

VISUAL STUDIES
**WORK
SHOP**

Press Contact:

Mariclare Hulbert, Visual Studies Workshop Publicist

mariclare.hulbert@gmail.com

585.278.2302

**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP ANNOUNCES
DIASPORAS ARE THE LANDSCAPE EXHIBITION**
*Exhibition Exploring Diasporic Experience Through Contemporary
Photography, Film & Installation*



Plantain (Musa x acuminata), kluai, Pisang, Alida Rodrigues, 2021, naturally dyed embroidery on cotton

Rochester, NY (July 9, 2025)—Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) announces its ***Diasporas are the Landscape*** exhibition, on view in Rochester, NY September 25 to December 13, 2025. Featuring the work of contemporary artists Samantha Box, Claudia Claremi, and Alida Rodrigues, the exhibition presents a compelling exploration of diasporic identity through photography, film, and installation.

Drawing on diverse cultural, linguistic, and geographic perspectives, *Diasporas are the Landscape* examines how real, imagined, and symbolic representations of tropical flora and fauna serve as metaphors for how identity and traditions persist across time and borders.

Samantha Box's *Portable Homeland* and *Constructed* series feature intricately staged dioramas and terrariums built to propagate grocery store Caribbean fruits and vegetables, which are subject to strict import regulations. These intimate still-life installations speak to the complexities of preserving cultural traditions and identity across borders.

Claudia Claremi's filmworks focus on Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. and the Caribbean. Her film series, *La memoria de las frutas* and *Roots of Support*, are meditative portraits of individuals and communities whose reflections on fruit and fruit trees frame collective memories and actions as collective resistance to the violent legacy of colonialism.

Alida Rodrigues's photo-embroidery works combine historical imagery with indigenous dyeing and textile techniques from around the world. Her practice is both reparative and connective, engaging with global communities whose shared histories have often been fragmented. Inspired by VSW's lantern slide collections of landscapes, Rodrigues's embroideries translate imagery once used for exploitative purposes into an installation enriched with indigenous folk knowledge of nature.

The exhibition will feature:

- A multi-channel video installation by Claudia Claremi (b. 1986, Spain)
- Diorama and photographic installations from the *Portable Homeland and Constructions* series by Samantha Box (b. 1977, USA; b. Jamaica)
- Photo-embroidery and wallpaper works by Alida Rodrigues (b. 1983, U.K.; b. Angola)

Diasporas are the Landscape is curated by **Hernease Davis**, Assistant Curator at Visual Studies Workshop.

"This exhibition is a declarative statement of the significance of connection to one's place on this earth, particularly for diasporic communities. These three artists have beautiful practices that illustrate how this connection transcends location, borders and time. We are living through a time when conversations around belonging, citizenship, and climate are more urgent than ever. *Diasporas are the Landscape* invites Rochester audiences to engage and connect with these distinct, communal experiences that persist because of our shared humanity," states Davis.

Related *Diasporas are the Landscape* Salon programming including artist talks and events (in person and online) will be announced later this summer.

Exhibition Details

Diasporas are the Landscape

September 25 - December 13, 2025

At Visual Studies Workshop, 36 King Street, Rochester NY 14608

Learn more: www.vsw.org

Artist Biographies

Samantha Box is a Jamaican-born, Bronx-based artist who uses photography, sound and installation to chart the fluctuating and tenuous physical and psychosocial spaces of queerness and diaspora. Her work has been recently showcased in solo exhibitions at Light Work, the Des Moines Art Center, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts (DC), and in group exhibitions at Le Rencontres d'Arles, the Bronx Museum of Arts, and Baxter Street CCNY.

Box has been an artist-in-residence at the Center of Photography at Woodstock, the Visual Studies Workshop and at Light Work. She has been awarded a NYFA/NYSCA Fellowship in Photography twice: in 2010 and in 2022, an En Foco Fellowship, and a Silver Eye Fellowship. In 2023, she was shortlisted for the Aperture Portfolio Prize, the Louis Roederer Discovery Award, and the Prix De La Photo Madame Figaro; in 2024, she was nominated for the Foam Paul Huf Award; and in 2025, she was shortlisted for the CPW Saltzman Prize. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Art Houston, and of the Harvard Art Museums. She holds an MFA in Advanced Photographic Studies from the International Center of Photography-Bard College.

