



Rubianē Maia: Borders Without Edges



## **Rubiane Maia: Borders Without Edges**

**13 September – 19 October 2025**

Coinciding with the Folkestone Triennial in which Rubiane Maia is one of 18 participating artists, *Borders Without Edges* focuses on Maia's performance, film and photographic works to explore our relationships with memory and movement, and the powerful connection between the body and nature.

*Borders Without Edges* unsettles the conventional notion of a boundary as a rigid, definitive line. This exhibition proposes a radical rethinking of borders as porous, mutable spaces – zones of becoming rather than of separation. The artist invites us to inhabit a space where edges no longer define containment but become sites of encounter and transformation. They are neither barriers nor absolutes, but living surfaces of continuous becoming.

Considering the elements of earth, wind, fire (light) and water, the exhibition is anchored by four video works that consider the interaction between humans and their environment and the challenges that are faced as one engages with the other. Alongside these, a series of photographs reflect on our connection to the earth. The surviving elements of *Speirein* (2021) – Maia's 10-hour performance in which she engaged in a repetitive process of casting her feet – are installed to create a place to reflect on the myriad journeys that define us.



Suave, 2021-2023



Dissoluções [Dissoluções], 2021



Dissoluções [Dissoluções], 2021













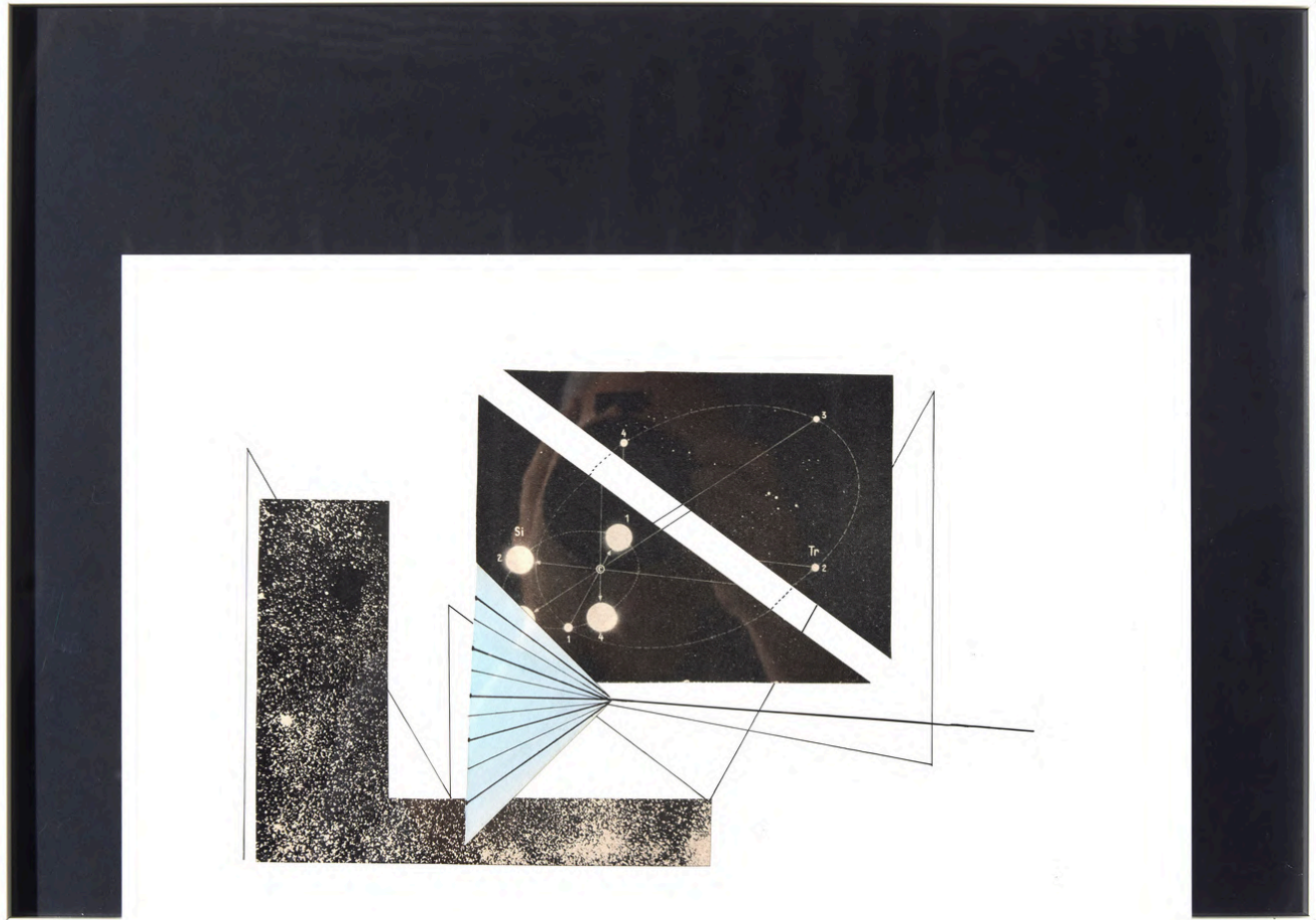














## List of works

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*Stones Across the Ocean: Part One [Pedras Atravessam o Oceano: Parte Um]*  
2017

