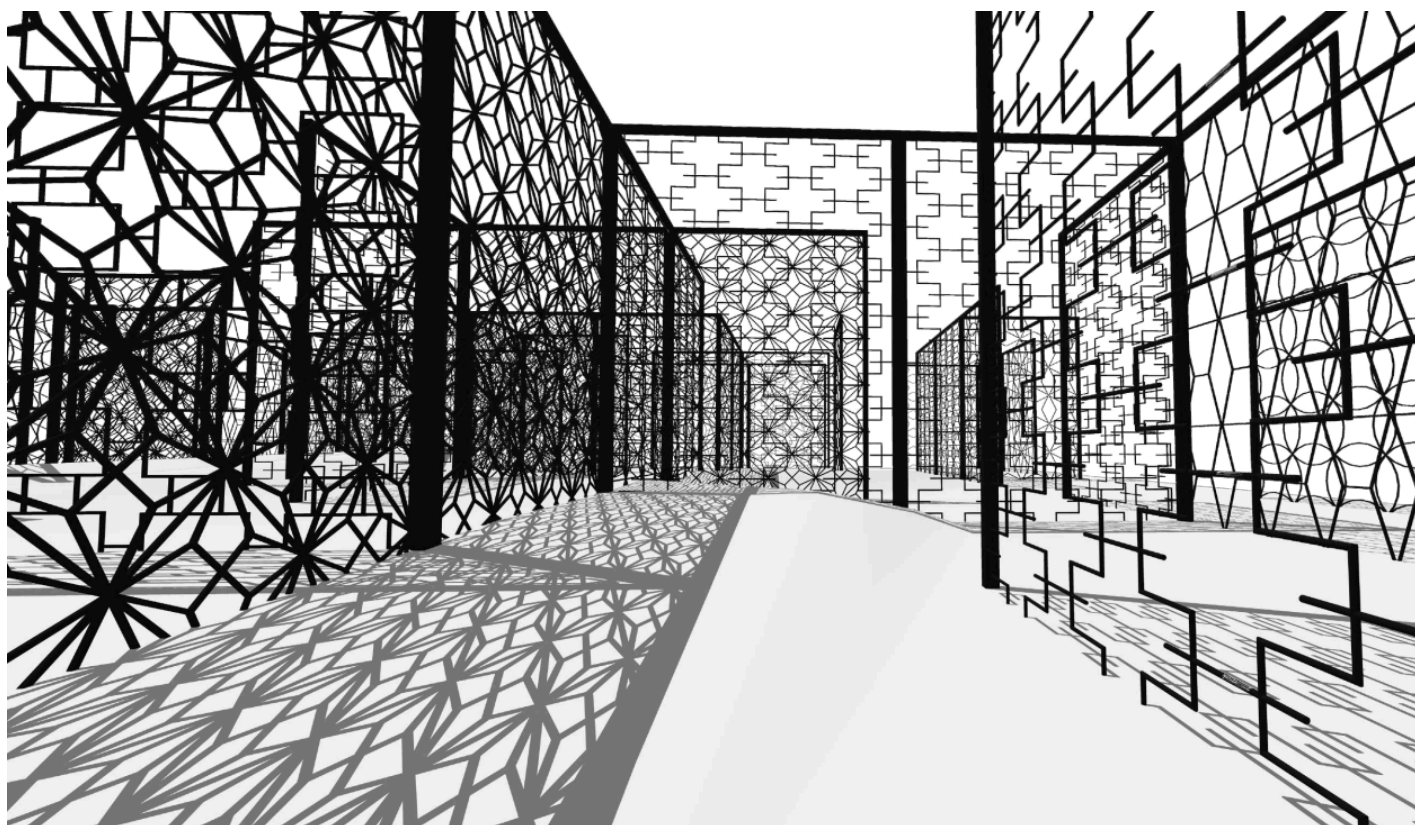


Coral dos Corpos sem Norte

Kiluanji Kia Henda (AO)



Commission and production
BoCA – Biennial of Contemporary Arts

Premiere
September 2025

SYNOPSIS

At the invitation of BoCA, Kiluanji Kia Henda creates a project that takes on two distinct formats: first, a theater show, presented in partnership with the D. Maria II National Theater, then a large-scale installation that includes occasional performative activations, presented in partnership with MAAT.

In the Angolan desert, originally the bottom of an ocean, travellers who return to their homeland are sometimes the target of “pemba/mbindi”, spells intended to keep them in their community and prevent them from leaving again. “Coral dos Corpos sem Norte” considers migration as a process of pemba. Leaving as returning. The journey as staying at home. A curse that follows our every step and carries us back to where we started. A pathway of concentric circles with no beginning and no end.

The diasporic condition, be it forced or chosen, is part of the human condition. However, through these movements, instead of paradise we encounter militarised hellscapes. In particular, those who believe that the European continent offers a new life are met with an appalling reality. According to the artist, since the Enlightenment, Europe has tried to build an image of reason, peace, and morality, being the supremacist force that colonised the African continent, a continent that even after independence, failed to achieve a place of peace to shelter its people. The Mediterranean Sea thus became a graveyard of bodies without a destination. A graveyard of lives lost in the desperate attempt to cross over.



