



**Tiran Willemse**  
***Dweller***  
**January 21 – April 12, 2026**

Swiss Institute (SI) is pleased to present *Dweller*, the first solo exhibition by artist, dancer, and choreographer Tiran Willemse. *Dweller* marks Willemse's debut exploration of moving image and sound, informed by years of training in classical ballet, rigorous studies of African dances, and collaborative ventures in experimental theater and performance. Continuing the artist's focus on the politics of embodiment, *Dweller* employs ritualistic choreographies of sound and gesture to navigate the ecstatic threshold between movement and stasis, form and formlessness, reason and unreason.

The exhibition, presented in the lower-level gallery, centers on a newly commissioned three-channel video installation that is accompanied by a spatialized sound composition. Shot at different times of day in the Swiss Alps, a theater (formerly a train station) located on the Swiss-German border, and a barn site in Mathon (now part of an art residency) that has historically housed immigrants, the work's rhythmic sequences oscillate between interior spaces and exterior landscapes, alluding to the layered migratory histories they contain. The film's cyclical logic is heightened by performances which unfold alongside symbolic visualizations of the four elements of air, water, fire and earth, foregrounding Willemse's associative contrasts of mythic, geological, and socio-political registers. Featuring the artist and his collaborators enacting slow, repetitive, and absurd gestures and expressions – at times approaching uncanny, doll-like artifice and inertness – these scenes figure the Black body as a fleshly site of representational disarrangement. In this way, the work critically interweaves dance and cinema to dramatize Blackness's historical function in cohering the modern, bio-political binaries of subjectivity and objecthood, male and female, life and death.

In the front and back stairwells leading to the gallery, a sound work complements the film's meditations on the material and spiritual relationships between land and those rendered landless through exile, slavery, and apartheid. Paired with atmospheric lighting, the installation features a conversation with Willemse's grandparents, who reside in the Western Cape of South Africa, alongside recordings of the artist vocalizing glossolalic utterances. Willemse leaves the dialogue with his grandparents untranslated in Afrikaans – the only language they speak – both to signify the epistemic violence of linguistic colonization on Black and "Colored" communities and to materialize a historical, site-specific relay between this Dutch-derived language and the viewer's presence in an urban landscape that bears the traces of Dutch settlerism.

Willemse's works grant visceral, poetic form to the historical and contemporary specters that haunt colonized minds, bodies, and lands. Working beyond humanist frames of recognition and redress, and responding to regimes of structural violence, *Dweller* proposes ritual, exorcism, and momentary surrenders to insanity as corporeal technologies of transgenerational endurance.

*Dweller*, 2026

Three channel HD video installation (color, stereo sound)

30 min

*Suiker bossie*, 2026

Sound installation

5 min

Concept & Direction: Tiran Willemse

Performance: Tiran Willemse, NewKyd, Samuel Francis Pereira

Original Score & Sound Design: Tobias Koch

Cinematography: Jannis Davi

Editing: Jannis Davi & Tiran Willemse

Additional Camera: Milan Friedlos & Alvaro Kreyden

Color Grading: Alvaro Kreyden

Coordination: Lhaga Koondhor

Production: Tiran Willemse, Rabea Grand, Eva Cabañas & Pealden Tamnyen

SI will present Willemse's live performance work, *Untitled (Nostalgia: Act 3)*, in collaboration with Danspace Project on January 23 & 24, 2026.

*Dweller* is curated by KJ Abudu, Associate Curator | Public Programs & Residencies.

## About Tiran Willemse

Tiran Willemse was born in South Africa and lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland. Recent performances have been presented at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Cantonal Museum of Fine Arts, Lausanne; Museo MACRO, Rome; Serralves Museum, Porto; Roskilde Festival, Roskilde; and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki. Willemse won the Swiss Performance Prize in 2023.

## About Swiss Institute

Founded in 1986, Swiss Institute (SI) is an independent nonprofit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental artmaking through innovative exhibitions, education, and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, SI serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new perspectives on celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions. SI is committed to being an organization that is diverse, equitable, accessible, and environmentally conscious in its work, structure, and programming. Open to the public free of charge, SI seeks to explore how a Swiss context can be the starting point for international conversations in the fields of visual and performing arts, design, and architecture.

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