

ULTRASANITY, ON MADNESS, SANITATION, ANTI-PSYCHIATRY AND RESISTANCE

CHAPTER 4

OPENING at ifa Gallery 13.12.2019 19:00

EXHIBITION 14.12.2019–16.02.2020

Tues–Sun 14:00–18:00

WITH Leo Asemota Virginia Chihota Jaswant Guzder Tracey Rose Eva Kotátková

OPENING at SAVVY Contemporary 14.12.2019 19:00

EXHIBITION 15.12.2019–26.01.2020

Thurs–Sun 14:00–19:00

WITH John Akomfrah Ulf Aminde Yassine Balbzioui M'Barek Bouhchichi Virginia Chihota Larisa Crunțeanu Alessandra Eramo Pélagie Gbaguidi Frederick W. Hickling Lukas Hofmann Immy Mali Teresa Margolles Nathalie Mazeas Lavar Munroe Adjani Okpu-Egbe Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

INVOCATIONS at SAVVY Contemporary 25.01.–26.01.2020

WITH Debbie Ann Chambers Alessandra Eramo Dora Garcia Jaswant Guzder Sophie Hoyle Frederick W. Hickling Lukas Hofmann Taoufiq Izzeddiou Dorothée Munyaneza Riah Naief Jota Mombaça Elisabeth Tambwe, and others

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

CURATORS Elena Agudio Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Kelly Krugman

PROJECT TEAM Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Abhishek Nilamber Lili Somogyi

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COMMUNICATION Anna Jäger

GRAPHIC DESIGN Elsa Westreicher Lili Somogyi

PRODUCTION Abhishek Nilamber Antonio Mendes

TECH Bert Günther

ART HANDLING Wilson Mungai Kimani Joseph Tibor Horváth Bogdan Bălan

LIGHT Marold Langer-Philipsen

ULTRASANITY, ON MADNESS, SANITATION, ANTI-PSYCHIATRY AND RESISTANCE is a SAVVY Contemporary research, performance and exhibition project in multiple chapters, in collaboration with ifa Gallery Berlin, Association of Neuroesthetics (AoN Platform for Art and Neuroscience), Picha Lubumbashi and Gnaoua Festival. The project is funded by the TURN Fund of the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes) and the Foundation of Arts Initiative. The work by Lukas Hofmann was commissioned by the Jindřich Chalupecký Society, and supported by the Czech-German Fund for the Future, and the Czech Centre Berlin. Alessandra Eramo's work was commissioned by Deutschlandfunk Kultur, Klangkunst Program, to be broadcast in 2020.

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS



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NAVIGATING ULTRASANITY

U L T R A S A N I T Y , a project in four chapters, situates itself within the long term research project at S A V V Y Contemporary with the title T H E I N V E N T I O N O F S C I E N C E that investigates science's entanglements with the colonial enterprise and the capitalist project. U L T R A S A N I T Y challenges conventional methods and perspectives on mental health and questions medical (mis)conceptions of psychopathologies by reconsidering them in the context of coloniality, racialisation, objectification, and patriarchal oppression. Deeply entangled with our previous reflections on land struggles and toxicity, with this project we engage again with traumas and fears of displacement and contamination, this time offering an opportunity to ponder the notion of madness beyond a Western understanding, but also understanding that space of madness as a possibility of resistance, of resilience, and of deliverance.

Over the course of one year, we collaborated with visual and performance artists, musicians, patients, healers, clinicians, cognitive scientists, scholars and practitioners to unfold this project jointly with ifa Gallery Berlin, the Association of Neuroesthetics (AoN), the Gnaoua Festival (Morocco) and Picha Art Lubumbashi (DRC). Together, we interrogated the grammars of violence inscribed in universal therapeutic models and the pharmacologisation of care still practised today. Beyond a romanticisation of madness, the project seeks to address the heuristic and generative potential of certain forms of delirium. Beyond that we are interested in the fundamental significance of community engagement and of spiritual, systemic, intra-generational histories in formulating healing strategies.

With this exhibition, performative and discursive programme between ifa Gallery and S A V V Y Contemporary, we navigate the potentialities of U L T R A S A N I T Y , moving beyond the dichotomy of insanity as the opposite of sanity, to inhabit the liminal space that lies beyond the norm, stripped of the process of normalisation and control.

...for it is not man but the world which has become abnormal...

Antonin Artaud

Madness is not a safe space, not a place to walk in for an elusive diversion. Madness burns. It burns in a spectrum – from without and within –, sometimes combusting everything in it and around it, crumbling the possibility of certainty and comprehension. But amidst smoke and flames, fire also produces light, and in darkness, it gives us the possibility of seeing through the thickness of the gloom.

As Antonin Artaud wrote in *Van Gogh: The Man*

Suicided by Society, those having superior lucidities and luminosity, those with the gift of special faculties and spirits, have been too often declared insane for breaking out of societal norms.

To compose a partitura of statements and a chorus of different voices, we deliberate on different trajectories, such as: the construction of insanity and madness, as well as rethink madness in the context of norms and normalisation; the entanglements between madness, colonialism and coloniality, and the relation between sanity, sanitation and the politics of segregation; madness as a tool of resistance, of escape, and refusal (i.e. rebellion, hysteria, tarantism and other disruptive behaviours catalogued with medical formulations and treated as illnesses); and the power of intra-generational histories and community in formulating healing strategies.

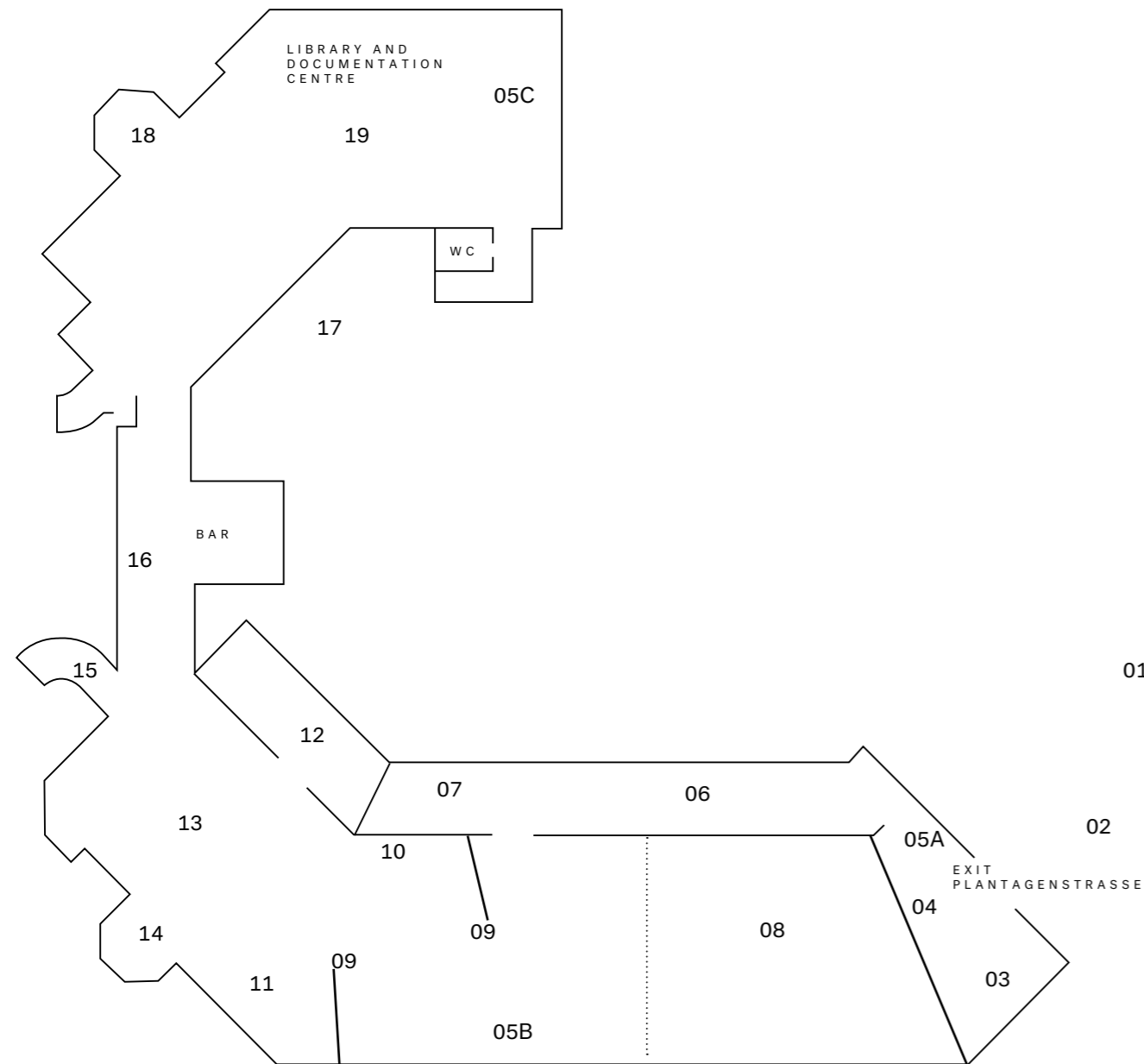
We begin, at S A V V Y Contemporary, with I M M Y M A L I and the imaginative powers and pains of child-hood – a sonic tunnel leads us into the exhibition by way of polyglot stories, nursery rhymes, religious and play songs from her youth, touched by trauma's entanglements with the postcolonial landscape of Uganda: a cave where distant voices coming from inner spaces may disorient us or take us by the hand. An intervention by the production team of U L T R A S A N I T Y follows closely, asking you to leave excess possessions of material and spirit behind on a built structure made of leftover constructions from the exhibition: from coats and umbrellas to frustrations and failures, you are welcome to abandon here any heaviness of spirit and of the physical. A D J A N I O K P U - E G B E explores the cathartic space of painting as a form of healing while making the plea for revisiting tombstones of history, activism, and repositioning labels of (in)sanity. M ' B A R E K B O U H C H I C H I ' s installation-accumulation of several thousand small heads manually produced out of the same mold have faces bearing no specific markers, inspired by the words of a potter he met in Tunisia who said "we are all made of earth", crafting a horizon as palpable as it is out of reach. U L F A M I N D E presents his collaboration with the artist group Wilderers from the Foundation Diakonie Himmelsthür in Hildesheim, pondering creativity and cooperation questioning how group dynamics and identity arise. J O H N A K O M F R A H tells of jazz legend Buddy Bolden's struggles with schizophrenia, hospitalization, and the violence of racist state powers' capacity to make disappeared those in precarious positions. N A T H A L I E M A Z E A S presents the architectural spaces and homes of the homeless in Paris, confronting us with the capacity of resilience in crisis. L A V A R M U N R O E problematizes the notion of the spectacle with his painted portrait exploring family, non-white diseased bodies, human

zoos, and mental and physical challenges as a means of entertainment. Through the work of T E R E S A M A R G O L L E S , we encounter the shadow, the dark space of the gloom, here evoking the problem of systemic gender violence against women, in Bolivia and around the world. For the artist, the dark shade represents also a membrane of protection and intimacy. A L E S S A N D R A E R A M O ' s sonic work on the freedom that resists in the female voice traces the wild, bestial, untrained, and vulnerable voice of inner agitation and ritual healing by means of the tarantula spider's tale and its inscribed, mythic memory in her region of Southern Italy. L A R I S A C R U N T E A N U combines reality and fiction to address the emotions of women that have been historically disregarded or treated as somatic illnesses in light of social etiquette, public space, motherhood, labour, and justice. V I R G I N I A C H I H O T A ' s hyper-lucid trust in her own intuition presents us with the capacity of femininity's emotional impulse. B E A T R I Z S A N T I A G O M U Ñ O Z delves into Puerto Rican writer and activist Elizam Escobar's anti-diaries written during his time spent serving 19 years in US prisons for the crime of seditious conspiracy: evidencing his extreme and sometimes painful attention to mental and sensorial processes. Y A S S I N E B A L B Z I O U I opens a door to eccentricity as an entry into a richer world, investigating madness as an absolute freedom of creation. F R E D E R I C K H I C K L I N G shows an archive of photographic materials and documents from his activity and experimentations in deinstitutionalisation in the 70's in Jamaica: the MADnificent Irations, stemming from psychohistoriographic cultural therapy, a new era in world psychiatry. L E O A S E M O T A spins a sonic playlist on madness circulating poetry, literature, and musical excerpts in the vein of the ultrasane. P É L A G I E G B A G U I D I probes the insanity of the societal, reflecting on her participation in U L T R A S A N I T Y ' s chapters in Venice and in Lubumbashi, where she made visible seismograms of geographic pain on San Servolo's island, an island fueled with its history as a psychiatric hospital, and in DCR she worked with female workers of coal mines in Kipush to create anti-pollution masks for their protection. L U K A S H O F M A N N investigates the idea of the skin as a permeable border, aiming to open and close wounds inflicted by the contemporary condition, causing both restlessness and relief.

