

pav
PARCO ARTE VIVENTE
CENTRO D'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA TORINO

BINTA DIAW

WHERE THE LIANAS INTERTWINE

RESISTANCES, ALLIANCES, LANDS

CURATED BY MARCO SCOTINI

31.10.2025
8.3.2026

Binta Diaw
Where the lianas intertwine
Resistances, alliances, lands

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with the support of:

Città di Torino · Regione Piemonte · Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo · Fondazione CRT

The artist



Binta Diaw (Milan, 1995) is an Italian-Senegalese visual artist active on an international level. Raised between Italy and Senegal, she studied at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and at the École d'Art et de Design in Grenoble, France.

Her practice unfolds through installations, sculptures, videos, photography, and performance, and is deeply rooted in a philosophical reflection on the social phenomena that shape the contemporary world – such as migration, diasporic identity, the sense of belonging, and gender issues. In her works, natural and symbolic materials – soil, plaster, ropes, synthetic hair, but also rolled-up flags – compose

a plastic language that places at its center the physical and sensory experience of the viewer, inviting them to confront their own position in the world and in relation to the artwork. Diaw's work draws on Afro-diasporic, intersectional, and feminist perspectives, positioning itself as a critical act against the dominant Eurocentric vision. Through her creations, the artist explores the multiple layers of identity – her own, as a Black woman within a Europeanized context, and the collective one, of a continent marked by histories and geographies in dialogue and conflict.
Her works give voice to marginalised memories, promoting a more conscious, inclusive, and plural vision of the present.

Her pieces are part of prestigious private collections and have been exhibited in numerous solo and group shows, as well as in major institutions: MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts (Rome, IT), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin, IT), Museo Madre (Naples, IT), Liverpool Biennial (Liverpool, UK), Berlin Biennale (Berlin, GER), Istituto Svizzero (Rome, IT), Italian Cultural Institute of Dakar (Dakar, SN), Express Newark (Newark, US), Fondazione Nicola Trussardi (Milan, IT), Gwangju Biennale (Gwangju, KR), Magasin CNAC (Grenoble, FR), Museo Novecento (Florence, IT), Palazzo Grimani (Venice, IT), Institut Culturel Italien de Paris (Paris, FR), FRAC Alsace (Sélestat, FR), Castello di Rivoli (Rivoli, IT), Bamako Encounters (Mali, MLI), Murate Art District (Florence, IT), Centrale Fies (Dro, IT), MUSEION (Bolzano, IT), Galerie Cécile Fakhoury (Paris, Dakar, Abidjan), and Prometeo Gallery (Milan, IT).

The exhibition

Where the lianas intertwine. Resistances, alliances, lands is Binta Diaw's solo exhibition, curated by Marco Scotini. Following the solo shows of Navjot Altaf, Arahmaiani, and Regina José Galindo, Diaw's exhibition offers a further focus on the relationship between nature and feminine thought in our present time.

The exhibition takes its title from the vegetal element of the liana, in both a poetic and political sense: a climbing plant that twists and resists the elements, capable of opening unexpected pathways and forging new, vital alliances with the other plants that surround it.

Diaw draws inspiration from Afro-descendant women's traditions and diasporic identities to address urgent contemporary questions. This violent yet living memory concerns the survival of all beings within an ecosystem now on the verge of collapse.

