# SOILIS AN INSCRIBED BODY ... ON SOVEREIGNTY AND AGROPOETICS

E X H I B I T I O N 31.08.–06.10.2019 Thur–Sun 14:00–19:00 W I T H Dina Amro Archipel Stations Community Radio Luis Berríos-Negrón Filipa César with Ahmed Isamaldin and Ali Yass Binta Diaw Leone Contini INLAND Raphaël Grisey Mia Harrison Zayaan Khan Yen–Chao Lin Barbara Marcel and Ana Hupe Julia Mensch Pedro Neves Marques Cedric Nunn Elia Nurvista Uriel Orlow Lerato Shadi Bouba Touré Hervé Yamquen

INVOCATIONS 13.09.-15.09.2019

GUIDED TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES

05.09.2019 15:00 With Jasmina in Romanian

06.09.2019 16:00 With Elena in English

13.09.2019 17:00 With Marleen in German

20.09.2019 18:00 With Abhishek in Hindi

25.09.2019 16:00 With Elena in Italian

ARTISTIS DIRECTOR Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

C U R A T O R S Elena Agudio Marleen Boschen

CURATOIAL ASSISTANCE Onur Çimen

PROJECT TEAM Cornelia Knoll Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock

EXHIBITION PRODUCTION Antonio Mendes

MANAGEMENT Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock

COMMUNICATION Anna Jäger

GRAPHIC DESIGN Elsa Westreicher Lili Somogyi

T E C H Bert Günther Niklas Krenek

ART HANDLING Kimani Joseph Wilson Mungai

EXHIBITION DESIGN Ola Zielińska

SOIL IS AN INSCRIBED BODY. ON SOVEREIGNTY AND AGROPOETICS is the second chapter of our long-term investigation. THE INVENTION OF SCIENCE. The project is funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds and the Foundation for Arts Initiatives. Uriel Orlow's contribution is kindly supported by the Swiss Art Council Pro Helvetia.

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





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### SOIL IS AN INSCRIBED BODY. ON SOVEREIGNTY AND AGROPOETICS

is a project examining both anti-colonial struggles of the past and current anti-extractivist land conflicts across the world to resist the invasiveness of neoagrocolonialism. It germinates through a series of readings, interventions, and workshops, and materialises in an exhibition (30.08.-06.10.2019) and performance / discursive programme at SAVVY Contemporary (13.09.-15.09.2019). The project seeks dispersed and yet connected moments of cross-pollination between artistic strategies and agroecological practices.

Staying alive – for every species – requires livable

Collaboration means working across difference, which leads to contamination.

Without collaborations, we all die.

Anna Tsing: The Mushroom at the End of the World. On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins

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GROUNDING: BUILDING ON PLANETARY DEVASTATION

> The land, now, (...)

it is the storm becalmed.

Amílcar Cabral<sup>1</sup>

We begin with the recognition that the Earth is wretched. This is not a metaphor. It is literally our ground. The Earth is wretched because its soil that thin layer of earth at the surface of the planet upon which we depend for life - is contaminated, eroded, drained, burnt, exploded, flooded and impoverished on a worldwide scale.

Shela Sheikh and Ros Gray<sup>2</sup>

Soil is and remains a space of struggle and conflict. Globally, the devastation of landscapes, consumption and exhaustion of natural "resources", vanishing of species and ecosystems, and the proliferation of wars and cultural genocides have left their marks on the land for centuries. And yet, local communities across geographies and spaces are experimenting with forms of collectivisation, and autonomy as rejections of the capitalist and colonial model of agriculture. It has become clear that most of the discourses around the violence of anthropogenic land-use raised in the past decades do not account for the deep interconnections of patriarchal, racial, and neocolonial patterns of extraction and destruction of lifeworlds.

In the face of terrestrial destruction, in which the Earth is both a skin of soil and a planet, contemporary experimental micro-economies of community subsistence farming put forward the power of food and land sovereignty as an affirmation "of the right of populations to decide what to eat and how to produce it,"3 to put it with Mariarosa Dalla Costa. Food is a common good rather than a commodity. Even when looking at soil or water as mere resources for the support of human life, threats of "peak soil" and water wars point to the states of exhaustion, contamination,

and desertification inscribed into this thin layer of living matter. All conflicts in recent decades share "the aspect of massive destruction of land and with it, resources for subsistence be they grazing lands or lands for sustainable and diversified agriculture primarily intended for domestic consumption."4

The earth has reached a tipping point. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa suggests that infrastructures often only become visible once they start to break down. On a planetary scale, soil becomes necessary for the support of all life: "Today, the worrisome state of soil in many places has made of it a public matter of concern. We could say that this global perspective alone reveals it as a vital infrastructure of bios on Earth. A flow of catastrophic messages is making more visible its vital importance." 5 Soil as an infrastructure, in this case literally a structure from below, is the living ground for human and more-than-human life. It is both biological and geological; its materiality is a partiture of dependencies and interrelations. As Bellacasa suggests, against less ecological and uncritical modes, we should engage with "the disruptive pace of care," reconsidering anthropocentric notions of care and understanding the fundamental collaboration of many agents and communities as the real living web of care circulating in and constituting the "natural" world.

Elia Nurivista's Sucker Zucker installation in the exhibition ponders on sugar and its history, opening up narratives of material extraction, slavery and exploitation. It renders evident the geographical divide between a world of raw materials, cheap labour, trading companies, and consumption. The artist is conducting research in Indonesia, exploring the patterns of exploitation of the palm oil industry and the land grabbing politics performed by local governments through foreign investment. Agrarian law and coloniality are inherently linked in Indonesia, which translates into arbitrary and unclear situations, allowing opaqueness and the perverse liaison between corporations, multinationals, politicians, and local speculators. As Elia puts it herself, "Mostly the foreign investment was stimulated by the spectacle of colonial fantasies of conquest and discovery, including risk, virility, and violence. This fantastic or spectacular form of investment, transnational in nature, in turn colluded with Indonesian corrupt government practices, mostly in the time of new order (1966-1998) under the term of "developing" the country."6

Amilcar Cabral, in the poem: Return, in: Unity and Struggle. Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1979): 4.
 Ros Gray & Shela Sheikh: The Wretched Earth. Third Text, 32:2–3 (2018): 163.

<sup>3</sup> Mariarosa Dalla Costa: Food Sovereignty, Peasants, and Women. Commoner June 21 (2008)

<sup>5</sup> Maria Puig de la Bellacasa: Encountering Bioinfrastructure: Ecological Struggles and the

Sciences of Soil. Social Epistemology 28(1) (2014): 36.
6 Elia Nurvista, quoted from a conversation between the

Coloniality was and is always not only imposed on human beings, but also on the more-than-human, on plants and microbial life, and in the making of the binaries of "nature" and "culture". It inscribes itself even into the soil through the decomposed traces of its past and continuing brutality, bodies and bones left and kept, others removed and repatriated. The botanical sciences of classification and plant modification emerged alongside the establishment of plantation economies, made possible by the transatlantic slave

trade. Historian Londa Schiebinger suggests that botanical gardens were set up as "experimental stations for agriculture and way stations for plant acclimatization for domestic and global trade;"7 they became institutional test sites of "improvement". There is a green thread from this colonisation of morethan-human vegetal life, its conversion into capitalist resources and land dispossession, to current forms of agricultural biotechnology. In this exhibition, Uriel Urlow's Soil Affinities and Luis Berríos-Negrón's Wardian Table confront us with the politics of transplantation and reflect on the geopolitical and economic movements of plants for agriculture, between colonies and European imperial powers. Drawing upon the entanglement between modern botany and colonialism, the film Linnaeus and the Terminator Seed by Pedro Neves Margues connects the modern obsession with classification and indexation of life forms with the politics of contemporary transgenics.

Extraction has moved to the genetic scale and the realm of intellectual property in the engineering of genetically modified seeds. It is a new technology for making farmers dependent on a global scale. Anna Tsing and Donna Haraway speak of the "Plantationocene" to describe these material histories of life forms under capitalism in "the devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures and forests into extractive enclosed plantations, relying on slave labour and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labour [...] moving material semiotic generativity around the world for capital accumulation and profit - the rapid displacement and reformulation of germplasm, genomes, cuttings, [...] plants, animals, and people."8 The logic of the Plantationocene is embedded across all relationality. In the exhibition Binta Diaw's sculptural installation Chorus of Soil points to these (geo)traumatic residues of memory that remain attached to material as it travels and transforms.

While we are writing this text, the Amazon rainforest is burning at an unprecedented scale. The government of Brazil is accusing NGOs to have started these fires, and has declared this emergency a domestic affair,

where no international interference will be accepted. In these same days the Waorani indigenous community in the Pastanza Province have beaten big oil and the Ecuadorian government in a court battle, rendering a land sale that was unknowingly being signed by the tribe null, and saving millions of acres of rainforest.." To challenge uncritical narratives of the Anthropocene, "the Age of Man", Marisol de la Cadena proposes the concept of the anthropo-not-seen. Rather than referring to a "regime of non-visibility" and passivity, the anthropo-not-seen brings to the fore the antagonistic and disobedient practices recalcitrant to classification. As she writes, it gives image and voice to the process of destruction of worlds and the resistance to this destruction. "As an organised process of destruction sometimes through benevolently offered assimilation the anthropo-not-seen included and continues to include, a silent war waged against entities and worldmaking practices that ignore the separation of entities into nature and culture."9

Agroecology, wherever it is practised, is about resistance and resilience, according to food justice activist Mama D Ujuaje. Questioning techno-scientific epistemologies and agriculture as a biopolitical tool, this exhibition wants to ask: How could entangled anti-colonial and environmental alliances nurture each other? How can we transform ruins, colonial erosion, and damaged landscapes - and take up tactics of precarity to make living possible despite economic and ecological ruination? How can we enable interspecies entanglements and collaborations to imagine polyphonic multidirectional futures?

