

ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTION

"ILLUSIONS", Multimedia performance, 2016–17

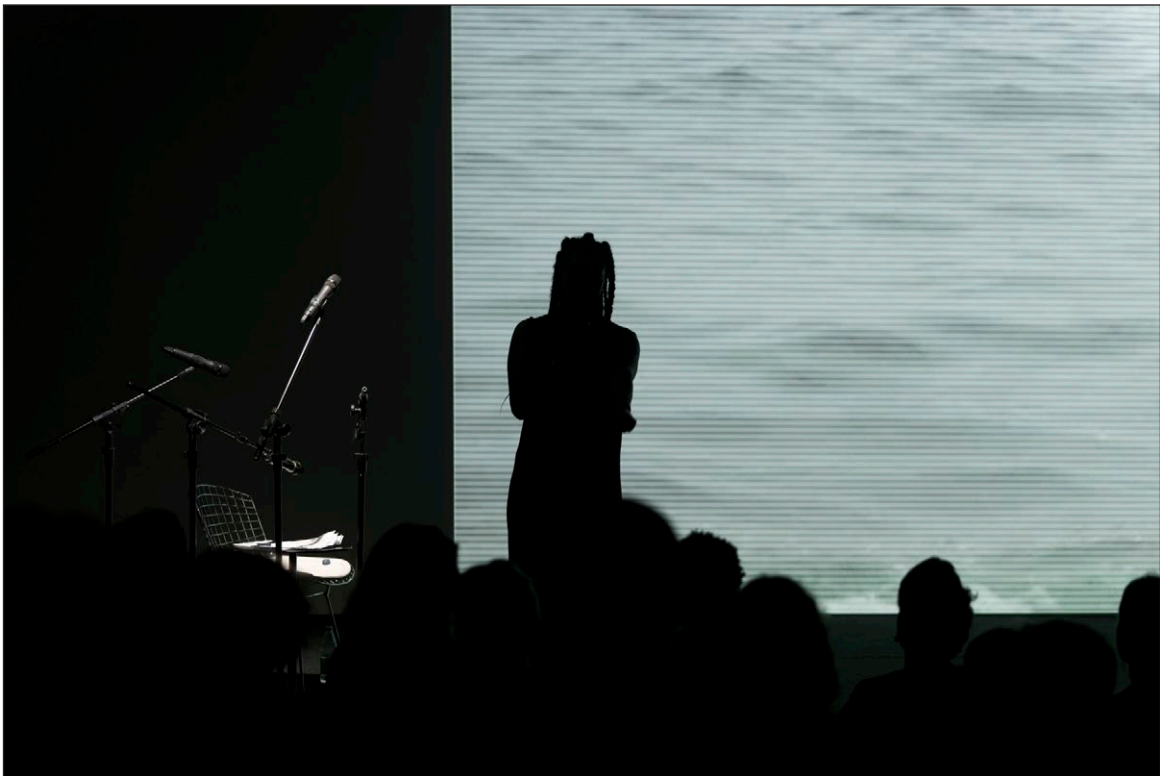
One-channel video projection, HD, colour, with one sound channel, an installation with a wooden chair, a wooden stool, 5 standing black microphones, one with sound channel, Approx. 45'

Grada Kilomba

DE
fineart@mahku.nl

Introduction

Grada Kilomba is best known for her subversive writing and her unconventional use of artistic practices, in which she "gives body, voice and image to her own writings", and brings texts into performance using a variety of formats, from video installations, to staged readings, to performances, text collage, and sound installations. In this artistic contribution Kilomba presents documentary text and images from *ILLUSIONS* (2016–17), a video performance with live storytelling that retells the myth of Narcissus and Echo in order to question how it is possible to break out of the colonial patterns that continue to imprint the present moment.



Grada Kilomba. Performance still from *Illusions* at the 32. Bienal of São Paulo, Photo by Leo Eloy, courtesy Bienal of São Paulo 2016.



Grada Kilomba. Performance still from Illusions. Photo by Moses Leo.



Grada Kilomba. Performance still from Illusions at the 32. Bienal of São Paulo, Photo by Leo Eloy, courtesy Bienal of São Paulo 2016.



Grada Kilomba. Video still from *Illusions*.

Illusions is a performance work in which Grada Kilomba brings the African oral tradition of story telling into a contemporary context, to recover the memories and realities of a postcolonial world. "It seems, we are still inhabiting the geographies of the past," insists the artist. To explore this coexistence of times, in which the past seems to coincide with the present and the present seems suffocated by a colonial past, Kilomba stages the myth of Narcissus and Echo anew. In the eyes of the artist, Narcissus becomes a metaphor for a society which has not resolved its colonial history, and takes itself and its own image as the only objects of love. Thus, Narcissus is enchanted by his own reflection on the surface of the lake. While Echo is reduced to endlessly repeating what she has heard –the words of Narcissus. Kilomba asks how we can break out of this colonial and patriarchal mould. Playing with the illusion of a double-layered scenario, Kilomba has created a large scale silent film, in which the characters of Narcissus and Echo move inside a white infinity, while the artist, outside and surrounded by an installation of microphones, becomes the contemporary 'griot' who retells these mythical stories with a postcolonial urgency.

