

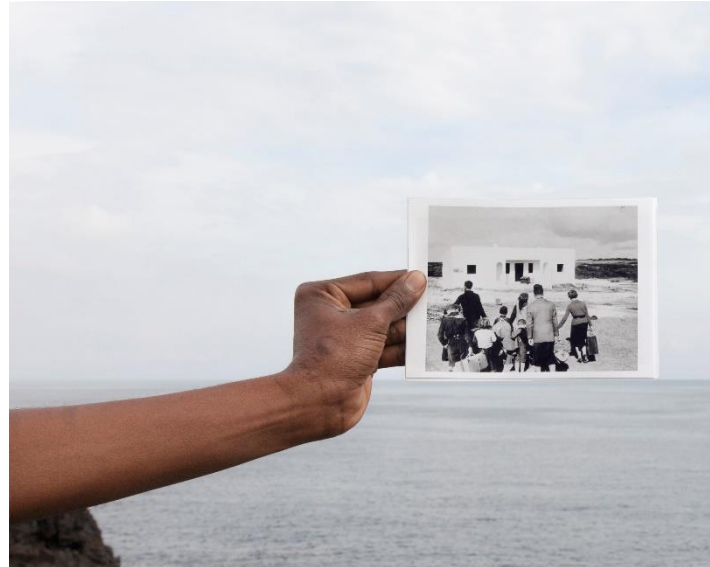


//////
PRESS RELEASE
//////

ALL YEAR,
ALL FREE

BMO  Financial Group

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8 JANUARY 2020



Dawit L. Petros, *Untitled (Overlapping and intertwined territories that fall from view II)*, 2019. Courtesy the artist.

Welcome to the New Year at The Power Plant! Experience four major exhibitions by artists Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa, Dawit L. Petros, Naeem Mohaiemen and Rashid Johnson.

On view from 25 January to 10 May 2020, The Power Plant is pleased to present four solo exhibitions by Canadian and international artists. Solo exhibitions by Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa (Guatemala/Canada) and Dawit L. Petros (Eritrea/Canada) join exhibitions by Naeem Mohaiemen (Bangladesh/USA) and Rashid Johnson (USA), on view since Fall 2019.

Join us as we launch the season with a FREE Public Opening Party on Friday, 24 January 2020 from 8-11 PM.

The Power Plant also presents numerous opportunities for all to enhance their exhibition experience. Pair a visit to the gallery with a workshop, performance, film screening, artist talk or other activity.

Details about the exhibitions and programs are below.
Join the conversation online with [@ThePowerPlantTO](https://twitter.com/ThePowerPlantTO).

Winter 2020 Presenting Sponsor

The Power Plant
Contemporary Art Gallery

 Harbourfront centre

231 Queens Quay West,
Toronto, ON Canada M5J 2G8

T: +1.416.973.4949

F: +1.416.973.4933

thepowerplant.org



Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa
Asymmetries

Curator: Lauren Barnes
Assistant Curator: Justine Kohleal

Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa produces sculptures, performance works and paintings that draw on literature, Latin American history, folklore, contemporary conspiracy theories and childhood memories. Referring to traumatic or tragic events – in particular Guatemala’s civil war (1960–96), which forced Ramírez-Figueroa and certain members of his family to immigrate to Vancouver as refugees in the 1980s – his works are imbued with a playful, sometimes dream-like quality. Using both sculptural objects and his body, Ramírez-Figueroa creates scenarios and installations that bring to light unbalanced power relationships in the history of Guatemala and beyond.

Asymmetries encompasses works from the past decade in addition to three new commissions. In two new sculptures, Ramírez-Figueroa reimagines the narratives of traditional and colonial objects – specifically, the Wardian case and the *cacaxte* – in relation to his own history, investigating the ways in which personal and cultural identities might expand and evolve over time. *Heart of the Scarecrow*, a newly commissioned performance video, looks back at the staging of a play of the same name by Guatemalan playwright Hugo Carrillo (1929 – 1994). Upon learning that a version of the same play involving Ramírez-Figueroa’s uncle was violently censored by the 1975 Guatemalan government, the artist became interested in its anti-establishment message, reimagining it several times in different media and locales. For the iteration at The Power Plant, Ramírez-Figueroa restages the production at the Universidad Popular in Guatemala City, the original site of the censorship.

The artist’s reimagining of these objects and stories calls to attention what has been lost, manipulated or left out of the colonizer’s history. Simultaneously, Ramírez-Figueroa’s artworks evoke the burdens that are carried – collectively and individually, physically and psychologically – and underline the importance of the imagination in overcoming them.