#### RE-ROOTING: SUBMERGED PERSPECTIVES

Throughout the development of the project, we sought to learn from an "ecology of practices" 10 of cultivation to re-root and re-ground questions of sovereignty and land rights. Understanding and witnessing the practical care and intimate relations of cultivation towards sovereignty was crucial to go beyond theoretical epistemologies. During the workshop Seed as a Relation developed in collaboration with artist Hassan Darsi, we got to learn about the practices of the agroecological gardens in the Ben Aïssi village and Benslimane forests outside Casablanca in Morocco. Learning from local farmers and artists who engaged with the landscape and soil as a form of resistance to large-scale quarries threatening the villages' water supply, economic and social life, we understood and experienced firsthand the deep and existential interconnections of agroecology, sovereignty, and activism. The urgency of

this agroecological fight against corporate destruction of the possibilities of independent and healthy living, materialised into a heuristic and empowering alliance between farmers, artists, activists, and cultural workers on a larger scale. Another deeply formative moment in understanding the strength, resilience and care held within farming practices was the Convention of Women Farmers, organised by artist Marwa Arsanios in the context of the Warsaw Biennale in Poland. We took part in the convention, exchanging knowledge, stories, and materials of soil transformation, witnessing and learning from the coming together of women farmers from across the globe who traded not only strategies and methodologies, but also bridged ecofeminist experiences of practiced autonomy and self-sufficiency.

The defence of sovereignty, land rights, the commons, and the broader struggle over natural "resources" emerged as a common thread across these initiatives, as well as many others within the wider ecology of practices.11 Among them, we conversed with, followed, and have been inspired by the Garifuna OFRANEH (Black Fraternal Organisation of Honduras), Jinwar village in Rojava, Northern Syria, Sakiya, an arts, science and agriculture initiative in Palestine, the INLAND art collective's gathering in an abandoned village in rural Northern Spain, the Foodscape Collective in Singapore and the Associação para o Desenvolvimento Integrado da Mulher (ADIM) in Guinea-Bissau. These practices and initiatives embody forms of communal resistance and lived resilience by battling for the commons and situated knowledges that go beyond and below agriscientific concepts of cultivation in sustaining relations of belonging. Narrating and giving a different sensitivity to these struggles through art became an important way to make visible slow (and fast) environmental violences.

To continue supporting each other's struggles and providing an open platform for the exchange of knowledge and strategies, we conceived of a participative and generative radio format using a Telegram group "hack" put together in collaboration with Archipel Stations Community Radio (Monaí de Paula Antunes and Ela Spalding) and radio aporee (Udo Noll). The outcome of this experiment will be featured live during our invocations programme, and will become a public platform with a continuous stream on Archipel Stations Community webradio. Members of this group, the agropoets, are invited to share their stories, experiences, dreams, singing, and situated knowledges in different languages and formats.

Across the project we sought to work with a positionality that Macarena Gómez-Barris describes as "submerged perspectives"; she urges us to see "social ecologies that reorganise and refute the monocultural

social imperative."12 In the following, we think through our engagement with the materiality of soil and agroecological artistic entanglements by reference to what we call patterns of epistemological and ontological dispersal:

### DISPERSAL 1: AGROPOETICS

Soil is the inscribed body and erosion is the scar left by historical violence.13

Filipa César

We take a cue from what Filipa César named "Amílcar Cabral's agropoetics of liberation" to articulate how political theory can be informed and subverted by agricultural practice. Cabral is most known as leader and Secretary-General of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), and was assassinated by Portuguese agents in 1973. As Filipa César suggested, Cabral's practice as an agronomist for the Portuguese academy can be read as a subversive strategy that germinated in his political formation and militancy, to advance "the liberation struggle from inside, using colonial resources to inform and strengthen the liberation movement".14

Can we engage with some of Cabral's studies and writings on soil epistemology to analyse and enlighten current struggles against monoculture, land grabbing, and neo-colonial extraction across the globe? César compares Cabral's methodology to Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's concept of the Undercommons<sup>15</sup>, "a practice that undermines the neoliberal academic edifice through clandestine activities that exceed the limitations and desires imposed by the capitalist agenda."16 Can we read some of the current experiments that merge agrarian traditions of self-sufficiency, contemporary art, and ecological practices as heuristic systems of knowledge production and sharing?

Bouba Touré and Raphaël Grisey's contributions to the exhibition show the ongoing work of the selforganised Malian agricultural cooperative Somankidi Coura, founded by former African migrant workers and activists in France. Touré was one of the cooperative's co-founders and documented its development from the very beginnings. They highlight the connections between liberation struggles and collective practices of care in permaculture through seeking to narrate one's own narratives of empowerment.

Londa Schiebinger: Plants and Empire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009): 11. Donna Haraway: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,

Environmental Humanities (2015). Retrieved from https://read.dukeupress.edu/environ humanities/article-abstract/6/1/159/8110

<sup>9</sup> Marisol de la Cadena: Uncommining Nature: Stories from the Anthropo-not-Seen, p.8. (2018) Retrieved from: http://www.lasisummerschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ Uncommoning-Nature-Anthropos-and-the-Material-July-5th.pdf

<sup>10</sup> A term we are borrowing from philosopher Isabelle Stengers: Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices, Cultural Studies Review (2013).

<sup>11</sup> We also learned from other curatorial projects such as Natasha Ginwala and Vivian Zihrl's research project Landings: On Sounding the Earth, which opened up the conne geological inscription as cultural expression, the construction of 'rurality' and what a listening to land as a historical agent might mean.

<sup>12</sup> Macarena Gómez-Barris: The Extractive Zone. (Durham and London: Duke University Press

<sup>(2017):</sup> XV.

13 Filipa César's writing on Cabral, particularly her text Meteorisations: Reading Amílcar Cabral's esal's withing on Cabrat, painturally lief lett witerorisations. Reading Affiliat activates ny of Liberation was fundamental for this project, and has inspired its title: Filipa César sations: Reading Amílcar Cabral's Agronomy of Liberation. Third Text 32.2–3 (2018): Ibid: 261.

<sup>15</sup> Stefano Harney & Fred Moten: The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study. (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013).

Relations of cultivation not only have inscribed themselves into the soil but also become cultural objects and carriers of rituals. Artist Dina Amro speaks of these poetic cultural objects in her sound installation time flows in all directions\_water flows through me as "technologies" towards future sovereignty in describing Palestinian songs performed to summon rain in a context where most water resources are currently controlled by Israel. These manifestations of a sonic identity hold memories, but also channel future imaginaries of the commons and collective living.

## DISPERSAL 2: EDAPHIC AGENCY: A BODY, CARRIER AND VESSEL

The soil is an inscribed body, a scarred terrain. But it is also a multitude of organisms that carry this history of erosion. It is a container and meeting space for collectivities. This project is a tentative testing ground for artistic engagements with the soil as vessel, as fragile global body for speculative, collaborative futures. Soil, a life world of organic matter, minerals, and organisms is a medium for plant growth and water storage, but also a habitat in itself, constantly shifting in metabolic processes. Soil is not just inhabited but made of these life forms, and as such alive itself.

Thinking with and through what we call edaphic agency (that is, of the soil) we engage with the intelligence of microbial life worlds and plants as social beings capable of care, relationality, and intentionality. As such, we continue the puzzle posed by Astrida Neimanis in No Representation Without Colonisation, wherein she speculates: "What if nature writes, thinks, is literate and numerate, produces patterns and meanings, expresses sociality, intelligence, changeability, invention?"17 With artistic and curatorial efforts to represent the more-than-human in relationships of cultivation, we need to be careful about what it means to speak for, to give voice to such more-than-human agents. If we want to listen to the soil as a living witness, also in forensic terms, it is by being cognisant of the fact that "we" are also always more-than-human already. Through processes of ingestion and digestion we are deeply connected with these food webs, we share the same organisms in our microbiomes. Local and global networks of cultivation and microbial collaboration come together in our bodies with their own cycles of life, death and "microbiopolitics", to borrow a term from artist Zayaan Khan. In the exhibition, Yen Chao Lin's film Small Things offers a glimpse into the life worlds of vermicompost, wherein worms are accelerating processes of decomposition and nutrient cycling to create fertile soils. Taking this practice further and into

a different direction, geophagy, the practice of earth eating – sometimes for beneficial microbiological effects and sometimes as a destructive act to reclaim control of one's life and death – is the subject of Lerato Shadi's exploration in her video work MOTLHABA WA RE KE NAMILE, wherein she reveals the histories of not just inscription but also ingestion of the soil. Thinking with edaphic agency allows us to look at conflict as a productive space, to reject notions of purity, whether genetic or epistemic, to open up space, and to slow down time for radical pedagogies of learning.

