

HISTORICAL  
CHILDRENAL  
LULLABIES FROM  
WOUNDS TO WONDER

RESEARCH, EXHIBITION AND INTERGENERATIONAL  
PARTICIPATORY PROJECT

OPENING 30.11.2024 17:00

ON VIEW

01.12.2024–24.01.2025 THURSDAY – SUNDAY 14:00–19:00

[closed during the winter break 23.12.2024–01.01.2025]

WITH works of kids & teens participating in the workshops and works by the artists Adel Abidin Saadia Batool Tentative Collective Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo Irene Fernández Arcas with Werkstatt für interkulturelle Medienarbeit WIM e.V. Laura Fong Prosper Mariana Garcia Mejia and Company JUMU in collaboration with Arthur Sohoian Sara Khan Mizi Lee Gulnur Mukazhanova Conial Neighbours (Vivian Ngozi Aghamelu Rosemary Esinam Damalie CTPC Productions) Duy Nguyen Sina Seifee an archive selection from ProNATs e. V. and The Concerned for Working Children

COLLABORATION INITIATIVES Orta Okul Werkstatt für interkulturelle Medienarbeit WIM e.V. Eltern von besonderen Kindern (EVBK) RomaMoMA Nomadic Library – a collaboration with the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC) &&

WORKSHOPS WITH Venuca Evanán Valentina Karga Dudù Kouate Leila Boukarim & Asaf Luzon Mizi Lee with Y-Thanh Võ Julius Nägele &&

TEAM

ARTISTIC DIRECTION Renan Laru-an

CURATION & CONCEPT Hajra Haider Karrar Daniellis Hernandez Calderon Lili Somogyi

PROGRAMME CURATION Manuela Garcia Aldana Lili Somogyi

PROJECT COORDINATION Matthew Hansen

PRODUCTION LEAD Ola Zielińska

PRODUCTION TEAM Dušan Rodić Jessie Omamogho Nancy Naser Al Deen Gabriela Guarnizo

SCENOGRAPHY Ola Zielińska

PROJECT MANAGEMENT Grace Baggott, Anna Fasolato

GENERAL MANAGEMENT Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Lema Sikod

COMMUNICATIONS Anna Jäger

GRAPHIC DESIGN Juan Pablo García Sossa

EDITING & TRANSLATION Anna Jäger

VIDEO & SOUND Bert Günther

LIGHT Emilio Cordero

SAVVY.DOC Sagal Farah

COLONIAL NEIGHBOURS Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Matthew Hansen

INTERNSHIP Srotoswini Sinha

THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We give thanks to

Projektraum Galerie M for providing space and support to host the workshop with Irene Fernández Arcas and Werkstatt für interkulturelle Medienarbeit WIM e.V.

Najib Abidi for facilitating and supporting Arthur Sohoian's participation in mural painting with JUMU

&& to all the participating kids for their trust, creativity, generosity, and very detailed snack lists!

FUNDING The project takes place in the framework of the 15-months-long programme TRANSITIONS, funded by Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien.



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

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# P R O G R A M M E

## CLOSED WORKSHOPS WITH INVITED KIDS

25.-26.10.2024

*Sarhua Tablas*

PAINTING WORKSHOP

WITH Venuca Evanan

07.12.2024

*Exploring the ways in which we tell our stories*

BOOK WORKSHOP

with the kids from Orta Okul

WITH Asaf Luzon and Leila Boukarim

18.01.2024 11:00-14:00

*CIRCLE #2.1 – A Resting Infrastructure*

SOFT SCULPTURES & TEXTILE PAINTING

with the families from Eltern von besonderen Kindern (EVBK)

WITH Valentina Karga

## PUBLIC EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

11.01.2025 11:00-14:00

*The Symphony of Abandoned Objects*

INSTRUMENT MAKING WORKSHOP

WITH Dudù Kouate

25.01.2025 12:00 - 15:00

*While Our Parents Worked for Wages*

KINETIC MECHA-SCULPTURES WORKSHOP

WITH Mizi Lee, Y-Thanh Võ, Julius Nägele

26.-25.01.2025

INVOCATIONS

## SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES

01.12.2024	15:00	ENGLISH	Hajra Haider Karrar
15.12.2024	16:00	ENGLISH	Lili Somogyi
04.01.2024	16:00	ENGLISH	Lili Somogyi
09.01.2025	14:00	POLISH	Ola Zielińska
11.01.2025	15:00	SPANGLISH	Manuela García Aldana
12.01.2025	15:00	URDU	Hajra Haider Karrar
24.01.2024	17:00	SPANISH	Daniellis Hernandez Calderon

Tours in Romani, German, and more will be added for January – please check our website for updates

# W E L C O M E F O R Y O U N G P E O P L E

We warmly invite you to S A V V Y for an exhibition and project about childhood. We believe that it is important for children and young people to use their imagination and creativity without fear. When kids feel free to express themselves, they can share their unique stories and ideas. We understand that growing up can be different depending on your background, where you live, and the challenges your family may face in moving to a new country. Through this exhibition project for children and young adults, we hope to understand how kids experience their worlds and we are interested in how kids remember their past, think about their communities, and imagine where they belong.

This project is a way to support young people in telling their stories, and to listen to and learn from them, to celebrate their creativity, their political and social protagonism and giving them the space to explore important ideas in ways that are meaningful to them. Through fun and interactive activities like drawing, storytelling, photography, karaoke, music, and theatre, children and teens have the chance to express themselves and explore their histories and dreams. We want this to be a space where kids can share their joy, imagination, and creativity as a way to highlight their unique perspectives and create a space for solidarity, respect, care and relations between different generations.

Long before the opening of the exhibition, we have been working with young people to create pieces that are displayed in the exhibition. We will continue to host workshops with different groups of kids who can keep creating new things, which will also be added to the show. Come all, join us!



# I N T R O

How do we envision the future of a society that struggles to decolonize itself? How will the past be remembered, the present understood? How can we nurture the aspirations and imaginations of the present and upcoming generations for a desired future?

S A V V Y Contemporary's artistic programme for 2024–2025, T R A N S I T I O N S , takes colonial heritage and decolonisation as facts and points us towards practices of transition. The fourth exhibition and the last segment of this year-long program is H I S T O R I C A L C H I L D R E N : L U L L A B I E S F R O M W O U N D S T O W O N D E R which takes a cue from the agency of children and the youth in imagining decolonization.

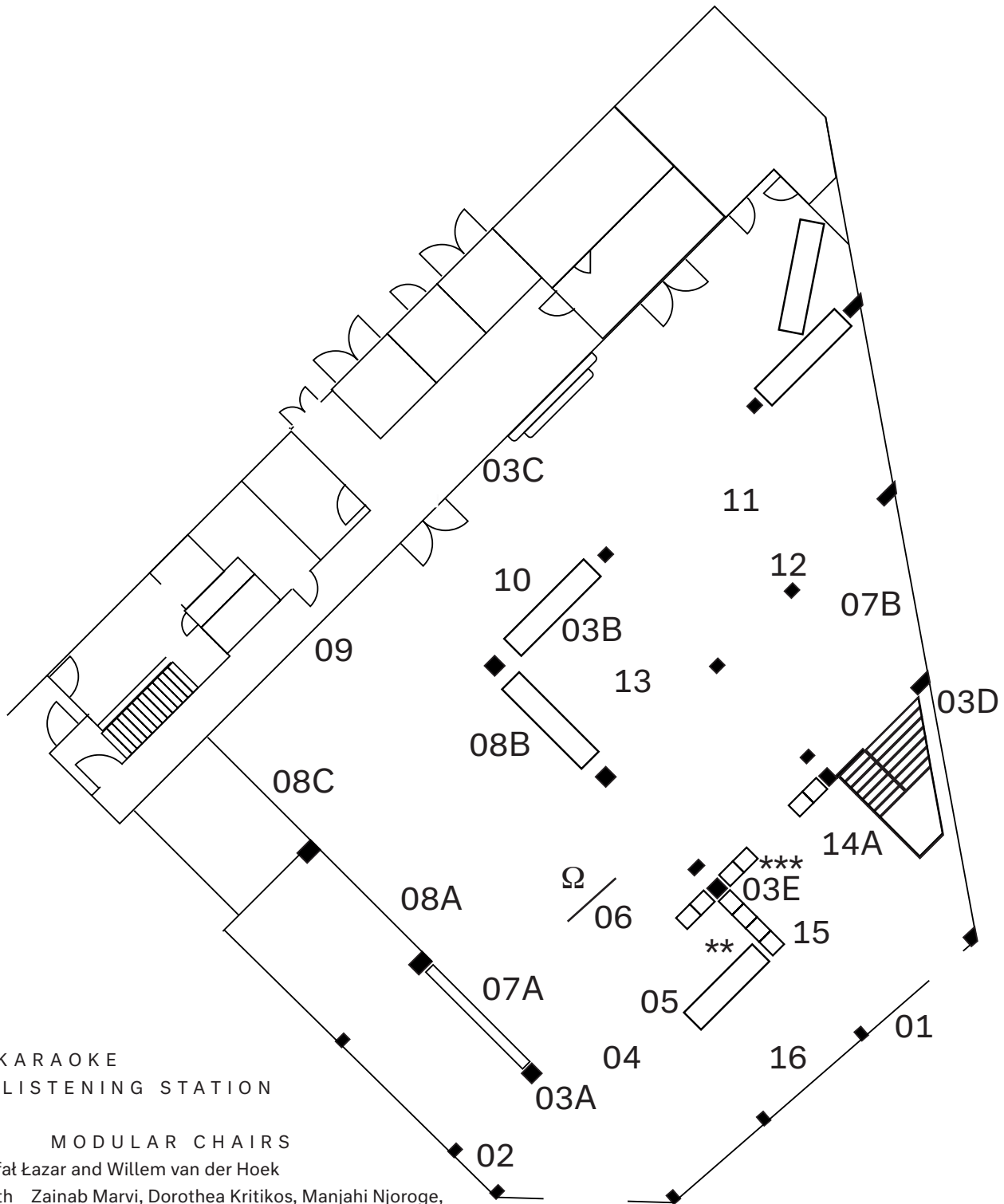
The project is a collaboration with children and youth initiatives. We think and work together with children and cultural practitioners, questioning the complex notion of childhood and recognizing it as a position shifting between dependency, interdependence, and being unassisted. By witnessing and experiencing childhood in varying degrees of adulthood and mothering, we acknowledge how each is dictated by racial, social, and political hierarchies resulting in generational traumas and the inculcation of fear and self-censorship. This collaboration is an attempt at activating capacities of the imagination and agencies of a young mind in the absence of inhibitions, where it can continue to freely respond and react to stimulus and be equipped with multiple forms of expression.

We think through the constructions of memory, remembrance, sense of community and Heimat that are perceived and imagined by a child or young adult. We focus especially on those who struggle to reconcile diaspora imaginaries, between the site of (ancestral) origin and the circumstantially chosen or imposed locality. In this process we expand towards the history of children's resistance movements and their transnational resonances and connections as well as the existing practices and strategies of storytelling in reclaiming, retelling narratives, and the power of joy as a tool of resistance in nurturing new imaginaries.

There is a rich heritage of traditions and cultures that consistently invest in sustaining narratives and legacies through linguistic, sonic, literary, and performative rituals especially of marginalised and oppressed communities. We are also interested in the sounds and songs of resistance that have emerged from youth movements in their struggle to establish their rights. These practices are devised to counter historical and ongoing erasures including the experience of displacement, racism, and xenophobia, and to bear the burden of trauma that is transmitted through generations.

With this project, we ask ourselves: How is the ethical and political agency of children and young adults situated in the current moment? What are the ideas being generated, what is being learned? And what is never learned? Engaging in interactive and participatory actions through visual arts and crafts, the written word, oral testimonies, sonic and instrumental traditions, new media formats of film and photography, theatre and other embodied practices of individual and collective storytelling, we stage H I S T O R I C A L C H I L D R E N : L U L L A B I E S F R O M W O U N D S T O W O N D E R . It is an exhibition and a series of children and young adult commissions where creativity and conviviality become a methodology of transmitting narratives allowing children to highlight their politics. Before the opening of the exhibition, we began to work with young people whose creations are included in the exhibition. Throughout the duration of the exhibition, this creative endeavour continues and the works produced by different groups of children and young adults will be included continuously in the exhibition display.

# FLOORPLAN



Ω KARAOKE  
& LISTENING STATION

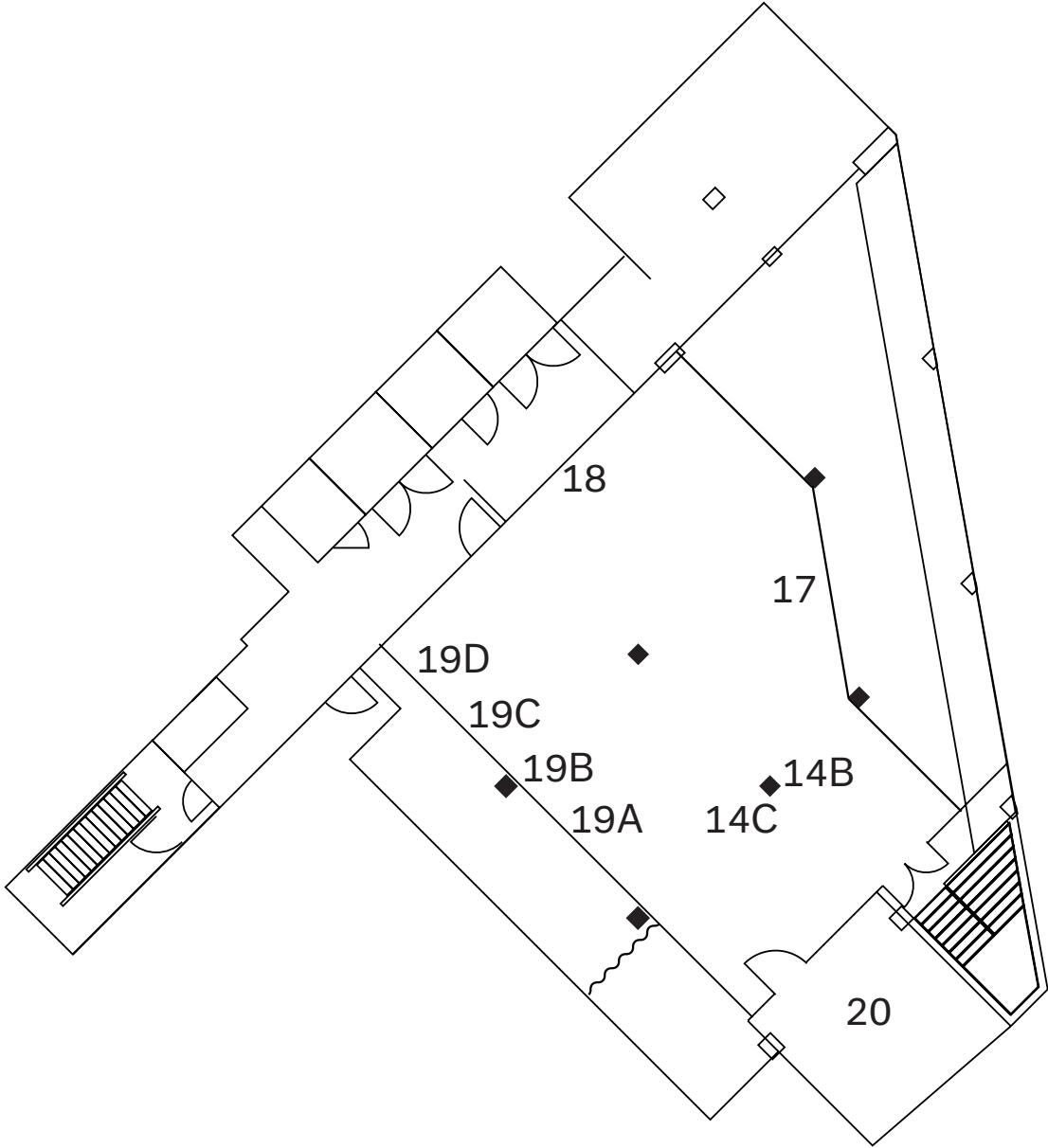
\*\* MODULAR CHAIRS  
Rafat Łazar and Willem van der Hoek  
With Zainab Marvi, Dorothea Kritikos, Manjahi Njoroge,  
Berta Galofré Pons, Paloma Torréns Muzás, Matthew Hansen,  
Annie Kern, Lena Cramer, and others participating in our wood  
workshop

