

SONIA MARTINS MATEUS PORTFOLIO

WWW.SONIAMARTINSMATEUS.COM



Sonia Martins Mateus is the descendant of a Portuguese family who had to flee Portugal for economic reasons during the Salazar dictatorship, and is originally from a village called Perais (Beira Baixa). She is interested in history, the territory and its memory, our footprints, the notion of displacement, popular cultures and pagan mythologies.

As a result of her family's complex heritage of displacement and movement, she travels to remote, rural, even arid and desert territories.

Through her work collecting materials, documents and testimonies, her works unfold in different forms - sculptures, drawings, photographs or 'landscape-sculptures' (installations) - which are all traces of a personal and collective history, of a popular and universal culture at the same time. Her work has a strong poetic quality, containing both gentleness and brutality, a strange in-between where our relationship with our origins lies, whatever they may be: family, geographical or social.

She draws her inspiration from both traditional craft techniques and the DIY techniques of her village and surrounding area. Her language is dry and arid, rocky and burnt. Her materials are those of construction and domestic space.

Driven by notions of entropy and landscape, she uses the specificity of the site and its materiality to look at the pollution of our territories, both visual and material.

Her palette is organic and primitive. Attached to black, she creates through and with it. She attacks matter using fire, acid and bleach to bring it to life or reveal it. The act of burning the material bites into the black, transforming it and bringing out other colours: ochre, shades of grey, shades of yellow, orange or off-white.

To introduce a dialogue into her works, which are conceived as architectures, she has created a bestiary of small crawling creatures. These animals are close to the earth, inspired by the imagery of folk tales, and live in our interstices, our walls and our streets. By altering their scale, changing their colour or multiplying them, they become «the uncanny» figures. Attentive to their representation in the collective Western imagination, these pets, fantasies of disease, sickened wanderers in a filthy world, are revelations, mirrors of our fears and reflections of our anxieties. This tragic bestiary looks at us as much as we look at it, as if there were not just one story, but many stories to look at.

Taking an interest in popular cultures and building practices by referring to those who build rather than those who plan, finance or orchestrate the construction is a way of challenging the standardisation of architecture, an art of building that too often excludes residents from all phases of design and construction. It is also a way of promoting a heritage other than that of preserving the traces of the powerful, a heritage of popular practices.



*Telhado do avo Mateus (Mateus grandfather's roof)*  
4x5" photograph, black and white  
Inkjet print, Aluminium  
71x88cm  
August 2018  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



Forno (Four)  
Shale stone, granite, mud, tiles  
15x21cm,  
August 2018.  
©Sonia Martins Mateus

Seau I  
Ceramic, black ink and barbed wire  
34x45cm  
February 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



Ferramentas I, II, III  
Ceramic,  
12x23cm,  
July 2019  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



Celle qui revait de construction  
4x5" photograph, black and white,  
inkjet print, wooden box, plaster  
50x60cm  
May 2018  
©Michèle Gottstein



Installation: Foundation and Snakes  
Bricks and limestone from a demolition site, Smoked ceramics  
variable dimensions  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



