

IT

GO

HAVE

TO

ADJUST.

ON

LANGUAGE

AS

PARASITE

TEAM

A SERIES OF EXERCISES, RESEARCH, EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMES

TRANSMISSION II IN BERLIN, GERMANY

EXHIBITION

WITH Pelumi Adejumo Blick Bassy Onur Çimen Lucas Lugarinho Braga Jimmy Robert Lerato Shadi Farkhondeh Shahrودي Lulëzim Ukaj David Zink Yi

OPEN 14.09.–03.12.2023 Tuesday–Sunday 14:00–19:00

SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES

14.09.2023 17:00 ENGLISH With Sagal Farah Billy Fowo Meghna Singh & Manuela García Aldana
15.09.2023 17:00 FRANÇAIS / FRANGLAIS Avec Billy Fowo
23.09.2023 18:00 ENGLISH With Sagal Farah
28.09.2023 18:00 DEUTSCH Mit Anna Jäger
01.10.2023 17:00 ENGLISH With Meghna Singh
12.10.2023 17:00 ESPAÑOL Con Manuela García Aldana
14.10.2023 17:00 ENGLISH & SOMALI With Sagal Farah
26.10.2023 17:00 SVENSKA Med Sagal Farah
02.11.2023 17:00 SPANGLISH With Manuela García Aldana
04.11.2023 17:00 ENGLISH With Sagal Farah
05.11.2023 17:00 HINGLISH With Meghna Singh

WORKSHOPS

September–November

23.09.2023 With Blick Bassy

INVOCATIONS

11.–12.11.2023

Details and updates on our website

ARTISTIC DIRECTION Renan Laru-an

CONCEPT Sagal Farah

CURATION Sagal Farah Billy Fowo

CURATORIAL RESEARCH Meghna Singh Manuela García Aldana

PRODUCTION LEAD Waylon D'Mello

EXHIBITION SCENOGRAPHY Nancy Naser Al Deen

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LIGHT Emilio Cordero

PUBLICATION Archive Books Mokia Laisin

INTERNSHIP Grace Baggot

COLLABORATION A SAVVY Contemporary project in collaboration with Archive Kabinett (Berlin, Germany), Fankeenna (Hargeisa, Somaliland), and Alice Yard (Port of Spain, Trinidad)

FUNDING This project is funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds.

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS



C O N T E N T

THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

BY SAGAL FARAH AND BILLY FOWO

Hold we to the centre of remembrance
that forgets the never that severs
word from the source
and never forgets the witness
wof broken utterances that passed before
and now breaks the culture of silence
in the ordeal of testimony;
in the history of circles
each point lies along the circumference
diameter or radius
each word creates a centre
circumscribed by memory.... and history
waits at rest always
still at the centre

Excerpt from M. NourbeSe Philip "She Tries Her Tongue,
Her Silence Softly Breaks"

Together with artists, writers, programmers, translators, scholars, activists and other thinkers, the SAVVY Contemporary project IT GO HAVE TO ADJUST reflects on the parasitic nature of language¹ and its potential to facilitate the suitable climate and conditions for subversive feminist, anti-racist and de-colonial practices within art and publishing. We are interested in how that parasite can be transmitted through interactions that can also take place without our influence and how a subversive language can provoke laughter as joy and disavowal.

Suppose we are "participants in the future of our languages," as the poet Ocean Vuong argues. Can we find procedures for optimising our communication to aid the creation of networks that can parasitize to proliferate and develop liberating practices?

The title of the project stems from Derek Walcott's play *Pantomime* and borrows from the Creole words of black Trinidadian servant Jackson, who, recounting his experience of hearing a parrot use infected language to Mr Trewe, is asked how a parrot can be prejudiced and in return replies that the parrot is remnant from the "pre-colonial epoch", and if it wants to survive in Trinidad then "it go have to adjust".

We have considered the project's research chapters in the framework of modes of transmission. Our journey to Hargeisa began with a collaboration with youth-led art space Fankeenna that acts in a region steeped in the history of oral storytelling that gave Somali speakers the epithet "A Nation of Poets". The collaboration resulted in an intergenerational gathering and conversation on the metaphorical apnoea that characterises lulls in cultural circulation during and after conflict and how those channels have been cared for and resurrected.

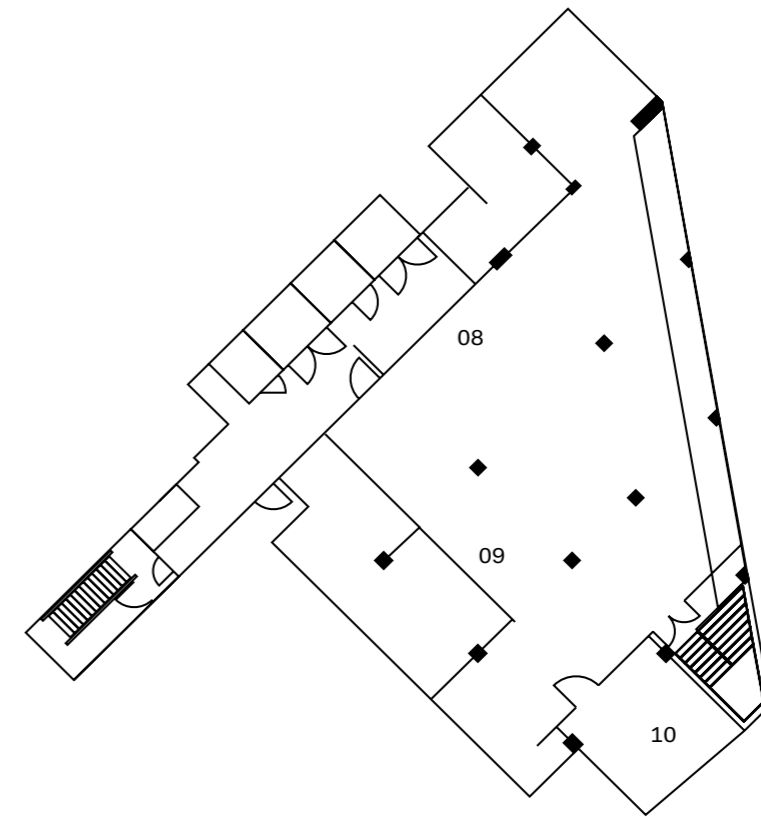
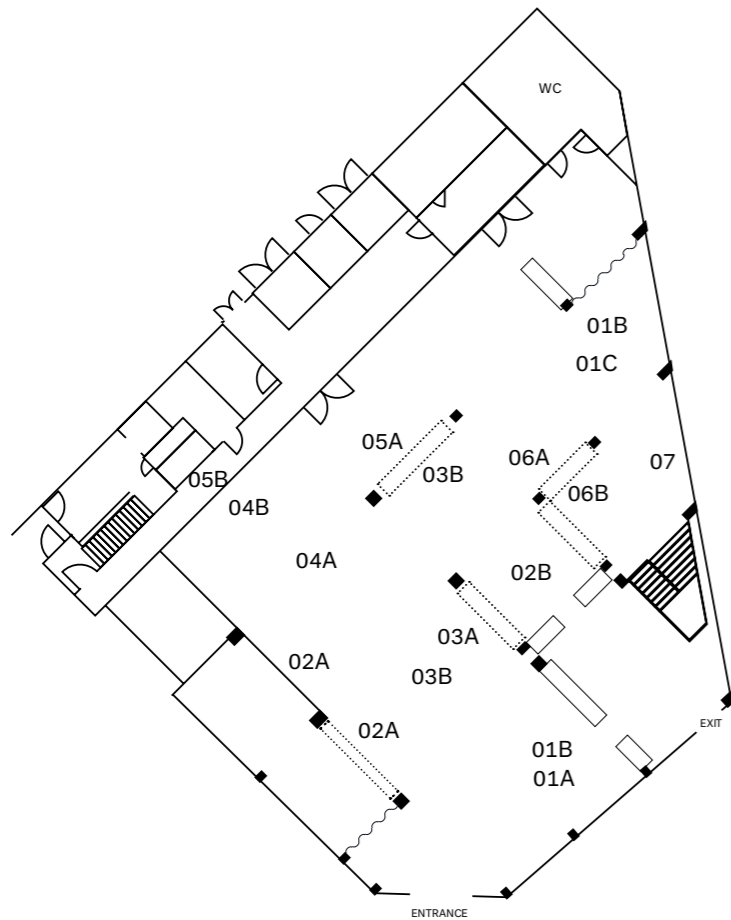
The second research chapter looks at water as a mode of transmission and is a collaboration with the Port of Spain-based art space Alice Yard. There, Walcott's character Jackson acts as a point of departure from which to explore motions over and in bodies of water that have contributed to the development of Creole.

