



Title

Articulage as an aesthetic praxis of decolonial linkages

Author(s)

Massa Lemu

Article DOI

doi.org/10.31452/bcj14.lemu.articulage

Url

<https://contemporary.burlington.org.uk/journal/journal/articulage-as-an-aesthetic-praxis-of-decolonial-linkages>

ISSN

2631-5661

Cite as

Massa Lemu: 'Articulage as an aesthetic praxis of decolonial linkages',
Burlington Contemporary Issue 14 (June 2026),
doi.org/10.31452/bcj14.lemu.articulage

About the author(s)

is a Malawian artist and writer currently teaching in the department of Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Cover image:

Articulage as an aesthetic praxis of decolonial linkages

by Massa Lemu • June 2026 • Journal article

Introduction

Inspired by young Senegalese smokers' practice of scavenging discarded cigarette butts, the film-maker Ousmane Sembène (1923–2007) coined the term 'mégotage' to describe his practice of making do with scarce resources in film production.¹ Sembène also used mégotage to distinguish his practice from montage, a filmic aesthetic that inspired him.² Similar to Sembène's resourceful approach, the term 'articulage' describes a scavenger aesthetic praxis. Formulated by the present author, it combines 'assemblage', as established by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, with the Gramscian term 'articulation',³ especially as used by Stuart Hall.⁴ Much like Sembène's mégotage, articulage is an experimental and speculative term describing a process of flexible linkages and re-combinations of materials and ideas for decolonial purposes. Articulage highlights articulation as assembly, as a process of linking different elements together. It describes artistic strategies of assemblage focusing on the materials, forms, energies and structures that facilitate visual connections between diverse entities characterised by flexibility and elasticity.

After providing a definition of the term, this article will reflect on a number of artistic practices that embody and express articulage as a concept, such as the work of the South African artist Dineo Seshee Bopape (b.1981), the Haitian-French artist Gaëlle Choisne (b.1985) and the American artist Stephanie Dinkins (b.1964). The article will demonstrate how these artists separate from negative assemblages to connect with life-giving and life-promoting linkages defined by mutuality and reciprocity between subject and object, and the human and the non-human. It will then review the two conceptual frames of assemblage and articulation to show how they are put to work together as articulage. Lastly, to contextualise the concept, the article takes recourse to animism and decolonial thought to reflect on what constitutes empowering assemblages in the present. The article is itself an articulage of diverse ideas, perspectives, thoughts and observations, combining theory with practice.⁵

Articulage: a provisional definition

What materials hold assemblages together? Articulation defines the flexible linkages of diverse and heterogeneous elements within contemporary artistic compositions. However, examples of flexible linkages, referred to as articulations, abound in nature. Consider the knee joint, in which ligaments and articular cartilage facilitate flexible connections between the femur and the tibia. To transpose this into the visual arts, articulation focuses on the 'ligaments' and 'articular cartilages' that enable elastic links within artistic compositions. Articulation is concerned with the languages, technologies and mechanisms of the articulation of bodies and other structures. It is about the mediums, go-betweens and intermediaries of articulated linkages.



FIG. 1 Detail of *+/-1791* (*monument to the haitian revolution 1791*), by Dineo Seshee Bopape. 2017. Mixed media installation. (Courtesy the artist and Sharjah Biennial).



FIG. 2 Detail of *+/-1791 (monument to the haitian revolution 1791)*, by Dineo Seshee Bopape. 2017. Mixed media installation. (Courtesy the artist and Sharjah Biennial).

In nature, in a more diffuse assembly, pollen and nectar could be considered articulation elements for their flexible symbiotic relationship between the wasp and the orchid, just as a tick on the back of a hippopotamus would be in mutual relation with an oxpecker, a bird that perches on large mammals.⁶ In art, as opposed to the process of fixing elements by gluing or screwing, articulation defines loose connections of objects or sensations that are flexible or pliable. In traditional assemblage – from the foundational work of Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) to that of Phyllida Barlow (1944–2023) – objects are typically cemented together to form a composition. If one were to cleave the parts, it would destroy the work. By contrast, articulation can easily be disassembled and reassembled without compromising the integrity of the original composition. In fact, the work, which is open-ended, can manifest in new re-combinations at different showings.⁷ In the works of art discussed here, joints, hinges, suspension and knots feature as examples of forms of connection expressing an articulation aesthetic: cords, hooks, wire, string, keyholders and hangers form its repertoire of materials. Articulation is diminished in works that are fixed, aspire for permanence, are materially homogeneous or monumental. In other words, articulation is an aesthetics of tentative connections that allow for re-combinations and re-articulations, of sensations, speeds and passions, rather than of permanently fixed or sealed objects, materials and forms.