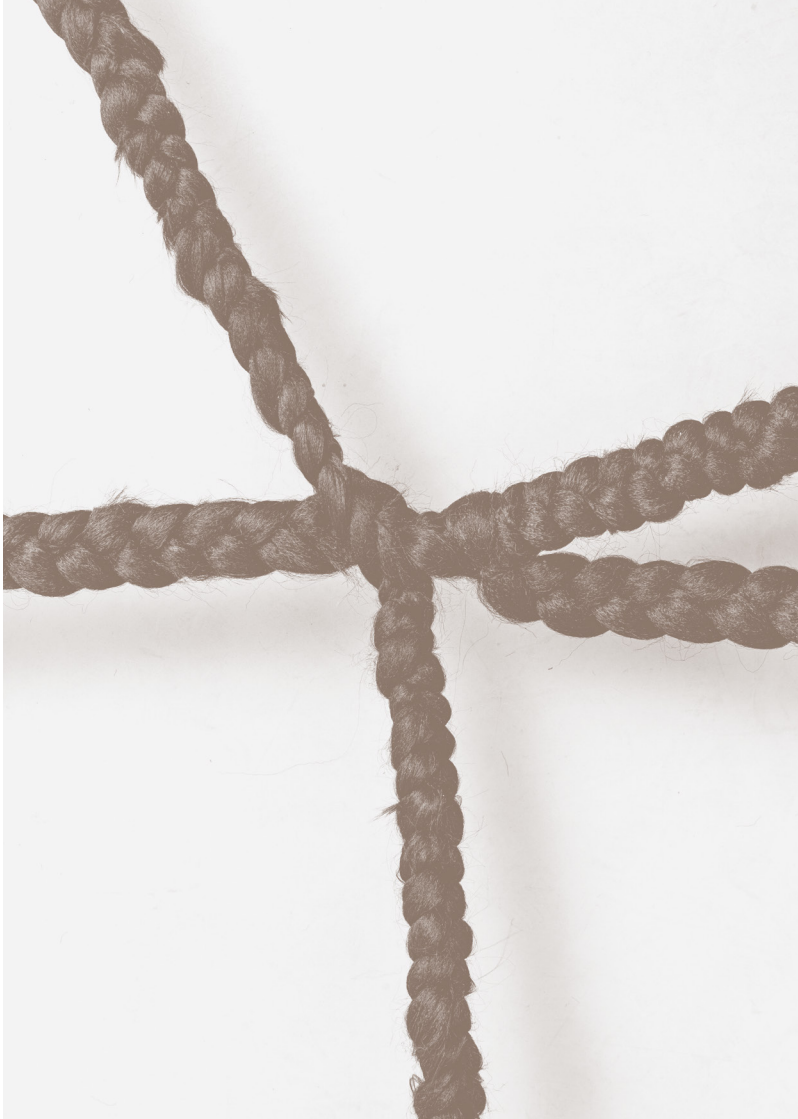
Born in Milan in 1995 to Senegalese parents, Diaw has developed a practice that weaves together ecology, Black feminism, and diasporic memory, placing at its center the relationship between body, nature, and colonial history. Her artistic language activates a powerful symbolic and iconographic vocabulary rooted in her identity as a Black woman artist within a Eurocentric cultural system, unfolding through diverse geographies and visual references at the intersection of stories and latitudes that may appear distant yet remain profoundly connected.

She works with materials poised between organicity and artifice: soil, as an element of reconnection with the natural world, and synthetic hair, which African women use as extensions of their own hair, symbols of beauty and cultural identity.

The exhibition revolves around the diasporic and collective body as a site of resistance and alliance with the living world. Just as lianas never grow in isolation but find support and the possibility of ascent only by intertwining with other plants, the memory of the African diaspora is narrated as a fabric of bonds, solidarities, and practices of care. The relationship with nature becomes a political space, a relational territory, and an archive of ancestral knowledge that resists the extractivist logic of the colonial plantation.

Dïà s p o r a (2021), presented at the 2022 Berlin Biennale, is an installation resembling the body structure of a spider, where braids of hair fill the space, evoking the hidden resistance of African women in the slave plantations. Within their hair, women once concealed maps of the plantations or seeds brought from their homeland – such as tomato seeds in Diaw's work. The hair thus becomes an instrument of memory and cultural transmission, while the suspended, branching structure recalls the clandestine paths of the diaspora and marronage, transforming the exhibition space into a place of poetic and political resistance.

Chorus of Soil (2019) continues this reflection, merging historical archives with natural materials. Using soil mixed with seeds, Diaw outlines on the ground the plan of the 18th-cen-





tury slave ship *Brooks*, retracing the forced journey of over five thousand people deported from Africa to the Caribbean. The black silhouettes of the enslaved, immobilized within the ship's narrow hold, become both a symbol of oppression and a point of germination: over time, the seeds sprout, transforming the ship into a living garden, a metaphor for the vital strength and resilience of African-descendant women and peoples.

The *Paysage Corporel* and *Nature* series of works features the body of the artist, transformed and reinterpreted as a landscape. Through interventions with traces of plaster or installation elements, Diaw builds a sensitive geography that evokes the survival and regeneration paths of the plant world.

Instead, the courtyard the installation *Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation,* work inspired by eco-feminist readings that have the mangroves of Senegal as their metaphorical element.

Equally central is the video work *Essere corpo* (*Being Body*), which resonates with the entire ensemble of works, emphasising the relationship between memory, body, and nature, and transforming the exhibition space into a place of passage, entanglement, and connection with the living.

