

ENGLISH

REMITTANCE SPACES

BETWEEN

ARRIVAL

AND

RETURN

CLOSE

✦ To ✦

HOME

S A V V Y CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS

CLOSE TO HOME.

REMITTANCE SPACES BETWEEN ARRIVAL AND RETURN

WITH Lizza May David Akshita Garud Hasan Gündoğan & Deniz Örün Samuel Hilari
Patrick Jimenez Krämer Pegah Keshmirshekan Ilaaf Khalfalla Van Bo Le-Mentzel Yairan Montejo
Tra My Nguyen Canan Öztekin Jeanne-Ange Wagne

ON SHOW

11.09.–19.10.2025 THURSDAY – SUNDAY 14:00–19:00

ACTIVATIONS

27.09.2025	19:00	<i>Sonic Remittance</i>	LISTENING SESSION with Abraham Tettey
05.10.2025	19:30	<i>Come La Notte</i>	FILM SCREENING with Liryc Dela Cruz
19.10.2025	19:30	<i>Cross My Palm With Silver</i>	DINNER with Akshita Garud

Please visit our website for details.

SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES

14.09.2025	15:00	ENGLISH	Curators Patrick Jimenez Krämer & Lukas Feireiss
25.09.2025	17:00	ENGLISH	Abraham Tettey
02.10.2025	16:00	ENGLISH	Matthew Hansen
04.10.2025	16:00	ARCHITEKTUR-TOUR AUF DEUTSCH	Patrick Jimenez Krämer
11.10.2025	15:00	DEUTSCH	Shahnas Claus
16.10.2024	17:00	DEUTSCH	Anna Jäger

TEAM

CURATION Patrick Jimenez Krämer Lukas Feireiss
CURATORIAL TEAM Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Billy Fowo Anna Jäger
PRODUCTION Matthew Hansen
PRODUCTION TEAM Jessie Omamogho Dušan Rodić
PROJECT MANAGEMENT Anna Fasolato Patrick Jimenez Krämer
GENERAL MANAGEMENT Lema Sikod
ACCOUNTING Matthias Rademacher
COMMUNICATIONS & TRANSLATION Anna Jäger
GRAPHIC DESIGN Aziza Ahmad
SAVVY.DOC Sagal Farah
FELLOWSHIP Abraham Tettey
INTERNSHIP Shahnas Claus
TECH Bert Günther
LIGHTING Shun Perrotta
MOUNTING SUPPORT DOG Felix

The project is funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds.

The exhibition opening is taking place in the framework of Berlin Art Week.

S A V V Y CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS

BERLIN
ART 10—14 SEP 2025
WEEK

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FONDS

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03	W O R K D E S C R I P T I O N S & B I O G R A P H I E S	08

C O N C E P T

BY PATRICK JIMENEZ KRÄMER

WITH ANECDOTES BY Akshita Garud
Samuel Hilari Pegah Keshmirshekan Ilaaf Khalfalla
Yairan Montejo Tra My Nguyen Deniz Örün

& EDITS BY Anna Jäger Abraham Tettey

Is sending money home as an immigrant as selfless as it appears or is it selfish, an unspoken obligation for leaving one's family behind?

My act of remittance is providing financial support to my father, my single parent. He mostly uses that money to pay off the mortgage or as his monthly allowance. On the surface, this is a selfless act, an unspoken duty shaped by the collective culture I come from – a culture where caring for one's parents is not questioned but expected. It is born out of collaborative guilt, a way to foster support, and, in some ways, to show gratitude by paying back what was once invested in my education and upbringing.

The selfish side is quieter but still present. In some ways, this keeps me tethered to my culture, a strange solution to my struggle with belonging. It is also a way to extend emotional support from afar and work through the unspoken guilt of leaving my country and my family behind.
— Akshita Garud

The exhibition project **CLOSE TO HOME : REMITTANCE SPACES BETWEEN ARRIVAL AND RETURN** is an exploration of fragments and flows of everyday migrant worlds, an appreciation of the ways care travels, of how memories drift and cross oceans, and of how “home” is not simply lost or found but continuously created, inherited and shared. It invites us to rethink migration – not merely as the movement of bodies but as an ongoing exchange of meanings, gestures, objects, forms, sounds, images and memories that weave together lives across geographies.

A vivid childhood memory: We had just returned to Switzerland from our holidays at home in Pazarcik. After four weeks of visiting relatives, us kids weren't particularly excited about the welcome committee: more relatives waiting for the VHS tapes my father had brought back. VHS tapes used by family and neighbours to send messages to relatives and friends in Switzerland

(and vice versa) – one could say early-day video calls and voice notes before the invention of the mobile phone. I didn't know back then what precious kind of material he was physically delivering from our hometown. Only when my older self dove into the massive archive of my father I realised what a unique form of remittance for communication we used.
— Deniz Örün

At its core, this project considers remittance beyond financial transfers: as emotional, cultural, and creative flows moving between places of origin and arrival. They manifest themselves in architecture, music, textiles, food, objects and everyday cultures – and thus shape urban spaces and individual identities, leaving traces of lives lived across time and place – a tapestry of presence and absence, memory and longing, connection and distance.

Growing up in a Bolivian-German household, remittance in different forms was always present, whether it was gifts or money sent from Germany to Bolivia, or some food or a postcard sent from Bolivia to Germany. When I started to study in Germany, I had a clear remittance-idea, to soak in as much knowledge as I could, and to later use that knowledge in Bolivia. Somehow, building the Yatiyawi Museum was a great opportunity for that purpose, as for example, I used old GDR building regulations to calculate the timber trusses for the roof. These proved to be a useful tool in the Bolivian context, since, as in the GDR, construction is more manual than mechanised.
— Samuel Hilari

Remittance spaces are thus created by the invisible threads – physical, symbolic, and emotional – of connectedness. In Berlin, a city where the second and third generations of migrants navigate between different cultural reference systems on a daily basis, these spaces become particularly visible. They shape landscapes, identities and everyday cultures – on both sides. The emerging spaces unfold beyond geographical

borders: Houses built with money earned abroad, often empty and yet full of meaning; shisha bars, mosques, restaurants or shopping arcades that make hybrid belonging visible; clothes that convey memories and status, interweaving the past with the present.