Claudia Claremi (Madrid, 1986) is an artist and filmmaker. Her work explores collective experiences, shared imaginaries and the depths of memory and the unconscious to unveil structures of Western modernity that are hidden from view. Most of her projects delve into embodiment, memory, diaspora, and coloniality. Her films create sensory experiences for the viewer and her approach to moving images is multidisciplinary, including video, analogue film, installation, photography, archive, or text. Claremi graduated in Documentary Film from the International Film School of San Antonio de los Baños (Cuba) and in Fine Arts from University of the Arts London (UK) and the Instituto Superior de Arte de La Habana (Cuba). She has been an artist-in-residence at Beta Local in San Juan, Puerto Rico (2015), Centro de Residencias Matadero Madrid (2021), the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY (2023) and The Clemente in NYC (2023). Among the grants and awards she has received are the Generaciones Award from the Montemadrid Foundation (2021), Circuitos de Artes Plásticas (2021), and the NOEXPO programme in the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid (Spain). Her films have been screened and awarded at festivals such as Raindance, Ann Arbor, Ji.hlava, FIC Guadalajara, Vienna Shorts, Makedox, LOOP Barcelona, Oberhausen, the Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin, Márgenes, Documentamadrid, etc. and shown at CA2M, Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, HKW in Berlin and the Cervantes Institutes in Tokyo and New York. Her work has also been exhibited at La Casa Encendida, PHotoEspaña, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Madrid, the Center for Visual Art (Denver), Paul Robeson Galleries (Newark), Cuchifritos Gallery (NY), Manifattura Tabacchi (Florence), El Lobi (San Juan), and Casa de Iberoamérica (Cádiz) among others. At present, she is developing various projects, including the series 'Amnesia colonial' and 'La memoria de las frutas'.

Alida Rodrigues is an Angolan visual artist with a notable presence in exhibitions across Africa, Europe, and the UK. Rodrigues's artistic practice weaves together collage, textile, and installation, using 19th century black and white photographs and botanical illustration. She has

also participated in artist residencies in Mexico, the UK, and the USA. In 2019, Rodrigues was featured in the film *Relic 3*, part of *Relic Traveller: Phase 2* by British-Ghanaian artist Larry Achiampong. Her collaboration with the fashion label Winnie New York won the Karl Lagerfeld Prize in 2022.

At its core, her work delves into layered concepts of identity, investigating themes of belonging and un-belonging. She is deeply motivated by the need to confront the enduring legacies of colonialism, unravelling how this complex past continues to shape global dynamics of race, culture, politics, land, economics, and society. Central to her practice is the exploration of the racial dimensions of historical imagery, questioning whose stories are preserved and celebrated and whose narratives remain obscured. This inquiry extends into the realm of ethnobotany, where she investigates the intertwined histories of plants and people. She examines the roles women have played in plant exploration and the extraction of botanical knowledge from indigenous women to serve colonial interests. Through archival research, Rodrigues explores the act of collecting and cataloguing, drawing connections between the classification of plants and the racial categorisation of humans.

About Visual Studies Workshop: Visual Studies Workshop nurtures experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and builds community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies. VSW was founded in 1969 in Rochester, NY by photographer, educator and curator Nathan Lyons (1930–2016), and became one of the earliest independent, not-for-profit, artist-run spaces in the country. More than 50 years later, the organization's mission is reflected in its core programs: VSW Salon screenings and exhibitions, Project Space Artist Residencies, and VSW Press. In support of VSW programs, the organization holds substantial photography and moving image research collections and an art library for artists, critics and the general public to explore, research and reuse. vsw.org

VSW programs are currently supported by The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the New York State Legislature, Konar Foundation, Joy of Giving Something, Monroe County NY, The Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation, and all our members and individual supporters.

###