In this exhibition chapter at SAVVY Contemporary which we consider to be the body of our project, we bring together works from artists, scholars and researchers who through their practice deliberate and expand on the parasitic nature of language within their various contexts. With works by Berlin-based and international artists, the exhibition offers a multi-perspective translation of the concept note (which you find at the end of the handout), and traces back to aspects of the research done in Hargeysa as well as ruminations developed with our second collaborator Alice Yard in Port-of-Spain.

IT GO HAVE TO ADJUST. ON LANGUAGE AS PARASITE is a living curatorial endeavour that, through a series of exercises, research, exhibitions, and public programmes, will evolve, expand and build upon the exhibition in SAVVY Contemporary. The curatorial concept introduces the reader to a series of themes and events that, on the surface level, seem to be unrelated but that, on closer inspection, will show shared symptoms or bear witness to points of convergence through unlikely common denominators. Pay close attention, and new manifestations of our research journeys will find their way into our rooms. As the project progresses, the curatorial text will also reappear in new variations wherein new authors will speak.

¹ A theory that has been suggested in varying fashions by thinkers from Jacques Derrida to Susan Blackmore and in the prolific misquoting of Octavia Butler's literary proposal "there is nothing new under the sun" from The Lost Parables series that actually ends "but there are new suns". The fragment of Butler's main clause has already made its way into the world.

FLOOR PLAN



1. FARKHONDEH SHAHROUDI

A. *Book In The Book*

2001–ongoing, Installation, series of textile books and scrolls, paint on fabric, various dimensions

B. *Trap*

2020, Sculpture, wire and artificial hair, various dimensions

C. *Glossolalie*

2007–2010, Installation, series of six bound books, pen and marker on paper, each book 21,5 x 30,5 cm, 80 pages

2. LERATO SHADI

A. *Gaufi*

2023, Performative drawing, Pen on raw linen, 400 x 148 cm

Kgakala

2023, Performative drawing, Pen on raw linen, 400 x 148 cm

B. *Ngono Le Nna*

2020, Neon light installation in 2 parts, mounted on red walls, 160 x 60 cm and 150 x 150 cm

3. HARGEYSA CULTURAL CENTRE ARCHIVAL DISPLAY

A. *Qaraami*

Documentary, video projection

B. Display of HCC's archive on Qaraami cassettes (1960s–ongoing), musical notations, photographic prints, excerpts of lyrics translated from Somali to English

4. DAVID ZINK YI

A. *Being The Measure*

2016, Installation, Wooden objects, variable dimensions,

B. *Being The Measure*

2016, Video, 1-channel, 01:11:16 min

5. PELUMI ADEJUMO

A. *I Pass By The Attenuation Well*

2018, Poem on the wall, stencil

B. *I Pass By The Attenuation Well*

2018, Sound installation, 09:23 min

6. JIMMY ROBERT

A. *Vocabulary*

2011, HD video, sound, 7:43 mins

B. *Paramètres*

2012, HD video, sound, 5:20 mins

7. LULËZIM UKAJ

weaving time

2023, Collage, Repurposed paper of print media (posters and magazines), 213 x 190 cm

8. LUCAS LUGARINHO BRAGA

Sonic & The Escape Hypothesis

2023, Playable video game installation

9. ONUR ÇIMEN

Maran's Scriptings

2023, Drawings, Brush pen and dry pastel on tracing paper, 140 x 79cm

10. BLICK BASSY

Future Lullaby

2022, HD video, sound, 15:43 min

W O R K D E S C R I P T I O N S & B I O G R A P H I E S

1. F A R K H O N D E H S H A H R O U D I

A. *Book In The Book*

2001–ongoing, Installation, series of textile books and scrolls, paint on fabric, various dimensions

Book In The Book, an ongoing series that Farkhondeh Shahroudi first began working on in 2001, is presented here through four books of different sizes, each bound in red velvet with pages of fabric inscribed with paint, and two scrolls of green silk with similar paint and text. These works reference and trace book-making traditions of near and far pasts: scrolls that evoke, both, the scriptural and painterly memory of papyrus and silk; the playful cutouts and overlapping pages seen in children's books; the intricacy of textures of the Persian miniature book. Within these pages, Shahroudi dismantles a certain kind of language while simultaneously constructing another. Text in Farsi, which the ambidextrous Shahroudi writes with her right hand, is written over and over until it is rendered illegible; language is offered and then retracted, its opacity a communiqué in itself. Meanwhile, figures appear, alone and in groups, sometimes split apart and sometimes fastened together through wandering, organic lines of connection. The flow of these figures and lines through the series establishes them as symbols, as units of meaning that, through the turning of each page, through the movement of the eye on the stretch of silk, compose and continue many a conversation.

B. *Trap*

2020, Sculpture, wire and artificial hair, various dimensions

Trap is a bodily manifestation of the organic assemblages that proliferate within Shahroudi's works and worlds. A flowing sculpture braiding together wire and artificial hair, the work is a multi-hinged cipher: it is a line of text that writes over itself, it is a many-limbed being from Shahroudi's books, corporealised here into greater dimensionality. With a form that suggests a language of multiple openings, the sculpture speaks to and in many tongues.

C. *Glossolalie*

2007–2010, Installation, series of six bound books, pen and marker on paper, each book 21,5 x 30,5 cm, 80 pages

Glossolalie is a set of six books of “word magic”, as Shahroudi calls it, an enjambment of text and drawing. Written and drawn in her left hand, the language that appears in these paper books is German; the figures accompanying the writing are multi-limbed, more than human, with no discernible beginning or end. The title of the series references “glossolalia”, the phenomena of speaking in “tongues” or languages supposedly otherwise unknown to the speaker; some religious traditions interpret these tongues as the channelling, by the speaker, of a divinely transmitted language. In *Glossolalie*, Shahroudi's German tongue or language is poetic, playful and sombre all at once. Like their many-armed figures, the books offer no fixed points of opening or closure but, instead, create multiple constellations of meanings, internal rhymes and logic that transmute and metamorphose through the pages.

F A R K H O N D E H S H A H R O U D I is an artist and poet. She studied painting in Tehran at Alzahra University (1985–1990), subsequently moving to Dortmund for a degree in Arts and Design (Fachhochschule Dortmund, 1993–1998). Composing text in both Farsi and German, Shahroudi has spent over three decades working with and through shifting sets of symbols and languages, forms and bodies. On the page of her books as in her textile-based sculptures, the scriptural entwines with the figurative to found fields of meaning that gesture to the personal as much as to the collective and political. The human figure is often at the centre of Shahroudi's work, where it finds shape by interweaving itself with text, where it is dissolved and reassembled, where it multiplies and collects more-than-humanness.

