



Where is South?

AtWork No. 14 New York

THE
AFRICA
CENTER

Moleskine 
Foundation

AtWork New York

Where is South?

No. 14
May 30 - June 3 2019

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Where is South?

AtWork No. 14 New York

Exhibition

June 12 - July 21, 2019

Africa Center

Exhibition of the notebooks created by the participants
during AtWork workshop conducted by

Simon Njami at
Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

AtWork is an itinerant educational format conceived
by Moleskine Foundation and Simon Njami that wants
to inspire a new generation of creative thinkers.

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Work



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Where is South?

23 people came to a basement in New York City on May 30 2019 thinking they would be given notebooks to write and explore the meaning of South. Some were artists, some were students, some were explorers and some were lost. Some spoke English, some spoke French, some spoke silence, some spoke Spanish, some spoke Pidgin and some spoke Italian. We were met by curator Simon Njami, who spoke all.

Shapeshifting between art critic and shaman, Njami posed questions that sent us back into ourselves, back to the womb, and back to South.

Where is South? We were called to interrogate the location, both literal and abstract, of a direction that has been loaded with meaning via politic and a manipulated objectivity. South is a cardinal direction, at least. At most, it is a relative starting point for our becoming. The space where we began. The place where we left. Day by day, we became the sculptors of our narrative, etching away at the layers of performance, politic, masks, and confusion that have been created

and imposed by ourselves and others, obfuscating our space of origin.

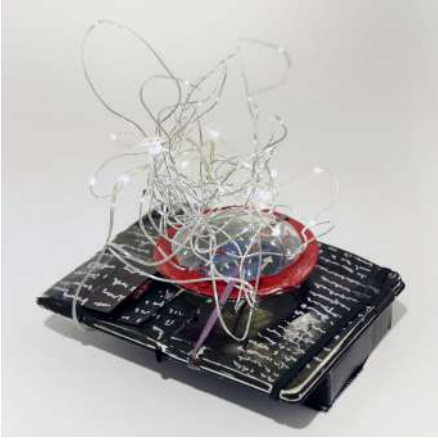
What we found beyond the intellectual linguistic gymnastics was a vulnerability that shattered our complicated lies and pointed to our simple truths of being, love, life, and death. Even through disparate tongues, we were able to find each other in ourselves, to help each of us re-member what has been broken and lost.

Each piece in the exhibition is connected by a book. The book was our first material. We each used whatever tools necessary, by any means necessary, to express the South we could not see. To excavate the South that began with us.

22 people left this basement on June 3 2019 not with a book, but a vision and expression of their South. We were given the power of definition, and with it, we recreated stories of creation that located us as the starting point. Why do we hold onto stories and meanings that do not serve us; stories that bind and trap us? In order to be free, you must first understand what is keeping you bound.

Yohana Zecarias
Editor In Chief
June 2019

My South is **contemplative.**



LADIN AWAD

“for the record”

“for the record” is a proclamation of my truth. This piece is meant to demonstrate a process not yet actualized. It is an idea, concept, a challenge. An enlightened journey, a non-linear path with no clear beginning, middle or end. The writing is not legible as it represents a lack of clarity in defining South. To me, it exists in a liminal state, with a pending moment of arrival.

Ladin Awad is a multidisciplinary artist and creative producer by way of Sudan and New York City. Her practice is centered around innovative and intimate forms of image making as well as identifying cultural movements and translating them into immersive and experiential art programming.



My South is a direction that moves me forward.



NINA BARATTI

“Feeling my routes”

My notebook is a journey across the places to which I belong. On the pages, I explore colours, sounds, and smells that reconnect me to my Southern universe. Sounds of the swallows on a sunny morning in Southern Italy, shades of sunsets over the Atlantic Ocean, earth, mint, coffee, and cinnamon, are small things that remind me of my roots as well as my routes. My South is a journey bringing me back to memories and sensations that inspire me to move forward.



Nina Baratti is a Ph.D student in ethnomusicology at Harvard University. She did her studies in violin and musicology between Milan and Lisbon. When she is not studying, she loves to play music, make sound recordings and travel between Italy, Portugal and Angola, a country where she has recently started a new research project.