At ifa Gallery, E V A K O T Á T K O V Á peers into the clothing of children to make visible their worn places, asking us to consider the language of memory left in their holes and tears. J A S W A N T G U Z D E R , a therapist who uses drawing as a filter between her patients and herself, subverts the canonical trope of the "outsider" artist, her visual works being an extension of her therapeutic adventures in collective decolonization. V I R G I N I A C H I H O T A lays bare tensions of personal experiences, plummeting us into depths to

explore anxiety, turmoil, and the remedies within. L E O A S E M O T A shares the same playlist he presents at S A V V Y Contemporary, along with diverse findings that contemplate microcosms of madness. T R A C E Y R O S E drifts together with various unclassifiable and marginal characters in a carnivalesque subversion prioritizing the freakish, the strange, and the alien.

FLOORPLAN AT S A V V Y CONTEMPORARY



01 *Sounds of Memory* sound, 2 channels, 51:32 min 2018 IMMY MALI

02 *Please Leave Your Possessions Here* Intervention by SAVVY Contemporary's production team Design by WILLY MUNGAI

03 *The Coronation Of Steve Biko* mixed media on waterford paper 2018 ADJANI OKPU-EGBE

04 *Fabricated Anthropology* mixed media on wooden door panels (quadriptych) 2019 ADJANI OKPU-EGBE

05A *Glands* installation, polyester resin 2018
05B *Into* installation, glass 2019
05C *S. C. L.* video, sound, 22:25 minutes 2019
Into installation, glass 2019
LUKAS HOFMANN

06 *Terre* terracotta sculptures 2019 M'BAREK BOUHCHICHI

07 *Bildet Banden* HD video projection, colour, sound, 7:23 min 2011 ULF AMINDE

08 *Precarity* three channel HD colour video installation, 7.1 sound, 46:3 mins 2017
JOHN AKOMFRAH

09 *SUBLIMIS* series of photographs, printed on photo paper 2019 NATHALIE MAZEAS

10 *Institution of Captivity* acrylic, latex house paint, spray paint, fabric paint, pencil, string and staples on cut unprimed canvas 2015 LAVAR MUNROE

11 *Frazada (La Sombra), Blanket (The Shade)* fabric used to wrap the body of a murdered woman, mounted on a metallic structure, similar to those used by street markets, La Paz, Bolivia 2016 TERESA MARGOLLES

12 *Tanz Sediment* sound/video installation, stereo, HD, 6:38 mins, drawings (graphite on paper, variable dimensions) 2019 ALESSANDRA ERAMO

13 *A Room Full of Hysterical Women* cement silkscreening, handmade textile costume, metal frames 2019 LARISA CRUNȚEANU

14 *Kumira Mutariro (Waiting in Faith)* silkscreen on cotton paper 2017 VIRGINIA CHIHOTA

15 *Prisoner's Cinema* HD video, color, sound, 31:10 mins 2014 BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ

16 *Camisole* mural 2019 YASSINE BALBZIOUI

17 *Findings Through Principles of Phrenology, Literature, Sound and Advertising* sound 2019 LEO ASEMOTA

18 *Udi Kinje* video, color, sound, 12:32mins 2019
The Sysmograph Genesis Act 4 series of drawings created on the island of San Servolo in Venice during our Ultrasanity symposium on May 10th 2019
PÉLAGIE GBAGUIDI

19 *Archive of MADnificent Irations* SAVVY.doc
FREDERICK W. HICKLING

WORKS

01 *Sounds of Memory* sound, 2 channels, 51:32 min 2018 I M M Y M A L I

A sonic tunnel leads us into the exhibition space by way of polyglot collections of stories, play songs, nursery rhymes, and church songs that together attempt to describe trauma's entanglements with the social-political landscape of Mali's childhood growing up in postcolonial Uganda. The songs remembered through the process of writing letters to her childhood are at times accurate and on other occasions improvisations from familiar tunes that come in four different languages: Luganda, Lusoga, Lugbara and English. Springing from childhood memories, the work slowly grows into more collective, complex bridges between intertribal migrations and thus multilingual experiences, linked to British imperial history as well as fictions that occur in telling echoes of the past.

I M M Y M A L I from Arua in Uganda, was born and raised in the Eastern and central regions of the country. She attended the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts, Makerere University in Kampala where she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Industrial and Fine Arts in 2013. Using a variety of media including text, video, sound, sculpture, drawing and animation, her work attempts to unpack the complexities and entanglements of memory and existence in a neo/postcolonial Uganda. Notions of presence and absence, personal memories of childhood growing up in Uganda juxtaposed with current personal and collective experiences of living beyond "home" also influence her work.

Mali has participated in exhibitions, residencies and workshops in various countries including Kenya, India, Ethiopia, Denmark, Germany, USA, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, and Uganda. Her work has been published in art magazines including the *Africa Arts Journal 2019*. She has recently concluded a two-year residency program at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

02 *Please Leave Your Possessions Here* Intervention by S A V V Y Contemporary's production team Design by W I L L Y M U N G A I

One is urged to possess to feel secure nowadays. Modern existence can demand an incessant hoarding of objects both material and immaterial, with one's status often measured by the excess displayed rather than the contentedness one fosters.

S A V V Y Contemporary's production team, dealing with materials and labors of art production and exhibiting, believes in the spirit of up-cycling, re-cycling and DIYing. This is a resistance to the prominent art exhibition practices of "exhibiting and trashing." We believe that such tendencies, both in the world of art and otherwise, are symptomatic of an unreflected existence, where possessions possess the possessor.

These tendencies at a global scale are catastrophic to a delicately balanced environment, to vulnerable cultures, and to the spiritual health and existence of humanity. With our construction made out of the excess from previous exhibitions, we would like to collectively reflect on what we possess and how we can share what we have. Please leave your coats, umbrellas, frustrations, failures and other excess possessions on this structure. Leave any heaviness of spirit behind.

03 *The Coronation Of Steve Biko* mixed media on waterford paper 2018 A D J A N I O K P U - E G B E

The anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko paid with the price of his life on the revolutionary frontline, in a country where racist-inspired-societal constructs were the order of the day. Survival of the average black person was dependent on the rejection of dignity and conventional sanity. The forced requisite was conformity to a norm of violation and of cruelty. Carrier of the name "Bantu", the name for a tribe found in various places in Africa and "people" in Zulu – Biko was "coronated" by his family, loved, cherished, trained and empowered to stand for himself and for others as a freedom fighter, venturing into the dangerous world of revolutionaries. With the "Black Consciousness Movement" (BCM) he prepared people mentally for what would become protracted bloody battles. Fearless and articulate, his unique written and narrated stories live until today, 42 years after his assassination.

Adjani Okpu-Egbe pays tribute to his continuation and adds his voice to this depiction of Steve Biko. The two female figures in the painting remind of the role women play in the empowering democratisation process across the African continent, shining lights on the cases of "The Takumbengs" Ambazonians in Southern Cameroons. Where imposed values are claimed to be righteous, Okpue-Egbe potently reminds us of rebellion's role in the ultrasane, as a zone of resistance, of compassionate and critical perspectives, beyond the constructs of imposed and flawed norms.

04 *Fabricated Anthropology* mixed media on wooden door panels (quadriptych) 2019 A D J A N I O K P U - E G B E

In this work, the unsustainable character of neoliberal and patriotic lies makes the plea for revisiting tombstones of history. Divide, Dehumanise, Conquer, Carted, Fabricate and Exploit (DIDECORCAFEX CAFEX), a system coined by the artist, confronts us with the lineage of slavery that he traces to present day America, where before forced into ships bound for the Americas, captured Africans were set against each other, exploited with aims to divide. In turn, these tactics enabled a violent conquering, as names were changed and an anthropological background to identity was fabricated, in order to brainwash and facilitate control and exploitation.

Fabricated Anthropology takes the birth of

American capitalism, noted by Eric Williams in his book *Capitalism and Slavery*, to have been dependent on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and free labour done by enslaved peoples and draws a link to today: where Trump's control over the press and usage of racist, xenophobic, homophobic and islamophobic remarks, protracts historical dominance and power exploitation as a long-known tool for political capital building, dividing and distracting communities and individuals. Adjani points us to the ghosts of American past, that can be seen in Trump's methods of control; from dominating the press by disrupting decades of presidential protocol to dismissing the reports of experienced and credible journalists that do not favour him as fake news and untrustworthy. In doing so, he cultivates a narrative of distorted sanity. As he pitches those critical of him against his core supporters, he thus divides the country in order to build an imbalanced, self-righteous political capital, a method to be seen in right and extreme right movements throughout the world. Adjani paints and cites the revivals of hate and extreme right groups like RAHOWA, KKK, which he believes empowers the likes of H8 and especially 8Chan, which is associated with many recent mass shootings in the US.

Expressing that he would like his work to be a starting point for the work of others, as a hypothesis to historical and current climates, Adjani urges us to take note of history's remnants and the building of countries "based on lies and the evasions of accountability". The pangs of madness are here looked at head-on, as an issue that can spiral from societal oppression. With *Fabricated Anthropology*, we are brought to contemplate the possible absorbed effects, that may seep from the societal to the collective and individual self.

