

Photoworks

The Thing

Photoworks Annual #30

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Priced £35, or free to Photoworks Friends

Available in art bookshops or directly from Photoworks

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www.photoworks.org.uk

Inspired by Aimé Césaire's formulation "colonisation = chosification" [1], Photoworks Annual #30 is themed *The Thing*. Gathering 27 projects, this publication considers how the camera objectifies, and how image-makers have broached this. *The Thing* is an intersectional project that includes works on the environment, colonialism, feminism, class, and gay and disability rights, suggesting a common interest against a commodifying gaze and a technology both shaped by and perpetuating it. As Ariella Aïsha Azoulay has put it, "photography was not co-opted by imperialism but rather grew out of it" [2].

The Thing includes 176 pages, and images from the following artists: Eleonora Agostini, Remy Artiges, Vincen Beeckman and La Deviniere, Lucas Blalock, Leah Clements, Juan Covelli, Giana De Dier, Dries and Bieke Depoorter, Odette England, Jermaine Francis, Frederike Helwig, Lauren Huret, Sky Hopinka, Mahmoud Khaled, Xiang Li, Javier Hirschfeld Moreno, David O'Mara, Liz Orton, Lam Pok Yin and Chong Ng, Wakilur Rahman, Felipe Romero Beltrán, RoN, Julie Scheurweghs, Matilde Søes Rasmussen, Sheida Soleimani, Tabitha Soren, and Sofia Yala.

Each artists' project is individually introduced, and *The Thing* also features newly commissioned essays by four writers and academics which center around time, black women artists, and depictions of people by NGOs and aid agencies: Marta Labad, Pelumi Odubanjo, and Jess Crombie & Siobhan Warrington. The introductory essay is by Diane Smyth, Editor of Photoworks and this Annual, and *The Thing* also includes a round-table transcript of Photoworks Curators Julia Bunneman and Danit Ariel with Matilde Søes Rasmussen, Felipe Romero Beltrán, and Mahmoud Khaled discussing power and image appropriation.

Designed by A Practice for Everyday Life, *The Thing's* cover features a bespoke lettering which nods to B-movies and horror stories, in which the disempowered sometimes fight back. *The Thing* also features reflective silver cover papers evoking the Situationist Internationale's journals and mass-produced mirrors, the latter a technology of display that emerged alongside photography, shop windows, and museum vitrines, at the start of industrial capitalism. *The Thing* is printed on recycled and part-recycled sustainable papers, and is fully recyclable.

Priced £35, or available free to Photoworks Friends, *The Thing* will be available in art bookshops and direct from Photoworks. It will officially be launched during Frieze London, from 6.30pm – 8pm on 12 October at The Photographers' Gallery in London, and will have another launch during Paris Photo, from 7pm on 09 November at the Polycopies photobook fair. Both events will feature discussions with featured artists, and themes raised by *The Thing* will be further explored at a Photoworks event in Brighton next Spring. These events are free and open to all.

For more information, contact diane@photoworks.org.uk

Notes for editors

[1] Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (trans Joan Pinkham), Monthly Review Press, 2021

[2] Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, 'Toward the Abolition of Photography's Imperial Rights', in *Capitalism and the Camera: Essays on Photography and Extraction*, edited by Kevin Coleman and Daniel James, Verso, 2021

Photoworks

Photoworks champions photography for everyone. We are an international platform, global in reach, and have provided opportunities for artists and audiences since 1995. We do not have a physical venue, but our online channels are always open. Our programme brings new experiences to audiences and opens up new ways to encounter photography.

Photoworks is a registered charity and the only organisation with a national remit for photography in England. Our work is supported by public funding through Arts Council England's National Portfolio. For more information about Photoworks and the Photoworks Friends visit www.photoworks.org.uk.

A Practice for Everyday Life

A Practice for Everyday Life is a multidisciplinary studio for art direction and graphic design, collaborating with global brands, cultural institutions, and contemporary artists. www.apracticeforeverydaylife.com

Press Images

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From the series Praying for my haters © Lauren Huret www.laurenhuret.com

From the series La Dèvinierie © Vincen Beeckman and La Dèvinierie
www.vincenbeeckman.com