Visitors traverse material spaces where the works stretch across the floor like carpets of soil or vegetal germinations, hang suspended like aerial installations, or intertwine into textile elements that evoke the sinuous paths of lianas in the forest. Each section functions as a threshold: moments

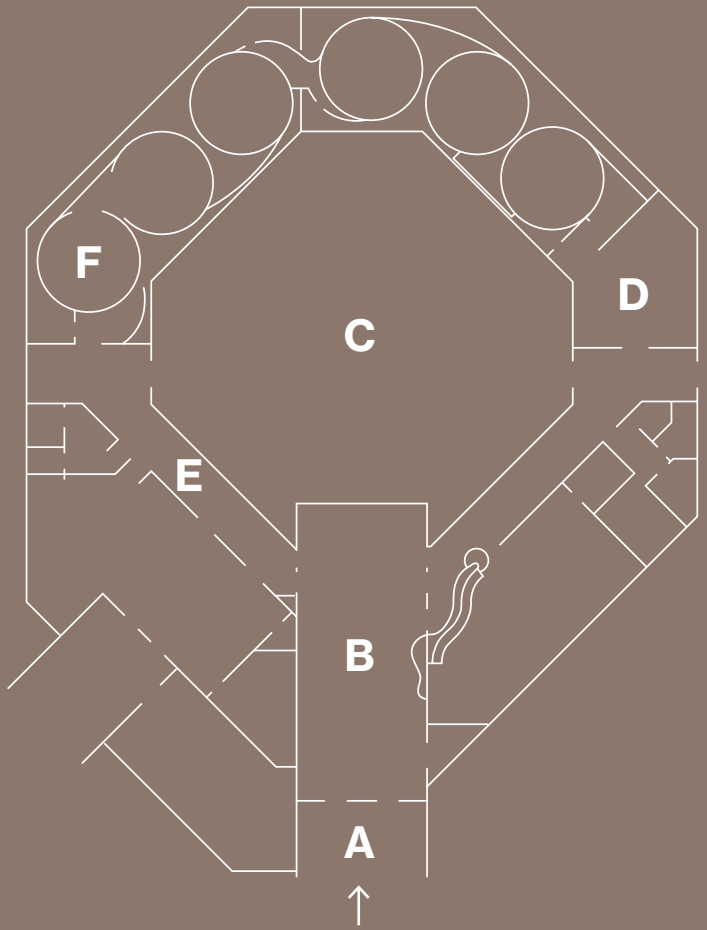
of rootedness alternate with experiences of movement and crossing, visually translating diasporic histories and alliances with the living world.

The exhibition becomes a choral landscape in which aesthetic and political dimensions coexist and sustain one another – like the intertwined plants of a single forest.

With *Where the lianas intertwine. Resistances, alliances, lands*, the PAV (Parco Arte Vivente) continues its exploration of new forms of political ecology and of ways to rethink the bonds between nature and global society. Diaw's project reaffirms art as a relational space, where diasporic memory and vegetal forms intertwine to generate new images of community and new possibilities of belonging.



MAP



A NICHE

Paysage Corporel IV.III, 2019 – ongoing

B GREENHOUSE

Chorus of Soil, 2019
Paysage Corporel XIV, naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation, 2023

C COURT

Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #1, 2022
Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #3, 2022
Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #4, 2022
Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #4, 2022

D PROJECT ROOM

Diä s p o r a, 2021

E CORRIDOR

Nature I, 2023
Nature II, 2023
Nature III, 2023
Essere corpo, 2016

F VIDEO ROOM

Essere corpo, 2016

A NICHE

***Paysage Corporel IV.III*, 2019 - ongoing**

Inkjet printing on cotton paper mounted on dibond, plaster.

In these photographs, the artist's own body takes on the contours of a physical place, of a natural morphology. "The body," explains Binta Diaw, "is the essence of my artistic practice. It is that personal space which at times also becomes social, political, and collective." Autobiography, questions of belonging and descent, memory, silenced histories, and the African diaspora lie at the core of her research. On the surface of the photographs, the artist intervenes with traces of chalk and pigments, drawing lines and colors that follow and amplify the body's outlines, transforming them into harmonious, cyclical, and infinite paths. These gestures evoke the breath of the natural world, where every movement and every material are in a constant state of regeneration.

B GREENHOUSE

***Chorus of Soil*, 2019**

Soil, seeds, variable dimensions

The installation reproduces on the ground the plan of the 18th-century slave ship *Brooks*, retracing the forced journey of over five thousand people deported from Africa to the Caribbean. The black silhouettes of the enslaved, immobilised within the narrow hold of the ship, become both a symbol of oppression and a point of germination: the seeds of tomato and melon embedded in the soil gradually sprout, transforming the ship into a living garden, a metaphor for the vital force and resilience of African-descendant women and peoples. The soil itself is conceived as a living entity: it gives birth, lives within our bodies, and is in everything we eat and drink. The choice of the word *"chorus"* evokes the sound of the earth, which speaks through bodies, faces, and stories in motion, forming a choir of voices and sounds. The work draws on little-known archival images to recall and reinterpret the past, inviting reflection on contemporary events.