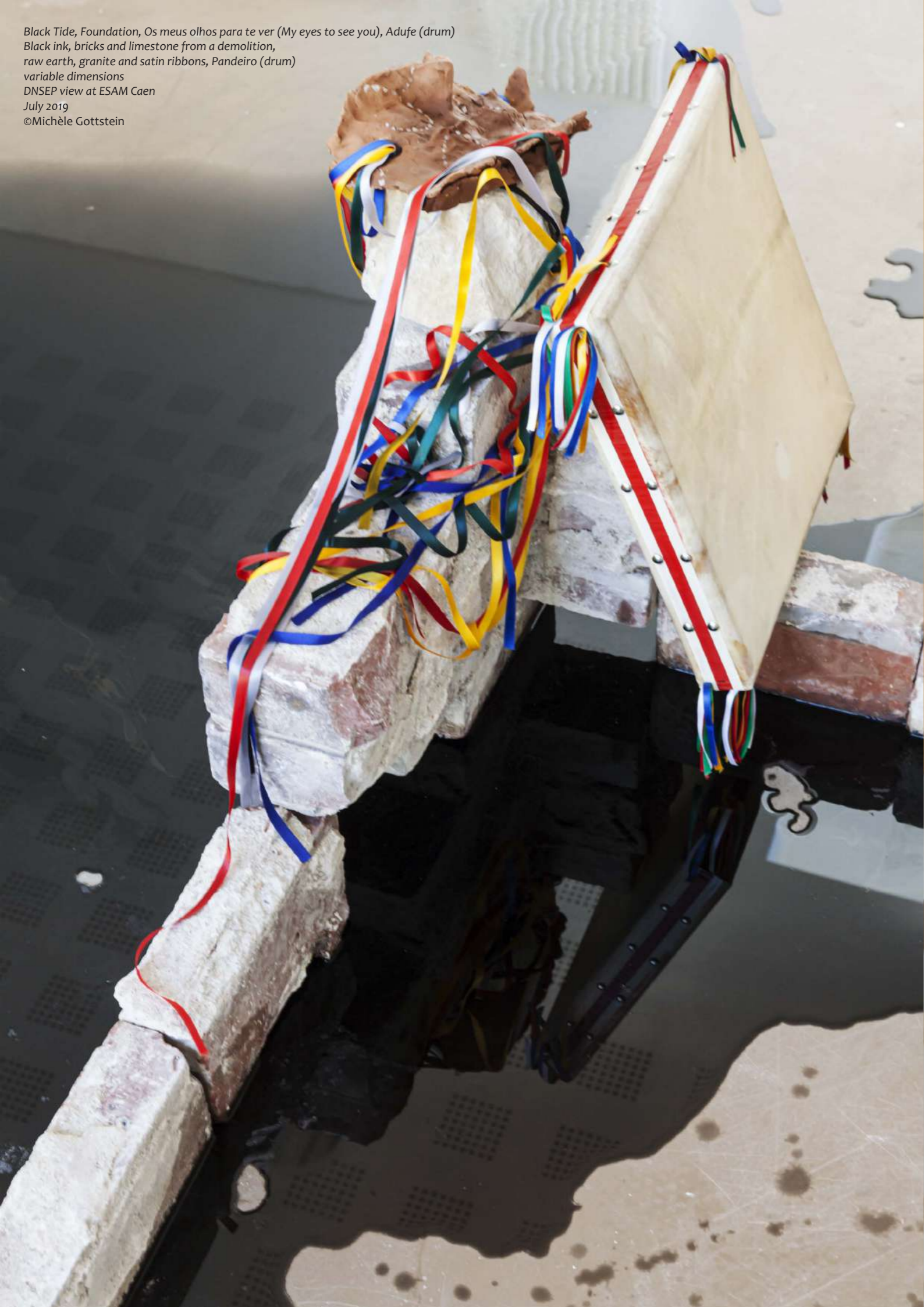
Vertigo  
4x5" photograph, black and white  
Blue back  
186cmx225cm  
DNSEP view at ESAM Caen  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



*Black Tide, Cadeira (chair) and Foundation*  
Black ink, Xylogravure, Ceramic and barbed wire, Bricks and limestone from a demolition site  
variable dimensions  
DNSEP view at ESAM Caen  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



Black Tide, Foundation, Os meus olhos para te ver (My eyes to see you), Adufe (drum)  
Black ink, bricks and limestone from a demolition,  
raw earth, granite and satin ribbons, Pandeiro (drum)  
variable dimensions  
DNSEP view at ESAM Caen  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



Os meus olhos para te ver (My eyes for you)  
Singing performance  
<https://www.soniartinsmateus.com/os-meus-olhos-para-te-ver>  
DNSEP view at ESAM Caen  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein





Mur Volant (Flying wall)  
Litogravure on Chinese paper, dried sunflower wood  
1m25x82cm - 1m47 (wood)  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



*The flowers of the shadow*  
Lithogravure on plaster on its iron skeleton,  
37cmx52cm  
July 2019  
©Michèle Gottstein



«This is not the fucking end,» he said. The woman laughed and began to scrape the ground with her foot. Mud began to gush out  
Raw clay, wood, ashes, earth, metal and nails  
June 2021  
In Situ work created as part of the exhibition Just Married [11.06 - 01.09.2020] at the contemporary art centre, LE SHED, Maromme  
©Marc Damage



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©Marc Damage





Les Bruits du temps (The sounds of time)  
 Bleach on black fabric, crochet, thread and black felt  
 1m72x95cm  
 June - July 2021  
 On view at 45 rue Molière in Caen from [19.06-18.07.2021].  
 ©Léo Fourdrinier ©Pauline Creuzé



Touchée - Coulée (Touched - Cast)  
 In Situ Installation - Musée de Louviers  
 Plaster - Soot & Ash

