



ANN GOLLIFER (BOTSWANA)

Terra Incognita 1

2018

Oil stick on linen / Huile sur toile

200 x 140 cm (78.7 x 55.1 inches)



ANN GOLLIFER (BOTSWANA)

Terra Incognita 2

2018

Oil stick on linen / Huile sur toile

140 x 200 cm (55.1 x 78.7 inches)



ANN GOLLIFER (BOTSWANA)

Terra Incognita 3

2018

Oil stick on linen / Huile sur toile

140 x 200 cm (55.1 x 78.7 inches)

ANN GOLLIFER

Ann Gollifer's (b. 1960) work explores the complex entanglements of history, identity, place and belonging. Her art draws on her South American, British and African heritage, and their shared histories of conquest and empire. Her "Terra Incognita" maps were inspired by a visit to the Royal Swedish Scientific Society archives, where she viewed 19th century maps made by British and Swedish explorers Livingstone and Andersson. Those maps were made of small sections of paper glued onto linen, which could be folded into a small portable package, carried on expedition and edited by hand when necessary.

The control and representation of geographical space was central to the colonising project. Mapping was central to colonial endeavours to explore and reconstruct space, often blind to the presence of its indigenous inhabitants. More broadly, maps have been employed by states in the exercise of political power. The selective inclusions, omissions and classifications contained in maps signify particular human intent.

The artist writes that "The word 'territory' immediately brings to mind a sense of current and future ownership. I wanted to make maps of the unknown, that thing on the edge of consciousness, a fading memory, a forgotten dream, vanishing as it is almost remembered, unavailable for division or settlement." Gollifer chose specific colours motivated by von Linnaeus' classification of humans divided into four groups: White Europeans, Red Indians, Brown Asians, Black Africans. "The size of the maps was made to fit my body print, because I decided the best place to start a search for the unknown was in myself."

Gollifer has lived and worked in Gaborone, Botswana since 1985. A multidisciplinary artist, her own navigation of identity informs much of her work: she was born in a remote part of Guyana to British and Warao-Arawak parents, who traveled and worked widely during her childhood, and completed a Masters in History of Art at Edinburgh University (1983). She has exhibited in multiple group and solo shows across multiple countries, and her work has been collected by the British Museum, the National Museum of Botswana and the Triangle International Art Workshops amongst others.

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