

29 March - 22 November 2026

ACCESSIBLE VISIT

Visit the exhibitions «Lorna Simpson.Third Person» and «Paulo Nazareth. Algebra» at Punta della Dogana with this booklet in Simple English and the videos in International Sign Language (IS).

Punta della Dogana
Palazzo Grassi
**Pinault
Collection**

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LORNA SIMPSON. THIRD PERSON

Welcome to Punta della Dogana. On this floor, we can look at works by Lorna Simpson.

Lorna Simpson was born and raised in New York. She began working with photography in the mid-1980s, later moving toward collage and then painting.

A central theme in her work is the concept of collective memory, particularly that of the African American community.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

ROOM 1

In the first room, we encounter *Black Totem* (2025), a work made by stacking copies of the American magazines *Ebony* and *Jet*.

These were the first magazines, in the 1950s, to publish images of Black women and to address the life, culture, and politics of the African American community.

They are important childhood memories for the artist and were essential cultural tools for the community.

The fragility of the magazine paper evokes the fragility of memory.

On the opposite wall are three paintings—*Three Figures* (2014), *Black Nebula* (2016), and *Then & Now* (2016)—which reference riots and civil rights protests in Detroit and Alabama during the 1960s.

Simpson mixes magazine imagery and archival material with painting.

These images celebrate moments that power would prefer to erase from collective memory.

ROOM 3

In the third room, we encounter *Vibrating Cycles* (2026), a work that recalls meditative practices from Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

The vibrations of obsidian singing bowls are perceived throughout the body—try it yourself.

In the same room, we see paintings from the *Ice* series.

Through these works, Simpson recalls the figure of Matthew Henson, the Black explorer who reached the North Pole in the early 20th century but whose role was erased in favor of the expedition leader.

This is not an isolated case. Further in the exhibition, the work *did time elapse* refers to a Black farmer who witnessed and documented a meteorite's fall, yet whose testimony was replaced by a white voice when the event entered the Smithsonian's narrative.

Simpson aims to make these silenced stories visible.

ROOM 4

In the next room, we encounter the series *Unanswerable* (2013–2018), a group of collages created over several years.

Simpson primarily uses images from *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, as well as domestic archives.

The collages merge the familiar with the fantastic and create new relationships on the page.

An animated collage, *Walk with Me*, can be found in Room 5.

THE TORRINO

Woman on Snowball is a large-scale sculptural transformation of a collage from the *Unanswerable* series.

Simpson uses the contrast in scale between the woman and the snowball to render poetic what initially seems absurd.

The title refers to the “snowball effect,” a process in which something small grows larger and becomes harder to stop.

The sculpture embodies suspended movement, frozen just before inevitable melting.

What emotions do you think the seated woman is experiencing?

THE CUBE

This room, number 9, is called the Cube because of its shape.

Here we find large-scale paintings depicting women reading, studying, thinking, or painting.

These works share cosmic references, visible in the presence of stars and skies.

The women's bodies fuse with star networks, halos of light, and blue mists, evoking a dimension that extends beyond the human.

PAULO NAZARETH. ALGEBRA

The exhibition *Paulo Nazareth. Algebra* shows works by the Brazilian artist Paulo Nazareth.

Algebra means “recomposition of broken parts”: through his works, the artist reconstructs stories and shifts the meaning of individual elements.

Nazareth walks across Latin America, documenting the people and the situations he encounters along his journeys.

For this reason, you will see photographs and videos throughout the exhibition.

You will also encounter many everyday objects assembled together. As a child, Paulo Nazareth used to transform discarded objects found on the street into toys.

The artist’s mother is at the origin of both walking and collecting. It was she who taught her children to walk from the outskirts to the city center, and she who, working as a street cleaner, brought home objects for her children.

The exhibition therefore brings together actions, objects, and ancient as well as contemporary stories.



[Watch the video in International Sign](#)

A white line runs along Punta della Dogana. It has the shape of a *tumbeiro*, the ships that transported enslaved people from Africa to the Americas: human beings treated as goods to sell.

Look closely at the line: it is made of salt.

In antiquity, salt was called "white gold." It was used to preserve food and even served as currency.

The city of Venice controlled the salt trade in the Mediterranean, and Punta della Dogana was the place where it was stored and protected. It was also thanks to salt that the city accumulated great wealth.

By placing the outline of a *tumbeiro* inside Punta della Dogana, Paulo Nazareth reminds us that the wealth of Venice and Europe was built through the sacrifice of people and the exploitation of distant lands.

Following the line, you will enter a room covered with names: the names of peoples who were displaced, erased, and deported in order to build European wealth.

ROOM 1

This room connects Nazareth's personal history with universal histories.

The videos, *Antropologia do Negro I e II*, projected on the floor shows the artist among skulls. These are the skulls of people who died in the Brazilian psychiatric hospital of Barbacena, where individuals considered inconvenient, queer, or racialized were confined.

The artist's grandmother died in Barbacena, a place from which bones were sold to hospitals and universities for research, while the dead were denied burial.

Nazareth commemorates this family figure, and family references also appear in the cloths displayed on the walls. These are kitchen dishcloths, common household objects that evoke domestic affection and togetherness.

On these cloths, Ana, Nazareth's mother, embroidered with other women the phrase Mother's Love in many languages.

This same phrase is sometimes tattooed in prison on rapists, who are among the most despised inmates.

In Nazareth's work, meanings are multiple and often in tension with one another.

ROOM 2

Supermarket products appear embedded in ice. Their labels and logos feature names, images, and figures of Black and Indigenous people—individuals transformed into commercial symbols by industry and sold on the market.

Wealth is generated, but not for the people depicted on the packaging.

For this reason, in this room you will see a photograph of the artist holding a sign that reads:

I sell my image as an exotic man.

Nazareth reverses power: he chooses to sell his own image, and he profits from it.

Power changes hands.

ROOM 6

A spiral of left shoes tells multiple stories.

The artist collected these shoes while walking across Latin America.

They once belonged to people who traveled with him or were migrating elsewhere.

They speak of migration and the spiral also recalls the history of African populations violently enslaved and transported to the Americas. Before being shipped, captives were forced to walk around the Tree of Forgetting, to erase their names, languages, and cultures.

Nazareth walks the spiral in reverse, symbolically undoing that violent ritual.

It is important to remember that enslaved people were not allowed to wear shoes—shoes were reserved for free people.

Even those who were freed often lived in poverty and hardship.

For Nazareth, the shoe becomes a symbol of oppression and violence. For this reason, he walks barefoot or with thin sandals.