

US

Bougaard | Zenaéca Singh

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Our sense of identity is bound up with the concept of community - the idea that we are social creatures, drawn together by shared experiences, beliefs and values. We are always entangled not only with the lives of others, but with the particular stories, histories, places, practices, materials and cultures of the people with whom we find common ground. Through contrasting approaches to collective archives, artists Bougaard and Zenaéca Singh look at how identity is constructed through stories, place and language, and how the legacies of the past endure in present-day South Africa.

Bougaard's work focuses on the (de)construction of so-called "Coloured" identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Through the transformation and reclamation of language over time, particularly through children's games, Bougaard creates iconographic word-based works made out of handmade paper. These works distil the hybridised language of *gamtal* into a powerful reflection on mixed heritage and the constantly renegotiated archive of identity.

Meanwhile, Singh's paintings, sculptures, and installations interrogate the largely state-produced archive on indentured South African Indians (1860 – 1911), particularly regarding the long history and economy of sugar production in parts of the country. Drawing on a range of metaphoric associations of sugar, which Singh uses as a medium in its various states of crystallisation and fluidity, her work highlights how everyday materials, particularly those associated with the domestic sphere, are related to histories of migration and subjugation.

Together, their works offer a lens through which to explore the themes of heritage and inheritance in a contemporary South Africa that bears the traces of, and is always indebted to, its troubled past. The selection of works on paper, sculptures, and paintings showcased in the exhibition *Us* reveals the enduring legacies of colonialism and apartheid, and reminds us of the ongoing struggle to construct a meaningful and inclusive sense of community and identity in the present.



Zenaéca Singh

(b.2000, Port Shepstone, South Africa)

Zenaéca Singh's work explores the complex history of the sugar economy in South Africa and its entanglement with exploitative labour practices, migration, colonialism, and the dynamics of the domestic sphere. Working across painting, sculpture and installation, Singh interrogates the largely state-produced archive of images and text related to indentured South African Indians in the period 1860 - 1911. Her current work translates this archival material into image sequences and alluring sculptures made from molasses and sugar in different states of solidity and fluidity.

Her sculptures of melting sugar ships recall the fluid connection between India and South Africa across the Indian Ocean, a relationship fortified by Britain's colonisation of both countries in the late 19th Century. Fixed in resin, frozen in a state of perpetual transition and collapse, these ships evoke the temporal suspension of the archive: it is both fluid and static, borne of the past and unresolved in the present and future.

Singh's work uses domestic objects and scenarios to contextualise her sculptures and painting, tracing connections between the sugar economy and its impacts on domestic culture and conventions for South African Indians. Singh acknowledges the gendered history of the home space, both within her specific research frame and more broadly, situating her own making and identity in relation to this history.

An MFA candidate at the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Michaelis School of Fine Art, where she received multiple awards for her BA degree in Fine Art. Singh is also a UCT Accelerated Transformation of the Academic Programme (ATAP) Fellow. She has exhibited her work in Cape Town at the Michaelis School of Fine Art (2022), at the Slave Lodge, in collaboration with the Association of Visual Arts (2023), and at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair (2023) as part of an intervention by Church Projects. She has also shown her work in Johannesburg as part of Fresh Voices at Guns & Rain (2022) and with Turbine Art Fair as part of TAF Paper (2023).



Zenaéca Singh
High Tea, 2023
Sugar, clay and resin
24 x 23 x 23 cm



High Tea, 2023 (detail)



High Tea, 2023 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
The Beginning, 2022
sugar, plaster of Paris and
resin
13.5 x 21 x 9 cm



The Beginning, 2022 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
Finding Home, 2022
Sugar, plaster of paris and resin
22 x 22 x 9 cm



Finding Home, 2022 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
Here's One For Your Sweet Tooth,
2022
Sugar, plaster of paris and resin
21 x 16 x 25 cm



Here's One For Your Sweet Tooth, 2022 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
Five Generations, 2022
Sugar, plaster of paris and resin
25 x 27 x 26 cm

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Five Generations, 2022 (detail)





Zenaéca Singh

A Little Sugar Goes a Long Way, 2022

Sugar and plaster of paris

Set of 14, Variable dimensions: largest approx. 23 x 11 x 19 cm

Large:

Medium:

Small:



A Little Sugar Goes a Long Way, 2022 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
Why is There Hope Where There is Tea?, 2022
Sugar and clay
Set of 8 cups and 2 saucers
7 x 13 x 13 cm per piece
for set /



Why is There Hope Where There is Tea?, 2022 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
The Sweet Successors, 2022
Molasses, sugar and resin on canvas
55 x 48 x 7 cm



The Sweet Successors, 2022 (installation view)



Zenaéca Singh
Home Sweet Home, 2023
Molasses, sugar and resin on canvas
43 x 60 x 1.5 cm

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Home Sweet Home, 2023 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
My Coolie Mary's, 2023
Molasses, sugar and resin on canvas
43 x 60 x 1.5 cm

My Coolie Mary's, 2023 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
Bittersweet Impressions, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste and shelves
Dimensions variable, 27 pieces



Bittersweet Impressions, 2022 (detail)

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Bittersweet Impressions, 2022 (detail)



Bittersweet Impressions, 2022 (detail)



Zenaéca Singh
Sweet Sisters, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste
Set of 2
12 x 9 cm each
/ (set)



Zenaéca Singh
Home, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste
Set of 3
12 x 9 cm each
/ (set)



Zenaéca Singh
Strength, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste
Set of 3
12 x 9 cm each
/ (set)



Zenaéca Singh
The Matriarch, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste
Set of 2
12 x 9 cm and 12 x 7 cm
/ (set)



Zenaéca Singh
A Sweet Assembly, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste
Set of 2
12 x 9 cm each
/ (set)



Zenaéca Singh

M, 2022

Molasses on sugar paste

Set of 6

variable sizes: 8 x 8 cm, 12 x 9 cm each

/ (set)



Zenaéca Singh
Granny and Ma, 2022
Molasses on sugar paste
set of 9
variable sizes: 8 x 8 cm and 12 x 9 cm each
/ (set)

Bougard

(b.1993, Johannesburg, South Africa)

Bougard is a Johannesburg-based artist who uses explorations of language, childhood games and artisanal papermaking to speak about hybrid identities in post-apartheid South Africa. In particular, her work deconstructs and re-examines notions of “Coloured” identity, unpicking the cultural traces and practices that have been, and still are, associated with “Colouredness” today.

The term “Coloured” is an apartheid-era racial classification, first officially used in the South African Population Registration Act of 1950, to refer to individuals of mixed racial heritage. The term still has purchase in post-apartheid South Africa, in both official and unofficial contexts, although many members of the so-called Coloured community are circumspect about its use.

Bougard proposes an alternative version of the word “Coloured”, the phonetically approximate “Kullid”, as a liberating creolisation of the bureaucratic language of apartheid. Rather than a new way of categorising individuals according to their race, Bougard sees the word “Kullid” as a linguistic vessel for her own lived experience of hybrid identity. In her work she activates and acknowledges the language Afrikaaps (a dialect related to Afrikaans), specifically using phrases from the slang dialect Gamtaal, which is associated with the “Coloured” community of the Cape Flats, near Cape Town.

Bougard works fluidly between sculpture, sound, installation and papermaking, allowing the conceptual demands of the work to dictate the medium. Her handmade paper works bring together millions of fibres of mixed origin, a metaphor for the almost limitless plurality of Kullid experience. Her sculptures capture culturally resonant objects, such as Sunlight soap, Amala oil, Afrikaaps phrases, and wooden spoons, among others, which are then encased in resin. Through this process, she memorialises her everyday life.

In early 2023 Bougard completed a Master of Fine Arts degree (*cum laude*) at the University of Johannesburg, exhibiting her final body of work in a solo show at the Origins Centre Museum at the University of the Witwatersrand (also in Johannesburg). In 2021, as part of her Honours in Fine Arts, Bougard had a solo show at Constitution Hill. Prior to this she has shown her work in group shows with Guns & Rain (2021, 2022) and in the 2019 Sasol New Signatures Award exhibition.



Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Untitled III, 2023
Spices cast in resin
14.5 x 7 x 5cm each
/ (pair)

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Unbodied Series: Untitled III, 2023 (detail)





Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Untitled II, 2023
Spices cast in resin
14.5 x 7 x 5cm each
/ (pair)

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Unbodied Series: Untitled II, 2023 (detail)



Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Untitled IV, 2023
Spices cast in resin
14.5 x 7 x 5cm each
/ (pair)



Unbodied series: Untitled IV, 2023 (detail)



Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Untitled I, 2023
Spices cast in resin
14.5 x 7 x 5cm each
/ (pair)

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Unbodied series: Untitled IV, 2023 (detail)





Bougaard
Poppie on a Swing, 2023
Found object cast in resin, mannequin,
tyre and wooden rig.
198 x 230 x 230 cm

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*Poppie on a Swing, 2023
(detail)*

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Poppie on a Swing, 2023 (detail)





Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Koppe, 2023
Amy toys cast in resin
26 x 30 x 30 cm



Unbodied Series: Koppe, 2023 (detail)



Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Koppe, 2023
Army toys cast in resin
26 x 30 x 30 cm



Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Kabouter, 2023
Wooden spoon cast in resin
26 x 30 x 30 cm



Bougaard
Unbodied Series: Kabouter, 2023
Wooden spoon cast in resin
26 x 30 x 30 cm



Bougaard
Geitjie, 2022
Found object cast in resin, mannequin clothed in
screen-printed interfacing
117 x 59.7 x 54 cm



Geitjie, 2022 (detail)





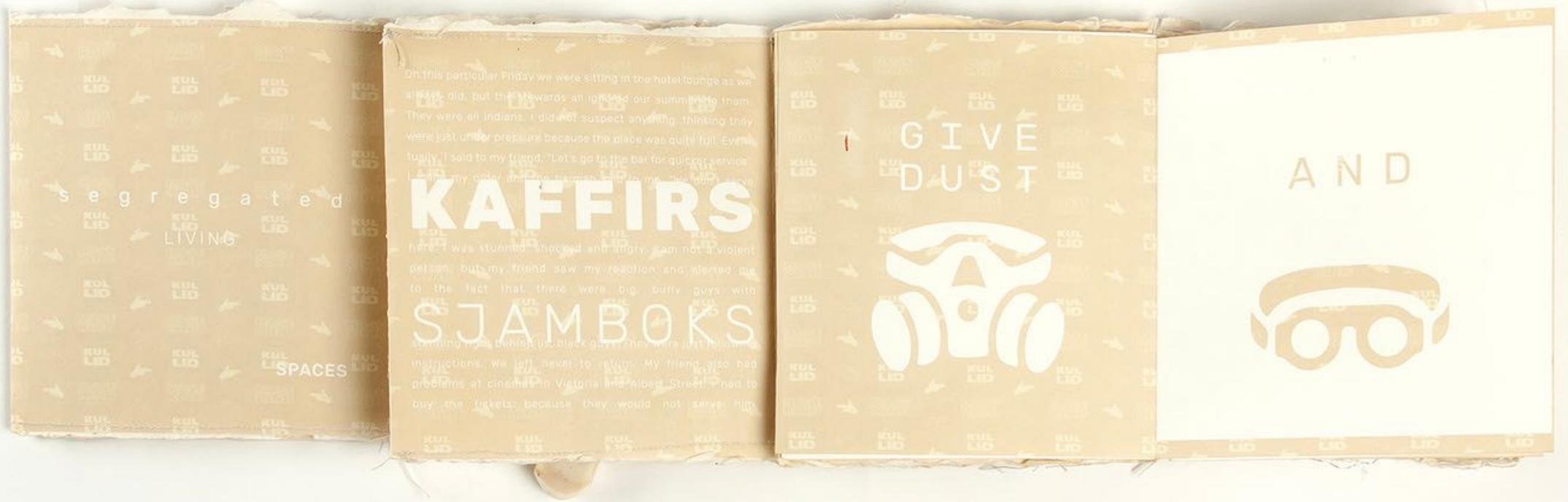
Bougaard

Uncle China's Memories II, 2023

Paper watermark, cut-out and
embedding in handmade paper

17.5 x 16 x 2 cm (folded)

17.5 x 16 x 400 cm (extended)



Uncle China's Memories II, 2023 (details)