From the series BUG © Rémy Artiges www.remyartiges.com

From the series A Storied Ground © Jermaine Francis
www.jermainefrancis.studio

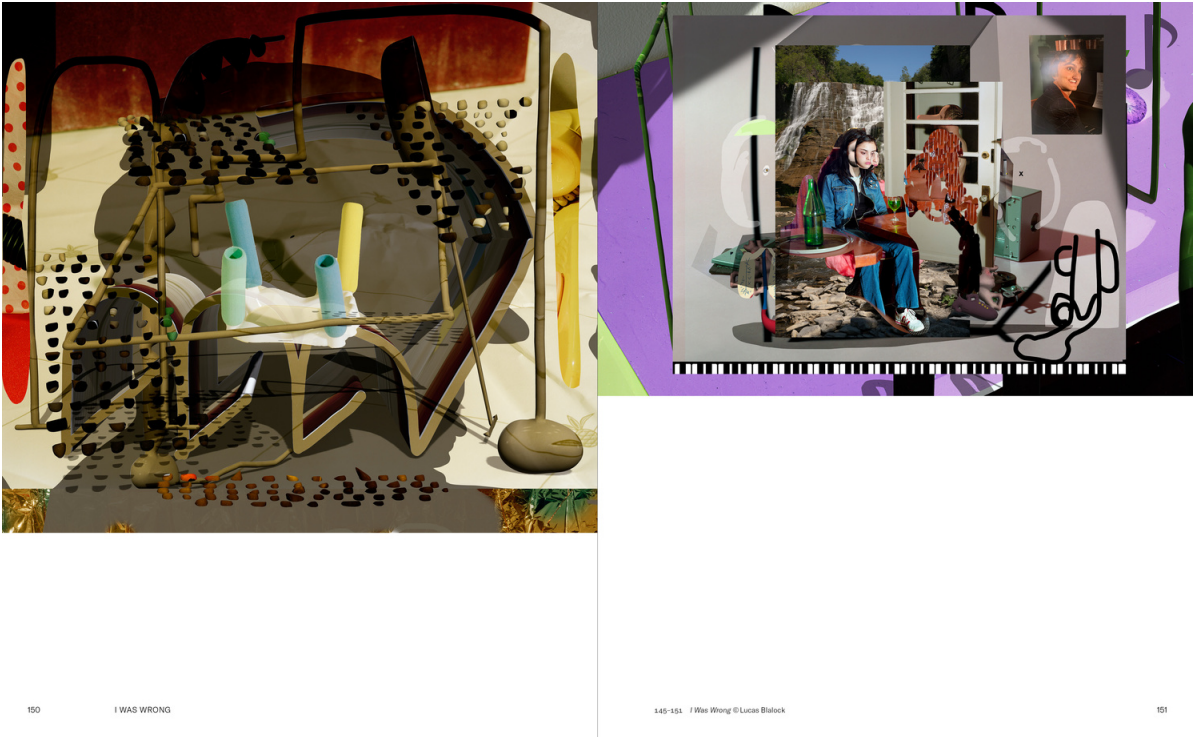
From the series Seasonal Worker © RoN www.whatisameow.com

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Nos fuimos de pesca ['We went fishing']. From the series Utopias Decoloniales
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58 Noon-o-namak (bread and salt), 2021
 59 Crying Quince, Laughing Apple, 2022
 57 Behind the Door, 2022

58 Kfay, 2021
 59 What a Revolutionary Must Know, 2022
 Images courtesy of the artist and Edeli Assanti, London

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MÈRE 2021

Julie Scheurweghs

When Belgian artist Julie Scheurweghs gave birth to her first child, she asked her partner to photograph her labour. But when she saw the images, she was acutely disappointed. Shot at a distance, as if for a medical textbook or a newspaper, they failed to capture her experience. She later reclaimed them by cropping tightly into them, focusing mostly on her face to create a new series showing an intense psychological experience. Scheurweghs published a book of these images, under her own name, arranging them in chronological order to follow the progress of the birth. The book comes closer to conveying her perspective, she says, though it also suggests that that's impossible.

Scheurweghs' *Mère* puts the subject in the driving seat, pushing back at an individual photographer and conventional depictions of birth. The artist probed similar ground in 2019 with an exhibition titled *Women As Parts*, which combined images of women found in medical textbooks with images of women found in porn. The title referred to the impersonal gaze of both types of image but it also refers to the dichotomy between the erotic and the maternal, which is deeply engrained in our culture – despite the fact that one physically follows the other. By the same token, Scheurweghs' expression on the cover of *Mère* has been mistakenly interpreted as orgasmic.