Performance – Video [HD 16:9]

20 minutes

Work made in collaboration with Manuel Vason and Tian Maia Vason

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

*Stones Across the Ocean: Part Two [Pedras Atravessam o Oceano: Parte Dois]*  
2020

Performance – Video [HD 16:9]

20 minutes

Work made in collaboration with Manuel Vason and Tian Maia Vason

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*Speirein*, 2021-2023

Photograph and installation

Dimensions variable

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*Dissolutions (2) [Dissoluções]*, 2021

Photograph

84 x 119 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

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*Dissolutions (1) [Dissoluções]*, 2021

Photograph

84 x 119 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

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*Transfiguration [Transfiguração]*, 2018

Photograph

84 x 119 cm

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

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*Divisa – Border between States*, 2022

Site specific project – Photograph

84 x 119 cm

Work made in collaboration with Manuel Vason and Tian Maia Vason

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

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*In the Time of the Flying Fishes [No Tempo dos Peixes Voadores]*, 2022

Video [HD 16:9]

14 minutes 17 seconds

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

*Temporary Window – In Light of Shadows [Janela Temporária – À Luz das Sombras]*

2016

Video [HD 16:9]

7 minutes 36 seconds

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

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*Celestial Diagram [Diagrama Celeste]*, 2017

Drawing, cutting and collage on paper

34 x 21.5 cm each [12 pieces]

Unique work

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*Catching the Wind [Apanhador de Vento]*, 2016

Performance [8 Days] – Video [HD 16:9]

23 minutes 31 seconds

Work made in collaboration with Carla Borba

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

## Rubiane Maia: Explanatory texts

### ***Stones Across the Ocean: Parts One, Two and Three, 2017, 2020 and 2025***

*Stones Across the Ocean* is a video performance conceived as a continually expanding project, unfolding at different moments over the years, transforming itself into a living archive of gestures, memories, and affections. The first video was made in 2017, five days before the birth of the artist's son. Facing the sea, she throws stones one by one, in a gesture of ritualistic simplicity, while observing the horizon, breathing deeply, and imagining the future. This elemental and repetitive act of throwing becomes a metaphor for crossing, waiting, and surrendering to the unknown.

In the second film, made in 2020, the action is resumed, now shared with the presence of her son, Tian. The thrown stones cease to be a gesture of solitary preparation and become a game, a dialogue between mother and son, a spontaneous choreography that connects generations through the repetition of movement. The horizon remains there, a silent witness to the passage of time, but the gesture gains new layers of meaning, nourished by care.

During the current exhibition, a third part is proposed, further expanding this relational field. Tian returns, this time accompanied by his Year 3 class from St Eanswythe's C of E Primary School. The intimate and familiar gesture expands into a collective experience, where the simple act of throwing stones into the sea becomes a moment of shared learning, a practice of imagination and belonging. Each stone carries not only the force of the throwing arm but also the memory of previous actions, composing a timeline that traverses the body, family, community, and the ocean. The film will be presented during the closing weekend of the exhibition, 18 and 19 October.

### ***Speirein, 2021-2023***

Speirein is a word of Greek origin that first appeared in the earliest translations of the Bible, where it was used to describe the dispersion of the Jewish people across the world following their captivity in Babylon. Within this context, some linguists argue that speirein became the root of the term diaspora, its biblical usage providing a foundational reference for articulating experiences of traumatic displacement.

In the performance *Speirein*, the artist works continuously for ten hours, replicating the form of her own feet. The process unfolds in four stages: preparing the raw material by mixing plaster, cement, and water; filling the mould; allowing it to dry; and carefully removing the hardened pieces. Most of the casts emerge fractured, with broken toes, a deliberate imperfection that symbolically recalls the suffering of those who endured the transatlantic crossing and set foot in the Americas for the first time.