Articulation as decolonial art praxis

Bopape and Choise are among contemporary artists from Africa and its diaspora whose work is structurally necessitated by nomadic lifestyles that call for contingent, flexible alliances and for temporary connections.⁸ The work, which has to be made, unmade and packed after each exhibition and remade elsewhere, reflects the itinerant lives of its makers. However, in its aesthetic outlook, much of it mirrors the inventive life that defines the postcolonial backgrounds of some of the artists, especially in African townships. All sorts of odd yet practical combinations exemplify this creative life of re-existence: illegal water reconnections and electricity tapping; improvised motor repairs that combine reused car parts from different brands; and the stringing together of ends that inspired Sembène.⁹ Some of this work might resemble the technologies of mending: of electronics repairers, shoemakers and tinsmiths who scavenge and reuse materials. Other work is directly influenced by these practices. Articulation describes the material and expressive aspects of these works, which feature the contingent yet creative combination and recombination of objects

and materials to reflect contemporary lived experience.



FIG. 3 *The Name of which escapes me now (in its whole as well as in numerous specific places)*, by Dineo Seshee Bopape. 2016. Mixed media installation, dimensions variable. (Commissioned by Marrakech Biennale; courtesy the artist and Marrakech Biennale; photograph Jens Martin).



FIG. 4 Detail of *The Name of which escapes me now (in its whole as well as in numerous specific places)*, by Dineo Seshee Bopape. 2016. Mixed media installation. (Commissioned by Marrakech Biennale; courtesy the artist and Marrakech Biennale; photograph Jens Martin).

It is imperative to note that Sembène's mégotage does not only refer to the material practice of stringing together film stock and other resources in conditions of scarcity, it also describes his technique of juxtaposing images to form a visual narrative, drawing

in particular on Sergei Eisenstein's theory of montage.¹⁰ Similarly, articulation re-presents cultural practices that arise out of necessity. In other words, like *mégotage*, articulation aesthetics operates simultaneously as an ontological category – a state of being or becoming, manifested in its processes and forms – and as a metaphor with political significance. Rather than merely reflecting postcolonial lived experience, articulation practices recuperate assemblage and re-present strategies for decolonial empowerment. For example, the work of Bopape, Choisine and Dinkins reflects on, challenges and expands conceptions of the present, echoing contemporary critical notions of the human in relation to the environment and non-human others; interrogates the colonial archive; and variously critiques colonial subjecthood and objecthood.



FIG. 5 *Transitional object of desire #1*, by Gaëlle Choisine. 2023. Brass, pearls, shells and keys, dimensions variable. (Reiffers Art Initiatives, Paris; courtesy the artist and Air de Paris; photograph Aurélien Mole).

The early work of Bopape in particular can be seen to express articulation. Her installations are made up of diverse materials, including soil, plants, animal matter, archival images and sound, which 'draw together the celestial and the earthly, the bodily and the metaphysical, the personal and collective'.¹¹ Bopape's heterogeneous materials articulate and are articulated to issues of land, race, memory and the spiritual in coloniality. The aesthetics and ethics that characterise her often site-specific works draw on such references as Winnie Mandela, Nina Simone, Frantz Fanon, the Haitian Revolution and *sangoma* practices.¹² This can be seen in *+/-1791 (monument to the haitian revolution 1791)*

