

# MONSIEUR ZOHORE



## Biography

Monsieur Zohore is an Ivorian–American artist based in New York and Baltimore. His practice is invested in the consumption and digestion of culture through the conflation of domestic quotidian labor with art production. Through performance, sculpture, installation and theater, his practices explore queer histories alongside his Ivorian–American heritage through a multi-faceted lens of humor, economics, art history, and labor.

Zohore received his BFA from the Cooper Union in 2015 and his MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2020. His work has been exhibited in numerous venues including Palo Gallery (New York), Terrault Gallery (Baltimore), New Release Gallery (New York), 56 Henry (New York), Canada Gallery (New York), and 315 Gallery (New York) as well as at the 2020 Material Art Fair (Coyoacan, CMDX). Zohore has also been invited to show at The Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore), Washington Projects for the Arts (Washington D.C.), and at The Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus).

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Growing up, my Ivorian parents would command my siblings and I to eat. My mother would hover over us, her finger pointing upward, ordering “Mange!” I always took this as an insult. On the one hand, she said this as a direction for us to acknowledge the bounty that she and my father were able to provide for their first-generation, God-bless-America miracle children. And yet, on the other hand, her words were meant as a reminder of the many people back home who were going without in the Ivory Coast.

This behavior was always insulting to me, as I wondered, “How dare ces villageois (my parents) try to turn me into one of them!” All the women I wanted to be on television were white and skinny and actively not eating.

Bulimia presented itself as the obvious solution.

It was the best of both worlds! It allowed me to placate my mother, specifically, and to keep up appearances with my family, more generally. It also provided me with a vehicle to escape—picture a 1994 white Jeep Wrangler with the top down, as in the movie *Clueless*. When my parents’ oppressive culture became too overbearing, I could simply ride off and resume my secret life, expelling every last chunk of theirs.

Looking back, I consider the purging as my earliest form of performance. This durational endurance action centered around the domestic convention as a cultural critique. Throw in an art history reference, and I might as well have made it in 2018.

My practice today remains centered on consuming and digesting cultures and their practices through the conflation of domestic quotidian labor with art production: overeating and undereating at the same time; making a mess and cleaning it up. I think you get it.

But now, instead of vomiting, I maintain my figure by crafting a self-contained (and self-reflexive) critique of myself and those around me, which comes out of me as a pinkish-greenish, chunky, stinky synthesis of labor practices, histories, and ideologies mediated by the spectacle of my existence.

I hope you enjoy it!

## CV

### EDUCATION

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**2020** MFA, The Maryland Institute College of Art (Mount Royal School of Art)

**2015** BFA, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (School of Art)

### PERFORMANCES

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**2021** MZ.20 (All By Myself), Palo Gallery, New York, NY (forthcoming)

**2020** MZ.11 (How Taxing), Zoom Performance  
MZ.06 (Caiman), Palo Gallery, New York, NY  
MZ.10 Beverly’s Material Vol.7, Material Art Fair, Coyoacan, Mexico, MX

**2019** MZ.05, Curated By Wickerham & Lomax; Generations: A History of Black and Abstract Art, The Baltimore Museum of Art

**2018** MZ.03, (Occupied) Timonium: None of us Like Each Other, SZ.03, Sheila and Richard Riggs Gallery, Baltimore, MD  
MZ.02, Curated By Sadie Lanska; Slummer Nights 2, Canada Gallery, New York, NY

**2016** PZ.29, Home Center, 315 Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
PZ.28, Curated by Joseph W. Kay, I’d Rather be Here Than Almighty, 315 Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

**2013** Totally School, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH  
BHQFU Performance Open Mic #2, BHQFU, New York, NY  
BHQFU Performance Open Mic #1, BHQFU, New York, NY

### SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITION

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**2021** MZ.20 (All By Myself), Palo Gallery, New York, NY (forthcoming)

**2020** Untitled Sandy Williams IV and Monsieur Zohore Pilot, New Release Gallery, New York, MD (forthcoming)

**2015** PZ.27, Cooper Union Great Hall Gallery & Colonnade, New York, NY

**2014** PZ.43, Cooper Union Great Hall Gallery, New York, NY

**2013** PZ.00, Cooper Union Great Hall Gallery, New York, NY

### GROUP EXHIBITION

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**2020** Don’t Joke About That, Elote Loco Gallery, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH  
Darkest Before Dawn: Art in the Age of Uncertainty, Ethan Cohen KuBe, Beacon NY  
Alfresco, New Release Gallery, New York, NY  
The Observation of Life, Palo Gallery, New York, NY  
Flame of Fire, Sublimation, New York, NY  
Home Alone, Jack Barret Gallery (Offsite), New York, NY  
The Why of the Why Not Curated by ‘Sindikit Project, BMA Salon, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
Screening Room, Necessary Tomorrow(s), The Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
Another Country Curated by Teri Henderson, Terrault Gallery, Baltimore, MD

**2019** badidea69@yahoo.com, Leidy Gallery, Baltimore, MD  
Red Lines Curated by Legacy Russell, Leidy Gallery, Baltimore, MD  
B19 Curated By Kirk Shannon Buts, The Gallery at Baltimore City Hall, Baltimore, MD  
Mess Hall, New Release, New York, NY  
Hedonist Buddhist Curated by Nomu. Nomu, Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C.  
Notebook Curated by Joanne Greenbaum, 56 Henry St, New York, NY  
Clear Objects, Like Lalique Group Show curated by Nick Farhi, Kate Messinger, and Sarah Schulman,  
Material Art Fair Vol.6, Coyoacan, Mexico, MX  
Memorial Curated by Tiffany Auttriana Ward and Rodrigo Caracas, Baltimore, MD