Credits:

Written, directed by Grada Kilomba.

Performed (in film and/or on stage) by Martha Fessehazion, Moses Leo, Grada Kilomba, Zé de Paiva.

Camera by Zé de Paiva.

Camera Assistance by Laura Alonso, Tito Casal.

Costume design by Moses Leo.

Video edited by Grada Kilomba.

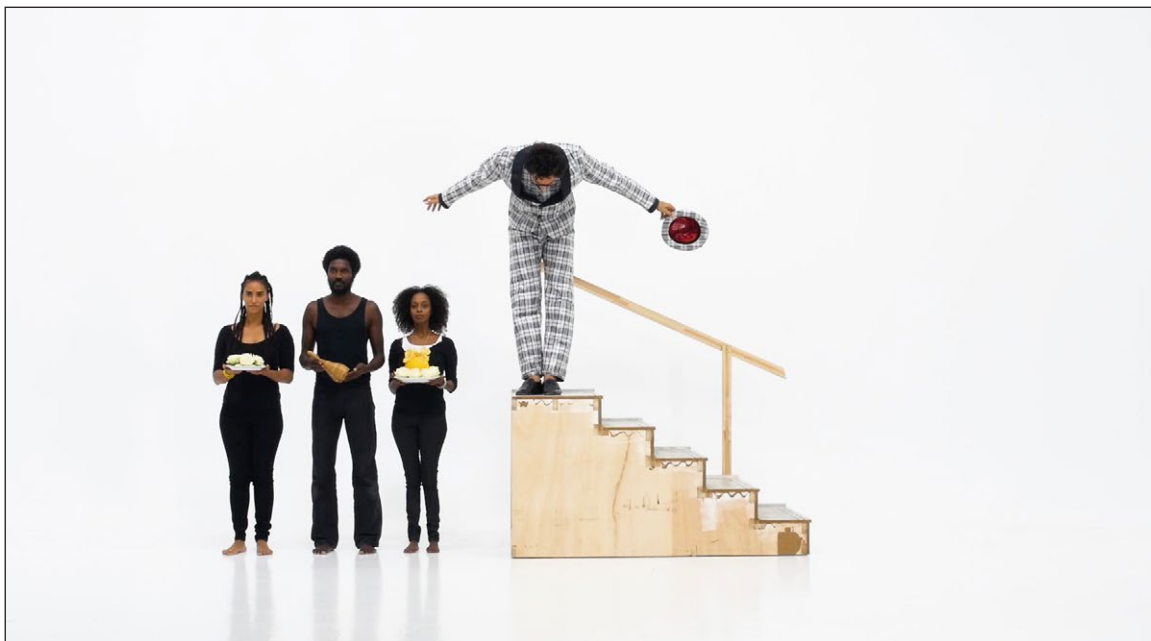
Images courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery.



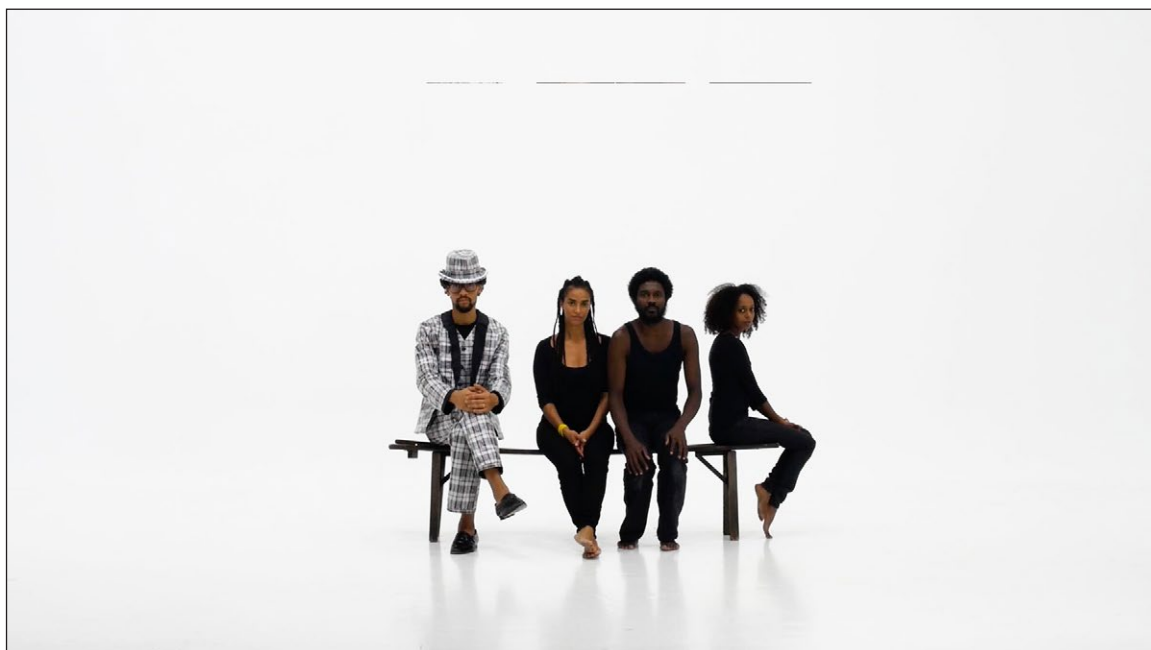
Grada Kilomba. Video still from Illusions.