FIG. 1 **FIG. 2** and *The Name of which escapes me now (in its*

whole as well as in numerous specific places) **FIG. 3** **FIG. 4** both of which look at land, history and memory for decolonial futures.¹³ Structurally, in the latter, the jointed swivel and adjustable clamp – which hold together lamps, bottles of water and wooden spoonfuls of soil and dung – are articulation elements. Blue plastic or tape is used to tie the spoons together in the same way that plastic bags are stretched and reused as cords in African townships. Therefore, in both form and content, Bopape's work embodies articulation through flexible linkages that symbolically join

or tie together the organic with the inorganic, matter with spirit and the ancestral with anti-colonial practices, representing what Deleuze and Guattari call an 'intermingling of bodies reacting to one another'.¹⁴



FIG. 6 Detail of *Transitional object of desire #1*, by Gaëlle Choisne. 2023. Brass, pearls, shells and keys. (Reiffers Art Initiatives, Paris; courtesy the artist and Air de Paris; photograph Aurélien Mole).

Articulage can also be discerned in aspects of Choisne's work, for example in *Transitional object of desire #1* **FIG. 5** **FIG. 6**, *Conquête et Carnaval_Marchandage* **FIG. 7**, *Corps éthérique* **FIG. 8** and *Entre Chien et Loup* (2015), each of which includes the stringing together of different objects. In *Conquête et Carnaval_Marchandage*, brass wire and chains are connected to shells, linking the natural and the artificial.¹⁵ In *Corps éthérique* an antique key, a pendant and dried flowers are articulated to a

loosely handwoven brass wire mesh. This articulated relationship of materials can also be identified in *Entre Chien et Loup*, which features loose knots of cloth on metal. Occasionally, one must search for it in the details, such as a keyholder attached to the main body of *Maât and the tears of god* (2024). In Choisne's work, this assortment of chains, wires, clothes hangers, mesh and cords ties together the bundles of myth, tradition and colonial history carried in objects and matter.

For a clearer picture of what is at stake in this located and local expression of articulage, one can turn to Issa Samb (1945–2017). In an interview with Antje Majewski, conducted in Samb's courtyard studio in Dakar, the animist shaman-intellectual eloquently described how, besides its material characteristics, every object carries with it economic, political or spiritual dimensions. Samb's courtyard – essentially itself an installation in which loosely assembled objects became props for performance or rituals in a domestic space that was also an altar, shrine and a stage – offers a case study for an extended assessment of articulage.¹⁶ Therefore, following Samb, the present author posits that the manner in which Bopape and Choisne physically joins different objects also connects their histories at both a metaphysical and metaphorical level.¹⁷



FIG. 7 *Conquête et Carnaval_Marchandage*, by Gaëlle Choisne. 2023. Brass and shell, dimensions variable. (Private collection; courtesy the artist and Air de Paris; photograph Aurélien Mole).



FIG. 8 Detail of *Corps éthérique*, by Gaëlle Choisne. 2023. Handcrafted brass wire, keys, locks, butterfly and ladybird charms, water bottle, cola bottle, zip pull and Madonna pendant. (Courtesy the artist and Kaufmann Repetto, Milan and New

Articulage and new animism

Here, it is crucial to reflect on how new animist thinking shapes contemporary African and diasporic artistic practices, and how this in turn shapes articulage. Drawing from precolonial and precapitalist ideals of mutuality between humans, non-humans and the environment, new animism recognises interspecies entanglement and the power and agency of 'inert' objects. It reasserts the centrality of matter – matter matters, especially in capitalist contexts where it is wantonly extracted, consumed and wasted. In connection with articulage, the postcolonial or decolonial conception of animism, especially as defined by Achille Mbembe, considers contemporary assemblages of the human, animate and inanimate in ways that challenge a Eurocentric humanist understanding of the human as distinct from the animal, the machine and matter, which exist to be exploited by man. At the same time, it sheds new light on postcolonial and neoliberal subject and objecthood.¹⁸

When precolonial African societies endowed trees and wood with spiritual powers and attributed magical forces to so-called inanimate objects, such as stones, carapaces, shells, quills and feathers, they were often derided as spiritually backwards and cognitively underdeveloped.¹⁹ To augment their personhood

York; photograph Aurélien Mole).

and to empower themselves,
members of such societies
used to adorn, surround and

equip themselves with these objects in order to draw from their powers and energies. Animism was a derisive, colonial term applied to such practices. However, unlike in the West, these practices were not ones of dominance, whereby humans exercised their unlimited agency over passive objects. Rather, there was reciprocity of agency between the subject and object. As Mbembe notes, in African worlds, it was:

Generally recognized that there will always be some degree of overlap and even reversibility between the human, his body, and the objects he invented, that agency was shared between different entities and co-agency was itself a key element in the nurturing and circulation of all kinds of vital forces. Whatever the case, human beings were never satisfied with simply being human beings. They were constantly in search of a supplement to their humanhood. Often, to their humanhood they added attributes of animals, properties of plants and various animate and inanimate objects. Personhood was therefore not a matter of ontology. It was always a matter of composition and assemblage of a multiplicity of vital beings.²⁰

Notably, in an age of electronics, nanotechnology, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), subjects often seek to similarly enhance or extend themselves through computers, cell phones and other prosthetic technologies. As Mbembe observes, 'neoliberalism has created the conditions for a renewed convergence, and at times fusion, between the living human beings and objects, artifacts, or the technologies that supplement or augment us and are in the process transfigured and transformed by us'.²¹ In an era of neoliberal capitalist-induced hyperproduction, most of which happens online and through electronic devices, such as computers and smartphones, human beings are fundamentally being shaped by them. At the same time, machines are assuming human characteristics, as exemplified by our growing dependence on AI. However, the animist linkages of the human and the non-human, or the human and the technological, and their attendant reciprocal transformations and transmutations, potentially embody and express articulage. In the visual arts, animist articulage describes work that mirrors the flexible linkages of the technological and the human materially and expressively, and for a politics of empowerment.



FIG. 9 Installation view of *Stephanie Dinkins: In Search of The Present* at Espoo Museum of Modern Art, 2022–23, showing *Not the Only One*, by Stephanie Dinkins. 2018–ongoing. (© EMMA Espoo Museum of Modern Art; photograph Paula Virta).

A number of contemporary artists from Africa and its diaspora are experimenting with and interrogating these modes of subject formation and self-fashioning, which involve flexible linkages with technology. Articulation names these artistic processes of linking and delinking in empowering technological networks. For example, Dinkins engages what can be described as ‘new animist technologies of decolonial redemption’. Dinkins strives to enhance the self through AI, robotics and digital avatars. She reappropriates technologies often known to serve corporate ends, such as algorithms and AI, for what she refers to as an ‘Afro-now-ist’ politics of racial, environmental and gender emancipation.²² In her project *Not the Only One* **FIG. 9**, Dinkins attempts to create a multigenerational memoir of a Black American family told from the perspective of an AI of evolving intellect. The voice-interactive AI entity is ‘designed, trained, and aligned with the concerns and ideals of people who are underrepresented in the tech sector’.²³ Dinkins’s practice invests in urgently transforming the present moment rather than the future. Recognising the political potential in assemblages of the human and the machine, she argues that:

as artificially intelligent ecosystems based on opaque algorithms and biased data proliferate and biological design gains momentum, we are confronted with the need to reimagine human supremacy. Advances in our understanding of machine learning and our single-celled bacterial cousins portend opportunities to create broad definitions of society based on mutuality and lateral coexistence among species and computational machines.²⁴

As more and more people of colour are marginalised from empowering technologies, Dinkins's practice – as well as that of artists working in a similar vein, such as Sondra Perry (b.1986) – exemplifies a politically conscious search for liberating and revitalising new animist articulations. Such approaches represent personhood in a way that aligns with Mbembe's sense, as 'a matter of composition and assemblage of a multiplicity of vital beings'.²⁵

Stuart Hall's articulation

Hall's adoption of the Gramscian term to analyse power in the post-colony is very useful for contextualising and understanding articulation. Hall defines articulation as 'a complex unity structured in dominance'.²⁶ Moving away from the economic reductionism of orthodox Marxism, Hall's concept of articulation describes how different structures can be linked together and influence each other in a social formation in relations of domination. For example, articulation describes how the economy and politics influence and shape one another, without entirely determining how each other operates.²⁷

Although Hall's concept of articulation is rooted in the discursive, there is a material dimension that emphasises the politics of articulation as praxis. Most specifically, Hall cites Harold Wolpe, who introduced the term to South African debates to describe how capitalism was linked to racism in the differentiation of Black and white working-class labour, and also how it was connected to agrarian peasantry in relations of subordination, domination and exploitation in apartheid South Africa. By emphasising the specificities of time and place when studying relations of production, articulation helps name crucially formative social relationships without downplaying or over-exaggerating any causal links between the two. However, while Hall's articulation dwells on what constitutes the political in relations of domination, Deleuze's extensive notion of assemblage encompasses the material as well as the expressive.

