

# Trajectory:

## FiveMyles

### 20 Years

October 19-December 15, 2019

**Nicole Awai**

**Bahar Behbahani**

**Mildred Beltre**

**Martha Haile**

**Alexandre Kyungu Mwilambwe**

**Sa'dia Rehman**

**Roberto Visani**





Trajectory: FiveMyles mirrors the vision of the gallery. It champions a diversity of opinions, media and experiences. bringing together recent works by a selection of international artists, many of whom were featured in past exhibitions as well as those whose work conceptually falls into the credo of a place dedicated to furthering social, racial and economical justice and equality.

Nicole Awai is returning to FiveMyles after an exhibition in 2001. The three works on view are from her extensive series Vistas, 2013-2017 . Here the artist highlights her use of untraditional materials and daring assemblage technique. In 2012 she traveled to her native Trinidad to specifically visit the La Brea Pitch Lake, considered the largest existing deposit of natural asphalt. Her visit there was actually prompted by her interest in flowing and oozing materials. "Audacious Asphalt" is a title of one piece in the series, which the artist sees as a "glimpses of our experience."

In 2012 Mildred Beltre captivated audiences with the combination of large scale crocheted wall pieces and drawings of appropriated images from conflict situations. In her current work she centers on the search for self-knowledge and self-determination using fragments of text: passages from Zora Neal Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God" is a primary inspiration. Beltre comments on multiple perceptions of racial identity, its physical manifestation and psychological impact. Often using images of herself as starting point for the composition, she overlays these with fragments of manipulated text inviting the viewer to enter into a dialogue with the work. This participation is challenging but ultimately rewarding. Following the artist's thoughts we clarify our own opinions on issues of racial and national identity, belonging and tolerance.

Iranian born Bahar Behbahani spends a sizable amount of time on academ-





ic research prior to completing any of her projects. Investigation and depiction of the fabled Persian gardens is a recurring theme in her work. For FiveMyles Bahar created a site-specific installation composed of a multitude of mixed media drawings on photo and/or black paper. The photocopies are those of declassified documents that identify the preeminent scholar and authority on Persian Gardens, Donald Wilbur as a CIA operative, involved in staging a 1953 coup against the democratically elected government: a tragic blunder of American covert foreign policy. The large painting "Apparent Failure" commemorates this.



Alexandre Kyungu Mwilambwe was born and lives in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. The city and its maze of streets and alleys is his inspiration, together with the patterns of bodily scarification used in a number of African cultures. He sees parallels in the stratification of landscape as a parable of the complex cartography of human body. Roads can facilitate access but can also be used as a tool for colonization and for creating borders. To break this pattern of closed "boundaries," Kyungu repurposes discarded doors creating sculptures scarred, painted and stamped with a visa reading "J'Habite La Terre;" advocating for freedom of movement, tolerance, and acceptance of one another. Speaking out against the inhumane anti-immigration policy spreading throughout the world.

Sa'dia Rehman's themes are tied to observation of customs and traditions of her Pakistani background and growing up a Muslim in the post 9/11 United States. She uses materials present in the everyday lives of the Islamic community, such



Left: Bahar Behbahani, Nicole Awai and Sa'dia

Above: Roberto Visani

Right: Sa'dia Rehman and Bahar Behbahani



as prayer rugs. She also creates page-size drawings reflecting the heritage of illuminated manuscripts in Islam, which comment on pressing issues of today. Her work “Even the Persians Are Now Demanding Constitutional Government” articulates the artist’s thoughts on conflicting issues of present world order. In the series of drawings called “The Here” and “The Hereafter” Rehman presents her own visual re-interpretation of Islamic belief in the interconnectedness of our earthly existence and the afterlife

Roberto Visani’s cardboard sculptures are intermediates in a long process that starts with forms taken from Ghanaian and Dogon (among other) sculptural tropes, and then are reinterpreted by the artist. He tessellates them, expands and reduces their proportions and reconfigures them based on medium and the intrusion of technology into the process of making. The larger cardboard sculptures may or may not end up becoming cast iron and aluminum pieces—they stand on their own as delicate and vulnerable cardboard effigies. they crouch, kneel and raise their arms in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. You can view Roberto’s public sculpture (x)ofmanychildren in the Herbert von King Park in Bed Stuy, made possible by the Uniqlo Park Expressions Grant.

Martha Haile’s work investigates the imbalance between the very palpable traces of colonial and postcolonial interference in East African culture. Through video, interdisciplinary installation, painting and drawing she seeks to call out these cultural discrepancies and offer solutions; sometimes ironic, sometimes practicable. Her focus is on women’s bodies: how they are faulted and flawed by culture. She weaves questions of propriety and behavior with more difficult absolute and irrevocable issues of appearance, bodily function and disease in an effort to approach body-empowerment from a more holistic and sympathetic angle.

FiveMyles: Trajectory was curated by Charlotta Kotik with Will Corwin and Hanne Tierney with indispensable help of Marine Comuet.

Rehman





On Sunday June 6, 1999, a new performance and exhibition space opened its doors in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Its founder, Hanne Tierney, and the curator Heidi Riegler invited neighbors and artists to a performance marathon featuring more than 20 young artists, while a few barbecue experts were grilling on the sidewalk.

Ten days later on June 16, FiveMyles presented its very first exhibition, *For Myles*. Curated by Marian Griffith, the former director at the Sculpture Center. The show was dedicated to the memory of Hanne Tierney's son, Myles, an Associated Press journalist killed in Sierra Leone that same year. Six emerging artists were chosen for "the elegiac and spiritual concerns that characterize their work", in Griffith's own words. These artists were Terry Boddie, Maria Elena Gonzalez, Cathleen Lewis, Jack Pospisil, Michael Lee Poy, and Veronica Ryan

Twenty years later, FiveMyles is still standing. Its walls and floors are still painted grey, and it still shows the work of beginning, emerging, and established artists who still find a home in the space. A lot has happened over all these years, and FiveMyles gained and retained a reputation for the excellent work that it shows, the eclectic nature of its programming, and the welcoming atmosphere

Trajectory: FiveMyles

October 19 - December 15, 2019

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 26, 5:30pm to 8pm

An exhibition celebrating FiveMyles' 20th anniversary, curated by Charlotta Kotik with William Corwin.

Nicole Awai, Mildred Beltre, Bahar Behbahani, Martha Haile, Alexandre Kyungu Mwilambwe, Sa'dia Rehman, Roberto Visani

# FiveMyles

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GALLERY HOURS  
Thursday through Sunday,  
1pm—6pm

Right: Nicole Awai







Above: Martha Haile and Mildred Bètre Below: Alexandre Kyungu Mwilambwe