# DISPERSAL 3: AGAINST SOIL NATIONALISMS AND PATRIARCHAL DISPOSSESSION

Agriculture is being weaponised as a warden for national identity: the relationships between blood and soil, between identity and land are being essentialised and made the terrain for xenophobic arguments and paranoid constructs of "the other". In the exhibition, Cedric Nunn's *Unsettled* series of images of memorial sites, geographical formations, and agricultural fields reveals the longevity and resilience of the resistance of the Xhosa people against Boer and British colonisers in South Africa over the course of more than 100 years.

Artist Leone Contini, who is traversing art, activism, and anthropological research, works on the phenomenon of migrant agriculture in Italy, addressing how purist and ideological approaches to traditional farming cultures are nourishing nationalist xenophobic attitudes. In his work, he engages with practices of resistance developed by Chinese farming communities in Tuscany who are object of unanimous persecution by local authorities, media and citizens. They are responding by developing parallel food circuits contravening local legislation.

It is crucial to emphasise that many of the struggles we have learned from, be they from Guinea-Bissau to Palestine and Syria, are carried and pushed forward by women, reflecting what activist Miriam Miranda described in the Honduran context as follows: "everywhere throughout Honduras, like in all of Latin America, Africa, Asia, women are at the forefront of the struggles (...) not only with our bodies but also with our force, our ideas, our proposals. We don't only birth children, but ideas and actions as well."18 This goes hand in hand with the deep historical-material connection of enclosures on land, the environment, and the commons that happened simultaneously to and was supported by the subjugation of women and reproductive labour and the instrumentalisation of "witchery", as argued by Silvia Federici in Caliban and the Witch.

Thinking and doing agropoetically becomes an act of manifesting healing and repair in the face of environmental, patriarchal violence, and the weaponisation of agriculture. Soil as the earth's vulnerable skin can hold geotrauma but also point to the possibility of collective care, healing and living. Hervé Yamquen's installation Une cabanes d'histoires creates a space for poetry and images of ritual sites in West Cameroon, linking both cosmo- and geopoetics to a metaphorical space of belonging. Agroecology is poetic but also resistant in its relating. It is an attempt towards building a culture that values soil and the predominantly female, black, and indigenous people who have taken care of the Earth, and continue to do so. As artist Mia Harrison explores in her work, connecting with the Earth in this sense is also about unearthing stored memories and wounds that have been left open.

## DISPERSAL 4: SOIL EPISTEMOLOGIES

S A V V Y Contemporary is located below ground, in the shadows of a Bayer factory that dominates the first impressions of Berlin's Wedding neighbourhood. In Cartography of an Experiment Under Open Sky artist Julia Mensch explores the connection between Bayer's Wedding location and the Argentine soy monopoly and networks of activism against these global transactions of genetically modified organisms. In the aftermath of Bayer's merger with Monsanto, the largest in the history of corporate mutations, this exhibition thinks through what it could mean to work invisibly and from the ground up, while a new era of regimes of life through agriscience is being ushered onto the scene.

We learn from a poetics of dormancy and germination to think with edaphic agency about what it means to lie in waiting, touching, and sensing the surrounding matter. It is easy to fetishise the caring relationships of cultivation at the root of agricultural practices, but Vilém Flusser's "Gesture of Planting" points to the "unnatural," perverse nature of this gesture, which forces nature to deny itself. Agriculture here is always already an act of "not only planting and harvesting but above all greedily and jealously watching"19. Planting is a gesture at the foundation of claims of ownership, it is "a powerful and violent gesture". We need to look critically at both the farmer and the curator in their roles as carers and acknowledge the power dynamics at play in these relationships. When it comes to representations of "nature" we often tend to fetishise the "natural", the "local", the "indigenous", and the "traditional"<sup>20</sup>. Barbara Marcel and Ana Hupe explore another extractive link with Berlin, they seek to make visible the survival of indigenous cultivation technologies and knowledges and work towards a decolonial listening practice in their work Maniok reibe ich dir, Schwesterchen which traces the voice recordings of Macushi indigenous people singing a women's labour song. The recording was done

by German naturalists and is held in the Phonographic

Archive in Berlin–Dahlem. Throughout this project, we have been careful to reflect on how we engage with the fetishisation of indigeneity and soil epistemologies developed by indigenous practices without reproducing the same patterns of dispossession to which they have been subjected.

If we talk about soil epistemologies, it is urgent and impossible not to take into account movements for social change. When dealing with care, whether agricultural or curatorial, one needs to then be sensitive to how this is embedded in the control of knowledges – that which can be said, done, and the way in which it is said and done. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa suggests that "scientific knowledge about soil is not just used by but may well be produced by movements for social change, in a quest to transform ecological relations between different beings sharing the Earth"<sup>21</sup>. What does a decolonial, more—than—human sensitivity challenge and make possible when bringing together practices of cultivation and liberation?

T H A N K Y O U We express deep and heartfelt thanks to the artists, farmers, activists and agroecological initiatives that allowed us to learn from their practices, and generously shared their spaces and knowledges throughout this project. Among them, apart from the artists in the exhibition: Associação para o Desenvolvimento Integrado da Mulher (ADIM), Yemisi Aribisala, Samanta Arango Orozco, Marwa Arsanios, Biowatch South Africa, Florence and Hassan Darsi, Mama D Ujuaje, Alex Ungprateeb Flynn, Ayesha Hameed, Bertrand Houin, Fadma Kaddouri, Jaques Lopez, Antje Majewski, Jumana Manna, Huiying Ng, Zahia Rahmani, Youssef Ouchra, Prinzessinenngärten, Sakyia - Art, Science, Agriculture, Surplus Movement, Jonas Tinius, Mercy Vera, and Nicole Wolf.

T E X T Elena Agudio and Marleen Boschen

<sup>17</sup> She builds here on Gayatari Spivak's question of "Can the Subaltern speak?" to take the dilemma of representation to the relationality of the more-than-human: Astrida Neimanis: No Representation without Colonisation? (Or, Nature Represents Itself)", Somatechnics, 5(2) (2015): 146.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Miriam Miranda. As referenced here: https://rightsandresources.org/en/blog/defending-afro-indigenous-land-black-fraternal-organization-of-honduras-wins-food-sovereignty-prize/#.XVFx7pNKgWo.

<sup>19</sup> Vilém Flusser: The Gesture of Planting, in: Gestures. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Throughout the project we are seeking to work from the ground up, thinking both in terms of the poetic and political potential of the metaphors created from working with the edaphic but also of resisting the fetishisation of indigenous or "grassroots" practices and cosmologies. We recognise what Zoe Todd describes as that "we are just an invasion or economic policy away from re-colonising at any moment. So it is so important to think, deeply, about how the Ontological Turn- with its breathless 'realisations' that animals, the climate, water, 'atmospheres' and non-human presences like ancestors and spirits are sentient and possess agency, that 'nature' and 'culture', 'human' and 'animal' may not be so separate after all - is itself perpetuating the exploitation of Indigenous peoples." (Zoe Todd: An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' is Just Another Word For Colonialism', Journal of Historical Sociology, 29 (1) (2016): 4–22.)

<sup>21</sup> Maria Puig de la Bellacasa: Encountering Bioinfrastructure: Ecological Struggles and the Sciences of Soil, Social Epistemology 28 (1) (2014): 31.

# WORKS

01 TIME FLOWS IN ALL DIRECTIONS\_WATER FLOWS THROUGH ME Sound installation and mural 2019

Dina Amro's sound installation at the entrance of SAVVY Contemporary and her performance during the public programme of the Invocations bridge a past brimming with collective sovereignty over water resources to a very different prospect for the future of Palestine. The piece titled *time flows* in all directions\_water flows through me takes field recordings of haphazard conversations about rainsummoning songs with women from various locations, but intentionally stitches these conversations together with the performer's own writing and production. The piece opens up the possibility that this sovereignty over rain, expressed in the traditional rain songs sung in the field research, can be extended to mean sovereignty over time, and that their revival is one way of forging an alternative future whereby linear progress and colonialism is confronted with communal technologies of sovereignty and liberation. The text murals of the rain summoning songs included in the installation have been painted by Abdul Razzak Shaballout. DINA AMRO is a researcher working in the field of sound practices in the Palestinian context. Her work is informed both by research material she gathers in Palestine, and from the sounded and written repertoires that are historically and politically engaged such as those by artists and writers like Dirar Kalash, Jumana Manna, Emily Jacir, and Kareem Samara. She focuses on imagining the possibilities of how Palestinians can regain sovereignty, specifically over their water resources, and uses sound as a medium to explore this theme. She is currently completing a master programme at Goldsmiths College, University of London, on rain-summoning songs and rituals. ABDUL RAZZAK SHABALLOUT is an artist from Homs, Syria, based in Berlin. He was a lecturer in painting at Damascus University and has exhibited at Kozah Gallery, Beirut and Arabian Wings Gallery, Jeddah. He received a scholarship from the Heinrich Böll Haus in 2015.

02 LINNEAUS AND THE
TERMINATOR SEED Film, colour, sound,
15 mins 2017

Is there a deterministic evolutionary line connecting modern botany to contemporary transgenics? Gathering botanical drawings by European naturalists in Latin America and Southeast Asia, plant genome representations, contracts, and UN documents about transgenic seeds, as well as modern depictions of the

reproductive systems of flowers and humans, this short film–essay explores the sexual imaginary of botanists such as Carl Linnaeus. It considers the post-natural conditions governing current biotechnology, the colonial management of reproduction, as well as the representation and indexation of life forms past and present.