The Deleuzian assemblage

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of assemblage is characterised by an exteriority of relations between and among heterogeneous parts in contrast to a homogeneous, organic unit.²⁸ Face-to-face conversations, the symbiosis of plants and pollinating insects, collectives, cities and nation states can all be categorised as assemblages.²⁹ As Deleuze and Guattari note, an assemblage also comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and of passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another:

on the other hand, it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies.³⁰

In addition, the Deleuzian assemblage is marked by territorialising (internally stabilising) and de-territorialising (internally destabilising) dimensions.³¹ As in Hall's articulation, the Deleuzian assemblage coheres while also being temporary, flexible and open-ended. Shaped by this understanding, Jane Bennett defines assemblages as 'ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within'.³² Hall's articulation is materialist in that it is founded on Marxist notions of social relations of production grounded in nature and its exploitation, whereas Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage is materialist in the sense of vitalist ideas of the spirit and agency of matter.³³ This materialist understanding of articulation (in the sense of concerning the political) and of assemblage (in the sense of concerning matter or the politics of matter) drives articulation as praxis. Bopape's, Choisne's and Dinkins's work figure as flexible assemblages of bodies, actions and passions that influence and shape one another, and which hold and express the aesthetic and political valence of articulation as a praxis seen through Hall and Deleuze and Guattari.

Dis-articulation or delinking

Considering that central to articulation are materials and processes of linking, and that it is also a kind of speculative theory for other possible linkages, it is important to reflect on how the concept, as critique, is inspired by and resonates with the praxis of decolonial delinking.³⁴ Decolonial thinkers such as Walter D Mignolo urge us to delink from coloniality – that is, the domination, oppression, exploitation and dispossession that is constitutive of and supports the Western project of modernity – and its toxic epistemes. For Mignolo, 'decoloniality names the vision and energy of delinking (disconnect) to re-link (reconnect) with praxis of living, thinking, doing that we, decolonially speaking want to preserve'.³⁵

Decolonial delinking resonates with what Ariella Aïsha Azoulay refers to as rehearsals of disengagement from imperialism, which 'consist in repeating and reactivating what others have already said, established, performed or written at different conjunctures before us, when they were subjected to different modalities of imperial violence'.³⁶ As an Algerian-Palestinian Jewish scholar, Azoulay adopted her grandmother's suppressed Arabic name, Aïsha, as a personal rehearsal of disengagement. During the period of formal decolonisation in Africa in the 1950s to 1970s, some members of the African elite delinked from their bourgeois political

affiliations and joined the rising oppressed in what the Guinean revolutionary Amílcar Cabral called 'class suicide'.³⁷ Some of these members of the elite led the struggles for decolonisation that resulted in the independence of the formerly colonised. Even after independence, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o writes about 'the phenomenon of university-educated youth and secondary school graduates opting to join workers and peasants in the bush to fight on a clear program of a national democratic revolution as a first and necessary stage for a socialist transformation in something new in the Africa of the seventies'.³⁸

Decolonial delinking, rehearsals of disengagement or class suicide all describe processes of disinvesting and disconnecting from exploitative and toxic colonial or imperial assemblages. Articulage – or in this instance, dis-articulage – echoes these praxes to define processes of what the present author describes as 'the patois bourgeois elite', delinking from continual coloniality in the contemporary order. As a praxis in the visual arts exemplified by the artists in this article, articulage parallels and re-presents these political and ethical struggles.