\*\*\* SHAUNAK MAHBUBANI  
WITH SAVVY.DOC  
*Dis-visible Narratives:*  
*Non-western Cultural Production around HIV/AIDS*  
2024–ongoing, Research commission



- 01 DANIELLIS HERNANDEZ CALDERON  
*Reencountering Ourselves as Working Class?*  
*A Cultural Worker's Question*  
2024, Participatory Research Display  
With photographs by Jürgen Henschel, courtesy of the archive of the FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum, and by Das feministische Archiv FFBIZ as well as shared family archives by Martin Hyun
- 02 AKINBODE AKINBIYI  
*Photoautomat*  
2020, participatory installation, black and white photo prints
- 03 MARIANA GARCIA MEJIA AND COMPANY  
*Lullabies Archive*  
2023–ongoing, sound installation of an open archive, speakers  
A Lullaby sung by Luan  
B Lullaby sung by Nan  
C Lullaby sung by Tpsi  
D Lullaby sung by Felice  
E Lullaby sung by Yupanqui
- 04 SARA KHAN  
*Dhulai (The Wash)*  
2021, installation, textile panels, fabric and iron-on glue, 91 x 274 cm (panel 1), 107 x 274 cm (panel 2), 122 x 274 cm (panel 3), 137 x 274 cm (panel 4)
- 05 COLONIAL NEIGHBOURS  
Video Installation  
A *German Town*  
By CTPC Productions  
1990, 27:00 min  
B *German Remnants in Kpando*  
By Rosemary Esinam Damalie and Chris Parker Edzordzi Sefogah (MEGBORNA)  
2024, 03:34 min  
C *Hair Stories*  
By Vivian Ngozi Aghamelu (Concept and artistic direction), Aya and Rabiataou (video and text contribution)  
2024, 05:40 min
- 06 TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE  
*Lyari Kay Sab Rang Anokhay*  
2014, single channel, edited cell-phone video, colour, sound, 15:24 min
- 07 GULNUR MUKAZHANOVA  
A *Bosaĝa (Threshold)*  
2023–24, textile painting, mixed media, hand made felt, fabrics, pins, 250 x 200 cm  
B *Untitled #1*  
2023–24, textile painting, mixed media, hand made felt, fabrics, pins, 250 x 200 cm
- 08 DUY NGUYEN  
*Distant Tongues*  
Installation
- A *Distant Tongues*  
2024, mixed media, sculptures, kinetic sculptures (arduino, metal pipes, synthetic fabric, plywood, bamboo), various dimensions  
B *Distant Tongues*  
2024, sculptures, kinetic sculptures, pigment transfer on acrylic glass (acrylic, inkjet, plexiglass), 100 x 70 cm  
C *Distant Tongues*  
2024, Pigment transfer on leather drums (acrylic, inkjet, leather, plywood, bamboo), 25 cm diameter
- 09 JUMU IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTHUR SOHOIAN  
*Get a Grip*  
2024, mural, water based acrylic painting, 420 cm x 730 cm
- 10 SARHUA BOARDS PAINTED BY CHILDREN AND THEIR ELDERS IN A WORKSHOP WITH VENUCA EVANAN  
*Our stories painted in the Sarhua boards style*  
2024, painted wooden boards, acrylic paints and colour pigments, 35 cm x 15 cm x 1 cm
- 11 SINA SEIFEE  
*Relaxing Horror Tales for Children and Adults*  
2022, video installation, multimedia projection, large glass, textile, two synchronous video projections, 27:00 min
- 12 LAURA FONG PROSPER  
*In a Human Aquarium*  
2011, single-channel-video, 2:58 min
- 13 IRENE FERNANDEZ ARCAS IN COLLABORATION WITH CHILDREN FROM GEFLÜCHTETENUNTERKÜNFTE (ASYLUM CAMPS) FACILITATED BY WIM E.V.  
*Our Home is Made of Lines and Laughter*  
2024, painted textile installation, textile and paint, variable dimension
- 14 MIZI LEE  
A *also jetzt siehst du mich (now you see me)*  
2024, installation, pearl curtain, steel, cotton thread, acrylic beads, glass beads, 180 x 175cm  
B *Die Wiederentdeckung der Welt (Into the new world)*  
2024, installation, pearl curtain, steel, cotton thread, acrylic beads, glass beads, 200 x 200 cm  
C *Rediscovering the world*  
2024, single-channel video, 04:15 min  
D *Mizi Lee As A Rising Horse*  
2024, 1-channel video, 1:00 min
- 15 SAVVY.DOC  
Display of books and research material
- 16 ROMAMOMA NOMADIC LIBRARY – A COLLABORATION WITH THE EUROPEAN ROMA INSTITUTE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (ERIAN)  
Display of a curated selection of books from the RomaMoMa Nomadic Library, centered on themes and stories from, for, and with children.

# FLOORPLAN



17 SUSANA PILAR DELAHANTE  
MATIENZO

A *Apuntes para una Historia*

2021, 11 charcoal drawings on paper, 20cm x 10 cm

B *Historias Negras*

2022, installation, black origami boats, 10 cm x 5 cm

18 ADEL ABIDIN

A *Vision of the Future*

2017, 1-channel-video, 4k digital, stereo, 16:9, 6:20 min

19 SAADIA BATOOL

A *Untitled III, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 117 x 84 cm

B *Untitled I, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 56 x 41 cm

C *Untitled IV, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 124,5 x 87,6 cm

D *Untitled II, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting mixed media on canvas, 114 x 81 cm

20 ARCHIVAL DISPLAY

Other Childhoods: International Movement of Child and Youth Workers

A ProNATs e.V.

Selection of archival material of the movement of child and youth workers

1996–2024, press articles, manifestos

Courtesy of ProNATs e.V, Berlin

B The Concerned for Working Children

Video documentation and films

*Time to Listen*

1996, documentation, 48 min

*Taking Destiny in their Hands*

2005, video documentation, 45 min

*Banned Aid (Thepeya Thootugalu)*

2015, documentation, 20 min

*Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail*

2016, animated docu-drama, 18 min

# WORK DESCRIPTIONS & BIOGRAPHIES

## 01 DANIELLIS

HERNANDEZ CALDERON

*Rediscovering Ourselves as a Working Class?*

*A Cultural Worker's Question*

2024, Interactive Research Display

With photographs by Jürgen Henschel, courtesy of the archive of the FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum, and by Das feministische Archiv FFBIZ as well as shared family archives by Martin Hyun

The interactive photographic installation displayed in the windows of our space was born as part of the second exhibition held this year, entitled **L A B O \* R : AN INVITATION TO ACTION ... A BASIS FOR HOPE**. From our positioning as cultural workers and with the purpose of establishing from contemporary art spaces connections, interactions and alliances in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism and all its forces, this installation raises fundamental questions: Who are our working class comrades? How do they live and how do they work? What are their histories? How close are they to us? Are they our neighbours?

Currently, on display in the windows archival photographs found in the archive of FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum and Das feministische Archiv FFBIZ as well as shared family photos from our neighbour Dr. Martin Hyun, which portray his parents as part of the guest workers who came to Germany from Korean territories in the 1970s.

This photographic material serves as a starting point for informal conversations with our visitors and neighbours: We invite them to bring their photographs and documents evidencing their or their family's life as workers. The photographs they share with us will be gradually incorporated into the exhibition and will expand, challenge, and complexify it from different perspectives.

## DANIELLIS HERNANDEZ CALDERON

lives and works in Berlin as artist, activist, and curator. In her work she explores possibilities of reinvention of the past and takes as sensitive material to build her work those memories produced and nourished in the coexistence, solidarity, struggles and resistance of migrated, diasporic and discriminated, but not defeated, bodies. She earned a BA in Sociology from the University of Havana. In 2007 she graduated from the International Film and television School of San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba as Documentary filmmaker.

She holds a Master in Art in Context by University of Arts, Berlin. Daniellis is part of the **S A V V Y Contemporary** team.

## 02 AKINBODE AKINBIYI

*Photoautomat*

2020, Participatory installation,

black and white photo prints

Commissioned by steirischer herbst 2020

The small square portrait quadrat portraits that emerge from a photoautomat often cater to the urgency of the moment, either a mood or for grim bureaucratic procedures. These photobooths found in public transitory spaces offer a moment of privacy, intimacy, and respite. In this installation, a constellation beyond the subject in front of the camera awaits, a surprise that may lead the viewer into a "a maze of never ending streets that coalesce into uncountable pathways", as Akinbode Akinbiyi describes it. Since 1991, he has been capturing life on the streets in megalopolises such as Berlin, Brasília, Durban, Lagos, where life regenerates and collapses with moments that coalesce across geographies and people. These observations are predominantly documented through black and white analogue photography. Akinbiyi's photomat placed at the entrance of the exhibition sets the tone for the exhibition where multiple portals situated across the space would transport one to the repository of memories and places familiar, desired, imagined, and longed for with a welcoming warmth that is inclusive and embraces plurality.

**A K I N B O D E A K I N B I Y I** is a photographer and poet. His work records everyday life in the age of planetary mobility and globally circulating images through a uniquely poetic view of everyday life and its manifestations. He lives in Berlin.

## 03 MARIANA GARCIA MEJIA AND COMPANY

*Lullabies Archive*

2023–ongoing, sound installation of open archive

- A Lullaby sung by Luan
- B Lullaby sung by Nan
- C Lullaby sung by Tpsi
- D Lullaby sung by Felice
- E Lullaby sung by Yupanqui

“Can a song be home?”, Mariana Garcia Mejia asks herself in this collective project of an archive of lullabies, born from her fixation on a lullaby her grandmother used to sing to her and to which she returns to even as an adult in moments of distress. These songs are distributed throughout the space as a polyphony that connects us, as whispers and babbles that transport us and recreate our memories, fictions and imaginations passed down from generation to generation.

We remember the soft skin of our grandmother, the firm and loving hand of our mother, the smell of coffee of our aunt, the rose aroma of our neighbour who lulled us to sleep and calmed us to continue the hard and exhausting labour of the day. There is no need to understand what is being said, songs in different languages are enough to make us feel safe, loved in a world that is often hostile, violent, unequal. As Mariana says: “It serves as a catalyst for tender encounters, evoking both vulnerable connections and a sense of sweetness in the heart during times shaped by alienation and animosity.”

The archive that Mariana has built, besides accompanying us throughout the exhibition, also dialogues with the work of other artists, embraces them and speaks to them, while unthinkable and distant, intimate evocations, echoes and murmurs are produced. With the cooing come the movements and the eternal swaying, the swaying of our souls since the times of our grandmothers.

M A R I A N A G A R C Í A M E J Í A (she/her) is a Colombian art-worker based in Berlin. As an artist, she creates space-installations with sound, smell, text, sculptural elements with a relational focus. As a curator and producer, she is interested in an expanded collaborative practice that encompasses all levels of care to foster emotional encounters. Her work delves into themes of refuge and the search of home. She references and explores childhood imaginaries, inspired by psychoanalytical approaches and executed with an accessible perspective. Ultimately, this search intends to bring to the present heart-states of tenderness and acceptance present in childhood before the integration of hate, separation and violence discourse in our judgement. The starting point and goal of her work is the concept of compassion (*Mitgefühl*), which implies a shared intimacy of affects. This, hoping that art can liberate us from loneliness, inspires us to resist against cultures of violence and to serve as a medium to raise awareness and build community.

04 S A R A K H A N

*Dhulai (The Wash)*

2021, installation, textile panels, fabric and iron-on glue, 91 x 274 cm (panel 1), 107 x 274 cm (panel 2), 122 x 274 cm (panel 3), 137 x 274 cm (panel 4)

These four overlapping textile panels refer to matrilineal kinships and bonds that are formed in the cycle of regeneration and care work depicted through sensitively crafted delicate white woven material that merges to shape intricate and precise images that are fluid in form. The meticulous treatment of these overlapping figures with flora and fauna conjoining in forms and emerging again depicts the flow and continuous circle of life – of birthing and nurturing lives. One that consists of an erratic tempo with hardships, failures, joys, and triumphs yet accompanied by the support of generations before and after embodied within and around, in person or in spirit. The colour white becomes symbolic for reverence, sacredness, and an ode to the spirits that strive to sustain lives before, within, and after them, and that continue to resist and persist against patriarchal oppressions. Khan, who is masterful with the use of colour embraces the strength of the female form with its strength and weaknesses in these panels. This rare work revels in the play of light and shadow instead of colour, reflecting and revealing new aspects with the movement of light throughout the duration of the day.

S A R A K H A N is known for her explorations of magic realism and the blurred lines between the real and imagined through watercolour paintings, textiles, and ceramics. Interested in how something grotesque and seductive can converge to become immensely captivating, she has developed a language distinctly her own.

Aside from her solo show at Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto (2024), The Reach Gallery Museum, Abbotsford, BC (2021) select group exhibitions include “Let Me Take You There” at The Doris McCarthy Gallery, Scarborough, ON (2023) and “Hope”, Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George, BC (2022). She has been artist-in-Residence at The Burrard Arts Foundation (2021). She was commissioned by Simon Fraser University to create work for the 50th Anniversary celebration of their Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (2020). She was the featured artist for The Indian Summer Festival (2019).

Khan holds a Bachelor of Fine Art from the National College of Arts, Lahore. She grew up in Lahore, Pakistan and now lives and works in Vancouver, Canada.

