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Exploring the Plantationocene Through Works by Otobong Nkanga

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Abstract This paper engages Otobong Nkanga's work *In Pursuit of Bling*, *The Weight of Scars*, as well as *Anamnesis through the Lens of the Plantationocene*. Coined by cultural theorist Donna Haraway and anthropologist Anna Tsing, the theory of the Plantationocene positions the emergence of extractive agricultural and natural resource withdrawal systems that are dependent on precarious racialised labour developed during the colonisation of the new world, as a defining point in our relationship with land and landscape. Nkanga's work examines the relationship between land, body, and labour through the colonial history of mineral mining in Namibia and Nigeria, the displacement and transportation of plants and people as commodities in racial capitalism, and the act of reconstructing a fractured landscape. Through the use of haptic means, such as bringing material from the landscape into the gallery, Nkanga explores alternative ways of knowing and thinking about ecological and colonial histories but also how ideas of blackness emerged intertwined with the materials of the plantation through forced racialised labour. Drawing on Katherine McKittrick's exploration of *Plantation Futures*, Krista Thompson's analysis of the 'politics of Bling', and Kathryn Yusoff's scholarship on the colonial history of geology, I consider how Nkanga's work disrupts the traditional narrative around the Anthropocene to show historical environmental inequalities and the scars of colonialism in the present-day landscape.

Keywords Plantationocene. Materiality. Anthropocene. Environment. Extraction. Racialised labour.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Anthropocene and Other Conceptualisations. – 3 Classification and the Extraction of Racialised Labour. – 4 Memory and Matter. – 5 Labour and Land. – 6 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

In an interview with the Tate Museum, Otobong Nkanga (2019) describes her experience visiting the Tsumeb mines in Namibia. Deeply impacted by this event she recalls,

> When I visited Tsumeb, you realize that it's a space that's been blown up with dynamite [and] I understood the difference between how technology

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> changes the way we extract […] how we've accelerated that process of destruction, scarification, and wounding. People coming into a place and changing completely that structure of things, and that repercussion [of these events are] still happening today. (Nkanga 2019)

Nkanga's recollections evoke the forces that drive her work: colonialism, racialised labour, and the ecological destructiveness of extractive industries. Through the lens of the Plantationocene, this paper aims to explore Otobong Nkanga's work, considering the intersection between these forces and how the artist seeks to address the unprecedented impact that humans are having on the planet. As a theory, the Plantationocene positions the emergence of extraction systems dependent on precarious racialised labour and ecological violence (Haraway, Tsing 2019). It also considers environmental injustice and how communities of colour experience inequitable amounts of exposure to pollution and human-caused toxicity. By situating Nkanga's practice in the Plantationocene, I aim to examine how her work explores the relationship between land, body, and labour through the colonial history of mineral mining in Namibia and Nigeria, the displacement and transportation of plants and people as commodities in racial capitalism, and the act of reconstructing a fractured landscape.

2 The Anthropocene and Other Conceptualisations

Climate change is often spoken of as a species act; the idea that *all* humanity is to blame for our raging wildfires, rising sea levels, and species extinction, and other ecological disasters that seem to happen on an increasingly common basis. Much of the critique against the notion of the Anthropocene is founded on its inability to address these inequalities in the creation and burden of ecological destruction. As anthropologist Anna Tsing says: "the term appeals to a false universal of homogenous 'Man', which was created with a white, Christian, heterosexual male person as the basis for the universal", indicating that humanity as a whole is responsible for climate change, rather than the ideology and power of Western capitalism (Haraway, Tsing 2019). Françoise Vergès (2017, 84) in her seminal essay *Racial Capitalocene* similarly proposes an understanding of climate change that considers the historic intersection of colonial and ecological violence by capitalist systems of extraction. In 2015, cultural theorist Donna Haraway coined the term 'Plantationocene' to

> make visible power relations and economic, environmental, and social inequalities that have made ways of being in a world undergoing rapid climate change, accelerated species extinction, and growing wealth disparity more precarious for some human and nonhuman beings than others. (Haraway et al. 2015, 557; Moore et al. 2021)

Like many other terms such as the 'Capitalocene' (Moore 2016, 5) and the 'Chthulucene' (Haraway 2016, 2), the Plantationocene emerged as a means to explore the intersectional perspectives of environmental collapse that often is obscured in the universalist language of the Anthropocene's *anthropos*. Specifically, the theory positions the emergence of colonial extractive resource systems – dependent on precarious racialised labour – as a defining

point in the change of our past and present relationship with land and landscape. To quote environmental scholar Katherine McKittrick (2013, 2), "the legacy of slavery and the labor of the unfree both shape and are part of the environment we presently inhabit" and continue to shape our ecological, political, and socio-cultural presents and futures. Nkanga's work examines this relationship between the body and landscape, the material memory of colonialism, and how colonial extractive industries have left, and continue producing 'scars' in communities and bodies, both human and non-human (2).