TEAM AND CREDITS

Concept and staging: Kiluanji Kia Henda

Text: Kiluanji Kia Henda and Lucas Parente

Choreography: Kiluanji Kia Henda, Vânia Doutel Vaz and Natacha Campos

Interpreters: Natacha Campos and Lua Aurora

Support for dramaturgy: Zia Soares

Music: Michel Figueiredo (aka Zumbi Albino)

Sound technician: Bernardo Barata

Light design: Iorgos Konstantinidis

Video editing: Lucas Parente

Costumes: Neusa Trovoadá

Modeling and plaster modeling: Eva Lopes

Technical design: Lilianne Kiame

Construction and installation: Forsemat Lda

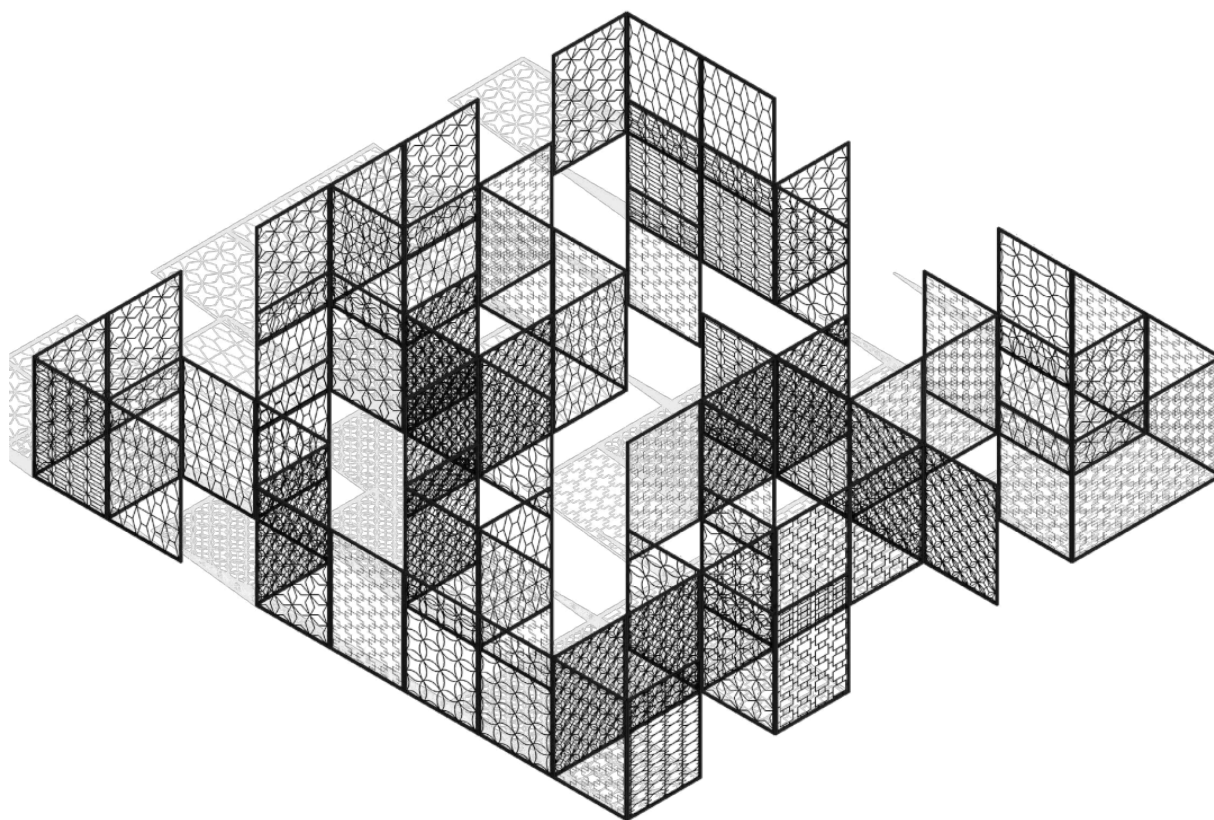
Executive production: Olivia Portellada

Commission and production: BoCA - Biennial of Contemporary Arts

Coproduction: Teatro Nacional D. Maria II (Lisbon), MAAT - Museu de Arte, Arquitectura e Tecnologia (Lisbon)

