Untitled (Book of Tawhid I)
Ink, bleach and cold glue.
220 x 210 cm.
Untitled (Gairodien's student notebook VII).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
220 x 176 cm.
Untitled (Book of Tawhid VIII).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
104 x 76 cm.
Untitled (Kitaab III).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
53 x 38 cm.
Kamyar Bineshtarih’s koples boek(e):
Transliteration’s potential subterfuge or/and inhabiting a grammar of opacity?

Amogelang Maledu

My first visit to Kamyar’s studio in Salt River after he asked me to curate his debut solo exhibition – koples boek(e) – at the Goethe Institut in Johannesburg, started off with somewhat of a miscommunication. We spent a good 20 minutes explaining to each other what we both think transliteration means. At first it seemed like we had divergent definitions of what we thought the word means, so we took to Google for some “fact-checking”, eventually abandoned that for some illustrative inscriptions (mostly Kamyar because I can only write in Roman script) and then continuously repeating both our respective definitions over and over again to each other – convincing each other that only one of our definitions is right. It was not a screaming match, but neither was it a harmonious conversation. It was robust: Kamyar – nil, Amo – nil, Discordance – amok! English exasperating each of our definitions: the mental gymnastics of translangugaging one has to do in explicating things from their home language first
to the subsumed universality of English: sekgowa sa lapisa maan – انگلیسی خسته کننده است – Alas, eventually we realised that even though we had plural ways of defining this word, principally, we returned to somewhat of a changing same, a spiraling tangential understanding of the subtleties of this word’s meaning: a curiosity-cum-obsession with knowing the so-called Other. But what if we were comfortable with inhabiting a grammar of opacity (Glissant, 1997) – centring unknowability so the work creates situations that allow for multiple readings (Ngcobo 2018: 19)? Multiple readings that
considers an aesthetic conceptualism fueled by an impetus of artistic enquiries on the historical injustices laden in the polyphonic knowledge and subsequent erasure of Arabic-Afrikaans.

From 1795, the Cape Muslim community-initiated madrassahs in Cape Town to teach Arabic reading and writing. Afrikaans at this time was considered a vernacular language that was frequently spoken and heard, but never written nor read (Jappie 2015). Arabic-Afrikaans was the words enslaved Cape Muslim communities in the middle of the 19th century created in Cape Town, using the Arabic script to phonetically transcribe their creolised Dutch (Davids, 1989). Consequently, ajami scripts (Arabic scripts used to write non-Arabic languages) specific to South Africa developed: a blatant rejection, at the time, from Cape Muslims of the Dutch colonisers’ Roman alphabet (Campbell 2013: 81).

To begin with, the ingenuity of creating Arabic-Afrikaans arose from the despoliation and dispossession of the Khoikhoi in Cape Town by the colonialists from Portugal, Holland, Germany, and France. When Cape Town was ‘founded’ as a supply station for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, the Khoikhoi were pastoral nomads with no inclination in regulated manual labour, subsequently, fiercely resisting the serfdom imposed by the Europeans (Coplan 2007 [1987]: 13). This had consequences: a Khoikhoi underclass developed, and the VOC indentured and enslaved people
from Java, Malaya, the Malabar Coast of India, East African coast, and West Africa for the company (Coplan 2007 [1987]: 13). As they toiled the land of the Cape, the Khoikhoi, and the displaced enslaved communities as well as the indentured labourers and even exiles, inevitably intermingled, mixing with the European colonialists too (Coplan 2007 [1987]: 13). This is the precipitation of the grounds of Arabic-Afrikaans: mobility and migration (forced and voluntary/intercontinental and intra-continental), shapeshifting markers of identity formation shaped by histories of empiricism and power. The geographic evils of colonisation’s displacement of people for a ‘globalizing capitalism … that would ensure global economic, ecological and political security in the face of an out-of-control free-market liberalism’ (Harvey 2000: 529). Alas, creating increasingly protean identities underscored by the violence of colonialism and therein, strategies of surviving multiple ontological terrors¹. One of those survival strategies included language production and interaction. Without necessarily taking a philological approach to Afrikaans, but to consider Arabic-Afrikaans’ formation as per Davids (1989) suggestions, we start from the creolised Dutch that the immigrant enslaved communities of Black people² in Cape Town spoke, alongside the Free Burghers. However,

¹ I use the term ontological terror to specifically relate its syntax to the theorisation of Black nihilism and its potential threats. This is especially influenced by some of the ideas of Calvin L. Warren’s book Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism and Emancipation published in 2018.