A D J A N I O K P U - E G B E was born in Kumba, Southern Cameroon, also known as Ambazonia. He lives and works in London, United Kingdom. Using a crude expressive painterly language that incorporates autobiographical content, Adjani Okpu-Egbe unfolds a wide range of complex themes relating to Archaeology, Feminism, Patriarchy, African History, Pan Africanism, Afrocentricity, the African diaspora and political activism reflective of and transcending the Southern Cameroons Ambazonian movement to highlight specificities within the realm of the global social justice movement. These are sometimes spiced with direct and indirect sense of humour that gives away an interest as a keen observer of people and a social commentator. The mathematical formulae that was recurrent in many of his earlier paintings are an automatic scribble that became his distinguishing mark. These math exercises he was forced to do as a child were a repetitive sign of his relationship with his father who wanted him to abandon his dream of pursuing a career in professional football to instead become an economist or a businessman and consequently with any imposing or repressive authority have suddenly disappeared following the "passing" of the former and Adjani's impulse and or emotional intelligence in

allowing his practice to evolve naturally. The symbols that represented science and logic and became a subconscious automatic scrawl, and – perhaps the worst affront in the context of West and non-West relationships – a decorative element, has now given way to an emphatic use of unique materials suggestive of an artistic philosophical manifesto, perhaps in the near future. Often painting on found materials such as reclaimed doors and bubble wraps, Adjani's boundless imagination and experimental curiosity allow him to take these salvaged materials to heart and use them as convincing metaphors.

Okpu-Egbe's most noteworthy exhibitions include *Regarding Africa: Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism* curated by Ruti Direktor at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel in 2016 and *The Underdog*, a solo presentation at the 2014 edition of the 1-54 African Art Fair in Somerset House London. In 2012, Okpu-Egbe was amongst the artists commissioned nationwide by BBC to interpret the Queens Diamond Jubilee Pageant on the River Thames, making him the first African Artist to officially partake in such an event.

05A *Glands* installation, polyester resin 2018
05B *Into* installation, glass 2019

L U K A S H O F M A N N
Approaching ultrasanity from various intersections, Lukas Hofmann spreads his marks throughout the exhibition space. Keep your eyes open for multicolored and neon climbing holds that reappear and inch up the walls of the gallery space, where potential touch is paired with one that goes unfulfilled. Glass basins and jugs stand on podiums or hang from the ceiling with chains, invoking additional powers of sensuality and mythical imageries of purification. In a performance during the I N V O C A T I O N S programme, serving as a sibling to the installation, Hofmann will tie water to life and to death through perfume and alchemical cultivations involved in a mysterious process between medicine and witchcraft, manifesting the waters paired with the basins and jugs in order to activate them. According to Slavic mythology trickling through modern TV fairy tales that Hofmann grew up with in the post-communist Czech Republic, these liquids were to bring back the dead to life and heal wounds, respectively. The I N V O C A T I O N S will take place on the 24.01.–25.01.2020.

05C S. C. L. video, sound, 22:25 minutes 2019
L U K A S H O F M A N N

In an allergic reaction, a self-deterrent, over-protective, and protected body chooses to consume itself, it sends out histamines in an effort to cope with itself. A comprehensive multi-sensory experience, Skin Come Leather examines the allergy as a process of self-sabotage to reflect on hygiene beyond purification, transformation and reformation; accompanied by elements in between the realms of fetish, commercialized wellness and empowerment. Hofmann follows the rudimentary process of turning skin into leather

– a commodity – alongside skin examinations and experiments.

From the Greek *allos*, meaning different, and *ergia*, energy, allergy is also partially a construct stimulated by the development of human civilization. A number of studies support the so-called hygienic hypothesis, according to which we have constructed our late capitalist urban environment as overly hygienic, clean and sanitary. Immune systems in such environment hastily turn against incoming externalities. Hofmann looks at skin as a permeable border, at eczema and allergy as failures of hypersensitive immune systems, that can be freely transposed onto wider societal issues. Skin as a multi-layered metaphor and sphere becomes Hofmann's zone for interaction, manipulation, (self)violation, sensation, or exploitation: both dividing the bodily self from the rest of the world, and providing access to it; a sphere of the most intimate contact, letting the environmental elements enter the body, holding the body together and yet being so vulnerable to outer powers. The video in its hyper-tactile contemplations of skin as a membrane and border present the microscopic in a macro frame.

The video was commissioned the Jindrich Chaloupecky Society, and supported by the Czech-German Fund for the Future, and the Czech Centre Berlin.

L U K A S H O F M A N N studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (Studio of Intermedia Work III / Tomas Vanek School). He participated in a study program at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (Sculpture Studio), at the Korean National University of Arts in Seoul and at M.I Gallery in Berlin. He participated in a residency program at Nisyros, Greece organized by the Prague-based platform Are and is currently a resident of Residency Unlimited, New York. Also known as Saliva, he expresses himself primarily through performance and "social" sculptures that often speak in a dialect of the fashion and creative industry. In his situations, he creates curated communities of actors and environments in which he induces a focused atmosphere and egalitarian dynamic. In this way, he communicates a whole range of most current emotions: apathy as well as potentiality of feeling, disappointment and hope. He regularly participates in collective exhibitions and art events in the Czech Republic and internationally; he has presented his work e.g. in the Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin, the National Gallery of Denmark in Copenhagen, Moderna Museet in Stockholm and PLATO Gallery in Ostrava; during Manifesta 11, he performed at Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. In 2018, he received the Jindrich Chaloupecky Award, the most prominent Czech award for visual artists.

06 *Terre* terracotta sculptures 2019

M ' B A R E K B O U H C H I C H I

For several years M'barek Bouhchichi has been confronting the realities of black existence in Morocco and the Maghreb through his interactions with

craftsmen from the south. He is committed to learning from their devotion to simple shapes and primary materials, their ritual reiterations of ancient gestures, and their ethics of patience in the face of discrimination. *Terre* is an installation-accumulation of several thousand small heads manually produced out of the same mold. Beyond their different hues – resulting from distinct treatments of the clay–, these faces bear no specific markers. In their similarity and in the imperfections the artist chose to keep, they suggest a common, generic humanness.

Through an almost absurd process of infinite repetition, like an insistent demand or an impassioned prayer, Bouhchichi produces the bare, miniaturized image of an egalitarian humanity. But the huddled population of equals remains inaccessible under glass. This work was inspired by the words of a potter Bouhchichi met in Tunisia who claimed that "we are all made of earth". Out of this origin story, the artist has crafted a horizon as palpable as it is out of reach. M ' B A R E K B O U H C H I C H I is an artist who lives and works in Tahanaout in Morocco. He has taught art since the mid-1990s, first in Tiznit and today in Tahanaout. From the transcription of research into hollow and full spaces, from the colour to the gesture that he composes, his beginnings as an abstract painter influence his current work. His works propose a dual reading that rests on that of the artist which is personal and a reading that is guided by thoughts that are open to being shared and interpreted. Through installations, paintings, drawings and videos, M'barek Bouhchichi gives shape to modes of expression that move from the individual discourse towards broader social, poetic and historic systems. The thread of his works is an individual voice that enables a re-writing of the self.

M'barek Bouhchichi has taken part in exhibitions, biennials and conferences in Morocco and abroad. His recent exhibitions include: *Dak'art*, 13th edition of the Biennial of Contemporary African Art (Dakar, 2018); *Documents Bilingues* (MUCEM, Marseille, 2017); *Between Walls* (Le 18, Marrakech, 2017); *Les Mains Noires* (Kulte, Rabat, 2016).

07 *Bildet Banden* HD video projection, colour, sound, 7:23 min 2011 U L F A M I N D E

Bildet Banden (Form Gangs) is a performative happening which evolved out of a collaboration with the artist group Wilderers from the Diakonie Himmelsthür in Hildesheim, Germany – a social welfare organisation run by the Protestant church. The work on the film began at a time when the management of the Diakonie decided to follow the so-called paradigm shift in integration, initiated by the UN and decided to address their residents as "customers" to generate an economy at eye level. As a way of "Inclusion Management", they started to offer them apartments of a housing company whose supervisory boards are also in the management of the institution. The apartments were mostly in the quarter through which the procession passed:

Extensive, colourful banners were made and

carried through the city by the artist group which was filmed by Aminde. The banner next to the video projection in the installation is embedded in images and film-stills of him and protagonists from other works of the artist's archive. The procession in *Form Gangs* becomes a condensed version of Aminde's process of working: his works only evolve when the encounter between him and the people he is working with mutually hits a desire. They document the expectations and wishes towards each other with an intrinsic radicality. This dynamic is not finished in each work, it is passed onto the viewer and awakens an ambivalent oscillation between distance and empathy. In many of his works, Aminde negotiates the respective economics of collaborations and critically questions the power relations inherent in them. Aminde has not taken himself out of the process. Instead of romanticising the very unequal structure of this cooperation rather he examines his position self-critically.

A cooperation with Diakonie Himmelsthür, Atelier Wilderers, proTeam GmbH and with friendly support by "Stiftung Himmelsthür – Damit Leben gelingt." U L F A M I N D E is an artist and filmmaker living and working in Berlin. In his cinematic work he deals with the potential of self-empowerment through the performative camera, alienating effects in the documentary, and strategies of subjectivation. In doing so, he roams through categories of standardization and norms, and he questions social concepts such as discrimination and exclusion of minorities. His film works are mostly characterized by collaborations and experimental settings.

He is also Professor for Time Based Arts at the Weißensee Academy of Art in Berlin. There, he initiated in particular the *foundationClass for artists who were forced to flee their home countries. In Cologne, he will develop a film using Augmented Reality as a participative monument in memory of the racist attacks by the terrorist NSU network in Probsteigasse and Keupstrasse.

Exhibitions include Berlin Biennale 4, Havana Biennale, KW Berlin, Volksbühne am Rosa Luxemburg Platz, Berlinische Galerie, NGBK Berlin, ZKM Karlsruhe, MARTa Herford, Steirischer Herbst, Schirn Frankfurt, Kestner Gesellschaft Hannover, MoCA Taipei, Kunstverein Heidelberg, Staatstheater Mannheim, Kunstverein Wolfsburg and Galerie Tanja Wagner. He was nominated for the Anni and Heinrich Sussmann Artist Award, committed to the ideal of democracy and antifascism Vienna in 2017, the Nam June Paik Award in 2014 and won the Autoren und Produzentenpreis Junges Theater Bremen in 2006. He studied at Universität der Künste, Berlin with Lothar Baumgarten, where he graduated in 2004.

08 *Precarity* three channel HD colour video installation, 7.1 sound, 46:3 mins 2017

J O H N A K O M F R A H

In *Precarity*, Akomfrah charts the dark tragedy of Charles Joseph "Buddy" Bolden, the undisputed king of New Orleans music scene in the early 20th century, who was institutionalised in his early thirties and never seen in public again. *Precarity* is an exploration of the diasporic condition, the legacy of creativity, displacement and dispossession. Bolden's booming cornet and itinerant musical style is apocryphally famed as creating the sound of modern jazz. With no surviving recordings of Bolden's music only myth and legend remain. As much a ghost story as it is a portrait of a historical figure, *Precarity* weaves together fragmented histories and archival remnants to connect the experience of those suffering at the violent ends of history and state power.

