

# Pierre-Antoine Vettorello

## Portfolio

Pierre-Antoine Vettorello (he/him) is a practice-led researcher at the Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts (ARIA), he works with textile, photo archives, diasporic testimonies and objects. He crafts installations, sculptures and design prints and researches Senegalse Women afro-diasporic resistance between 1939 and 1966 in Paris, through photo archives and textiles. He questions how humans transform and adorn themselves moving in colonial and postcolonial spaces. Afropean, he grew up in Bordeaux and works and lives in Brussels. He has an MA from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, fashion department and an MA in Artistic Research from Sint Lucas School of Arts.

(right) archive: 'Jeune fille en face de l'île de Gorée', c. 1950, Studio Goldner, Paris.



# Terracotta dolls 1

This project of the creation of six dolls, has been made during a residency in Naples in February 2024, drawing inspiration from the narrative of Maïmouna, the protagonist of Senegalese author Abdoulaye Sadjì's (1910-1961).

Maïmouna traverses her social ascent to Dakar accompanied by her doll Nabou. The aim is to evoke the collective memory of these dolls, with the talented Naples-based Senegalese tailor Haruna who dressed them up in hand-dyed indigo textiles.

Known as "dome" in Wolof, the dolls refer both as a plaything for children and a symbolic representation deeply rooted in the Neapolitan "Presepe" tradition utilizing terracotta miniatures. This project was made in collaboration with the Naples-based tailor Haruna connected by the diasporic association

SENASO.s

Photography: Amedeo Benestante.



(right) installation, doll made with terracotta, wool, metal and indigo dyed textiles.



(left) Detail of a hand-crafted doll in terracotta, braided wool and jewelry, dressed in indigo dyed textiles.

(above) atelier table at SuperOtium, Naples, Italy.

(right image) Installation, Terracotta, textiles, metal, wooden table, Saint-Louis (2024)

(below) Installation, Terracotta, textiles, metal wooden table, (2024)

# Mémoria



This installation was created during a residency at Océan-Savane in Saint-Louis, Sénégal. I crafted two terracotta dolls, incorporating woven textiles sourced from the Tesss workshop in Ndar, with shoes made by the artisan Falou from the "Village des Artisans." Set in water, the installation captures reflections, local stories and poetry drawn from my experiences in the bird sanctuary.

Acknowledgements: Sabine Grégoire, Olga Yaméogo, Yétou Wade & Fatima Fall Photography: Michel Digout



# Black Yarns - The making of Replicas

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Since 2019 I embarked in a journey of researching about my genealogy besides discussing the presence of black women in the Parisian space. This research started with the collection of photographs from Khady Diop and Galandou Diouf (January 1939) where they both declared "No I won't dress with European clothes" published in the newspapers. I researched on the political aspect of wearing indigenous clothes in the Parisian space and how I could replicate these historical garments using techniques of museology to recreate archives

The following photographs are showing different replicas made at Cité Internationale des Arts and Villa Ndar (2022), and Sint Lucas School of arts (2021)





This dress represents a night in Antwerp when Pauline and her friends went to get away from Brussels for the night. This dress was created in collaboration with Brussels' atelier Mulieris. This installation was part of a textile fabulation on Pauline Samba, a young Congolese woman who came to Antwerp for a concert by Jack Hammer. Hammer was an African-American musician who performed his songs.

(left) 'Replica' (2021) Installation at Sint Lucas Antwerpen. Wood, silk paper, cotton dress, vinyl, album cover, papers.

(right) Untitled. Detail of a dress. Hangtag: "Pauline Samba. Antwerpen-Leopoldville Zomer 1963"



(left) Detail of the installation at Villa Ndar in Saint Louis, SN. Headpiece with headscarf and jewelry.

(right) Making of a replica, handpicking indigo dyed textiles using the technique of Shibori. Villa Ndar (2022)



# The Yarn - zine

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If we ever believed that colonial violence ended upon entering the educational system, we were mistaken. The roots of colonial hegemony, patriarchy, and capitalism underlie the very framework of the fashion education system, enticing numerous young students each year with aspirations and desires. It creates hierarchies, classifications, and othering. The Yarn offers a compilation of writings from individuals with an experience of the system as students, teachers, or models within the fashion school, and those who perceive and question these institutions as places where colonial violence persists. It provides a platform for individuals who have encountered or witnessed violence related to race, class, and the environment and who desire to share their experiences through their written works.

This anthology of texts forms part of a wider research endeavour focused on exploring the intersections between colonial hegemonies and the Western fashion system and redefine fashion in the present context. The study involves an examination of the modes of canonization of designers, places and hierarchies within the Western fashion environment.

"Fashion is ecologies of dress and bodily adornment through which we express our relationships with our environments. It is a universal definition that avoids the dualism of Fashion haves and have-nots, 'civilized' and 'uncivilized', exploiters and exploited. It offers a level playing field: we are all in this together. It emphasizes process, the materials of fashion being but a visual epiphenomenon. Most of all, it emphasizes connections and interactions in all of their complexity (ecologies). Environments are plural and multi-dimensional. May it also liberate and transform understandings, offer a pluriverse of ways out. It turns out that we are the gatekeepers. Let us get on the bridge and run the colonial ship aground."  
Sandra Niessen, p.22

editor ENG/FR: Pierre-Antoine Vettorello  
Publisher: Black Yarns Antwerpen  
ISBN number 978-2-9603419-0-4..