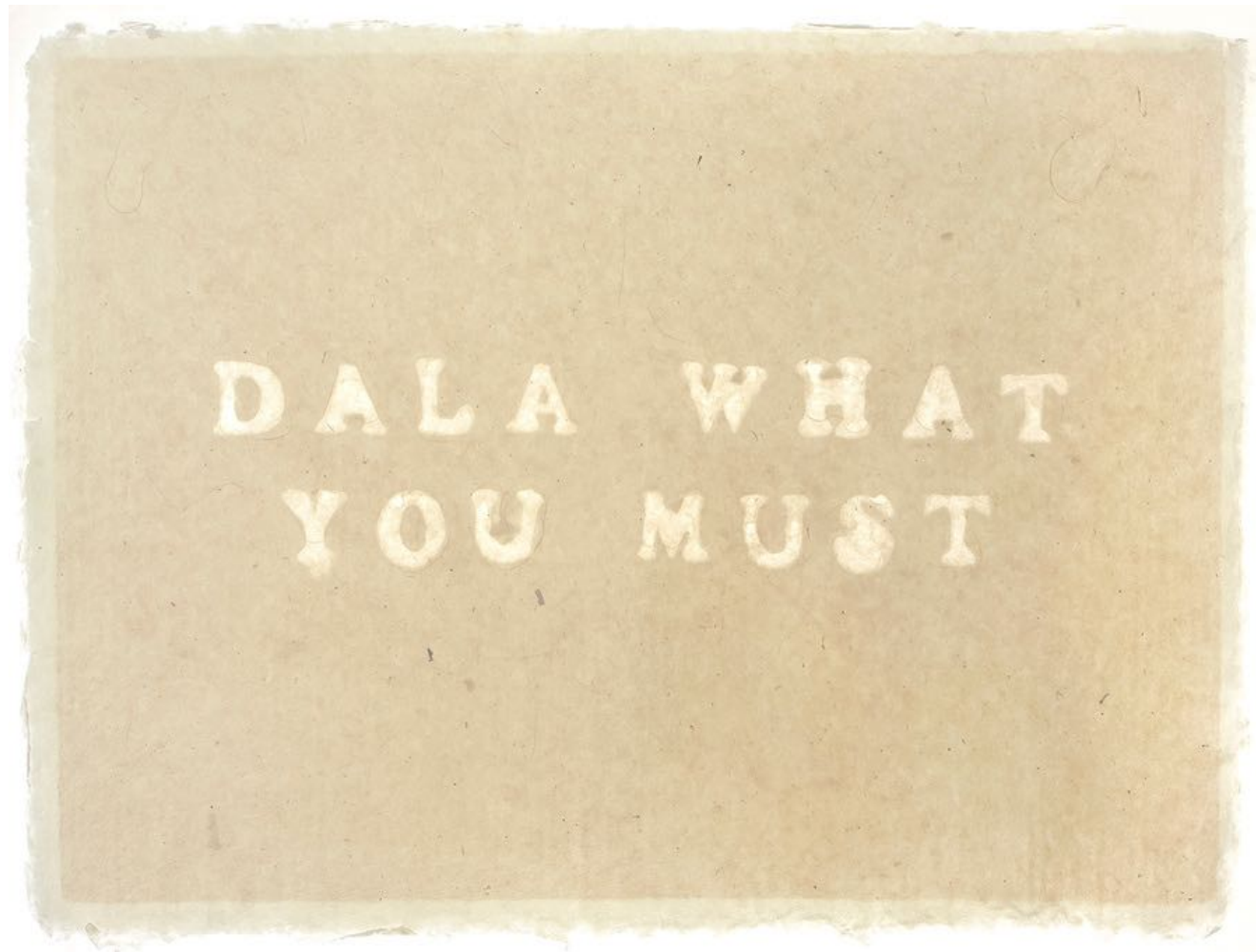
Uncle China's Memories II, 2023 (details)



Bougaard
Kullid I (Bietjie Gam series), 2022
Paper watermark in handmade paper
49.5 x 65.2 cm
Variable edition of 3



Bougaard
Kullid II (Bietjie Gam series), 2022
Handmade paper cutout
49.5 x 65.2 cm
Variable edition of 3