As part of the second-generation Vietnamese-German community, my experience with remittances has been very different from my mother's. While I've never had to take on that role, she has always supported our family in Vietnam with great commitment. One story that stays with me is how she sold her first motorbike, something very meaningful to her at that time, in order to save money for her migration to Germany. That small but powerful act laid one of the foundations for the support that flowed back home.

— Tra My Nguyen

Everyday objects – such as prayer rugs, jewellery or cooking utensils – also function as carriers of history, loss and connection. Dishes, recipes and spices brought along tell of the longing for taste, for home, for continuity – sometimes adapted, sometimes reinvented. And finally, music also travels with us: It is passed on, recombined, reinterpreted – as an expression of homesickness, hope and cultural perseverance.

One of my grandfather's favorite jokes was to remind us that in a way we are all sinners, since all decisions we take in life seem to be some sort of gamble. Living through two military coups before the age of 35 does that to you, I guess. His life was driven by leaps of faith: Faith in a future you weren't truly guaranteed nor had any evidence of, as time went on.

He had faith, perhaps more precisely hope, in the prosperity of a country that never materialized in a meaningful way. A trust in the community surrounding him, that they shared some common visions for a better country, for all of them. So he chose to build a home in Sudan instead of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Arizona or any of the other places he has also lived in. Everywhere else almost exacerbated what was waiting at home, what he had left behind. It was also an act of belief. When my father decided to start building a house in Sudan 15 years ago, my grandfather laughed and asked him if he didn't learn anything from his family or the friends around him. All these years didn't bring the possibility of different and perhaps even better dreams.

— Ilaaf Khalfalla

C L O S E T O H O M E brings together various artistic positions that engage with, reflect and transform these multi-layered aspects of remittances. The exhibition is not intended to establish a linear narrative or an ordered structure, but to be experienced as a

dense collage of voices, images, objects and sounds – a place where space is given to the fragmentary, the untranslatable and the contradictory.

In my project "Imaginary Homeland", the remittance is not sent in money, but in imagery and memory. It is a response made from afar, directed towards a place that cannot be easily reached – or perhaps does not exist in reality. Through the act of painting, the fictional bus driver-artist in my video sends back fragments of a romanticised homeland, shaped by longing and distance. Each flower she paints – native to her homeland and recurring in her daydreams – becomes a symbolic payment, not to sustain a family, but to sustain a connection. It is a return that exists only through the act of repetition, in hopes of remembering and creating a home in absence.

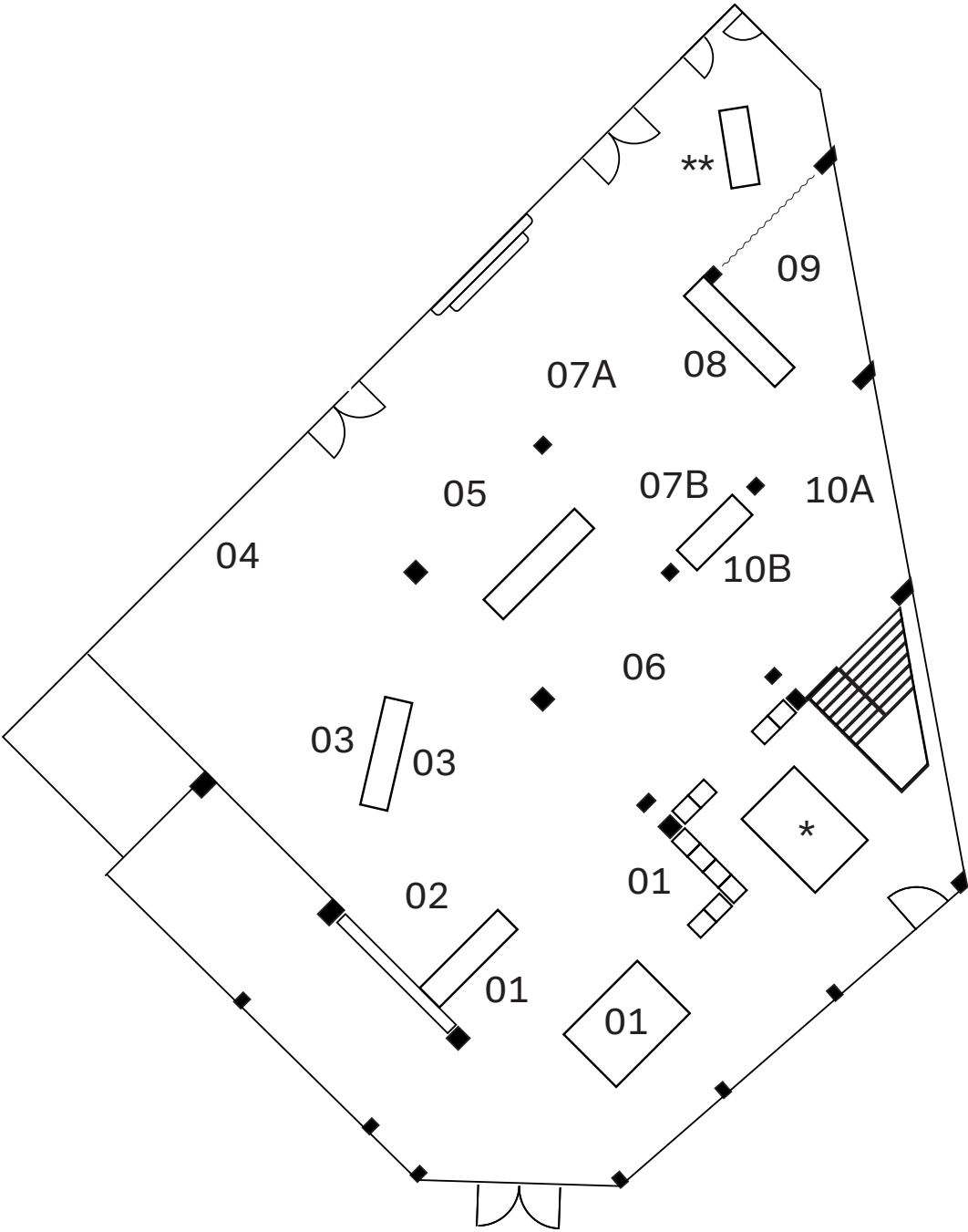
— Pegah Keshmirshakan

The exhibition is accompanied by a program of events, dinners, film screenings and other forms of gathering that deepen and expand the topics and place them in new contexts.

