

## Grada Kilomba: 18 Verses

May 12 – July 1, 2023

Exhibition will be temporarily closed from May 19–20

540 West 25th Street  
New York



Left to right: Portrait of Grada Kilomba © Ute Langkafel; Installation view of Grada Kilomba | *One soul, one memory* featuring *18 Verses* (2022) at Goodman Gallery in London, courtesy Goodman Gallery

New York – Pace is pleased to present an exhibition of the work *18 Verses* (2022) by Grada Kilomba at its 540 West 25th Street flagship in New York from May 12 to July 1. The exhibition, organized in collaboration with Goodman Gallery, marks the artist’s debut presentation with Pace. Kilomba, who joined Pace’s program in the US in 2023, has nurtured a practice centering on decolonial storytelling. This exhibition will spotlight her sculptural installation *18 Verses*, which has never before been exhibited in the US.

Through her work spanning performance, staged readings, video, and sculptural and sound installations, Kilomba—a Berlin-based Portuguese artist—draws on memory, trauma, gender, postcolonialism, and notions of selfhood to interrogate concepts of knowledge, power, and cyclical violence. Informed by psychoanalysis, the artist’s unique practice of storytelling gives body, voice, movement, and form to her own texts, creating subversive and poetic imagery. Her process interrupts the collective imaginary, and it is guided by a series of questions: “What stories are told? Where are they told? How are they told? And told by whom?”

Drawn from Kilomba’s acclaimed large-scale installation, *O Barco | The Boat* (2021), a 32-meter-long sculptural slave ship memorializing the Middle Passage, *18 Verses* continues using the boat as a metaphor to explore the relationship between power and historical repetition. This sculptural installation reveals the silhouette of a shipwreck, alluding to migrant routes across the Mediterranean and other global waters today, while echoing images, gestures, and sounds that insinuate a sense of cyclical violence. As the artist states, “When history is not told properly, its barbarity repeats itself.”

The installation is composed of burnt wooden pieces, each featuring an engraved verse from a poem written by the artist and hand-painted with gold leaf. In a gesture of affection and warmth, these verses are translated into six languages: Kimbundu, Yoruba, Creole from Cape Verde, Portuguese, English, and Arabic from Syria, evoking a timeless and resonant narrative about old empires and post-coloniality. The burnt wooden pieces are mantled in long segments of black fabric, which can be understood as symbolizing water or an imaginary female entity, guardian of the verses. After the wood undergoes a traditional burning process, it is immersed in a sonorous landscape in which human breathing negotiates its own space amid the sound of wind and waves. As such, *18 Verses* explores the material duality of ancient techniques and contemporary sound technologies.

An artist-led discussion with scholar Tina Campt presented by Pace Live on May 11 at 5 p.m.—ahead of the exhibition’s opening reception from 6–8 p.m. that evening—will complement Kilomba’s presentation of *18 Verses*. Further details about this live conversation, which will take place amid the artist’s presentation, will be revealed in the coming weeks. Visit [pacegallery.com/pacelive](https://pacegallery.com/pacelive) for updates.

*18 Verses* will be installed on the seventh floor of Pace’s 540 West 25th Street gallery from May 12 to July 1. The exhibition will be closed on Friday, May 19 and Saturday, May 20. The show will reopen to the public during regular gallery hours on Tuesday, May 23.

**Grada Kilomba** is a Berlin-based Portuguese artist whose works draws on memory, trauma, gender, and post-colonialism, interrogating concepts of knowledge, power, and violence. “What stories are told? How are they told? And told by whom?” are constant questions in Kilomba’s body of work. Performances, staged readings, videos, sculptural installations, and sound pieces all become conduits for the artist’s unique practice of decolonial storytelling. Kilomba holds a Doctorate in Philosophy from the Freie Universität Berlin and has been recently awarded an Honoris Causa Doctorate by ISPA, Lisbon. She has also lectured at several international universities.

Kilomba has participated in La Biennale de Lubumbashi VI (2019); the 10. Berlin Biennale (2018); Documenta 14 (2017), Kassel; and the Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo (2016). In recent years, she has presented her work at the Norval Foundation in Cape Town (2022); Somerset House in London (2022); the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in Helsinki (2022); the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2021); Castello Di Rivoli Museo D’Arte Contemporanea in Turin (2021); the Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions in Tokyo (2020); and other international venues. Kilomba’s work can be found in many prominent public and private collections around the world, including Tate Modern in London; the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; the Hartwig Art Foundation in Amsterdam; the Rennie Collection in Toronto; and the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, among others.

**Pace** is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has eight locations worldwide, including a European foothold in London and Geneva, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace’s long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace’s engagement with Silicon Valley’s technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing.






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