J O H N A K O M F R A H is a widely respected artist and filmmaker, whose works are characterised by their investigations into memory, post-colonialism, temporality and aesthetics and often explore the experiences of migrant diasporas globally. Akomfrah was a founding member of the influential Black Audio Film Collective, which started in London in 1982 alongside the artists David Lawson and Lina Gopaul, who he still collaborates with today. Their first film, *Handsworth Songs* (1986) explored the events surrounding the 1985 riots in Birmingham and London through a charged combination of archive footage, still photos and newsreel. The film won several international prizes and established a multi-layered visual style that has become a recognisable motif of Akomfrah's practice. Other works include the three-screen installation *The Unfinished Conversation* (2012), a moving portrait of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall's life and work; *Peripeteia* (2012), an imagined drama visualising the lives of individuals included in two 16th century portraits by Albrecht Dürer and *Mnemosyne* (2010) which exposes the experience of migrants in the UK, questioning the notion of Britain as a promised land by revealing the realities of economic hardship and casual racism. In 2015, Akomfrah premiered his three-screen film installation *Vertigo Sea* (2015), that explores what Ralph Waldo Emerson calls "the sublime seas". Fusing archival material, readings from classical sources and newly shot footage, Akomfrah's piece focuses on the disorder and cruelty of the whaling industry and juxtaposes it with scenes of many generations of migrants making epic crossings of the ocean for a better life. Akomfrah presented his largest film installation to date, *Purple*, in 2017 at the Barbican in London, co-commissioned by Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden, TBA21— Academy, The Institute of Contemporary Art/ Boston and Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon. The six-channel video installation addresses climate change, human communities and the wilderness. More recently, Akomfrah debuted *Precarity* at Prospect 4 New Orleans.

John Akomfrah has had numerous solo

exhibitions including at the Imperial War Museum, London, UK (2018); New Museum, New York, NY, USA (2018); Bildmuseet, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden (2018); Nasher Museum at Duke University, Durham, DC, USA (2018); SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA, USA (2018); Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2017); Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2016); Tate Britain, London, UK (2013-14) and a week long series of screenings at MoMA, New York, USA (2011). His participation in international group shows has included: *Prospect 4*, New Orleans, LA, USA (2017); *Restless Earth*, La Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy (2017); *Unfinished Conversations*, Museum of Modern Art, New York City, NY, USA (2017); *The Place is Here*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK (2017); *All the World's Futures*, 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2015); Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2015); SeMA, Seoul, South Korea (2014); Sharjah Biennial 11, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2013). He has also been featured in many international film festivals, including Sundance Film Festival, Utah, USA (2013 and 2011) and Toronto International Film Festival, Canada (2012).

09 *SUBLIMIS* series of photographs, printed on photo paper 2019 NATHALIE MAZEAS *SUBLIMIS* is an ongoing photography project that presents the architectural spaces and homes of the homeless in Paris, confronting us with the capacity of resilience in crisis. Through the layers of visual stories, we peer into the lives of people who have been cut off, or have cut themselves off from material comfort and consumerism. Nathalie Mazeas has been observing, listening and talking to the authors and owners of the places and belongings in the photos. Living on the streets proves to catalyse the setting of extra rules, ultra guidelines for themselves, notions of time and relationships to art and art making which create comfort despite uncomfortable circumstances. The prodigious architectural constructions are made of cardboard and plastic bags, some covered with drawings serving as wallpaper, breathing temporal/atemporal/temporary winds. These spaces teeter between compliance to create a personal territory and tenacious self-reliance: re-inventions of home, wherever and however in opposition to known norms. In spite of the harshness of the pavement and neglectful people rushing by, these photographs enable a possibility of reflection towards a territorial intimacy, a time machine of dissidence to uniformity. *SUBLIMIS* speaks of the limitless within the liminal.

NATHALIE MAZEAS was born in Paris, where she also lives and works. After twenty years spent photographing actors for magazines, movies and for the National Drama School (CNSAD Paris), her work has become more personal and intimate. The human side is still the main focus. Her work has been exhibited among others at the Galerie JPB (Arles), Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris), Festival FOT'Oeil (Cerbère), Festival PHOT'AIX (Aix-en-Provence) and Galerie VU (Paris). Her work has been published in *L'Oeil de la*

Photographie.

10 *Institution of Captivity* acrylic, latex house paint, spray paint, fabric paint, pencil, string and staples on cut unprimed canvas 2015 L A V A R M U N R O E Lavar Munroe is interested in the idea of the family as spectacle. Mother, father, aunt and child are all on display as they each wear various skin pigments, pointing to no specific race or nationality. The notion of the spectacle of the non-white diseased body on display in human zoos serves as one of many sources of interests in this work. Also of interest is the problematization of displaying the mentally and physically challenged as means of curiosity and entertainment.

The family portrait borrows from age old photography props, head in hole boards that served as a source of photo memorabilia for visitors and popular ads for exhibitors during freak show, world fairs, and human zoo exhibits. The mentally and physically handicapped central figure gives birth in front of an audience while celebrating a birthday. The sense of touch and elements of pain are challenged in this work. Resistant to the physical pain of the birth, the central figure suffers most from the mental strain of being exposed based on othering. Of concern are instances of genetics in relation to disease, disease brought on by colonial empires towards unaware and unequipped captives, and disease as an imposed measurement of otherness.

L A V A R M U N R O E was born in Nassau, Bahamas. Lavar Munroe is an interdisciplinary artist whose work encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture, and installation art, creating hybrid forms that straddle the line between sculpture and painting.

He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2007, and his Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art from Washington University in 2013. In 2014, he was awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received the Postdoctoral Award of Research Excellence. Munroe has exhibited widely, nationally and internationally. He was included in *Prospect.4: The Lotus in Spite of The Swamp*, the New Orleans triennial curated by Trevor Schoonmaker. Munroe's work was featured in the 2015 Venice Biennale in the international art exhibition *All the World's Futures*, curated by the Biennale's director, the late Okwui Enwezor. He represented The Bahamas at the 2010 Liverpool Biennial with a site-specific drawing project, and at the 12th Dakar Biennial in Senegal, curated by Simon Njami. He has been awarded residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the MacDowell Colony, the Headlands Center for the Arts, the Joan Mitchell Center, Thread Senegal: Artist Residency; Cultural Center, a project of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation and is the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. Most recent, Munroe was named an inaugural Artist in Residence at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm

Beach Florida. Munroe has also exhibited at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Orlando Museum of Art, Nasher Museum of Art, Contemporary Art Museum of Raleigh, SCAD Museum of Art, National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo (MAXXI) and the Meadows Museum, among others.

Munroe lives and works between Baltimore MD, and Nassau, Bahamas.

11 *Frazada (La Sombra), Blanket (The Shade)* fabric used to wrap the body of a murdered woman, mounted on a metallic structure, similar to those used by street markets, La Paz, Bolivia 2016

T E R E S A M A R G O L L E S

The fabric, almost levitating in the gallery space, was recovered from a morgue in La Paz. Paired with its edges, we encounter the shadow, a dark space of the gloom, evoking the problem of systemic gender violence against women in Bolivia and around the world. In the shine of the light, the cloth's membrane textures the shade. We are faced with the remains of the cloth's initial use: of intimacy, shelter, and concealment even with the loathsome at hand. The volume of the space filled with the aura of this suspended fabric conducts a genealogy of remembrance, a memorial of unwieldy and ongoing pain against femmes international. Set at the backdrop of a naked wall stripped of paint, the bareness calls to mind the raw and stained textures of city streets, reconnecting the fabric's locality to the public space it was taken from.

(According to the Bolivian National Institute of Statistics, in 2016, 87% of women suffered violence in Bolivia).

T E R E S A M A R G O L L E S born in Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico, is a visual artist who examines the social causes and consequences of death, destruction and civil war. For Margolles, the morgue accurately reflects society, particularly her home area where deaths caused by drug-related crime, poverty, political crisis and government's brutal military response have devastated communities. She has developed a unique, restrained language in order to speak for her silenced subjects, the victims discounted as "collateral damage" and nameless statistics.

Teresa Margolles is known for creating powerful artworks that demand attention to violence, poverty and alienation; for exposing the social and economic order that renders violent and destitute deaths an accepted normality; for her courage and integrity in transgressing social and artistic conventions; and for speaking truth to power through public exposure of government complicity in violence and poverty, not only in Mexico, but throughout the world.

Among many others, her work has been exhibited solo and in group shows at Venice Biennale (2019); Kunsthalle Krems (2019); MAMBO Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (2019); DAAD Galerie Berlin (2018); Witte de With Rotterdam (2018); Belvedere 21 Vienna

(2018); Musée d'Art Contemporain Montreal (2017); MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt (2017); Museo de la Ciudad de Queretaro (2016); Manifesta 11 Zurich (2016); Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst Zurich (2014); Museo de Arte Moderno Mexico City (2011); Kunsthalle Fridericianum Kassel (2010); The Venice Biennale, Mexican Pavilion Venice (2009). In 2017, she was artist in residence of the DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm.

12 *Tanz Sediment* sound/video installation, stereo, HD, 6:38 mins, drawings (graphite on paper, variable dimensions) 2019 A L E S S A N D R A E R A M O Drawing inspiration from Tarantella music and the mystical possession of the Tarantula spider bite, in *Tanz Sediment* Alessandra Eramo explores the space of freedom that resists in the female voice by creating a trance music ritual, evoking sonic memories like a river sediment. A wild voice, noisy, gentle, confident, bestial, natural, untrained, vulnerable voice. As Tarantella music and dance lead to trance in form of healing ritual, Alessandra is interested in tracing a visceral feeling through singing, disclosing an archaic sonic territory in the modern human body.

She created a composition – commissioned by Deutschlandfunk Kultur – as a hypnotic sound collage that includes extended solo voice, female choir and glossolalia, a traditional Apulian women work song, frame drum, the text in ancient Greek from the Euripides tragedy *The Bacchantes*, and field recordings at a wild park and former deserted industrial area in Berlin. Tarantism is a form of disease, inner agitation and "madness" that was common in Puglia in Southern Italy until the 1960s, resulting from the bite of the tarantula spider, often occurring in summer to women during tobacco harvesting. The women organized healing rituals to free their bodies from the symbolic spider poison through frenetic Tarantella music and dance, giving voice to suffering and repression, as a form of rebellion and autonomy of the illiterate subaltern community in one of the most disadvantaged parts of Italy.

Possessions, healing rituals and ecstatic music similar to Tarantella were documented in the Afro-Mediterranean region already thousands of years ago, such as female Dionysian rituals in Magna Graecia. Tarantism phenomenon in Puglia eclipsed due to the industrialization and the decline of peasant culture. The tarantula spider derives its name from Taranto, the city in Southern Italy where Alessandra was born and raised, a beautiful place on the coast of the Ionian Sea, with a glorious past as the capital of Magna Graecia. The name of Taranto is today synonymous of social tension due to the heavy industry among the largest in Europe that has poisoned the city and the population for decades, leading today to an ecological disaster and mass migration. Tarantism is extinct but it remains in my consciousness through the experience and memory of songs. In amazement Alessandra has been observing her body through videos or photos taken while she

sings her deformed face, gestures, grimaces, postures, breath, with her mouth wide open. Alessandra's singing body becomes a visual trace of a sonic event, an inscribed memory. She sings an oppression and is free again.

Video, Composition, Vice and Electronics: Alessandra Eramo
Frame Drum: Antonino Secchia
Voice in ancient Greek: Eirini Fountedaki
Choir: Inma Bernlis, Alessandra Eramo, Ianni Luna, Morena Liceli, Sonia Noya
Tanz Sediment is also a radiophonic work commissioned by Deutschlandfunk Kultur, Klangkunst Program, broadcast in 2020.