² Author uses the term ‘Black’ in the context of Steve Biko’s Black Consciousness philosophy where he applied the term “Black” not only to Bantu-speaking Africans, but also to Indian and so-called Coloured people.
Untitled (Kitaab IV). 
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas. 
25 x 19cm
Untitled (Kitaab V).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
18 x 25 cm.
even though colonialists denigrated the vernacular language, calling it a ‘kombuistaal’ or ‘Hottentotstaal’, the exiles, enslaved communities, and indentured labourers – mostly Muslim – developed the intimacy of their creole language further (Davids 1989: 20). Contrary to colonialists often referring to the Cape enslaved communities as illiterate, they could read and write, just not in the ideological supremacy of the colonialists’ Roman script. Historian, Saarah Jappie (2015) explains:

Malay speakers … because of their knowledge of the Qur’an they could read and write Arabic. Joining these two skills, they adopted the Jawi system, using Arabic letters to write Malay. By the 19th century Malay was losing ground to Cape Dutch, an early form of Afrikaans. Quite soon, Cape Dutch became the lingua franca of the Muslim community, used as the official language of religious sermons and in the madarassah setting. In order to write the new language, the Jawi system was adopted and Arabic-Afrikaans was born.

*koples boek(e)* begins with this awareness of Arabic-Afrikaans in Kamyar’s artistic consciousness. His practice has long been preoccupied with languages’ (il)legibility and its embedded structures of determining whose language is read, how and why. From his gestural light brushstrokes of dipped ink, comfortably twirling in the visuality of Arabic script that manages a chemical interaction with bleach and glues on stretched and stripped canvases, leaving layers of
inscriptions seemingly disappearing – fading into traces – suggesting an absence or an erasure of the processes of transliteration’s concealments of Afrikaans’ origins. Some inscriptions’ disappearances are gradual, some palimpsestic. It is from this alluded erasure in koples boek(e) where my mind trails to the caustic consequences of exclusion by those who have been victims of segregationist policies themselves. Dynamics that are embedded in the history of Cape Town’s urbanisation, dynamics that are still rife in Cape Town even today. From the philological approach of Afrikaans’ history as ‘a white purism’ (Davids 1989: 12), to the jarring anti-Black remnants of the city’s spatial politics. Art historian, Nomusa Makhubu (2019: 19) speaks about Cape Town’s current spatial planning as it relates to a term in psychogeography called ‘anatopism’, to illustrate how Black township life is perpetually seen as out of place in the city’s central business district. Herein, language functions as a segregationist marker, and in Cape Town, it often borders on race relations too. Surprisingly, for a Cape-born language as diverse in its early invention as Arabic-Afrikaans, one would think that they would not be much gatekeeping of its accessibility, but Davids (1989: 41) begs to differ:

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Afrikaans was an established language in the Cape Muslim community. For the first twenty-five years of this present century, the Cape Muslim, in very much the same way white Afrikaners, manipulated the Afrikaans language for group exclusivity and political gain. Their first political organization, the South African Moslims Association, was open only to ‘Dutch
speaking Malays’, and thus effectively excluded [Black Africans], Afghans, ฤาษิ and Indians, who were also resident in Cape Town at the time. Then again in 1825, Arshud Gamiet, as president of the Cape Malay Association, flirted with [James Barry Munnik] Hertzog’s Pact Government, to gain for them recognition as ‘Cape Malay’, as opposed to ‘Asiatic’, ถ้า they spoke the Afrikaans language. This effectively placed them apart from their [Black African/Indian co-religionist, whom the state regarded as temporary sojournists.