## 05 COLONIAL NEIGHBOURS

Archival presentation with a digital commission by Vivian Ngozi Aghamelu

Colonial Neighbours is S A V V Y Contemporary's participatory archive and research project investigating the colonial history of Germany, including its ongoing impacts upon the present. The long-term project aims to address gaps in Germany's politics in order to question dominant knowledge structures and historical narratives. The archive serves as a platform for discussion, exchange, and collaborations with actors from various fields.

Today, knowledge of this history and its impact is hardly present in the German public sphere. Official German "collective memory" actively displaces, silences, or denies this history. Many schoolbooks, media outlets, and politicians ignore this period, downplay its importance, or portray it as if it evolved in isolation from an alleged "core" of "German history." As a consequence, colonialism is often seen as part of the "distant" past. However, we cannot understand Germany without understanding its role as a colonial power. Germany's colonial past is a history of ignorance and *Verschlossenheit*. But: The "periphery" as well as the "metropole" have been influenced strongly by the colonial encounter.

The city of Berlin, with its long history of migration, plays a crucial role in the history of colonialism. Its representatives in power chose the capital to host the famous Berlin Conference, also known as the Congo Conference, in 1884–1885 where the African continent was divided between European rulers. Berlin consolidated the process of global European expansion, as it was here that the political rules which would install formal colonial power over African territories were established. Colonialism is connected to the history of racism, and that racism haunts us still today.

In the current display format we are merging commissions that have been acquired this year to activate and question the continuation from a violent historic not so distant past towards a future that will haunt us equally for the direct and indirect involvement in the violent continuations of colonialism(s). Starting the year with a commission by the artist and researcher Rosemary Esinam Damalie who focused on the Volta region in Ghana to think about contemporary remnants of a colonial past and also point the finger to regions that are not obvious former colonies but very much affected by the endeavour of extending ones territories in a violent way. The second film *German Town* is an archival footage that tells the story of German settlers in Jamaica: In 1834, following the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, over 200 Germans were brought as indentured labourers from Bremerhaven to settle

in what is now called Seaford Town in Jamaica. For this current iteration we have commissioned Vivian Ngozi who works on continuations of violence in the creation of beauty standards and forms of otherness and aesthetics of black femme bodies.

The display format is intended to think of ways of how we look at objects and how our own perception of themes are holding us captive in our approach. The archival project of S A V V Y Contemporary invites the visitors to touch the objects in order to feel the connection towards the material and have create their own haptic relation to a fragment in our collective memory mapping project.

V I V I A N N G O Z I A G H A M E L U (concept and artistic direction) with Aya and Rabiadou (video and text contribution)

*Hair Stories*

2024, documentary, single-channel video, 5:40 min

The video *Hair Stories* portrays the experiences of three Black German women in relation to their identity and the attribute of hair and how they decided to shave it. The documentary shows the process of the shaving and includes poems/monologues about their experiences with beauty standards, identity and the connected colonial and capitalist structures. The action of shaving off their afro-hair symbolizes an act of liberation from capitalist structures, ideals of beauty and stigmatization associated with hair on Black and female gendered bodies. The video documentary is dedicated to the parallel realities of collective histories that are stigmatizing, capitalist and marginalizing, as well as identity-forming, rebellious and resistant. Resistance and liberation are found in a playful relationship, as well as self-confidence and pride in one's own identity and body.

V I V I A N N G O Z I A G H A M E L U is a self-taught German-Nigerian interdisciplinary artist born and based in Berlin. Her artistic work is an expression of a liberational practice from predetermined social and political structures that aim to classify, categorise and divide. To break through these resulting inequities, she embraces the multitude of her identities, which allows her to connect collectively and place my personal history in a global historical and political context. As an artist and space holder for intersectionally discriminated people, she engages with the history inscribed in our bodies and seeks resources to research multifaceted modes of resistance.



## 06 TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE

*Lyari Kay Sab Rang Anokhay*

2014, single channel, edited cell-phone video, color, sound, 15:24 min

Original video edited by Cyrus Viccaji and Yaminay Chaudhri, Re-edited for S A V V Y Contemporary by Yaminay Chaudhri

First screened on May 23, 2014 in Karachi, Pakistan

This collection of videos created by children is an insight into the perceptions of space-home, locality, relationships, and kinships and how they are processed by a young mind. These portraits – sharing glimpses of a casual day navigating familial spaces of the home and neighbourhood – counter notions about an area otherwise deemed as one of the most violent localities of the megalopolis, Karachi. The shifting shaking frames aligning with the movement of a young body and the low resolution pixelated quality of the video demands an effort and engagement from the viewer to disclose the nuances of the multiple worlds inhabited by these children. The joy and glee in the intimate affiliations and bonds that exist and continue to be generated through the openness, generosity, and the agency expressed through these visual diaries challenges external readings formed through propaganda and sensationalism. As the artist, Yaminay Chaudhri shares: “these videos create environments that resist summary.”

The drawing filter applied in the re-editing of the video by Yaminay Chaudhri for the work to be shown in a context outside of the children’s locale acknowledging ethical obligations, further extends these narrations to resonate with other geographies. It reinforces the need for sharing stories that remain untold that shift, challenge, and complicate our understandings of the multiple worlds that coexist waiting to be discovered.

The video was constructed by ten students of Kiran School, ages 9–13. They were asked to use cell-phone videos to create visual diaries, as an archive of everyday observations. The children went through a structured program of ten workshops taught over two months by artist Yaminay Chaudhri. In these workshops students were taught to cultivate a routine of diary writing using multiple media like text, drawing, collective observation, and eventually video portraiture. Tentative Collective research assistant, Khadija Abdul Lateef, and two resident teachers from Kiran School assisted the process. The Tentative Collective’s Mobile Cinema was brought in to edit and project *Lyari Kay Sab Rang Anokhay* on a public street just outside Kiran school. The public screening in Lyari was hosted by the children, and was attended by over 300 people from the neighborhood. This collaborative project was a part of and supported by CCE and VASL’s art in education program.

Made by students of Kiran School, Baghdadi campus. Student workshops were designed and led by artist Yaminay Chaudhri, with support from Vasl and CCE’s artists in education training. A collaboration between Yaminay Chaudhri of Tentative Collective, Kiran School, VASL artist Collective and Creative Partnerships, UK.

TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE created site specific, poetic and ephemeral moments in conversation with Karachi’s precarious urban space. Based in Karachi, Pakistan, the Tentative Collective was a gathering of artists, curators, teachers, architects and often, collaborators from completely different backgrounds including fishermen, housewives, students and domestic workers. Membership changed from project to project eventually resulting in the formation of a core group including: Hajra Haider, Fazal Rizvi and Yaminay Chaudhri. The collective operated from 2011 to 2017.

YAMINAY CHAUDHRI is an interdisciplinary artist and educator with a background in architecture. Her socially engaged practice is influenced by southern urban theory and the politics of low-res media. Yaminay co-founded the Tentative Collective with 50 unlikely collaborators at a guerilla protest about shrinking public space. *Lyari Kay Sab Rang Anokhay* emerged from a series of workshops taught by Yaminay at Kiran School.

## Ω KARAOKE & LISTENING STATION

We invite you to engage with your voice in the space and/or to listen to the sonic material we have selected to accompany the exhibition. We believe in popular music as a carrier of memories, resistant movements and messages that carry us and that we pass on across times and spaces.

## 07 GULNUR MUKAZHANOVA

A Bosaĝa (Threshold)

2023–24, textile painting, mixed media, Materials: hand made felt, fabrics, pins, 250 x 200

B “Untitled”#1

2023–24, mixed media, 250 x 200 cm, hand made felt, fabrics, pins

In these two exhibited pieces, we see Gulnur Mukhazanova’s recurring symbols of portals, presented through large-scale felt paintings collaged with other textile-related materials. The works invite viewers to step into other world(s), connecting the “here and now” with the realms of the subconscious and dreams.

Mukhazanova revisits a central material of her Kazakh ancestors: soft wool, which, through hard and repetitive ritualistic movements, transforms into an incredibly

resilient and essential tool for the everyday life of Kazakh nomadic culture. This material has traditionally been used to cover homes, clothe people. The wool's transformation has long been a process carried out by women across generations, embodies both cultural heritage and collective memory while being deeply entwined with childhood as a site of learning, bonding, and cultural transmission.

In our conversation with Gulnur, she emphasized the importance of not planning too far ahead in the process of creating these textiles. Instead, she works step by step, carefully listening to the material and following what it suggests and wants to become. This approach allows her to deeply engage with the essence of the materials, letting their natural qualities guide the creation of her works. By carefully opening these portals, she creates a space for the process and for herself, through which she receives guidance from her ancestors. In this way, she continuously tells both their story and her own – a story that is ever-evolving and perpetually becoming.

**G U L N U R M U K A Z H A N O V A** is an artist who uses the materials of traditional Kazakh handicrafts to explore the complexities of post-nomadic identities, cultural alienation, and the effects of globalisation. Born shortly before the collapse of the USSR, she was raised in the volatility of the newly formed Kazakhstan. She completed her studies at the Art Academy in Almaty and the Kunsthochschule in Berlin Weißensee. Working in felt, the textile recalls and connects to the origins, traditions and customs of her native country. The artist also works with mass-produced synthetic fabrics that imitate organic silks and were originally acquired from Kazakh bazars.

She creates vivid installations that are precariously secured with pins, raising questions of impermanence, fragility and uncertainty. Being based in Berlin for over 10 years has helped Mukazhanova understand and critically analyse not only the situation in her home country and the Central Asian region but also global issues that are common for everyone.

## 08 D U Y N G U Y E N

### *Distant Tongues*

#### Installation

##### A *Distant Tongues*

2024, mixed media, sculptures, kinetic sculptures (arduino, metal pipes, synthetic fabric, plywood, bamboo), various dimensions

##### B *Distant Tongues*

2024, sculptures, kinetic sculptures, pigment transfer on acrylic glass (acrylic, inkjet, plexiglass), 100 x 70 cm

##### C *Distant Tongues*

2024, Pigment transfer on leather drums (acrylic, inkjet, leather, plywood, bamboo), 25 cm diameter

The installation poses a profound question: how can we find common ground and understanding in a history marked by violence, divisiveness, and loss, while also embracing the desire to connect and make sense of the present through the lens of the past?

Duy Nguyen's installation delves into the complexities and dividedness of Vietnamese culture, reflecting the artist's own story of migration and detachment from his cultural roots. Through his practice, he is engaged in an ongoing search for understanding, piecing together an archive from his memories and the embodied traces within his own body.

At the heart of the installation is a dinner table, around which the viewer can experience the conversation of kinetic sculptures, dressed in traditional Vietnamese clothing. Their movements are off rhythm, creating a sense of disconnection and prompting the viewer to question whether the conversation is unfolding simultaneously or in parallel, like fragmented echoes of a shared but divided experience. Positioned slightly apart from the main installation is an additional kinetic figure wearing Duy's self-portrait. This figure represents the artist within this narrative: close enough to hear and understand the conversation, yet still searching for a place at the table.

Additionally, a drum bearing Duy's self-portrait invites the viewer to engage with the installation. It offers an open invitation to join the conversation of drums, becoming part of the rhythm and contributing to the dialogue. As the viewer strikes the drum, they encounter Duy's presence, prompting reflection on the artist's vulnerability and the personal resonance of his story.

Connected to this installation is Duy Nguyen's dinner table prayer, which you can read on the second-last page of the handout.

**D U Y N G U Y E N** is a Norwegian-Vietnamese artist working between Oslo and Berlin. He has an asymmetrical approach to his art practice, where his work seamlessly intertwines poetry, photography, video, and installation. Duy's work has been exhibited at venues such as Künstlerhaus Bethanien (DE), Kunsternes Hus (NO), Fotogalleriet (NO), Liquida Photofestival (IT), Leipzig International Art Programme (DE), Fotografiens Hus (NO), Haute Photographie (NL), and more. In 2024, Duy was awarded a two-year work grant for younger and newly established artists by Arts Council Norway.



## 09 JUMU IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTHUR SOHOIAN

### *Get a Grip*

2024, mural, water based acrylic , 420 cm x 730 cm  
With the support of Angel David Candeaux Abel

JUMU created together with Arthur Sohoian the mural *Get a Grip* that was born in a two days workshop where they reflected on their different migratory experiences and the value of everyday objects in the process of migration. JUMU proposed a pictorial space where Arthur contributed with different elements. For instance, the hug that gives birth and life to a flower, or amulets that are main pillars to remember and anchor to family and the land that had to be left behind, offering strength and wisdom for the journey ahead.

The process of making the mural began with the composition of a still life, where several objects representing memories of JUMU and Arthur were arranged on a table. These elements were interconnected into an altar and symbolise their past lives, now accompanying them in the present. These objects and amulets act as pillars in the building of a new home, and the altar represents their sacrality.

*Get a Grip* signifies regaining control in challenging situations. It reflects the necessity of managing emotions and staying strong, such as when someone feels stressed but must "pull themselves together." In this context, amulets represent a strategy for finding positivity and strength – helping individuals *get a grip* by holding onto positive energy for the path ahead.

### JUMU AKA JURENA MUÑOZ

L A G U N A S grew up in Hanover with Peruvian-Chilean roots and lives and works currently as a visual artist in Berlin. She immerses herself in the rich world of the Abya Yala culture and explores the deep connection between man and nature, which is imbued with a spirituality that runs like a common thread through her work and inspires her to create masks, canvases and murals. Using a variety of materials, Jurena creates a surreal world that invites the viewer to delve into the spiritual essence of nature and the connections to ancient cultures.

A R T H U R S O H O I A N tells us about himself: My name is Arthur, I am 18 years old, and I am an artist, creator, content maker, and dancer. Creativity, in all its forms, has always been a part of my life. I have never viewed creativity as just a hobby; to me, it has always been something where I can pour a piece of my soul. Two months ago, I arrived in Berlin and started with a blank slate. Berlin is a city full of creative minds, and here I am, at S A V V Y , not just painting, but stepping into an entirely new level. The future is bright, and I truly believe in it. So don't be afraid to try, leap beyond your limits, break through imaginary walls, and always move forward.

## 10 SARHUA BOARDS PAINTED BY CHILDREN AND THEIR ELDERS IN A WORKSHOP WITH VENUCA EVANAN

Our stories painted in the Sarhua boards style  
2024, Painted wooden boards

With this installation, we echo the spirit of this year's inaugural exhibition C U R E S : C H R O N I C P R O M I S E S , where artist Venuca Evanán first shared traditional Sarhua Tablas from the Ayacucho region of southern Peru. These tablas carry profound significance, narrating the lives of communities enduring ongoing violence and erasure. Traditionally crafted by men, Venuca reclaims this art form, consciously centering stories of women, queer individuals, and people with disabilities in her work.

We invited Venuca to return for this project to hold a two-day workshop specifically for the Latin American community that resides in Berlin. The workshop focused on the theoretical, practical, and ceremonial teaching of Sarhua boards. Each participant had the opportunity to draw and paint their own stories on a board, following the steps of this ancestral technique.