For me, remittance is not just money: it's an invisible thread that keeps my family together, even with an ocean and endless obstacles in between. It means sending hope through a voice message, a shared meal, a laugh across the distance. I grew up seeing that every transfer was more than a transaction: it was an act of love.

— Yairan Montejo

FLOOR PLAN



01 PATRICK JIMENEZ KRÄMER

Bahay Kubo

2025, mixed media sculpture/installation and video, 9 minutes

02 HASAN GÜNDOĞAN AND
DENİZ ÖRÜN

Çavê ta paçtaka – Lost Kisses

2025, installation with private archival videomaterial, Pazarcık, Kurdistan / Zürich, Switzerland

03 PEGAH KESHMIRSHEKAN

Imaginary Homeland

2022–24, multimedia installation (video, painting, installation), variable dimensions

Special thanks to Gallery Under the Mango Tree for their continued support on this project, as well as for facilitating the participation in this exhibition.

04 YAIRAN MONTEJO

The Long Way Home

2025, mural, dispersion paint, 600 x 375 cm

05 SAMUEL HILARI

Yatıyawi Museum

2025, Installation, various materials, various dimensions

06 AKSHITA GARUD

Cross My Palm With Silver

2025, food installation, mixed material: stainless steel spoons, mirrors, concrete, edible components, variable dimensions

07A TRA MY NGUYEN

Hung the Moon Behind the Curtain

2025, mixed-media sculpture, aluminium, foam, textile, silicone, variable dimensions

07B *Amidst the Threads, our Names Become*

2022, 2-channel installation, 4K, color/sound, 15:20 minutes (video 1), 5:44 minutes (video 2), capulana, batik fabrics

08 VAN BOLE-MENTZEL

Artist Wallidency

2025, Wooden room installation in a movable wall, 355 x 80 cm (H: 300 cm)

09 ILAAF KHALFALLA

SDF / Das Schwarze Journal – Trommeln in der Nacht

2025, installation, mixed media, variable dimensions

10A LIZZA MAY DAVID

Two Years More

2006, documentary, 26 minutes

10B *Sari-Sari*

2025, painting, acrylic ink and stamp ink (non-permanent) on canvas, 120 x 160 cm

11 CANAN ÖZTEKİN

imaginaries-digital.info

2015, video, 15 minutes

12 JEANNE-ANGE WAGNE

Wörterverzeichnis or Glossary (propositions in: works of art as future archives)

2025, text-based sound installation, second-hand Harman Kardon speakers, polypropylene strapping, tape, metal wall shelf, cardboard box, packing tape, sound recording in two languages: German and English, approx. 11 minutes each. Song by Metsinda Susanne sang by Chantalle Wagne.

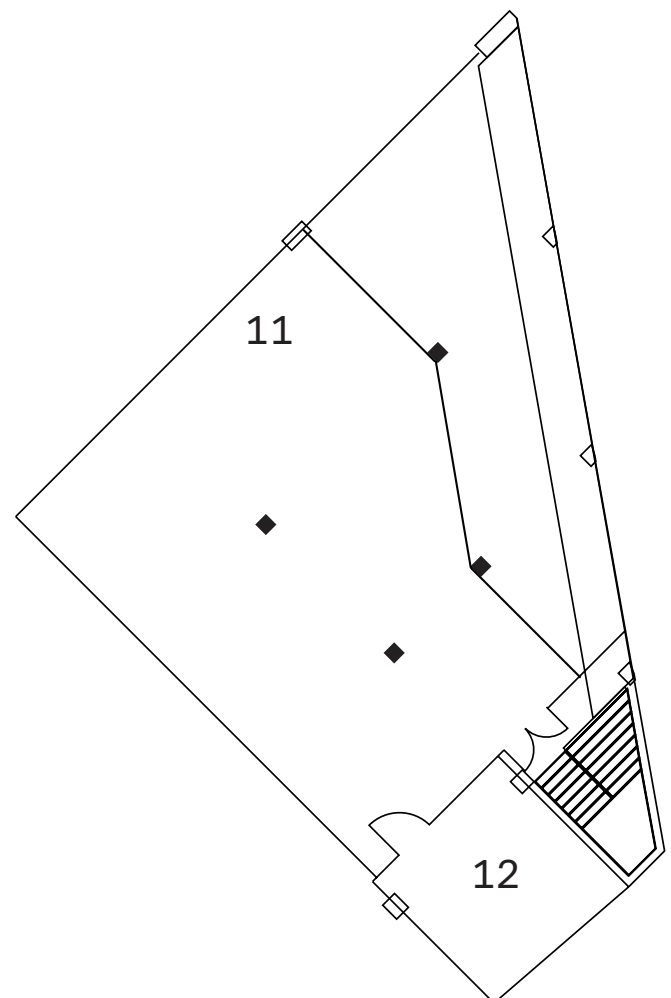
* SAVVY.DOC

Curated by Sagal Farah

Display of selected books

** SONIC REMITTANCE BOOTH

Curated by Abraham Tettey & the visitors of the exhibition



WORK DESCRIPTIONS & BIOGRAPHIES

01 PATRICK JIMENEZ KRÄMER

Bahay Kubo

2025, mixed media sculpture/installation, variable dimensions, and video, 9 minutes

Bahay Kubo refers to a traditional Filipino architectural form and serves as the starting point for this installation. Based on a biographical investigation into the effects of transnational family relationships and remittances, another remittance house of my family was created in 2023, whose spatial and social dimensions are reflected here.