**2017** High Stakes 2: When Paper Towels Just Don't Cut It, A benefit for Puerto Rico, Cloud City, Brooklyn, NY 2016  
Powered2, MX Gallery curated by Issa Israel, New York, NY

**2015** The American Boys Collection curated by Nandi Loaf, 227 Waverly Place, New York, NY

**2014** Not For Profit, The Bruce High Quality Foundation, Brooklyn, NY

## CURATORIAL PRACTICE

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**2020** The Decameron, New Release Gallery, New York, NY  
Career Ender, Collect and Connect Gallery, Baltimore, MD (forthcoming)

**2019** Meanwhile In Europe, Mount Royal Gallery, Baltimore, MD

**2015** BHQFU Fundraiser Auction, BHQF Studios, Brooklyn, NY

**2014** BHQFU Fundraiser Auction, Carbone, New York, NY  
BHQFU WSS directed by Monsieur Zohore, The Bruce High Quality Foundation, Brooklyn, NY

**2013** A Warm House curated by Monsieur Zohore and Aaron Kuhn Ferro Strauss Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
Here Hoping, Ariel Rene Jackson, Cooper Union Gallery, New York, NY  
Taco Tuesday; A Weekly Art Exhibition, Fish Wall Gallery, New York, NY (2013 to 2015)

**2012** A Very Warm House, Curated by Aaron Kuhn and Monsieur Zohore, Ferro Strauss Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

## PUBLIC SPEAKING

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**2021** Ghost Stories, Washington Project for the Arts (Forthcoming)

**2020** It Was Written in the Stars, 'Sindikit Lecture Series, 'Sindikit (Forthcoming)

Star Power, F.E.A.S.T Presentation Series, VisArts Rockville

In Formation: Art and Activism, Maryland Institute College of Art

Transfiguration, University Cincinnati

**2019** Why Do People Like Dogs More Than They Like Black People, Maryland Institute College of Art

**2015** Pop as Performance, Lady Gaga and the Avant-Garde, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

## PUBLIC SPEAKING

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**2015** Avery Singer, Pictures Punish Words, Kunsthalle Zürich and Foundation Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, JRP|Ringier,  
Zürich (exh.catalog) [Contributor]

## PRESS

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**2020** BMORE ART, A New Print Fundraiser for Baltimore Action Legal Team, by Teri Henderson

PURRSE MAGAZINE, Interview with Malcolm Lomax

BMORE ART, MASTERS by Teri Henderson

**2016** IRREVERENT PODCAST, Interview with Jeremy Ziroiu,

**2015** THE OBSERVER, 12 Things To Do In New York's Art World Before April 12th, Nate Freeman and Alanna Martinez

**2014** ART OBSERVED, Bruce High Quality to Launch a Production of "West Side Story"

## AWARDS

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**2020** WPA Wherewithal Grant

Transformer Artist Sustaining Artist Grant

Black Artist Fund Recipient

**2019** Best New Artist Baltimore, Baltimore City Hall

**2018** Mount Royal Scholarship, Mount Royal School of Art

**2011** Scholastic Art and Writing Award (National & Regional) in Photography

Maryland Distinguished Art Scholar

NCA Cappies Nomination for Best Costumes, Best Make-Up, Best Hair, and Best Set Design

**2010** NAACP ACT-SO Regional Gold Medalist in Photography

## Clock the Spook

Clock the Spook is a new research-based performance project that will allow me to use my body to explore ideas of fear, loss, anxiety, and horror, both past and present. In this project, I will disguise myself with a sheet ghost costume to protect my body as I move about space. This strategy has evolved from my interest in spiritual and phantasmagoric ideologies with my need to develop guerilla public performance like that of Adrien Piper, Michael Smith, Lorraine O'Grady, Pope L, Dread Scott, and my mentor Sharon Hayes. This disguise serves multiple purposes. It will allow me to move safely around my chosen arena as my disguise covers my extremities from direct physical contact and the threat of COVID-19 and other airborne contagions. It also poetically transforms my body into the ghost of the queer black body that used to stand its place.

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**Clock the Spook Study**

## Hunter (1993-2020)

Hunter 1993-2020 is a series of mirrored plastic easter eggs sitting on gilded legs. The eggs contain memories of micro/macro aggressive acts of racial and/or sexual violence enacted against the artist between the years of 1993-2020. The memories are transcribed on edible paper and are secured inside of the eggs with a wax seal to prevent the eggs from being open by anyone other than the collector who has purchased it.

Hunter 1993-2020 is a revisiting of a work Monsieur Zohore never fully realized in 2011. For the Boys, 2011 is an installation that consisted of scattered easter eggs filled with condoms scattered underneath silicon baseball bats dangling from the trees throughout The Ramble in Central Park. The work was to serve as a memorial for all the queer men who lost their lives to hate crimes.

Hunter 1993-2020 uses Monsieur Zohore's personal history as the site of the memorial. This intentionally seductive work is simultaneously deceptive and sincere. These works masquerade the artist deeply personal and oftentimes unsettling recollections of his personal history into nothing more than a children's farce.