The workshop was open to children and young adolescents, who were welcome to bring their mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, and aunts, honouring the fact that knowledge-making and sharing happens intergenerationally. The tablas will return to their creators after the exhibition closes.

The tablas were painted by Nanda Gamarra, Patricia Hualpa Garcia, Luana Álvarez Hualpa, Lia Álvarez Hualpa, Johan Álvarez, Zenaida Hualpa García, Karen Michelsen Castañón, Marimar Behling, Rocío Vázquez, Brisa Sauerwein, Killari Sauerwein, Elisabeth Evanan Quispe, Wolfgang Hein, Ximena Ferrer Pizarro, Gema Gubianas Blanes, Juana Goceline Acevedo Hülsbusch, Gabriel Rossell Santillán

V E N U C A E V A N Á N is a visual artist, activist, educator, and autodidactic artist. She is a keeper of the artistic expressions and traditions of the Sarhua community, in the region of Ayacucho in southern Peru. She specialises in painting with natural colours and bird feathers. For more than twenty years, Evanán has continued with the development of the traditional painting techniques of the "Tablas de Sarhua", the painted boards, of Sarhua, an Ayacuchan artform declared to be part of Peru's National Cultural Heritage in 2018. She is the daughter and student of pioneer disseminators of this artistic tradition, Primitivo Evanán and Valeriana Vivanco. She combines her technique with experimentation on various surfaces and objects within the everyday life of women such as stone, wood, and textiles. Venuca is one of the first women to break the patriarchal systems for creating Sarhua tablas, which were typically masculine forms

of artistic production. She also expanded the themes of the tablas, to incorporate contemporary stories and struggles across eroticism, LGBTQ+ identities, sexual violence, feminist protest, and themes of everyday life that center the agency of migrant women.

As part of her interest in promoting Sarhua art, Venuca currently organises workshops in which she teaches participants how to create Tables of Sarhua in Peru and abroad. Venuca obtained the Kuna Expression award from ArtLima in 2019 and the Ipcna Contemporary Art award in 2020.

## 11 SINA SEIFEE

*Relaxing Horror Tales for Children and Adults*

2022, video installation, multimedia projection (large glass installation, two synchronous video projections), (27 min), music track (samples from Bedtime Songs For Toddlers, Buffy The Vampire Slayer, Prof. Faust-Troll and X: The Man with the X-Ray Eyes), narration by Eszter Nemethi, performance for camera by Ella De Gregoriis and Steven Jouwersma, production assistance by Liselore Vandeput

The idea of a blank state or starting afresh is one that continues to be craved for its possibilities and potentials. A space for experimentation and presumptive outcomes is almost fetishized. A child's mind being one such site of possibility continues to be shaped by tactile and technologically advanced modes of storytelling. Often aligning with nationalistic values, these modes are employed to inculcate the consciousness of the self and the other. In *Relaxing Horror Tales for Children and Adults*, Sina Seifee complicates the formation of perception of reality and truth in contrast to the provoked and make believe.

Sina Seifee: "The video installation is an intermediary apparatus that provides viewers with the immersive experience of a children's album of deconstructed fairy tales. Using the classic Pepper's Ghost illusion, the work mines the historical concept of childhood. The artist locates memory lapses, unstoppable rage, stuttering, and unconscious idioms, which are often associated with the incompleteness of children's comprehension, in their production of new, organized fictions for adults. Composed of disjointed performances, spoken word, and various audiovisual elements, the story-image narrative is knotted by many discontinuous lineages and characters of puppetry, folk literature, and demonology in Czech and Persian cultural milieus. *Relaxing Horror Tales* is a modest engineering of perception – emerging from an artistic experiment instead of psychoanalysis – that invests in the wonders of ambiguities, a pleasant non-dissolution of childhood in adulthood."

SINA SEIFEE is a visual artist and researcher based in Brussels. Structured around a research-intensive and transversal exploration of performative storytelling and image-making, Seifee's artistic practice

looks at how aesthetic knowledge is shaped. His work has been recognized for its commitment to the social dimensions of imagination at the intersection of technology and globalism with an emphasis on the heritage of zoology in West Asia. He has presented internationally at WIELS, Brussels (2020); SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin (2016); Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE (2018); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017); Temporary Gallery, Cologne (2019); Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen (2019); and Akademie der Künste der Welt, Cologne (2015).

## 12 LAURA FONG PROSPER

*In a Human Aquarium*

2011, single-channel-video, 2:58 min

In the video performance *In a Human Aquarium*, artist Laura Fong Prosper reimagines the captivating yet confining beauty of an aquarium, making herself the sole inhabitant within the glass/screen walls. By adopting the movements and gestures of various sea creatures, she reframes the viewer's perspective, bridging human and non-human experiences in captivity in an exercise of interspecies empathy and thus calls into question the ethics underlying our fascination with captive wildlife. These animations of bodies that move all the time, but cannot escape, evoke perhaps those border walls that form between childhood and adulthood, those caged identities that we want to escape from in our adolescence. How to live in a fishbowl? Laura Fong proposes a space of captivity, but also of hybridizations, a place of mutation, unfolding, repetitions, reinvention and change.

LAURA FONG PROSPER is a Panamanian artist based in Berlin, creating immersive, process-driven works that explore collective memory, eco-feminisms, retro-futurisms, and ancestral imaginaries. Working across video, analog film, new media, and, most recently, textiles, she brings together the body, territory, and decolonial narratives to build bridges between the past, present, and future. Her approach as a "recycler" of materials, archives, and electronic gear reshapes how we engage with history and technology.

Laura studied Film Editing at Cuba's International School of Film and TV (EICTV) and received an M.F.A. in New Media Art from Bauhaus University Weimar in Germany. She earned fellowships at Cologne's Kunsthochschule für Medien (KHM), Tongji University in Shanghai, and Berlin's Akademie der Künste.

Her work has been shown in Centre Pompidou (Paris), Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid), Akademie der Künste (Berlin), Museum of Modern Art (Rio de Janeiro), Americas Society, New York City, amongst many others. She's part of the permanent collections at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Panamá (MAC) and the Murzi & Morgan Collection of Latin American Contemporary Art.

13 IRENE FERNANDEZ ARCAS IN  
COLLABORATION WITH CHILDREN  
FROM GEFLÜCHTETEN UNTERKÜNFTE  
(ASYLUM CAMPS) FACILITATED BY  
WIM E.V.

*Our Home is Made of Lines and Laughter*

2024, painted textile installation, textile and paint,  
variable dimension

This installation explores the concept of home through collective art-making and storytelling between the artists and children in asylum seeker camps in Berlin. For many participants, living far from where they were born brought a sense of being a stranger and the feeling of “missing something.” Together, the group reflected on what they missed from home, what made them feel at home, and what they would bring to Germany if they could – whether it was smells, foods, people, or places. By identifying these elements, symbols, and metaphors, they began to imagine and create a shared vision of a collective home.

The workshops began with playful drawing exercises designed to loosen up and overcome the fear of making art, such as drawing with the non-dominant hand, drawing blind, or drawing collaboratively with another person. Participants then created simple comics exploring their personal experiences and stories about home, guided by prompts and storytelling techniques. These comics, made using a Japanese folding technique, formed small books that served as a “library” for the shared space called the collective home.

In the second workshop, the participants expanded on these ideas, gathering the important elements that had emerged in their conversations and drawings to serve as the foundation of the collective home. They created large-scale paintings on textiles, which acted as the walls of this shared space. By combining individual and collective creativity, the workshops offered a gentle and playful way to reflect on belonging, well-being, and the personal and cultural aspects of what it means to feel at home.

IRENE FERNÁNDEZ ARCAS is an interdisciplinary artist. She creates installations, combining drawings, paintings, audio, texts and performative rituals. Through her work, she explores new descriptions of spirituality and the healing potential of art. Her practice embraces experiments and ongoing research into domestic rituals, self-care, and the process of art making itself. They are an invitation into the present moment and the unfolding Now. She paints through movement, eroticism, intuition, humour and emotion. Her installations unfold as habitable spaces, built from colourful painted textiles, and objects which are often relics from the artist's prior ceremonies or projects. Collected over the years, they build connections with her own history and homeland. What materialises are metaphorical inner gardens that give room for activations, to explore connection and community. A dialogue and a laboratory in motion for exchange. Through collective self-care we transform and reshape.

Irene was born in Granada, Spain. She is based between Berlin and the Mediterranean context. She studied Media in Málaga and Fine Arts in Berlin. Her work has been shown in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Germany, and in Berlin; most recently at Venice Biennale, Kunstmuseum Bochum, NGBK, Galerie Wedding, Sammlung Haubrok, Kühlhaus Berlin, Blake and Vargas Gallery, The Institute of Endotic Research.

14 MIZI LEE

*also jetzt siehst du mich (now you see me)*

2024, installation, pearl curtain, steel, cotton thread,  
acrylic beads, glass beads, 180 x 175 cm

*Die Wiederentdeckung der Welt (Into the new world)*

2024, installation, pearl curtain, steel, cotton thread,  
acrylic beads, glass beads 200 x 200 cm

*Rediscovering the world*

2024, single-channel video, 04:15 min

*Mizi Lee As A Rising Horse*

2024, two 1-channel video, 1:00 min and 04:15 min

The beaded curtains by Mizi Lee hold cultural symbolism as decorative objects that maintain a functional operation of providing partial privacy in shared spaces in Korea and hold significance as relics of her childhood memories. However, in the creation of these works, Lee is drawing upon these curtains conceptually in reconciling imaginaries, traumas, and lived experiences of leading a diaspora life in foreign lands, where one is often made to feel invisible. Lee draws upon the strength of each bead used to create the curtain, where individually it may appear fragile and delicate but strung together in the form of a curtain holds weight, nimbleness and the elasticity of coming back to original form even when disrupted and intervened. *So now you see me* depicts a circle of friends on a meadow, vibrant and full of color, exuding a warmth and energy that glitters and extends outwards. It marks a presence and claims space in a bold and playful manner. This is an image of Lee's band members, Horizontalgene Transfer, a group that stands together bringing memories of diverse geographies and childhoods, together with a deep familiarity of leading migrant lives, even as second generation migrants.

Lee's methodology of employing humor and sarcasm to relay traumatic memories and experiences is impactful and refreshing. The light and playful nature of the work is attractive and the use of karaoke as a format makes them further interactive yet the darkness and the nuance hidden in between these beads or the sound of her voice do not go remiss. *Die Wiederentdeckung der Welt (Into the new world)* is a reference to how social norms and beliefs impact lives deeply. 1990 was the year of the white horse, which is also the year of Lee's birth, and its symbolism led to female infanticide. In Stuttgart she chanced upon the horse again as the city's mascot. These two horses, one from her childhood and

the other from her teens are reminiscent of rejections experienced in different contexts. Yet, by creating a self-portrait posing as the horse, Lee exercises a survival strategy as well as exerting her agency through humor and 45000 beads.

Mizi Lee shares with us: “The work bears the title of a classic K-pop song. This song takes on a feminist context when it was used in a demonstration against femicide in Korea in 2017. The lyrics refer abstractly to the relationship between mother and daughter: ‘Close your eyes and feel it, this moving heart/ My gaze towards you/ I chase after the faint light/ We’ll be together, no matter how long it takes/ My world, where I met you again’ (Into the new world, girl’s generation, 2007).”

M I Z I L E E uses all kinds of media and crosses the boundaries of all disciplines to create a unique event. Sometimes she finds a fake supermarket to print leaflets full of artworks, sometimes she screams in a punk band in Berlin’s Kulturbrauerei or in old railway carriages at Stuttgart’s Nordbahnhof station. She works in an interdisciplinary collective because she believes that artworks require more than one artist. In 2022, she founded Horizontaler Gentransfer and together they create a series of projects that lie at the interface of visual art, performance and theatre.

## 15 SAVVY . D O C

This section displays research and reading material that is an excerpt of the research bibliography of HISTORICAL CHILDREN : LULLABIES FROM WOUNDS TO WONDER . It also presents illustrative, reading and participatory material in different languages that is open for interaction, reading and enjoyment by children and families.

S A V V Y . D O C is SAVVY Contemporary’s library archive and documentation center. The radical archive aims to encourage and therefore to enable access to rare, unnoticed or ignored documents. Our shelves are home to a multitude of written texts spanning from critical theory to literature, from art magazines to political analysis, from exhibition catalogues to poetry collections. The S A V V Y . D O C archive is constantly growing in its diversity and complexity as it accompanies the research of all projects and exhibitions that we undertake. Being conscious of the responsibility of the traditional archives as an instrument of the state in order to perform that act of “chronophagy” which leads some pasts to be commemorated and some forgotten (Mbembe), we aim our radical archive to be a space where archivists, artists, researchers and objects actively interact in a performative process of archiving.

## 16 R O M A M O M A N O M A D I C L I B R A R Y – A C O L L A B O R A T I O N W I T H T H E E U R O P E A N R O M A I N S T I T U T E F O R A R T S A N D C U L T U R E ( E R I A C )

Display of a curated selection of books from the RomaMoMa Nomadic Library, centered on themes and stories from, for, and with children.

The RomaMoMA Nomadic Library was created in 2021 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the First World Romani Congress. It is dynamic and nomadic, engaging with local contexts wherever it travels. Comprising some 150 books on contemporary Roma literary, artistic and cultural heritage, the library’s growing collection showcases this rich Roma legacy, while critically interrogating the violence and oppression against the Roma in Europe. RomaMoMA Nomadic Library was first activated through Adjacent, the mobile knowledge device conceived for RomaMoMA by British Romani artist Daniel Baker: Adjacent is a table with a black and white barcode of *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*. As the artist explains: “The concept title refers not only to the parallel lines that form the code, but also symbolises the act of standing side by side with our collaborators in our fight for equality”.

ERIAC has created the library of mainly, but not exclusively English-language books focusing on Roma Art History and Roma Cultural History, which is intended as a space to preserve, collect and showcase contemporary Roma literary and artistic heritage. This is a “library on the road” that can be hosted by different institutions. This library is not to be understood as a classical library that exclusively collects and preserves books and knowledge in order to make them accessible to the public, but rather an open and dynamic library, which, taking its departure from a body of materials built by ERIAC expertise, will be further developed in the course of the exhibition/event/hosting period, together with the visitors and the institution’s team.

The library is a kind of “study room”, where everyone can come to read, discuss and comment on texts, and to produce new knowledge together. In line with emancipatory educational approaches, the RomaMoMA Library critically reflects the white, Western canon and expands it with postcolonial theoretical perspectives and voices from the Global South and diasporic communities. The mediation programme is a central component of the RomaMoMA Library. In addition to reading circles and consultation hours, workshops take place at the library, in which participants work together on an “alternative canon”. Visitors and participating artists/groups are invited to share books and literature lists.