Works Visible as part of the exhibition Couvrir le Feu [October 2021] Musée de Louviers.  
 Made & Working with the memory asleep contain in this area and the living memory of its inhabitants.  
 To echo the fire of labour and the heaviness of gestures imprinted in these factory walls whose walls are decaying like a memory. So far, so near. ©Michèle Gottstein

*A l'étouffée (Be muffled)*  
4x5" photographic print on plaster, soot and bistre  
1m20x85cm - thickness 9 cm  
2021  
©Michèle Gottstein







Usines (Factories)  
Plaster, Photographic stop bath, India ink, Red raw clay  
34x46cm  
November 2020  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



*Feu ( Fire)*  
Smoked ceramics  
Variable dimensions  
December 2020  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



*A l'arrêt (At a standstill)*  
Plaster, Indian ink and industrial crushed glass, showcase  
6mx7m50x2m, December 2020  
©Michèle Gottstein



*Ouvre les yeux (Open your eyes)*  
Series of three photographic prints on  
plaster,  
32x53cm, 2020©Michèle Gottstein

Memories  
Dyed bleach on black fabric, 1mm crochet hook with black thread, wood  
4m50x82cm  
2021  
© Michèle Gottstein







*Particules - Seconde peau (Particles - Second skin)*  
Handmade crochet hook - 1mm, black thread  
2m40x1m10cm  
2020  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



*Factory variations*  
Collage, India ink, walnut stain, photographic stop bath, red clay  
38x72cm and 12x21cm  
2020 © Michèle Gottstein



[Ecoute les Murs parler] [Listen to the Walls]  
In collaboration with Marilou Perez  
Torchis walls - 180 Bricks - Various plants and wood  
Variable dimensions, 2022  
In Situ work presented as part of A ciel Ouvert - Parcours d'art actuel. Riorges  
©Marilou Perez

Black corner  
Installation  
variable dimensions  
June 2021

> *Mettre le feu en Silence (Putting Fire to Silence)*  
Bleach drawing on black fabric,  
3m x 1m70  
2020

In situ work on view as part of the exhibition *Entre deux eau*  
at the contemporary art centre, 2Angles, Flers [26.06 to 06.07.2021]  
©Maria Giovanni







*Sisyphus*  
Plaster & India ink  
variable dimensions  
June 2021  
©Maria Giovanni



*Maria (dancing with her eyes closed in the fire)*  
Plaster, wood varnish, Indian ink, wooden plinth  
variable dimensions  
June 2021  
©Maria Giovanni







The Wall, One Instance  
Performance by Marie Heleen Samrotzki  
with Sonia Martins Mateus & Linus Vincent Scherz  
1H - 18.09.2022  
<https://www.soniartinsmateus.com/the-wall-one-instance>  
©Michèle Gottstein





Seuil(Threshold)  
In Situ Drawing with Ash and soot , material collected from severals houses in Normandy (France)  
17mx9m  
September 2022  
Work realised In Situ in the Eglise du vieux St Sauveur - Caen As part of the exhibition TERRITORY [17.09 to 25.09]©Michèle Gottstein



Wages for Housework - Spring that unravels itself  
Black fabric & thread, nails and sanded curtain rod  
3m50x2m10  
2022  
©Michèle Gottstein







The Whip (Amulette)  
Red, white and black cotton threads, rusty nail & Bistre  
15m x 65cm  
2022  
©Michèle Gottstein