In *Born To Kwaito* (2018), a book co-authored by Esinako Ndabeni and Sihle Mthembu that reflects on the Kwaito generation, Ndabeni (2018: 85) implicates the aforementioned White proximity of Afrikaans by Cape Muslims in the complex history of Afrikaner nationalism as an ideological referent of apartheid white supremacist ideals, symbolic in the conflicting meanings of words:

These notions of propriety in language, of course reflect themselves in Tsotsitaal as well. This is why the history of Afrikaans is important to highlight: respectability politics are at the core of the legitimation of language. It is widely accepted that the word ‘kaffir’, which came to be a slur denoting Black people, came from Arabic word ‘Kafir’, which translates to ‘unbeliever’. How reflective is this of the language that was spoken by Muslim people of the Cape? I’m imagining a situation where the Dutch settlers heard these Malay people talking about ‘Kaffirs’ and, sensing that it would be the perfect word to define Black people…
Untitled (Book of Tawhid IX).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
34 x 48 cm.
This is how language functions as a salient marker that is continuously changing – being shaped by its speakers and accommodating new socio-political objectives that determine who, how and which speakers is taken along its journey of relevance. The deadly dislocation of colonialism’s unhoming is the basis of Cape society, and subsequently South Africa’s polyglottic nature. It did not take long for colonialism and later apartheid to use the notion of this diverse opacity to entrench a belief that oneself and another are not able to translate into or knowing of each other – underpinning a doctrine of untranslatability as an absolute ‘epistemic barrier’ (Maharaj 2019: 142). *koples boek(e)* is thus ripe in being read both within the potential subterfuge of the untranslatability of the so-called Other and/or via a grammar of opacity. To focus both on untranslatability or opacity’s deceit and potentiality is to acknowledge both grammars’ impossibilities and limitations of transliteration and subsequently translation. It is also to wrestle and challenge the dialectics of antagonisms – difference – as diametrically opposed. I know multiculturalist ideals are seductive, but please look at the cracks of South Africa’s nationalist PR utopian campaigns of *Rainbowism* and *Ubuntu* as case studies that have fallen short of their own objectives. *koples boek(e)* is too – similarly – imbricated in the slippages of being objectified as a celebratory token of multiculturalism and/or ideological biases of invented irreconcilable differences or even furthermore, neo-Orientalism in a contemporary Artworld preoccupied with making its institutions and collections politically correct. In fact, scholar Ali Behdad (2016: 153 – 169) warns that one
ought to be careful of the art-market and post-colonialist trends’ sudden appetite and desire of artistic production outside of Euro-American contexts. Meanwhile, Sarat Maharaj (2019: 143) calls this a perfidious fidelity of the embedded power dynamics of ‘Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe – no position permits a viewing without itself turning into the viewed. What prevails is the sense of watching as we are being watched, of some looking over our shoulders as we look l’autre l’ailleurs – the other, elsewhere, everywhere and besides”.

Unfortunately, operating in an out-of-control free-market liberalism makes you jaded. You need to be careful of excessive expectations and overzealous claims. It is a slippery slope of being aware of the implications of contemporaneity and the multiple endings of modernity. Even though koples boek(e), reflects on a history of systemic exclusionary practices fully operational in the global present, and similarly circuits representational politics of diversity and visibility, there is an awareness that this is not a linear process. It is filled with contradictions precisely because the power structures embedded in the process, is largely hierarchical. It is interdisciplinary artist and intersectional feminist, Jota Mombaça (2018: 43) who warns that “access to artistic and intellectual circuits concerned with the so-called politics of diversity is predicated on our ability to reproduce – even if as a critical position – the very logic through which we are marked”.
**Note that the author deliberately left the red underwritten and grammatical annotations Microsoft Word detected as needing amendment to speak to the stylistic nature of not only what the essay addresses, but also illustratively alludes to Kamyar Bineshtarigh’s work operating between the slippages of ‘transliterations’ potential subterfuge or/and inhabiting the grammar of opacity’.
Bibliography


Untitled (Book of Tawhid II).
Ink, bleach and cold glue.
34 x 48 cm.
Untitled (Book of Tawhid III).
76 x 57 cm.
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
90 x 64 cm.
Amogelang Maledu – Curator (AM): Let’s start chronologically, what is *koples boek(e)*? I know you have an interesting annotation and slightly invented etymology of the words.