At the center is a wooden table sculpture that traces the floor plan of a room in the house on a reduced scale. Its construction follows the logic of the *Bahay Kubo*, while inside, a 1:50 scale architectural model demonstrates how these principles are reinterpreted and practically applied in the present.

Surrounding photographs explore the tension between closeness and distance, pointing to the fragmented reality of transnational families. A large-scale photo wallpaper depicts a pawnshop in Pamplona, which for years served as the main point of contact for receiving my mother's remittances. An accompanying video documents the on-site construction process and explores the social and material networks emerging from the flow of remittances.

The installation invites reflection not only on how remittance spaces are built, but also on broader questions of social change, the materiality of the local context, and transnational identity.

PATRICK JIMENEZ KRÄMER is a German-Filipino architect, independent curator, and artist based in Berlin. The core of all his projects is the architectural perspective, which is reflected across different media, including curatorial work, video, photography, and other artistic formats. He often aims to make complex ideas clear and accessible.

Over the past three years, he has focused on the theoretical and practical aspects of the remittance world, shaped by his family history. In 2023, he realized his first architectural project in the Philippines, followed in 2024 by another, a reinterpretation of a *Dirty Kitchen*. In 2025, his first curatorial project, *Close to Home. Remittance Spaces Between Arrival and Return*, will be presented at SAVVY Contemporary.

02 HASAN GÜNDOĞAN AND DENİZ ÖRÜN

Çavê ta paçtaka – Lost Kisses

2025, installation with private archival videomaterial, Pazarcık, Kurdistan / Zürich, Switzerland

The installation presents an audio-visual remittance experience rooted in memory and connection. From the 1990s to early 2000s, our family used VHS cassettes as a form of communication within the Kurdish diaspora in Switzerland and Germany, reaching out to loved ones back home. These tapes carried greetings, well-wishes and kisses – standing in for the video calls that didn't yet exist but were deeply needed. The cassettes were sent as gifts to those addressed in the videos, while the remaining ones stayed behind – silent witnesses to messages that never made it to their intended recipients. Visitors step into the role of these would-be recipients. Seated in front of two tube TVs and an archive display, they are invited to engage with the videos, reflect on the stories, and connect with one another. Together, they help recreate the living room space these messages were once meant to reach – a space of presence, longing, and shared memory.

HASAN GÜNDOĞAN is a graphic designer and creative director of *BREAUX Zine*, a Berlin-based magazine that highlights young creative voices from Germany and Switzerland. His practice is dedicated to bringing forward the stories of marginalized communities with migration histories in Europe, often engaging with archival work, cultural programming, and the development of sustainable structures for future generations of disadvantaged creatives to ultimately make these narratives more visible. Through collaborations with institutions such as the Maxim Gorki Theater Berlin and the Goethe-Institut in Hamburg and Paris, he has realized projects including publications and exhibitions like the *Guerilla Project*.

DENİZ ÖRÜN is an architect whose practice is rooted in exploring memory cultures, migration, and translocal spaces. His architectural work engages with contextually embedded design approaches, emphasizing social and cultural narratives as integral to spatial practice. His filmic and installative projects draw on family archives, language, and media to reflect on belonging and diasporic memory. By weaving together conceptual, architectural, and curatorial methods, he develops forms of practice that situate architecture as a cultural and transdisciplinary field. Deniz graduated

in Architecture from ETH Zurich in 2023 and has been practicing as an architect since 2024.

03 PEGAH KESHMIRSHEKAN

Imaginary Homeland

2022–24, multimedia installation (video, painting, installation), variable dimensions

Special thanks to Gallery Under the Mango Tree for their continued support on this project, as well as for facilitating the participation in this exhibition.

Imaginary Homeland is based on a fictional story which is centred on the ideal vision of home, a homeland supposed primarily from a distance through blurred memory. This imaginary landscape has been portrayed through a fictional imagery, shaped over time as a result of experiences with displacement.

The work revolves around a fictional character who works both as an artist and as a London bus driver. Her paintings mainly feature flowers called *Fritillaria Imperialis* or Crown Imperial, which represent her daydreams of a romanticised homeland. The *Fritillaria Imperialis* are said to have originated in the Iranian mountains Alborz.

The video adopts the format of an interview focused on the fictional artist's life. Here again a fantasy world is taking shape. This world is built through the interactive exchange of ideas and thoughts between the fictional artist/bus driver and interviewer, who in this case is the actual artist of the paintings, Pegah Keshmirshekan herself. The conversation is primarily about their position and role in society and the art scene.

The project also references “Impossible Bouquets”, the 17–18th century paintings by Dutch masters. These paintings depict different flowers, which were considered “exotic”, placed together in a vase, even though they could never coexist because of different geographical origins and seasonal blossoming times. The flower paintings reflected the fashionable interests of botanists, who traded seeds and bulbs hoping to cultivate new floral varieties. The main idea behind these paintings was to present views of floral scenes to be enjoyed all seasons and all year long. In other words, these bouquet paintings did not aim to reflect reality, but rather served as representations of fantasy. This subject in fact forms the main topic of the fictional artist's work materialized in this project through an adopted version of Crown Imperial paintings. This approach, furthermore, aligns with the aim of the project which does not aim to depict a literal place, but assembles fragments of memory, longing, and imagination.

By creating a fictional character and giving the impression as if the paintings were done by the protagonist, the notion of authorship, particularly in

relation to the diaspora experience is challenged. Thus, *Imaginary Homeland* explores the question of authenticity of the artwork as an additional point of reference. Ultimately, the project raises the question of whether I should, as the viewer, identify myself as the bus driver, the artist, both or neither.