Shahroudi's art has featured in multiple solo and group exhibitions; some recent exhibitions include: *Publishing Practices: In the Inner Bark of Trees* (Archive, Berlin, Germany, 2023); *On Damp Earths We Wander* (Lantz'scher Park, Düsseldorf, Germany, 2023); *Gestern*

War Ich So Müde, Dass Ich Den Tee Gegessen Habe (Kunstverein Arnsberg, Germany, 2023); *Ich Habe Knast* (Spittelmarkt, Berlin, Germany, 2022); *A Different Now Is Close Enough to Exhale on You* (Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2022); and *Force Times Distance: On Labour and Its Sonic Ecologies* (Sonsbeek, Arnhem, The Netherlands, 2021).

2. L E R A T O S H A D I

A. *Gaufi*

2023, Performative drawing, Pen on raw linen, 400 x 148 cm

Kgakala

2023, Performative drawing, Pen on raw linen, 400 x 148 cm

In the serpentine-like coil drawings on raw linen in Lerato Shadi's *Gaufi* and *Kgakala* (meaning Near and Far), Shadi has inscribed the canvas with a stream of excerpts from her journals written first from left to right, then folded back over itself in mirror image writing. The written words are there, but Shadi has created a drawing which renders the literal legibility of text as words inaccessible and invites the viewer to use other ways of reading. There are places where the linen is soaked in ink because the artist might have rested her hand for a moment and others where the linen only carries light tracings because the momentum of her hand left a thinner mark. The titles suggest that motion is readable as the body's motion or the passage of time. Shadi often centres her body in durational performances; similarly, the arduous act of writing on and manoeuvring the material is visible in the creases intentionally left on the linen. It renders it an evocative embroidery that makes Shadi's labour visible. In other ways of reading, it can be battleground, river, landscape, or score.

B. *Ngono Le Nna*

2020, Neon light installation in 2 parts, mounted on red walls, 160 x 60 cm and 150 x 150 cm

Ngono Le Nna (Grandmother and I) is a work of two walls mounted with neon signs of which the X signifies the artist's maternal great-grandmother and the other the artist's signature. Here the viewer stands immersed in the flows of knowledge passed on through a female lineage as the room created by the juxtaposition of the two neon signs holds space for two generations of women. The space between is the present absence of Shadi's mother and grandmother. Shadi describes the work as her attempt to make a family photo without the people. More than an autobiographical inscription in light, the work is an inquiry into the ebb and flow in ancestral and generational knowledge transmission: at times in chorus and others in dissonance. Shadi considers her own signature and lens as one marked by

Western knowledge production and the work begs the question: what might be overlooked simply because of our own perceptions of what constitutes knowledge? The body of the viewer is part of the experience as it is reading the space. It is possible to enter the work and not know that you have entered the work, yet in the movement between the X and Shadi's artist signature, subtle gestures such as a turning of a hip, and a leaning in towards the work inscribes *Ngono Le Nna* into the viewer's body.

L E R A T O S H A D I is an artist born in Mahikeng who currently lives and works in Berlin. She studied visual art at the University of Johannesburg and earned an MA in Spatial Strategies from Weißensee Academy of Art Berlin in 2018. She received the *Alumni Dignitas Award* from the University of Johannesburg in 2018 and in the same year Shadi was a fellow at Villa Romana in Florence, Italy. Her works have been shown internationally in numerous solo and group exhibition, among others in the Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn, Germany (2023), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (2022), at the Palais de la Porte Dorée and in the Musée d'art moderne both in Paris, France (2021); in solo shows at KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin and at Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany (2020); during the 14th Curitiba Biennial in Brazil and at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany (2019); Kunsthall Amersfoort, Holland, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town, South Africa (2018). Her video work *Mabogo Dinku* was part of the Artists' Film International programme 2020, organised by Whitechapel Gallery London, and presented in art institutions around the globe. In spring 2022, her monograph was published with Archive Books, Berlin.

3. H A R G E Y S A C U L T U R A L C E N T R E A R C H I V A L D I S P L A Y

A. *Qaraami*

Documentary, video projection

B. Display of HCC's archive on Qaraami cassettes (1960s–ongoing), musical notations, photographic prints, excerpts of lyrics translated from Somali to English

Displayed in a glass vitrine is a selection of Qaraami music curated for this exhibition by the Hargeysa Cultural Centre. Qaraami, a word in Somali for love, is a lyric-focused music genre mostly accompanied by the oud, vocals and drumming. Although the lyrics in Qaraami are mostly about love, numerous songmakers use the music genre to speak about deeper issues such as political injustice. This cassette selection inscribes itself within the framework of a larger preservation project started by the Hargeysa Cultural Centre, with the aim to digitise, conserve and re-record the poetry, audio letters and songs found within their cassette collection, that address diverse topics from politics and

history to geography. These tapes serve as an archive to Somali culture and in a context where the geographical and environmental landscape of the country has been rapidly changing due to socio-political reasons, these tapes help trace back, recount and reconstruct history. Displayed alongside the cassettes are accompanying text material and musical notations on Qaraami.

H C C T E A M

Dr Jama Musse Jama, program director
Hafsa Omer, program coordinator

Technical team at Hargeysa Cultural Centre:
Xasan Cismaan Buuni, Mustafe Cali Axmed

Singers/musicians at Hargeysa Cultural Centre
Juweeriya Maxamed “Janno” (Vocalist / singer)
Mustafe Macalin Caydiid (Violin)
Cabdiqurbaani Maxamed Gahayr (Oud)
Cabdalle Xaaji Maxamed (Flute)
Cabdi Siidaw Cabdi (Drums)

Poets and musical composition of original songs
(1940es)
Cabdillaahi Maxamed Maxamuud "Cabdillaahi Qarshe"
(1924–1997) – RIP
Saxardiid Maxamuud Jebiye (1938–2019) – RIP

Written musical notations
Dr Jama Musse Jama and Sven Kacirek

H A R G E Y S A C U L T U R A L C E N T R E
(H C C) was opened in August 2014 in Hargeysa, Somaliland, and was established by the Redsea Cultural Foundation (RCF). Since its establishment, the centre has become an important feature in Hargeysa’s cultural landscape. Its success owes much to the respect that RCF has gained from its work on running the annual Hargeysa International Book Fair, which, now in its eighth year, has become one of the most admired cultural events in the region. By the end of its first year, HCC had become a hub of students, scholars, artists, and musicians, in addition to a unique resource for the local community. It has also undertaken a variety of essential collection and archival projects. Its gallery includes a permanent collection of artworks in addition to holding specific temporary exhibitions of historical documents and artefacts.

4 . D A V I D Z I N K Y I

A. *Being The Measure*
2016, Installation, Wooden objects, variable dimensions,

B. *Being The Measure*
2016, Video, 1-channel, 01:11:16 min

The piece will be activated in a performance during the INVOCATIONS weekend, 11.–12.11.2023.
A work by David Zink Yi with Angie Keefer, Regis Molina, Onel Matos, Eliel Lazo and Marvin Diz. *Being The Measure* was commissioned by Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), where it was first performed for a live audience in late 2016.

In *Being The Measure*, David Zink Yi explores abstraction within the Afro-Cuban musical context, and by doing so, opens the doors to navigate from other angles the complex and powerful knowledge embedded in those rhythms and epistemologies. By posing the question “Who is the protagonist?”, *Being The Measure* encourages us to inhabit – within a sonic, physical, and visual sculptural experience – a space to think and feel this music tradition otherwise. Through repetition, abstraction, and polyrhythm, it invites us to let go and allow space for the unknown.