The work is also designed with gameplay in mind. The memories are sealed inside of eggs to prevent any premature tampering and can only be opened by its collector. But once opened, the piece loses its value and is no longer considered an official work of the artist.

With Hunter 1993-2020, Monsieur Zohore weaponizes and commodifies his painful history for his gain as a means of reclaiming ownership over the micro/Marco aggressive injustices he has endured.

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## MZ.14 (Celestial Bodeis)

MZ.14 (Celestial Bodies) is a memorial project for which I will I am purchasing stars in the name of a person of color who has lost their life to racial and/or sexual violence. The funds for this series, which begins with Freddie Gray, are raised through public donations, institutional grants, and the sale of an open edition engraved brass telescope.

The stars to be purchased are ones that were visible in the same area where and at the same time when the named person was killed so that the members of that community may look to the sky and metaphorically see their loved one as a celestial being. The stars themselves will be documented through the framing of the certifying documents provided by Cosmo Nova, a star-naming company.

In an effort to ensure complete transparency, each framed print and subsequently "owned" star will be donated to a local institution that is devoted to the preservation of POC life and culture. Violence against POC goes as far back as the inception of the history of this nation, and I intend to honor these victims' lives until I run out of stars in the sky.

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**Freddie Gray April 19, 2015, 2020**

28" x 20" x 2"  
Matted and Framed Print  
Unique Edition  
Not For Sale

<https://bodiescelestial.com/>

**MZ.12 (How Taxing)**

MZ.12 (How Taxing) is a performative lecture in which the artist will discuss examples of lamentation in performance art. In order to disrupt the traditional lecture format the artist himself will be in tears for the duration of the talk. I attempt to teach the audience how to cry on cue, in an effort to create audience participation over the virtual platform.

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*MZ.12 (How Taxing) , 2020*  
Video, Color, Sound  
02:45:00

<https://vimeo.com/457851843> <https://vimeo.com/457851843>

## MZ.11 (Comédien Ivoirien)

In MZ.11 (Comédien Ivoirien) uses his body to literally confront the comedic and political and art historical history of the banana or in this case the plantain. In this video performance shot in front of a live studio a live studio audience a blindfolded Monsieur Zohore attempts to dodge plantains being thrown at him by the participating audience. The action is scored by the tinny drone of his remaining Benny Hill theme song. By slowing down the track Zohore reveals the sinister undertones of his comedic labor.

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*MZ.11 (Comédien Ivoirien) 2018-2020*  
Video, Color, Sound  
Runtime: 5:32  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeeQ1oyvZ0I&t=4s>

## MZ.10 (Le Vendu)

Portrait of the Artist with Caution, 2020 is the result of the most recent iteration of Monsieur Zohore's Work in Progress series. The project began in 2010 as a studio exercise in which the artist covers his face with tape and documents himself in various circumstances. By obliterating his face with the tape Zohore transforms his body into an object to be manipulated by his audience. In MZ.10 (Le Vendu) a performance commissioned by New Release Gallery And Beverly NYC for the Material Art Fair in Coyoacan, CMDX. In this performance, Zohore attempts autograph and sell the Portrait of the Artist with Caution to unsuspecting fairgoers.

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MZ.10 (Le Vendu), 2020  
Performance  
03:00:00



*Portrait of an Artist with Caution, 2020*

**MZ.07 ( Starring David and Monsieur Zohore as Galatea and Pygmalion but also as David and Goliath )**

Labor, queerness, blasphemy, conservation, and the love of objects are all put on display in Monsieur Zohore's MZ.07 ( Starring David and Monsieur Zohore as Galatea and Pygmalion but also as David and Goliath). In this performance for camera, Monsieur Zohore reimagines the labor of art conservation as a romantic gesture between lovers by taking a shower with a reproduction of Michelangelo's Statue of David. In the shower, Monsieur Zohore serenades the statue he cleans its body by lip-syncing Celine Dion's rendition of It's All Coming Back to my Now.

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*MZ.07 ( Starring David and Monsieur Zohore as Galatea and Pygmalion but also as David and Goliath )*  
Video, Color, Sound

Runtime: 05:32

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTCb99hak48&t=2s>

## MZ.06 (Caiman)

Caiman is a live performance shot for the camera in which I cover myself in body lotion until I can no longer breathe. The lotion is applied to my body with an alligator print textured roller as a means of transforming my body into that of the creatures.

In 1923, Time magazine reported that "colored babies were being used for alligator bait" in Chipley, Florida. "The infants are allowed to play in the shallow water while expert riflemen watch from concealment nearby. When a saurian approaches this prey, he is shot by the riflemen."

This tactic was more humane than the one described in a Miami New Times article. Alligator hunters would sit crying black babies who were too young to walk at the water's edge. With a rope around their necks and waists, the babies would splash and cry until a crocodile snapped on one of them. The hunters would kill the alligator only after the baby was in its jaws, trading one child's life for one alligator's skin. They made postcards, pictures, and trinkets to commemorate the practice.

I found myself baffled and fascinated by the practice. I was attracted to this form of mortal employment: even in infancy the black body is still put to work and expected to give up its life in service of its employer. There is a devilish kind of offering being made here. The trapper in this case offers up the young supple skin of a black baby in exchange for the brash and wisened sink of an alligator.

In MZ.06 I embalm myself in the lotion preparing my body for such a sacrifice.