PEDRO NEVES MARQUES is a visual artist, filmmaker, and writer, Born in Lisbon, Portugal, he lives in New York City. Among others, he has exhibited or screened his work at Gasworks, Tate Modern, and Serpentine Galleries Cinema, London; Pérez Art Museum of Miami, Miami, and e-flux, SculptureCenter, and Anthology Film Archives in New York, Sursock Art Museum, Beirut and Times Museum, Guangzhou. As a writer, he is the editor of the anthology on Brazilian antropofagia and anthropology, The Forest and the School: Where to Sit at the Dinner Table? (2015) and the author of two short-story collections, most recently Morrer na América (2017). He has written for magazines such as e-flux Journal and The Baffler, and has published texts in books by Archive Books, Verso Books, MIT Press, and the HKW. Together with artist Mariana Silva he is the founder of inhabitants, an online channel for exploratory video and documentary reporting.

## 03 SUCKER ZUCKER Mural/Sculptures 2019

The shape of crystalline sugar resembles the material of diamond or jewel stones. They share colours, shapes, and histories marked by slavery, labour exploitation and material extraction. The history of sugar reveals one of the biggest migrations through enslavement and industrialisation, involving many parts of the world: from the African continent, the Caribbean and Asia to Europe. This operating model of commodity production continues today in the context of how the world is divided geographically between the raw material sources, cheap labour, trading companies and the consumption models they are fostering; and thus leading to exploitation. Murals painted by Abdul Razzak Shaballout.

E L I A N U R V I S T A is an artist whose practice focuses on food production and distribution and its broader social and historical implications. Food in various forms – from the planting of crops, to the act of eating and the sharing of recipes – are Nurvista's entry points to explore issues of economics, labour, politics, culture and gender. Her practice is also concerned with the intersection of food and commodities, and their relationship to colonialism, economic and political power, and status. She runs Bakudapan, a food study group that undertakes community and research projects. Her social

research forms the background of her individual projects, presented through mixed media installations, food workshops, group discussions and texts.

## 04 MOTLHABA WA RE KE NAMILE Film, colour, sound, 7 mins 30 sec 2016

This video was shot on location in Shadi's home village of Lotlhakane in Mahikeng, Northwest Province, South Africa. It references a mask used on enslaved people in order to prevent them from committing suicide through the act of consuming soil. The work focuses on this act of eating soil to commit suicide which has been overlooked as a form of resistance. The film also makes reference to the challenges on land dispossession, belonging and displacement entangled in these questions of sovereignty over one's life and death. LERATO SHADI lives and works in Berlin. Her artistic practice explores problematic assumptions projected onto the Black female body and how performance, video and installation can create a space to engage with those preconceived notions, making the body both visible and invisible. Shadi questions how the white cube of the gallery and the museum can be symbolic of spaces of exclusion. How does the location and architecture affect the body that is performing in it? Why is it important to center, not just include, the marginalised body as a main figure of narrating experience? Shadi participated in The Parliament of Bodies, the Public Programs of documenta 14 and was awarded with the AFRICA'SOUT! residency program (New York) in 2017.

## 05 CHORUS OF SOIL Sculptural installation, soil, seeds 2019

Chorus of Soil gives materiality to the sonority of the soil, to its noise and agency to speak of the narratives of bodies and voices inscribed into it. The installation is a large-scale reproduction of an 18th-century architectural plan for a slave-ship made of earth and seeds. It embodies a space of memorialisation, a temple, and a sanctuary, but also - and more importantly - of new life, as it manifests in the material used for the installation; soil, a living and breathing entity, where new seedlings can grow. We are born from this earth and it keeps our bodies alive after our passing. In her research, the artist reflects on the connection between the slave trade and contemporary migration. Referring to the plantations run by the mafia in Southern Italy, where thousands of migrants are systematically exploited and live under the threat of the so called "caporali", the piece carries melon seeds that the artist planted in the week before the opening. Drawing upon Alice Walker's In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, Binta Diaw unfolds narratives of struggles and resistance, suggesting to reconnect to the agency of women's collective gardening as a practice of commoning, that creates communities of solidarity across the world in order to remember the past and reconfigure the present.

BINTA DIAW is a Senegalese–Italian visual artist. Her research focuses on the creation of installations of various sizes and works about social phenomena like migration, contemporary colonial narrations, anthropological, and social aspects in the European context, her body's relationship with nature, and the complexity of her identity. She is pursuing a degree from the Academy of Art and Design of Grenoble, in France, and was a team member of S A V V Y Contemporary in 2018.

In the last two years, she has developed her research through an intersectional feminist methodology based on a physical and personal experience: herself, as a social body and her position as a black woman (being born in Italy to Senegalese parents) from the point of view of second-generation migrants.

## 06 UNSETTLED - ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF RESISTANCE BY THE XHOSA PEOPLE AGAINST BOER AND BRITISH Photographs 2014

Cedric Nunn's Unsettled series reveals the traces of the resistance of the Xhosa people against the British and Boer in South Africa, as well as the outcomes of lost wars and the erosions the land suffered since. From 1779 to 1879 the Xhosa people were subjected to nine wars of aggression over a one hundred year period, first by Afrikaner settlers and then British colonialist and settler forces intent on conquering the Xhosa and their territory. There is little to memorialise this act of aggression and resistance. The series looks at the land as it speaks of being occupied, desired, defended, lost and won. In the images we see both the uses and states it is found in today, by the victors and the vanguished, as well as the continuing collaborations and beauty, which stirred the souls of the inhabitants and the lust of the invaders.

Cedric Nunn's second contribution from the series Biowatch Agroecology Farmers documents the work of Biowatch, a South Africa based nongovernmental organisation of groups of rural women in the coastal province of KwaZulu–Natal. Their practice engages in agroecology, a return to ancient farming techniques and a focus on seed sovereignty. Heirloom seeds form the heart of their practice as they cultivate, nurture crops that preceded European settlement and domination of their region. This project, a seed as well, propagates itself through the region, buoyed by its own success, and promises to reverse the harsh treatment both land and people were subjected to in the quest for endless growth and profit by the imperial settler colonial project and its associated economy and politics.

C E D R I C N U N N is South Africa born and based, of fourth generation mixed–race parentage. He began making photographs in Durban in the early 1980s. He soon moved to Johannesburg and joined the photographic association and agency

Afrapix in 1982 and was a member until it closed in 1990. He has continued to work independently as a documentary photographer and artist, showing his work in galleries and museums in South Africa and abroad. Nunn has taught photography at the University of the Witwatersrand's Wits School of Arts. He was previously also Director of the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg. In 2011, he won the first FNB Joburg Art Fair Award. Nunn lives in Hillcrest, KwaZulu–Natal and Johannesburg.

07 SOIL AFFINITIES Installation Wooden boxes, 4 videos, lightbox, archival pigment prints 2018

Soil Affinities takes its starting point in Parisian suburb Aubervilliers' 19th century market gardening past which ended when factories started to take over and relegated agriculture to small workers' gardens for the underpaid factory labourers. Around the same time, in 1899, after the infamous Berlin conference which divided Africa between the European powers, the French colonial department created a colonial test garden in Vicennes, Paris. In specially designed transport boxes — the socalled Ward crates — plants would be shipped from the Americas to Paris and from there to a series of newly set up test gardens in Dakar, Saint Louis and elsewhere in West Africa. Over time those same gardens also started experimenting with and cultivating European staples for the growing French settler population. This eventually led to large scale commercial cultivation of vegetables in West Africa after independence from France in 1960 with a number of French and European companies creating industrial farms in Senegal producing almost exclusively for Rungis, one of the biggest wholesale markets in Europe, just outside Paris. Soil Affinities traces these lines and networks of terrestrial connections between plants and people, across different geographies and temporalities, through video, photography, and other documents gathered in France and Senegal, allowing them to speak for themselves as well as cross-fertilise each other.

URIEL ORLOW lives and works between London and Lisbon. His practice is research-based, process-oriented and multi-disciplinary including film, photography, drawing and sound. He is known for single screen film works, lecture performances and modular, multi-media installations that focus on specific locations and micro-histories by bringing different image-regimes and narrative modes into correspondence. His work is concerned with spatial manifestations of memory, blind spots of representation and forms of haunting. Orlow's work is presented widely in museums, film festivals and international survey shows including Manifesta 12, Palermo (2018), 2nd Yinchuan Biennial (2018), 13th Sharjah Biennial 13 (2017), 7th Moscow Biennial (2017), EVA International, Limerick (2016), 2nd Aichi Triennale, Nagoya (2013), Bergen Assembly (2013), Manifesta 9 (2012), 54th Venice Biennale (2011). In 2017 he was awarded the Sharjah Biennial prize.

