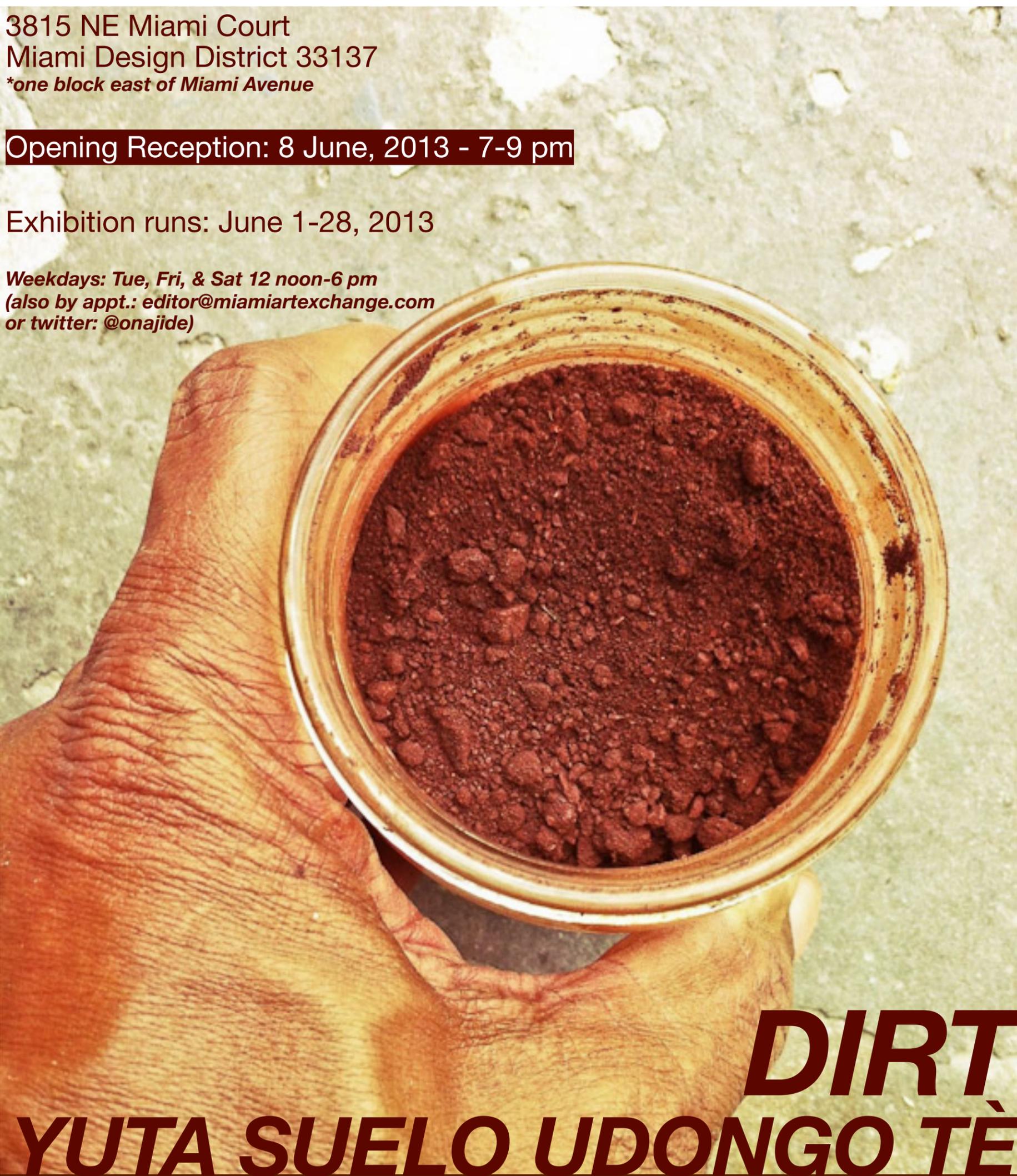


3815 NE Miami Court  
Miami Design District 33137  
*\*one block east of Miami Avenue*

**Opening Reception: 8 June, 2013 - 7-9 pm**

Exhibition runs: June 1-28, 2013

*Weekdays: Tue, Fri, & Sat 12 noon-6 pm  
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# **DIRT** **YUTA SUELO UDONGO TÈ**

**8 JUNE, 2013**

*Spear Bldg. | 3815 NE Miami Court |  
Miami 33137 |  
info: [editor@miamiartexchange.com](mailto:editor@miamiartexchange.com)*

*7:00-9:00 pm*

**MIAMI  
DESIGN  
DISTRICT**

There is a challenge facing this exhibition. Statements about life, death, history and the ephemerality of it all are loaded with symbolic baggage before you do anything with them. Visual artist and curator Onajide Shabaka wanted to ask artists to take up the challenge and investigate various aspects of dirt, and certainly not all on the physical level. After a recent conversation with artist William Cordova, Shabaka felt a need to resurrect this material and all of its various notions because he has been hoarding a supply of red oxide colored dirt shipped back to Miami from the foundation of a demolished building and mine shaft in Ely, Minnesota. That place, its dirt, and the three fired clay bricks shipped back have a lingering resonance with Shabaka's art practice having spent nine summers there. Lugging the dirt and bricks around since Shabaka's visits to Minnesota also carry weighty references that are evoked in this exhibition, "Dirt Yuta Suelo Udongo Tè." These linguistic references are: English, Talaandig (Philippines), Spanish, Kiswahili, and Kreole (Haiti).