In the final stage, when a significant number of feet have accumulated on the floor, the artist performs a ritual of care. She stains the fractured white surfaces with earth mixed with water, massaging and handling each cast with tenderness and attention. This act transforms the replicated feet into relics, emphasising resilience, dignity, and the enduring humanity of bodies that bore the weight of unimaginable trauma.

### ***Dissolutions, 2021***

*Dissolutions* is a series of images that the artist created during a residency in the Canary Islands, Spain. Through a sequence of actions, she brings her body into direct contact with earth, stones, and plants, enacting gestures of rooting, leaning, stretching, and holding. These encounters do not seek representation but rather dissolution, an unravelling of the boundaries between the body and its environment.

Planting her feet into the soil, threading stakes between her fingers, and balancing fragile branches, the artist enters into an embodied dialogue with the landscape. Here, the body does not dominate but listens, aligning itself with the rhythms, textures, and silent agencies of the more-than-human world. In *Dissolutions*, intimacy with the landscape becomes both method and ethic: an exploration of vulnerability, permeability, and the possibility of dissolving into a wider field of life.

### ***Transfiguration, 2018***

In this work, the artist covers her face entirely with her own placenta, transforming it into a ritualistic mask. The placenta, a temporary organ that shelters and nourishes the foetus during pregnancy, is evoked here as both material and symbol — a visceral link between body and motherhood.

By reclaiming and re-signifying this organ, often relegated to medical waste, the artist situates it as a site of memory, intimacy, and power. The action draws inspiration from rituals of various African and Indigenous peoples, where the placenta carries spiritual and cosmological significance, often treated as an extension of the self and a vessel of continuity between generations.

Through this performative image, the artist inscribes herself within a lineage of ancestral gestures, positioning the maternal body not as a private or domestic condition but as a locus of resistance, transformation, and female empowerment. The mask becomes both concealment and revelation: an invocation of origins, and a confrontation with what is culturally hidden or denied.

### ***Divisa [Border between States], 2022***

*Divisa [Border between States]* was rooted in the artist's personal biography: born in Minas Gerais, Rubiane spent her early years in a city on this frontier before growing up primarily in Espírito Santo, Brazil. Decades later, she returned to this terrain, transforming her memories of crossing the border into a collective artistic investigation alongside her partner, Manuel, and their son, Tian.

Over twenty consecutive days, the family travelled the entire stretch of the Minas–Espírito Santo border. Sites were identified through official signage, satellite mapping, or oral testimony from local inhabitants, revealing the shifting and unstable ways borders are named, imagined, and inhabited. At each location, the trio performed ephemeral interventions, creating symbolic landmarks through gestures of encounter, intimacy, and care. These actions did not monumentalise the border as a fixed division but activated it as a porous zone, a space where histories, landscapes, and memories converge. Through embodied practice, *Divisa* reframes the border as an affective and imaginative territory, speaking simultaneously of separation and belonging, displacement and return.

### ***In the Time of the Flying Fishes, 2022***

*In the Time of the Flying Fishes* was created in an environmentally protected zone in Gran Canaria, where the artist came across an abandoned fishing frame, corroded by time and salt. This found object became both an extension of the body and anchor, rolled and lifted across the ground in gestures that pressed the body against the earth's surface, treated as a porous skin, a vessel of buried memories.

The resulting video unfolded as a spatial diagram, where shadows, lines, and movements traced an impossible archaeology, an attempt to touch the erased presence of the Guanches, the Indigenous peoples who inhabited the Canary Islands before the Spanish colonisation in the 15th century, who were eradicated by colonial violence.

### ***Temporary Window – In Light of Shadows, 2016***

*Temporary Window – In Light of Shadows* was developed during a three-week residency at the Centro de las Artes de San Agustín in Oaxaca, Mexico, during which the artist developed research based on the observation of light (solar and artificial).

Rooted in the striking presence of shadows that cut across the surrounding architecture and landscape, the work situates the artist's body as the central axis of investigation. In dialogue with a specially constructed grid measuring 2.5 by 2.5 metres, she stages an encounter between body, structure, and environment. Through gestures of ascension and descension, the body merges with the frame, opening a temporal window in which light and shadow are reconfigured as material forces, constantly shifting, unstable, and negotiating the limits of visibility.

### ***Celestial Diagram, 2017***

*Celestial Diagram* explores the sky as a space of geometry, rhythm, and relation. Diagrams are usually tools for clarity, yet here the lines extend into the unknown, connecting sidereal bodies in patterns that resist completion. The work transforms astronomical precision into abstraction, proposing that the cosmos can be read not only as data but also as a living archive of symbols and encounters. It gestures toward an order that is never fully attainable, an unfinished drawing, cutting and collage that mirrors our own search for meaning within the celestial sphere.