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## MZ.05 (Grâce)

MZ.05 (Grâce) is a performance that consists of me along side a group of performers applauding for one hour to three hours a day for the duration of the exhibition. The work questions the ideas and intention behind celebration, truth, and authenticity.

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MZ.05 (Grâce)  
Performance  
Runtime: 01:00:00  
<https://vimeo.com/385278143>

## MZ.04 (Wishes)

MZ.04 Wishes is an installation that revolves around my research in the ideas of wishes and promises. Specially how to make a wish and how to make a promise and subsequently the breaking of those two things. The objects are as follows:

- 1.Empty boxes holding each other up
- 2.Paper Towels desperate to be clean again
- 3.A sea of whiteness (packing peanuts)
- 3.A sky of falling stars (balloons)
- 4.A cake and its biggest fan
- 5.A black swan and its reflection
- 6.An arm and a leg
- 7.Breathless A boy a balloon
- 8.A Dragonball on their way to see the world

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**MZ.03 (Occupied)**

A performance in which I dressed up as a bathroom attendant and served handmade chocolate truffles in the men's and women's bathrooms of my studio building 4 hours a day for two months. I performed this peice along side a serise of sculptures called The Girlsfriends made out of dipares, synthetic hair weave, and acrylic paint.

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*MZ.03 (Occupied)  
Performance*



*Girlfriends, 2019 (Mariah and Evita)*  
Diapers, Hair Weave, Acrylic Paint, Hair Accessories



*Messy Bitch Painting (Faggot), 2019*  
Paper Towel, Fabric Dye, T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas  
84" x 96" x 3"

## MZ.02 (Shot)

A performance on blackness, celebrity, spectacle, & the transferential interplay of the body as an abject object. In this performance, I am lead into the gallery space blind; my face bound by tape and hand cuffed. As "Paparazzi" by Lady Gaga begins to play, I am photographed. Throughout, the audience is prompted (by my encouragement) to join me & use my body as a transient step & repeat under blue & red strobe lighting (mimicking that of police sirens). They are allowed to take photos with me & to interact with me. The resulting photos will then be flash printed & offered back to the audience as autographed memorabilia.

The aesthetic elements of the performance are meant to engage the mise en scène of the mugshot turned model phenomena, informed by such works & instances as Line Up by Gary Simmons , Prison Bae (Jeremy Meeks), mugshots of Lindsay Lohan, & Paris Hilton in the era of #BlackLivesMatter & online/IRL police brutality. In works like Dana Shultz's Open Casket, one asks oneself if the cogs of fame will always turn by the very mechanisms by which we are all eventually systematically defanged & destroyed. It would seem there is little difference between the branding iron and the casting couch when one is sufficiently lubricated by fineries or circumstance.

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MZ.02 (Shot)  
Performance  
Runtime: 03:00:00

## Paper Towel Works

Painting is messy work. Not only does it require the standard materials to paint the painting, you also need a whole host of cleaning supplies to clean up after the painting you just made. After a certain point it all started to seem like a waste to me. I asked myself what would it mean to make a painting out of the materials you used to clean up after the painting.

I've been working with paper towels over ten years now. I was attracted to the material for its absorbent quality and it's futile nature. Paper towels are designed to be destroyed. They are used to erase the shame of our mess and to be quickly disposed off before anyone else can notice. The 'paintings' exist in a state of flux; embodying ideas of make a mess and cleaning it up at the same time.

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Messy Bitch Painting (Une Nou Nou D'Enfere) , 2019  
Paper Towel, Favric Dye , T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas



*Messy Bitch Painting (Faggot) , 2019*  
Paper Towel, Favric Dye , T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas



*Messy Bitch Painting (Faggot) , 2019*  
Paper Towel, Favric Dye , T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas



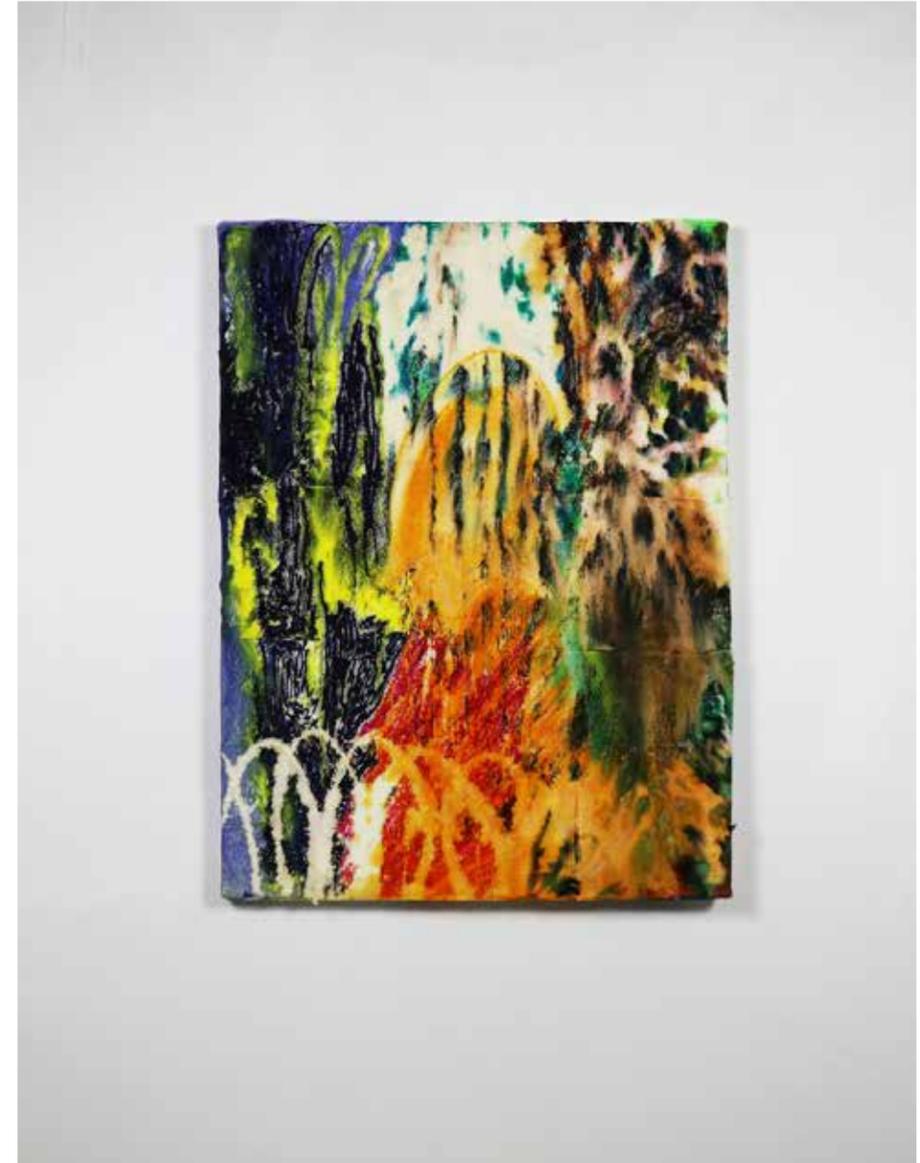
***Messy Bitch Painting (Faggot) , 2019***  
Paper Towel, Favric Dye , T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas  
84" x 96" x 3"



***Messy Bitch Painting (Faggot) , 2019***  
Paper Towel, Favric Dye , T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas  
84" x 96" x 3"



***Messy Bitch Painting (Lake Titicaca) , 2019***  
Paper Towel, Fabric Dye , T-Pins, Jade 711 on Canvas  
84" x 96" x 3"



***Paper Towel Painting #20 (Something About Charline Von Heyl)***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas  
48'x36'x2'



***Title: Paper Towel Painting #5 (Slow Disco)***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



***Paper Towel Painting #13 (Ohh Yeahhh)***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Turner Knockoff #1*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Turner Knockoff #2*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Turner Knockoff #3*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Turner Knockoff #4*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



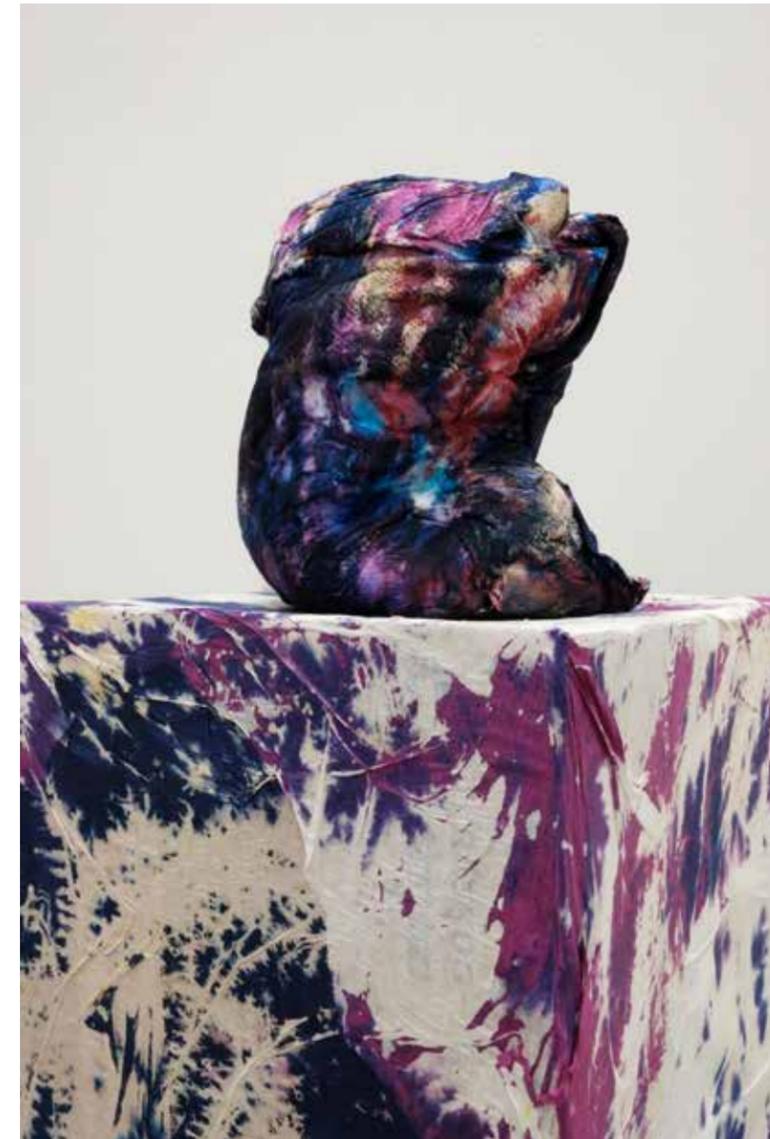
*Turner Knockoff #5* (  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Turner Knockoff #6*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