Articulaged relinkings

What kind of delinkings and relinkings are empowering and meaningful? At a time when capitalist and colonialist assemblages threaten the very continuation of life and the existence of the planet, what ensemble of technologies is available for strengthening mutual and sustainable bonds? What ethical and aesthetic tools and ideas need to be scavenged and resharpened or manufactured? What facilitates linkages that are not defined by hierarchical relationships of domination and exploitation? Bopape's, Choisine's and Dinkins's work exemplifies articulage as an emergent decolonial praxis of aesthetic and ethical relinkages. Hall used Gramsci's articulation as a term to describe the phenomenon of unlikely or odd alliances and linkages for hegemonic political ends in coloniality. Deleuze and Guattari used assemblage to describe diverse forms of material connections in nature and in society. Drawing from these two powerful philosophical concepts, and inspired by Sembène's *mégotage* – an aesthetic term born out of African lived experience – this article presents articulage to surface the praxes of certain contemporary artists that deploy tentative linkages to connect material histories; to challenge the colonial episteme; to reconnect with ancestral and Indigenous knowledges; and to link with creative practices of the African townships, for other possible futures.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to professor Jesse Goldstein of Virginia Commonwealth University, and to professor Nomusa Makhubu of University of Cape Town for their critical feedback on the original manuscript of this essay.

Footnotes

- 1 *Mégot* is a French word meaning cigarette stub and 'tage' is taken from the word montage. See S. Gadjigo and J. Silverman: "'Father of African cinema" Ousmane Sembène at work – in pictures', *The Guardian* (10th June 2021), available at theguardian.com/film/gallery/2021/jun/10/father-of-african-cinema-ousmane-sembene-at-work-in-pictures, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 2 See K. Bosch: 'Ousmane Sembène: film by any means necessary', *Walker Reader* (2015), available at walkerart.org/magazine/the-man-behind-the-legend-the-story-of-ousmane-sembene, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 3 See A. Gramsci: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London 1971.
- 4 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. B. Massumi, Minneapolis 1987; S. Hall: 'Race, articulation, and societies structured in dominance', in *idem: Essential Essays, II: Foundations of Cultural Studies*, ed. D. Morley, Durham NC 2019, pp.172–221, doi.org/10.1215/9781478002413-010.
- 5 In addition to the artists examined in this essay, this author's own interdisciplinary practice employs articulation as a way to think about how facets of his work articulate with, to and by theory, and to networks of ideas, ideologies, beliefs and value systems.
- 6 Deleuze and Guattari describe the symbiotic relationship between the wasp and the orchid as they exchange pollen and shape each other in what the authors call 'the orchid's reproductive apparatus', as a form of 'rhizome' – a heterogeneous, decentralised and non-hierarchical network. This description of the wasp and the orchid's relationship as a rhizomatic network informs articulation. See G. Deleuze and F. Guattari: 'Introduction', in *idem, op. cit.* (note 4), pp.1–25.
- 7 For example, Choisine used the word 'adaptable' to describe her exhibition *Temple of love* (2021), see the artist's portfolio, available at gaellechoisine.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/gaelle-choisine-portfolio-2024-web-version.pdf, accessed 20th May 2026.

- 8 For example, Dineo Seshee Bopape has described her studio practice as follows: 'I ask myself often what a studio is. Is it a physical space or a process? Right now, I'm in between spaces. There was a fire in my building, where I had my home studio. I hadn't been spending much time there because of all the traveling. What kind of things were there? Well, sjoe! There are several thoughts jumping in at the moment about being in South Africa, the different places I'm sent to within the country, and that being a studio in and of itself. Perhaps that is where the research happens, in the physical space, when all the things are gathered: the photographs I've taken that live in my phone, laptop, and iPad, and then the objects that are in my living space or travel with me as I go do exhibitions [...] A lot of the work that I was doing in undergrad was physically heavy, with things and things and things. At some point, I had to leave the physical things because I was moving from South Africa to the Netherlands', quoted from 'Interview: Dineo Seshee Bopape by Zoë Hopkins', *BOMB* (15th December 2023), available at bombmagazine.org/articles/2023/12/15/dino-seshee-bopape-zoe-hopkins, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 9 For example, see A. Mbembe: 'African modes of self-writing', transl. S. Randall, *Public Culture* 14, no.1 (2002), pp.239–73; A.M. Simone: *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities*, Durham NC 2004; and M. de Certeau: *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. S. Rendall, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1984.
- 10 Gadjigo and Silverman, *op. cit.* (note 1).
- 11 Artist entry for Dineo Seshee Bopape in *Artes Mundi* 9 (2021), National Museum Cardiff, available at artesmundi.org/dineo-seshee-bopape, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 12 A *sangoma* is a healer, priest or prophetess in Southern African societies.
- 13 The artist has considered the title 'Azania' for *The Name of which escapes me now (in its whole as well as in numerous specific places)*. Azania is the name African nationalists and freedom fighters give to South Africa, see D.S. Bopape: 'Azania', available at seshee.blogspot.com/2016/03/azania.html, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 14 Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.88.
- 15 The sculpture is made in close collaboration with the Olivier de Serre ENSAAMA Métal school and the professors Félix Touzalin and Thomas Boutin, as well as students Cléa Dumas, Ninon Courtaud, Pierre Rafini, Pauline Raud, Anaëlle Guidé and Nicolas Havez.
- 16 See *La coquille*, dir. A. Majewski. 2010, available at vimeo.com/41850322, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 17 In addition, both Bopape's and Choïsne's makeshift constructions can easily be structurally disassembled after each show and reassembled at another venue.
- 18 A. Mbembe: *Necropolitics*, transl. S. Corcoran, Durham NC 2019, doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1131298.