A L E S S A N D R A E R A M O is a Berlin-based sound artist, vocalist and performer who works primarily with voice and noise. She creates sound performances, videos, installations and drawings, exploring the tension between vocality and writing, performative rituals and trance-like states through singing. Her projects often adopt relational aesthetics and address questions about the body, memory and identity. She was trained in classical singing, piano and music theory since an early age, she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and Stuttgart and completed her Masters Degree in Performance Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Ca' Foscari University in Venice.

She has performed and exhibited widely at festivals, museums, radio and independent art spaces such as: Tsonami Festival Chile, Liminaria/Manifesta12 Palermo, BBC Radio 3, Heroines of Sound Festival Berlin, FLUSSI Media Arts Festival Avellino, Transmediale Berlin, Electronic Voice Phenomena/Liverpool Biennial 2013, Roulette New York, Padiglione Italia nel Mondo/54th Venice Biennale, to name a few. Alongside her solo work, she has collaborated as vocalist with many acclaimed composers, choreographers, poets and visual artists including Maria Iorio & Raphaël Cuomo, Zorka Wollny, Brandon LaBelle, Noha Ramadan, Ines Lechleitner, and many more. Co-founder of "Corvo Records – vinyl & sound art production", between 2015 and 2018 she has been a member of Errant Bodies – Sound Art Space in Berlin. Also, she is an art teacher and leads the cross-disciplinary workshop *The Space between Voice and Gesture*.

13 *A Room Full of Hysterical Women* cement silkscreening, handmade textile costume, metal frames 2019 L A R I S A C R U N Ţ E A N U Larisa Crunţeanu's practice as performer, video artist and sound collector combines reality and fiction to question power relations and the notion of female identity. Looking at the similarities between patterns (architectural and textile) and the representation of women throughout history, the installation *A Room Full of Hysterical Women* is composed of dressing screens containing monologues and blueprints. Each screen

is a portrait of a character from literature, poetry, film or theatre. The work addresses emotions expressed by women, that have historically been disregarded and treated as somatic illnesses, in the light of social etiquette, public space, motherhood, labour, or justice. The visitors are invited to navigate through this dramatic architecture that deconstructs and problematizes the gendered attribution of objects, according to which the dressing screen belongs to the domestic emotional space of femininity, while the architectural blueprint belongs to the intellectual rational space of masculinity. Larisa invites us to move beyond the conceptions of presumed and conditioned gender norms as they have been historically imposed, asking us to trouble how they have shaped and influenced both medicinal belief systems and the construction of gender-based inequities.

L A R I S A C R U N Ţ E A N U studied photography and moving image and is currently a PhD candidate at the National Arts University of Bucharest. She works at the intersection of video and performance between research and speculation, often collaboratively, creating contexts for the emergence of new practices and organization.

Solo shows include: Halle9, Leipzig (2019); Anca Poteraşu Gallery, Leipzig (2019); Anca Poteraşu Gallery, Bucharest (2018); Zacheta Project Room, Warsaw (2018); tête, Berlin (2018); RKI Gallery, Berlin (2015); Ivan Gallery, Bucharest (2015); Atelier 35, Bucharest (2013); Galeria Posibilă, Bucharest (2012); Atelier 35, Bucharest (2012). Her work appeared, among others, in the group shows: Warsaw Biennale, Warsaw (2019), MAB, FAAP, São Paulo (2017), Projektraum LS43, Berlin (2017); Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2016); District Berlin, Berlin (2016); National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest (2013).

14 *Kumira Mutariro (Waiting in Faith)* silkscreen on cotton paper 2017 V I R G I N I A C H I H O T A Subjected to memory, the *Waiting in Faith* series draws to the laborious moment of undoubted belief, despite supposedly rational sense-making imposed by medical advice. After two surgical deliveries and arrival of a still born child, Virginia Chihota decided against surgery for her next baby to come. "I had given birth the natural way to death, I just wanted to give birth the natural way to life." Within sight of the arrival of her baby and mediated by faith, she captured herself waiting for her newborn in the suggested atmosphere of worry and warning others were driving her into. *Waiting in Faith* is a heart freezing podium for waiting for life when death has come beforehand. Virginia Chihota's intuition presents us with the capacity of femininity's emotional logic, impulse, and hyper lucidity, a reasoning so often pinned against assertively rational, dominant, and limiting models. V I R G I N I A C H I H O T A was born in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, she currently lives and works in Podgorica, Montenegro. She graduated in Fine Arts from the National Art Gallery Studios in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2006. Chihota represented Zimbabwe at

the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 and was awarded the Prix Canson in the same year.

Introspective in nature, Virginia Chihota's work is deeply influenced by personal experiences – landmark and everyday. In a reflection on intimacy and the human figure, she has addressed themes such as childbearing, child rearing, marriage, kinship, bereavement and faith. At once mundane and transcendental, rife with allusions to everyday life, and religious and folkloric symbolism, her large works on paper display a raw, expressionist verve and a striking grace in the elaborate use of patterns, textures and layers. Having trained as a printmaker, Chihota's use of screen-printing is as confident as it is original. She mixes printing techniques with drawing to produce unique works of striking formal complexity. They often depict the female form blending into near abstraction, and bodies caught in strange embraces evoking a figural union; along with an iconographic repertoire which points towards the domestic while emphasising connectedness and collectivity. Chihota's work highlights the ways in which the female agency disrupts borders and activates concerns around different forms of belonging. Subjectivity emerges as a concept embedded in notions of interrelatedness.

Recent exhibitions include: National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare (2018); Vienna Academy of Fine Arts (2017); Hangar – Centro de Investigação Artística, Lisbon (2016); Muséum d'histoire naturelle, Le Havre (2016); Tiwani Contemporary (solo, 2016); Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2015); Saatchi Gallery, London (2015); Kunsthalle Faust, Hannover (2014); Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2014); and the Lyon Biennale (2011). Her work is represented in collections including Tate, the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Deutsche Bank and Saatchi Gallery

15 *Prisoner's Cinema* HD video, color, sound, 31:10 mins 2014

B E A T R I Z S A N T I A G O M U Ñ O Z In the cavity of the stairwell, the viewing of *Prisoner's Cinema* takes place in a claustrophobic space inviting you to inhabit and to imagine zones of confinement. Here, the shapes of the ultrasane are seen in rebellion and resistance.

The name of the film takes itself from experiences of imprisonment, after prolonged incarceration and sensory deprivation, some prisoners experience visual hallucinations filled with extraordinary luminescence and color. These hallucinations are sometimes referred to as "prisoners cinema". Elizam Escobar is a Puerto Rican artist and writer who served 19 and a half years in US prisons for the crime of seditious conspiracy. Escobar never experienced these visual hallucinations, but his writing during these years evidences an extreme and sometimes painful attention to mental processes, as well as an expanded sensorial, emotional and intellectual internal life. *Prisoner's Cinema* is the film that might have been imagined by Escobar during these years of imprisonment. The words

in the film are taken from what Escobar has called his prison Anti-diary, a record of the thought processes that ran parallel to his painting, poetry and essays from 1988 to 1995.

B E A T R I Z S A N T I A G O M U N O Z lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She is an artist whose expanded moving-image work is entangled with Boalian theater, experimental ethnography and feminist thought. She tends to work with non-actors, and incorporates improvisation into her process. Her recent work is on the sensorial unconscious of anti-colonial movements, and on everyday poetic work in the Caribbean.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Gosila in Der Tank*, Basel; *Rodarán Cabezas* in Espacio Odeón, Bogotá; *That which identifies them, like the eye of the cyclops at Western Front*; *A Universe of Fragile Mirrors* at the PAMM in Miami, and *Song Strategy Sign* at the New Museum. Recent group exhibitions include: Whitney Biennial 2017, NYC; *Prospect 4*, New Orleans; 8th Contour Biennale, Mechelen; *Ce qui ne sert pas s'oublie*, CAPC-Bordeaux. She has received the Herb Alpert Arts Award, and received a 2015 Creative Capital visual artist grant.

16 *Camisole* mural 2019

Y A S S I N E B A L B Z I O U I Yassine Balzoui's mural created for the exhibition at SAVVY Contemporary is a continuation of his intervention *Flying Spoons*, performed in the framework of the third chapter of U L T R A S A N I T Y in Essaouira, during the Gnawa festival. There, we explored the accountable connectivity between individual imbalances with societal imbalances, reflecting critically on the role of music, ritualistic healing, and collective engagement. Yassine's performance piece incorporated the sonics of Gnawa's traditional Theremin and Guembri, alongside metal spoons, to create symphony out of cacophony and melody out of madness. The surrealistic mural presents staged scenes and stories that repeat themselves and collide, around carnivalesque characters wearing strange costumes. Centering the absurd while deliberating on his take of the ultrasane, Yassine's perspective prioritizes a nonlinear and limitless set of possibilities of expression and identity, a radical proposal for the elasticity of self. Y A S S I N E B A L B Z I O U I was born in Morocco, he lives and works in Marrakesh. Balzoui holds a Master of Fine Arts, from the School of Fine Arts in Casablanca, Morocco and a Superior National Diploma ART and MEDIA from the School of Fine Art in Bordeaux, France. His work plays with conventions and shifts between media. The mask is a recurrent theme that has always fascinated Balzoui and played a major role in his work. According to him, society is often based on appearances. His works continually lead the viewer to question the notions of sincerity and hypocrisy or truth and lies. It is hard to miss the absence of the human face in Yassine's work; as the paintings are marked with animals and birds, often referring to bestiary, representing stories or scenes depending on the characteristics of the animals; and their similarities

to human habits and characteristics. Balbzioui has taken part in numerous international exhibitions and residencies.

Recent solo shows include *Half Flying*, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Berlin (2018); *Golden Wall*, Gallery Shart, Casablanca, Morocco (2018); *AKKA*, with Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Paris, France (2018); *Porcellanographie: Future Traces*, Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth, Germany (2016); *Splash... and Galerie Shart*, Casablanca, Morocco (2016). Selected recent group shows include *Kubatana*, Vesfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway (2019); *Dak'Art Biennale*, 13th Biennial of African Contemporary Art, Dakar, Senegal (2018).

17 *Findings Through Principles of Phrenology, Literature, Sound and Advertising* sound 2019
L E O A S E M O T A

Leo Asemota spins a sonic playlist in contemplation of the realms of the ultrasane beginning with the entrance poem to the concept of the show entitled *Madness*, recited by its author Shade Maryann Olaoye. Musical tracks follow of songs throughout the eras, layered with literature reflecting on microcosms of madness. As is wont when working alongside curators Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and Elena Agudio, Asemota provides some of the material from his findings inspired by conversations and exchanges with them.

L E O A S E M O T A was born in Benin City, Nigeria. He has places of residence in London, England and in his birthplace Benin City, Nigeria.

18 *Udi Kinje* video, color, sound, 12:32mins 2019
The Sysmograph Genesis Act 4 series of drawings created on the island of San Servolo in Venice during our Ultrasanity symposium on May 10th 2019
P É L A G I E G B A G U I D I

It was during a conversation that Pélagie Gbaguidi discovered the common thread of her research: “women who break stones”. She went to the Kipushi mines in DRC and understood the metaphor of the tragedy of the 21st century. There, an indescribable place of human desolation where a multitude of ingredients of the madness of the world are condensed: a colossal wealth of minerals, exploitative working conditions and the overexposure of the body to the toxicity of minerals; a place of predations of various multinationals to build innovative materials all around the world; the list continues. This city polluted by dust and other consequences of mining operations in the surrounding area moved Pélagie Gbaguidi to set in motion a march, a “collective awareness” movement, given the urgency of these conditions. The movement takes the form of a prototype with a path between a silent/sung demonstration. For Pélagie Gbaguidi, it is “a kind of hybrid generated by collective consideration”. The artist therefore proposed to manufacture anti-pollution masks made with local printed fabrics such as loin-cloths, with hopes that collective walks including those with the wearing of these masks, can contribute to massive behavioural changes. Her film documents and

probes the insanity of the societal, offering performative and collective solution-making for the female workers of the coal mine, providing possibilities for healing in the form of physical protectants: a critical call for shielding life.