Lead Donor

Hal Jackman Foundation

Major Donors

Phil Lind & Ellen Roland

Support Donors

Catherine Barbaro & Tony Grossi
 Bitá Doagoo & Mazyar Mortazavi
 Fonds Hamelys
 Jill Homenuk
 Liza Mauer & Andrew Sheiner

Supported by

Panasonic

Dawit L. Petros
Spazio Disponibile

Guest Curator: Irene Campolmi
Assistant Curator: Amin Alsaden, Nancy McCain & Bill Morneau Curatorial Fellow

Dawit L. Petros presents a new body of work that underlines the unexplored links between colonization, migrations and modernism. *Spazio Disponibile* – Italian for 'Available Space' – scrutinizes historical gaps in European memory, particularly that of modern Italy. Alluding to vacant advertising sections that appeared in *Rivista Coloniale*, a widely circulated early 20th century magazine and the official organ of the Italian colonial project, the title is also a reference to the colonial gaze that viewed the lands of Africa as 'available space' to occupy and exploit.

Petros's art reflects his research into the complex layers of colonial and postcolonial histories connecting East Africa and Europe. Employing archival materials collected over a period of seven years, documents that attest to the Italian presence in Ethiopia and Eritrea between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Petros has developed an expansive suite of works that reflect on the lingering effects of colonial memory. Composed of a multimedia installation of serigraphs, photographs, sculptural works, a film and soundscape, the works highlight the ties between the contemporary resurgence of nationalism in Italy and a suppressed colonial past.

The exhibition extends the artist's ongoing project, *The Stranger's Notebook* – the result of a thirteen-month journey exploring mobilities within Africa and across the Mediterranean – to focus on built forms including architecture, industries and infrastructures, as well as questions of labour, the pitfalls of nationhood and intertwined narratives of migration. A newly commissioned film on Montreal's Casa d'Italia, a community centre built in 1936, probes the building's graphic and architectural language to unpack its complicated fascist symbolism. Examining parallels between African histories and European modernism, the exhibition also investigates how objects operate as texts in the construction and transmission of cultural ideologies. Petros looks at how these objects often obscure power differentials while connecting people across borders, binding disparate geographies such as Italy, Eritrea and Canada.

Lead Donor
 Lonti Ebers

Dr. Kenneth Montague & Ms. Sarah Aranha

Support Donors
 Jennifer Grant & David Dattels

International Arts Partner
 Istituto Italiano di Cultura

Donors
 Yvonne & David Fleck

Supported by
 Tiwani Contemporary
 The A.G. Leventis Foundation

Naeem Mohaiemen
What we found after you left

Curator: Lauren Barnes

Naeem Mohaiemen grew up in Dhaka, Bangladesh and now lives in New York. His work across films, installations and essays excavates historical moments via fiction, documentary and archives. Overlapping micro stories and macro histories underpin his projects, which start from transnational leftist utopian projects that took place in the 1970s, the first decade of Mohaiemen's life and a period of clashes between decolonization, socialism, non-alignment movements and new forms of imperialism.

This exhibition spans two seasons, presenting four films in a rotating program. Each film is called a 'chapter' accompanied variously by photographs, prints and sculptures that serve as 'footnotes', which further expand on the films' themes.

Screening from 25 January to 15 March, the three-channel film *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (2017) probes a pivot of power in the 1970s from the Non-Aligned Movement (the anti-imperialist coalition of states not allied to the United States or the Soviet Union) toward the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (an alliance of Muslim-majority countries). Images of triumphalist transnational architecture and documentary footage from the 1973 political congress come together in a narrative woven by publisher Samia Zennadi, political leader Zonayed Saki and historian Vijay Prashad that uncovers a history of the Cold War period from a previously hidden perspective.

From 18 March until 10 May, the exhibition concludes with *Afsan's Long Day, The Young Man Was: Part 2* (2014), a film that considers parallel histories of radical struggles in the 1970s. Accounts from the 1974 diary of Bangladeshi historian Afsan Chowdhury and footage relating to the militant Red Army Faction in Germany form part of a wide-ranging investigation into the stories of people that shaped what the narrator describes as "the 'what if' moment of the last century."

While both films focus on moments of misrecognition and failure, Mohaiemen's overarching investigation into the various ways in which the political left attempted to implement socialist utopia(s) during the Cold War era is ultimately rooted in a hope for a future international left.

Presenting Donor
Jack Weinbaum Family Foundation

Supported by
Experimenter

Rashid Johnson
Anxious Audience

Curator: Lauren Barnes
Assistant Curator: Amin Alsadon, Nancy McCain & Bill Morneau Curatorial Fellow

For his first solo presentation in Canada, American artist Rashid Johnson has undertaken a major new site-specific work. This is the fifth iteration of the Clerestory Commission Program, which invites artists to respond to The Power Plant’s central, light-filled space.

Johnson has attained prominence internationally for works harnessing the rich symbolism and histories of varied materials that are both naturally occurring and artificially made. He is renowned for minimalist black grid constructions that serve as carriers for plants, shea butter and other artefacts—objects that reference collective aspects of African-American intellectual history and cultural identity.