Kamyar Bineshtarigh – Artist (KB): I am not sure if it’s a fact, but when I got the translation of the *koples boek* — with my very rudimentary understanding of Afrikaans, I thought about how *kop* is head in Afrikaans and *les* in the context of the word *less* in English. This would formulate the direct translation of ‘headless book’. I thought about this definition in relation to what Achmat Davids explains *koples boek* in the nineteenth century context of the Cape Muslim’s educational system of rote learning. In terms of this teaching method, repetition is key. Let me read a segment of how Davids explains this in his research, *The Words the Slaves Made* published in August, 1989:

... the student is required to transcribe a lesson, either from a chalkboard, or dictation by a teacher, in a book called the ‘koples boek’. The student is then required to memorise the lesson at home (getting it into his head or ‘kop’ in the literal sense), and recite it from memory to the teacher on the next occasion. If his retention is good, the student is given a new lesson and the process is repeated. It was from some of these student notebooks or ‘koples boeke’, which have
survived, that we able to gain some idea of teaching methods of Dorp Street Madrasah. We have two such notebooks, dated 1806 and 1808; several others, from various times in the nineteenth century. These student notebooks give us an idea of the continuity of the educational method that existed in the nineteenth century.

**AM:** Your ‘bastardized’ version of koples boeke is interesting in also thinking about religious dogma. For religious dogma to hold, it mustn’t be questioned, you must suspend your *kop* – and if Davids speaks about *kop* in the literal translation of it as head, I’m thinking about kop as a metaphor for consciousness…

**KB:** That’s a very good point and even how you speak of me bastardizing a language that is already so hydridised. They have been studies saying the languages of the future are intrinsically mixed. Even though I can’t speak Afrikaans, it was easy for me to understand how and why Afrikaans – a creolised Dutch – was first written in Arabic script. Considering the religion of Islam in Cape Town, generally, the reading of Arabic script is considered important in Muslim communities.

**AM:** It’s funny that you say that mixed languages are the languages of the future because it’s Toni Morrison who said the first cosmopolitans were enslaved people yet it’s funny how Africa(ns) is often seen or read as ‘delayed’ in relation to modernity or technology, yet global industrialisation begins with slavery. This is also something that infiltrates into ideas of Africa as largely an ‘oral’ continent with little to non-writing traditions.

**KB:** The idea of literacy is very political.
AM: The assimilatory nature of diverse language cultures being legitimised by how well they can be translated into English speaks to an ecosystem of homogenization and Whiteness’ preoccupation with translating ‘others’ as a global domineering effort. Imagine, instead, if Whiteness approached the diversity of language cultures and knowledge production through our shared humanness. Maya Angelou (reiterating a quote by the Roman African playwright Publius Terentius Afer) says “I am human, nothing can be alien to me”.

KB: The curiosity of Whiteness is dangerous because it is premised on a superiority of an all-encompassing knowledge that comes with an “I know it all” arrogance that is effectively interested in ‘the Other’ only as a subject of dominance and made-up superiority/inferiority complexes.

AM: There is also humility in waiting. Waiting to be invited into knowledge systems that don’t centre you. If we think about Afrikaans as a so-called ‘kombuistaal’, we can see the intimacy of how language systems premised on the basis of community building in polyglottic environments, are ultimately about inviting each other into understanding different ways of being. An invitation to understand our shared humanity in its difference. Is this relevant in your interest in Arabic-Afrikaans?