***Mound #1***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel



***Mound #1 Detail***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel



*Mound #2 Detail*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel



*Mound #2*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel



*Mound #3*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper



*Mound #3 Detail*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel



***Mound #4***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



***Mound #4 (Detail)***  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Mound #5*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Mound #5 (Detail)*  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



**Mound#6**  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel



**Mound #7**  
Fabric Dye and Bleach On Paper Towel on Canvas



*Dumps #1*  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



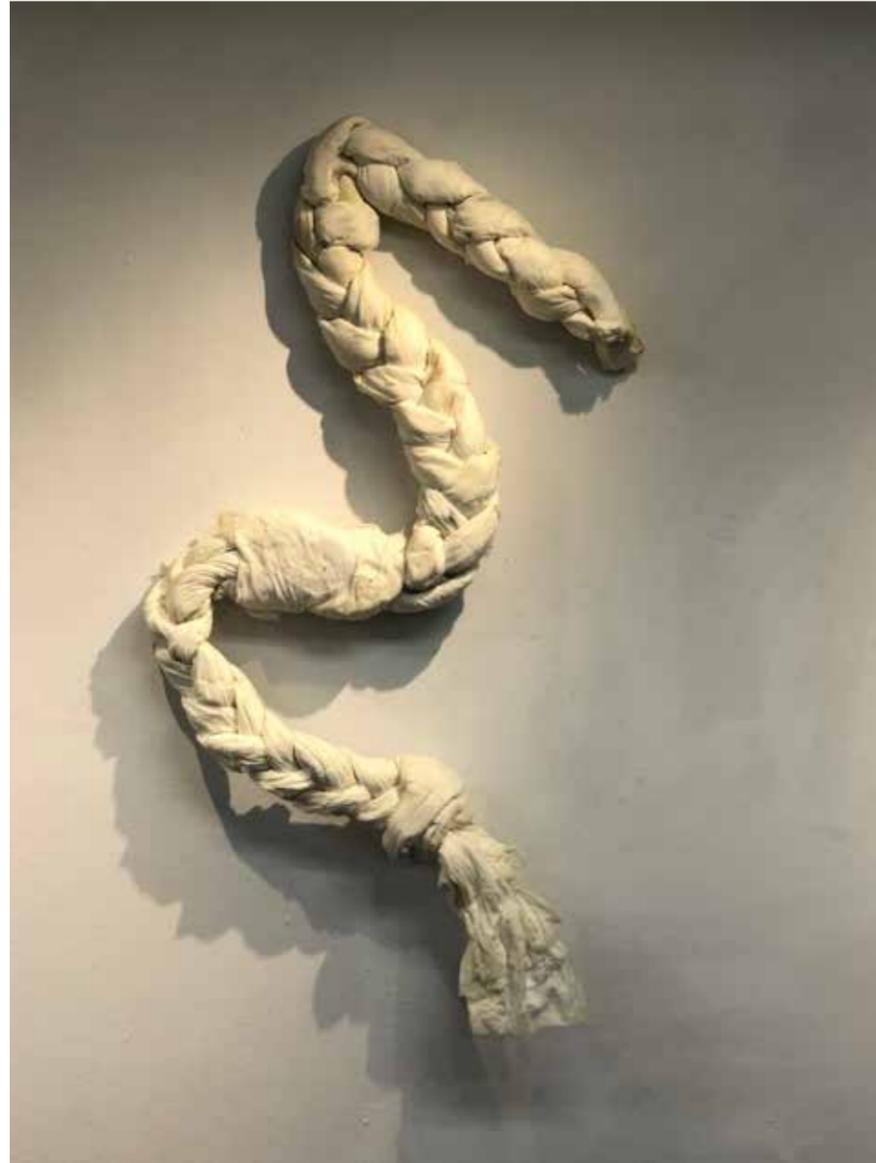
*Dumps #2*  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



