

5 Works

May 5 – Nov 22 2026

Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation

Lydia Ourahmane

Curated by Polly Staple

Lydia Ourahmane presents a solo exhibition, *5 Works*, at the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation in Venice, curated by Polly Staple. The exhibition coincides with the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

Lydia Ourahmane is a conceptual artist whose installations, sculptures, moving image and sound works create situations that have consequences beyond the walls of the institution, while negotiating the terms within. Exploring landscapes of displacement and community, her work examines how the movement of objects and people is influenced by factors such as state restrictions and invisible barriers. Her recent presentations have involved the audience as material, subject and author.

Ourahmane's new commission follows her residency at the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, living and working in Venice since January 2026. One of the exhibition's central premises is that many of the artworks are created in Venice. Ourahmane has worked with Venetian craftspeople and technicians but also collaborated with organisations in the city of Venice and the surrounding region. These individuals and collectives continue to offer extraordinary expertise and comprise a thriving community, providing a concrete alternative to popular images of Venice as a city of tourism and in decline.

*5 Works* combines a wide range of visceral media – including, for example, antique sculpture moulds, church lighting and decommissioned bed linen – with traditional conceptual gestures such as the recontextualisation of found objects and the presentation of documentary process. Several works in the exhibition are the direct result of negotiations, transactions and exchanges specific to historic sites and activist associations in Venice including the church of San Giovanni Crisostomo, Poveglia per tutti, Banco Lotto No. 10: Il Cerchio, Lavanderia LSG and TOCIA! Cucina e Comunità.

The island of Poveglia became a muse throughout the making of the exhibition. Situated on the outskirts of the Venice lagoon and largely inaccessible, its history is steeped in myth. The island has recently however been reclaimed by the association Poveglia per tutti (Poveglia for all), which is transforming the site into a public park. A central object commissioned for *5 Works* is a fully functioning pier that will be transferred to Poveglia enabling public access by boat from the water to the land.

*5 Works* operates as a series of encounters that unfold across the rooms of the Foundation's building. The dormant void, contained energy, and its potential are concepts that Ourahmane uses as a dynamic within her work but also as a motif within the staging of the exhibition. In seemingly empty rooms the lights turn on and off or the aroma of cooking greets you. Towers of industrially processed bed linen contrast with a delicately handmade bead curtain.

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Often, using physical scale and spatial composition, Ourahmane creates a performative arena for the viewer which resonates with a long tradition of minimal sculpture, commemorative monuments and ancient, totemic objects. Anticipation gives presence to intangible form and makes visible what you cannot see. This is a consistent theme of the exhibition as much as its counterpoint, the reality of Venice. The city's religious iconography, architectural heritage and social economy but also its underbelly; the ghosts of the house or a fond memory are all Ourahmane's materials here.

Ourahmane's practice is focused on the real politics of daily life as much as exploring how art itself is valued and produced, distributed and displayed. We are living in a new world order in which waste collapses into sublime abstraction for many but remains a brutal reality for others. This requires a shift in perspective. What then is the form for our present moment? At what point does art insert itself into reality? In *5 Works*, matter is always negotiating its terms.

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## Bios

### LYDIA OURAHMANE

Born in Saïda, Algeria in 1992, Lydia Ourahmane is currently based in Venice. Lydia Ourahmane's solo exhibitions include *108 Days* at MACBA, Barcelona (2024); *Tassili* at Sculpture Center, New York, rhizome, Algiers and Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (all 2022); *sync*, KW Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin (2022); *Survival in the Afterlife*, Portikus, Frankfurt (2021–22); *Barzakh*, Kunsthalle Basel, S.M.A.K., Ghent, and Triangle, France (all 2021–22); *The you in us*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2018). Her work has been featured in major biennials, including the 60th International Art Exhibition– La Biennale di Venezia (2024); the 15th Gwangju Biennale (2024); the 34th Bienal de São Paulo (2021); Manifesta 12, Palermo (2018); and the 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017).

Ourahmane received the Rosa Schapire Art Prize in 2024 and the Arts Foundation Fellowship Award in 2018. Her work is held in the collections of Tate, the Stedelijk Museum, FRAC Nantes, and the British Museum, among others. In 2026, Ourahmane's work will be included in presentations at Tate Britain, London; EMMA Museum, Finland; ICA LA; Biennale Gherdeïna, Galeria Municipal do Porto; and Rubaiya, Qatar.

### POLLY STAPLE

Polly Staple is an independent curator based in London. She was previously Director of Collection, British Art at Tate; Director of Chisenhale Gallery; Director of Frieze Projects and Editor-at-Large of *frieze* magazine. Since 2000, Staple has played a significant role in shaping contemporary art discourse, championing emerging artists and contributing to the development of major art collections. She often collaborates closely with artists to realise new commissions, exhibitions, and publications to expand the definition of what contemporary art can be.

Staple is renowned for her award-winning programme at Chisenhale Gallery and significant projects with artists such as Ed Atkins, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Helen Marten, Camille Henrot, Ima-Abasi Okon, P. Staff, Mark Leckey and Hito Steyerl. The commissions she produced by Maria Eichhorn, Ed Atkins and Banu Cennetoğlu were recently recognised by *ARTnews* and *frieze* as three of the 'Best Works of the 21st Century'.

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