

Lydia Ourahmane: Tassili

May 12–August 1, 2022

For Immediate Release

RELEASE DATE

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EXHIBITION

Lydia Ourahmane: Tassili

EXHIBITION DATES

May 12–August 1, 2022

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Lydia Ourahmane, *Tassili*, 2022, video still. Courtesy the artist

SculptureCenter to present first New York solo institutional exhibition of artist Lydia Ourahmane featuring a newly commissioned video work

Long Island City, NY – SculptureCenter is pleased to announce Lydia Ourahmane’s first institutional solo exhibition in New York, on view May 12 - August 1, 2022.

Lydia Ourahmane’s works often begin as large, open-ended propositions that find the edges of possibility within the political, environmental, and metaphysical conditions in which she operates. For her exhibition at SculptureCenter, Ourahmane and a group of collaborators will produce a new moving image work and a series of scans that draw from a journey on foot in Tassili n’Ajjer, a largely inaccessible plateau near the border between southeastern Algeria and Libya.

Tassili N’Ajjer is host to thousands of prehistoric engravings and cave paintings that describe the transformation of life in the region over thousands of years. Scenes of conflict and ritual submit to a drastically altered ecological landscape, now an arid and inhospitable expanse of desert. Ourahmane’s work subsumes an encounter with a hallucinogenic array of this imagery – of ancient demons, extraterrestrials, and lost rivers and forests – in a place that both collapses and measures the severity of time. “The desert is the only place where we can visit death,” writer Ibrahim Al-Koni has said. “Because it is the isthmus [*barzakh*] between total freedom and existence.”

Ourahmane’s project offers an expansive vision of a site sustained by the remains of a singular source of water and unsettled by decades of governmental and colonial interference. While much of her past work has engaged with the hard-won movement of original objects across contexts, her exhibition at SculptureCenter explores a new approach to the mediation of site and material through video and other techniques of replication or simulation. Interweaving extended passages of

moving image, Ourahmane's film wordlessly narrates the desert's terms, untangling the dualities of pilgrimage/tourism, archaeology/extraction, and surveillance/documentation. The film is scored in chapters by four composers as an exquisite corpse.

For *Tassili*, Ourahmane has brought together a group of fellow artists, musicians, and filmmakers to travel with her to Tassili n'Ajjer and to contribute to her exhibition at SculptureCenter, including artists Hiba Ismail and Yuma Burgess; filmmakers Alana Mejía González and Jacob Oommen; guides Ahmed Hamid and Berka Ayoub; psychiatrist Isabel Valli; musicians felicita, Nicolás Jaar, Yawning Portal, and Sega Bodega; and editor Robert Fox.

Lydia Ourahmane (b. 1992, Saïda, Algeria) is an artist based in Algiers and Barcelona. Ourahmane's research-driven practice spans spirituality, contemporary geopolitics, migration, and the complex histories of colonialism. She incorporates video, sound, performance, sculpture, and installation on an often large or monumental scale that has consequences beyond the walls of her exhibitions. Drawing on personal and collective narratives and experiences, Ourahmane challenges broader institutional structures such as surveillance, logistics and bureaucratic processes, and the ways these forces are registered. Her recent solo exhibitions include: *Survival in the afterlife*, Portikus, Frankfurt, and De Appel, Amsterdam (2021); *Barzakh*, Kunsthalle Basel and Triangle – Astérides, Marseille (2021); *صرخة شمسية* *Solar Cry*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2020); and *The you in us*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2018), among others. Her work was included in the 34th Bienal de São Paulo (2021) and the New Museum Triennial (2018). With collaborator Alex Ayed, she presented *LAWS OF CONFUSION*, Renaissance Society, Chicago (2021) and was included in *Risquons-Tout*, WIELS Contemporary Art Center, Brussels (2020).

Lydia Ourahmane: Tassili is curated by Kyle Dancewicz, Deputy Director, SculptureCenter.