08 EXTREMADURA LOOTED Installation, film, poster and books 2019

In 1978, a large group of young cultural workers from different disciplines decided to engage in field work in Extremadura (an autonomous region in western Spain), looking at the escalating dispute between local farmers, villagers and governmental plans to install a power plant in the area. It was one of the first times that Franco's development policies were being contested in the streets, and, pertinently, from the very core of his regime's creation: the settlers of new villages, instated after the Spanish Civil War as part of a new hydraulic policy, establishing irrigated land in former arid plains. The multidisciplinary group developed a thorough analysis of this energetic governmental plan and created a historical portrait of the structural exploitation of the region, which was an almost inner-colony. The book, Extremadura Looted, was published in Paris by printers in exile, and formed the last blow to the power plant project that was finally abandoned. For more than two years, INLAND has been researching and working with the historical, political and conceptual framework that made possible the publication of Extremadura Looted / Extremadura Saqueada. In this installation, a video shows a collective reading by INLAND members of a re-enacted and partly fictional series of texts, dialogues and testimonies attributed to the original multidisciplinary group of researchers 40 years back, mixed with footage from newborn villages that later fought to the power plant plans. For INLAND, this ongoing work rethinks the conditions in which cultural production could happen then – and potentially now - engaged in a rural context, combining research and mobilisation. The products, such as the re-designed poster announcing the publication made in collaboration with designer Ignacio Gatica, are tools in territorial struggles and aim to bend inherited extractivist and imposed development logics. INLAND is a platform for collective agricultural, social, and cultural production, and a collaborative agency. It was created in 2009 by Fernando García-Dory as a project about the possibility of an organisation that engages territories, culture, and social change. INLAND functions as a collective and works as a para-institution to open spaces for land-based collaborations, economies, and communities-of-practice as a substrate for cultural forms. Appearing in different configurations in different countries, while dissolving individual agency within the collective, INLAND publishes books, produces shows, and makes cheese. It also consults the European Union Commission on the use of art within rural development policies, while facilitating a shepherd and nomadic peoples movement, and is recovering an abandoned village in an undisclosed location for collective artistic and agricultural production. It has been present at the Istanbul Biennial, the Maebashi Museum of Japan, MALBA, Matadero Madrid, Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellin, and the Jeju Biennial, South Korea, amongst many others. During 2019,

INLAND is working with the Serpentine Gallery, London,

Centre Pompidou in Paris, and Casa do Povo, São Paulo. Fernando García–Dory's work engages specifically with the relationship between culture and nature. Interested in the harmonic complexity of biological forms and processes, his work addresses connections and cooperation: from microorganisms to social systems, and from traditional art languages to collaborative agro–ecological projects and actions.

09 MANIOK REIBE ICH DIR, S C H W E S T E R C H E N 2-channel video installation 13 mins & 43 mins 2015-2019 The video gathers images and interviews with local Amazon women activists and herbalists, filmed by Barbara Marcel and Ana Hupe in Santarém, Alter do Chão and in the community of Anã between 2013 and 2017 (Alto Tapajós River, Amazon region, Brazil). In the second, more experimental channel, guided by a sound piece by musician Thelmo Cristovam, fragments of the first film ever shot in the Amazonian forest, No Paiz das Amazonas (Silvino Santos and Agesislau de Araújo, Manaus, Brazil 1922), are merged with images of present-day soy monocultures and local politicians discussing town planning. The surviving ancestral indigenous process of manufacturing manioc flour is also juxtaposed with an old recording of Macushi indigenous people singing a women's labour song recorded by the German naturalist Theodor Koch-Grünberg between 1911 and 1913 during a trip to the Brasilian and Venezuelan Amazon. Mixing the sound material contained in the Koch-Grünberg wax rolls with contemporary images demonstrating the survival of indigenous technology in the production of manioc flour in Caboclo communities in the Amazon region, the artists experiment with the possibilities of productive shocks between past and present, and challenge viewers to a decolonial reckoning with the Phonographic Archive of Berlin-Dahlem Museum. BARBARA MARCEL is an artist and filmmaker interested in the cultural roots of nature and the troubled heritage of colonial imagery. Marcel graduated in Film Studies in Rio de Janeiro, holds an MA from the Art in Context Institute at the Universität der Künste Berlin (UdK) and is currently a PhD candidate at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar as a research fellow of the Heinrich Böll Foundation. Her artistic research PhD investigates the essay film as a historiographical tool for decolonial ecological thinking with and through images, focusing on issues related to the history of botanic between Germany and Latin America. Recent exhibitions include: Fractured Landscapes: Broad Underground Film Series at Broad Art Museum, Michigan (2019); Disappearing Legacies: The World as Forest at the CeNak Centrum für Naturkunde Hamburg and the Tieranatomisches Theater Berlin (2017-18); Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin: New Cinema and Contemporary Arts at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt and the Centre Pompidou (2018); La Voluntad de la Forma at Espacio Pla, Buenos Aires (2018); Tropic Matters at V240, Amsterdam (solo show 2017); and Omonoia Athens Biennial (2016).

ANA HUPE is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and lives in Berlin. She dedicates her practice to building a contra-memory of colonial archives. She works with printmaking, sculpture, photography, video, and social practices creating multiple narratives related to histories of resistance. She holds a Doctor in Fine Arts by PPGAV-UFRJ (2016), with one year research at UdK Berlin. In 2019, she is part of the Goldrausch Program Berlin. In 2018, she was at residency Vila Sul, Goethe Institut Salvador, Bahia, Brazil and won the Prêmio Foco by Rio Art Fair; as well as completing her residency "Artista x Artista", in Havana, Cuba. Her most recent solo exhibitions are Women of the Fourth World (2017, Paco das Artes, São Paulo, and G. Mario Kreuzberg, Berlin), A lot of Future for one single memory (Fundaj, Brazil 2017) and Readings to move the center (2016, CCBB, Brazil).

10 CARTOGRAPHY OF AN EXPERIMENT UNDER OPEN SKY Installation, newspaper publications, text and painted ceramic plate 2017-in progress

The ongoing boom of agroindustrial biotechnology started in Argentina in 1996, when the first genetically modified (GM) crop was commercially released for cultivation: Monsanto's Roundup Ready glyphosatetolerant soybeans. Since then, the monoculture model is applied in Argentina as if territories were open laboratories, without taking precautionary principles into consideration. Cancer, malformations, DNAdamages, chronic diseases and other health problems are said to be significantly increasing, especially in areas close to GM-plantations. The agrochemicals show up in food products on the Argentinean market, and glyphosate, the most widely used ingredient of the pesticides, has even been found in rain. The risks involved with GM-organisms, being approved and commercially grown in the fields for more than 20 years already, have neither been sufficiently studied nor discussed. But just as the negative health and socio-environmental consequences of this model are multiplying, the resistance and alternatives are growing, too. This research is about the agriculture and the environmental situation in Argentina, in a global context and in relation to the European countries where these technologies are being developed by companies like Bayer-Monsanto, Syngenta, BASF, etc. JULIA MENSCH (Buenos Aires) studied at the National Art University in Buenos Aires and in Hito Steyerl's class at the UdK, Berlin. She develops her practice based on long term research, reading fiction

the National Art University in Buenos Aires) studied at the National Art University in Buenos Aires and in Hito Steyerl's class at the UdK, Berlin. She develops her practice based on long term research, reading fiction and theory, visiting archives and territories, doing interviews. Her work is an intersection of text, drawing, installation, public events, photography, video and lecture performance – from which she opens collective dialogues about political and social contexts and future scenarios. Her practice deals with the history of socialism and communism in Latin America and Europe, and with environmental sociopolitical conflicts in Latin America with focus on the condition of the continent as exporter of nature since the Spanish conquest.

At the moment, she is working on a project about extractivism, with a focus on the model of transgenic agriculture applied in Argentina since 1996, its negative consequences on health and environment, and on the growing resistance and alternatives creating new horizons and ways to relate to nature. Her solo shows include *La vida en rojo*, Kunstraum Baden, Switzerland (2019), *EAC*, Montevideo, Uruguay (2018), *CCR*, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2016), 1973, Galerie im Turm, Berlin, Germany (2014), *Salashi*, Pyecka Galery, Kosice, Slovakia (2013).

## 11 TRÜMMERBERG Sculptural installation, rubble 2019

In the aftermath of World War II, the ruins of Berlin were piled up to create a specific type of artificial mountain, in German named a Trümmerberg. Several of such rubble-hills sprouted across the city, while similar artifacts were created in Stuttgart, Munich, Dresden etc. but also in London, Milano, Palermo, Warsaw. Across the last 70 years, these war dumps gradually turned into public parks: wild flora and fauna, humans and dogs re-appropriated what was in origin a sterile wasteland, while the city underwent further cycles of destruction and reconstruction. This process is still ongoing and formerly neglected areas of the urban fabric are contested between real estates and citizens-resistants. In this installation, the seedlings were received from Himmelbeet, a collectively run urban garden, whose current site in Wedding is threatened by real estate regeneration plans.

LEONE CONTINI lives and works in Tuscany, Italy. His research finds its place at the intersection between creative practice and ethnography. He focuses primarily on intercultural conflicts, power dynamics, migrations, and diasporas, and how all these phenomena influence the anthropological context and the botanical landscape of the places in which he works. His practice includes lecture/performances, events in public spaces, text and audio-visual narrations, and drawings. He has held events and exhibited at the Museo della Civiltà in Rome, the MUDEC in Milan, the MART in Rovereto, Cittadellarte in Biella, the Delfina Foundation in London, the Kunstverein in Amsterdam, and the Kunstraum in Munich, among others.

## 12 S M A L L T H I N G S Film, color, 16mm to HD 1:55 mins 2019

This film belongs to Yen–Chao Lin's larger project *The Eroding Garden*, which uses the art of dowsing, a technique for searching for underground water and minerals through the movements of a pointer as an alternative technology for the remediation of land, water and colonial history. This 16mm film of microscopic images serves as a metaphor for introspection, following protozoa, worms and other microorganisms found in vermicompost. By reimagining dowsing as a technology for remediation, one that might shift our relationship to land and water, we might unearth forgotten stories and deconstruct

colonial history, to incite self-examination and care for the more-than-human.

