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Title: The 'contact of models' in the work of Paulo Nazareth and Joiri Minaya

The research aims to analyze the photographic and performative practice of Brazilian artist Paulo Nazareth (1977) and the New York artist Joiri Minaya (1990) whose works address the presence of racial stereotypes in the contemporary visual and photographic representation of black, colored people and non-binary people.

By employing an autobiographical form of narration in which self-representation is a way to explore his own roots and the diasporic identity of Latin Americans, Nazareth addresses not only the issue of immigration and emigration in contemporary Latin America, but also the inquisitorial gaze to which black and colored people are still subjected. In particular, the experience of travel to the United States at the core of the artistic project *News from the Americas* (2011-2012), in which Nazareth transformed himself into an emigrant, becomes a reflection on the issues faced by contemporary global migrants and emigrants. In fact, in *News from the Americas* Nazareth retraces the migratory routes followed by the lost members of his family to the United States by documenting the process through photography and video, while in the later *Cadernos de Africa* (2013) he extends his route to Europe, the continent of origin of his ancestors. The travel and the encounters with the inhabitants of the countries involved in his journeys are for Nazareth a way to put into question the visual stereotypes commonly associated with Latin American and African American migrants, and at the same time his work becomes a way to acknowledge the difficulty of his people to preserve their identity in an increasingly globalized world. In order to address the issues of identity, nationality, ethnicity, slavery (see the video *L'arbre d'oublier*, 2013), oppression (see the exhibition *Genocide in Americas*, 2015) and race (see the work *Cara de Indio*, 2011), Nazareth employs a variety of media like performance, video, giveaways, collected items, and photography. Thanks to photography, Nazareth gives birth to a group of *Untitled works* (2011 - in progress) in which he refers to the photographic profiling first employed even in Brazil in the ethno-anthropological campaigns and then by colonist as a means of surveillance, control, and racial comparison. In these mug-shot photographic portraits Nazareth plays the different roles codified by the colonial gaze (the shaman, the crazy, the wild man...), but employing a posture and an impassive look that fiercely annihilates the depersonalizing power of the photographic evidence and in this way underlying the persistence of racist models of representation of Brazilians. The impossibility to belong and the condition of invisibility which characterizes the life of contemporary global nomads is investigated by Paulo Nazareth, who becomes the spokesman of an invisible collectivity: a diaspora of marginalized and invisible ones that the artist makes visible through his own body and through the photographic medium.

Raised in the Dominican Republic, Joiiri Minaya is known for her performance *Container* (from 2016) in which the artist, wearing camouflage costumes printed with floral patterns representing lush tropical gardens, works on the forms and visual stereotypes of colonial portraiture which reify the female body by reducing it to a mere decorative object – and thus effectively making it ‘invisible’ – and at the same time starting a reflection on the label of ‘tropicality’ connected to the model of pictorial representation of the female body that move from painting. In her own words: “*My current body of works focuses on the construction of the female subject in relation to the landscape in a ‘tropical’ context, shaped by a foreign Gaze that demands leisure and pleasure. Like nature, femininity has been imagined and represented throughout history as idealized, tamed, conquered/colonized and exoticized. I’m currently revising existing cultural products that engage in this form of representation and challenging them through my work. [...] The constant in my work is the presence of the body and the interest in creating distinct power position with it, often contradictory but operating simultaneously*”. Minaya’s performance and photographs underline the persistence of a Western gaze that finds its references in the iconographic world of pictorial language (Venus, the so-called Bathers and so on), while disappearance of her body testifies to the condition of invisibility of the non-Western female body and its exclusion from the horizon of representation of Western culture.

The paper and the research wishes to underline how, thanks to photography, these artists manage to shape a personal reflection on what it means to be a man and a woman (as well as an artist) within societies and political context still dominated by racism, discrimination and gender inequality and how much the models of colonial photography continue to dominate the logic of representation of the Other in the contemporary world. The methodology will benefit from the comparison between the artist’s photographic works and the reference models that they highlight (mostly pictorial, but also photographic) illustrating the ability of these artists to question those models from within while connecting historical and visual memory, as well as artistic poetics and social claims.