Since 2015, his output has encompassed representational works entitled *Anxious Audiences*. For The Power Plant, Johnson developed an ambitious new work in this series that envelops visitors amongst an accumulation of portraits incised into a mixture of West African black soap and wax, which sits atop white tile panels. Reflecting a sense of collective unease, this crowd of faces emerges through a process of ‘drawing through erasure’ into the viscous black surfaces.

Presenting Donors
 Alison & Jim Christodoulis

Donors
 Nadine Léonard
 Alan & Alison Schwartz

Lead Sponsors
 ProWinko ProArt!

Supported by
 David Kordansky Gallery
 Hauser & Wirth

Support Donors
 Jay Smith & Laura Rapp

Winter 2020 Season Programs and Events

For a full list of programs and events:
thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents.aspx

Working in tandem with our Winter exhibitions, our public programs provide numerous opportunities for visitors to engage with thought-provoking perspectives and insight.

This Winter season offers myriad opportunities to join various communities and engage in meaningful conversation through book signings, events, film series, lectures and tours, often with expanded access. We are determined to ensure our exhibitions and programs are accessible to all. With the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the gallery is able to provide audio recordings of wall texts, select programs with American Sign Language interpreters and outreach workshops, among other initiatives.

Learn more about exhibiting artists' processes and works during a **Performative Lecture** by **Dawit L. Petros** and guest curator **Irene Campolmi** and an **In Conversation** program with **Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa** and Curator of Exhibitions **Lauren Barnes**. Enjoy the **Italy and East Africa: Unexplored Histories Symposium**, which will consider multiple perspectives about Italian colonization in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Libya, providing additional context for Dawit L. Petros's exhibition, **Spazio Disponibile**. The **Italian Colonial Cinema film series** will look to Italian filmmakers to examine Italy's entanglement with Africa.

Our annual fundraiser, **Face to Face**, is not to be missed. Taking place on **26 February 2020**, this unique event brings Toronto's cultural leaders and contemporary art patrons together with artists for an intimate dinner and conversation. This year, invited artists include **Stephen Andrews, Shary Boyle, Brenda Draney, Pascal Grandmaison, Iris Häussler, Sasha Huber, Shona Illingworth, Geoffrey James, Laurie Kang, Jeremy Laing, Sandra Meigs, Jennifer Murphy, Jennifer Sciarrino, Syrus Marcus Ware, Tim Whiten** and more.

Participate in our **Portfolio Nights** and **Master Classes**, which provide Artist Members the opportunity to discuss their work with our curators, exhibiting artists and special guests. This season, we are also thrilled to host our first Master Class for emerging curators. Our **Sunday Scene** series brings in artists and professionals from across disciplines to offer dynamic perspectives about our current exhibitions. Winter 2020 speakers include feminist art collective **Sister Co-Resister; Akshaya Tankha**, a specialist in the preservation and study of South Asian photography; and photographer and Assistant Professor of Health and Science **Dr. Laura Bisailon**.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to bring children to our widely popular **Power Kids** programs, each of which begins with a brief tour of the galleries, followed by hands-on art making. Additionally, the **Power Youth** program connects youth ages 12-17 with local professional artists, and works from these sessions will be on display at the **Spring Exhibition and Reception** in May.

For more information on exhibitions and programming, please contact the Gallery: info@thepowerplant.org / 416.973.4949 / thepowerplant.org / @ThePowerPlantTO

ALL YEAR,
ALL FREE

BMO  Financial Group

About The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

The Power Plant is Canada's leading public gallery devoted exclusively to contemporary visual art. It is a vital forum for the advanced artistic culture of our time that offers an exceptional facility and professional support to diverse living artists, while engaging equally diverse audiences in their work. The Power Plant pursues its activities through exhibitions, publications and public programming that incorporate other areas of culture when they intersect with visual art.

Director: Gaëtane Verna

ADMISSION: ALL YEAR, ALL FREE
presented by BMO FINANCIAL GROUP

Providing as many people as possible with access to these programs and events remains the gallery's top priority. The initiative leading these efforts is a renewed partnership with BMO Financial Group, whose support of the ALL YEAR, ALL FREE initiative is vital to expanding and diversifying audiences by eliminating the cost of admission to The Power Plant's exhibition program.

For bios, images, interview requests or more information please contact:

Jaime Eisen
Marketing & Communications Manager
media@thepowerplant.org / 416.973.4932

For more information, please visit:

thepowerplant.org

Connect with us:

facebook.com/ThePowerPlantTO
twitter.com/ThePowerPlantTO
instagram.com/ThePowerPlantTO

Join the conversation:

#TPPNaufusRamirezFiguroa
#TPPSDawitLPetros
#TPPNaeemMohaiemen
#TPPRashidJohnson
#ThePowerPlantTO