R O M A M O M A is a joint initiative of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) and OFF-Biennale Budapest. RomaMoMA is a contemporary art



project initiating a forum for collaborative reflection on a future Roma Museum of Contemporary Art, with the involvement of local and international Roma and non-Roma artists, cultural experts, social scientists, and the civil sphere.

In the form of a contemporary art project involving stakeholder communities and exploiting the possibilities of collective thinking and discourse, as well as the critical and discursive potentials of modern art, it – “prefiguratively” – “creates” itself.

It is an imagined and natural space home to both Roma arts and artists. Rather than the realization of a specific museum concept, the project connects a range of programs (exhibitions, film screenings, performances, workshops, etc.), modelling nomadic, flexible institutional operation, which raises questions about the devices of contemporary art.

17 SUSANA PILAR DELAHANTE  
MATIENZO

*Apuntes para una Historia*

2021, 11 charcoal drawings on paper, 20 cm x 10 cm

With her charcoal drawings, Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo makes notes to a history that still needs to be written: the history of her family that is also the history of millions of women, men and children of the African continent who were ripped from their territories and forced with their bodies, sweat and blood to feed the capitalism we know today.

While Susana Pilar wonders who should have the property and access to the goods that were built with colonial blood, or when the descendants of the exploited and enslaved will be compensated, she sketches with short and firm lines, at times diffuse, clear, almost imperceptible, stories of migration, resilience, pain, violence, emptiness, rebellion. Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo not only rewrites the history that is not in textbooks or museums, not only claims visibility, justice and historical responsibility to the European metropolis but also poses a fundamental question: Who should be able to write or rewrite whose history?

*Historias Negras*

2022, installation, of black origami boats, 10 cm x 5 cm

Black origami boats are not fortuitous figures, but direct references to the crimes committed against the African ancestors of the artist Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo and millions of people who “were separated, divided, enslaved and sent against their own will through ‘the door of no return’ to the American continent and the Caribbean”.

But these seemingly innocent little paper boats also speak of another reality, later in time, but just as brutal. These paper boats are made with the feet of Susana Pilar,

in memory of all those whose hands were mutilated as punishment by the Belgian colonial power in the Congo. *Black Histories* narrates silenced pasts, interweaves common family memories and assembles past and present. It also speaks of a future that calls colonial states to account and dozens of little paper boats are there to keep us from forgetting.

SUSANA PILAR DELAHANTE

MATIENZO was born in Cuba in 1984. From 2011 to 2013, she did a Postgraduate course in New Media, Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG) with DAAD Scholarship, Germany. From 1998 until 2008 she studied in the Fine Arts Academy “San Alejandro” and the High Institute of Arts (ISA) in Havana, Cuba.

She has been artist in residency of Caribbean Linked VI 2021 (virtual edition), CAD+SR 2019-20 Research Fellowship in Italy and Kenya (2019-2022); as well as Guest Professor with the Peter and Irene Ludwig Grant at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary, 2020. Among her solo exhibitions we can mention *Achievement* in Secession, Vienna in Austria (2024), *Empatia*, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano in Italy (2024) and *Resilience*, Truck Contemporary, Calgary in Canada (2022).

Some of the group shows and international venues she had been part are *The True Size of Africa*, Unesco World Heritage Site Volklinger in Germany (2024), the Berlin Biennale, Germany (2022), 14th Dakar Biennale, Senegal (2022), 6th Lubumbashi Biennale, République Démocratique du Congo (2019); 13 Havana Biennale, Cuba (2019); *Resilience and Resistance in African Diaspora*, New Museum of African Civilizations, Dakar, Senegal (2018); 56th International Art Exhibition, Cuban Pavilion, Venice, Italy (2015); 1st Biennale of International Contemporary Art, Martinique (2013); *Prome encuentro Bienal Arte Contemporaneo di Caribe*, Aruba (2012); III Biennale Arts Actuels Réunion, Reunion island (2011) and the 7th Gwangju Biennale in South Korea (2008).

18 ADEL ABIDIN

*A Vision of the Future*

2017, 1-channel-video, 4k digital, stereo, 16:9, 6:20 min  
Thanks to Darat al Funun – The Khalid Shoman Foundation for facilitating the production of this artwork / Noura Khasawneh

The children standing with their eyes shut in the projection of the video work *A Vision of the Future* by Adel Abedin appear as an ephemeral reflection of the viewer, standing across and waiting simultaneously. The covered eyes raise questions as to whether this gesture is one of self-preservation, hope or being restrained. Restrained by force or by self from movement, thought and observation. Hope for the desired future, a joyful surprise that brings warmth and happiness or a rejection

to witness a reality that may not be bearable, is not bearable. These children standing across from the viewer stall the passerby into waiting together with them for an outcome that may come at any moment- yet the moment may stretch a lifetime. A waiting toll of which can be physically, emotionally, and psychologically felt through a moment, a life, and a generation, raising questions about the powers that impose these structures of waiting- waiting until it is not acceptable, and an alternate path must be paved. A simple yet deeply impactful gesture when made by these young bodies is an image that imprints itself on the mind, nagging and questioning, our vulnerabilities and limits- limits of endurance, reserves of hope and resolves for manifestations.

A D E L A B I D I N is a Helsinki-based artist renowned for his incisive exploration of history, identity, politics, and memory. Through irony and humor, he addresses social issues and cultural alienation, earning recognition in numerous exhibitions worldwide.

Born in Baghdad in 1973, Abidin holds a BFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad (2000) and an MFA in Time and Space Art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki (2007). His accolades include the prestigious Ithra Art Prize (2023) and the Finland Prize for Visual Arts (2015).

Abidin's works are featured in prominent collections, including the Kiasma Museum in Helsinki and the NGV in Melbourne. He has represented Finland at the Nordic Pavilion of the 52nd Venice Biennale and showcased his art at major biennales globally, including the Sharjah and Sydney Biennales.

His major solo exhibitions span institutions like MAC/VAL in Paris and Kiasma in Helsinki, and he has participated in group shows across the globe, from the New Museum in New York to the Louisiana Museum in Denmark.

#### 19 S A A D I A B A T O O L

*Untitled I, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 56 x 41 cm

*Untitled II, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 114 x 81 cm

*Untitled III, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 117 x 84 cm

*Untitled IV, series "Mapping Roots"*

2024, painting, mixed media on canvas, 124,5 x 87,6 cm

The multiple translucent layers of paint with photograph imprints in between and further textural layers of embroidery on some others in this series of paintings by Saadia Batool resemble a palimpsest of the mind. A record of memories, being, locality, kin, home, and all that has been left behind. This record keeps accumulating and the edges of these events

keep vanishing with each shift and each oppressive and violent gesture from the oppressors. It is carried from one generation to the next, across languages and times. These paintings are an ode by Saadia to the women of her community, her mother, aunts, grandmothers, sisters and daughters who continue to nurture and sustain the generation before and after, acknowledging and honoring the struggle and resilience with which each hardship and aggression is borne and the path paved forward for a safe and secure environment where each moment is not one of lurking dread. In mapping roots, Batool extends the perception of roots and their connection to land, for the marginalized communities that continue to move, displaced, hunted, and haunted carrying their roots and the soil that comes with it, rich with stories of survival spreading and tying new lands with them.

S A A D I A B A T O O L born in 1998, Quetta, Pakistan, lives and works between Quetta and Lahore. She graduated with a Distinction in Fine Arts from the National College of Art Lahore in 2022, majoring in Painting. Batool took summer residency at Gasworks, London in 2024. She was the awardee of Inception Grant 2024. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally including Inception Grant show at Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, India in 2024; The Story Underneath, 8B2 Gallery, Islamabad 2024; In the Realm of Madness, Gallery Full Circle, Karachi in 2023; Asli Contemporary, Numaish Gah Gallery, Lahore 2023; Recent at Tagheer Art Gallery, Lahore; Broadcast Volume 1, O Art Space, Lahore 2023; Fine China, Artescape Gallery, Islamabad 2023.

#### 20 A R C H I V A L D I S P L A Y " O T H E R C H I L D H O O D S : I N T E R N A T I O N A L M O V E M E N T O F C H I L D A N D Y O U T H W O R K E R S "

A ProNATs e. V. and The Concerned for Working Children

Selection of archival material of the movement of child and youth workers

1996–2024, press articles, manifestos, courtesy of ProNATs e.V, Berlin

Video Documentation and films courtesy of The Concerned for Working Children

*Time to Listen*

1996, documentation, 48 min

*Taking Destiny in their Hands*

2005, video documentation, 45 min

*Banned Aid (Thepeya Thootugalu)*

2015, documentation, 20 min

*Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail*

2016, animated docu-drama, 18 min

In the framework of this exhibition, SAVVY Contemporary with the support of ProNATs e.V. (Berlin) and The Concerned for Working Children (India), proposes a selection of archival materials with the aim of incorporating the voices, views and proposals of the movement of children and young workers from different territories in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and to echo their struggles and rebellions against discrimination and their search for a better world for more than 50 years.

This movement offers us other imaginaries and another understanding of what children are, while being far from being distanced from the roles historically associated with adults, they propose a participation in social and political life, fundamentally collective, in solidarity and in alliances with other people in similar social exclusion situations.

Copies of the declarations and manifestos of their world meetings, documents and videos exhibited in this archive have been provided by ProNATs e.V. in Berlin and The Concerned for Working Children, India, who, like many other organisations have supported the struggles and demands of this movement.

PRONATS is a non-profit organisation that promotes the rights of children, in particular working children, worldwide. They maintain contacts with the movements of working children and youth in Africa, Asia and Latin America, support them politically and carry out educational offers on the topics in Europe. They work under the slogan "Strengthen children's rights instead of demanding bans", employees of child rights organisations, trade unions, "Third World" solidarity groups, educational institutions and universities came together in November 1997 to form a Germany-wide project group which is committed to combating the exploitation of working children and to strengthening their position."

THE CONCERNED FOR WORKING CHILDREN is a not-for-profit secular, democratic development agency based in Bengaluru, India. Active since the late 1970s, they were one of the first organisations in India to focus on working children and their needs. They have since become widely recognised as a world leader in children's rights, particularly children's right to self determination.

They work in partnership with children and their communities; local governments; and national and international agencies to implement viable, comprehensive and appropriate solutions to address the various problems that children and their communities face and they are committed to empowering children and ensuring their democratic participation in all matters that affect them.

## \* \* MODULAR CHAIRS

Rafat Łazar and Willem van der Hoek  
With Zainab Marvi, Dorothea Kritikos, Manjahi Njoroge, Berta Galofré Pons, Paloma Torréns Muzás, Matthew Hansen, Annie Kern, Lena Cramer, and others participating in our wood workshop.

The concept behind these modular chair designs stems from a profound reflection on the challenges artisans and workers face in an era of mass industrialization. It was inspired and influenced by the poster of "Culture and Resistance Conference, Botswana, 1982", that was exhibited in the previous SAVVY exhibition LABO\* R. AN INVITATION TO ACTION... A BASIS FOR HOPE.

As an artisan, it can be difficult to stand up against the tide of large-scale industrial production, where furniture and textiles are often produced cheaply, consumed rapidly, and discarded just as quickly. This project that took shape as a workshop is a statement against this cycle of consumption. By using discarded and found materials, we reclaim and repurpose what would otherwise be wasted, creating a culture that values sustainability and craftsmanship. The act of re-appreciating these materials is not just an artistic endeavour but a cultural one, pushing against the disposable nature of modern consumer goods.

The framing of the chairs is found in patterns from nature – imagine slicing an orange in half and observing the intricate design within. This natural pattern creates the modular nature of the chair frames. The decision to make each chair frame connectable allows for various configurations, from complete circles to adaptable S-shapes, emphasising both flexibility and unity in design.

The choice of colours and textiles for the chair bottoms was a collaborative effort, shaped by the workshop participants. The idea was to encourage participants to bring in their own broken or found chairs and textiles, infusing personal stories and materials into the creation process. This collective improvisation added a rich layer of community and individual expression to the final pieces.

This project and the workshop was a collaborative endeavour between Rafat Łazar and Willem van der Hoek. The participants of the workshop were Zainab Marvi, Dorothea Kritikos, Manjahi Njoroge, Berta Galofré Pons, Paloma Torréns Muzás, Matthew Hansen, Annie Kern, Lena Cramer, among others.

\* \* \* S H A U N A K M A H B U B A N I  
W I T H S A V V Y . D O C

*Dis-visible Narratives: Non-western Cultural Production  
around HIV/AIDS*

2024, Research commissioned by S A V V Y

Contemporary

The installation was designed by Pablo Santacana  
López. The font used for questions was designed by  
Amélie Dumont.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is not a thing of the past. In  
2022, UNAIDS estimated 39 million people around the  
globe live with HIV. Although we have made enormous  
leaps in awareness and medical research since the peak  
of the epidemic in 1995, 1.3 million people became  
newly infected with HIV in 2022, and 630,000 died due  
to AIDS related-causes, a statistical snapshot of how  
much further we must go.

Since the early days of the epidemic artists living with  
the virus and artists who lost loved ones to it have  
been visualising its complexities. However, most of  
this cultural production has been and continues to  
be concentrated in the USA and Europe, even though  
a majority of new infections now occur outside  
these regions. Dis-visible Narratives – initiated as an  
intervention into S A V V Y .doc and guided by curator  
Shaunak Mahbubani – probes the reasons for this  
asymmetry, imagining models of archiving and display  
that centre the specific social dynamics of living with  
HIV in the Global South, towards creating an archive  
hospitable to published and unpublished narratives.

Building on Mahbubani's articulation of the wounded  
archive (2023), dis-visibility is proposed as a form  
of epistemological wounding caused primarily by  
structural stigma. The prefix "dis- locates its tactics  
within the realm of disablement, or the enactment of  
restrictions "by the political, economic and cultural  
norms of a society which takes little or no account  
of people who have impairments and thus excludes  
them from mainstream activity" (Mike Oliver, 1990).  
In the case of cultural production around HIV/AIDS in  
the Global South, this dis-visibility sits atop the wider  
effects of neo-colonial structures that advantage white  
creators and those located in the Global North. It is  
aggravated by social, material, and in some locations,  
legal discrimination against those who speak publicly  
about their positive HIV status, as well as increased  
costs of survival for PLHA without arts infrastructures  
that can support this, amongst other factors. Rooted  
in the shame attached to HIV via it's deplorable early  
labelling as GRID, as a condition caused by deviance  
and hedonism, compounded by the nascent nature of  
movements for queer equality across the South, dis-  
visability is often enacted through self-censorship,  
hindering the very creation of artwork and as well as its  
emergence into the public realm.

T R I A G E , the first of four research phases, seeks  
to understand and organise the impact of external  
factors in making artwork around delicate subjects  
public. Which questions of structure, of safety, of  
visibility and opacity must we ask ourselves – as  
researchers, archivists, curators – in the process  
of assembling and exhibiting a wounded archive?  
Alongside broader considerations, we also survey the  
conditions under which art around HIV/AIDS is made  
public, challenging us to create measures of agency,  
mutability, and reciprocity as part of making these  
dis-visible narratives cautiously visible. The project  
will grow iteratively across each exhibition chapter  
of S A V V Y 's new artistic programming, it began  
with C U R E S : C H R O N I C P R O M I S E S  
and, after L A B O \* R , will be followed by  
exhibitions on S O C I E T Y , and H I S T O R I C A L  
C H I L D R E N .