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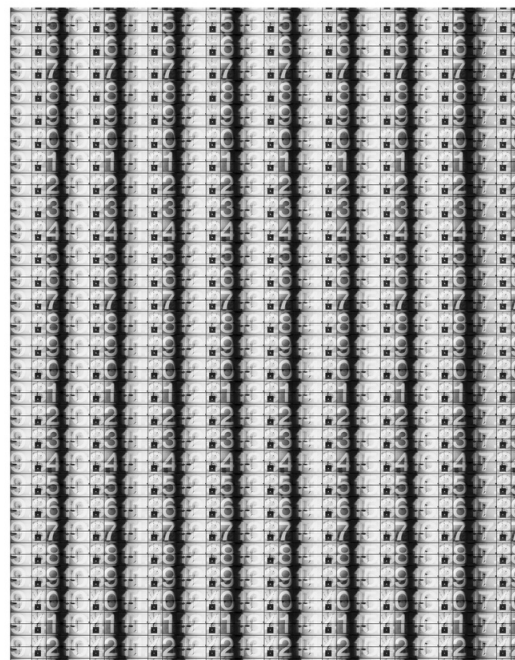
THE UNTIMELY CLOCK: PHOTOGRAPHY AS PASTIME 2015

Lam Pok Yin and Chong Ng

From 2014–2015, Lam Pok Yin and Chong Ng collaborated on a project titled *the untimely apparatus of two amateur photographers* while studying together at the London College of Communication. An extended look at image making processes and apparatus, this project sought to deconstruct and re-examine the fundamentals of photography. At a time when digital cameras have made taking photographs feel near-frictionless, they argued, it is crucial to understand how images translate and warp reality. Part iii of this project considered photography's relationship with time and is presented here.

Taking a flip clock, Yin and Ng converted it into a camera by covering each number flap in photographic paper and adding a large-format lens shutter. Each number column registered a different exposure time and the duo used the apparatus to expose nine hours, creating a set of images representing a document of that period of time and space through the accumulation of exposure times and frequencies. Naming the final images *Kawara's Clock*, in honour of Japanese conceptual artist On Kawara, whose work included paintings of the date, their work emphasised a relationship between the camera and chronometry that's always present but often forgotten. This relationship was clear in the equipment they used, however; both the flip clock and large-format lens shutter were made by the same company, Copal.