PEGAH KESHMIRSHEKAN is an Iranian-born artist, currently working and living in Berlin and London. The key question that she deals with in her artistic practice is how collective belongings contribute to the formation of one's personhood in the contemporary globalized world.

Through documentation of events and personal lives in her videos, sound works, installations, paintings, and printmaking, her work addresses how imaginary pictures and fictional imagery are shaped through the experience of displacement and diasporic experimentations. As a foundational aspect of her artistic practice, Pegah's work integrates archival materials into her research-based projects, trying to connect cultural narratives with historical contexts. This methodological approach integrates a scholarly dimension into her exploration of identity, belonging, and the transformative processes that shape contemporary society today.

04 YAIRAN MONTEJO

The Long Way Home

2025, mural, dispersion paint, 6 x 3,75 m

This mural, presented as a comic strip, portrays the routes, obstacles, and emotions surrounding remittances to Cuba. Between bureaucracy, blockades, and absurd fees, the need to support family turns into an act of resistance and care. Through graphic humor, the work highlights the paradox of a simple gesture – sending money home – that becomes a path full of hurdles, yet also of ingenuity and solidarity.

For those that need help with the Cuban Spanish in the mural – you can read along here:

PANEL 1

The mother writes from Cuba: “My son, we have no food and no electricity. Can you send us something?” The son replies: “Of course, mom, let me see how I can do it.” The central problem is established: scarcity at home and the son's determination to help.

PANEL 2

The son faces the absurd reality: PayPal charges 80% in fees, Western Union no longer transfers money to Cuba, and there are no legal or safe alternatives. Tension grows: Even family love must fight against bureaucracy and sanctions.

PANEL 3

The dove – symbol of peace and of remittances – is crushed in a police hand, showing how freedom and hope are suffocated. Cuba itself is tied up in flames, representing a nation trapped and burning.

The son turns to Enrique, a childhood friend now in Miami. Enrique says: “Yeah, send it to me. I’ll give it to a colleague who knows another colleague, and he’ll deliver it personally to your pura (your mom).”

Trust, friendship, and the Cuban diaspora create the informal networks that replace official systems.

PANEL 4

Police officers with oversized ears stand in the street, always trying to overhear everything. Motorcycles and uniforms add to the atmosphere of control and surveillance.

The background of daily Cuban life: repression and vigilance.

PANEL 5

The mother finally receives the money and says: “Oh my son, thank you from the bottom of my heart.” Her relief reflects not just gratitude, but the happiness of overcoming what felt impossible.

Success and emotional release: love reaches its destination.

PANEL 6

Her final message: “Thank you, my son. At least today we ate chicken, and we shared peace together as a family.” The son smiles at his phone, satisfied that his effort gave dignity and comfort.

The story closes tenderly: in a reality of scarcity, love still triumphs.

Y A I R A N M O N T E J O, also known as Cinco (5), is a Cuban artist based in Berlin whose practice expands the language of muralism by bringing comic strips to the wall. Inspired by his early fascination with Mafalda, a comic that addressed complex social issues through humor, and by the large-scale comic murals he encountered in Brussels, Yairan developed the idea of translating this narrative form into public space.

At the core of his work is his alter ego Cinco, through whom he transforms personal and collective experiences into visual chronicles. Much of his practice grows out of a daily habit: taking notes of what he sees, hears, and thinks in everyday life, and reshaping those fragments into comics on the wall. In this way, themes such as migration, family, and resilience emerge through humor, allowing complex realities to become accessible while sparking both laughter and reflection.

His murals function as urban diaries, bridging communities and opening conversations in the public sphere. Cinco’s work is accessible yet deeply critical, rooted in lived experience and committed to turning daily observation into collective storytelling.

05 S A M U E L H I L A R I
Yatipayi Museum
2025, Installation, various materials, various dimensions

The Yatipayi Museum is designed to house exhibitions and workshops, providing new spaces for the El Getsemaní foundation, an organization that works with children and young adults in the peri-urban neighborhood of Tilata. This neighborhood is part of the outskirts of the La Paz–El Alto metropolitan area (Bolivia), at an altitude of approximately 3920 meters above sea level. The urban sprawl that is transforming the landscape of Tilata can also be described in material terms, as earthen buildings, witnesses of a recent rural past, are rapidly being replaced by concrete and brick constructions. It is in this context that the museum seeks to make a difference with the reintroduction of natural building materials such as earth and timber. With a minimal budget, the museum was built with the premise of offering adequate spaces of simple construction, using materials with a low carbon footprint and employing local labor force. The museum’s collection is mainly composed of the legacy of the extinct Yatipayi Foundation, an organization run by the German pastors Burkhardt and Irene Sievers that worked during the 1990s and 2000s in Tilata, producing educational material for both children and adults. “Yatipayi” means “message” in the indigenous Aymara language spoken in the region.

This project represents the largest contemporary work of rammed earth in Bolivia.

General information on the construction:	
Location	Zona Nueva Tilata, Viacha, Bolivia
Year	2024
Client	Sievers Family / El Getsemaní Foundation
Architect	Samuel Hilari
Technical consultancy	Pacha Yampara Blanco, Marcelo Murguía Fernández (Yapu Tierra)
Contractor	Luis Escobar Osco
Builders	Eduardo Escobar Osco, Raúl Quispe Kama, Omar Quezada Carvajal, Iván Viracocha
Electrical installation	Rolando Mérida
Locksmith	Vicente Condori Mamani
Carpentry	Marcelo Murguía Fernandez
Expanse	320 m²
Budget	29,500 USD

S A M U E L H I L A R I is a Bolivian-German architect. He studied in Berlin and Santiago de Chile, finishing his masters degree with a research project about the city of El Alto in Bolivia. He co-founded the collectives “ifa_diaspora” in Berlin and the “Community Archive of El Alto” in El Alto, both interested, from different perspectives, in migration, decolonization of institutions and the building of memory. Currently, he is working as an independent architect in Bolivia, with the Yatiyaw Museum being his first commissioned work. He has published essays and articles in Chile, Bolivia and Germany.