Gbaguidi's drawings were created as part of her performance during the third chapter of Ultrasanity's symposium in Venice, entitled *The Sysmograph Genesis Act 4*, done on the island of San Servolo: a place of the convergence of sufferings linked to its past as a military hospital and psychiatric hospital. As a durational intervention, Pelagie drew throughout the symposium and “made visible the non-visible areas of pain trace [present on the island] as a seismogram, to communicate them visibly”. In this underground language, she invites to “probe the vibrations” of her excavation on the island at S A V V Y Contemporary.

P É L A G I E G B A G U I D I from Benin, born in Dakar, lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. Gbaguidi calls herself a contemporary “griot”. A “griot” questions the individual as they move through life, by absorbing the words of the ancients and modeling them like a ball of fat that she places in the stomach of each passerby with the ingredients of the day. In the practical sense, it breaks the commonplace rhythm by inserting subtle incidents integrating its part of eternity. Her work is an anthology of signs and traces on trauma. In fact, it is one of her recurrent subjects, evidenced by the acquisition of 100 drawings of the *Code Noir* (1685) series at the Memorial Act in Guadeloupe. Her focus of interest is centered on the colonial and postcolonial archives and on the unmasking of the process of forgetting in history. This readjustment of the imaginary arouses in the artist the urgency to give it form, a writing of liberating images and a corpus to draw contemporary forms.

She has participated in numerous international exhibitions such as: Biennale of Dakar (2004, 2006, 2008, 2014, 2018); *Divine Comedy: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory Revisited* by Contemporary African Artists, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (Germany) 2014 and the National Museum of African Art – Smithsonian Institution, Washington (USA) 2015; among many others. Recently, she took part in documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel and contributed to the book *Why Are We “Artists”? 100 World Art Manifestos* by Jessica Lack. In October 2018, she received a scholarship from Civitella Ranieri Foundation. In 2019, she participated in *Decolonizing the Body* at Eternal Network Gallery in France and in May at the *Exhibition Multiple Transmissions: Art in the Afropolitan Age* at Wiels (Brussels) and at the biennial of Lubumbashi as well as in the Frohner Museum (Austria), among others.

19 *Archive of MADnificent Irations* S A V V Y .doc

F R E D E R I C K W . H I C K L I N G

The curators of the exhibition and S A V V Y .doc invited psychiatrist Frederick W. Hickling to present his archive, asking him to rummage into materials and documents collected in the 70s, during his activity

and experimentations in deinstitutionalisation in the 70s in Jamaica: the *MADnificent Irations* series. The phrase MADnificent Irations was created intentionally to describe “the magnificent dialectic thinking of Descendants of Africans Enslaved in the New World” with madnificent being neologically inverted from the English word magnificent meaning “extremely beautiful, elaborate, impressive or excellent; and irations the Rastafarian neologism for thinking. The word madnificent was definitely and intentionally invented to challenge in no uncertain terms who precisely is being described as mad; the colonial enslavers or the Africans enslaved in the New World.¹

The sociodrama *MADnificent Irations* launched at Bellevue Mental Hospital in Jamaica in 1978 triggered a socio-cultural tsunami that challenged the European colonial concept of madness; had debunked many deep-seated myths about Rastafari, the etiologic role of marihuana in the genesis of madness, and catalysed revolutionary new community engagement to the treatment and management of mental illness in the Jamaican society. Most importantly, *MADnificent Irations* signalled the launch of psychohistoriographic cultural therapy as a new era in world psychiatry, developed in the context of Jamaica as an answer to existing therapy models, which almost exclusively addressed the white middle class of Europe and the United States. *MADnificent Irations* presented the ideological inversion of the drama tracing the history which portrayed Rastafari vilified by British colonialism and ending up incarcerated in the colonial madhouse. (...) The launch of *MADnificent Irations* in the bowels of the Bellevue Mental Hospital in August 1978 represented an in vivo attempt to trace the development of psychiatric social systems and therapeutic models that have evolved in Jamaica to counter the ideology of violent insanity that has developed pari-passu with the development of capitalism, enslavement and colonial exploitation.

Frederick W. Hickling

Jacks Hill, Jamaica

04.12.2019

(full text available in the SAVVY.doc)

F R E D E R I C K W . H I C K L I N G CD, BSC (Anat.), MBBS, DM, FRCPsych (UK), FRSM, DLFAPA is a poet, playwright, dramaturgist, medical practitioner and psychiatrist educated at University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona; BSc in Anatomy St. Thomas' Hospital Medical School, University of London; residency in psychiatry at UWI and the University of Edinburgh. Pioneered psychohistoriographic cultural therapy in Jamaica in the 1970's; established a private psychiatric research and clinical service in Kingston

¹ Celebrated Jamaican poet Louise Bennett chose not to work in English, the official language of Jamaica but in the language most Jamaicans speak. She explicitly defended the dignity and autonomy of the Jamaican Creole and asserts that the African ancestors of Jamaica choose to disguise the English language to protect the African languages, with Jamaican words camouflaging English words allowing the dialect to sound as if has no English in it, so an English speaker would not be able to understand the Jamaican dialect speaker if that was the Jamaican's intention.

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E D I T E D by Jasmina Al-Qaisi Anna Jäger
Kelly Krugman Lili Somogyi

ULTRASANITY

ON MADNESS, SANITATION,
ANTIPSYCHIATRY AND
RESISTANCE

by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

For the souls in Nsukka.

sometimes, you wonder what spirit
plucks you, feather after feather
revealing your mind as blotched flesh

as whirlwind
it lays bare your earth
and you wonder what spirit claims
— soul-body-mind
all at once, calling you its own, shutting you out
of yourself
leaving you grasping for anything familiar
for the name you once were called
beneath a pile of dirt and flies

madness is rain that refuses to stop
voice calling you over and over in a deluge
to run the open roads as flood
where wraiths and debris are company
leaving behind you broken pieces of normalcy
and what your mind once was

you begin to look for shelter, away from the
downpour
for the mouth that calls you
so it can take you in and give you peace
but some riddles cannot be untied
so, you beat about the bush — all bushes
searching for answers
to questions someone said they never asked you

who asked you?

sometimes, you do not know
you become a mask of vacant expressions
something covered in red dust as some forgotten
relic
buried in time with ancient worth

aren't you forgotten?

everything you hold tells you no one should walk
the earth alone
they tell you many things like the rain
but all you have is a pile of rubbish and memories
buried deep in the denial of men
all you have become is a story of how fate works
how life loosens its thread and you become
tangled and lost
so you are only thought of in rumors, hands on
waist and clapped palms
how everything forgets you
except the voices that walk with you
except the road which is now home

Shade Mary-Ann Olaoye: *Madness*

ANECDOTE I: THE STALENESS OF THE NORM

One of the most acknowledged and brilliant theatre directors, dramatists, essayists, poets of the twentieth century, Antonin Artaud (Marseille, 1896 – Paris, 1948), though considered by many a genius, spent nine years of his short life in the discomfort and restrictions of five asylums for the insane.¹ It is said that, what shocked Artaud most was that his family and friends were ready to cast him out of society into asylums because they considered him out of the norm. A norm he was never meant to, never could, and was never willing to abide to. A norm that had been equated with sanity. A norm equilibrated to the basicness and often mediocrity of society, which was and is still ready to barnish, reject, discharge, scapegoat its own whenever it considers him or her to have danced out of the realms or normality. It is with this autobiographical baggage – the distrust of society's judgement and placements with regards to sanity and insanity – that Artaud wrote with much ardour the seminal essay *Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society*. At the crux of Artaud's lamentation towards society with regard to the way people like himself, Virginia Woolf, Van Gogh, Gerard de Nerval and many others are treated, is the construction and the rigidity of the norm. Since the norm society creates is equivalent to sanity, those that fall out of this norm, i.e. those who Artaud describes as having superior lucidities and luminosity, those with the gift of special faculties and spirits, those that have chosen to accommodate spaces we can barely imagine are declared insane. Insanity as the opposite of sanity. Artaud like many others see those considered insane by society – because of their

¹ Ros Murray, Antonin Artaud. *The Scum of the Soul*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014
A reference from a text in one of Antonin Artaud's notebooks written in Paris in 1946: "l'anatomie humaine est fausse, elle est fausse et je le sais pour l'avoir de la tête aux pieds éprouvé pendant mes 9 ans de séjour dans 5 asiles d'aliénés." (the human anatomy is false, it is false and I know it because I have from my head to my feet experienced it during my 9 years of residence in 5 insane asylums).

illumination in spirit, because of their beyond-normalcy – rather as the ultrasane. Ultrasanity as that which is beyond sanity. Ultrasanity as that space explored and inhabited by those that have broken out, that have delivered themselves from the ordinariness, as well as the staleness and sogginess of the norms of society. If society does construct that which is right and wrong in terms of saneness and madness, then ultrasanity is that thing sold to us as madness. Which is to say that sphere on the other shore across the river, which has hardly been explored by those in the comfort of the “right”, and in possession of “sanity”. Ultrasanity is for those who have dared to eat the forbidden fruit, and drink from the forsaken river. Madness, being mental, or insanity are considered to be forms of deviations from traditional, cultural, or social behavioural norms. Which is to say that certain forms of mental illness, madness, insanity could be traditional, cultural or social inventions.

ANECDOTE II: THE CONSTRUCTION OF INSANITY AND MADNESS

Antonin Artaud's suspicion of insanity and madness as a kind of construction by society seems to be reflected in Thomas Szasz' controversial *Myths of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct*, which was originally published in 1961. Szasz postulates that mental illness is a myth, as illness is meant to be bodily disorders, typically manifested in alterations of bodily structures that cause visible deformities. According to Szasz mental illness is “functional”, and bodily illness is “structural” i.e. detected by observing the patient's body and anatomy, and treated by medicating. Szasz points out that while “in modern medicine new diseases were discovered, in modern psychiatry, they were invented. Paresis was proved to be a disease; hysteria was declared to be one.”² With this example Szasz drives through Artaud's question as to who has the right and possibility, or under what grounds does one declare that someone is mentally ill and what are the criteria for this declaration.

The construction of madness is for sure not a one way street. That is to say, it is not only the society that pushes one into that space of madness, but also, some individuals have sought to occupy that space of mental illness on their own accord as a way of escaping a certain situation, which is to say the performance of madness as a rebellion towards certain norms in society. If society has constructed that space, i.e. given one the possibility of escaping into that space, then madness too can be chosen as a way to avoid legal consequences. In the past years, we have heard of people who committed the gravest of crimes, and were later classified as mentally unstable and mentally ill. Interestingly, in the last decade that has been plagued with terrorist attacks all over the world, it is worth noting that especially in the Western context,

² Thomas S. Szasz. *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct*. New York: Harper & Row. 1974, 2.

whenever an attack is committed by someone of colour or someone from the non-West, there is a tendency to term this a terrorist attack, while if the attack is done by someone considered of White race, there is a tendency to classify the attack as a mental lability. It is worth understanding the link here between madness, mental illness and race in the context of the perpetration and responsibility of violence.