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Lam Pok Yin and Chong Ng

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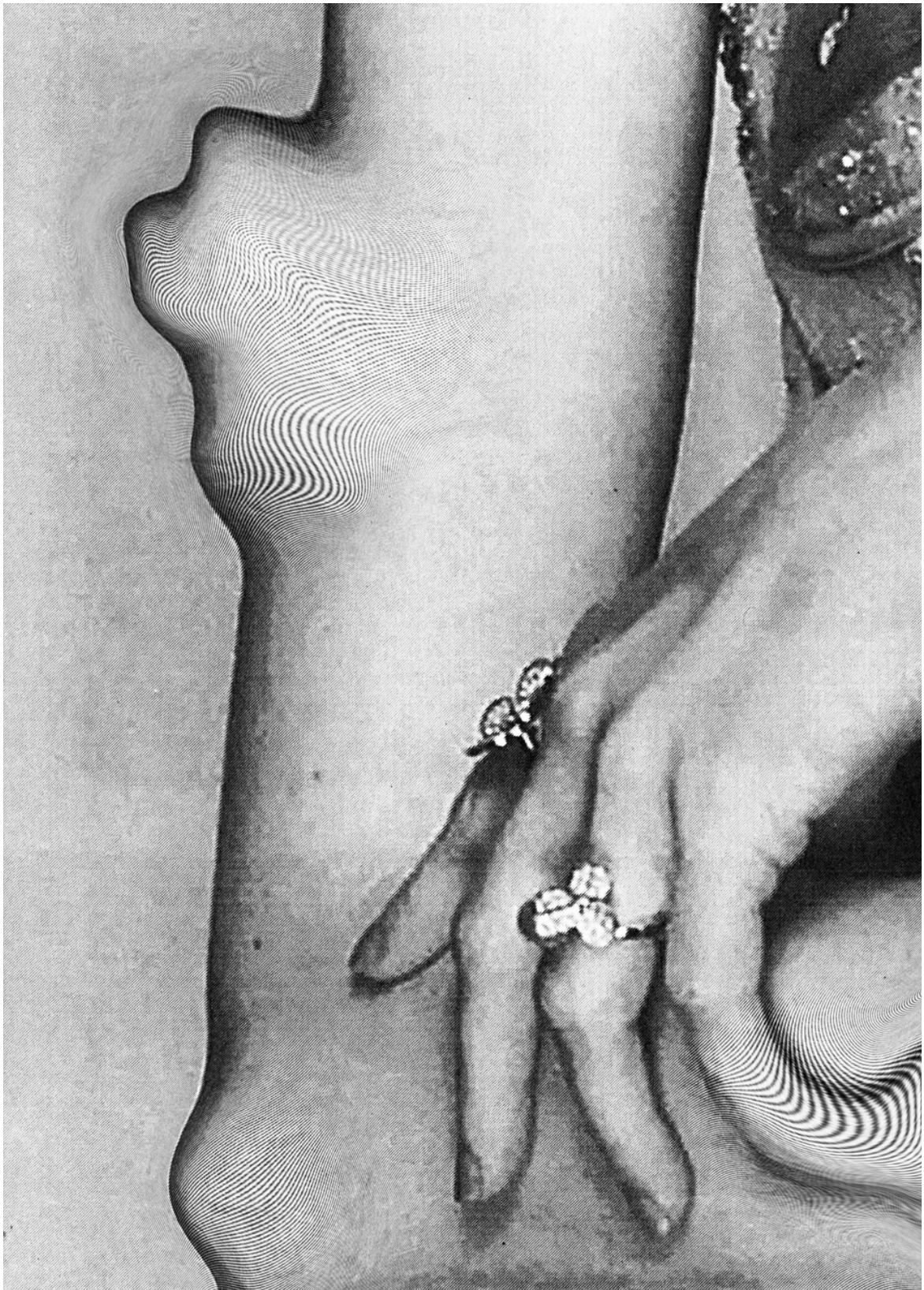
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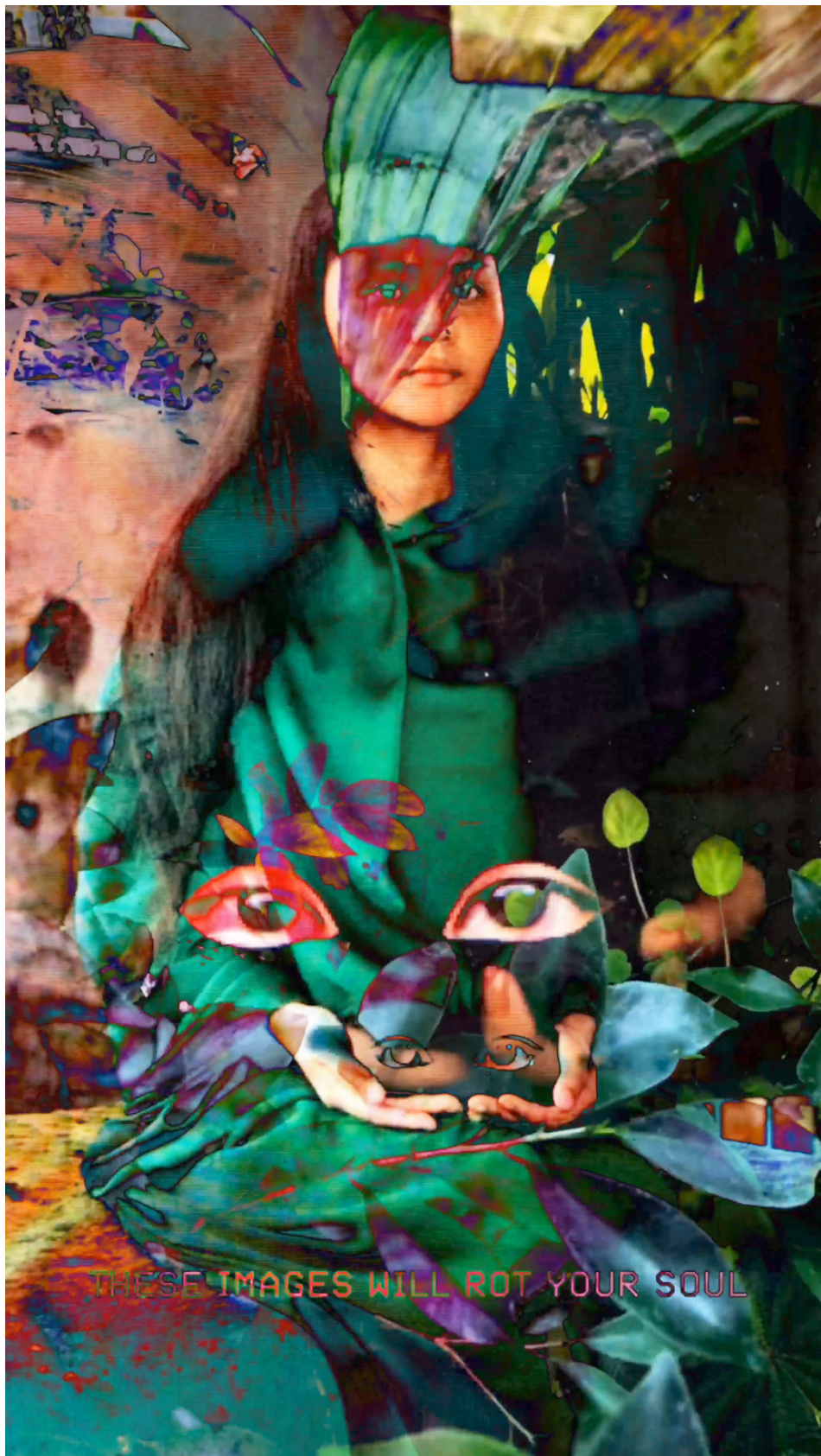
Felipe Romero Beltrán