### ***Catching the Wind, 2016***

*Catching the Wind* emerged from an experience during an artistic residency in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Over the course of eight days, the artists travelled through the interior of Rio Grande do Sul – the country's southernmost state – across a strip of sand, road, and earth, suspended between the Atlantic Ocean and the Lagoa dos Patos. It is a flat and expansive terrain, marked by sparse vegetation, shifting dunes, and the force of the minuano, a polar south-westerly wind that sweeps across the region with unrelenting intensity. In this landscape that has a seemingly infinite horizon, verticality becomes almost abstract, a fragile orientation in the midst of overwhelming horizontality.

The central action of the work unfolded within the Parque Nacional da Lagoa do Peixe, where the artists manipulated an 80-metre-long stretch of orange safety net. The video documents their interventions, performed both individually and together, with the shared intention of 'capturing' the wind.

Dressed in bright orange workwear and reflective safety vests, they staged this poetic encounter as if it were a technical procedure – methodical, pragmatic, and at times playfully absurd. Their movements reveal the paradox of attempting to grasp what is, by its nature, ungraspable: the invisible yet ever-present force of the wind.

Through the film, one perceives not only the physical exertion demanded of the artists but also the shifting balance of agency between human effort and elemental power. The minuano asserts its supremacy, resisting domestication and affirming its protagonism in the encounter. What emerges is not the conquest of nature but rather a choreography of negotiation, where the body's persistence collides with the immensity of the environment. In this sense, *Catching the Wind* reimagines performance as a fragile but potent site of contact: where futility, resistance, and play converge into a poetic meditation on impossibility.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who made this exhibition possible. To Beton Collective, for the invitation and for hosting me at kollektiv; to Megan Piper, whose curatorial insight illuminated new paths within the work; and to the joint production of Beton Collective and Studio Radar, whose collaboration sustained this project from beginning to end. My sincere thanks also to Mick Williamson for his kind and generous support and Sangmin Cha for the thoughtful design of this catalogue. I extend thanks to St Eanswythe's C of E Primary School and to the Year 3 parents and kids, who kindly agreed to participate in a new performance project, enriching this journey with their trust and openness.

I am profoundly grateful to my partner, Manuel Vason, and to my son, Tian, whose presence and contributions are woven into several of the works presented here. My thanks to Carla Borba for her collaboration in *Catching the Wind*, and to my gallery, Marli Matsumoto, for the continued support and belief in my practice.

Beyond these immediate circles of care and collaboration, I wish to acknowledge my ancestors, whose strength resonates through every gesture; all those who live between places, carrying multiplicity as a form of knowledge; and the ocean itself, the vast connective tissue that binds us to every continent, reminding us that no journey is ever solitary.

Rubiane Maia

## Credits

Curated by Megan Piper

Produced by Beton Collective and Studio Radar

Exhibition documentation © Manuel Vason

Original photographs © Manuel Vason and Rubiane Maia

*Catching the Wind* © Rubiane Maia and Carla Borba

Catalogue design by Sangmin Cha

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## **Rubiane Maia**

Rubiane Maia is a Brazilian multidisciplinary artist based in Folkestone. Working across performance, installation, video, writing and photography, her practice explores the body as a site of memory, perception and transformation. Guided by the energies of place, landscape and the more-than-human, she creates works that centre care, interdependence and embodied knowledge. Often developed through site-responsive research, Maia's work engages with organic materials, ancestral memory and altered states of perception. Recent projects have drawn on autobiographical texts and transgenerational narratives to address themes of race, gender and belonging.

She has performed and exhibited internationally, including at the 35th São Paulo Biennial (2023), Jerwood Visual Arts, ICA London, and Inhotim Institute. Her two-month long durational work *The Garden* was presented at Terra Comunal – Marina Abramović + MAI, São Paulo (2015), and she has developed research-led projects in high-altitude landscapes across Bolivia, Venezuela and Brazil.

Currently, she is part of the exhibition *Marina Abramović + MAI* in dialogue with Joseph Beuys, at the Museum Schloss Moyland in Germany, presenting the work 'Coming from the Plants', through a seven-day live performance.

## **Megan Piper**

Megan Piper co-founded East London's public art trail, *The Line*, with the late regeneration expert Clive Dutton OBE and served as its Director from 2015-2025. She is a former gallerist who ran *The Piper Gallery* in Fitzrovia (2012-13) and a space on Jermyn Street in St James's (2016-17). She is a founding member of the Association of Women in the Arts and a former Governor of *Elmhurst Ballet School* in Birmingham. She moved to Folkestone in 2021.

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**Marli Matsumoto**  
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