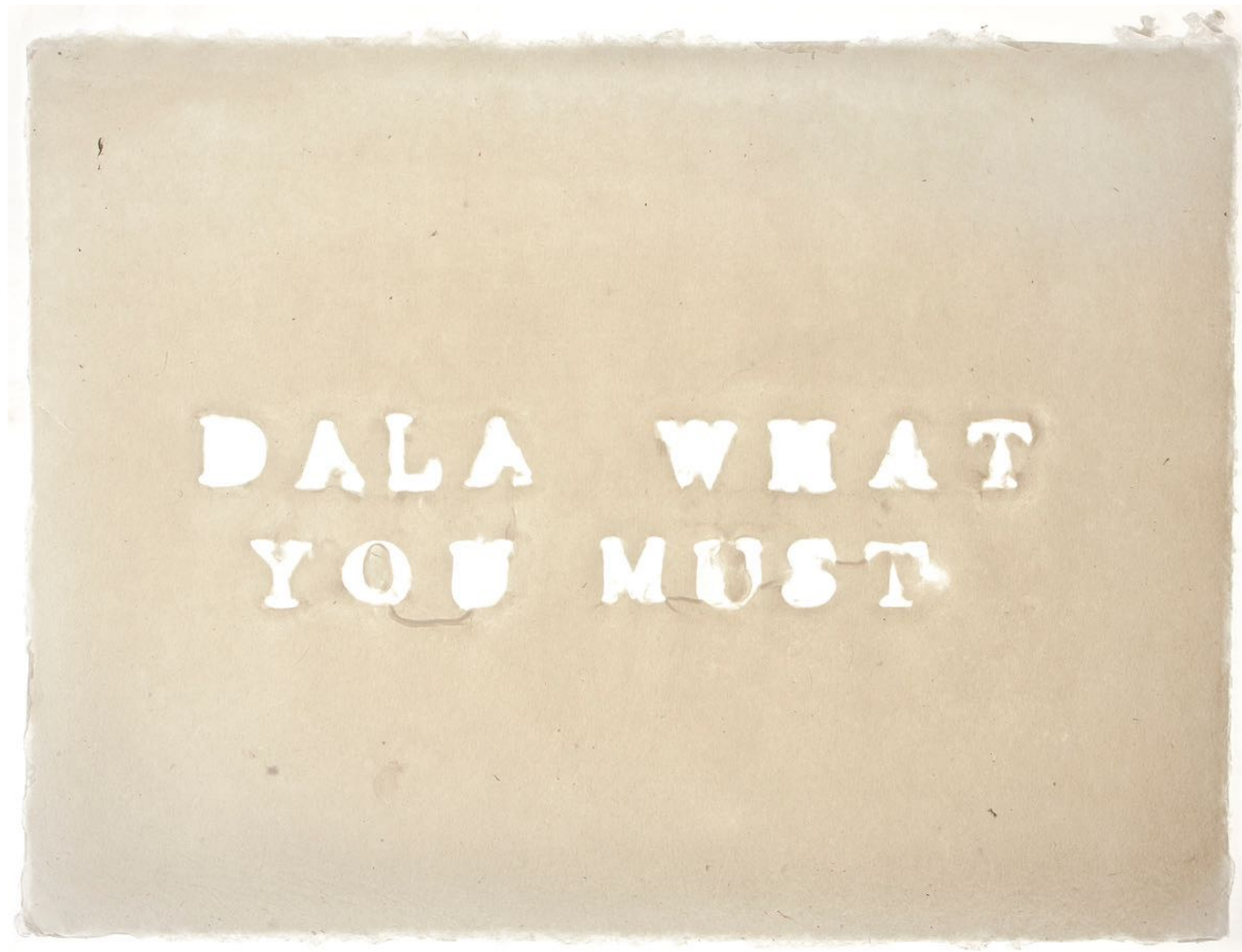
Bougaard

Dala What You Must I (Bietjie Gam series), 2022

Paper watermark in handmade paper

49.5 x 65.2 cm