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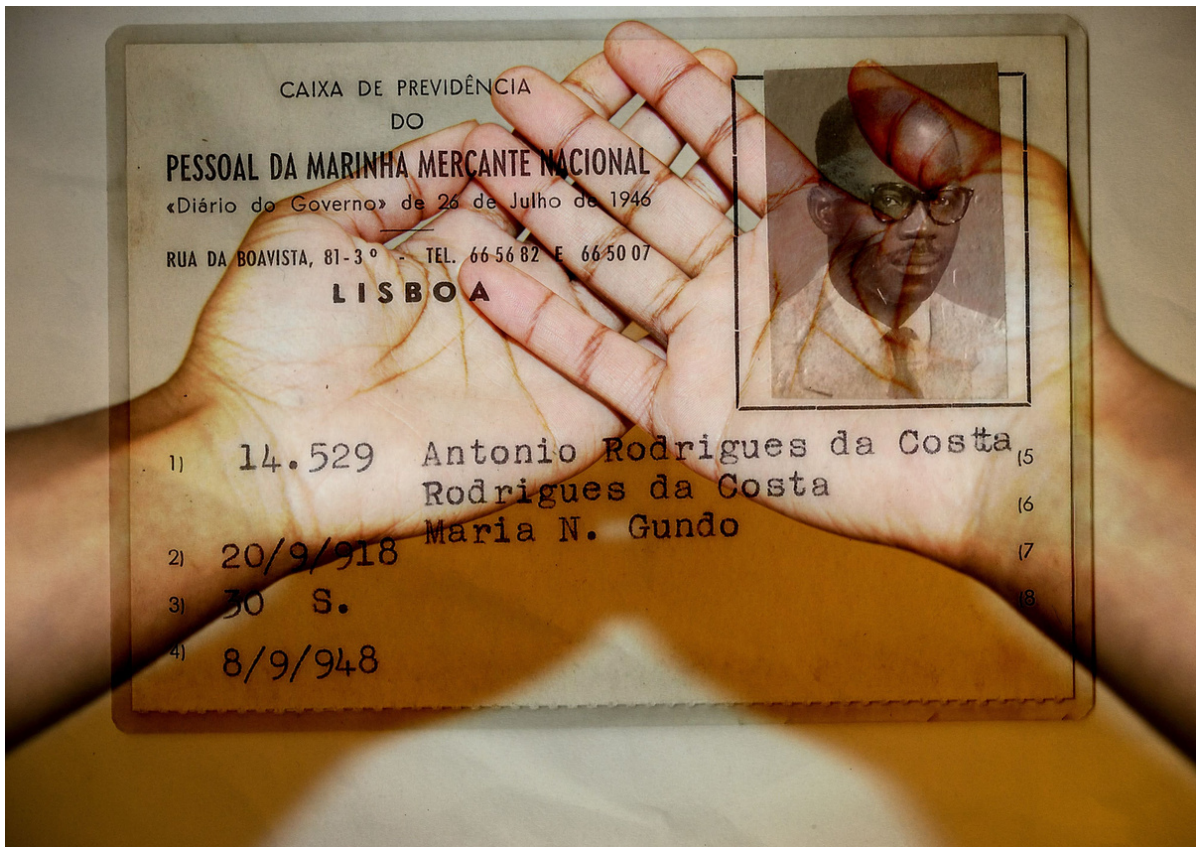
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