KB: I think my interest in language didn’t come from language or art respectively. My interest in written language came from my interest in writing as form, shape and having a calligraphical kind of background from my dad and uncle. Seeing writing as a form of painting was the initiation of my interest in language. Its more personal for me.

AM: How do you arrive from that context of art and not necessarily calligraphy?
Untitled (Kitaab VII).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
18 x 25 cm.
KM: If a professional, traditional calligrapher that knows Arabic Persian or any other form of Arabic related to that area, they wouldn’t understand my work. They’ll probably be like ‘oh so you just write random letters, and your handwriting is trash?’

AM: (Laughs) Because calligraphy is all about precision.

KB: Exactly! It’s like martial arts, there’s levels. So, there’s also a very hierarchical system embedded in that practice, very snobbish, especially in Iran. So, if my artworks were to be seen through the eyes of a professional calligrapher, it’s definitely not calligraphy and I don’t claim to be a calligraphist. I am a visual artist. But I think what I like about calligraphy is seeing it as a form of art – as a form of mark-making and painting. I like the shapes of the letters and what they can conceptually contain and what they can conceal. How one can strip the text out of its content, making it a 100% visual. In calligraphy, they don’t try to do that. There is set standards of what calligraphy should be. Calligraphy is preoccupied with the decorative aspects of writing. So, we have a form of poetic and literal perfection in language and a form of perfection in the literal act of writing – and there is also Tazhib art which is also a form of textured calligraphy. But for me, my art practice is not any one of those. Even though I am inspired by those forms of writing, my reflective points of it relates more broadly to the notion of what the language, specifically as it relates to the written, communicates or miscommunicates. I am interested in how to strip text from its meaning and make it completely visual, completely abstract, and what role does material play in all of that.

AM: It seems like you also playing with perceptions of untranslatability in language. The limitations of translation and/or transliteration, and perhaps even poking at symbolic conflicting means of written language cultures and their embedded value systems and markers of difference?
Untitled (Kitaab VIII).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
22 x 34 cm.
KB: The first layer is inextricably personal – coming from my own background and how I understood and got to appreciate languages. Then there’s always more layers after that… if you want to see them

AM: How do you invite people to strip off those layers considering that your work is so coded? Can people read it in relation to ideas of Lucy Lippard’s concept of the dematerialisation of art that argues for a kind of de-commodifying of the art object and instead pursues art in relation to its auratic power? Also, how does your practice consider where you meet people’s comprehension of your practice especially if you think about how art is institutionalised to only be legitimised through bourgeois Artworld Euro-American canons?

KB: I think there is a certain level of presentation. I make the work and I present it. Conversations come out of it as we are currently speaking and there is always a narrative behind the work itself. What I never want to do is identify myself as a form of artist within a particular kind of modality of artmaking. For example, as you mentioned the dematerialisation of art that comes from the school of conceptualism. I sometimes use them as devices but it’s not that I identify myself as a conceptual artist. I think when you identify yourself that again becomes the same superiority complex of ‘which way of practicing art is better?’ It’s the same with nationalism for example and ideas of countries as superpowers. It’s the same conversation of which languages are more dominant than others as well. I want to refrain from those kinds of alignments. So, what I am inviting people to see is first appreciate the visual aspects of my work and then if they want to have multiple conversations about it, we can do that, but I refuse to make any specific claims of what each artwork means. That’s why most of my work is a whole body of work that has a more visual flow to it. I refrain from narrowing the meaning of my work.
AM: What is your political position in speaking to the history of Arabic-Afrikaans? Considering the question of positionality as valid and important.