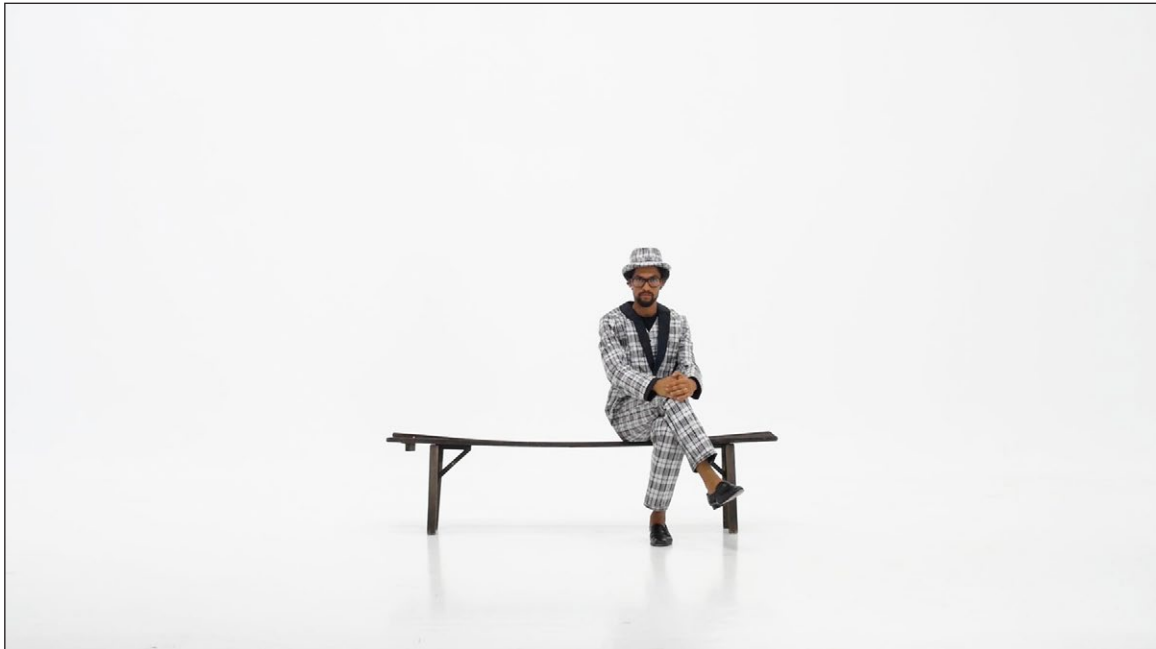
Grada Kilomba. Video still from Illusions.



Grada Kilomba. Video still from Illusions.



Grada Kilomba. Video still from Illusions.



Grada Kilomba. Video still from *Illusions*.

Competing Interests

The artist has no competing interests to declare.

Artist Biography

Grada Kilomba (Lisbon, 1968) is an interdisciplinary artist and writer living in Berlin. She has been exhibiting and performing her work internationally at renowned venues, such as documenta 14 in Kassel (2017), 32nd Bienal de São Paulo (2016), Rauma Biennial Balticum (2016), Art Basel, Cape Town Art Fair, Transmediale, Secession Museum in Vienna, Bozar Museum, Brussels, Maritime Museum, London, SAVYY Contemporary, Berlin, Wits Theatre, Johannesburg, Theatre Müncher Kammerspiele, Munich, Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin and Palace of Arts, Belo Horizonte, among others. She is the author of *Plantation Memories* (2008) and *Performing Knowledge* (forthcoming) and co-editor of *Mythen, Subjekt, Masken* (2005). She has lectured at several international universities and was a Full Professor at the Humboldt Universität Berlin, Department of Gender Studies (2012–2013). Kilomba studied Clinical Psychology and Psychoanalysis at the Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada (ISPA) in Lisbon and holds a Doctorate in Philosophy (summa cum laude) from the Freie Universität Berlin.

How to cite this article: Kilomba, G 2018 "ILLUSIONS", Multimedia performance, 2016–17. *MaHKUscript: Journal of Fine Art Research*, 2(1): 12, pp. 1–6, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/mjfar.35>

Published: 14 March 2018

Copyright: © 2018 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

 *MaHKUscript: Journal of Fine Art Research* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

OPEN ACCESS 