My South is **sensitivity**
and awareness.



**KIRILA
CVETKOVSKA**

"Lean On Me"

It gets painful, but it also gets warm. How do we embrace our pain and find meaning in the mundane? How do we set a different tone? There is a constant anxiety and dictated concepts all around us, while we become restless and forget to stop, often dismissing our pain. But there is a profound rhythm in all our hurting bits, still radiating light. Fragile, but centered and warm - only if we look inside.

I wish one day we could stand holding hands away from definitions.

Kirila Cvetkovska is a wondering wanderer. Her endeavors dwell on the themes of collective memory, loss and detachment, exploring cross-cultural values and their manifestation. She is engaged in creating visual and written narratives of the social, as well as personal tensions we experience.



My South is **the ending-starting point, the coastal land of Borikén.**



GABE DORTA

*“Wholesome
Fragmentation”*

My starting-point is what was the ending-point of my ancestors. It is a mobile location harnessed by our mind/body/soul/spirit that can be accessed with sincere, deep internal reflection. Accessing this self-knowledge, through writing, art-making, or a combination of both, might entail painful fragmentation and disintegration, but one that urges towards wholeness always with a promise of transformation.



Gabe came to develop a deep sense of belonging to Borikén. “To honor truth one must honor those who are indigenous to the land they settle.” Autohistoria-teoria, is part of Gabe’s framework, bridging the divide between “intellectual” activity and inner knowledge grounded in corporeal reality.

My South is **free fall.**



**AMAL FAWUNDU-
BUFORD**

“A Journey Within”

A Journey Within is a map inspired by the feeling of free fall. Free fall is a feeling that occurs when we lose an important structure in our life. Separated from the comfort of structure, the path forward is not always clear-cut. I deformed the “notebook” because no structure is self-evident. We create structures in our lives out of circumstances we find ourselves in. This map does not offer a path, but rather a suggestion: to explore the pit, to revolve and evolve, and to closely examine the ridges in the landscape along the way.

Amal is a musician, filmmaker & coder currently based in Brooklyn, New York. His works are interdisciplinary, incorporating self-produced auditory, visual, and algorithmic elements. Amal has directed short films, music videos, abstract works, and performed music under the alias Mal the Oddity. Find him at malsounds.space.



My South is **linked potentialities** **/ mutual thriving.**



DALAEJA FOREMAN

“Been Workin’: A toolkit for the possibilities of potential”

Been Workin’: A toolkit for the possibilities of potential is inspired by the block parties in reclaimed/underused spaces as places for quotidian marronage. This notebook evokes the strategies for resistance that already exist in working-class and working-poor communities of color and Black communities. These are spaces of great potential for the fashioning of strategies for creating a new world as strangers of the current, ideologically unhinged from the oppressive forces that dictate our matters realities. In these potentialities, autonomy becomes possible and liberation inevitable.



Dalaeja Foreman is a community organizer, curator, first-generation Caribbean-American, and Brooklyn native. As a hood-intellectual: Pedagogy, identity, and representation are central to Dalaeja’s curatorial practice; with the goal of combating internalized misconceptions of oppressed people and legitimizing resistance through direct action and cultural esteem.

My South is **complicated.**



FATEN GADDES

"Ce n'est pas le moment"

"It's not the right time"

"When I was little often they used to tell me: this is not the right time: It's not the right time to play... It's not the right time to eat... It's not the right time to speak your mind... It's not the right time to talk... In short, it has never been the time: to say what I think, to say what I want. And then I grew up...But that refrain never left me, until it became part of me. A sort of "mantra". But today, Faten, what is South? I really don't know, I want to drink a glass of wine but certainly it's not the right time...."

Faten Gaddes is a French/Tunisian photographer currently living and working between Tunis, Paris and New York. With works that touch an artistic and political vein, Gaddes has shown her work in the permanent collections of the Tunisian government, the French Development Agency, the Foundation Pierre Bergé and many collectors abroad.



My South is **where** **instinct meets intuition.**



NEEMA GITHERE

“Shika Mkono Wangu”

Shika Mkono Wangu is an invitation: to reach in; to come closer; to think about the weight of touch - the fine line between instinct and intuition that brands touch as either taboo, or requisite. My South is someplace warm and complicated - it is this deep down South gut feeling that is my North Star.