KB: When I moved to Cape Town, I remember going on a hike in Signal Hill and then I got to see a Kramat – they are basically like shrines – paying homage to mostly Muslim scholars and teachers who contributed to the faith of Islam in Cape Town as well as contributing to the trajectory of Arabic-Afrikaans. This was a signifier I resonated with, but Kramat is a South African word for these kinds of shrines, in Iran we call it something else. So, I started to see these more
often in other parts of Cape Town and it kept reminding me of the villages in Iran that also have these kinds of Kramats. When you enter you find some poems and passages from the Qu’ran and it reminded me of the history of our shared connectivity even in countries you don’t always feel connected with immediately. I also saw a history that was not necessarily one-sided because even though I resonated with the teachings in some capacity, language was a big barrier given that there’s what, 11 different South African languages and I had to learn the most accessible one and common one – English. That is how the spark of an interest in language also started. The fact that I had to suddenly communicate with different people from various socio-cultural and linguistic background in English. It felt weird because at home I had to speak Farsi.

**AM:** I think W.E.B Du Bois calls that ‘double consciousness’. Is there a discomfort in acknowledging those dynamics (our histories and their painful past-presents) in critical ways in your practice? Is there a silver lining to that self-criticality? What about the co-option of representational identity politics in the systems we are inevitably trying to critique? Are these not traps?

**KB:** I think identity politics manifests in neoliberalism as well. There is discomfort in knowing that the institutions I exhibit in or the people I sell my works to, their histories are embedded in my identity’s marginalisation whether they are working towards recognising that or not. I think it is very important to be aware of those dynamics. There’s obviously capitalism involved in art ecosystems and representational politics of diversity and identity are currently selling points right now…

**AM:** And representational politics of diversity in art have historically entered artistic discourse in relation to ideas of Othering…
Untitled (Book of Tawhid IV).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
41 x 35 cm.
KB: Now I’m actually wondering about my work if it is seen as an identity politics for social capital and economic opportunities.

AM: Does it matter?

KB: It doesn’t matter but I am interested in writing from my subjective histories with calligraphy and family, but I can see how that can read on the surface as speaking to identity politicking.

AM: Identity politicking is not a bad thing but there can be traps. Neo-orientalism being one of them for instance…

KB: Yes exactly, neo-orientalism is not my intention, but it leads its way to that. A kind of self-objectification even if its self-critical.

AM: A lot of us do that in other ways though. As the tirade goes: “there is no ethical consumption under racial capitalism.”

KB: But assuming my art does not operate in these nexuses of social dominant discourses that make identity politics important is a fallacy. It sounds like erasure if I don’t acknowledge my subjective position.

AM: Hypervisibility within invisibility. Those are the nuances of contemporary art practice today.

KB: Curiosity and the gaze of my work doesn’t necessarily bother me; it allows me a space for play in my work where I can tickle and ridicule ignorance. Like my mural at the AVA where I transliterated Edward Said’s seminal text, Orientalism, and some people thought the AVA turned into a mosque suddenly.
AM: Arabic-Afrikaans is embedded in the religion of Islam so are you ready for the questions that might saturate that discursive context? Although for me your project starts with the source of religion, but it morphs into something through and beyond Islam.

KB: Totally. At first when I started this project, I was looking for non-religious works. I didn’t want religion in my work. I am not religious, and I question religion a lot. But later on that fear of using religious text in my work came into a realisation of how I can’t erase that very important history of Islam in the history of Afrikaans – but it didn’t end there, its beyond religion. That’s when I started feeling comfortable with using the religious text as some of the source material for the work because it is not important that people read and understand the work so didactically. Even someone who can read Arabic script is incapable of reading my work because I refuse that taxonomy of my work being comprehensible. Understanding my work literally is beside the point.

AM: And maybe that’s also how we should approach language: as inherently precarious because it changes all the time as it moves in between space and time.

KB: I don’t remember who I was talking too but I remember hearing something like ‘the goal should be using no languages’… (Laughs)

AM: … *side eye*

KB: But there are other forms of communication – non-verbal /non-written – that are possibly a lot more understanding.
**AM:** … And maybe those ones actually make us more … human? Like how we can resonate with different kinds of music cultures without necessarily coming from their situated contexts because music transcends regionality? Like how we develop love languages with our pets. Sharing empathy with other beings outside of ourselves. Okay now that makes sense.