D A V I D Z I N K Y I was born in Lima in 1973 and left Peru for Germany at the age of 16. As a son of Peruvian parents with Chinese, Italian and German heritage, he began to draw inspiration from his migratory family history. His work interrogates the complex aspects of identity construction through a multidisciplinary practice encompassing film, photography, sculpture and sound. Zink Yi is also known for his multi-channel video installations and performances, many of which revolve around the experience of music. Focusing on the performative strength and interaction of his collaborators, his works reflect and analyse the realm between individualism and cooperation, between regulation and expression, between what is known and what is new or still to be learnt. Zink Yi’s practice, rather than pursuing an integration of heterogeneous fragments of identities and cultural spheres into a single patchworked identity, dissolves and blends them in a way that affords us fundamental insight into how the other, the stranger, but also ourselves are constructed. Recent exhibitions include *Soft And Weak Like Water*, The 14th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea; *Drums Listen to Heart*, The Wattis Institute, San Francisco, USA (2023), The Koenig Gallery, Seoul, South Korea; *Strange Clay*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2022); *Atem*, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany (2022); *Forms of Misleading*, Koenig Gallery, London, UK (2021); Liverpool Biennale, UK, (2021), *Rare Earths*, Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland (2020), *Sound and Silence*, Kunst Museum Bonn, Germany (2020), Big Orchestra, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt a.M., Germany (2020), *Carlone Contemporary*, Belvedere, Vienna, Austria (2018); *Being The Measure*, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown MA, USA (2016).

5 . P E L U M I A D E J U M O

A. *I Pass By The Attenuation Well*
2018, Poem on the wall, stencil

B. *I Pass By The Attenuation Well*
2018, Sound installation, 09:23 min

While searching for language in the element of air and its transition through thought into matter, Pelumi Adejumo finds ways to resist and contest imposed memory – with the act of remembering through her own body and knowledge. Inspired by a research trip to their motherland Nigeria, the artist uses sound and poetry to connect with ancestral heritage that goes beyond what is visible through monuments and family storytelling. *I Pass By The Attenuation Well* is an act of finding, in music and poetry, a method of archiving.

P E L U M I A D E J U M O is a Nigerian-Dutch runaway pastor’s child, interdisciplinary writer, and lucid dreamer currently based in Rotterdam. They publish poetry, create performances and music, sometimes in collaboration with the collective Public Relations. Their work is strongly influenced by West-African spirituality and mythology, incorporating both Christian and Yoruba influences, as well as queer and feminist theory. Working with themes as migratory grief, the grammar of the “poor” and researching the role and reclamation of spirituality in queer lives. They understand language also as a place of struggle. Using glossolalia, unintelligibility and the mix-match of languages to open up disruptive creative and musical possibilities.

Collaborators in the past include Sonsbeek biennale 20–24, de Appel, Metro54, National Theatre Young, National Opera & Ballet, *Pank* Magazine, deBuren, De Gids, Into The Great Wide Open and Montez Press Radio. Within the literary and visual art fields they work as an editor/programmer for *Girls Like Us* Magazine in Brussels, for the international literature festival Read My World in Amsterdam, and as a writer for *Mister Motley* Magazine.

6 . J I M M Y R O B E R T

A. *Vocabulary*
2011, HD video, sound, 7:43 mins

In *Vocabulary*, Jimmy Robert appeals for a more holistic understanding of knowledge production and dissemination through corpoliteracy.¹ It is a call to look into the body as an archive and epistemic site. Appearing in front of the camera, Robert dances to music the watcher can’t completely hear, and can

only guess from the faint sound leaking out of the headphones. Through a series of repeated silent bodily gestures the artist associates with different cultural and political roles within society – sower, archivist, idealist,...–, the work hints at the fact that through innate and / or learned day-to-day movements such as dancing, the body has the ability to record, and communicate in a perhaps silent action complimentary to the vocal or written act.

B. *Paramètres*
2012, HD video, sound, 5:20 mins

The work *Paramètres* by Jimmy Robert inscribes itself within the artist’s long term research and practice, addressing the material aspect of the body, and situating it as an inextricable component within different spatial configurations. In the video, Robert tries to adapt different geometrical patterns cut out of paper to his face, and for every geometrical form he reads out a sentence. Some of these sentences prompt an action and Robert’s gestures are precise and timed. The drawings on paper represent 2D figures, and once cuts are done to the paper pieces, these 2D figures are translated into 3D while Robert, with the help of his face, adds a sculptural element to the forms.

J I M M Y R O B E R T is an artist whose multidisciplinary practice encompasses performance, photography, film and collage, frequently collapsing distinctions between these mediums. Robert’s interest in how the body can be personified through materials and the reverse is a force that integrates his longtime work encompassing performance within his larger practice. Robert has choreographed performances within exhibition spaces, in relation to existing architectural structures, as well as re-staging, reframing or sampling historical performances. The frequent citation of moments from art history, film and literature is characteristic of his deeply layered narratives. Jimmy Robert was born in Guadeloupe and currently lives and works in Berlin.

Robert was the subject of a mid-career survey at Nottingham Contemporary in 2020, which travelled to Museion, Bolzano, and CRAC Occitanie, Sète, in 2021. Recent solo exhibitions include Moderna Museet, Malmö (2023); Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2022); Künstlerhaus Bremen (2022); The Hunterian, Glasgow (2021); La Synagogue De Delme, France (2018); Museum M, Leuven (2017); Power Plant, Toronto (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2012); and Jeu de Paume, Paris (2012). Robert’s performances have also been presented at Tate Britain, London; MoMA, New York and Migros Museum, Zurich. His most recent performance “Joie Noire” premiered in 2019 at KW Institute of Contemporary Art in Berlin and travelled to Kaaitheater, Brussels. It was reprised in March 2023 on the occasion of *Exposé-es*, a group exhibition curated by François Piron at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, in conjunction

² “Corpoliteracy” is a term coined by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung. He describes it as “an effort to contextualise the body as a platform, stage, site and medium of learning, as a structure and organ that acquires, stores and disseminates knowledge”. Ndikung, B. (2018). “Corpoliteracy”, in Angiama, S., Butcher, C. & A. Zezo (Eds.), *aneducation, documenta 14*, Berlin: Archive Books, 107–115.

with a solo exhibition of Robert's work at the Centre National de la Danse, Paris-Pantin. A vinyl record of the sound pieces created in connection to Robert's performances and exhibitions over the years, titled *Call and Response*, will be jointly released in October 2023 by Künstlerhaus Bremen, Apparent Extent, and Bierke Verlag. Also forthcoming is a comprehensive monograph of his career, set to be published in 2024 by Bierke Verlag.

7. L U L Ě Z I M U K A J

weaving time
2023, Collage, Repurposed paper of print media (posters and magazines), 213 x 190 cm

Ukaj's woven collage of repurposed print media that he describes as "hallucinations", represents 266 hours of immersed labour, during which the artist contemplated the lasting impacts of political imprisonment and exile in his family's biographies.

During a visit to his childhood home in Kosovo in 2020, Ukaj found photographs of his young mother in woven frames made from cigarette packaging. The frames were gifts for his mother made during one of his father's multiple times in prison and proof of a lived experience that was never spoken about in his family. In a rumination on rumours about a time of which conflict torn generations rarely speak of, Ukaj's repurposed paper-weaving technique creates a large-scale assemblage of entangled fragments that show the passage of time and remnants of a silenced collective past. *weaving time* is both a measure of self-restraint and a meditative expansion into Ukaj's interest in transmitting change over generations and how contemplative labour and repetition ingrain his body with a transferable language.

L U L Ě Z I M U K A J is a Kosovo born artist with a master's degree in logic studies and philosophy from Leipzig and Berlin. Growing up under conditions of political imprisonment and exile, it is the confrontation with the politics of migration and separation that has shaped his voice as an artist. Lulëzim Ukaj was part of the public program at the 4th and 5th edition of the Paris Internationale in 2018 and 2019. His performance, "Good Evening Mr. Orwell," featuring philosopher and Oxford University professor Luciano Floridi was broadcast on French-German art TV-channel "Souvenirs from Earth." He has worked in construction, as an arborist, car dealer, electrician, web accessibility developer and artist. He lives and works in Berlin.