S H A U N A K M A H B U B A N I is a curator-  
writer based between Berlin and Mumbai. They explore  
possibilities of co-visioning futures grounded in the  
pursuit of non-duality, striving to hold complexity,  
fluidity, ambiguity, and mutability in investigating  
the boundary between the self and other. Their work  
focuses on practices that foreground personal and  
ancestral lived experiences, towards the resuscitation  
of wounded archives. They are currently working on  
*Wrapped in the Shadow of Freedom* (Prishtina, Aug  
2024). Recent projects include *The Albanian Conference*  
(initiated by Anna Ehrenstein) at the 4th Lagos Biennial  
(2024), *When the Moon was Nine Months Full* by Seema  
Kohli (Tao Mumbai, 2024), *Parag Tandel: Archipelagic  
Archivist* (TARQ Mumbai, 2023), *AUTOPOIESIS* (2022–  
ongoing, Mexico City, New Delhi, Berlin), *Party Office* at  
documenta fifteen (co-curated with Vidisha-Fadescha,  
Kassel 2022), *DANCE TRANS\* REVOLUTION* (Curated  
by After Party Collective, New York 2021), *Entre Sures*  
(Co-curated with Eli Moon, Mexico City, 2021), and  
*Saavdhaan: The Regimes of Truth* (New Delhi, 2018).  
Their art writing has appeared in *NO NIIN*, *Hyperallergic*,  
*Artforum*, *Critical Collective*, *Mezosfera*, *ifa Biennale  
stories*, and other platforms.





# WORKSHOPS

## CLOSED WORKSHOPS

07.12.2024 11:00–15:00

LEILA BOUKARIM  
AND ASAF LUZON

*Exploring the ways in which we tell our stories*

BOOK WORKSHOP with the kids from Orta Okul

In this workshop, Leila Boukarim and Asaf Luzon create a space for children to express their emotions through making. The focus is on letting them choose what they want to talk about – offering a hand and the tools they need to tell their story.

Together, they will make zines: small, handmade booklets where each child becomes the author of their own narrative. These zines can hold anything – a feeling, a memory, or an imagined world. Once finished, the zines will be scanned and multiplied, giving their stories the chance to travel beyond the room, to places and people who haven't heard them yet.

This is about sharing voices and expanding imaginations – one tiny book at a time.

LEILA BOUKARIM was born in Lebanon, travelled the world over the course of her life and now lives in Berlin. She has published several children's books, her stories are heavily influenced by her upbringing in the Middle East and raising two young boys. Besides writing, Leila likes to spend her time reading, hoarding books, embroidering and desperately trying to impress her cat.

ASAF LUZON was born in Jerusalem, has been based in Berlin-Neukölln for many years, and tells his life stories through cute illustrations of different animals and picture books. Vegan, dog papa, trying to advocate for children's and animal rights, freedom, and safety.

ORTA OKUL ("Middle School" in English) is an interdisciplinary, inclusive, and process-based learning initiative that emphasises collaboration at every stage of artistic and crafts-based production. It adopts a nomadic approach, offering a flexible structure for discussion, practice, and production. Guided by three principles – "art with community, not art for community," "participants before curriculum," and "maintenance over development" – Orta Okul engages diverse individuals and communities as makers, challenging traditional definitions of art and the artist.

Orta Okul seeks to create a space for those who do

not speak the dominant language, practise different religions, embody different cultural codes, span different age groups, and for those who are considered outsiders. Art and culture serve as tools for fostering this inclusive environment. By collaborating with existing organisations in the cultural and political fields and utilising their spaces, Orta Okul observes needs, listens, learns, and creates long-term impact through its expansive and adaptive approach.

18.01.2024, 11:00–14:00

VALENTINA KARGA

*CIRCLE #2.1; A Resting Infrastructure*

SOFT SCULPTURES & TEXTILE  
PAINTING WORKSHOP

with the families from Eltern von besonderen Kindern (EVBK)

In our productivity-driven culture, claiming "unproductive" time is a topic that is either neglected or a taboo. Everything goes very fast, and we better hurry to catch up. However, not everybody is privileged to follow this culture's fast pace. Especially when you are an immigrant and don't understand the language or the culture. Or when you are neurodivergent and need more time, care and support. Even more so when you are both.

Valentina Karga and members from EVBK (children and parents) work together to produce a soft infrastructure using their bodies to paint on textiles with earthen pigments. By doing so, they create empowering thoughts and memories to counterbalance the disabling culture of fast-paced productivity.

VALENTINA KARGA's work operates between art, design, architecture and research. It draws together elements of socially engaged practices and speculative experiments that question existing social and physical infrastructures within the realms of energy, economy, and sustainability. She was a fellow at the Berlin Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Science, University of the Arts Berlin, a Saari Fellow in Finland, and in residency at the NTU-CCA in Singapore and the Transmediale's Vilém Flusser Program in Berlin. Her work has been exhibited internationally. 2018-2024 Valentina Karga has been a professor at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HfbK).

## ELTERN VON BESONDEREN KINDERN (EVBK)

We can all grow together.

Our work is to create opportunities for migrant families with children with disabilities.

Through community support and information, we facilitate their journey towards integration in Germany.

We want to be a community that empowers and advocates for migrant families with children with disabilities and makes them agents of change. We are working for an inclusive future.

Our work is divided into three main areas:

### 1. Solidarity Support Network

Our vision includes a strong network where migrant families can find support and advice.

### 2. Empowerment through knowledge

We want to equip parents with relevant information and resources that will enable them to go through a smoother process of integration into German society. We believe that knowledge is the key to autonomy and empowerment.

### 3. Inclusion without barriers

We work continuously to break down the physical and social barriers that limit our families' full participation in society. We do this by promoting an inclusive and accepting environment.

## PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

11.01.2024, 11:00–14:00

DUDU KOUATE

*The Symphony of Abandoned Objects*

INSTRUMENT MAKING WORKSHOP

We warmly invite kids and young adults to the workshop "The Symphony of Abandoned Objects" with the musician and artist Dudù Kouate.

Exploring the musical potential hidden within abandoned objects is the goal of this workshop. Through the practice of making instruments with recycled materials we will transform discarded objects into unique musical instruments, opening the doors to new adventures and discoveries.

The aim of the workshop is to raise awareness of the importance of music as a universal language that brings together diverse cultures and welcomes everyone's contribution; foster collaboration among youth to achieve a common goal; stimulate creativity and environmental awareness through observation and intuition.

We will delve into the world of wild lutherie: Identification and separate collection of discarded materials, with a preference for those that produce sounds. We will dive into creative construction of unique musical instruments, research and experiment to obtain innovative sounds. We will also classify instruments based on their family.

DUDU KOUATE born in Dakar, Senegal, hails from a family of griots, inheriting a rich musical tradition. Since 1988, he has showcased his talent worldwide, mastering over 200 traditional African instruments. As a key member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago since 2017, he has recorded albums and graced prestigious stages as The Carnegie hall NY and many others around the globe. Based in Berlin after three decades in Italy, he conducts educational workshops internationally and collaborates with cultural institutions. His music, blending Afro free jazz with diverse influences, notably demonstrated in his acclaimed album *Africation*, reflects his modern reinterpretation of griot traditions, while his versatility extends to cinema, theater, performance and poetry projects.

25.01.2025 12:00–15:00

MIZI LEE, Y-THANH VÕ,

JULIUS NÄGELE

*While Our Parents Worked for Wages*

KINETIC MECHA-SCULPTURES

WORKSHOP

The artist trio Mizi Lee, Y-Thanh Vo and Julius Nägele invite children to recapitulate the cultural genre of mecha in the art context and do a workshop by making these mecha. They will build mechas out of old cardboard boxes, reminiscent of childhood artists with Japanese anime that the audience can actually climb on and control. Kinetic artist Julius Nägele will contribute a few kinetic movements to these mechas. We would like to share our joy and enthusiasm from our childhood with people who are either also enthusiastic about it or have not yet had any points of contact with it.

“The cyborg does not dream of community on the model of the organic family, this time without the oedipal project. The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust.”

– Donna Haraway, 1991. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”

In the small pause of all these wars in Southeast Asia– not only the Second and Cold Wars, but also the Korean War and the Vietnam War – the aesthetics of the subculture in South Korea was characterized by cyberpunk and the turn of the century. The Baby

Boomer generation, who were supposed to rebuild the country, had to work without breaks and weekends, their children sat in front of the television instead of going for walks in nature with their parents. Sailor Moon, Cowboy Bebop, Gundam or Neon Genesis Evangelion were on the television. The children knelt down to watch the heroes transform, for example with Sailor make-up or by enlarging Gundam to save the world. These metamorphoses were then always accompanied by very impressive orchestral music. For the artist Mizi Lee, this was Don Giovanni or Fidelio and its culture. For her, this means culture and not subculture, as it is just as significant as the Eurocentric canonized high culture. While our parents were working, children were able to consume culture and keep themselves busy in this cheap way. That's how the idea for the theme came about: we want to preserve our identity despite our anger and frustration about classism or elitism. This is how we celebrate what we loved back then. In conversations, Mizi and Y-Thanh realized that although they grew up on two different continents, they spent a very similar childhood, as both of their families worked in the catering industry and they put these observations into a social and critical context.

The anime produced in Japan between the 1970s and 1990s strongly addressed the trauma of the post-war period from the perspective of the perpetrators. Shinji from Neon Genesis Evangelion, seemingly the only young man who can save the world – like Neo in Matrix – refuses to get on the robot to kill people and eventually decides to give up the fight. The final episode of Neon Genesis Evangelion is known for its abstractness, which was not common for children's animation at the time. The audience is invited to enter his soul, and the anime uses alternating abstract images to show his confusion as the hero he does not want to be. Long before Donna Haraway wrote A Cyborg Manifesto and proposed the cyborg as a border crosser between man and machine, the synchronicity between man and robot was already being addressed in so-called cyberpunk manga and anime in the 1950s. Astro Boy Atom (1952–1968) by Tezuka Osamu was intended to replace the developer's son and was discarded by him because he did not grow like human boys. A common staging of science fiction manga is also that the pilot is injured when the robot is damaged where it was attacked, unlike Iron Man or Batman – the robots are not simply armor resting on the body, but are an extension of the vulnerable body. The bond between the pilot and the machine is therefore very important. This concept reached its climax in the resolution of the mystery behind the battle robots in the anime Neon Genesis Evangelion – namely, the robots were created from the womb of the pilot's own mother. Mindless, cold machines suddenly become the warm womb of the mother and one feels blessed behind the back of the strong, large machines. Mecha is the name of the genre of an East Asian subculture, derived from anime culture and cyberpunk films, in which large robots are depicted as humanoid figures.

M I Z I L E E uses all kinds of media and crosses the boundaries of all disciplines to create a unique event. Sometimes she finds a fake supermarket to print brochures full of artworks, sometimes she screams in a punk band in Berlin's Kulturbrauerei or in an old train at Stuttgart's Nordbahnhof. She works in an interdisciplinary collective because she believes that artworks require more than just one artist. In 2022, Lee founded the punk band Horizontaler Gentransfer (HGT), with which she performs projects that lie at the interface of visual art, performance and theater.

Y - T H A N H V Õ has been studying communication design with Patrick Thomas at ABK Stuttgart since 2017. She has produced print design and social media design for Komma Esslingen, Merlin Stuttgart and Container't, among others. She works across different fields – occasionally DJing at music festivals such as New Normal, collaborating with other artists or giving workshops for children. Since 2021, she has been part of the student initiative cute und artsy, a group at the art academy that deals with issues of various forms of discrimination.

J U L I U S N Ä G E L E works with various media, including kinetics and printmaking. His prints can currently be seen in the exhibition Stand Jetzt by winners of the Walter Stöhrer Prize for Graphics. The walk-in automatic instrument "T.O" was presented after two and a half years of construction in the Gäubahnatelier G2 of the Wagenhalle Stuttgart.



# CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR YOUNG FRIENDS

Often, the manifestation of dreams and aspirations takes one or more generations to be fulfilled, especially when they revolve around empathetic, inclusive, equitable and humane societies. However, as we continue to strive for their fulfilment over time these dreams tend to alter with time, observations, situations, and the additional aspirations of the generation carrying them. As cultural practitioners, when we respond to our present urgencies, while dreaming and sowing seeds for the futures we desire, how do we take into consideration the needs and wishes of the young people who will most likely experience these futures? What do we understand about their experience of the microaggressions and violence that they witness around them or encounter first hand? How can we keep instep and walk forward together in shaping and preparing for what awaits us in the short and long run? Hence, we shift our lens here, to deviate from assumptions and predictions but engage in conversation with children and teens from diverse backgrounds to learn more about their perceptions and how they navigate their worlds, the micro- and macrocosms that they inhabit. Following are some excerpts of conversations transcribed and translated, shared with the consent of the children and their parents.

## CONVERSATION WITH MIR, 11 YEARS OLD

S A V V Y : How do you feel when someone calls you a child? What comes to your mind when we say childhood?

M : I would agree. It means that I am young and under 13. Yeah, I don't have much to say about being a child. Being a child is a very broad thing.

S A V V Y : It is, right? But it also kind of exists contrary to being an adult. So, what do you think is the difference between the two?

M : Children have imagination. Children are way more observant. They have way more rights in this country. There's not much to say.

S A V V Y : When you go to Pakistan or when you go to India, do you think children experience a different childhood there?

M : Yeah.

S A V V Y : In what way? What are your observations?  
M : It's a very extreme way. Like, here, most children

grow up middle class. And their whole lives are middle class. But in South Asia and stuff, it's more extreme. So either you're middle class Pakistani, which is high class, or you're low class Pakistani.

S A V V Y : And what kind of differences do you see in that?

M : I don't know. It changes the way we perceive the world. So, for example, if you live in poverty, then you learn not to take things for granted. And if you live rich, you don't learn much.

S A V V Y : Is there one thing from Pakistan and one thing from India that you would like to have here in Berlin? That you wish you could have here?

M : In general? Or through my childhood? Like, while growing up or currently, like this second?

S A V V Y : Are they different?

M : Extremely.

S A V V Y : I would like to know both.

M : While growing up... Well, I still do. One is the weather there.

S A V V Y : The tropical weather?

M : Yeah! And now, I want the ocean. Ocean from Karachi. The humidity.

S A V V Y : What do you like about it?

M : It gives me a homey feel.

S A V V Y : That is not a Berlin homey? Is it a Kolkatta homey?

M : No.

S A V V Y : So it's specifically a Karachi homey?

M : Yeah.

S A V V Y : And what about Kolkatta?