06 A K S H I T A G A R U D

Cross My Palm With Silver

2025, food installation, mixed material: stainless steel spoons, mirrors, concrete, edible components, variable dimensions

Starting from the second day of the exhibition, the installation will change as the food is replaced with non-edible materials. For this reason, please do not handle the spoons.

In *Cross My Palm With Silver*, artist Akshita Garud explores her personal journey with remittance and its emotional landscape with a delicate duality. Is sending money home as an immigrant as selfless as it appears or is it selfish, an unspoken obligation for leaving one's family behind? Created in collaboration with fellow artist and metalworker Avantika Khanna, the double-ended spoons in the food installation appear silver, but are in fact stainless steel, a metal known for industriousness and resilience against tarnish. Those born without a silver spoon in their mouths must diligently forge their own paths to prosperity and give back to their parents who invested in them.

As a precious metal, silver has longstanding associations with wealth, currency, and status. One idiom, “to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth,” refers to someone inheriting a life of affluence and privilege. Another, “cross my palm with silver,” indicates an old practice of paying a silver coin to a fortune teller ahead of their services, which simultaneously invokes prosperity with the arrival of a newborn child. But this also points to the undercurrent of reciprocity in every ostensible act of goodwill. An extended palm symbolises trust and generosity towards others, as well as the interest to receive in kind.

These spoons rest on a mirrored table that multiplies and reflects their forms in the ubiquity of remittance. Each utensil cradles Indian food with contrasting yet complementary flavour profiles, in reference to Garud's roots, to carry forth the payment's bittersweet nature. On one side, duty and the other, desire. The varying sizes of the vessels represent the uneven psychological weight and levels of personal sacrifice with each

benevolent act. Some spoons have stems of differing lengths, while others multiple and curve, akin to the physical distance and emotional complexity between family members.

Cross My Palm With Silver necessitates that every participant gaze into the mirrored table in self reflection before lifting a spoon, tasting both sides, and deciding for themselves which is selfish and which is selfless – or realise that both can exist in the same mouthful.

— *Exhibition text by Whitney Wei*

A K S H I T A G A R U D is the founder and creative director of *Two Odd*. She works in art direction for editorial content driven by storytelling, and curates experiences involving spatial design through tablescapes and installations. The underlying theme of all her work is to advocate for positive change and purpose. Through her work, she narrates stories and initiates conversations about otherwise hushed topics, challenging rigid and unfair societal norms.

Two Odd operates as both an online magazine and a creative studio. As a creative studio, it facilitates art direction across all mediums, and as an online magazine, it brings attention to narratives that need more visibility and advocate for change. An assemblage of curiosity, *Two Odd* undresses the normal to embrace the odd.

07 A T R A M Y N G U Y E N

Hung the Moon Behind the Curtain

2025, mixed-media sculpture, aluminium, foam, textile, silicone, variable dimensions

Hung the Moon Behind the Curtain is a series of textile-based sculptures that explore the entangled aesthetics of mass-produced Vietnamese garments and the vertical architecture shaped by remittance economies. Constructed from polished aluminum, digital-printed mesh fabric, silicone, and foam, the works abstract patterns from everyday garments such as sun-protective clothing and printed pajamas. These garments are common in Vietnam's domestic and street life.

Motifs like florals, polka dots, camouflage, and checks, often dismissed as generic, take on new resonance here. As theorists, such as Arjun Appadurai, argue, these patterns form a vernacular globalism circulating widely through supply chains yet marked by class, gender, and postcolonial histories. In this context, they function as informal uniforms: highly visible, yet socially overlooked; signaling labor, care, and the intimacy of daily routines.

Framed in tall, narrow aluminum structures echoing the proportions of Vietnam's “tube houses” – multi-story dwellings often built with remittance income – the sculptures stage a conversation between fabric

and architecture, softness and constraint. The sagging mesh fabric evokes curtains, windows, and thresholds: between inside and outside. The series invites reflection on how remitted homes are not only built materially, but also imagined through patterns, gestures, and emotional labor stretched across distance.

07 B *Amidst the Threads, our Names Become*
2022, 2-channel installation, 4K, color/sound, 15:20 min
(video 1), 5:44 min (video 2), capulana, batik fabrics
Commissioned by State of Fashion 2022 | Ways of Caring

Amidst the Threads, our Names Become is a collaborative and multidisciplinary installation exploring fragmented narratives on textile and material culture through a diasporic lens. The project aims to challenge Eurocentric narratives around displaced identities, cultural symbolisms, labor, and the space held for such stories to exist.

The work comprises a two-channel video installation and textiles. The textiles used in the installation are traditional capulanas from Mozambique and batik from Singapore, made with the same wax resist dyeing technique which originated from Indonesia and travelled through Dutch Colonialism. By deconstructing these textiles, the fabrics turn to threads, blurring boundaries, becoming a form of decolonizing these textiles.

The videos follow two protagonists: Rosa, Mozambican-born and now residing in Portugal, weaves memory, symbolism, and transformation into her narration. Anabel, a textile designer from Singapore, guides us through a journey of care, intricate labor, and textile knowledge.

Together, the work engages with plurality and possibility, questioning who holds the power to tell, curate, and preserve memories, narratives, and identities. By foregrounding the emotional, cultural, and feminist labor embedded in garments, the project invites a more intimate and meaningful relationship with the textiles that surround us.

T R A M Y N G U Y E N is a Berlin-based multidisciplinary artist born in Hanoi who works across sculpture, moving image, installation, and textiles. Her practice recontextualises material culture through a diasporic lens, investigating the intersections of the body with power structures and histories of resilience, agency, and transformation. Deploying speculative narratives, her work explores themes of embodiment and commodification within a globalised framework.