8. L U C A S L U G A R I N H O B R A G A

Sonic & The Escape Hypothesis
2023, Playable video game installation

The installation will be activated by the artist on 13.09. at 20:00 and on 16.09.2023 at 18:00.

Sonic and the Escape Hypothesis is a playable fan game installation and an intimate yet expansive immersion into Lucas Lugarinho's own experience of coming to terms with virality. By contrasting his long time passion for the video game character Sonic the Hedgehog with his own bodily experience with viruses, the game elucidates a story where Sonic is summoned by a mysterious voice that yearns to be met. As Sonic navigates the painterly gamified landscapes, he finds himself amongst seemingly benevolent and sometimes visibly antagonistic characters that explore the realities and impacts of living alongside unescapable virality.

The escape hypothesis is one of three main theories on the origin of viruses that suggests that viruses are pieces of genetic code that "rebelled" against the cell, allied with a strand of protein, and managed to escape the structure or stronghold of the cell. Lugarinho has programmed unexpected alliances into the game and subverted the virus's antagonism by tackling the theme of virality in the biological sense and by using Sonic, a figure of pop. The work presents themes that, at first glance, are only sometimes recognisable to be connected. Still, he traverses seeming gaps through the fragile intimacy of tenderly putting the experience in the hands of a player who navigates that which acts within his own body and upon collective bodies and psyche.

L U C A S L U G A R I N H O from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, produces videogames and paintings as an effort to rethink our affection and mutualistic relationship with images. By exploring the feedback loop between culture, technology and ecology, the artist steers through digital landscapes of subculture imageboards, buried blogs and over-attended videos in order to connect which modes of bonding with abstractions have emerged from the systematic reinforcement of the past century's telecommunications revolution over our lives. With an emphasis on how queer and subaltern imaginations embody alternative and revolutionary modes of relating to images, his works aspire to explore the insurgent political and ecological implications of communities mediated through screens.

9. O N U R Ç I M E N

Maran's Scriptings
2023, Drawings, Brush pen and dry pastel on tracing paper, 140 x 79 cm

Onur Çimen's drawings layer history, mythology, language and textual transmissions from the eastern Mediterranean, Kurdistan in particular. Rooted in Çimen's research into ancient script systems used around Kurdish-speaking lands, these drawings play with sets of alphabets — the Urartu, ancient Kurdish, Avestan and Yezidi — by recasting them into a figurative symbology that here reforms the myth of Shahmaran. Within the semiotics of these compositions, the alphabet transmits meaning as a symbol of language and cultural heritage as much as through its figure; the letter is a letter is a part of the tableau that retells the story of the "shah" of snakes, Shahmaran. Çimen, in renarrating the myth to signal towards an origin of written language and then visualising this telling in his tracings, invokes, too, oral traditions of story-telling and cultural transmission, in which the story changes form, twists like a snake, each telling particular to the teller and to the sedimentations of past tellings.

O N U R Ç I M E N works on various modes of sharing texts and narratives. He is a writer and also translates between Turkish and English. His art featured in a group exhibition at Onassis AiR in 2022, as part of the Caravan Residency Program. He is a part of SAVVY Contemporary's ensemble team, and co-leads the SAVVY.doc's initiatives and projects.

10. B L I C K B A S S Y

Future Lullaby
2022, HD video, sound, 15:43 min

Future Lullaby explores how language, through its socio-political construction, has been commodified and used as a tool to enable patriarchal structures. With lullabies as an entry point, Blick Bassy in a subtle way hints to the fact that our societies influence and build us from a tender age to normalise patriarchal dominance either through media propaganda or daily conversations in our home settings. Done in a satirical style, the work remains faithful to the artist's hybrid and experimental approach to languages, and draws from matriarchal and subversive ways of being, offering a speculative approach to what a (radical) shift in our societies could look like.

B L I C K B A S S Y was born in Cameroon where he grew up between Yaoundé, the capital, and Mintaba, his native village where singing, dancing and music are customary. He draws his multiple inspirations from his childhood memories, travelling between music, dance, performing arts and cinema. Blick Bassy brings these disciplines into dialogue with brio. After spending ten years with the group Macase, which he

created, he embarked on a solo career and produced four successful albums, making him one of the most inventive multidisciplinary artists of his generation.

Blick Bassy takes up this heritage and questions the conflicts of yesterday and today. His futuristic Afro music makes him an avant-garde artist mixing traditional and electro-modern sounds. In 2016, he wrote his first novel, *Le Moabi Cinéma*, published by Gallimard and awarded the Grand Prix which celebrates the continent's French-speaking authors. In 2019, he was honoured with the Sacem Grand Prize for World Music for the album 1958, dedicated to Cameroonian independence heroes. His latest album, *Madiba*, released in 2023, addresses the issue of water.

In 2021, he presented a series of artistic works, including concerts, sound experiences, musical conferences, his first short film, and finally *Bikutsi 3000*, a dance tale highlighting African women in contemporary governance at the Quai Branly in Paris, France. In 2023, he created "Today Na Today," a collective bringing together African creators and bearers of traditional knowledge, with the aim of raising awareness about life. He also established a cultural space dedicated to the same issue.

The artist says: „In each of my projects, the same concerns drive me: how Africa can reconnect with its identity, emancipate itself from its colonial history, inspire its youth and invent its future.”

OFFERINGS

POETIC

PARASITES

I SLEEP UNBROKEN DARK HOURS ON AIRPLANES HOME & DREAM I'VE MISSED MY
CONNECTING FLIGHT I DREAM A NEW & FLUENT MOUTH FULL OF GAUZY SWATHES OF ARABIC

I DREAM MY ALTERNATE SELVES EACH WITH A FACE BORROWED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
OF THE GIRL WHO BECAME MY GRANDMOTHER BROWS & BODY ROUNDED & CURSIVE LIKE ARABIC

BUT WAKE TO THE USUAL BORDERLANDS I CROWD SHINING SLIVERS OF ENGLISH TO MY MOUTH
IRIS CROCUS INLET HERON HOW DARE I LOVE A WORD WITHOUT KNOWING IT IN ARABIC

EXCERPT FROM "HOW TO SAY" BY SAFIA ELHILLO³

ENGLISH
IS MY MOTHER TONGUE,
A MOTHER TONGUE IS NOT
NOT A FOREIGN LAN LAN LANG
LANGUAGE
L/ANGUISH

ANGUISH
—A FOREIGN ANGUISH.
ENGLISH IS
MY FATHER TONGUE.
A FATHER TONGUE IS
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE,
THEREFORE ENGLISH IS
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
NOT A MOTHER TONGUE.

EXCERPT FROM "DISCOURSE ON THE LOGIC OF LANGUAGE"
BY M. NOURBESE PHILIP¹

ÉCRIRE POUR NE PAS MOURIR
ÉCRIRE SA CARTE D'IDENTITÉ POUR SEMER LES MILICES
PLANTER L'ARBRE LA SÈVE DEMAIN
LA MONTAGNE LA FORÊT
DÉROUTER LES LANGUES LES GÉOGRAPHIES
LE TAMBOUR DIT
J'EXISTE

EXTRAIT DE "PROLOGUE" DE RODNEY SAINT-ÉLOI²

MY GRANDFATHER
TAUGHT HIS PARROT
THE NINETY-NINE HOLY

NAMES OF GOD. AL-MUZIL:
THE HUMILIATOR. AL-WAARITH:
THE HEIR. ONCE, AFTER
MY GRANDFATHER HAD BEEN
DEAD FOR A YEAR, I WOKE
FROM A DREAM I WAS A
SULTAN GUZZLING FLIES

FROM A CRYSTAL BOOT) WITH
HIS WALKING CANE DEEP
IN MY MOUTH. I KEPT SUCKING
UNTIL I FELL BACK ASLEEP.
THERE ARE ONLY TWO BONES
IN THE THROAT, AND THAT'S IF YOU
COUNT THE CLAVICLE. THIS

SEEMS UNSAFE, OVERDELICATE,
LIKE I OUGHT TO ASK FOR
A THIRD. AS IF ANYONE
LIVING WOULD OFFER.