Neema Githere is a writer and digital theorist currently based in New York City, by way of Nairobi. Neema is the Portal Curator at The Africa Center in Harlem, where she develops programming that connects Afro-diasporic communities in over 20 sites across the globe, live and full-body.

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My South is a **child** looking for a home.



JOLLY CHIDIADI JAMES

"Nick"

I have decided to call my book Nick, after my cat who passed in September 2018. He was my explorer, he was timid, but had a warrior's heart. Like a dragon, his claws left marks but his purrs left warmth within and around me for days. The scales represent the reptile's surface and the burned edges represent the aftermath of the dragon's flames.

Stephanie Gomez is from Manhattan, NY. Currently attending SUNY Purchase as a Psychology major, Stephanie is hoping to use visual methods to stimulate the "why" aspects of an individual's choice making. She is interested in photography as a hobby and sweets including ice cream, baked goods, and fruit.



My South is **raw**. It is a catalyst for the transformation. It is time in.



ERIKKA JAMES

"Time In"

This piece explores the relationship between movement and time. The value of how time is spent and how things change over time. Each page was creased, rolled, and flushed out in conversation with the next. Wailing and whooshing. It is possible that some of these exchanges will change over time as the piece travels and ages. There is no beginning and the route is undefined. The pages are left in their rawest form because the dialogue between them tells their story. It is time in.



Erikka Electra James is a native New Yorker with a BA in Art History from Amherst College. Erikka is currently the Director of Leadership and Global Initiatives at The Lower Eastside Girls Club of New York, where she directs programming and special events for young women with an emphasis on social justice, art, and activism.

My South is **Pitakwa,**
where I have no fear of failure.



**JOLLY CHIDIADI
JAMES**

"Olileanya (Hope)"

My notebook is a penny. I am the penny, and while I am empty, and lost like a penny with a hole in it, the message in/on the bottle is my hope (Olileanya in the Igbo language) and hope is the concept of my South. The message is addressed to God and to my future self, hoping they find me. The pillars of white and brown represent my faith in God and trust in myself, they help keep me open.

Jolly Chidiadi James is a Nigerian self-discoverer. He is currently studying computer engineering at the New York City College of Technology. He loves to write short stories, poems, plays and study philosophy. He is on a journey to tell the greatest story ever told: his story.



My South is **spiritual alchemy.**



KASMIR JONES

"Death is Essential"

There are 7 stages of Spiritual Alchemy. It is a process of the eradication of the ego, the shedding of layers of self, becoming in tune with and aware of your feelings, while ultimately accepting self as a step to spiritual maturity. The final step is coagulation, and this is where you become free from your mind, and allow your soul to connect with the spirit. You have now and continue to rise to a higher frequency. "The physical universe is not separate from the mind or spiritual reality; it is a reflection of it."



Kasmir Alyse is a visual artist who chooses to carry her work in many disciplines and explore different artistic forms that give her work purpose and perspective.



My South is **intimacy.**



TREY KIMBREW
“Seekret Ingredients”

My souf is Aya.

Trey Kimbrew is a liberator of conquered vacuum spaces and organizer of radically thinking AFRIKAN/INDIGENOUS being. Currently living in New York.



My South is a name.



MEGAN KINDSFATHER

"This Is Not A Book"

A name can be powerful, it is a tool, a construct or a symbol. Its value is measured by how much validation we give it. Like South, names are part of the system by which we orient ourselves, but is also a tool for othering. I wanted to explore the power and curiosity of a name and explore the nuances of what is in a name. Can one understand the world around us in a different way if we rename or reject them?



Megan Kindsfather is a New York based artist and educator who runs art programs at the Lower Eastside Girls Club since 2014 and cofounded the community based art collective, Brooklyn Recycle Project. She has worked in New York, Chiapas, Jaipur and Denver. Megan is currently finishing her Bachelors degree in Anthropology and Fine Arts.