B GREENHOUSE

***Paysage Corporel XIV, naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation*, 2023**

Wallpaper, synthetic hair, iron wire, soil

This work is inspired by an eco-feminist reading of mangroves in Senegal. The visual resonance between braided hair and mangrove roots is immediately evident, yet the association goes far beyond mere formal similarities. Mangroves grow mainly in coastal areas near the equator. Their roots rise out of soil and water, absorbing oxygen where the ground is water-saturated. Crossing through different elements, the roots appear as a connective tissue between separate categories. The work transforms these roots into a symbol of relationship and connection, evoking the deep bond between body, nature, and social environment, and inviting reflection on interdependence, growth, and resilience.

C COURT

***Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #1*, 2022**

***Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #3*, 2022**

***Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #4*, 2022**

***Naître au monde, c'est concevoir (vivre) enfin le monde comme relation #4*, 2022**

Water, synthetic hair, iron wires, metal structure

The visual resonances between braided hair and mangrove roots are immediately evident. Yet, the association goes far beyond formal similarities: mangroves embody the ability to survive under adverse conditions, taking root between water, earth, and air much like the diasporic communities and female genealogies to which the artist refers. The roots emerging from the ground and crossing through different elements become a metaphor for a connective tissue between seemingly separate categories: the human and the vegetal, memory and matter, the individual and the collective.

D PROJECT ROOM

***Dià s p o r a*, 2021**

Synthetic hair, soil, seeds / Variable dimensions

Dià s p o r a is an installation that evokes the body structure of a spider, where braided hair fills the space, recalling the hidden resistance of African women in slave plantations. Within their hair, women concealed maps of the plantations or seeds from their homeland. The hair becomes a tool of memory and cultural transmission, while the suspended, branching structure recalls the clandestine and furtive paths of the diaspora and marronage, transforming the exhibition space into a place of poetic and political resistance. This practice, a symbol of resistance and cultural perpetuation, becomes for Diaw a sensory and intellectual act that intertwines memory, body, and history.

E CORRIDOR

***Nature I*, 2023**

***Nature II*, 2023**

***Nature III*, 2023**

Inkjet print on cotton paper mounted on dibond

In this photographic series, the Black female body becomes a site of revelation and metamorphosis. Diaw explores the ancestral relationship between body and Nature, restoring to the skin and its forms the function of a landscape, a living surface where memories, wounds, and rebirths are inscribed. These photographs illuminate the body as a ground of resistance, power, and action. The ancestral connection between female bodies and Nature reappears in these works, in which different parts of the body are portrayed.

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***Essere corpo*, 2016**

Still from video

F VIDEO ROOM

***Essere corpo*, 2016**

Video performance, 4’30”

The work is an exploration of the body’s sensory capacities in relation to the patriarchal and capitalist reality that distances us from our natural state as human beings. Bodies are living traces of our oppressions, experiences, and actions. Through her own body, movements, and steps, Diaw returns to primordial origins, inscribed within us just as the earth is inscribed within us. The body dances with the soil: a sensitive choreography that reconstructs and sustains the continuity of the indissoluble bond between human beings and nature. This dance of liberation and knowledge reveals how nature can be understood as a common good, rooted in ancient origins.

PAV – Parco Arte Vivente

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Parco Arte Vivente is an Experimental Center for Contemporary Art, conceived by the artist Piero Gilardi and directed by Enrico Bonanate. The PAV includes an outdoor exhibition site and an interactive museum, conceived as a place for meetings and laboratory experiences aimed at fostering dialogue between art and nature, biotechnology, and ecology, as well as between the public and artists.
The park is a green territory in continuous evolution, occupying a former industrial area of approximately 23,000 sqm, where, in addition to Trèfle, an environmental installation by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (2006), and Jardin Mandala, a garden designed by landscape architect Gilles Clément (2010), other relational and participatory interventions are in progress, including Focolare, winner of the PAV Prize 2012, and an urban beekeeping project featuring bees inside La Folie du PAV by Emmanuel Louisgrand (2009).

Re—Imagine Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

The exhibition Where the lianas intertwine. Resistances, alliances, lands is realised with the support of Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione CRT, the Piedmont Region, and the City of Turin.

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Part of New Perspectives for Action, a project by Re-Imagine Europe, co-funded by the European Union.

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Friday 3 – 6 PM
Saturday and Sunday 12 – 7 PM

For schools and groups:
by appointment, Tuesday
to Friday