EXCERPT FROM "FORFEITING MY MYSTIQUE" BY KAVEH
AKBAR⁴

¹ M. NourbeSe Philip, "Discourse on the Logic of Language", *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014 [1989], 30-33.
² James Noël [ed.], *Anthologie de la poésie haïtienne contemporaine*, Paris: Points, 2015, 15.

³ Safia Elhillo, "how to say", *The January Children*, University of Nebraska Press, 2017.
⁴ Kaveh Akbar, "Forfeiting My Mystique", *Poetry Magazine*, 2018.

MARAN'S SCRIPTINGS

BY ONUR ÇIMEN

The story goes that a young man and his friends discover a cave, full of honey. His friends convince him to get into the cave and extract the honey from the magical place. However, realising the amount of honey that they took out, his friends get greedy and decide to share the honey with one less person, leaving the young man in the cave. Not knowing what to do, the young man started to explore the cave with the hope that there might be another exit. After walking deep into the darkness of the cave, he came across a ray of light coming from a small hole. He started to dig and found a garden, the most beautiful one that he had ever seen in his life. The kind of trees that he could not even imagine, and fruits that smell better than the best of the kingdom he lived in.

All of a sudden, he realised there was an unusual movement on the earth itself, as though the soil was turning upside down, through the little holes on it appearing and disappearing momentarily. A constant cloud of dust covers the surface, blurring his vision.

First, he thought that they were snakes and feared for his life. Though these are not snakes, but maran; creatures of the east, the dry, landlocked, mountainous territories with sublime, dangerous rivers, with off-white skin and green stripes on them. And then there was their shah, half woman and half snake, who spoke the human language along with all the other languages of the world, including the maran's. She took in the young man, calmed his fear and told him the story of maran. How they learnt to move like those rivers curling in between and despite the mountains and rock, because they wanted to overcome the high hills much quicker than they would if they were to go around the mountains. So they joined the rivers, to combine their powers, and carved the earth for themselves. And they succeeded. The only problem, both for the snakes and the rivers, was that they had to continue constantly, in the same direction, in order not to let mountains and rocks block them once again, to prevent them from moving as they wished and to reconquer what was theirs. Moving so constantly gave the maran an eternal chance to be in tenacious existence and live a long life, but it came with a price: their curse was to forget any other movement, so even on the land and through the underworld, they have been curling since the first day of rivers.

Shahmaran found them in their state of utter confusion and revealed to them another opportunity that their movements posed: now, maran could also communicate with their movements by creating unique signs, forming particular combinations of them in order to express themselves. Even when they were not in each other's presence, maran could leave a mark on the soil to warn each other of the dangers or just to let each other know which direction they were going towards, if they needed to be found.

The telling of the story itself took such a long time that the young man fell in love with Shahmaran, and she couldn't stop herself from falling for him, too. They spent years together with happiness and joy, until one day a darkness covered the young man's eyes by his longing for his family. Shahmaran knew that he would only be miserable and in pain if she forced him to stay. So, she asked him to promise to never tell anyone where her cave was and, in return, she would let him go despite all the pain that would cause her. They agreed and he left in the company of the maran who safely led him out of the cave.

The young man's joy of love was replaced with the joy of returning to his family, but on returning he realised that the sultan's sickness was affecting everyone's life. The whole sultanate was in danger of total chaos. The vizier sent his men to go to the villages to let the whole sultanate know that the remedy was hidden in Shahmaran's body. A friend of Shahmaran's lover told the soldiers of the vizier that our young man knew where the secret garden was located. The young man, in fear of what might happen to him, betrayed Shahmaran. Soldiers were immediately dispatched and found her. They brought her back alive. Shahmaran told them to blanch her in an earthen dish, give her extract to the vizier, and feed her flesh to the sultan. Thus, she didn't go alone; the extract was poisonous and her flesh was filled with the secret of immortality. The vizier died, and the sultan lived.

The part about her flesh and its healing effects were remembered by everyone. What people forgot was that this taught humans how to write, too. As the young man was made vizier after the previous one's death, he betrayed Shahmaran and her subjects a second time by disclosing their secret, quiet method of communication.

They too developed signs, called them letters, and began to record anything that could be recorded. And stories lost their variety after that, except for those from some people who buried their alphabets to recover that lost multiplicity.

IT GO HAVE TO ADJUST. ON LANGUAGE AS PARASITE

CONCEPT

BY SAGAL FARAH

*You people can watch while I'm scrubbing
these floors
And I'm scrubbin' the floors while you're gawking
Maybe once ya tip me and it makes ya feel swell
In this crummy Southern town
In this crummy old hotel
But you'll never guess to who you're talkin'
No, you couldn't ever guess to who you're talkin'
Then one night there's a scream in the night
And you'll wonder who could that have been
And you see me kinda grinnin' while I'm scrubbin'
And you say, "What's she got to grin?"*

Nina Simone sings WWW Bertolt Brecht's
"Seeräuber Jenny"^[1]

"IT GO HAVE TO ADJUST" – ON LANGUAGE AS PARASITE

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have gained intimate familiarity with the language of contagion. A wide range of words pertaining to COVID-19 and its many variants have blurred the boundaries between the infecting agent and personal space. The language of contagion has spread beyond the networks of our blood vessels and has not just reached our bodies, but has also come to permeate our lives.

In the years of the fascist reign leading up to and during the Holocaust and the Second World War, the Jewish German philologist Victor Klemperer kept a meticulous journal recording his observations of how the "Language of the Third Reich" was slowly contaminating the German language and noted how that manifested itself in people's actions in his surroundings. "Language does not simply write and think for me, it also increasingly dictates my feelings and governs my entire spiritual being the more unquestioningly and unconsciously I abandon myself to it," he wrote, and asked the critical question: "what happens if the cultivated language is made up of poisonous elements or has been made the bearer of poisons?"^[2] If we seek to see language as a pathogen, then it has the potential of killing the host and as well as the potential to be a means of survival. Those pathogens didn't entirely vanish from our world after the war and many attempts have been made at finding the linguistic equivalent of a mass grave or vaccination for a language from which we seek to protect ourselves.

In *The Ticket That Exploded*, William S. Burroughs depicted a near doomsday scenario on a planet inhabited by population groups with irreconcilable differences deriving from what he described as their incompatible conditions of existence. The endlessly quoted concept from Burroughs' novel is that "language is a virus"^[3] which implies that a pathogen with the ability to replicate, proliferate and insert itself into the existing schema of an already functioning system.

Susan Blackmore, who studies the technology of memetics, refers to the memetics of language as a "parasite that we have adapted to, and not something that originally was there for our genes" and that like most parasites carries the potential of being hazardous for us, but that then "co-evolves and adapts", leading to our co-existence.^[4] She defines a meme as information that is copied from "person to person, person to book, or person to computer" wherein the source is referred to as the first replicator and the information that is being passed on is the second replicator. As we're increasingly adapting to a world where technology is capable of communicating without our aid, Blackmore has identified a third replicator that she calls the "Technological meme" or Teme for short, and she describes it as one that carries the potential of existing without us.^[5]

An example of a Teme (or third replicator) would be the information passed between the computers in a 2017 AI experiment where the computers created their own language and a cascade of Reddit threads speculating on the potential dangers of AI ensued.^[6] In reality, much as in the way that we humans once contracted and still continue to spread language memes in order to better communicate with each other, the two chatbots in the experiment modified the human input language in order to carry on more "successful" conversations.^[7] Our bodies are perpetually evolving through our interaction with contaminants in our environment and yet language is subject to intense scrutiny and often quarantined before it is accepted into the formal settings of print and other publications that often, as the Vietnamese-American poet Ocean Vuong maintains, actively excludes people of colour.^[8]

"IT GO HAVE TO ADJUST" is a 16-month discursive research and public programme, culminating in an exhibition in SAVVY Contemporary, and an INVOCATIONS programme that seeks to disrupt the pathogen centered relationship

in the contagion of language and laughter out of place. Bringing together practitioners in this research programme's convergence points will help us to explore methods of parasitizing the third replicator in order to make space for a plurality of voices. If we are participants in the future of our languages, as Ocean Vuong says,^[9] then how can we make space for more variants of influences in order to facilitate the right climate and conditions for subversive feminist, anti-racist and de- colonial practices within art and publishing to take hold? And if language is a meme, “memes are there to make space for our survival” and that survival is subject to the conditions of our existence as Blackmore contends,^[10] can we find procedures for optimising our communication to aid the creation of networks that can parasite towards the proliferation and development of the aforementioned liberating practices?