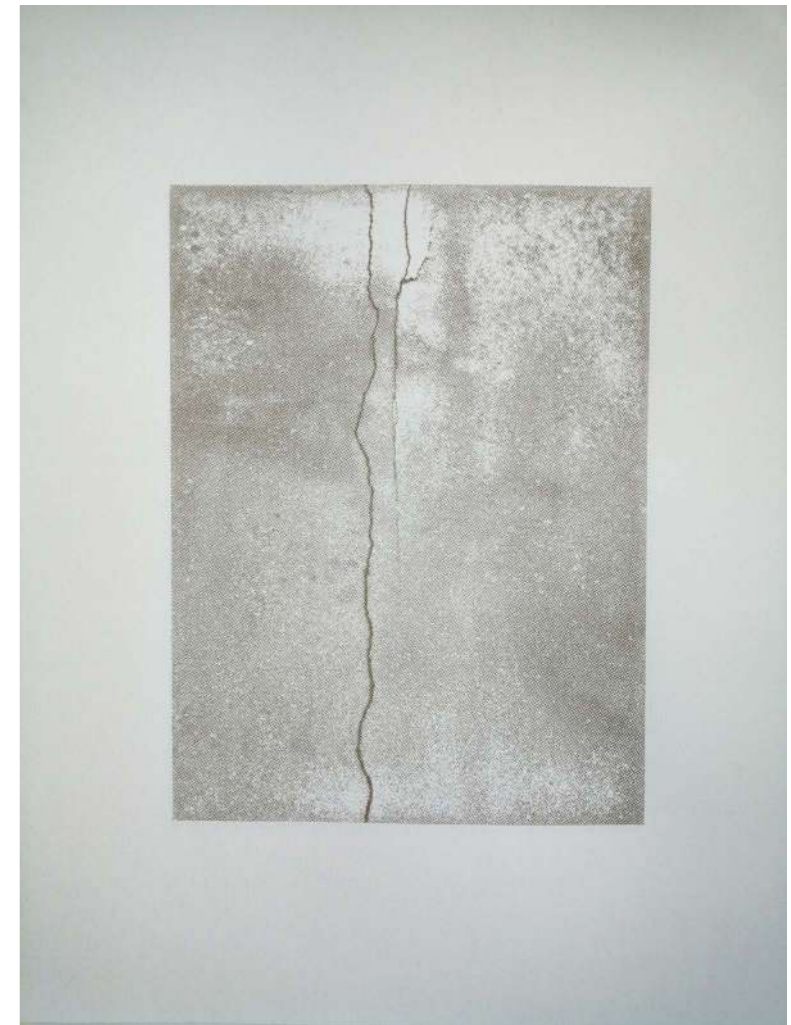


*Sous nos pieds, les Hyades se meurent (Under our feet, the Hyades are dying)*  
Ceramic, wood and In Situ Drawing with Ash and soot, material collected from several houses in Normandy (France)  
In Situ installation in the Eglise du vieux St Sauveur - Caen As part of the TERRITORY exhibition [17.09 to 25.09].  
2022  
©Michèle Gottstein



> *An Octopus never died*  
Smoked ceramic  
75cmx47cm- Height 36cm  
March 2022

Work on display in Caen as part of TERRITORY  
[17.09 to 25.09] - Eglise du Vieux St Sauveur  
©Michèle Gottstein



*Tear II & III*  
Silkscreen - Wood ash & soot ink (homemade)  
56x76cm each  
March 2022  
©Sonia Martins Mateus

Rats  
Ceramics & Raw clay  
Variable dimensions  
2022  
Work on view in Caen as part of  
TERRITORY [17.09 to 25.09] - Eglise du Vieux St Sauveur  
©Michèle Gottstein



Tears of Roots  
Performance [19.01.2023]  
as part of the exhibition The Invisible Thread at the AVA Gallery  
Cape Town - South Africa  
©Swain Hoogervorst





"Near my house, there is a thousand-year-old holm oak.  
This tree is one of the largest in Europe and is a Portuguese historical monument.  
Four years ago, it started to die from the inside.  
What you have in front of you are two pieces of wood belonging to it, saved but dead.  
The stars fall on the ruins of its roots."



*Tears of Roots*  
Two pieces of dead wood from a thousand-year-old holm oak in central Portugal,  
handmade black crochet hook 1mm,  
coral beads,  
In situ drawing made with Cape Town earth and sand  
32cmx1m85  
25x2m07  
2022-2023  
© ToscaNeena

> EGUA MATEREA  
Silkscreen with ash and wood soot and red ochre earth from the Klein Karoo (South Africa)  
32.5 x 50 cm  
March 2023  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