**KB:** Precisely.

**AM:** I feel honoured to be working with you. Keep tickling chom.

**KB:** Me too. I think this is an important collaboration because the premise of the thematic focus of the work is about multiple interaction points of knowledge generation and production.
Untitled (Gairodien’s student notebook II).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
100 x 120 cm.
Untitled (Book of Tawhid X).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
56 x 48 cm.
Untitled (Kitaab XII).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
32 x 26 cm.
Untitled (Kitaab XIV).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
27 x 20 cm.
Untitled (Kitaab XIII).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on canvas.
29 x 18 cm.
Untitled (Kitaab II).
Ink, bleach and
cold glue on canvas.
53 x 38 cm.
Untitled (Diptych) (Gairodien's student notebook III).
Ink, bleach and cold glue on calico.
200 x 100 cm (Diptych).
Kamyar Bineshtarigh – Biography

Kamyar Bineshtarigh was born in Semnan, Iran. He lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa. He is currently in his final year, completing a BA Fine Art degree at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town (UCT). He received a Diploma in Fine Art at Ruth Prowse School of Art in 2019 where he also won the Ruth Prowse Award for his body of work “An Exhaustive Catalogue of Texts Dealing with the Orient” which explored Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism using Said’s eponymous book (1978) as the source material.

In 2021, Bineshtarigh was awarded a Creative Knowledge Resources (CKR) Fellowship: CKR is an interdisciplinary project by the National Research Foundation & UCT studying socially engaged artistic practices in Africa and its diaspora. In the same year, Bineshtarigh has participated in a number of group exhibitions including “My Whole Body Changed” Into Something Else at Stevenson Gallery (Cape Town and Johannesburg) and “Shaping Things” at SMAC Gallery (Cape Town). Inspired by the freedom that comes with a DIY-spirit, between 2020 and 2021 Bineshtarigh curated his own independent solo show showcasing his body of work “(Hafez) The Tongue of the Unseen Realms” in an exhibition space in a factory warehouse in Salt River, Cape Town.
Amogelang Maledu

Amogelang Maledu is an art practitioner working between independent curating, research and sessional lecturing. She is currently an MA candidate in Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT) focusing on music and sonic Black popular cultural archives through an multidisciplinary curatorial lens. In 2021 Maledu project managed and co-curated the Institute for Creative Arts’ (ICA) “(Un) Infecting the City” 2021 public arts festival. In 2020, she co-curated the ICA’s Online Fellowship, the first digital-based Fellowship for the interdisciplinary institution. Maledu is currently the research assistant for Creative Knowledge Resources – an interdisciplinary project funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and UCT which seeks to document and study socially engaged art and interventionism.

She is also a committee member for UCT’s Works of Art Committee, responsible for the institution’s art acquisitions and curation.
Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany’s cultural institute, active worldwide. Its mandate is to promote the study of German abroad and to encourage international cultural exchange. Today it is represented in 98 countries and has some 3,300 employees. It contributes widely to the promotion of artists, ideas and works. Supporting the local cultural scenes and strengthening pan-African dialogue through the arts are part of its mission on the African continent, where it operates 20 institutes in Abidjan, Accra, Addis Ababa, Alexandria, Cairo, Casablanca, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg, Khartoum, Kigali, Lagos, Lomé, Luanda, Nairobi, Ouagadougou, Rabat, Tunis, Windhoek and Yaoundé, as well as 2 liaison offices in Algiers and Kinshasa.
\textit{koples boek(e)} is an exhibition by Kamyar Bineshtarigh that explores the textuality of Arabic-Afrikaans, curated by Amogelang Maledu. It forms part of an ongoing research project to stimulate conversation about the public narratives and archives of Arabic-Afrikaans.

The exhibition was first presented at the Goethe Institut, Johannesburg, South Africa between 20 November 2021 and 31 March 2022.

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koples boek(e)

20 November 2021 - 30 March 2022

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The Letter II.
Ink, bleach & cold glue
on canvas.
220 x 150 cm.