## Exhibitions

### SOLO exhibitions

- Fils Noirs, Goutte d'Or. Cité internationale des Arts (March 2022) Paris, FR

### COLLECTIVE exhibitions

- SLARG. Sint-Lucas Gallery (Oct. 2022) Antwerp, BE
- Fils Noirs. Institut Français, Villa Ndar (May 2022) Saint-Louis, SN
- SLARG. Sint-Lucas Gallery (Oct. 2021) Antwerp, BE
- Rather Raw But Turning Softer. ADMA.be (Sept. 2020) Online
- Avaler l'horizon. Palais de Tokyo - Costumes for Adélaïde Fériot (Oct. 2019) Paris, FR
- Feathers. Etnografiska Museet (Sept. 2018- Feb. 2019) Stockholm, SE
- Feathers. Världskulturmuseet (Feb. 2018-Aug. 2018) Gothenburg, SE
- Recollection #Fashion & Art. Belfius Private Collection (Oct. 2016) Brussels, BE
- Feathers. Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (Oct. 2016) Leiden, NL
- Les Belges, une histoire de mode inattendue. BOZAR (June-Sept. 2015) Brussels, BE
- Happy Birthday Dear Academy. MoMu (Sept. 2013-Feb. 2014) Antwerp, BE
- Arrrrgh, Monstres de Mode. Central Museum (Oct. 2013-Jan. 2014) Utrecht, NL
- Madifesto Edition 1. Centrale for Contemporary Art (June 2013) Brussels, BE
- Arrrrgh, Monstres de Mode. La Gaîté Lyrique (Feb.-Apr. 2013) Paris, FR
- Arrrrgh, Monstres de Mode. Benaki Museum (May-July 2011) Athens, GR

## Residencies

- SuperOtium, February 2024, Napoli, IT
- Institut Français, Villa Ndar, May 2022, Saint-Louis, SN
- Cité Internationale des Arts, January 2022, Paris, FR
- Morpho, January 2021, Antwerp, BE

## Lectures & Conferences

- Université Paris 1 La Sorbonne, Art et Archéologie. "L'Habit Immuable: Cartographier les Archives Coloniales et Résistances Afro-Diasporiques à Paris (1931-1966) in "Par-delà les archives violentes". Lecture during Prof. Lotte Arndt's course over Art et Globalisation. Paris, FR (Forthcoming), 2024
- Hampshire College, "Black Yarns: On Seeing / Researching / Dreaming a Photograph of Khady Diop in Paris.", lecture during Prof. Jennifer Bajorek's course on photography, Amherst, MA, USA, 2024
- Universität Bern, "Black Yarns: Unveiling New Perspectives Through Press Archives, Family Photography, and a Decolonial Lens (lecture) in Shadow Archives: Unveiling Global Entanglements in Visual Records, Bern, CH, 2024
- Universität Bayreuth, "Estranged Dolls: Exploring Connections and Disconnections Through Objects. A Study of the Parisian Senegalese Diaspora and the Musée du Quai Branly" in Reconfigurations in Africa and in African Studies, Biannual conference of the Association for African Studies in Germany e.V. (VAD), September-October 2024, Bayreuth, DE
- University of Galway, "Unveiling New Perspectives Through Press Archives, News, Photography, and a Decolonial Lens (lecture), Galway, IE, 2023
- Sint Lucas Antwerpen, Disrupt! Imagine Fashion in the Post-Museum, the Archive and Beyond (chair & lecturer), Antwerp, BE, 2023
- Universität der Künste, De-Fashioning Education conference (paper presentation), Berlin, DE, 2023
- Institut Français de la Mode (IFM), Executive MBA Global Fashion Management (lecture), Paris, FR, 2023
- Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule University of Art and Design, Master in fashion design (lecture), Halle, DE, 2023
- Dakar Design Hub, Master Class (workshop), Popenguine, SN, 2022

## Publications

- Vettorello, P.-A. 'Dressing for Defiance: From Senegal to Diasporic Colonial Paris with Khady Diop' in *The Poetics of Fabric: Intermedial Craft in Poetry and Textiles* (ed. Adele Bardazzi). London: Bloomsbury Publishing (Forthcoming chapter, 2025)
- Vettorello, P.-A. (2024) "Uniqueness in Fashion: Disrupting Modernity, Igniting Indigenous Romanticism" in *The Future of Fashion Education: Speculation, Experience and Collaboration*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge [Manuscript submitted for publication]
- Vettorello, P.-A. (Ed.). (2023). *On Colonial Violence in the Fashion School, The Yarn Zine #1*. Antwerp: Black Yarns Publishings.
- Vettorello, P.-A. (2023). 'Decolonial Methods for Artists and Researchers from the Diasporas. Damien Ajavon: Archiving the Invisible | Méthodes Décoloniales Pour Artistes et Chercheurs des Diasporas. Damien Ajavon : Archiver L'Invisible', *Decoloniality & Fashion RCDF e-zine*, (2), pp. 74-77.
- Okemwa, N. & Vettorello, P.-A. (2022). *The Curation of African Textiles in Belgian Fashion Museums from a Diasporic Viewpoint, TYPP#8 Blind Spot*. Antwerp: Yellow Press, pp. I-XVI.
- Vettorello, P.-A. (2021). *A conversation with Diana Bamimeke and Rima Hamid*. TYPP Special Issue. Antwerp: Yellow Press, pp. 35-42. <https://www.adma.be/typp>