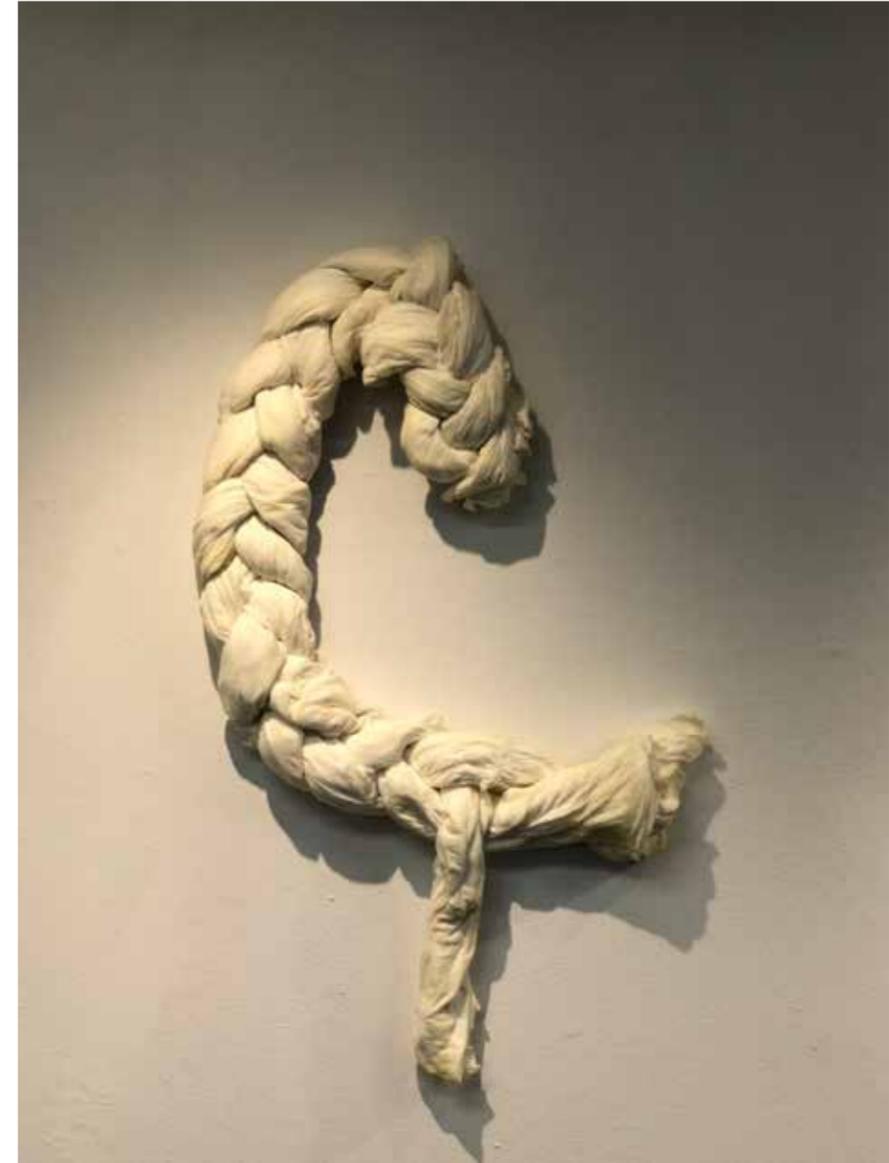
*Dumps #3*  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