Nguyen's work has been exhibited internationally, including at Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (DE), Bienalsur (AR), VCCA Vincom Center for Contemporary Art (VN), and the State of Fashion Biennale (NL). She has presented solo and duo exhibitions at Grotto (Berlin) and Human

Resources (Los Angeles), among others. In 2020, she received the Fashion Position Jury Prize and is currently participating in the BPA// Berlin program for artists.

08 V A N B O L E - M E N T Z E L

Artist Wallidency

2025, Wooden room installation in a movable wall,
355 x 80 cm (H: 300 cm)

Artist Wallidency is an artist residency in a wall. This walk-in spatial installation is an attempt to create a hidden retreat, a place where one can work, sleep, and even cook. It reflects on the fragile balance between refuge and exclusion, exploring the traces left by migrants who, though they have reached the diaspora, continue to live in a state of in-between.

The installation is inspired by the life of Co Hanh Ngo, a Buddhist nun who lived in a tiny room in the Vien Giac Pagoda in Hanover until her death. As an architect, I am fascinated by how she created a life for herself within just 5 square meters. In this small space, she built a kitchen with a rice cooker and refrigerator right next to her bed and prepared her own meals — without running water, relying only on a kettle. What might seem like precarious living conditions was, in fact, an expression of her freedom and self-determination. Throughout her life, she never wanted to conform to the heteronormative ideal of married life, nor did she want to move into a retirement home; above all, she sought to live without being a burden to anyone.

On the contrary, she remained active in the Buddhist community, sold souvenirs at fairs and in the pagoda's gift shop, and saved money for her daughter in Laos. While Co Hanh Ngo chose to live in a tiny space, she enabled her daughter and grandchildren to enjoy a prosperity in Laos that she herself never had. Her daughter lives in a two-story villa and has even set up a prayer room there in honor of her mother.

After more than forty years in the German diaspora, Co Hanh Ngo returned to her daughter and grandchildren in 2024. There she died unexpectedly as a result of an illness. After forty years in Germany, she died in Laos. Surrounded by the people closest to her, surrounded by a family from whom she had been separated for most of her life.

Co Hanh Ngo is my mother's older sister and has had a decisive influence on my understanding of feminism, migration, and space.

V A N B O L E - M E N T Z E L is an architect and author born in Nongkhai, Thailand, and living in Berlin, Germany. His initiatives range between social participation and design. The architect, who has roots in China and Vietnam, has a close relationship with SAVVY Contemporary. For the Bauhaus anniversary year,

he built a miniature version of the Bauhaus building in Dessau on a scale of 1:6, which was shown and brought to life at various locations as part of the SAVVY project SPINNING TRIANGLES. Le-Mentzel is known for developing blueprints for DIY furniture: Hartz IV furniture. In January 2026, his new book *Build More Buy Less* (Hatje Cantz) will be published, which also features a Hartz IV Möbel piece created at SAVVY: the “Wok Life Balance” kitchen.

Le-Mentzel lives with his wife and three children in a two-room apartment of 56 sqm in Berlin-Kreuzberg.

09 I L A A F K H A L F A L L A

SDF / *Das Schwarze Journal – Trommeln in der Nacht*
2025, installation, mixed media, variable dimensions

SDF (*Schwarz-Deutsches Fernsehen / Black German TV*) is a speculative broadcasting project revisiting the infrastructures of Afro-diasporic memory and media in Germany. Within this frame, *Das Schwarze Journal* appears as a cultural program preparing its next episode.

The room we see, disassembled yet in use, belongs to a writers’ team developing a segment on a Brechtian seminar in Khartoum: Notes are pinned, chairs are left askew, timelines collapse. The space becomes a stand-in for everything that wasn’t televised, and for the possibility that it could have been.

These fragments gesture toward histories of Sudanese resistance and African Marxist thought, circling a question: How might editorial processes, and television itself, have articulated alternative formations of political memory if shaped by Afro-diasporic frameworks? However the main question that lingers in the room asks: How can one preserve a history designed for disappearance, especially when its guardians – its professors, workers, poets, exiles, fighters and comrades – are dying one by one, without archive or ceremony?

I L A A F K H A L F A L L A is a cultural researcher and artistic practitioner based between Berlin and Paris. Her work focuses on memory, archival silences, and the politics of representation, with a particular interest in Afro-diasporic histories in Germany and Sudan. She is interested in how history informs the present and how our relationship to the present reframes the past. Ilaaf has contributed to mediation projects at C/O Berlin and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, and recently co-organized the People’s Tribunal on the Persecution of Women Activists in Sudan with the feminist network Bana Group as part of the 13th Berlin Biennale.

10 A L I Z Z A M A Y D A V I D

Two Years More

2006, documentary, 26 min

The film is about my aunt Nerry. She is one of the 140.000 housekeepers in Hongkong, also called "Overseas Filipino Workers". There, she worked for the last 14 years to support her family in the Philippines. After three years, she took her vacation and visited her husband and three sons in the province called Ogod. The film gives insight to a specific family model in Asia and questions media titles like "heroines" and "victims". – Back in 2006, this was the film description which I usually sent out to festivals. The film was not accepted, but ended up being screened by critical-minded curators (f.e. Nanna Heidenreich or Sunju-Choi – Thank you!) who wanted to raise awareness about labor conditions in Southeast Asia – something that was barely talked about back then. In my film department, postcolonial studies just started being on the radar for students. When I left university, I still remember spotting a small note pinned in the corridor: Hito Steyerl offered the first lecture on postcolonial issues.

10 B Sari-Sari

2025, painting, acrylic Ink and stamp Ink (non-permanent) on canvas, 120 x 160cm

The motif of this painting is based on a group selfie with my aunt Nerry and my two cousins, Bryan and Francis, taken during my visit to the Philippines in 2023. When the pandemic began affecting Hong Kong in 2020, my aunt decided it was time to return to the Philippines for good, after working there as a domestic helper for more than 30 years.