My South is **invisibility.**



NORA MOLINA

“Undocumented Diaries”

Undocumented Diaries - the chorus of surviving voices that have been silenced by fear. The loud yet invisible stories that resound. The “evidence of things not seen”. South is everywhere, it’s nowhere, it’s everyone, it’s no one.

Nora Molina is a multi-media artist born, raised and currently based in New York City. Nora hopes to challenge dialogues surrounding immigration and human rights. Chat with her @noramolina_



My South is **independence.**



STEPHANIE OLOGAN

"I AM.."

Independence is both a process of destruction and liberation which I visualized as a tornado. The chaotic but powerful feelings of finding one's identity outside of names, traditions and relationships are what I wanted to convey emotionally through a damaged house. The walls are missing to represent a sense of vulnerability that comes from orienting yourself away from how you typically define yourself. Red is a color that encompasses many emotions like anger and love, which are all a part of the overall journey of self-discovery.



Stephanie Ologan is currently a student studying biomedical engineering and entertainment business. Stephanie hopes to plan concerts and festivals for artists from all over the African diaspora in the future.

My South is **self-recognition.**



**VASILIS C.
ONWUADUEGBO**

"Full Reflections"

I don't want to have a say in your life

but I do want to have a say in mine

Vasilis C. Onwuaduegbo is a writer currently based in New York City. Find out more at vasilisonwuaduegbo.com



My South is **humanity.**



DEVIN OSORIO

"La Mesa Llena"

My South is an existence in which humanity and its elemental experiences are enhanced to its purest form such as one's endorphins while on ecstasy. Our levels of empathy would be true, love would be infectious and anger volatile. The closest we get to this ideal state are those quiet moments in which everything is quietly in balance.



Devin Osorio was born and raised in Washington Heights. He is a first generation American who attempts to use the influences from his upbringing to document his experience as a Dominican from the diaspora.

My South is **assurance.**



**RUBEN DARIO
RAMIREZ**

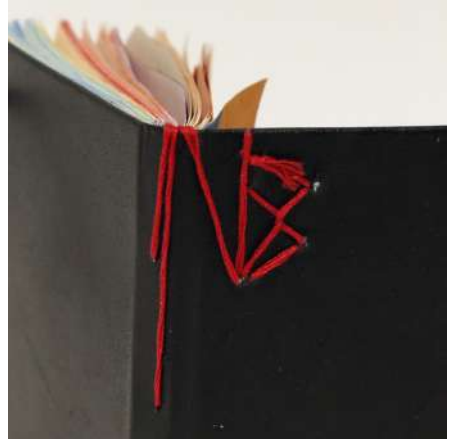
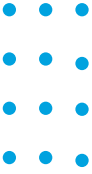
“Rock Bottom”

The piece was made with the phrase “assurance” in mind. It is the idea of “solid” and “concrete” to describe our certainty about a subject, aligned with the misconception of rock bottom being a place one avoids, instead of the place where we start- the place we call home.

Ruben Dario Ramirez's artwork focuses on aspects of life we all assume to know, yet live in a state of amnesia about. He uses paint, colored pencils, and digital illustration to create pieces about the human condition within a Dominican-American lens.



My South is barefoot.



AMBER RAMOS

“Not My Best Work”

My South is not a location, it is a feeling. I made this “book” into a topographic map of my foot that represents a footprint and its inverse. To me, being barefoot correlates to being honest, which is why the title is “Not My Best Work.”



Amber Ramos is a rising senior at Bowdoin College where she plays rugby and majors in sociology. Other than keeping a visual journal, she has no art background which was why she was excited to participate in this Moleskine Foundation workshop.



My South is freedom.