M : The Puja festival. And the community.

S A V V Y : What do you enjoy about the community?

M : It's a very close community. Mainly friends. I have no cousins on my father's side. But I have twice the number of cousins on my mother's.

S A V V Y : You are multilingual, you know English, German, Urdu, Hindi, and Bangla.

M : Yeah.

S A V V Y : Which one do you feel most comfortable in??

M : English.

S A V V Y : And do you think what you experience from these other places, are you able to translate it in English?

M : Yeah, because they mainly happen in English.

S A V V Y : Is there anything that you feel is a bit difficult to translate?

M : Zainab market.

S A V V Y : What about it do you feel you can't translate?

M : Everything! The clothes. The entire environment. They're not known to European styles, so they cannot be dressed in European styles.

S A V V Y : What's your favourite thing from each of these three places?

M : Food for all of them, all subcontinental foods.

S A V V Y : Okay, other than that?

M : So here (in Berlin), city vibes. In Calcutta, it is community. And Karachi. Everything else. Family.

S A V V Y : Okay, can you share a bit more about each of them?

M : Diaspora

S A V V Y : What about it?

M : The Diaspora here in Berlin, communities.

S A V V Y : Which communities do you connect with, apart from the South Asian?

M : Senegalese, Lebanese, Moroccan, I am just naming diasporas I know. Korean, Tanzanian. Chinese, Iranian. South African, Taiwanese, Mexican, Yemeni and Peruvian.

S A V V Y : Are these people in your school?

M : No, just friends of mine.

S A V V Y : Where did you meet them?

M : Subko. So, I met about five people at Subko, and then through those people, I met tons of people. A whole new community.

S A V V Y : What about Karachi?

M : Food. Food and family.

S A V V Y : What about family?

M : I don't know, it's like a family meeting spot.

S A V V Y : And what about Kolkatta? How does community work there?

M : Everybody is very close and very intimate.

S A V V Y : And then things here are quite different. In your mind, how do you make sense of them?

M : I was born in Germany, so it makes it normal for me.

S A V V Y : How do you think it is for kids who move here from elsewhere?

M : It's hard growing up in a country which you don't know.

#### C O N V E R S A T I O N   W I T H   H A N N A , 1 7   Y E A R S   O L D

S A V V Y : Did you see our Historical Children Exhibition proposal on the SAVVY Contemporary website, what can you tell us about this?

H A N N A : The general description of the exhibition gives a very good picture, not so much of what to expect there, as works or what you're going to be exhibiting, but more as a theme in general. I like that because it is a bit intriguing, but it captures a lot of... I mean, it captures my interest. That is to say that it is going to be a view of young people and children after decolonization. And I like the subject of colonialism and children, it is a subject that has been discussed a lot in political spaces among adults, but children also carry colonial ideas, with colonial pasts and I like the relationship that is made there, between youth, the future, so to speak, and the decolonization of mentalities, art and all that.

S A V V Y : What does the expression "historical children" suggest to you?

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<sup>1</sup> The cultural space Subkontinent.



H A N N A : “Historical Children” when I hear this, the first thing I thought of was children who were important or special to human history, like Anne Frank or someone like her but after having read what you put on the website of the exhibition as such, I think a little more about children who carry stories, like they carry history of their home country, that maybe they have Migrationshintergrund, that they moved and that they carry not only their own history but the history of their ancestors, that maybe it was a history where there was slavery, or stories where there was colonialism for example, so that's what I would think of for example, when I hear “historical children – children carrying stories.

S A V V Y : What is childhood for you and what is puberty for you?

H A N N A : For me childhood, the truth is that I have great happiness, like the great freedom of being able to say that for me my childhood was being free, it was dreaming a lot, it was... I don't know, it was not having to worry about almost anything (laughter). It was a little bit like being a leaf in the wind. I had a very nice childhood and for me it was to dream, to laugh, for my childhood it meant that, to be free, to dream, to laugh. Doing anything and not being judged because children are free, they are free spirits, that's what I think of when I think of childhood and when I think of puberty, for me puberty is definitely changes, changes for the better, changes for the worse sometimes. And it's growing as people, having maybe new dreams, new goals, like having more ambitions, in the future having more a little bit more... like a perspective for the future I would say, for me that's puberty.

Like I'm going through puberty now and I notice that every day I'm growing as a person and at the beginning puberty is super hard, because a lot of things happen, like you don't understand why they are happening, but as time goes by you are like more, yes, at peace with the person you are becoming and it's easier to accept those changes.

S A V V Y : If you were given the opportunity to do an exhibition on children, what would you present?

Hanna: If I had to do an exhibition about children, I would definitely love to be able to reflect the freedom, the happiness of some children and compare it with the suffering of many children in this world who are suffering from hunger, who are at war. I would like to show the polarity of what the world is, the polarity of how children live in this world. Yes, that's what I would like to represent in a hypothetical exhibition.

I hope that was heard well and if you need to ask any other questions... or if I wasn't heard well, let me know and I hope I helped you a little bit.

C O N V E R S A T I O N W I T H C A T A L I N A ,  
2 0 Y E A R S O L D

S A V V Y : What does Historical Children mean to you? What's the first thing that comes to your mind?

C A T A : Well, that it's going to deal with the issue of children or the issue of giving voice, perhaps, to young people and children. And the experiences and stories of children from the past.

S A V V Y : What was childhood for you?

C A T A : A form of freedom because there's still no strong consciousness or responsibility at that age, I feel. And, yes, I think one form of freedom is still being free from all the laws and everything.

S A V V Y : When you talk about freedom, is that what you would wish for children or what is experienced as a child?

C A T A : Well, yes, from my perspective it's a privilege, and yes that's also what I would wish for all children.

S A V V Y : What do you remember most from your childhood?

C A T A : Well, all the relationships with friends and things we have done together. All the experiences.

S A V V Y : Is there a specific image that comes to mind?

C A T A : Yes, maybe like playing together or something. Something simple like that, I think.

S A V V Y : And as a young person now? What is this phase for you?

What does it mean to you, how had you imagined it?

C A T A : I imagined it would be easier, but there are a lot of changes.

S A V V Y : Do all the young women you interact with, perceive it in the same way or are there differences, depending on where they come from?

C A T A : Yes, I can see this too, I think. Well, like you said, it varies as well, and can be difficult. Sometimes it's difficult to see how time goes by so fast. And I think that's also something that I saw in a lot of kids.

S A V V Y : What would you wish for as a young person? Is there something that you would want to be different? What would it be?

C A T A : Yes, I wish a lot of things. I think everyone wants to be different and have the same rights. For young people and children to have the same opportunities everywhere.,If I say that I had a childhood where I felt free it's not like that for everyone. Yes, maybe that would be my wish.



S A V V Y : As a child and young person, adults as well, we move in different spaces, don't we? There's home, there's work, there's the circle of friends, there's school. What are the spaces that make you feel the best, or where do you like to be the most and where do you like to be the least?

C A T A : I think the spaces I like best is with friends and family. Because I don't feel so controlled. Well, I'm out of school, but I think that in school I didn't feel very good or I had difficulty to exist there.

S A V V Y : Because it was too much pressure?

C A T A : Well, yes, pressure... the way of teaching and everything, I don't know, it didn't work for me very well. And that's why I didn't like it.

(...)

S A V V Y : If you were given the opportunity to do an exhibition on children and youth, what would you put in it? I mean, what would be the things that would go into the exhibit, for example, that would be important for you to share?

C A T A : Maybe projects like the one you shared about the movement of working children and young adults. And then other media as well, like the photos that you shared, many different kinds of works that show maybe different perspectives, experiences and different opinions as well that has the child or the young person as a subject.

S A V V Y : What is an important topic for young people currently? Are there issues, concerns, or perspectives that young people right now are talking about but adults aren't even aware of?

C A T A : Well, I would say climate change. Yes, that, I think, is the most important thing now for the younger generation, because we're going to live on this planet. I think that's the first thing that comes to mind.

S A V V Y : And from a more personal point of view, what is impacting the youth that is not talked about much publicly but is discussed within friends circles.

For example, when I was a child, we spoke a lot about schools and careers, what each one of us could and could not do. I come from a place in Cuba, where the collective was very important, there wasn't much space to think about the individual?

C A T A : Yes, my friends, the ones who already left school, we also thought a lot about the school system here in Germany specifically. And as you said, it's a lot of Leistungsdruck.

I think it's like the opposite of what you experienced, that it's not all in the collective, but it's more ...you have

to individually be very successful and know what you want to do. The issue is that maybe you have to have different ways of learning, and also that Leistungsdruck would have to change something about that because it's not very good.

I do know a lot of people who have been affected by that.

C O N V E R S A T I O N W I T H L U C I A ,  
7 Y E A R S O L D , M A R I E , 5 Y E A R S O L D ,  
A N D M I O , 2 Y E A R S O L D

S A V V Y : Okay, we are starting – exciting! So Lucia, maybe we'll start with you.

L U C I A : I'm seven years old, and my name is Lucia.

S A V V Y : Yes... And Marie?

M A R I E : I'm five years old, and my name is Marie.

S A V V Y : And Mio, would you like to go too?

M I O : Yes.

S A V V Y : What's your name?

M I O : Umm, Mio.

S A V V Y : And how old are you? You're two years old, right?

M I O : Yes.

S A V V Y : Great. So, my first question is: What do you think, or what comes to mind, when you think about childhood? What does your childhood mean to you? For example, what does Marie's childhood mean, or other childhoods? You can answer however you'd like.

L U C I A : I think my childhood is very colourful, and yes, I play a lot, even when I'm at school. You do learn in school, but I still play a lot during my childhood.

S A V V Y : Yes, and Marie, what do you think? What does your childhood mean to you? What's the difference between me and Lucia, for example?

M A R I E : Lucia has more colours.

S A V V Y : More colours? I like that answer! Okay. Maybe you mean that when people grow up, they change a little?

M A R I E : Yes.

S A V V Y : And why do you think adults wear fewer colours?

M A R I E : Hmm... Because they're adults.

S A V V Y : Okay, but why am I an adult? Because of my age?

M A R I E : You're an adult because you're an adult.

L U C I A : I think adults usually wear matching clothes and don't play outside as much.

S A V V Y : And Marie, do you want to say anything else?

M A R I E : I don't know what to say.

S A V V Y : There's no "have to" here. You can say whatever you want.

M A R I E : But I don't know what to say.

S A V V Y : Mio, do you have an opinion?

M I O : Yes.

S A V V Y : Are you a child?

M I O : No.

L U C I A : Are you an animal?

M I O : No.

S A V V Y : Okay. I can tell you a bit about myself. I'm working on a project in an art gallery. We do lots of different things with art and artists. We work with children who, for example, don't have adults in their lives, come from other countries, or don't have papers. We do workshops and exhibitions together. That's why I'm interested in what childhood means to you.

M A R I E : Cake means childhood.

S A V V Y : Okay! Next question: What does home mean to you?

L U C I A : Home is always warm and cosy. You get delicious food and also have toys.

S A V V Y : And what does an ideal day at home look like?

L U C I A : An ideal day? I think it's nice when friends are there, and we play together. Sometimes we bake, too – that's great as well.

S A V V Y : So something with friends, mom, and dad?

L U C I A : Yes.

S A V V Y : What things or people are part of your home?

L U C I A : My siblings, my parents, and some of my stuffed animals.

S A V V Y : Stuffed animals? Tell me more about them.

L U C I A : I have lots of stuffed animals. They're always in my bed. Sometimes I even take some to school.

S A V V Y : Oh, really? I didn't know that! Is there anything you'd like to change about your home?

L U C I A : Not really.

M I O : Pizza!

S A V V Y : Pizza? Okay!

S A V V Y : What does family mean to you?

L U C I A : Family is a bit like my stuffed animals – they're also a little family to me. In a family, we're often together. We live in a small family, not a big family with aunts, uncles, grandparents, but there are five of us – and that's nice as a small family.

S A V V Y : And what is home to you? Is it a place or a feeling? Do you think home could be anywhere in the world?

L U C I A : I could feel at home anywhere in the world. But I think, in a home, you always have to be two or three people.

S A V V Y : Is there something you'd like to do but can't yet?

L U C I A : I'm practicing cartwheels all the time, but I never get them quite right.

S A V V Y : And what do you think – is it good to be an adult?

L U C I A : When you're an adult, you can make your own decisions and decide when to go to bed.

M A R I E : But you wear fewer colours...

L U C I A : Yes, and you're in the office more and don't play outside as much.

S A V V Y : What would you take with you if you had to leave your home?

L U C I A : I'd definitely take my bed with me.

S A V V Y : Your bed? Okay, let's talk about a backpack.

L U C I A : Ah, okay, a backpack? I'd definitely put food and drinks in it. Then maybe some pens and paper, a book to read, and stuffed animals.

S A V V Y : Would you also take your family or your friends?

L U C I A : Yes, I'd take them too... and preferably my school as well.

S A V V Y : The whole school building? Or just the people from school?

L U C I A : The school building and the teachers.

S A V V Y : That's very sweet. Thank you so much!

## CONVERSATION WITH MATILDA , 7 YEARS

S A V V Y : Matilda, how old are you?

M : 7, er 8 ... No, not yet 7!

S A V V Y : So you're already at school? How are things at school?

M : Good, only one friend is bothering me ...

S A V V Y : What is friendship for you?

M : I would say they don't leave the others alone, or say such things ....

S A V V Y : And where else is it important not to be left alone? Can you think of any other people?

M : Whenever you work in pairs, I am also ... always have to sit with someone other than my friends. Because they always want to work without me, my friends ... But now I think it's better, now there are six of us, so we can split it up better. Two, two, and two.

S A V V Y : Tell me, what is family for you?

M : Family is when I have a mum who hasn't adopted me and when I was born to my mum.

S A V V Y : And do you think that's the case for all families?

M : I think not

S A V V Y : Do other people have other families? Do you think so?

M : Hmm

S A V V Y : What might they see as a family?

M : So to say that very few of them have parents who might have adopted them. For the poor ones, a real family for now!

S A V V Y : How important is family?

M : Very!

S A V V Y : And is it very important for everyone?

M : Mhh

S A V V Y : There are also children who come to another country, sometimes their families come with them and sometimes not. Do you think it's difficult to arrive somewhere else? What are the biggest challenges?

M : First of all, when you're almost grown up, that you get a job first, or that you get a house.

S A V V Y : And for the children?

M : The children, it's important that someone looks after them

S A V V Y : Where do you think the difference is between children and adults?

M : Adults already know more and are also bigger. They are also allowed to do more things. Driving a car, for example. Or do martial arts, which are still quite dangerous for children.

S A V V Y : Which one, for example?

M : I don't know any!

S A V V Y : We've talked about family. Is the home also important?

M : Mhh, the whole family on the street is difficult to look after. Or if you have a baby and then you're on the street, you can't feed it well

S A V V Y : And what else is part of a home?

M : You can hide from people in there. Or you can sleep alone in peace.