YEN-CHAO LIN is a Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist. Commenting on the impermanence of existence through intuitive play, collaboration and scavenging, her practice explores divination arts, folk religion, ecology and social permaculture. A self-described postmodern archivist, and natural history enthusiast, she is an avid collector of all things from found family records to Victorian ephemera and biological specimens. Her works have been shown at Berlinale, Berlin; articule, Montreal; Art Metropole, Toronto; Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Montreal; OBORO (Montreal), SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art (Montreal), among others. Yen-Chao also serves as a key programmer and exhibition designer for Atelier Céladon.

#### 13 SOWING SOMANKIDI COURA -A GENERATIVE ARCHIVE

### 13.01 S O M A N K I D I C O U R A Slideshow 1977–2015 Bouba Touré

Somankidi Coura presents a selection of photographs around the installation of the members of the ACTAF (Cultural Association of African Workers in France) in the region of Kayes in Mali, along the Senegal river. The self-organised Agricultural Cooperative of Somankidi Coura was founded on 17 January 1977 along the Senegal river by a group of former African migrant workers and activists in France. Bouba Touré started with photography in order to document the migrant workers' living conditions in the late 1960s in France. In the 1980s, Touré promoted extensively the example of Somankidi Coura in Parisian migrant worker housing foyers with slideshow performances.

13.02 BOUBA TOURÉ, 58 RUE TROUSSEAU, 75011 PARIS, FRANCE Film 2008 29 mins Bouba Touré Bouba Touré, 58 rue Trousseau, 75011 Paris, France was shot in Bouba Touré's former flat in Paris in 2008. Bouba Touré started complimenting his photographic diary that he initiated in the 1970s to document African migrants' lives and struggles and the cooperative of Somankidi Coura, with video diaries, Bouba Touré, 58 rue Trousseau, 75011 Paris, France is one of the first tapes that he recorded in his previous Parisian home while Raphaël Grisey was filming Cooperative. BOUBA TOURÉ was born in 1948 in Tafacirga near the Senegal river in the former French Sudan that became Mali, and lives in Paris, France and Somankidi Coura, Mali. He is a photographer, a projectionist, and a peasant activist. He went to school in Tambacounda, Senegal, before emigrating to France in 1965. Touré lived in the migrant worker hostel Foyer Pinel in St Denis. From 1965 to 1970, he worked in the factory Chausson and took part in the strikes from 1966 to 1969. After studies at the University of Vincennes and in Montrouge in 1969, he worked from 1971 as

a projectionist at Cinema 14 Juillet Bastille and at Cinema L'entrepôt, Paris. A photographer since the late 1960s, Touré has been documenting the lives and struggles of migrant workers' movements, as well as the foundation of the agricultural cooperative of Somankidi Coura in Mali. Since 2008, this working photographic archive has been complemented by video productions. Touré co-founded the ACTAF (Cultural Association of African Workers in France) in 1971 and the Cooperative of Somankidi Coura in 1977. In 2015, he published his novel Notre Case est à Saint Denis (Our House is in Saint Denis, Éditions Xérographes). Since the 1980s, Touré has exhibited works and given talks in France, the UK and Germany in associative and migrant workers housings' circles (foyer) and more recently together with Raphaël Grisey at the Contemporary Art Center Les Églises, Chelles, France; Caméra des Champs Festival, France; Arsenal Kino, Documentary Forum, HKW, Germany;) and Archive Kabinett, Germany; Kunsthall Trondheim, Norway; Forum Festival Kàddu Yaraax, Senegal; 9thContour Biennale, Belgium, amongst others.

## 13.03 COOPERATIVE Film 2008 72 mins Raphaël Grisey

In the 1980's, Bouba Touré used to visit Raphaël Grisey's mother to perform slideshows in her living room, showing photographs of ongoing migrant struggles in France and of the permaculture cooperative of Somankidi Coura. First thought of as a video portrait of Bouba Touré as a photographer, Cooperative became a film around Somankidi Coura. It assembles different geographies and temporalities such as the village, the fields, the market of Kayes, the colonial ruins of the sisal Diakhandapé plantation, the flat of Bouba Touré, the demonstrations of Sans-Papiers and migrant workers' housing in Paris. It reformulates the context of creation of the community as well as its daily life and their mode of production along the Senegal river. The making of the film initiated the long-term collaboration between Bouba Touré and Raphaël Grisey.

These works belong to Sowing Somankidi Coura, a Generative Archive, a long-term collaboration between Raphaël Grisey and Bouba Touré around the permacultures and archives of Somankidi Coura. Sowing Somankidi Coura unfolds and generates a cinégéographie that reveals the boundaries between the liberation struggles of migrant workers in France, the Pan African history of the cooperative and potentialities of cultivation. Through a practice of filmmaking and collective care, Sowing Somankidi Coura engages in the articulation of narratives and analytics of empowerment and peasant alliances. The research navigates the liaisons across partial perspectives; situated knowledges and ecosystems; hetero-temporalities; affinities between soils, plants, animals and irrigation technologies; archives and reservoirs. Deploying diverse modes of image circulation, the work aims at resisting forces of erosion, determination, national migration management policies, and the patenting of (post) colonial agro-industries.

RAPHAËL GRISEY lives and works in Berlin and Trondheim. He uses video, editorial and photographic works to assemble or produce narratives about the politics of memory, migration and architecture. The book Where is Rosa L. (2001–2006) and the film National Motives (2011) study the ghosts of various political regimes in the public spaces of Berlin and Budapest. Through documentary, fictional or essayist forms, Grisey's films and installations deal with contemporary social and political issues such as migration and postcolonialism. His work has been shown in various film festivals such as Hotdocs Vancouver, Canada; Doc Lisboa, Portugal; Berlinale Forum Expanded, Germany, as well as in art centers including: Kunsthalle Budapest, Hungary; Centre Pompidou, France; Art Center Les Églises Chelles, France; MAM São Paulo, Brazil; MCA Chicago, USA; Archive Kabinett, Germany, amongst others. His ongoing artistic research, Sowing Somankidi Coura a Generative Archive, was exhibited at the Kunsthall Trondheim, Norway; Den Fries Copenhagen, Denmark; Contour Biennale Mechelen, Belgium; Kàddu Yaraax Theatre Forum Festival, Senegal; and Laboratoire d'Aubervilliers, France,, amongst others.

## 14 A CABIN OF STORIES Installation, wood/tree branches, photographs, drawings, poems 2019

This installation creates a story hut made of the textures of tree branches. It assembles photographs of ritual sites and landscapes of West Cameroon, as well as short poems written in three languages on the exteriors of the hut. It is a hut of images and signs that talks about vulnerability and the urgency of care reflecting our presence in the world. In the culture of West Cameroon, there is a saying: "A house that you do not visit is a lost house." A house reflects a personal relation to a territory; we arrange and negotiate space and taste of those living there. The cabanne carries fragments of their lives. During his residency at SAVVY Contemporary, Hervé Yamguen read Hominescence by philosopher Michel Serres, and was particularly inspired by the "common house" as a term for our world that reflects how science and biotechnology affect our bodies and the serious problems this poses for living beings. He therefore links agropoetics to the metaphor of the hut as a lens through which he approaches the themes of the earth, food and the body. What does it feel like to look at the world through the idea of the house, or the cabanne as a carrier of stories? HERVÉ YAMGUEN is a Cameroonian artist living and working in New Bell, Douala. His artistic practice is transdisciplinary; he is a poet, sculptor, painter, and performer. As a member of various art groups (Cercle Kapsiki, Marche des Arts Bali), Yamguen actively participates in self-organised art projects and social spaces of agency in his home country. Since the 1990s, he has been publishing editions and showing his artistic work in exhibitions and in public space. In 2014, his solo exhibition L'Oiseau Conteur at the Fondation

Donwahi in Abidjan was met with much acclaim. For Hervé, being an artist is a way of existing in the world, closely associated with spirituality. His imagination makes cultural, personal, and social memory visible in his own artistic practice.

# 15 A PRACTICE OF LIGHT AND DEATH Installation, projection, fermentation jars 2019

Fermentation is the loose or precise activation of working with microbiota as colleagues; yeasts, fungi, bacteria and others that collaborate to co-create our foods. Zayaan Khan, in A Practice of Light and Death, explores bacteria as ancient ancestors that have remained constant while the world has continued to change, in flux, in steadiness. They move with time in an infinite way, through story and presence yet within an ancient future. The dispossession and discrimination of these invisible colleagues has created a fear and an attempt at microbial genocide as antibiotics, super detergents and toxic chemicals became the norm in our homes, foodscapes and cities. With war terminology used against what may as well be imaginary worlds we are not privy to see but only feel. Yet delving into this invisible world through care, encouraging probiotic potentials to foment a culture of regenerative practice within the home offers an opportunity for infinite learning and spiritual sovereignty. Fermentation offers lessons in time, where salt stretches and slows time down gently with stillness, whereas sugar encourages a hyper time, fizzing and bubbling. Zayaan Khan attempts to turn the invisible visible through light projection and illumination in this installation, revealing what happens as yeast and bacteria consume, reproduce and die, connecting another meaning to colonise through space and time, in frenetic stillness.