Variable edition of 3



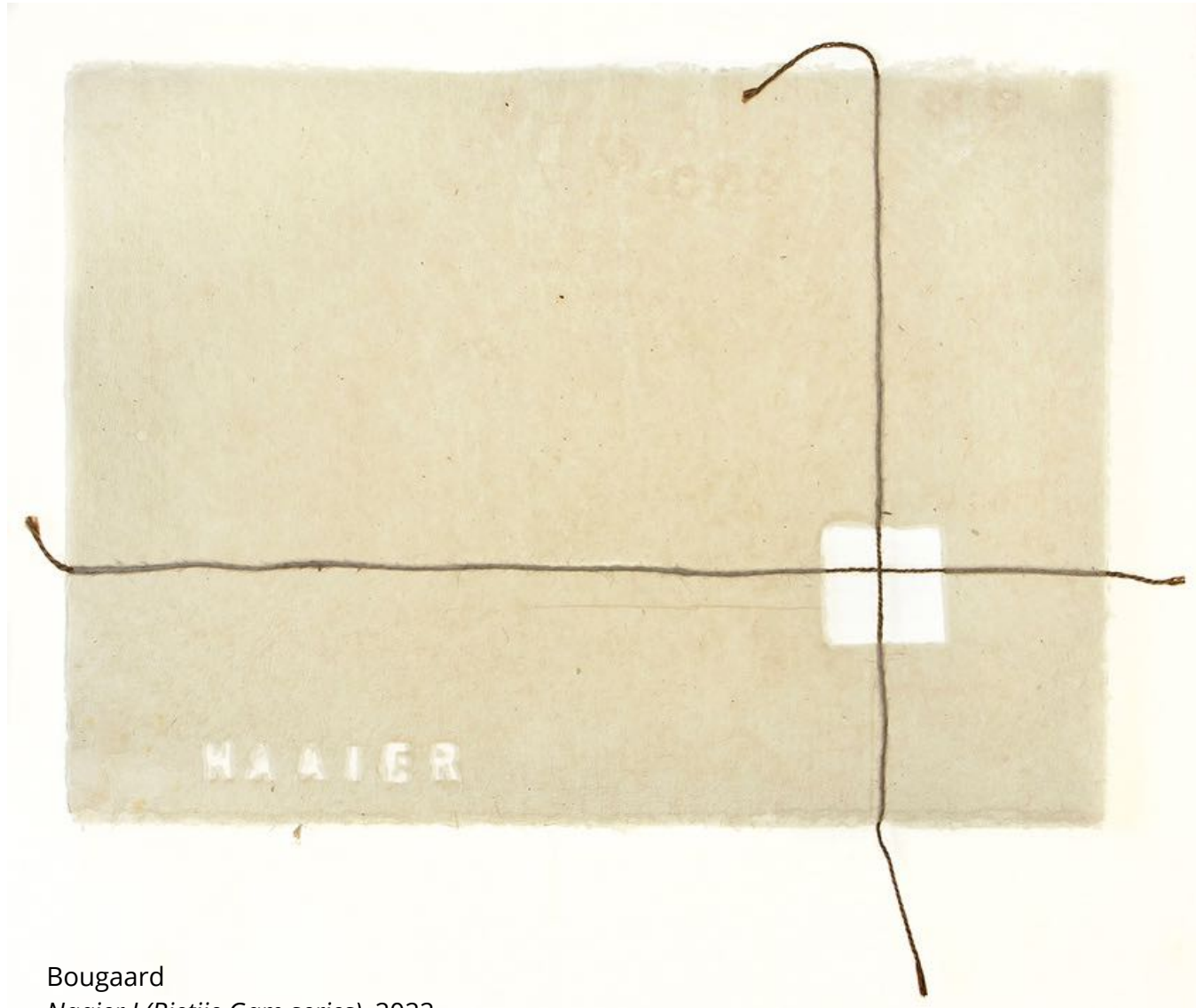
Bougaard

Dala What You Must II (Bietjie Gam series), 2022

handmade paper cutout

49.5 x 65.2 cm