Lydia Ourahmane's new moving image work *Tassili*, 2022, is commissioned and produced by SculptureCenter, New York; rhizome, Algiers; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis; Mercer Union, Toronto; and Nottingham Contemporary.

Lydia Ourahmane: Tassili is organized in partnership with B7L9 Art Station, Tunis, where it will travel in Spring 2023. Presentations of Ourahmane's video work are planned for 2022-23 in partnership with Mercer Union, Toronto (all 2022); Nottingham Contemporary (Fall 2023); rhizome, Algiers (Winter 2023); and the *Open Space* program of the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (dates forthcoming).

Support

Commissioning support for *Lydia Ourahmane: Tassili* is provided by VIA Art Fund.



Lydia Ourahmane's new moving image work *Tassili*, 2022, is made possible by Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter (VNXXSC).



Additional support for *Lydia Ourahmane: Tassili* is provided by the Kamel Lazaar Foundation and the Harpo Foundation. Research support was provided by Mophradat. In-kind exhibition support is provided by Genelec.

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About VIA Art Fund

VIA Art Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit philanthropic arts organization founded by an international coalition of individuals and private foundations who believe in the central role art plays in society. VIA's activities support innovative, ambitious, and rigorous works of art and endeavors with far-reaching public impact realized in various forms including institutional production and acquisition, exhibitions, public installations, curatorial research, publications, and symposia. Funding artists, curators, and arts organizations around the world, VIA Art Fund awards grants in three categories – Artistic Production Grants, Incubator Grants, and an annual Curatorial Fellowship – that exemplify VIA's core values of *Artistic Production*, *Thought Leadership*, and *Public Engagement*.

About Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter (VNXXSC)

VNXXSC is an ongoing initiative that funds the production of a major artwork by an artist in a selected exhibition at SculptureCenter. The partnership was launched in September 2015 with the commission of *Project for door (After Gaetano Pesce)* (2015), the centerpiece of the exhibition *Anthea Hamilton: Lichen! Libido! Chastity!* for which Anthea Hamilton received the nomination for the 2016 Turner Prize. Now embarking on its fifth partnership, the initiative has provided significant support in

realizing *The Maid* (2018), a large-scale, 2-channel video commission central to the exhibition *Carissa Rodriguez: The Maid; Closed for installation, Fiona Connor, SculptureCenter, #4* (2019), Fiona Connor's first New York solo institutional exhibition; and a major new commission by Rindon Johnson (2021).

Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter

About SculptureCenter

SculptureCenter leads the conversation on contemporary art by supporting artistic innovation and independent thought highlighting sculpture's specific potential to change the way we engage with the world. Positioning artists' work in larger cultural, historical, and aesthetic contexts, SculptureCenter discerns and interprets emerging ideas. Founded by artists in 1928, SculptureCenter provides an international forum that connects artists and audiences by presenting exhibitions, commissioning new work, and generating scholarship.

Since relocating to Long Island City in 2001, SculptureCenter has presented works by over nine hundred artists through its annual exhibition program, and today, it is considered one of New York's most important kunsthalls. Placing emphasis on investment, inclusiveness, independence, transparency, and rigor, SculptureCenter has developed a strong reputation for championing underrecognized and emerging artists, many of whom have gone on to celebrated and substantial careers; these include Nairy Baghramian, Sanford Biggers, Tom Burr, Liz Glynn, Rochelle Goldberg, Leslie Hewitt, Tishan Hsu, Rashid Johnson, Rindon Johnson, Ugo Rondinone, Gedi Sibony, Alexandre Singh, Monika Sosnowska, Mika Tajima, Jesse Wine, Turner Prize winner Charlotte Prodger and nominee Anthea Hamilton, and Hugo Boss Prize winners Anicka Yi and Simone Leigh. SculptureCenter continuously offers a dynamic series of free public programs and events including artist talks, performances, film screenings, and publications.