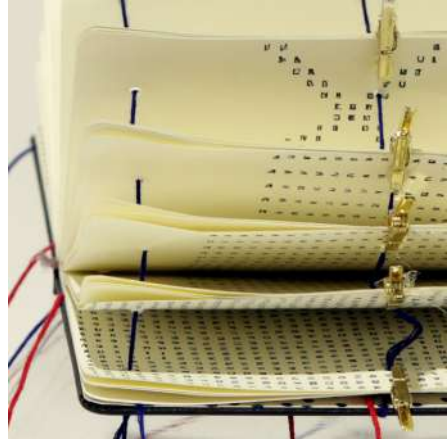
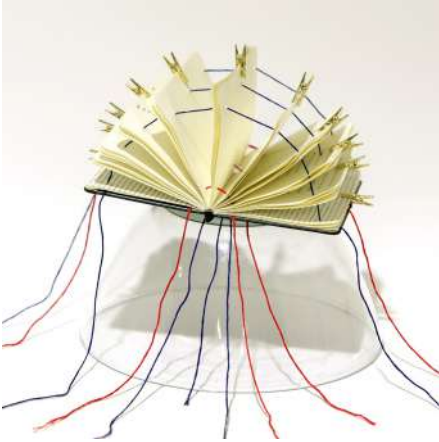
GLORIA TOLENTINO
"Full Reflections"

A place I could call home. A body that feels emotions for restored soul living in itself "Freedom is Having no fear". No fear to itself is freedom, to grow, to make mistakes allow them to be a lesson learn a thousand time more, Fuck it!! let your self go from charging energy that comes whenever look down to our hands questioned answer right there! You are the reason your ass is on the edge. Do it with love or else there's fear.

Gloria Tolentino is a craft designer from Puerto Rico. For six years, she has been residing in Brooklyn, New York. She would love to travel and see what could be the impact of her journey.



My South is **memories.**



YOHANA ZECARIAS

"My Sister's Sea"

My Sister's Sea is a sculpture and code, exploring the memories that have initiated my becoming and surrendering. Shape, form and color communicate the multitudes of stories, both told and waiting for language, that have informed the nature of my water (emotions) and my fire (action). Memories are both proof of my existence and betrayal, and they all begin and end in the ocean. By abandoning the english language and working within the structure of time [each page was coded within 3-11 minutes], I liberated myself from the constraint of perfection and other people's tongues.



Yohana Zecarias is an Eritrean-American cultural producer and strategist based in New York. She works with the word and image to unveil and reimagine old stories and new futures.

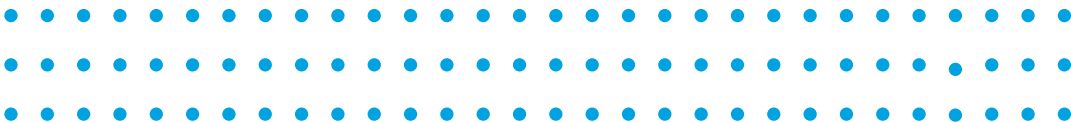
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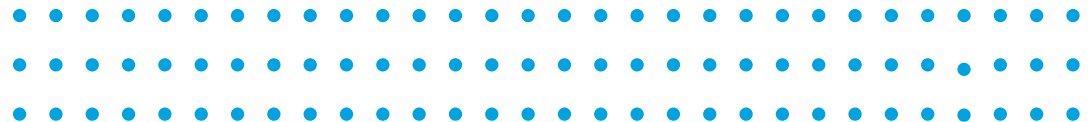
Rossella Zanelli, Adama Sanneh, Gabriel Zangari, Evelyn Owen, Alana Hairston, Dana Goland, Tania Giancesin and Elena Korzhenevich for your support and facilitation. Deep gratitude to the The Africa Center, the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and the Board of the Moleskine Foundation for creating a place and a space to commune, explore and become.

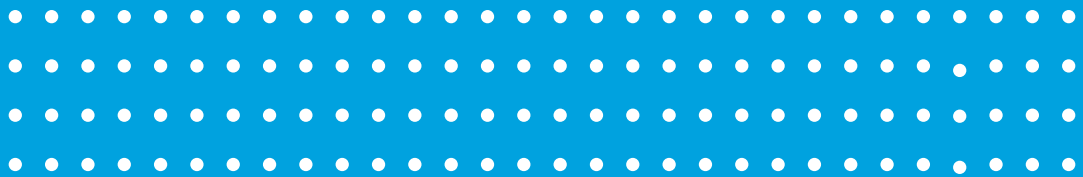
We thank the gatekeepers:

Our mothers for being our first home, our first South, and our teachers, like Simon Njami, for breaking it down so we could build it up.

In Spoons we Trust.







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