variable edition of 3



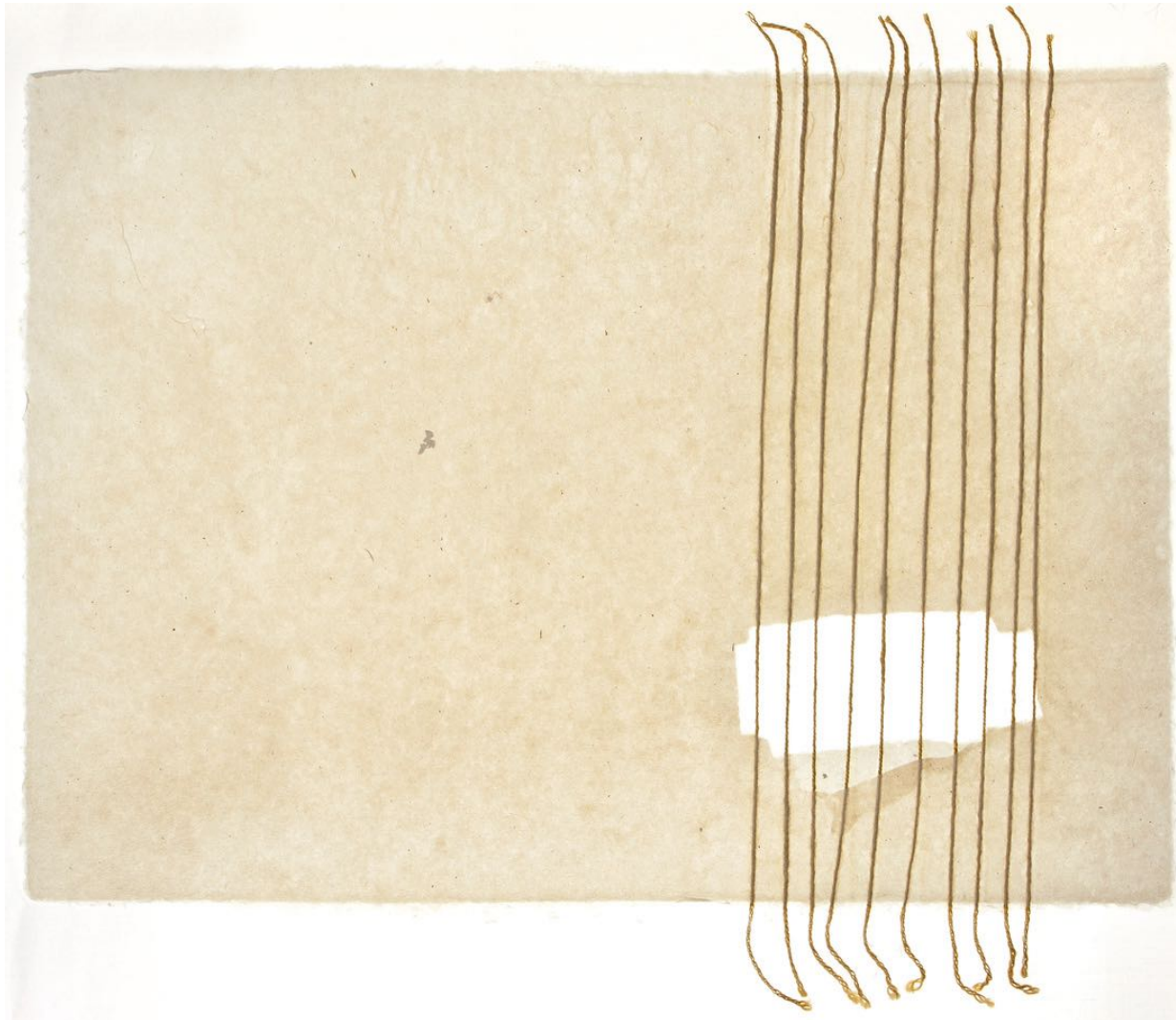
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Naaier I (Bietjie Gam series), 2022