S A V V Y : Retreat? That's important, isn't it?

M : Mh...

S A V V Y : How would you like the home to be for all the children?

M : Maybe everyone has a small room or something. Not like before, when everyone had to squeeze into one room. A quiet room for the parents, a kitchen and a toilet ... the bathroom... And a cosy room where you can retreat and eat.

S A V V Y : That's nice.

# HISTORICAL CHILDREN: LULLABIES FROM WOUNDS TO WONDER

CONCEPT BY HAJRA HAIDER  
KARRAR, DANIELLIS HERNANDEZ  
CALDERON, MANUELA GARCIA  
ALDANA, LILI SOMOGYI

is respected and received as an independent entity that contributes to the interdependent ecosystems of community as she develops and is nurtured through the multiple cognitive phases of life.

## I

The arrival of a new life into the world is a moment of promise and hope for an alternative future. It is coupled with aspirations, and dreams of and for childhoods of the parents and the community at large. But what is childhood? It is a literary fiction, a trope which is an aspirational space of fluid possibilities and potential futures determined by the perimeters of adulthood. The modern and universalized Eurocentric definition of childhood idealizes and romanticizes this construct presenting a set perception of behaviors and conditions that often treat children as subjects not taking into consideration the plural understandings of this concept and how it varies across cultures. While it is advocated as an equal globalized and homogenous childhood, it dismisses autonomy, language, and culture while reinforcing binaries that divide across privilege to sustain this idealized vision. The privilege being determined by race, class, and geographical locality. This Eurocentric mononarrative is upheld by ignoring the contradictions of privilege in a local setting and highlights an image of childhoods in prior colonies as ravaged by disease, impoverishment, and war, categorizing them as powerless subjects devoid of any identity beyond their destitution.<sup>1</sup> These images are also devoid of the acknowledgement or any accountability of global and systemic oppressions and contrived warfare behind human and material resource extractivism that continues to sustain capitalist infrastructures.

It is crucial to challenge and expand such directional colonialist epistemes by expanding and acknowledging the pluriversity of childhoods across cultural milieus, geographies and temporalities. In many of these instances the concept of childhood remains fluid, and a child is not defined as a binary opposite of an adult but in relation to them and other human and nonhuman members of the community. The perception of age and being also shifts according to the multiple positions a child traverses within the community, whether as a deity or a seer or an equal participant in sustaining the community with labor and care. Contrary to a passive existence based on dependency, a child in these realms

## II

I hit the streets when I was seven. It was the middle of the Depression and I learned how to sing out of hard experience. To be black was to confront, and to be forced to alter, a condition forged in history.<sup>2</sup>

— James Baldwin

How does the young mind of a seven-year-old read the world around him? This process of cognition is supported by interactions, mobilities, and encounters with human and nature, visual and material that evoke sensory responses and an emergence of affective affiliations creating a sense of time and space, as well as a spectrum of emotions.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously, through the observations made in the immediate vicinity of people in close proximity- their movements and reactions within the personal space of home or outside in the social realm that lead to perceptions of social, political, racial, and economic contradictions, and that determines his own movement in the world. However, this may not be a disillusioned perspective. Terry Eagleton explains it as *wondering estrangement* a stage when they have not yet fully internalized the routine social norms which enables them to pose fundamental questions that often challenge why things cannot be done differently.<sup>4</sup> The uninhibited reaction to act against oppressive elements of society that are tied to these contradictions define Paulo Freire's concept of *conscientização*, where the dimension of reflection (contradictions) and action (questioning and acting against them) conjoin a radical word that has the potential of transforming reality. This transformation is crucial for the continued humanization of people.<sup>5</sup> However, if this *wondering estrangement* is overcome by an acceptance of existing within these oppressive

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1 Oduor Obura, *Decolonising Childhoods in Eastern Africa: Literary and Cultural Representations*, Routledge, 2022, 176.  
2 James Baldwin, *Dark Days*, Esquire, 1980.  
3 Jamal J. Elias, *Alef is for Allah, Childhood, Emotion and Visual Culture in Islamic Societies*, University of California Press, 2018, 14.  
4 Terry Eagleton quoted in bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as Practice of Freedom*, Routledge, 1994, 59.  
5 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Classics, 2017, 60.

contradictions while being aware of them, it results in verbalism- a recognition of circumstances without any action against it, leading to disillusionment, fear, and self-censorship.

### III

There was not one amongst us who looked forward to being born. We disliked the rigours of existence, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinths of love, the ignorance of parents, the fact of dying, and the amazing indifference of the Living in the midst of the simple beauties of the universe.<sup>6</sup>

– Ben Okri

On March 1, 1990, child domestic workers in Senegal took to the streets to protest and demand better working conditions. Four years later they created a common program of demands formulated in 12 rights. This was the beginning of the working children and youth movement in Africa, who this year celebrate their 30th anniversary, and became one of the symbols of political and social protagonism of organized working children around the world, that started in 1976 Peru, with the Movement of Adolescent and Working Children Sons of Christian Workers (Movimiento de Adolescentes y Niños Trabajadores Hijos de Obreros Cristianos (MANTHOC).

The topic of working children is a controversial issue with many dimensions and complexities with heavy opposition world over but largely from international organizations, such as the International Labor Organization. The taboo of child labor in developed Western countries, which extends to the mechanisms of international power, stems from a prosperity achieved from the exploitation of former colonies and formally independent states that preceded them. However, the wealth that some Western countries now enjoy comes from the capitalist accumulation achieved through the slave trade and forced underpaid labor of girls, boys, men and women in plantations, manufacturing and mining in the colonized regions. (...) *While the European Enlightenment produced the image of the innocent, immature child to be educated, the emerging capitalism ruthlessly wore out the "native" children of the poor in manufactories, mills and mines and, in far greater numbers, the "foreign" children in the plantations and mines of the distant colonies.*<sup>7</sup> It is the same colonial ideology and capitalist system that perpetuates the conditions of inequality, exclusion, and brutal exploitation reinforcing hierarchies between the North and South. It arrogantly promotes a model of childhood that negates and ignores other childhoods, removed

from the realities experienced by children and young people around the world.

### THE STRUGGLES AND DEMANDS OF THE WORKING CHILDREN AND YOUTH MOVEMENT

in Latin America, Asia, Africa challenge the naturalization of social relations, in this case questioning a dominant model of childhood that is imposed as universal and natural from the West. It is “natural” to believe that children do not work, it is “natural” to believe that children belong to the school, to the family, it is “natural” to believe that children are incomplete. Children and young people who work in informal work contexts (markets, street vending, domestic service, recycling of materials, shoe shining, agriculture, incense making) configure their own livelihood and in many cases the livelihood of their families. This movement acknowledges other imaginaries, another understanding of the kind of lives led by children and the responsibilities they partake in where far from being distanced from the roles historically associated with adults,<sup>8</sup> they propose a participation in social and political life, fundamentally collective, in solidarity and in alliances with other people in similar social situations. Such movements challenge the mainstream narratives of working children as passive victims waiting to be rescued.

It is important to note that wherever children are mentioned in this project they have not been confined under an age bracket of 0-18, breaking away from the legal definition that often dominates our understanding. This exhibition seeks to challenge the rigid boundary where childhood and adulthood are defined and divided. It is an invitation to consider how the weight of childhood is carried—its traumas and joys—throughout lives lived and how these early experiences continue to shape and nurture the capacity for connection and relationships as adults in the world.

### IV

Learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress.<sup>9</sup>

– bell hooks

How do we create and imagine the fictions that will guide us toward the future we believe in? We open our ears and listen to what the kids and young adults have to teach us in this regard, letting ourselves be guided by the rhythms and wisdom kids bring with them and

6 Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*, Vintage Classics, 2003, 3.

7 "World without child labour" – a post-colonial myth in ProNATs e.V, 2020 <https://pronats.org/en/information/childhood-and-work/post-colonial-myth>

8 Manfred Liebel, *Infancias dignas o cómo descolonizarse*, 2019.

9 bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as Practice of Freedom*, Routledge, 1994, 207.



the lullabies that since we arrive on this world whisper to us the path that the heart is looking for. In this way, being aware that music and sound serve as vessels, connecting us with knowledge from other times that resonate with the emerging timelines of today, by intentionally engaging with our inner rhythms, we allow ourselves to be guided toward what lies ahead. With agency, we envision our possible humanities, embracing the freedom and joy of telling the story of the world we believe in – a world where many realities are possible and coexist in peace, and love.

Joy and playfulness become the tonalities of the paths we choose to walk. They shape how we navigate struggles and pain – not by avoiding them but by healing and transforming them into music, into collective dances, into paintings, into art. Choosing the path of making the wounds into thresholds that allow us to remember and from there imagine and make possible creating a society otherwise. *“The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference”*.<sup>10</sup> Being so a crucial path on the making of a pluriversal society.

V

But children, I submit, cannot be fooled. They can only be betrayed by adults, not fooled – for adults, unlike children, are fooled very easily, and only because they wish to be.<sup>11</sup>  
— James Baldwin

The exhibition project, HISTORICAL CHILDREN: LULLABIES FROM WOUNDS TO WONDER amplifies children’s agency, offering a platform for them to share their stories. Through their voices, it reflects on the structures and systems that fail to provide the care and support required by them. An archive of international movements of child and youth workers is presented in the context of the exhibition project to incorporate the voices, views, declarations, and manifestos of world meetings from different territories in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. To honor and echo the 50 years of struggles and rebellions against discrimination and their search for a better world. In addition, the initiatives invited for collaboration engage with children from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, mainly from vulnerable and marginalized communities that have been impacted by imperial wars and often deemed as collateral damage.

Reflecting on children’s agency, it is important to return to the origin story – the point where it all begins: are children ever asked to be born? What responsibilities are unfairly placed upon them simply because of their existence? This exhibition delves into the mother

archetypes these children embody – some of them inhabiting adult bodies already while carrying and mending their inner child’s wounds – as they nurture themselves and those around them. These relationships often transcend differences in culture, memories, or even language, yet together they develop processes and rituals to reconnect with childhood experiences and claim their rightful place at the table.

Creation is lifeforce. *“Love is lifeforce”*<sup>12</sup>. To mother is to engage in a revolutionary act, to connect with the “creative spirit or love itself”.<sup>13</sup> It transcends the biological act of conception and becomes the ability to survive in hostile environments, create connections, and foster spaces of communal care and joy. These young people, here and elsewhere, embody this lifeforce, creating and sustaining care despite their age and the lack of necessary support they so rightfully deserve.

“There are no sanctuaries  
except in purposeful action;  
I could say to my child,  
There are wounds deeper  
than flesh. Deeper and more  
concrete than belief in some god  
who would imprison your eye  
in the sterile sky instead of  
thrusting it on the piece of earth  
you walk everyday and say,  
Reclaim it.

But I let it pass since  
it is really about knowing today and how.  
This is what it has come to. Daughters  
and sons are born now and could ask,  
you know: Knowing your impotence why  
did you bring me here?

I could say:

Life is the unarguable referent.  
What you know is merely a point  
of departure. So let’s move.”<sup>14</sup>  
– Keorapetse Kgositsile

10 Audre Lord, “Use of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” in Adrienne Maree Brown: *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*, AK Press, 2019, 31.

11 James Baldwin, *Dark Days*, Esquire, 1980.

12 June Jordan, “The Creative Spirit: Children’s Literature” in *Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines*, Between the Lines and PM Press, 2016, 11.

13 Alexis Pauline Gumbs, China Martens, Williams Ma’fa, *Revolutionary Mothering. Love on the Frontlines*, Toronto: Between the Lines and PM Press, 2016, 24.

14 Keorapetse Kgositsile, Excerpt from “Notes from No Sanctuary” in: *Collected Poems 1969–2018*, Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, 2023, 78.

D U Y N G U Y E N  
D I S T A N T T O N G U E S

*Dearest father,*  
**Please don't devour this day  
because it's not yet fully ripe.  
I know no harvest is done with clean hands  
and no bite are chewed without teeth.  
Tell me which civilization I must unearth to belong.**

*You ask how far I've come  
so that I can become one of you.  
I ask how long it's been  
since I was one of them.*

**Time washes all,  
and the wind touches  
with both a soft and a hard hand.  
The world has never counted  
on men without feathers.  
Storms are not told to follow,  
I wonder which name I must cast  
to remind you of yours.**

*I pray while you watch  
four tongues twist into one.*

**Today I've listened to words so dense  
they anchor to the bottoms of lungs.  
Today I've seen eyes so impaling  
they hurt like braille on sore thumbs.  
It takes a palm to touch a soul,  
but it only takes one finger  
to point out one's faults.  
My young body was forgiving  
but this one needs to be kept safe.**

**I know an end to a means  
is like the end of a dream.  
Fill my mouth with filters  
so my body can be free to speak.  
I've been three people  
since my last prayer,  
and all threads that bind me  
are hard-wired.**

*Have you seen the world?  
I have, and now I can write my mom in silence.*

**Why are you eating your mother's meals  
with those shredded lips?  
No book about reality is more forgiving  
than fiction on creased-up pages.  
Now you live in a prison by an unknown author.**

*Son, why must you speak in distant tongues?*

**Your voice became so thin  
my brother started speaking.  
Now his tones can only be heard  
echoing in distant caves.  
I have replaced wood and concrete  
with feet that never stepped twice  
through the same mud and ice.**

**Don't remove more chairs from my table.  
I don't want to dine alone  
in these drenched-up halls  
masked by its own sweat and tears.  
Let me soak in these last words  
like wet clothes on bare skin.**

*Amen*

## MORE INFORMATION

savvy-contemporary.com

S A V V Y Contemporary – The laboratory of form-ideas is an artistic organisation, discursive platform, place for good talks, foods and drinks – a space for conviviality and cultural plurilog. S A V V Y Contemporary is a public and independent organism in perpetual becoming, animated by around 25 members and a network of collaborators, co-creating community and communities it breathes with. Founded in 2009, S A V V Y Contemporary situates itself at the threshold of the West and the non-West to understand their conceptualisations, ethical systems, achievements, and ruins. It develops tools, proposes perspectives and nourishes practices towards imagining a world inhabited together.

The space was founded in 2009 in Berlin-Neukölln by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, S A V V Y '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 Grace Baggott Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Bona Bell Sagal Farah Anna Fasolato Billy Fowo  
Raisa Galofre Manuela Garcia Aldana Juan Pablo García Sossa Hajra Haider Karrar Daniellis Hernandez Anna Jäger Aditi Kapur  
Laura Klöckner Lisa Kolloge Kelly Krugman Mokia Laisin Renan Laru-an Matthew Hansen Rafal Lazar Nancy Naser Al Deen  
Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Abhishek Nilamber Matthias Rademacher Lema Sikod Meghna Singh Lili Somogyi Ola Zielińska

D E S I G N Juan Pablo García Sossa

F O N T S Grow (through a generous partnership with DINAMO Foundry, abcdinamo.com) Neutral (carvalho-bernau.com)

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