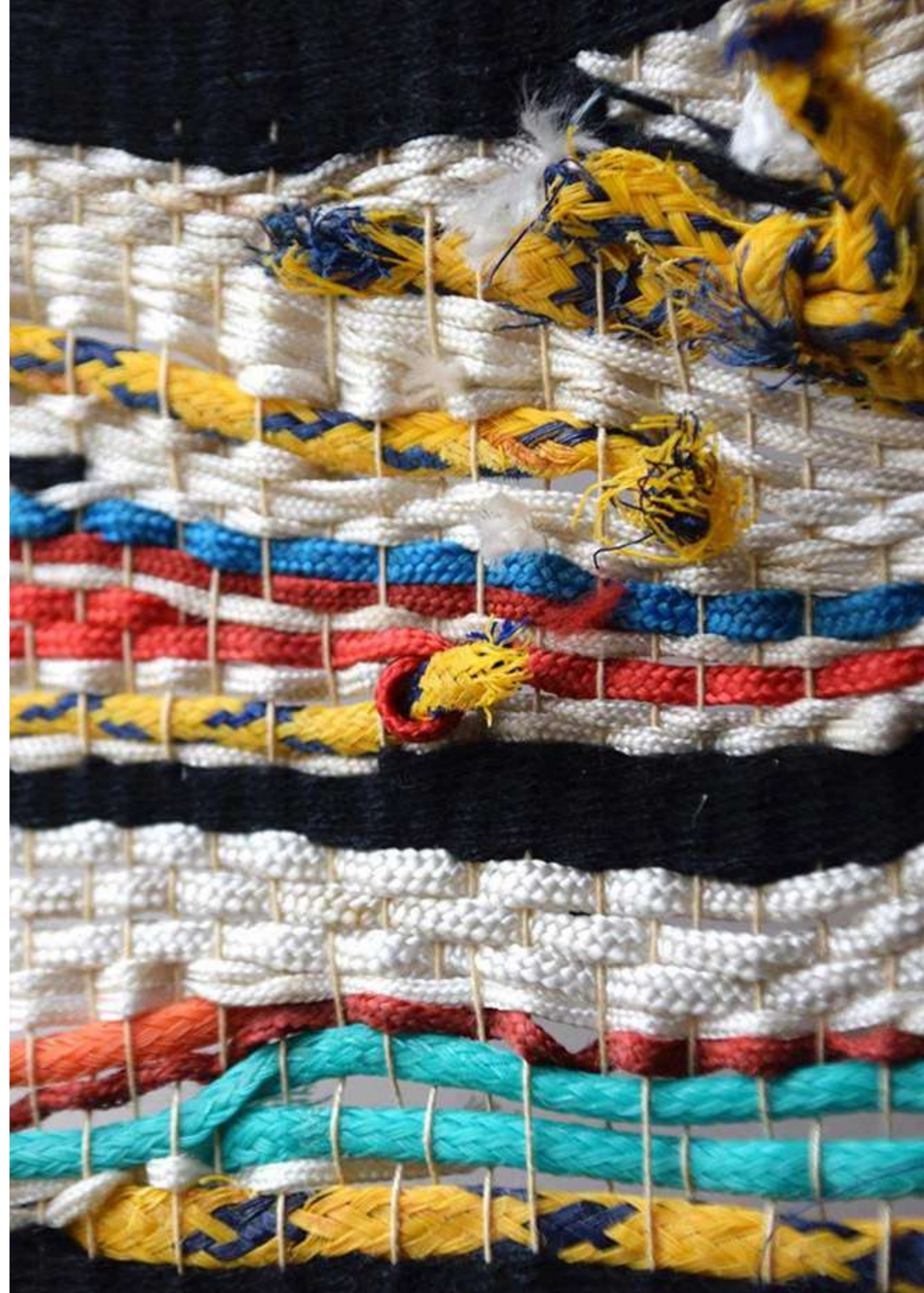
Tears of Roots  
Performance Installation : <https://www.soniamartinsmateus.com/tears-of-roots>  
Two pieces of dead wood from a thousand-year-old holm oak in central Portugal,  
handmade black crochet hook 1mm, coral beads,  
In situ drawing made with wood ash and soot  
from various fireplaces in Bern.  
32cmx1m85 - 25mx3m50  
August 2023  
[Performance presented during the KREMA Festival  
11 - 13 August 2023, Bern, Switzerland]  
© HelMaFotografie







*Fishermen's knots (Perais, Portugal)*  
Dyptique  
135mm photograph, black and white  
Inkjet print  
63x83,5cm each  
2022  
©Sonia Martins Mateus



26 minutes 47 seconds

*Worn thread and twine from trawling, oyster bag, liquid tar, black ink,  
beige and black cotton, wood, walnut stain.*

2023

*From what could lead our soles to the golden sparkle of a glance*

[Installation composed of two works, created for the Centre Hospitalier du Rouvray  
at the invitation of FRAC Normandie as part of the Heritage Days, 16 & 17 Sept 2023.]

The title 26mn47 refers to the time spent by the artist collecting plastic waste, string and nets in the fishing port of Port-en-Bessin. This raw material was used to enrich this participatory work created with the regulars at l'Arbre Tiers-Lieu in Commes (14). Following in the footsteps of her great-grandmother, who used to assemble and sew torn-up old clothes to make makeshift blankets, the artist re-enacts this principle, using worn-out, deformed garments steeped in the history of their owners to re-bind these sensitive textile surfaces. Located close to the C.H.R. linen room, this installation activates and superimposes the memories of places and lives.