TRACING RECURRING PATHOGENS

The primary definition of the word contagion is the situation in which a contaminant (alt. disease) is spread through contact (usually signifying touch), however, it's also an equally valid description of situations in which feelings, ideas or problems are spread from one place to another.^[11] Contagion can only act out its blueprint within the confines of an entity that has its own defined rules. An organism. An operating system. A family unit. A culture. Without edges from which to reverberate, it dissipates, mellowing out like waves in unframed waters – a place where the ripples have no shores to reach.

In LTI (*Lingua Tertii Imperii*) Language of the Third Reich, the German Jewish philologist Victor Klemperer collected his meticulous notes and minute observations of how the German language slowly and surely became permeated by the National Socialist party's intentions during and the time of the Holocaust and the Second World War. “Nazism permeated the flesh and blood of the people through single words, idioms and sentence structures which were imposed on them in a million repetitions and taken on board mechanically and unconsciously.”^[12] His notes read: “Following the Party's 'takeover [Machtübernahme]' in 1933 the language of a clique became the language of the people, i.e. it seized hold of all realms of public and private life: politics, the administration of the justice, the economy, the arts, the sciences, schools, sport, the family, playgrounds and nurseries.”^[13] Klemperer and his German Catholic wife Eva, an artist, literary translator and pianist who hid her husband's pages between her musical sheets, were subsequently dispossessed of their home and valuables and sent to live in what in Nazi bureaucratic rhetorics was referred to as a “Judenhaus” [Jew house] - but he was allowed to continue teaching for some time and although he could no longer publish, he could at least rely on his wife who provided him with reading material at great risk to her own life. Klemperer was convinced that he largely survived because of his marriage to Eva

and secondly, the Nazi party favoured him over those Jews who hadn't served the German Empire in WWI.

Around the time when Klemperer served in WWI, the warship SMS Goetzen cruised from shore to shore on Lake Tanganyika. When the passenger and cargo ship now called MV Liemba first broke the surface tension of the lake's water in 1915, it did so as a warship with the name Goetzen written on its white hull. It was built in Germany and made to control Lake Tanganyika serving the empire's interests in German East Africa during WWI.^[14] The name honoured Graf Gustav Adolf von Goetzen, the first governor of German East Africa who, among other atrocities, was infamous for his violent suppression of the Maji Maji Rebellion against German colonial rule that led to the death of up to 300,000 Africans.^[15] The ship carried passengers and cargo and travelled along the eastern shores of the lake where it met the East African Railway Company at the port of Kigoma – the railhead for trains to Dar es Salaam on the coast of the Indian Ocean. By the middle of July in 1916, allied troops that were increasingly getting a stronghold in the lake launched an air raid on the Graf Goetzen that stood moored at the Kigoma port. The Germans deliberately scuttled their own ship, burying it in a maritime grave in the depths of Lake Tanganyika in order to keep it out of foreign hands. The ship lived multiple lives at the hands of various powers. Multiple attempts were made to salvage it and eventually the British succeeded. Once again it broke the surface tension, this time named Liemba, and it continued its course as a ship that connected the inland to the railhead leading to the coast of the Indian Ocean while the land on Lake Tanganyika's shores changed names and rulers as colonial powers shifted shapes and Belgians, Brits and Germans withdrew their official holds in the region. Today, it's called the MV Liemba and still serves on Lake Tanganyika between Mpulungu and the railhead city Kigoma in Tanzania.^[16]

“If a piece of cutlery belonging to orthodox Jews has become ritually unclean, they purify it by burying it in the earth”,^[17] Klemperer wrote, but what happens if its poison carrying vessel breaks the surface of our waters? And in the cases where language withdraws to the edges of history only to bounce back off its unresolved and recurring crimes and our collective generational trauma? When like a latent virus, it patiently bides its time, waiting for our resistance to grow weary. Is that not what necessitated the 2018 Erklärung der Vielen (the Declaration of the Many)?

WHAT'S LAUGHABLE IS
SUBJECTIVE UNTIL THE
SUBJUGATED LAUGH
– WHEN “LANGUAGE IS IDEAS”
AND LAUGHTER IS RESISTANCE
(A BRIDGE)

As some records have it, on the 30th of June in 1962 three young classmates at a Catholic mission-run all-girls school in the village Kashasha in Tanganyika erupted into a fit of hysterical laughter so strong that it resulted in an 18-month long laughter epidemic and the closure of 14 schools across the short-lived nation in what is now a part of Tanzania.^[18] Many of those records claim that the laughter that began between the girls and later spread to over 1000 people across Tanganyika was a symptom of mass psychogenic illness. The Tanganyika laughter epidemic ran its course and the last recorded incident of the fits is said to have taken place 18 months after the battle of wits in the halls of the girls' boarding school. One of the roots of the alleged mass hysteria is thought to have been the students' struggle to reconcile themselves with pressures from parents and teachers since Tanganyika's recently gained independence from the United Kingdom a little over 6 months prior to the incident. In the *Central African Medical Journal*, bound to the standard ethics of objectivity in its field, printed a report of the incident where A.M. Rankin from the Department of Medicine at Makerere University College and P.J. Philipp, a medical officer in Bukoba in Tanganyika stated that the incident was a symptom of mass psychogenic illness – a collective fit of hysteria – where the “victims” were said to have “experienced symptoms that lasted from several hours to 16 days” and that “during this time the patient is unable to perform her normal duties and is difficult to control. (...) No literate and relatively sophisticated members of society have been attacked”^[19], the doctors wrote, without explaining precisely what level of sophistication would offer relative immunity to the illness. What's laughable was subjective until the subjugated laughed.

Derek Walcott's play *Pantomime*^[20] is set in Trinidad and Tobago where Harry, a white English master of a B&B, and Harry's black Trinidadian servant Jackson discuss Harry's desire to direct them in a performance of Robinson Crusoe, but with the roles reversed: the black man as Crusoe and the white man as the servant Friday:

H A R R Y
I kept thinking about this panto I co-
authored, man. Robinson Crusoe, and I
picked up this old script. I can bring it all
down to your level, with just two characters.
Crusoe, Man Friday, maybe even the parrot,
if that horny old bugger will remember his
lines . . .

J A C K S O N
Since we on the subject, Mr. Trewe, I am
compelled to report that parrot again.

H A R R Y
No, not again, Jackson?

J A C K S O N
Yes.

H A R R Y
(Imitating parrot): Heinegger, Heinegger. (In
his own voice) Correct?

J A C K S O N
Wait, wait! I know your explanation: that
a old German called Herr Heinegger used
to own this place, and that when that
maquereau of a macaw keep cracking:
"Heinegger, Heinegger," he remembering
the Nazi and not heckling me, but
it playing a little havoc with me nerves.
This is my fifth report. I am marking them
down. Language is ideas, Mr. Trewe. And I
think that this pre- colonial parrot have the
wrong idea.

H A R R Y
It's his accent, Jackson. He's a Creole
parrot. What can I do?