- 19** For a critical discussion of animism from a postcolonial or decolonial African perspective, see H. Garuba: 'On animism, modernity/colonialism, and the African order of knowledge: provisional reflections', *e-flux Journal* 36 (2012), available at e-flux.com/journal/36/61249/on-animism-modernity-colonialism-and-the-african-order-of-knowledge-provisional-reflections, accessed 20th May 2026. For a general critical discussion on animism, see A. Franke, ed.: *Animism (Volume 1)*, London 2010.
- 20** Mbembe, *op. cit.* (note 18), p.108.
- 21** *Ibid.*
- 22** S. Dinkins: 'Afro-now-ism: the unencumbered black mind is a well-spring of possibility', *Noëma* (16th June 2020), available at noemamag.com/afro-now-ism, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 23** Project text for *Not the Only One* (2018–ongoing), by Stephanie Dinkins, available at stephaniedinkins.com/ntoo.html, accessed 20th May 2026.
- 24** Dinkins, *op. cit.* (note 22).
- 25** For more on Dinkins's practice, see S. Mitra, ed.: *Stephanie Dinkins: On Love and Data*, Ann Arbor 2024.
- 26** Hall, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.197.
- 27** For more in-depth analysis of articulation, see J.D. Slack: 'The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies', in S. Hall: *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. D. Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, London 1996, pp.114–27.
- 28** Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.* (note 4), p.88.
- 29** M. DeLanda: *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*, London 2006.
- 30** Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.* (note 4).
- 31** Deleuze and Guattari describe the symbiotic relationship of the wasp and the orchid as follows: 'The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen', *ibid.*, p10.
- 32** J. Bennett: *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham NC 2010, pp.23–24, doi.org/10.1215/9780822391623.
- 33** Deleuze and Guattari's vitalism can also be tied to the discussion on new animism.

- 34** In reflecting upon the moral implications of her vital materialist theory and its considerations of the distributive agentic capacities between the human and the nonhuman, Jane Bennett importantly argues that ‘perhaps the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one’s response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating: Do I attempt to extricate myself from assemblages whose trajectory is likely to do harm? Do I enter into the proximity of assemblages whose conglomerate effectivity tends toward the enactment of nobler ends?’, Bennett, *op. cit.* (note 32), pp.37–38.
- 35** W.D. Mignolo and C.E. Walsh: *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, Durham NC, p.147.
- 36** A.A. Azoulay: *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, London 2019, p.44.
- 37** See S. Osuna: ‘Class suicide: the black radical tradition, radical scholarship, and the neoliberal turn’, in G.T. Johnson and A. Lubin, eds: *Futures of Black Radicalism*, London 2017, pp21–38.
- 38** N. wa Thiong’o: *Moving the Center*, Oxford 1993, p.70.

THE
BURLINGTON
MAGAZINE

© The Burlington Magazine Publications Limited. All rights reserved
ISSN 2631-5661

The Burlington Magazine
14-16 Duke's Road, London WC1H 9SZ