



Nina Johnson

Cassi Namoda Outside the Witch Doctor's House
September 7th - September 29th, 2018

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Cassi Namoda Outside the Witch Doctor's House
September 7- September 29
Opening Reception September 7th at 6pm

Nina Johnson Gallery is pleased to present a selection of large-scale paintings by Cassi Namoda, on display September 7th - 29th, 2018. The paintings in *Outside the Witch Doctor's House* reveal the shifting parallax between Western and African understandings of history and time: how life is experienced on a personal level, and how that experience shifts in a moment of globalized flow. With fast, fervent brushwork, Namoda deploys tropes of Western canonical painting, as well as the global language of cinematic composition, to portray the cadence of African village life: dim barrooms, slowly strolling animals, earthen huts, and witch doctors. The result is subversive and unsettling, exotic and banal.

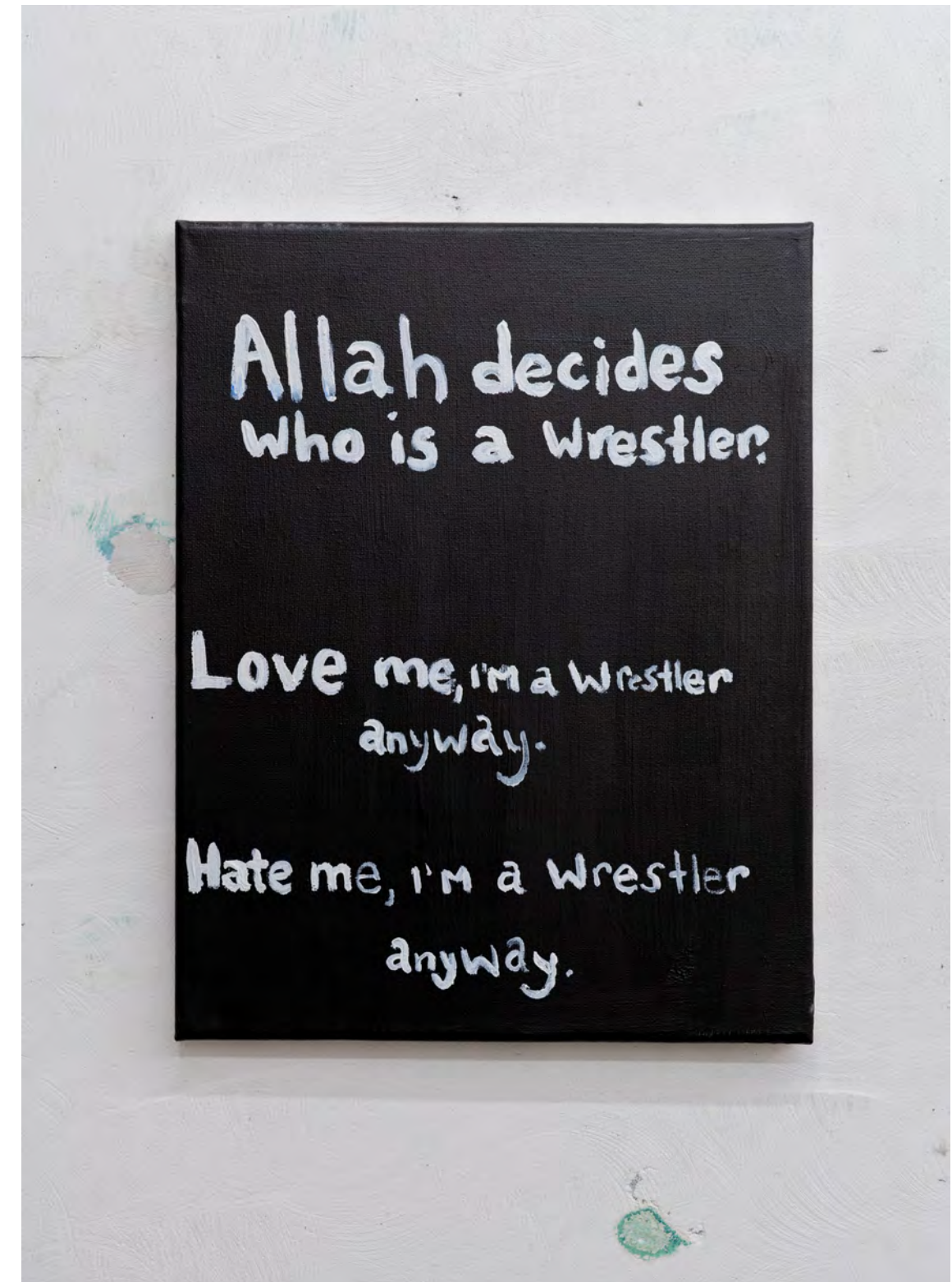
Cassi Namoda was born in Maputo, Mozambique to an American father and a Mozambican mother, and then raised in cities across Africa, Haiti, and in the United States. Her paintings reflect this nomadic upbringing, as well as the near-constant mobility of her adult years. Painting is but one part of a catholic cultural sensibility—one also informed by cinema, fashion, and literature. Her studio practice is unanchored from the studio itself; she paints on the move: on the road, in hotels and Airbnbs.