ZAYAAN KHAN works as an artist, consultant, food transformer, ceramicist, writer and researcher working from a socio-political platform to understand truer meanings of transformation and expressing solutions through the ways in which we consume, from food to medicine, art, cosmetic or household consumables. She is intrigued by the local urban and ecological environments and their interchangeable relationship in order to understand the elements that build ecosystems. Through curiosity, research, experimentation and engagement, her work found a resting place through food as a means of understanding the world, particularly land and our collective heritage. She is influenced by traditions, both inherited and the creation of new ones, reclaiming culture and reviving tradition through progressive interpretation in order to enact a listening of the future and a steady present survivalism. She continues to build the Seed Biblioteek, a seed library highlighting the story of seed.

# 16.01 MAPPING AGROPOETICS OF LIBERATION Reading, installation, floor painting 2019

Mapping not only geographies but also histories requires delving into the cracks, whenever possible. This collaborative layering of geographies and histories reveals Amílcar Cabral's double agency: his life as an agronomist and as an anti–colonial leader. Cabral was a "seeder" of African Liberation – he politicised soil and challenged the ongoing colonisation of land as a critical soil scientist. This site–specific installation unfolds through readings of his life and work, inscribed into the cracks and erosions of the floor at S A V V Y Contemporary. This collaboration between Filipa César, Ahmed Isamaldin, and Ali Yass draws upon the bridge César built in her essay of the same title, and visualises Cabral's Agropoetics of Liberation as a subversive resistance to coloniality, wherein political theory is informed by the science of agronomy.

FILIPA CÉSAR is an artist and filmmaker interested in the fictional aspects of the documentary, the porous borders between cinema and its reception. and the politics and poetics inherent to moving image. Her practice takes media as a means to expand or expose counter narratives of resistance to historicism. Since 2011, Filipa has been looking into the origins of cinema in Guinea-Bissau as part of the African Liberation Movement, its imaginaries and cognitive potencies, developing that research into the collective project Luta ca caba inda (The struggle is not over yet). In 2017, Filipa premiered her first feature-length essay film Spell Reel at the Forum section of the 67. Berlinale. Selected Film Festivals include Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, 2013 and 2016; Curtas Vila do Conde, 2012-2015; Forum Expanded - Berlinale, 2013, 2016 and 2017; and DocLisboa, 2011 and 2017. Selected exhibitions and screenings include: 8th Istanbul Biennial, 2003; 29th São Paulo Biennial, 2010; Manifesta 8, Kunstwerke, Berlin, 2013; Khiasma, Paris 2011, 2013 and 2015; Tensta konsthall, Spånga, 2015; Luleå Biennial and BIM, Buenos Aires, 2018.

A H M E D I S A M A L D I N is a graphic designer and blogger from Khartoum. Ahmed studied physics at the University of Khartoum, and later graphic design and photography in Cairo. He has participated in exhibitions in Khartoum, Cairo, Amsterdam, Brussels, and Berlin. His work was previously displayed at Schwules Museum in Berlin. He is dealing with the topics of immigration and psychology, as well as process of revolution and anti–colonial cartography. Currently he is studying Visual Communication at Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin.

A L I Y A S S Baghdad is a painter, draftsman, printmaker and archivist based in Berlin. He received his BA in Visual Arts from the University of Jordan in 2015. Ali is trying to capture and represent fear in his works, and believes it is one of the most rooted and clear human feelings. He considers these works as an invitation to tell the daily life story of fear as a person. He exhibited his work in Amman, Manama, Amsterdam, Istanbul, Berlin, Nottingham, Gera, and New York City.

## 16.02 THE RETURN OF AMÍLCAR CABRAL Sana na N'Hada et al. Film 1974

This collective film was the first production realised and accomplished by Guinean filmmakers

after the liberation of Guinea Bissau from Portuguese colonialism in 1974. Sana na N'Hada mentioned that the original aim of this film was to call the Guinean diaspora back to the newly free nation. In fact, the film documents the translocation of the remains of Amílcar Cabral from Conakry (where he was assassinated in 1973) to Bissau, the capital of the country. This event was edited with Guinean songs, and archival material framing Cabral addressing freedom fighters during the guerrilla war. The convocation of lament in this film is a gesture to provoke a multiplicity of returns.

#### 17 ARCHIPEL STATIONS COMMUNITY RADIO

Archipel Stations Community Radio contributes to the project with an open call for podcasts. audioworks, dialogues, and sounds relating to themes that explore agroecological practices as forms of care and embodied politics of resilience, resistance and rehabilitation. The program remains in the spirit of archipelagic thought, blending a variety of content, formats and languages produced all over the world. It engages with themes such as vegetal agency, the poetics of dormancy, food sovereignty, the commons, soil nationalism, the soil as vessel, as fragile global body and carrier for speculative, collaborative futures; patriarchal dispossession, bio-infrastructures and molecular extractions, unique local histories, and forms of collaboration. It explores questions such as: "What does working with 'nature' and cultivation on various scales mean for artists, cultural workers, and ecologists in times of violent planetary collapse of ecosystems and life worlds?"

ARCHIPEL STATIONS COMMUNITY R A D I O is an itinerant webradio occupying venues worldwide from where events are broadcasted and programs from elsewhere are transmitted live. It is a public-spirited platform with a focus on sound and narrative, finding in these two realms strong foundations for emancipation and encounters of the personal and the political, along with oneself and others, through shared experience and art. Archipel welcomes contributions and encourages participants to share their sound art, music, storytelling, writing, experiences, podcasts of artistic, ecological, educational, comic, social or political content, or simply their situated knowledges in whatever form, without hate speech or oppression. For this exhibition, Archipel is Monaí de Paula Antunes (project lead), Ela Spalding (cultural production), Philipp Klein (IT) and Niko de Paula Lefort (sound tech), as well as Kate Donovan as a guest radio maker. Kate is an artist and researcher whose work focuses on ecologies of radio - as a natural phenomenon, an artistic medium, and a site for resistance. She is part of the radio group CoLaboRadio, the Datscha Radio Berlin team, and the SENSING research group.

18 WARDIAN TABLE Sculpture, birch multiplex, polycarbonat, mixed media 2019

Wardian Table is a social pedestal, designed for nourishing seeds and cuttings of medicinal plants (datura, rosemary, brugmansia) placed onto the table and grown under a particular light frequency. The structure was produced in collaboration with TIER (The Institute for Endotic Research) in 2018 as a prop for the re-enactment of Metalogue: A Crème de Menthe, a Rusty Nail. Why Intransitive? with non-binary performance artist Callum Harper. It was conceived to remain as permanent display infrastructure where the public is invited to engage in seminars, workshops, and other collective and pedagogical activities. The mobile greenhouse, is an incubator for the planting and the ensuing growth of the medicinal plants to be inserted and later transported; it becomes an interface, mediation, and disruption - a reminder, and a membrane. The mobile greenhouse is an adaptation of the Wardian Case, which was arguably the first industrial greenhouse, i.e. mini greenhouses that were used by European botanists to literally "trans-plant" bio-commodities, extirpated back from the colonies, brought to European botanical gardens to be harvested and modified. The plants were then to be returned to the colonies where human and non-human labour could be further exploited, and bio-commodities extracted. The case-turned-table challenges the minigreenhouse to become a seminal scale-model to the violence of transnational agro-politics. At SAVVY it is re-imagined as social pedestal for inviting people to explore the selection of books put together by S A V V Y. doc team in the library space to further open up questions explored in the exhibition. LUIS BERRÍOS-NEGRÓN's work explores the perceptions, enactments, and displays of environmental form. He often calls these practicebased research works "social pedestals", carrying particular curiosity about the technological history of "greenhouse". Some recent exhibitions include Impasse Finesse Neverness at the Museum of Archaeology of Salvador da Bahia in Brasil (2017), Collapsed Greenhouse at Undisciplinary Learning in District Berlin (2016), and Earthscore Specularium at Experiment

19 HOW TO RETURN TO EARTH WHEN IT TURNS ITS BACK ON YOU Installation/performance, dollhouse, bathtub, soil, prints 2019

Stockholm in Färgfabriken (2015). He previously was commissioned artist at the 3rd Biennial of Art of Bahia

(2014), represented Germany in the 10th São Paulo Biennial for Architecture (2013), was core-collaborator

with Paul Ryan in the *Threeing* project at dOCUMENTA

(13), and exhibited in Ute Meta Bauer's Future Archive

at the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2012). He founded

the Anxious Prop art collective and the Paramodular

environmental design group, and is an associate

member of the M.I.T. Council for the Arts.

How can we connect with our ancestors through the soil? How can we heal the wounds that are left in soil? How can we retrieve stored memories? How is the

plight of the Earth similar to that of Black, Indigenous and Womxn who have taken care of the Earth? What would a culture that values soil and the people who work in it look like? How to Return to the Earth When it Turned its Back on You investigates these questions through an experiment: recreating a dream as a process of REM-membering - reassessing the message of a dream as one uses a historical or ancestral archive. The installation bridges the invisible gaps of connection between individuals by making the intangible (dreams) a tangible form of releasing trauma. By staging a "Grand Dream" – a dream that dissolves the separation of the past, present and future that feels more like a memory than a product of sleep - Mia Harrison aims to engage with the healing of generational traumas that are not just held within the lineage of our genes but the lineage of the Earth. The reactivation will be through the fivesenses, allowing the artist and the public to submerge themselves the subconscious that is covered in earth. MIA IMANI HARRISON is a Pacific Northwest native interdisciplinary artist and arts writer who currently lives in Berlin. Harrison interrogates the ways that disenfranchised communities can heal individual, communal, and societal trauma by creating works that live in-between the worlds of art and science. This "third-way" mixes unconventional methods (dreams, rituals) and science (ethnography, geography, psychoanalysis) to collectively dream new ways of being.