Paper watermark, cut-out and embedding in handmade paper

45.8 x 62.8 cm

Variable edition of 3



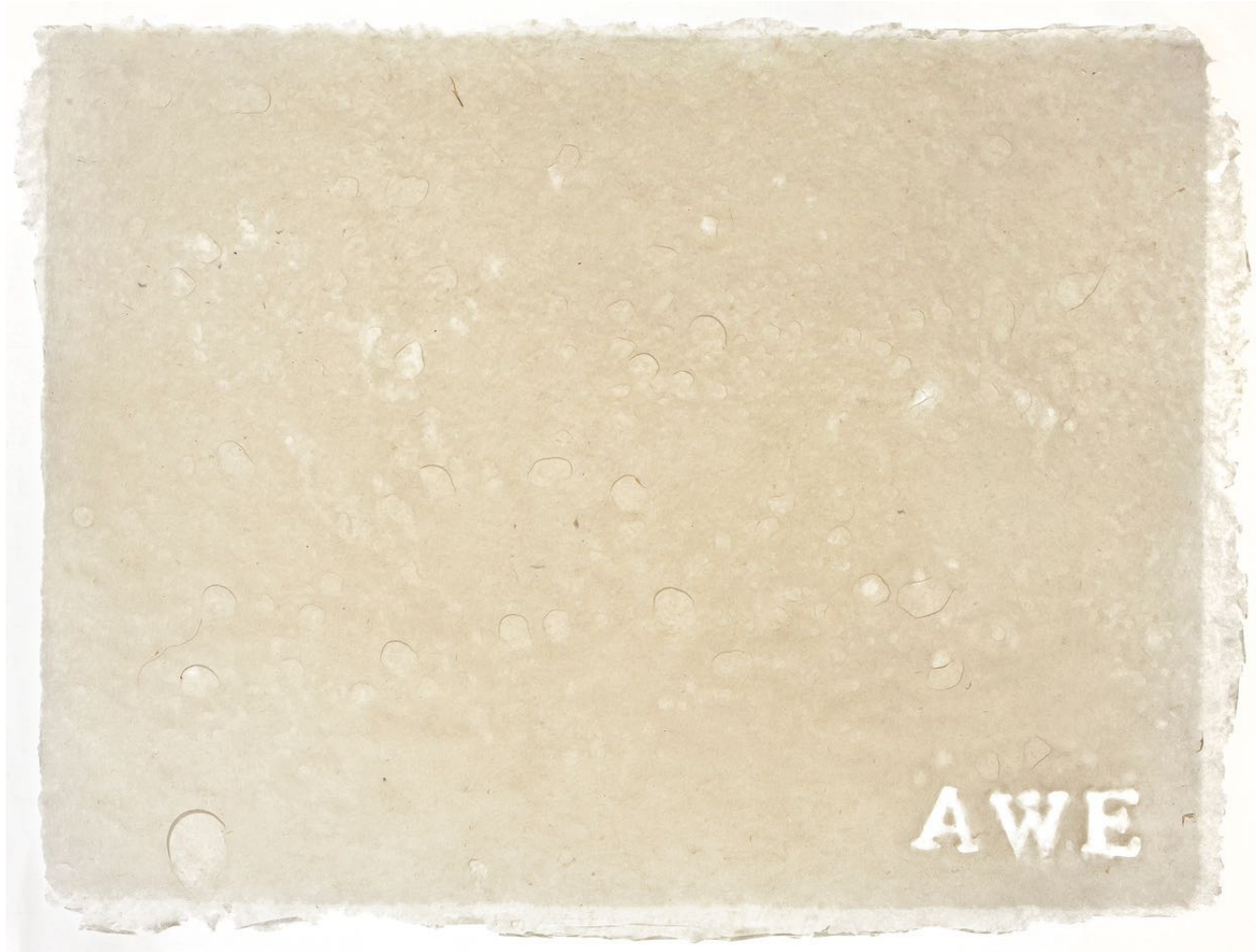
Bougaard

Naaier II (Bietjie Gam series), 2022

Paper watermark, cut-out and embedding in handmade paper

45.8 x 62.8 cm

Variable edition of 3



Bougaard
Awe II (Bietjie Gam series), 2022
Handmade paper cut-out
51 x 67.5 cm
Variable edition of 3



Bougaard
Awe I (Bietjie Gam series), 2022
Paper watermark in handmade paper
48.5 x 65.5 cm
Variable edition of 3



Bougaard
Masekind (Bietjie Sturvy Series I), 2023
Watermark on Fabriano paper
Variable edition of 3
169 x 120.5 cm

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Masekind

Masekind (Bietjie Sturvy Series I), 2023 (detail)

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