*Apolíno*,  
Bleach paint on cotton and black linen  
2mm black crochet  
2m70x1m40, 2023  
©Sonia Martins Mateus

*Collapsed*  
4x5" photographic print on plaster, soot & bistre  
Variable size  
2021  
©Michèle Gottstein



## SONIA MARTINS MATEUS

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## FORMATION

2017-2019 DNSEP, Art option, with the Congratulations of the Jury ESAM Caen/Cherbourg .  
2014-2017 DNAP, Art option, ESAM Caen/Cherbourg  
2010-2014 Bachelor's degree in foreign languages, English - Spanish - Portuguese  
University of Caen - Normandy  
2007-2010 Bachelor's degree in History, majoring in Art History of Ancient Rome and Art  
History of Ancient Egypt  
University of Caen - Normandy

## PERFORMANCES

- 2023 Tears of Roots - KREMA Festival, Berne, Switzerland.  
Tears of Roots - Visual and sound performance, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2022 The Wall, One Instance, Performance of Marie Heleen Samrotzki with Sonia Martins Mateus et Vincent Linus Scherz.  
Eglise du vieux Saint Sauveur, Caen.  
O Tempo (Time)- Visual and sound performance - Sonia Martins Mateus & Eric Desjeux, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen.  
En Découdre (to battle it out) - Openstudio - with My Dog's a bear, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris.  
The Wall, One Instance, Performance of Marie Heleen Samrotzki with Sonia Martins Mateus et Vincent Linus Scherz.  
Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris.
- 2019 Os meus olhos para te ver, ESAM, Caen.

## EXPOSITIONS

- 2023 De ce qui pourrait plomber nos semelles faire les éclats d'or d'un regard, FRAC Normandie, Centre Hospitalier du Rouvray, Sotteville-lès-Rouen, France.  
The Invisible Thread - Group Show, AVA Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2022 TERRITORY - Group Show avec Marie Heleen Samrotzki & Timo Herbst, Eglise du vieux Saint Sauveur, Caen, France.  
[Ecoute les murs parler] en collaboration avec Marilou Perez, A ciel ouvert, Riorges, France.  
WEAVE - group show, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France.  
De Visu, Exposition collective, Hotel du Doyen - Le Radar, Bayeux, France.
- 2021 Entre deux eaux - Angle Noir, 2Angles, Flers, France.  
L'Horizon soupire - Exposition collective, Collectif «A venir», Caen, France.  
Inside Out - Réflexion d'une architecture intérieure, Le Sentier d'Art, Bernay, Broglie, France.  
Just Married - Exposition collective - Commissariat et participation de Laurent Faulon, Le SHED - L'Academie, Maromme France.
- 2019 Exposition - Ensemble - Diplômés 2019 Art, Architecture, Design en Normandie.  
Abbatiale Saint Ouen Rouen, Place du Général de Gaulle, Rouen, France.  
Bruits de Fond, Exposition collective dans le cadre de l'exposition XXL Estampes Monumentales, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Galerie Mancel, Caen, France.

## RESIDENCES

- 2023 «Soudain l'Eté prochain» Résidency - research & production - RN13BIS - l'Arbre, Tiers-lieu, Commes.
- 2022 Résidency - research & production, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris.
- 2021 Résidency of production, 2Angles, Flers.  
Résidency of production, Le SHED - L'Academie, Maromme.  
Résidency of production, Bernay, Broglie.
- 2020 Résidency - research & production, Villa Calderon, Louviers.

## BOURSES

- 2022 Installation grant(DRAC - French State)  
Grant for production (Normandy Region)
- 2021 Grant for production from the city of Caen
- 2020 Grant for research & production (DRAC -French State)

## WORKSHOP & ENSEIGNEMENT

- 2022 Workshop with la Maison Des Arts, Evreux, France.  
De Visu Program- workshop in high school, Lycée Jean François Millet, Cherbourg.
- 2020 Workshop «Mission Triennale Territoriale» - SchoolThérèse Delbos, Le SHED - L'Academie, Maromme.

INTERVIEW OF SONIA MARTINS MATEUS BY ARTHOTÈQUE DE CAEN

LAST PRESS ARTICLE - FRENCH AMBASSY OF CAPE TOWN