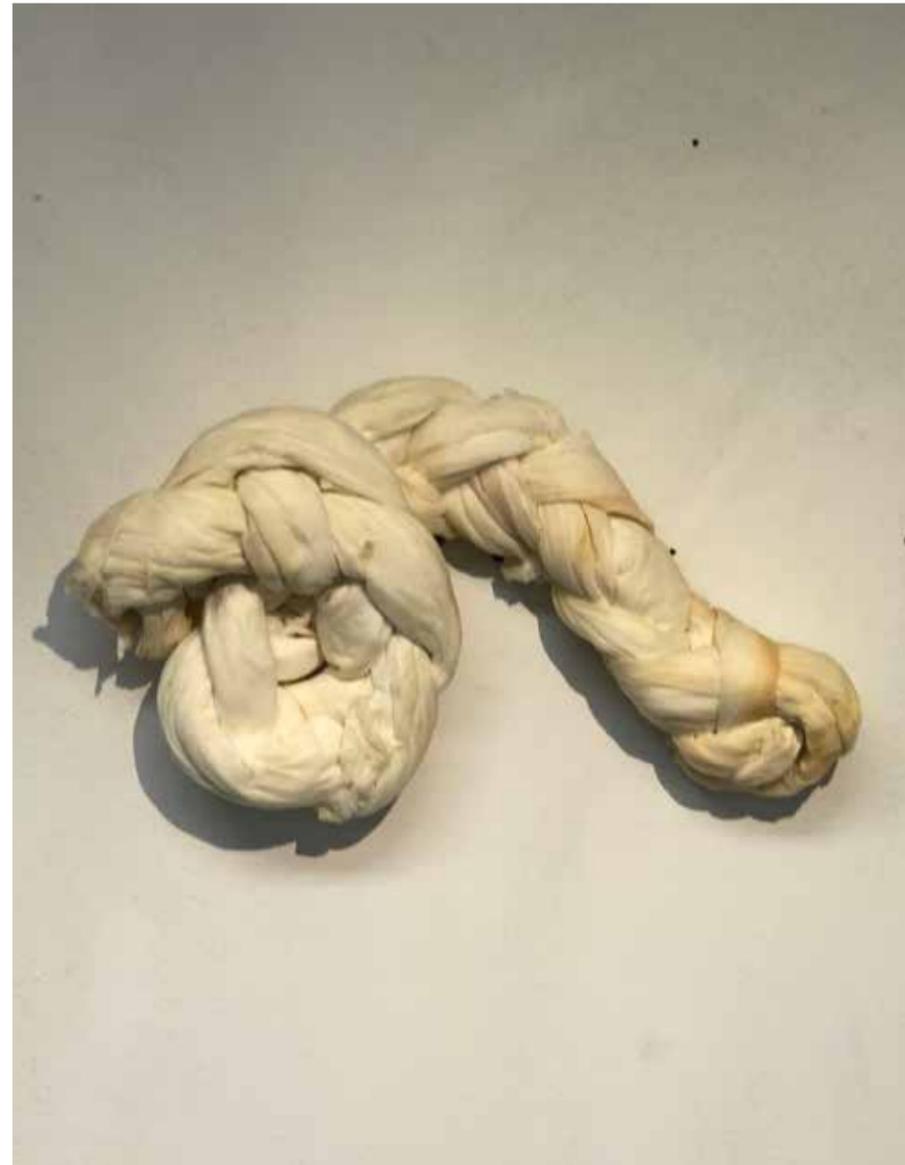
*Dumps Studio View*



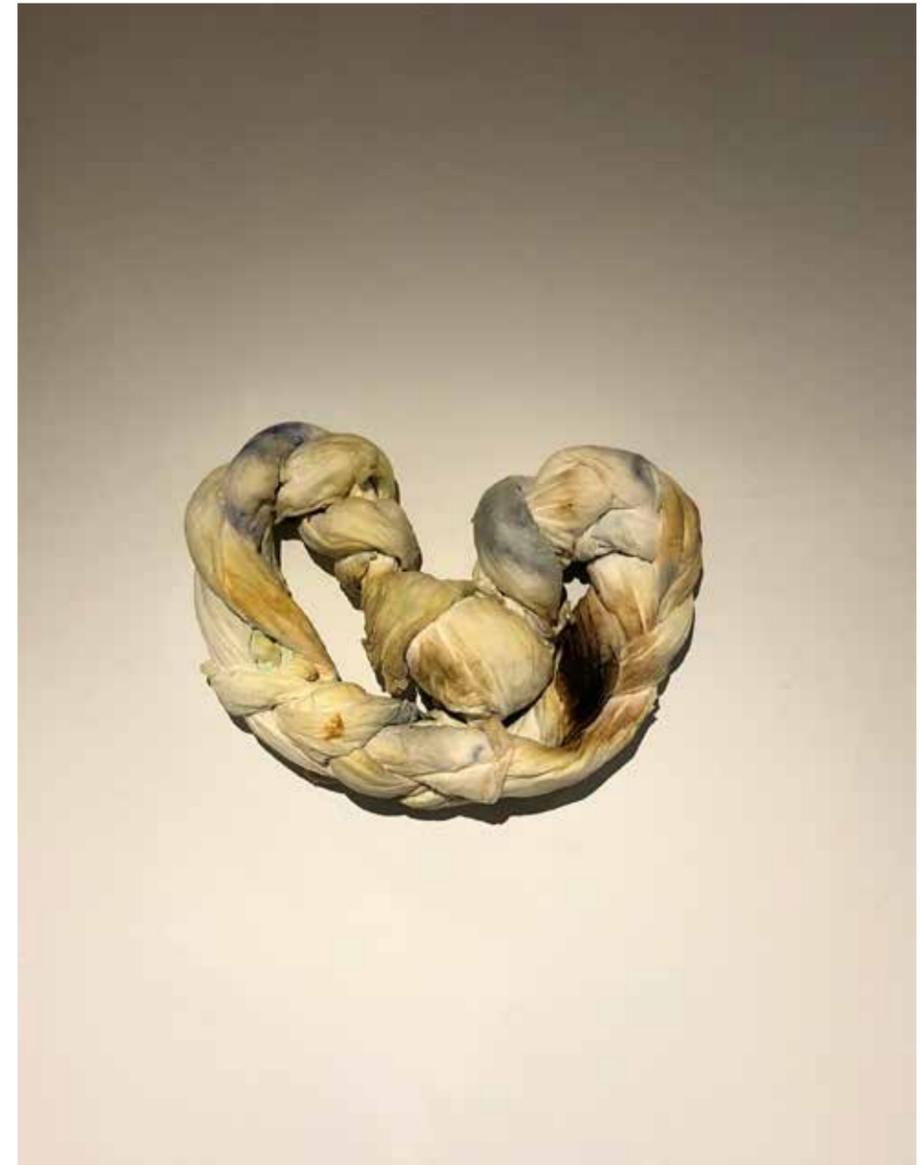
***Tether #1***  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



***Tether #2***  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



***Tether #3***  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



***Tether #4***  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel



**Tether #4**  
Fabric Dye, Jade 711 and Thix On Paper Towel

## Sauvagerie

In the Sauvagerie series, I hand-dye and bleach common bath towels and shape them into towel animals. A towel animal is a depiction of an animal created by folding bath towels. It is conceptually similar to origami but uses towels rather than paper. The exact originator of towel animals is unknown, but their popularity is often attributed to Carnival Cruise Lines.

For me, this body of work is a mediation on labor as these animals are generally produced by maids. Each day a maid painstakingly produces one of these animals to be destroyed almost immediately only to be repeated the next day. The obliteration of the animal not only invalidates the labor of the maid but also invalidates the potential legitimacy of the object.

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*Curious Gerogina*  
Bath Towel, Fabric Dye, Bleach, Hair Accessories



*I Was Perfect, 2019*  
Fabric Dye, Bleach, Bath Towel, Mirror



*Babbar*  
Bath Towel, Fabric Dye, Bleach, Hair Accessories

## Primitivism

Primitivism is a performace in which a bird of paradise flower and a bottle of windex kill on an other. The work explores the comsumerist and colonial realtionship between these two obejcts. In my native Cote D'Ivorie, the bird of paradise an accessible commodity widley available the masses. On the other hand the bottle of windex is a luxry item only avialbe to those with funds and access to the west. Conversely, in the United States, the flower is a luxury item sometime sometings selling for \$28 a stem. Togetehr they from a kind of suicide pact chosing to destroy eachother than be consumed.

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*Primitivism  
Bird of Paradise Flower in Windex*