## AGROPOETICS READERPublication 2019

This reader is a collection of writings by artists, theorists and activists that further open up the questions around the commons, cooperative forms of organisation and the materiality of soil that have driven this project, including texts by Marisol de la Cadena, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Yeremisi Aribisala and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa amongst many others. It is prepared and edited in collaboration between the S A V V Y Contemporary project team and The Institute for Endotic Research (TIER). The paper used in printing is recycled. Parts of the publication are printed with riso printing, which does not emit greenhouse gases and uses vegetable soy based ink, that allows easier recycling in the future.

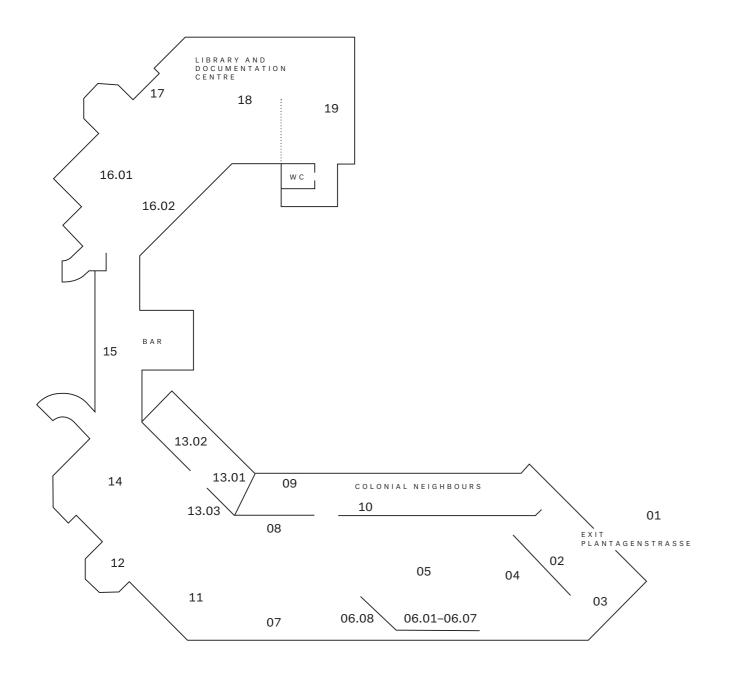
THE INSTITUTE FOR ENDOTIC
RESEARCH (TIER) began in 2015 as
a fictional institution understood as a habitable
sculpture. TIER's program challenges the processes
of producing and presenting art through encounters,
workshops and interventions. TIER is co-directed by
Lorenzo Sandoval and Benjamin Busch. The institute is
dedicated to research about forms of generation and
presentation of subject matter related to the endotic
– an antonym for exotic. French writer George Perec
used it as a conceptual tool to approach everyday life in
one's own immediate surroundings. With this idea, he
proposed to preserve the fascination that comes with
the act of exploring while also avoiding to produce the

figure of the other. Considering that an institute is an organisational body created for a certain purpose, TIER takes the form of an institute to produce a host for a multidisciplinary approach for knowledge production. The purpose of this institute is to create a body of work operating from the endotic. The endotic is a subtle but powerful tool to generate a situated practice of an institution.

 $SAVVYContemporary: The Laboratory of Form Ideas Soil is an Inscribed Body. On Sovereignty and Agropoetics 31.08.-06.10.2019 \\ 16/20$ 



# FLOORPLAN



- O1 TIME FLOWS IN ALL
  DIRECTIONS\_WATER FLOWS
  THROUGH ME Dina Amro & Abdul Razzak
  Shaballout Sound installation and mural 2019
- 02 LINNEAUS AND THE
  TERMINATOR SEED Pedro Neves
  Marques Film, colour, sound, 15 mins 2017
- 03 SUCKER ZUCKER Elia Nurvista Mural/Sculptures 2019
- 04 MOTLHABA WA RE KE NAMILE Lerato Shadi Film, colour, sound, 7 mins 30 sec 2016
- 05 CHORUS OF SOIL Binta Diaw Sculptural installation, soil, seeds 2019
- 06 UNSETTLED ONE HUNDRED
  YEARS OF RESISTANCE
  BY THE XHOSA PEOPLE AGAINST
  BOER AND BRITISH Cedric Nunn
  Photographs 2014
- 06.01 The rugged heights of the Amathole mountains, which served as a refuge for embattled Xhosa warriors.
  06.02 The Great Fish (Inxuba) River, streaming through the Great Fish River Nature Reserve in which the bush served as a tactical retreat for Xhosa militants.
  06.03 The burial place of the prophetess
  Nongqawuse, whose vision was to cause the Xhosa to destroy their cattle and grain stores in the belief that their dead would arise and the world would be reborn
- 06.04 Egazini Memorial to warriors slain in the failed 1819 attack on Grahamstown. The contested site of Makana's Kop on the horizon, now with reconstruction and development houses.

anew - without settlers and colonialists.

- 06.05 Looking north towards the Amohole Mountains from Grahamstown.
- 06.06 Farmland in the Somerset East region close to the Great Fish River, or Inxuba River, as it is known to the Xhosa who fought nine Wars of Resistance
- 06.07 The fruits of dispossession: soil erosion due to over-crowding and over-grazing in KwaNdlambe Village, Peddie.
- 06.08 BIOWATCH AGROECOLOGY FARMERS
- O7 SOIL AFFINITIES Uriel Orlow Installation, boxes, film, photographs 2018
  O7.01 Detail of a 1919 stained-glass window from the church Notre-Dame-des-Vertus in Aubervilliers
  O7.02 historical photographs showing the loading of Ward crates with 'useful', 'economic' plants in the colonial garden in Vincennes
- 07.03 Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research, Dakar (6' 30")
- 07.04 Former colonial garden, Vincennes (France); former Sor test garden, Saint-Louis (Senegal) (8' 18")

- 07.05 Workers Gardens, Aubervilliers (8' 44")
  07.06 Commercial Farm SCL, Saint-Louis, Senegal &
  International Market of Rungis (11' 23")
- 08 EXTREMADURA LOOTED INLAND Installation, film, poster and books 2019
- 09 MANIOK REIBE ICH DIR, SCHWESTERCHEN Barbara Marcel & Ana Hupe 2-channel video installation 13 mins & 43 mins 2015–2019
- 10 CARTOGRAPHY OF AN EXPERIMENT UNDER OPEN SKY Julia Mensch Installation, newspaper publications, text and painted ceramic plate 2017-in progress
- 11 TRÜMMERBERG Leone Contini Sculptural installation, rubble 2019
- 12 S M A L L T H I N G S Yen-Chao Lin Film, color, 16mm to HD 1:55 mins 2019
- 13 SOWING SOMANKIDI COURA A GENERATIVE ARCHIVE
  13.01 SOMANKIDI COURA Slideshow
  1977-2015 Bouba Touré
  13.02 BOUBA TOURÉ, 58 RUE
  TROUSSEAU, 75011 PARIS,
  FRANCE Film 2008 29 mins Bouba Touré
  13.03 COOPERATIVE Film 2008 72 mins
  Raphaël Grisey
- 14 A C A B I N O F S T O R I E S Hervé Yamguen Installation, wood/tree branches, photographs, drawings, poems 2019
- 15 A PRACTICE OF LIGHT AND DEATH Zayaan Khan Installation, projection, fermentation jars 2019
- 16.01 MAPPING AGROPOETICS OF LIBERATION Filipa César & Ahmed Ismaldin & Ali Yass Reading, installation, floor painting 2019
  16.02 THE RETURN OF AMÍLCAR
  CABRAL Sana na N'Hada et al. Film 1974
- 18 ARCHIPEL STATIONS COMMUNITY RADIO
- 19 WARDIAN TABLE Luis Berríos-Negrón Sculpture, birch multiplex, polycarbonat, mixed media 2019
- 20 HOW TO RETURN TO EARTH
  WHEN IT TURNS ITS BACK ON YOU
  Mia Imani Harrison Installation/performance,
  dollhouse, bathtub, soil, prints 2019

# M O R E I N F O R M A T I O N savvy-contemporary.com facebook.com/savvyberlin

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

S A V V Y Contemporary is Elena Agudio Antonia Alampi Jasmina Al-Qaisi Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Bona Bell Marleen Boschen Federica Bueti Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein Olani Ewunnet Irene Fountedaki Billy Fowo Raisa Galofre Monilola Ilupeju Ahmed Isamaldin Anna Jäger Kimani Joseph Laura Klöckner Cornelia Knoll Kelly Krugman Nathalie Mba Bikoro António Mendes Kamila Metwaly Wilson Mungai Arlette-Louise Ndakoze Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Abhishek Nilamber Jeff Obiero Elena Quintarelli Jörg-Peter Schulze Lema Sikod Lili Somogyi Elsa Westreicher Ola Zielińska

D E S I G N Elsa Westreicher A S S I S T A N C E Lili Somogyi F O N T S Grow (through a generous partnership with DINAMO Foundry, abcdinamo.com) Neutral (carvalho-bernau.com) S A V V Y Contemporary e.V. Amtsgericht Charlottenburg (Berlin) AZ: VR 31133 B Gerichtstraße 35 13347 Berlin