Duration and classification

55 min, 12+



BIOGRAPHY

Kiluanji Kia Henda



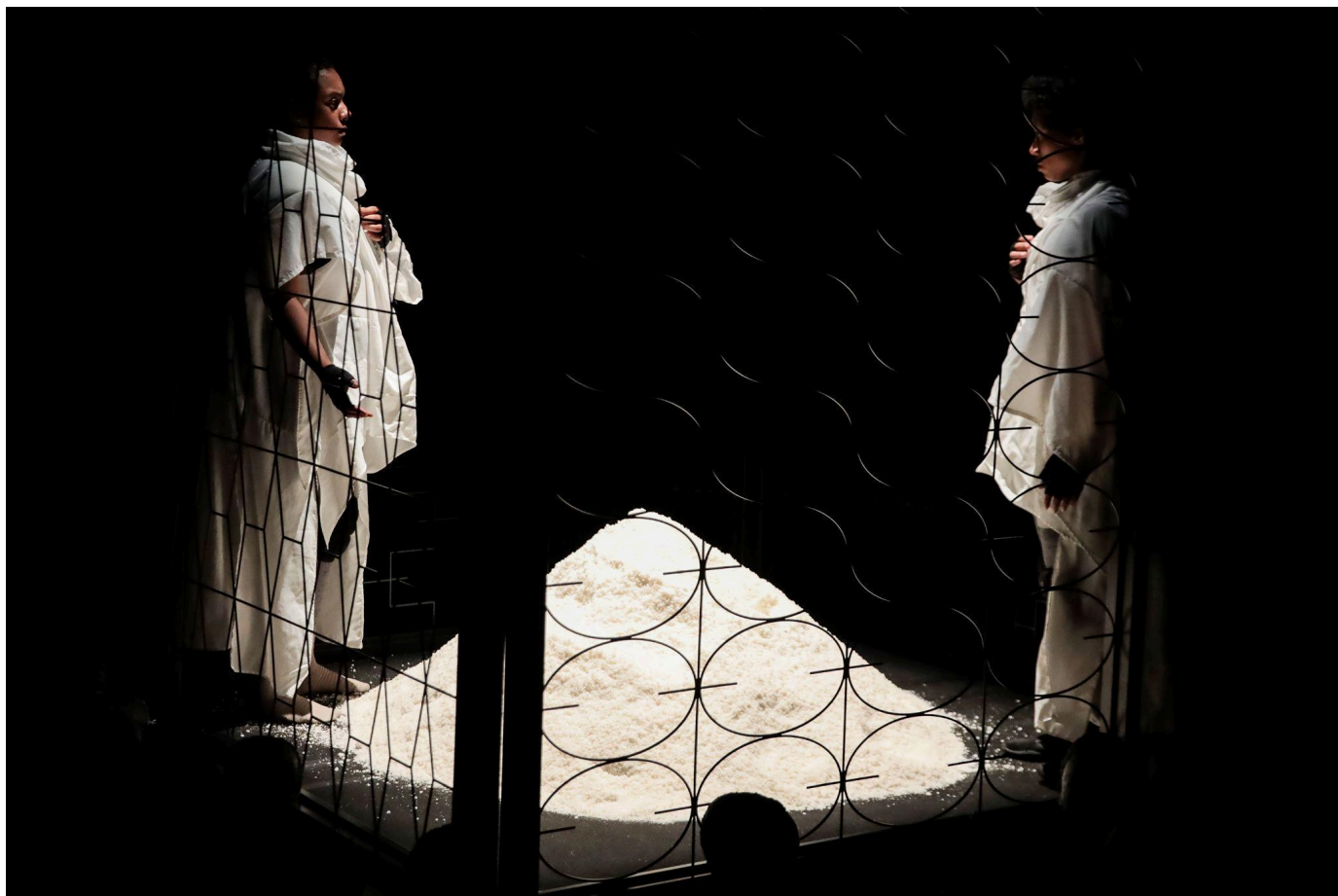
Kiluanji Kia Henda (b. 1979, Angola) lives and works in Luanda. A self-taught artist, his early immersion in photography was profoundly shaped by growing up in a family of photography enthusiasts. His conceptual and avant-garde sensibility was further refined through active engagement with music, experimental theatre, and close collaboration with a collective of emerging artists in Luanda's dynamic contemporary art scene.

Kia Henda employs art as a method for constructing and transmitting history—not by assembling fragments of established historical narratives, but by generating fictional ones. Through photography, video, performance, installation, and sculptural objects, he creates alternative temporalities and imagined contentions, shifting the viewer's perspective on established facts.

Humour and irony are central to his practice, which tackles complex themes such as identity, politics, post-colonial legacies, and African modernism. In a subversive dialogue with history, Kia Henda interrogates the processes of appropriation and manipulation of public spaces and structures, examining how collective memory is shaped by contested representations. His work reflects a nuanced, multidisciplinary approach that bridges critical theory with aesthetic invention.

A frequent practitioner across photography, video, and performance, Kia Henda has taken part in several international residencies, including in Cape Town (2008), Venice (2010), Amman (2013), Sharjah (2014), and most recently, a three-month residency at LUMA Arles in France. He was awarded the Frieze Artist Award in 2018 and received the National Prize for Art and Culture from the Angolan Ministry of Culture in 2012.

His work has been featured in numerous biennials, including Venice, Dakar, São Paulo, and Gwangju, as well as in group exhibitions at major international institutions, such as the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, 2020), Zeitz MOCAA (Cape Town, 2019), Tate Modern (London, 2018), Smithsonian Institution (Washington, 2015), Guggenheim Museum (Bilbao, 2015), and the New Museum (New York, 2014).





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