

Ana Hupe: Slash-and-burn

26 September – 19 October 2025

Coffee is the fuel of big cities, an addictive substance that powers the productivity of the 21st century's profit-driven world. Yet coffee is also, in many contexts, an invitation to pause, to take a break. It is a warm way into encounters, a welcome, an invitation to take a seat, stay longer, and savour.

In Brazil, coffee production dates back to the late 18th century and is closely tied to the long, gradual transition from slavery to paid labour. Today, cities across the globe cultivate an intense coffee culture that, though far removed from the coffee plantations of colonial times, reflects renewed dynamics of control adapted to the economic model of our age.

In *Slash-and-burn*, Ana Hupe creates a space for contemplation and wandering while approaching historical references to the production, trade, and consumption of coffee across the Atlantic triangle. Findings unearthed from public archives in Bahia, Brazil, roam through the artistic space of free associations, letting aesthetic responses surface beyond historical facts.

In this mix, 19th-century representations of Brazil through the gaze of painters such as the French Jean-Baptiste Debret and the German Johann Moritz Rugendas are used by Hupe in an exercise of reappropriation. These images are collaged with icons of coffee culture from varied times and geographies, such as an Italian Bialetti stovetop coffee maker or an Ethiopiancini cup.

Constantly focused on the workers who produce and move the economy, colonial or contemporary, Hupe observes how the imaginary of a place can be nurtured by images created from a detached perspective, often exploited as part of political projects of modernisation.

The artist's attention to how historical representations are shaped translates into the creation of new visuals: the collages are a starting point for textile printing using batik, a technique of *resist dyeing* where wax protects the drawing from the pigment to come and, once removed, reveals the images in the fabric's original colour. The final effect flirts with a sense of immateriality, with wavering lines reiterated by the instability of the jute frames, made from coffee sacks. These

figures blend the historical with the surreal, and their display, sprawled across the walls, opens the opportunity for fictional, associative readings between them.

Overall, techniques employed across this installation (including detaching, collaging, printing, and framing) play with concepts of representation, time overlap, absence, and erasure, as well as instability and resistance.

Finally, the scent and appearance of a pile of coffee mixed with soil helps turn the visitor's attention to the land. The term 'Slash-and-burn' defines a technique of care for the soil that includes controlled burning. This is common across a range of Indigenous cultures but has been co-opted and distorted by the agribusiness of monoculture, rendering it harmful. When appropriately applied, the technique is, first, contained and controlled, and, second, fundamentally combined with letting the soil rest for a substantial time, ensuring the soil's restoration and nourishment.

Time, key to productivity, is also key to resistance – from physiological rest to workers' strikes to coffee breaks.

The installation includes, resting on a side table, a book where a large part of the work's content unfolds only gradually, proposing a different rhythm for the experience of the space. With this, *Slash-and-burn* defies the visitor's availability of time. Those who can afford to savour it fully face the opportunity to enter the artist's universe, establish their own associations more freely, and discover more spaces where poetic resonances can breathe.

CECILIA VILELA



ANA HUPE (b. 1983, Rio de Janeiro) is a multimedia artist whose practice explores blind spots of representation and builds counter-memories that challenge colonial archives. Works by Hupe are part of important museum collections in Brazil, such as MAM Rio and IPHAN-Institute for National Historical and Artistic Heritage, Rio de Janeiro and MAR – Museum of Art Rio. Hupe is also a researcher and lecturer in Art History at the Burg Giebichenstein Art Academy in Halle, Germany. In 2021, her artwork Footnotes to a triangular cartography (2019) was acquired by the UK's public collection of art from Latin America, ESCALA. Casa Tomada marks Ana Hupe's debut solo exhibition in the UK. www.anahupe.com

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CASA TOMADA is a series of three solo exhibitions of site-specific installations created for a 3m-wide cube that visitors enter alone. Exploring themes of their own choice, invited artists create works that become places for visitors to inhabit at their own pace. Casa Tomada explores the everyday negotiations between isolation and coexistence, ownership and control. Cutting across the varied artistic languages of the three participants, what unites them is their ability to turn exhibitions into intimate encounters.

The project takes place at 92 Webster Road – RHFA, an arts space that has a 50-year history of shaping the art scene in Bermondsey, London. Casa Tomada is an initiative to reactivate this space through a collaboration between Cecilia Vilela, curating the project, and Ron Henocq, hosting it. The 3m-wide cube that Casa Tomada responds to is a legacy of when the space hosted Matt's Gallery, between 2018 and 2023.

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Credits

Curator: Cecilia Vilela

Host: Ron Henocq – RHFA

Visual Identity and Production:

Paloma Passetto de Souza

and Eloisa Rodrigues

Installation: André Nobre

Generously supported by RHFA.

Casa Tomada

92 Webster Road – RHFA

Opening hours:

Friday 12-8pm

Saturday–Sunday 12-6pm

Exceptionally, during **Frieze Week**, the exhibition will also open on Thursday 16 October, 12-8pm.

For **accessibility enquires** please contact:
92WebsterRoad@gmail.com

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Exhibition 2/3

8 – 30 November 2025

Preview: Friday 7 November, 6-8 pm (combined with an opening at Coleman Projects)

Exhibition 3/3

21 February – 15 March 2026

Preview: Friday 20 February, 6-8 pm (combined with an opening at Coleman Projects)

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