This comes back to the role society plays in the classification of mental illnesses. In most cases, people considered mentally ill are diagnosed by those in their immediate environment – family and friends – because it was noticed that the person in question fell out of the norm. The decision to take a person to the psychiatrist already influences the diagnosis of the psychiatrist. The diagnosis by the physician is often times influenced by the narrative of the family or friends. The myth and construction of madness is framed around the social arrangements and ethical convictions within societies.

ANECDOTE III: MADNESS AS TOOL – SUPPRESSION, ESCAPE, RESISTANCE

It is common knowledge in many cultures, for example with the Nguembas of the grasslands of Cameroon, that some people are forced into this state called madness due to extreme pressures in societies. In common folk tales we learn about people who chose the space of madness due to the pressures of the colonial era. Rather than succumbing to the violence of the White man, to the impetuositities of racism and suppression of cultures, epistemic systems and traditions, some people opted to escape the “realities” of the colonial norm and occupy that space of madness. In that space, one was either left alone, or at least locked up in an asylum, but one still had a relative peace of mind. In some of the cases, the mad were spared of work, spared of paying taxes and other quotidian chores and dues. That space called madness thus became a retreat. Retreat not in the sense of rest, but in the sense of retarding. Retarding not in the sense of insanity, but in the sense of pulling back, stepping out of, giving up. The give-up-teur. Which is to say, a space similar to the abode and hideout of those in guerilla warfare. A space of resistance.

In Mary Orijei Mba's PhD thesis *Saved by Madness: Responses and Reactions to Domestic Violence Against Women in Francophone African Novels*, she investigates Mariama Bâ's *Un Chant Écarlate* (1981) (Scarlet Song), Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* (1982), and Sony Labou Tansi's *Les Yeux du Volcan* (1988) with regard to the concept of madness as a cultural construct and myth. She studies particularly how women in these literatures appropriate and perform madness towards attaining certain benefits, but also use madness as a tool to exercise violence on others. By looking at the consequences of various forms of domestic violences – by men on women and vice versa, by parents on children and vice versa, by co-wives in polygamous contexts on their core and extended

families and vice versa – in relation to madness, Orijei Mba points out that “some of the victims wait without doing anything; they isolate themselves, go into their shells, lose their minds or buy into the idea that they have lost their minds. They either die of depression, retaliate by attacking others, or kill others or die themselves. In other words, they react or respond through madness.”³ Orijei Mba points out the complexity of the concept of madness in the African context, as it relates to, allies with and sometimes against the grain of mythology, witchery, fairy tales and reality. She analyzes madness through the prism of how African societies construct themselves and others, and how the notion and construct of madness of women – especially abused women – is related to mythical beliefs as Mamiwata, sorcery, witchcraft, and lunar cycle lunacy. Crucial in her reading of madness is that instead of condemning these women’s madness as negative, deplorable and the worst case scenario for the women, Orijei Mba chose to read their madness as liberating, redeeming, and sometimes, a choice. Short of saying a possibility of resisting.

ANECDOTE IV: MADNESS, COLONIALISM AND THE COLONIALITY OF INSANITY

At the same time these high-placed personages protect them; in other words the colonized people protect themselves against colonial estrangement by going one better in religious estrangement, with the unique result that finally they add the two estrangements together and each reinforces the other. Thus in certain psychoses the hallucinated person, tired of always being insulted by his demon, one fine day starts hearing the voice of an angel who pays him compliments; but the jeers don't stop for all that; only from then on, they alternate with congratulations. This is a defense, but it is also the end of the story; the self is disassociated, and the patient heads for madness. Let us add, for certain other carefully selected unfortunates, that other witchery of which I have already spoken: western culture.

Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth*

One might be tempted to think of colonialism as madness. But this would be an insult to madness. Despite its obvious imprudence, violence, irrationality, absurdity, ludicrousness and the mayhem and disorder it caused on colonised societies, colonialism is not madness, but rather a generator, facilitator and catalyst of and towards madness. The interconnectedness of power, race, gender and other constructs produced by

the violence of colonialism manifest themselves in the concept of madness within coloniality.

Richard Keller’s *Madness and Colonization: Psychiatry in the British and French Empires, 1800-1962*⁴ is an important summary of the history of madness in the colonies, the relationship between knowledge and power in colonial domination, the invention of asylum, hospital and prison as “correctional facilities” within the context of colonialism. That the colonial regimes saw medicine and especially psychiatry at the service of their colonial and racist civilization agendas can be seen in the French conqueror of Morocco Hubert Lyautey’s 1933 statement at a psychiatric congress in Rabat that “[t]he physician, if he understands his role, is the primary and the most effective of our agents of penetration and pacification.”⁵ Colonial psychiatry as a weapon of a civilizing mission. According to Keller’s reading of Waltraud Ernst’s *Mad Tales from the Raj: The European Insane in British India, 1800-1858* the development of psychiatric infrastructure in India paralleled British imperial advancement. Asylums usually began as private businesses – by investors with no medical training but interested solely in profit – and were then slowly taken over by the English state. Asylums in British colonised India were mostly strictly separated on racial lines in different asylum institutions, and in the few cases where British and Indians were confined in the same institution, the coloniser was accorded a residential treatment, while the colonised was subjected to deplorable living and labour conditions. Keller points out that the implemented therapies manifested racism in insidious ways. Class played an important role in the diagnoses of insanity in colonial India, with the end goal of maintaining white privilege and superiority in India. Obviously, gender played a huge role in the history of psychiatry in colonial India, with the etiology of women’s madness often related to a failure in fulfilling the social roles of the memsahib, while men were often diagnosed to be mad when “they failed to meet military standards for discipline.”⁶ Keller also looks at British and French colonization of North and sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike in colonial India, “from Algiers to Lagos, from Mombasa to Cape Town, psychiatrists, colonial administrators, and settlers focused their concerns about madness on indigenous rather than European populations. Officials fretted about how to define insanity in an alien culture, and psychiatrists from both British and French schools published widely on ‘indigenous psychopathology’ and the political and social implications of “the African mind.”⁷ As Megan Vaughan has stated in *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, European medicine “played an important part in constructing ‘the African’ as an object of knowledge, and elaborated

classification systems and practices which have to be seen as intrinsic to the operation of colonial power.”⁸ In the colonialists’ psychiatric investigations of the “African mind,” the colonisers’ linguistic, cultural, and cognitive limitations led to the production of multiple epistemic violences, as they couldn’t differentiate “alien” habits from “true” insanity, if anything like that exists. A mixture of witchery, violation of laws, the defiance to Western systems, race and more sufficed to declare madness. Keller also points to Jonathan Sadowsky’s *Imperial Bedlam: Institutions of Madness in Colonial Southwest Nigeria*, a social history of madness in colonial Nigeria and the political implications of specific manifestations of mental illness in colonized patients. With increased British presence in Nigeria, there was also an increased occurrence or appearance of madness, such that British officials passed a lunacy ordinance in 1906 for the construction of institutions for confining the insane.

Thinking of the history of psychiatry and colonialism, Algeria plays a very important role. In 1938, a few years after the French occupation of Algiers in 1830 France passed a law mandating the internment of lunatics at public expense in every French department, as Keller writes. A hundred years later in 1938, the Hôpital Psychiatrique de Blida was inaugurated, and the French established other colonial many other psychiatric institutions in other colonies Tunisia, Morocco, Madagascar, and Indochina. In the early institutions, French colonial psychiatrists coined the notion of the “Muslim mentality.” With the institutioning of the Ecole d’Alger directed by the infamous ethnopsychiatrist Antoine Porot at the Faculty of Medicine in Algiers, the construction of madness as a racial concept became fortified. Porot famously devised psychiatric theorems that questioned the mentality of “normal” Algerians, thereby establishing racist and paternalistic conclusions essentially to justify the racism of the French in Algeria on the basis that Algerians were biologically inferior. Based on his observations of Algerian tirailleurs in the French army, Porot noted that the Algerian had no concern for the future and was intellectually childish, but with none of the child’s natural curiosity or other good traits. Moreover, the Muslim lunatic showed none of the “mobile and polymorphous, at times rich psychoplasticity of the civilized man and the European.”⁹ In Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* in which he discusses theories and the impact of colonialism on the Algerian society, Fanon denounced the teachings of the Algiers School. Also, Maghrebi psychiatrists like Bachir Ridouh have illustrated the political content of the Ecole d’Alger’s “objective” knowledge. This “objective” knowledge produced by Porot and his students included theories and assertions about Algerian mentality like “Algerians were not only ordinarily pathological, but were also born criminals, according to Don Côme Arrii, who

argued that the civilizing mission needed to preserve public order from indigenous criminality. Another Porot student, Jean Sutter, focused on primitivism. Algerians were more evolved than Central Africans, he argued, but primitive tendencies accounted for Muslims’ fatalism, inactivity, and ineptitude.”¹⁰

ANECDOTE V: ON SANITY AND SANITATION

The etymological roots of both “sanitary” and “sanity” that respectively reference cleanliness and a correct mind set up lie in the Latin word “sanus,” which means “healthy or sane.” The treatment of people considered mad as dirt, outcasts, and untouchables is thus not surprising. The location of asylums – be it for the mad or for refugees – outside of the realms of society and the clean, is recurrent since the end of the Middle Ages, when madmen started to be expelled from towns. The madman, who too often speaks the truth, had to be both excluded and enclosed, interned in the Narrenschiff or in the asylum to avoid physical and mental contact with the citizens of the rising municipal society across Europe.

The concept of the cordon sanitaire (sanitary cordon) denotes mostly artificial boundaries set up to prevent the spread of infectious diseases by limiting the movement of people and carriers of diseases within certain geographies. In Belgian colonised Congo, a cordon sanitaire was imposed from 1903 to 1914 in the Uele Province with the aim of controlling the spread of sleeping sickness. This very physical boundary was a corridor that separated the indigenous people, i.e. the “impure” from the “pure” colonisers. This practice was common in many colonised cities, with similar claims of avoiding the spread of illnesses, but essentially stood for the demarcation of sanity. With the aforementioned relations between coloniality and madness, it is not far fetched to equate the “purity” and “impurity” on both shores of the cordon sanitaire with sanity and insanity, respectively.

In Mary Douglas’ *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966), the meaning of dirt/filth is illuminated by using anthropological tools in varying geographical, social and religious contexts. In making relations between the sacred, the clean and the unclean, the sane and the insane in different societies and times, Douglas illustrates the death rituals of the Nyakyusa people in Malawi and Tanzania. She points out their association of dirt with madness, as in those who are mad eat filth. In the Nyakyusa cosmogony, there are two kinds of madness, one sent by God and the other comes from neglect of ritual. “Thus they explicitly see ritual as the source of discrimination and of knowledge. Whatever the cause of madness, the symptoms are the same. The madman eats filth and throws off his clothes. Filth is listed as meaning excreta, mud, frogs: ‘the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces

4 Richard Keller. *Madness and Colonization: Psychiatry in the British and French Empires, 1800-1962*. Journal of Social History, Volume 35, Issue 2, Winter 2001, 295–326.