3 Classification and the Extraction of Racialised Labour

Nkanga's work *In Pursuit of Bling* (2014) investigates the colonial practice of categorising land and labour for mineral extraction in Namibia and Nigeria. The installation comprises two tapestries, *The Discovery* and *The Transformation*, hung back-to-back, along with several pedestals displaying minerals and photographs. It is a strategic arrangement that forces the viewers to encircle the work to fully experience it and absorb the many objects on display. Utilising woven textile, photographic images, video, and raw materials such as mica and copper, Nkanga prompts viewers to look closely and spend time with the objects on exhibit, absorbing their interconnected histories. At the centre hangs the tapestry *The Discovery*, depicting a large stone on a map divided into sections based on chemical elements. The composition references the use of cartography as an imperial practice to section up landscapes based upon valuable resources, disregarding the lives of the human and non-human residents. In her book *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, geographer Kathryn Yusoff takes a transdisciplinary approach in examining how the academic language of geology and mapping shaped Black subjectivity in conjunction with resource extraction. She observes that the

> geologic classification enabled the transformation of territory into a readable map of resources and organized the apprehension of extraction and the designation of extractable territories. (Yusoff 2019, 89)

This classification of land for mineral extraction is further emphasised by the work's title, which recalls the colonial 'discovery' of the New World and its pursuit of valuable resources such as the gemstone in the centre of the composition. Nkanga's tapestry shows how geology as a domain, fueled by colonial greed, became the means to see the environment and its inhabitants as exploitable resources for the uprooting of material and extraction of labour. Further, Yusoff (89) notes that "organization and categorization of matter enact racialization" as "bodies become gold, emptied of the sign of the human, reinvested with the signification of units of energy and properties of extraction. Black is made as will-less matter, a commodity object of labor". As Yusoff reveals, Blackness was created as a social construct in opposition to Whiteness to justify the dehumanising treatment of some humans as forced labour and the exclusion of others. In Nkanga's tapestry *The Transformation*, the upper body of the figures have been replaced by platforms mimicking the configuration of earth-like soil strata where materials like diamonds and other precious stones are found. The composition resonates with Yusoff's claim that just as labour and violence become embodied

in the glimmer pulled from the earth, the bodies of extraction absorb the very glitter they remove. Moreover, Yusoff writes:

> Blackness is understood as a state of relation (in Glissant's sense of the word) that is assigned to difference through a material colonial inscription, which simultaneously enacted the cutting of geographical ties to land and attachments to ecologies. Yusoff (2019, 10-11)

Blackness emerges through the violent assignation of bodies with commodity and material but also becomes reinforced through the intimacies between materials and bodies in the landscape. By placing the tapestries back-to-back, Nkanga ties the violent division of the earth for extraction ambitions with the violence done to the bodies living in the landscape who – through the colonial domain of geology – also become a resource of extraction.

The physical arrangement of Nkanga's installation *In Pursuit of Bling* invites a multifaceted interaction with the material histories on display. Rather than just passive observation, the work also functions as an alternative site of knowledge to be transferred and absorbed by the visitors in the museum; it is not only materials that circulate here but knowledge is also formed, uncovered, evoked, or repressed. Simultaneously, the pedestals and the light illuminating objects from above have other connotations too, evoking the structures of natural history institutions and their controversial practice of classifying, categorising, and displaying matter and beings, both dead and alive. Yusoff writes that

> in the categorization of matter as property and properties, both spatial dispossession of land (for extraction) and dispossessions of persons in chattel slavery (as another form of spatial extraction) are enacted. (16-17)

Just as matter becomes categorised by academic institutions, as visualised by Nkanga's tapestry *The Discovery*, those same institutions were responsible for the categorisation of humans through

> the division of matter into nonlife and life [that] pertains not only to matter but to the racial organization of life as foundational to New World geographies. (16)

Through evoking the hidden perspectives of land, matter, institution, and labour, Nkanga's installation explores how classification was used to justify slavery on the plantation and its many extractive equivalences.