The artist completed the paintings in *Outside the Witch Doctor's House* over several weeks living in a house in Golden Glades, Florida. Tropical geography infuses the paintings, as do the rhythms of life tempered by sleep and the ocean. Yet the vibrant and brooding works shift towards an African context: one of physical impoverishment but spiritual wealth.

Often using paintings to reflect upon literary works, here Namoda responds to the the Kenyan priest and religious philosopher John Mbiti's seminal *African Religions & Philosophy* (1961). In the book, which compares western and African forms of belief, Mbiti focuses on two Swahili notions of time. *Zamani*—the limitless graveyard of time—surrounds *Sasha*: the recent past, the present, and the near future. In other words, the small amount of time that we can grasp. Positioning *Outside the Witch Doctor's House* between these two poles of temporal understanding, Namoda's paintings reverberate between the mythological and the quotidian. They elevate the everyday, imbuing it with a supernatural quality.

These domestic tableaux—filled with priests and gamblers, a reclining woman with bewitching eyes, and a bleeding rainbow that seems both a sacrifice and blessing—combine the lush, languid sensuality of African arthouse cinema with the line work of Max Beckmann, the brash palette of Matisse, and the dream logic of Marc Chagall. As a biracial artist responding to East Africa's Lusophone tradition, Namoda borrows from disparate genres, art forms, and historical eras. The result is distinctly post-colonial: a body of work that refers both to its own limits, and to the unseen influences existing far beyond the horizon—entangling what the viewer knows with what they've never seen before.

Cassi Namoda (b. 1988, Maputo, Mozambique) is an artist, curator, and fashion designer based in Los Angeles. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Island of Earth* at Front Room Gallery, Los Angeles (2017), *Meat Is Meat + Our Nightly Bread* at OOF Books, Los Angeles (2017), *Bar Texas 1971* at Library Street Collective, Detroit (2018), and *We Killed Mangy Dog* at Harper's Books, East Hampton (2018).



Allah Decides Who is a Wrestler
2018
Acrylic on canvas
14 x 11 in.
\$2,500



Papa Poulet Crying Over Mashed Chilies and the Nostalgia of Home
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas
67.5 x 54.5 in.
\$10,000





Goodnight Mercado Boy and Sad Headless Palm Trees
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
56 x 58in.
\$9,000



God is a Spirit
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
53 x 53 in
\$6,000



Outside the Witch Doctor's House
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
61 x 85 in.
\$12,000





Cassi's Mae (Mother)
2018
Acrylic on canvas.
8 x 10 in
\$1,500



Afro Pessimism
2018
Acrylic on canvas.
11 x 14 in
\$3,000

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Cassi Namoda *Outside the Witch Doctor's House*
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Godfather
2018
Acrylic on canvas.
18 x 14 in.
NFS



Sasha & Zamani
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
40 x 38.5 in
\$6,000



Florist of the Nostalgia Graveyard
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
40.5 x 47.5 in.
\$8,000





Maria's Ill Fate
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
36 x 50 in.
\$6,000



Medicine Man on a Visit to Laureço Marques
2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas.
57.5 x 48 in.
\$8,000