Even though the notion of history and architecture are excavated with the now demolished building, it was the richness of the red oxide color that attracted Shabaka from the very beginning. He asked his Minnesota host at one point to stop along the rain soaked road to Ely from Minneapolis to gather a small cup of the red mud. At the time, Shabaka thought for sure his host would think he had lost his mind. Upon his return to Miami, it quickly ended up being used in artistic "play."

It's hard to define "dirt," since it represents the dissolution of everything else, the final stop, the end of entropy, the common conclusion of the thousand natural shocks that the flesh is heir to. Our relationship to dirt is entirely mixed. Dirt became contemporary art with the Earthworks of the late 1960s, a kind of formalism that moved out of the gallery, into the ground and then out of town. Nature is dirt, after all — as a timeless balm against the fragmentation of media culture. The dirt salve is the subject of at least four new books and this exhibition.

The participating artists:

Dona Altemus - mixed media  
 Edouard Duval Carrié - painting  
 Robert Chambers - mixed media  
 William Cordova - mixed media  
 Veronica Scharf Garcia - ceramics, sculpture  
 Mark Hahn - photography  
 Alette Simmons Jimenez - mixed media  
 Lori Nozick - sculpture  
 Kim Nicolini - photography, drawing  
 David Rohn - photography, performance  
 Onajide Shabaka - mixed media, drawing  
 Jovan Karlo Villalba - painting, sculpture  
 Debra Wilk - poetry

**Dona Altemus** work portrays the constant process of deciphering, while simultaneously sublimating the intellectually intangible action of thinking into form. **Jovan Karlo Villalba's**, "The Wake," comments on the negative effects present-day civilization land as well as the personification of today's man — worn and fallen. **Veronica Scharf Garcia's** Raku Salver, a tray used by a servant to present a letter or card but instead carries a mound of dirt that seems to refer to geophagy. Geophagy is a traditional cultural activity which takes place during pregnancy, religious ceremonies, or as a remedy for disease. **Kim Nicolini's** Dirt Yards At Night photographs focus on houses in the very unique landscape of Tucson, Arizona — a town where most of the yards are comprised of dirt and in which there are no streetlights. Nicolini been intrigued by the way these houses look at night, the way small signs of domestic life glow faintly in a sea of darkness and dirt. The photographs are like frames from a film of the domestic unconscious. Also of Arizona, **Mark Hahn's** photographs

reside between the known, the unknowable, the familiar and the new while focusing on unremarkable objects and the empty spaces between them revealing a fragile compositional and emotional balance. **Onajide Shabaka's** art practice makes references to the anthropological, geological, and biological through a visual aesthetic that is challenging and visceral, with a grounding in African Atlantic culture. **Alette Simmons Jimenez's** art addresses the significance of human existence with undertones of absurdity that play along as humanity attempts to balance negotiations with nature. **Lori Nozick** creates environmental installations with architectural and organic structures that refer to social and geological changes, both physically and symbolically, that also function as repositories of individual and collective moments and memory. **Edouard Duval Carrié's** art reflects the culture and history of Haiti with references to the Vodou religion. His work is often overtly political, executed in attempts to embody his nation's spirit and its troubles with an attitude that is neither detached nor ironic. **Robert Chambers** finds himself constantly toying with visual connections between science and art, forcing them into a realm of senselessness and chaos. This work stimulates viewers into constructing their own understanding of contemporary concerns and questions which may be used as an impetus to encourage associations between disparate entities. **William Cordova** says he has an urgent desire to create alternate perspectives. "Conscious change only occurs when we change our perspective," he says. As a life long gardener, **Debra Wilk** finds nothing about dirt derogatory. She wonders how dirt become a lowly condition, and her prose poem DIRT, takes that path. Dirt changes metaphor, from a blessing of sustenance to a lowly human condition. She sees the many layers of perspective about dirt, as metaphor and experience.

#### "THE BLOOMING"

for Stephen Wright

A giving light  
 Lends  
 To the earth  
 Leaves a winter's thaw  
 And weaves  
 A summer's sweat  
 Tends  
 With touch persistent  
 Returns  
 With Colour  
 The honesty of dirt

#### "DIRT"

What do you do with a bad mother? A mother so old there's no way things will turn out different. She dies and it's official. A mother who knew what she was talking about when she told us we were never wanted. No, that's not exactly true—what she said was she never wanted children. Not as personal. Hang on to ambiguous details. You love her. She wasn't evil. Evil doesn't teach her young not to hate—doesn't forbid words like nigger and spic. She didn't beat but she didn't hug. Her eyes never lit up when her child entered the room. She colored eggs for Easter. Filled baskets full of sweets. Poured Tide in her little girls tub when they played in the mud—soft places numb with pain too at home to invoke an honest scream. Little girls become women; retell their secret stories just between them—they drink. The stories are funny and the bar is noisy. Alone in bed they cry and hate her—wake up filled with guilt and self loathing. One sister stops bathing and the other scrubs every inch—starves herself thin. One sister eats and eats. Sometimes they reverse. Each child holds one secret they never tell. One shovel digs. The other buries.

*Debra Wilk*

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