4 Memory and Matter

By bringing material from the landscape into the gallery, Nkanga explores alternative ways of interacting with ecological and colonial histories. As art critic Lori Waxman (2018) observes in a review of Nkanga's 2016 exhibition *To Dig a Hole that Collapses Again* for the *Chicago Tribune*: "[a] part of Nkanga's strategy is this initial sensory attraction", the haptic communication of knowledge that goes beyond simply the visual. She not only depicts the materials, but she also brings them into the institution, making their reality immediate through their physical presence. In her work *Anamnesis*

(2016 and ongoing), Nkanga uses the fragrance of materials to evoke memories of colonial trade. The piece appears as a crack in the wall, filled with tobacco, ground coffee, and spices, the smell of the materials permeating the air of the exhibition space. Many of these fragrant objects were plants taken and transported into colonised areas so they could be grown for profit, often through slave labour. Haraway cites "the transportation of breeding plants and animals, including people" as crucial factors in creating a racist capitalist system of extraction involving simplified landscapes where one singular type of plant is bred in a controlled system of production (Haraway et al. 2015, 6). Through "the discipline of plants […] and humans" (6), human and non-human beings were forcibly relocated across the sea to and from areas occupied by Europeans where plantations emerged. Like Haraway and Tsing describe, colonisation plays a critical role in the globalisation of goods for the products many of us consume daily. Describing Nkanga's installation, Gabrielle Welsh writes how

> The wall has literally ruptured in order to bring us (the viewers, the humans, the colonisers, etc.) the sweet pleasure of various products commonly brought to the Chicago-area. (Welsh 2018)

Rather than just evoking the landscape visually Nkanga asks us to feel its presence in the room, as an entity with its own agency and specific history. The crack which seems to take the shape of the Chicago River brings to mind the displacement of Native American tribes on Illinois land by settler colonialism as a necessary part of the plantation system and also illustrates Nkanga's desire to connect local and global ecological histories (Kenjockety 2019). Tsing notes that "plantations dispossess both Indigenous people and indigenous ecologies and bring in not only exotic plants but people from other places" (Haraway et al. 2015, 8). Through relying on highly alienated and disciplined labour and land, the plantation created a system of agriculture that maximises profit at the expense of the wellbeing and life of its workers and the landscape. Like Nkanga shows, the labour driving these systems becomes intimately associated with the materials of extraction, both through the assignation of the body of the other as racial labour in capitalist systems, and the physical connection between racialised bodies and the materials they extract.

Through centring on extracted minerals like copper and mica, Nkanga makes material a key actor in her work, considering different voices within the landscape beyond man and their interconnectedness with human colonial histories. The consideration of knowledge and memory becomes a key focus in excavating the complex relationship between body, land, and labour formed through the plantation (and its many extractive equivalences). In the video *Reflections of the Raw Green Crown* (2015) (also included in *In Pursuit of Bling*), Nkanga performs in front of several copper-roofed churches in Berlin. Wearing a crown of green malachite, a mineral extracted in Tsumeb, Namibia, which can be processed into copper, Nkanga delivers a monologue impersonating the mineral from a contemporary perspective, reflecting on its historic displacement and transformation from the Green Hill mine in Tsumeb to the Berlin cityscape. Looking at the smooth green roofs, the malachite says, "who would have guessed the process you've been through, uprooted, melted, polished, reshaped and integrated into crowns, the finest in town" (Nkanga 2015) contemplating the journey of its "distant cousin" in

the colonial extraction of labour and minerals. The performance considers how this material has been uprooted from the landscape and transformed through technological modification, into an almost unrecognizable product for consumption – an architectural ornament. Yet extraction creates permanent traces in the land and becomes embodied in the material that remembers. Quoting the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Yusoff (2019, 24-5) writes that "the lives of the enslaved (and in turn also the human cost of the transatlantic slave trade) were embedded in every coin that changed hands, each spoonful of sugar stirred into a cup of tea, each puff of a pipe, and every bite of rice". Similarly, in the copper roofs of Berlin churches the colonial violence of extraction is recorded; or like the malachite that Nkanga embodies declares:

> You remain silent out of fear and do not want to be traced for the fear of the horror within […] the horror impregnated in […] I am raw. A simple raw pinnacle, visiting, passing through, looking like you, and guessing that we might be related. Guessing that you might remember Tsumeb. (Nkanga 2015)

The "intimacies of these material relations" (Yusoff 2019, 24) which Yusoff describes, have here become embedded into malleable metal, a material memory of its violent history of production.