Today, she runs a small „sari-sari“ convenience store on the ground floor of a modest building she constructed as an investment for her retirement in Manila. Most of her sons and their families now live in that building. Having laid the foundation for their lives, she has fostered a space where children grow up with an understanding of distance and estrangement – something held together only by the bonds of family and community.

I work with purple non-permanent stamping ink from the Philippines – once used for fingerprints on ID cards, and still present in offices and bureaucratic routines. Its slow fading makes me reflect on the fragility of memory and on the ways it is shaped, layered, and eventually transformed over time.

L I Z Z A M A Y D A V I D is an artist whose multidisciplinary practice anchors in painting, which she intertwines with artistic research, collaborations, and various other formats. Her work focuses on exploring gaps and silences within personal and institutional archives. Earlier video projects addressed themes of gendered labor migration and memory. She studied at the Berlin University of the Arts and the Academy of

Fine Arts Nuremberg. Recent exhibitions featuring her work and collaborations include *Nursing the Empire* at the Wiesbaden Biennale 2025, *As We See Us: A Decolonial Salon des Refusés* at MHAS Berlin 2025, *Stories that We Imagine, Stories that Connect Us* at Kunstverein Langenhagen 2025, and *Forgive Us Our Trespasses* at the House of World Cultures, Berlin, 2024.

11 C A N A N Ö Z T E K I N

imaginaries-digital.info

2015, video, 15 minutes

The video *imaginaries-digital.info* explores how imagination and placemaking shape migrant identities in a digitally connected world. Building on 1990s anthropological theories, it examines how places are reproduced within collective imaginaries. While this often drives longing for a distant “elsewhere,” the work asks what happens after migration and settlement. In this context, imagination shifts from future aspirations to reflections on what was left behind.

C A N A N Ö Z T E K I N studied architecture at the Technical University of Berlin and the Berlin University of the Arts. Her research focuses on material conditions and the social and productive relations of space, with a focus on documentary and visual methodologies.

12 J E A N N E - A N G E W A G N E

Wörterverzeichnis or Glossary (propositions in: works of art as future archives)

2025, text-based sound installation, second-hand Harman Kardon speakers, polypropylene strapping, tape, metal wall shelf, cardboard box, packing tape, sound recording in two languages: German and English, approx. 11 minutes each.

Song by Metsinda Susanne sang by Chantalle Wagne.

Violent ideologies often appropriate, distort and, in short, instrumentalise terms to enforce their goals and views, and to justify corresponding actions, stances and attitudes. The subversive reversal of this mechanism lies not in turning away, but in actively and analytically turning towards words and their dimensions of meaning. The uncompromising deconstruction of terminology promotes critical thinking and an understanding of subject matter, structures and systems. Their associative contextualisation reveals connections, inspires the imagination and encourages the development of new perspectives. Their clarification allows us to critically perceive, reflect on and revise our own actions.

This text-based sound installation, a spoken-word glossary of sorts proposes explanations of meanings and conveys how to be guided by terms instead of exploiting them.

J E A N N E - A N G E W A G N E is a creative art historian, knowledge mediator, interpreter as well as event host who conducts artistic research into memory, colonial provenance research and trend cycles in art, culture and fashion. She regularly moderates, conceptualizes and publishes critical mediation formats, artistic interventions, lectures and short texts for cultural and art institutions most recently for Biennale für Freiburg 3, Kestner Gesellschaft, c/o Berlin, Creamcake Berlin, Goethe Institut Kamerun x Musée National Yaoundé and KW Institute for Contemporary Art amongst others. Until October 2023, she also worked for the German branch of the transnational research project "The Restitution of Knowledge", at the department of Art History headed by the art historian Prof Dr Bénédicte Savoy at Technische Universität Berlin, where in 2022 and 2023 she co-curated and coordinated the event series KuK-Tuesdays: Dislocation.

* S A V V Y . D O C

Curated by Sagal Farah

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.

** S O N I C R E M I T T A N C E B O O T H

Curated by Abraham Tettey & the visitors of the exhibition

If migration is a choreography of bodies, gestures, objects, and memory, then sound is perhaps its most faithful companion. Songs drift through airwaves, whisper along streams, and settle in memory; intangible, unstoppable. They carry fragments of home arriving in diaspora communities as both nostalgia and the latest pulse of home, keeping people connected to evolving cultures and rhythms across distance. A single melody can hold a village, a childhood, an entire cosmos of relations, compressed in one breath. The Sonic Remittance Booth invites you to contribute a song that carries you home, however and wherever home exists. Each offering becomes part of a collective playlist, a living archive of voices, rhythms, and textures,

reverberating throughout the exhibition.

Here, music is remittance in its purest form: care, memory, and culture flowing freely, bypassing borders and bureaucracy, inscribed in sound rather than currency. Through these sonic gestures, we witness how people sustain ties across distance, time-travel through sound. It becomes an inheritance of vibration: a living resonance that reminds us home is not simply a place to return to, but something we carry, transmit, and share across time and space.

A B R A H A M T E T T E Y is a Ghanaian curator and artist, an currently a curatorial fellow at SAVVY. His practice engages the intersections of identity, material culture, decolonial imaginaries, and community-building. During his fellowship, he plans to expand his research into worldmaking practices, living archives, and the lived politics of survival for artists and independent art spaces navigating systemic precarity. He looks forward to engaging in collective learning and curatorial experimentation grounded in care, radical imagination, and translocal solidarity.

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, SAVVY's artistic director until 2022. From 2023 to 2025, the space – located in Berlin-Wedding since 2016 – was under artistic direction by Renan Laru-an. Currently, SAVVY is under executive direction by 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 Hajra Haider Karrar Daniellis Hernandez Calderon Anna Jäger Laura Klöckner Kelly Krugman Mokia Dinnyuy Manjoh Matthew Hansen Rafal Lazar Nancy Naser Al Deen Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Abhishek Nilamber Matthias Rademacher Lema Sikod Meghna Singh Lili Somogyi Ola Zielińska

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