J A C K S O N
Well, I am not saying not to give the bird a
fair trial, but I see nothing wrong in taking
him out the cage at dawn, blindfolding the
bitch, giving him a last cigarette if he want
it, lining him up against the garden wall,
and perforating his arse by firing squad.

H A R R Y
The war's over, Jackson! And how can a
bloody parrot be prejudiced?

J A C K S O N
The same damn way they corrupt a child. By
their upbringing. That parrot survive from
a pre- colonial epoch, Mr. Trewe, and if it
want to last in Trinidad and Tobago,
then it go have to adjust.^[21]

Language, as a contaminated remnant from a time
long gone. Jackson and Klemperer's observations
meet in Klemperer's words when he said that language
not only wrote and thought for him, but that they also
“increasingly” governed his emotions and his “entire
spiritual being” when he allowed them to permeate his
being unfiltered. “And what happens if the cultivated
language is made up of poisonous elements or has
been made the bearer of poisons?”, he asks.^[22] How
long is the incubation time, one might wonder and if

we apply the rules of disease, is there a time when we can consider ourselves to be healed? If language is the pathogen, then it has the potential of harming the host, but does it not also bear the potential of being a means of survival?

Lisa Bhungalias essay "Laughing at Power: Humor, Transgression, and the Politics of Refusal in Palestine"^[23] takes its departure from Billig's statement that laughter can't be "considered apart from the rhetoric of communication"^[24] and asks "in what ways might laughter, when out of place (...) and in the face of colonial authority, be a profoundly transgressive act?"^[25] Why did the young handcuffed Palestinian adolescents that were ushered into vans by Israeli soldiers in the viral photos from 2015 smiling? They knew the horrors that awaited them, yet they smiled for the cameras. In these situations laughter is not how power is opposed – it is how power is disavowed. Bhungalia goes on to argue that it is imperative that "humor (is) not be theorized outside of power relations. Just as mocking power can be a powerful delegitimizing act, so too does the reverse hold. It thus matters who is the agent and object of laughter."^[26] If laughter is communication then we can agree with Klemperer who recognised that it is nearly "impossible for a group to be forced together into a particular situation without developing its own linguistic particularities – especially when the force applied is genuine and malevolent and the individual can't escape the process."^[27]

There is a point in Walcott's *Pantomime* where Jackson, after having expressed his urge to execute the pre-colonial parrot, is forced to illustrate that there are limits to humour, but not to his laughter as he describes how he once served as a barman and one evening found himself to be subject to a guest's offensive ridicule. When he eventually reached his wit's end, he decided to do something about it:

(...) one day, just out of the blue, I pick up a ice pick and walk over to where he and two fellers was playing card, and I nail that ice pick through his hand to the table, and I laugh, and I walk away.^[28]

Did Jackson's patience simply grow weary, leading him to snap? Was the fact that the Palestinian adolescents smiled when faced with potential danger and that three girls near Lake Tanganyika in 1967 for a short time laughed their way out of the conditions of their lives signs of comic relief alone or is it also signs of resistance? How can we define the bridge that binds the two? If comedy can be considered a resistance carrying parasite, then perhaps laughter is a symptom of infection. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Prof. Dr. Dirk Brockmann at Humboldt University created a map that tracks the most probable spreading routes for COVID-19 based on international flight routes and

times. Imagine a map for language. Imagine these notes as a Venn diagram of all its contact points.^[29] Imagine how language travels and how it takes root. The word cloud might include WWI, Tanganyika, German Empire, Tanzania, Graf von Goetzen, railway, Indian Ocean, Klemperer, WWII, Germany, language, hysteria, Trinidad ... it goes on.

On the website hatecrimemap.com/covid, an anonymous entry reads:

"Date (M/D/YY)	10/03/20
City, State	Fullerton California
Ethnicity	White
Gender	TGNC
Type	Other

Description: racial micro-aggression between white instructors: professor discussed study abroad trips to Italy and japan as "sending lambs to the slaughter" because of the "number of Chinese" going there (only white instructors in the room, thought important to document what is said when not directly to the targeted community's face)^[30]

The website has its own word cloud and the significance here is the importance of tracing contact points in order to predict possible spread and contagion. The black comedian Roy Wood Jr from Birmingham Alabama in the US – arguably one of the most political English speaking comics of our time – is famed for keeping meticulous notes of his comedy sets in order to keep track of what was successful (i.e. provoked laughter) and which ones failed, while also noting the venues, dates and conditions. All data – information that one could argue serves the purpose of seeing if an infection has taken hold.

In 1962, the same year that the girls were laughing in Tanganyika, Trinidad and Tobago, a country where the language of the former colonial power is still superior to the native Creole languages in the constitution, became independent. The poet M. NourbeSe Philip was in college at the time. She has described schooling as a time when she learned about English nature and British royalty, things that were of no importance in a postcolonial nation with a tropical climate and where a "silent tradition of rebellion" bubbled beneath the surface.^[31] And in 2015, the same year that the boys in Gaza were smiling at the cameras while being detained by Israeli soldiers, Germany and the UK hotly debated who would pay for the necessary renovation of MV Liemba.^[32] It was argued that the ship was of value to the people who needed it as a means of transportation across Lake Tanganyika, when in fact when considering its initial function was to be a warship, one can reasonably argue that whatever value it has to the people is only incidental.

Walking away laughing like Derek Walcott's Jackson, or "grinnin' while I'm scrubbin'" like Brecht's Seeräubertochter Jenny in the interpretation by Nina Simone, the high-priessess of Soul – these vessels sailing their way towards liberation, by increments.

*All the night through, through the noise and to-do
You wonder who is that person that lives up there?
And you see me stepping out in the morning
Looking nice with a ribbon in my hair (...)
And the ship
The Black Freighter
Disappears out to sea
And on it is me^[33]*

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MORE INFORMATION

savvy-contemporary.com

facebook.com/savvyberlin

S A V V Y Contemporary – The laboratory of form-ideas is an art space, discursive platform, place for good talks, foods and drinks – a space for conviviality. S A V V Y Contemporary situates itself at the threshold of notions of the West and non-West, to understand and deconstruct them. S A V V Y Contemporary has realized a kaleidoscope of art exhibitions, performances, film screenings, lectures, concerts, readings, talks, dances. S A V V Y Contemporary has established a participatory archive on German colonial history, a performance arts documentation centre, a library, a residency program, as well as educational projects with schools. The art space engages in its neighborhood's history and socio-political realities which are entangled with the reflections and discourses of the project.

SAVVY Contemporary composes life-worlds through its commitments to exhibition-making, research, sonic and visual cultures, embodied knowledges, and other heritages of creativity. It is home to a participatory archive on German colonial history, a documentation center of performance arts, a library, a residency program, a series of SAVVY books, the record label SAVVY records, a radio platform called SAVVYZMAR as well as educational projects with schools. The art space engages with various publics facilitating translation and mediation of discourses, socio-political realities and difficult histories.

The space was founded in 2009 in Berlin-Neukölln by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, SAVVY's artistic director until 2022. From 2023 onwards, the space – located in Berlin-Wedding since 2016 – is under artistic direction by Renan Laru-an alongside the executive directors Lema Sikod and Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock.

S A V V Y Contemporary is Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Bona Bell Onur Çimen Bilge Emir Sagal Farah Billy Fowo Raisa Galofre Manuela Garcia Aldana Juan Pablo García Sossa Hubert Gromny Hajra Haider Karrar Daniellis Hernandez Anna Jäger Kimani Joseph Aditi Kapur Laura Klöckner Lisa Kolloge Kelly Krugman Mokia Laisin Renan Laru-an Rafal Lazar Nancy Naser Al Deen Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Abhishek Nilamber Matthias Rademacher Lema Sikod Meghna Singh Lili Somogyi Ola Zielińska

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