In her book, *Black Bodies, White Gold*, scholar Anna Arabindan-Kesson maps how Blackness became a material of extraction, along with the resources that black slaves were forced to tend to. She observes that

> as commodity forms, cotton and Black bodies reflected each other: the value of Black labor was expressed through and on the material of cotton itself. (Kesson 2021, 22)

Arabindan-Kesson's analysis explores how contemporary artists like Yinka Shonibare and Hank Willis Thomas employ cotton to

> materialize different histories and therefore different futures, in which conceptions of value, and Blackness, can be imagined beyond the constraints of the market. (22)

Through using the materials of the plantation, the artists conjure an alternative history emerging "in the tension between what can be seen and what might be felt" (20). In similar means, Nkanga uses the smell of traded colonial goods to explore uncomfortable connections between these materials and the racialised labour used to excavate them. In *Anamnesis* the artist punctures the white institutional space through a dark crack of aromatic matter, or like Art Historian Debra Riley Parr puts it,

> [Nkanga] confronts the viewer with a physical, olfactory experience of fragrant materials that drove the colonial project and still continue in a global flow […] [Nkanga] leads the viewer through a history of origins, (re)claiming a fragrant assertion of Blackness. (Riley Parr 2021, 28)

The warmth of the spices, coffee, and other goods, invites one to come closer while encouraging other ways of knowledge than the optic, which has been

emphasised by Western society. Through the evocation of smell, the piece escapes the confines of the wall and follows us throughout the space. It becomes an interaction we are forced to meet and carry with us unless we leave the room, and even then, it can haunt our olfactory memory. Through pungent aroma, the material histories of the daily goods we consume are imposed on us by Nkanga, a reminder of the complicated past and present structures they occupy in our colonial histories and everyday life.

5 Labour and Land

In her text *The Sound of Light. Reflections on Art History in the Visual Culture of Hip-Hop*, art historian Krista Thompson describes how shine, and particularly the phenomenon of Bling, presents a means to critique consumerism at the expense of Black bodies. Thompson argues that Bling creates a state of hypervisibility by emitting a white light so bright that it exceeds the extent of our vision. This state of hypervisibility and invisibility mirrors how "the overdetermined surface of the black skin prevented many from seeing the subjectivity of persons of African descent" (Thompson 2014, 489). Critiquing the visible as a way of knowing, Thompson (489) further traces the historic "commodification of Blackness and the blindness to Black subjectivity". Colonial slave traders oiled the skin of their black slaves to hide scars and create the appearance of good health for markets in the objectification of the Black body. As Thompson observes, the "bodily shine helped to increase the lives worth" as the shine helped to produce Blackness as a commodity, "[blinding] buyers to the slave's humanity" and defined them "in crushing objecthood" (Thompson 2014, 489). In the video *In Pursuit of Bling* (2014), also a part of the larger installation by the same name, Nkanga is seen physically interacting with the various minerals present in the installation. She holds them in her hand, applies them to her skin, and places them in her mouth as if to consume them, enacting both the violence of extractive ecologies and the corporeal memory engendered in the encounter between matter and body. She evokes both the displacement of matter and Black subjectivity described by Thompson as the Bling becomes quite literally embodied into the artist's skin and body, yet also how these encounters in the landscape are erased, hidden behind the shine of the reflective materials. Nkanga's use of extracted minerals explores Thompson's phenomena of Bling and emphasises the colonial infatuation with shine and value at the expense of Black lives. Like Tsing describes, along with the materials they are forced to attend to, "the people, too, become alienated resources," (Haraway et al., 2015) as Black bodies and labour become objectified as extractable resources. Nkanga's installation invites us to haptically engage with our interconnected histories in the land as she evokes the corporeal memory of Black subjectivity intimately linked with a landscape shaped by the pursuit of extractions.

The landscape and the bodies of consumption and extraction form a complicated ecosystem that Nkanga attempts to make visible through the grid of her installation *In Pursuit of Bling*. The interconnected structure combines elements of raw material, product, extraction, and labour to excavate the multiple memories carried by matter, body, and earth. As Nkanga's video shows, in occupying the landscape the bodies have touched, absorbed, and permeated minerals into the pores of the skin, often through poor working conditions. We should also note that even those who do not work in the

mines are affected by their environments, as particles enter the air and are brought into the homes by workers in their families. While Black labour provided the energy for extractions, Yusoff writes that they were

> excluded from the wealth of its accumulation. Rather, Blackness must absorb the excess of that surplus as toxicity, pollution, and intensification of storms. (Yusoff 2019, 88)

In the tapestry *The Transformation*, two figures have their upper body missing, replaced by platforms carrying chemical compositions perhaps as a result of the material absorption described by Yusoff. They are standing on grey matter, supposedly mica, a form of glitter extracted through mining in countries like Madagascar, India, and Nkanga's home country Nigeria. Found in cosmetics, electrical equipment, and paint, this material is ubiquitous in our everyday lives. The fine degree to which mica is mined means that mineral particles often surface into the air of poorly ventilated mines and enter the workers' bodies through breathing. 'Mica-pneumoconiosis' is the clinical term for lung disease caused by inhaling mica dust which causes lung impairment and inflammation (Hulo et al. 2013, 1473). Pneumoconioses are occupational conditions developed from extended exposure to mineral dust, often within the workspace (1473; Derickson 1983). Triangular structures lining the background suggest particles of unearthed mica circling in the air and their simultaneous presence inside the bodies indicates how the body absorbs its environment in conjunction with material uprooting. Moreover, Nkanga utilises Afrofuturist imagery in her mechanical figures to critique the use of technology that aided extraction and made labour disposable by reducing the need to specialise workers. Transformed through extraction, standardisation allows for bodies to become replaceable and mechanised, like the figures in Nkanga's work who lack upper bodies and heads, signifiers of personhood, left with only arms and legs, the means of labour. In an interview with Tate, Nkanga observes that only if we understand

> how we've accelerated that process of destruction, scarification, of wounding [through technology], then we can imagine what has happened in places that have been colonized. (2019)

Her cyborg figures then exemplify the violence of plantation systems made possible by technological advancements, whose use of forced labour through corporeal and material extractions exhausts land and people.

By evoking the intertwined histories in bodies, material, and land, Nkanga's work serves as a means to reimagine the past and the present, thus allowing new histories and ways of knowing to emerge. In *The Weight of Scars* (2015), two figures stand in front of a blue background depicting a map. They possess only the lower half of their body, and while lacking a torso, the figures have several arms in different shades mimicking the colors found within the landscape behind them. The weight of their legs rests on each foot in a contrapposto stance and their bilaterally symmetrical composition gives a sense of classical balance and rendering of the body found in classical art. Yet this balance is broken; instead of a beautifully sculpted body in pristine health, we only have limbs and too many for a normal figure. Rupture of stability is also present in other parts of Nkanga's tapestry where greens and vibrant orange specks the calm blue background.

Moreover, the figures hold a rope connecting a network of nine circular black and white images portraying barren landscapes with cracks, holes, and artificial structures from the Tsumeb mines in Namibia. These literal scars of the environment serve as an index of the invisible legacies of colonialism in the present-day landscape. Nkanga observes that

> the landscape can give an impression of what it is not [...] If we look at spaces that have gone through wars, they are later rebuilt, traces erased. We might not see the full story at first glance. (Elderton 2014)

Yet Nkanga's figures stand pulling the fragmented earth together, a composition that maps out a complex link between ecological extraction, colonial violence and the bodies left to bear the burden.

Cracks, pits, and hollows, visible in the photographs embedded in the tapestry *The Weight of Scars*, evoke the scars and histories of German colonialism present in the Namibian landscape of the Tsumeb mine. To Nkanga, holes can serve as a type of negative monument, a remembrance of the transportation of material from one place, leaving a wound to erect a structure elsewhere. On this idea, she says:

> We commemorate people and events by erecting buildings, structures or sculptures. I want to delve further and ask, – could the place that is holed out actually be a place of remembrance, commemoration and warning? (Welford 2020, 4)

In light of this, the emptiness suggested by the holes in the images not only indicates how materials and people were taken and moved for extraction purposes; they can also be a means to reflect on a landscape violently molded by environmental colonialism. Present in these photographs of the landscapes are scars left by colonial histories that impress their ramifications in contemporary life. In the exhibition catalog for Nkanga's MCA exhibition, titled *To Dig a Hole That Collapses Again* (a translation of Tsumeb into English), Omar Kholeif (2004, 5) reflects on the town's name. He describes it as "a turn of phrase that suggests the continual eruption and corrosion of a landscape, or perhaps a body consistently attempting to reconstruct or protect a site of mystical beauty only for it to be destroyed", much like the precarious figures in Nkanga's tapestry who stand pulling together fragments of the Tsumeb mine, carrying the weight of a scarred landscape; a ruptured earth. The name also indicates how the mining of minerals from Tsumeb and other precious matter like diamonds from mines in Namibia, served to pay for the German colony, which allowed more settlers to move onto the land and displace the original inhabitants (Hearth 2021). We should also remember that "the systematic practice of relocation for extraction is necessary to the plantation system" (Haraway et al. 2015). While indigenous communities in Namibia had been extracting Tsumeb copper since at least the late seventeenth century, this level of extraction was far beyond that (Hearth 2021, 445). Geologist Selby Hearth observes that Adolf Lüderitz, often named the founder of the Namibian colony, once wrote:

> I should be pleased if it turned out that the entire soil [of South West Africa] is a colossal mineral deposit which, once it is mined, will leave the whole area one gaping hole. (Hearth 2021, 453)

Lüderitz's statement evokes one of Haraway's distinctions on the plantation's effect on the landscape, that one

> aspect of plantation transformations of place is not just unsustainability but out-and- out extremism [...] the degree to which plantations destroy their own base, exhaust soils, exhaust peoples, exhaust plants and animals. (Haraway et al. 2015, 10)

While the Tsumeb copper mine was not a plantation, Yusoff (2019, 52) notes that "slavery and industrialization were tied by the various afterlives of slavery in the form of indentured and carceral labour that continued to enrich new emergent industrial power", often extractive industries like mining. Here, labour is kept precarious and vulnerable through poor working conditions, low pay, and migrant work (either transnationally or locally, isolating the subjects and reducing work-life boundaries). Katherine McKittrick describes these places shaped by extraction of labour and resources as "inhuman geographies" and that:

> The historical constitution of the lands of no one can, at least in part, be linked to the present and normalized spaces of the racial other; with this the geographies of the racial other are emptied out of life precisely because the *historical* constitution of these geographies has cast them as the lands of no one. [...] life, then, is extracted from particular regions, transforming some places into inhuman rather than human geographies. (McKittrick 2013, 7)

Nkanga's tapestry shows how it is not only the inhabitants of the geographies described by McKittrick who are tied to these histories. Her observations also mirror the passive response from the West in the increasingly frequent natural disasters affecting the global South, who quite literally must bear the scars and consequences of the ecological violence exercised by the West, an argument also emphasised by the tapestry's title *The Weight of Scars*. Our society's reliance on the extraction of minerals has created relationships of trade and consumption of resources that bind our global world together into a myriad of networks, moving resources from the south to the north. Our smartphones, laptops, and make-up, among many other things that form our lifestyle, are available to us because of the historic relationships Nkanga makes visible in her work. Her examination of the Tsumeb mines reveals how the histories of racialised labour and ecological violence continue to exercise their powers in our present systems of being.

6 Conclusion

Through analysing Nkanga's work through the lens of the Plantationocene, the artist's concern for exploring interconnectivity in our histories and landscapes emerges. Nkanga disrupts the traditional narrative around the Anthropocene, showing historical environmental inequalities and the social and environmental scars left by colonial extractions. By exploring the materiality of exiled plants through scent, Nkanga evokes the colonial histories tied to the growing of cash crops on colonial plantations that form a large part of our contemporary consumption. She reveals the secluded histories

of these objects for us to be conscious of our relationships with different agents in the world and the interconnectivity of our histories. Yet Nkanga also reveals the separate burdens we have to bear because of these different chronicles of events within the landscape. Specifically, the effects on the body of the other, both in the categorisation of Black bodies as labour for colonial capitalist extractions and the slow violence on bodies and landscapes shaped by a long-term history of extraction and pollution. Through often haptic means, Nkanga asks us to consider our interconnected histories to recognise the West's extensive withdrawal of resources in the global south and what McKittrick (2013, 7) describes as "the geographies of the racial other". Like Vergès says

> global warming and its consequences for the peoples of the South […] must be understood outside of the limits of "climate change" and in the context of the inequalities produced by racial capital. (Vergès 2017, 82)

and only if we understand and address how colonial rationale through the plantation system has shaped our past and present landscapes and resource extractions can we imagine other ways of being.

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