5 Proceedings of the Congrès des Médecins Aliénistes et Neurologistes de France et des Pays de Langue Française, XXXVIIe Session, Rabat, Paris, 1933, 73–4.

6 Waltraud Ernst. *Mad Tales from the Raj: The European Insane in British India, 1800-1858*, New York, 1991, 6.

7 Ibid.

8 Megan Vaughan. *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, Hoboken: Wiley, 2013, 8.

9 Keller, 313–14.

10 Keller, 314.

are the corpse' (Wilson, 1957, pp. 53, 80–1). So ritual conserves sanity and life: madness brings filth and is a kind of death. Ritual separates death from life: 'the dead, if not separated from the living bring madness on them.'¹¹

ANECDOTE VI: LE MONDE APPELLE
FOUS CEUX QUI NE SONT PAS
FOUS DE LA FOLIE COMMUNE.¹²
HEALING THE HEALED

Helps to relieve my mind
Sexual healing baby, is good for me
Sexual healing is something that's good for me
Baby, I'm hot just like an oven
I need some lovin'
And baby, I can't hold it much longer
It's getting stronger and stronger
Baby, I got sick this mornin'
A sea was stormin' inside of me
Baby, I think I'm capsizin'
The waves are risin' and risin'

Marvin Gaye: *Sexual Healing*

It is said that amongst the Nguembas, but also in many other African societies, individuals were never considered mad or mentally ill. Whenever someone danced out of the so-called rhythm of society, it was not the individual that was blamed for this out-of-rhythmnness, nor was the individual cast out of society, but society tried to question itself about the imbalance. It was believed that an individual's imbalance was the society's imbalance, therefore instead of directing the individual into an asylum, the society would – through various rituals, work patterns, food, sacrifices, music etc – seek a re-balancing. The so-called mad were integrated in society. And through performative healing sessions, the madness was casted out.

Amongst the Gnawa people, the spiritually weak, possessed and so-called mad are healed through the performance of Gnawa music and ritual practices performed under the guidance of a maalem. Through the performativity of liturgies called lila or derdeba, the Gnawa ceremonies recreate the first sacrifice and the genesis of the universe by the evocation of the seven main manifestations of the divine demiurgic activity. According to Maisie Sum's thesis *Music of the Gnawa of Morocco: Evolving Spaces and Times*, the explicit goals of a lila are accomplished through a threefold progression of successive ritual stages of "pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal. For example, in a lila held for the purposes of healing, the sick person traverses the three stages, processed by music and enacted in trance, to arrive at good health. The first phase serves (...) to prepare the ceremonial event through invitation of the unseen and seen, the sacred space by consecrating the

floor, and the adepts with musemes (which are minimal units of musical meaning, analogous to a morpheme in linguistics). In creating a space for the invisible world to enter, the performance can be seen as an act of detachment from the temporal world. In the second ritual stage, spirit possession takes place in the form of abstract and figurative dances. Here, the human and spirit realms interact and merge, and adepts take on the identities of the mluk. (...) This disavowal of one's body is seen as a kind of sacrifice. Participants enter an ambiguous situation and state which Turner designates the liminal phase. Floating between invisible and visible worlds, between spirit and human, adepts enact liminality in their dance, evoked and subdued by the music and musicians and overseen by the moqaddema and her assistants. Finally, in the post-liminal phase—that is, the end of the entire ceremony, possession portion or individual dance—participants re-enter a stable, non-ambiguous state endowed with baraka. At the end of the possession portion, entities who guide procreation (the feminine spirits) are invoked."¹³

THE PROJECT

This project is not meant to be a romanticization of madness or mental illness, but an effort to reconsider and challenge the notion of madness and the stigmas labelled on the so-called mad. The aim of the project is to move beyond insanity as the opposite of sanity, and imagine a space beyond what is understood as sane, i.e. Ultrasanity. This research, performance and exhibition project, takes up the challenge of exploring contemporary concepts and forms of cross- and trans-cultural psychoanalyses and psychiatry beyond a Western rationalization, but situated within the context of the coloniality and colonial subjugation, racialisation, patriarchal oppression and objectification. The project investigates varying tendencies and approaches to understand the normativity of the Mind, Selfhood and Consciousness, and materialises as an interdisciplinary collaboration with the Association of Neuroesthetics – a platform of research between the arts and the cognitive sciences affiliated to Charité Hospital and University of Medicine, and partnering with different scientific institutions among which the Berlin School of Mind and Brain and the Max Planck Institute, with the Gnawa Festival Essaouira – the Gnawa music festival held annually in Essaouira, Morocco, which sees up to 500,000 visitors every year over four days, with Picha Lubumbashi – an arts centre founded by Sammy Baloji in Lubumbashi, Congo, known mainly as the organizer of the Biennale of Lubumbashi since 2009, as well as with ifa Gallery Berlin.

Through the medium of exhibitions, performances, invocations and publications, the project deliberates on the different trajectories through which psycho-pathologies, especially but not limited to the

non-Western, could be understood through the prisms of the aforesaid Anecdotes I – VI. In this effort, we will explore the philosophical notions of "bios" and personhood within some non-Western societies, e.g. in Akan or Yoruba philosophy and cogitate on how societies unfold concepts of madness and how the integrate or discharge the mentally stable or unstable within their societies.

One of the most seminal propositions in the field of psychiatry in the last half-century was Arthur Kleinman's *Depression, Somatization and the New Cross-cultural Psychiatry* (1977)¹⁴. Unlike most psychiatric practices at the time, Kleinman made a strong case for the recognition of cultural differences, plurality and a case against the exportation or super-imposition of psychiatric theories onto other cultures – a practice that is daily practised until today and superimposed on people with non-Western cultural backgrounds living in the West and that was very common within the colonial context. Crass examples like the case of the French psychiatrist Antoine Porot, head of the Algiers School of psychiatry and notorious for his racist justification of the French colonial structure and the implementation of these prejudices in psychiatric practice – as discussed and criticized by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* – could stand as an epitome of such practices at the time. Kleinman's questioning of the universality of psychodynamic models and psychiatric constructs, and the influence of ethnographic and anthropological research on psychiatric epidemiology in his "new cross-cultural psychiatry", together with his models of culture-oriented somatization have become a tool for many practitioners today. The struggle within the field of psychology in the 70s, and still today, to come to terms with the fact that Western epistemological models cannot be translated one-to-one to non-Western contexts, as it was the case with other disciplines like literature and history, is still quite crucial. Other disciplines, especially in medical and natural sciences, biotechnology, bioethics and neuroscientific technologies have been more reluctant to engage in decolonial reflections of their discipline. Essentially, the project demands a reconsideration of the concept of madness as ultrasanity, reflect on the relationship between sanitation and sanity as constructs, the construction of madness as othering process, madness as, on the one hand result of suppressions of all sorts, but on the other hand space of resistance to oppressions. This project will allow us to look at the gendered, classed and racialised motors that produce and frame what is called madness and mental insanity.

¹¹ Mary Douglas. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Routledge 1966.

¹² Manon Philipon, dite Madame Roland.

¹³ Maisie Sum. *Music of the Gnawa of Morocco: Evolving Spaces and Times*, PhD Thesis, 2012.

¹⁴ Arthur Kleinman. *Depression, Somatization and the "New Cross-Cultural Psychiatry"*. *Soc Sci Med* January 1977.11 (1): 3–10.

CURATORIAL NOTE

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS
by Elena Agudio

With this curatorial note, I engage with the concept of madness as Ultrasanity, but also with some fundamental threads and preoccupations of my personal curatorial research. Namely, the possibility of challenging the presumed universality of the scientific discourse, of problematising and undoing its racist, patriarchal, Western-centred, and individualistic agenda and infrastructure. Of unravelling disruptive narratives on forms of care and of community engagement. In these days of writing, we find ourselves on the verge of celebrating the ten-year jubilee of S A V V Y Contemporary. Ultrasanity, and its focus on community engagement and the collective agency as forms of healing beyond the pharmaceuticalization of care, affords us an opportunity and a lens through which to analyse 10 years of S A V V Y Contemporary's activity, both retrospectively and prospectively: Since its inception, S A V V Y Contemporary engaged with scientific thought, and with the possibility of challenging its deep vertical and horizontal Western roots. More recently, and profoundly entangled with the rhizome of scientific genealogies, we are tasking ourselves with confronting the ultrasanity of our very own infrastructure, engaging with critical reflections on the infrastructural oddities, and the challenges of a para-institution¹ in constant becoming and generative, albeit often difficult, self-analysis.

If we understand curatorial practice as a form of troubling, a space fostering the insurgency of alternative epistemologies, it is maybe in unstable concepts such as “madness”, “darkness”, or “witchcraft” – all of which have been central in our unfoldings at S A V V Y Contemporary – that one can find some of the most heuristic spaces of disturbance.² Troubling, itself, is a practice that I understand positively; madness, oddness, the trouble-some-ness of certain practices is something too often put aside as “other”, as negatively disruptive and thus as disjointing of a smooth running and rational order of things. We want to invert this logic and propose a need, a desire, and a request for trouble-makers, odd-ones-out, and killjoys. Too much curating, too much institutional functioning, and political thinking background or even neglect the questioning of the logics by which we operate, and instead focus on getting more things done in larger and ever more

efficient ways.³

Confronting and generating theories that speak against the norm – as evoked by the invitation to a talk I gave at ODD Theory in Bucharest recently (2019) – is working at the interstices of different forms of knowledge that are somehow seen as quaint, strange, unfitting, or not part of the future. To think from these liminal spaces, is a possibility of getting rid of preconceived epistemological parameters within which we are embedded; I see it as a chance to unlearn them, to imagine new possible futures. As ways of interrupting the logics and unpoetics of ever more efficient production.

Madness is not a safe space, not a place to walk in for an elusive diversion. Madness burns. And it doesn't burn, as the Amazon, only because of governments, of corruption, because of our insane societies and the violent actions of men since centuries. It burns also of its own fire, sometimes combusting everything in it and around it, crumbling any possibility of certainty and comprehension. But amidst smoke and flames, fire also produces light; and in darkness it gives us the possibility of seeing through the thickness of the gloom.

As Antonin Artaud wrote in *Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society*, “modern life maintains its old atmosphere of debauchery, anarchy, disorder, delirium, derangement, chronic insanity, bourgeois inertia, psychic anomaly (for it is not man but the world which has become abnormal)” on the madness of its infrastructures and the performance of its continuous violent acts. “Thus it is that a tainted society invented psychiatry to defend itself against the investigations of certain superior lucidities whose faculties of divination troubled it.”⁴

Madness can be a form of ultrasanity, a space that lies beyond the dualistic categories of sanity and insanity. “That space explored and inhabited by those that have broken out, that have delivered themselves from the ordinariness, as well as the staleness and soggianness of the norms of society”, as Bonaventure Ndikung, artistic director of the project, puts it.⁵ To compose a partitura of statements and a chorus of different voices, S A V V Y Contemporary deliberates on different trajectories that criss-cross the boundaries and thresholds of the ultrasane. These include the construction of insanity, and the attempts to normalise those out of the norm; but they extend into questions of sanitation, segregation, and the entanglements between madness, colonialism and coloniality; madness as a tool of resistance, of escape, and refusal; and the

power of intra-generational histories and community in formulating healing strategies.

With a satellite chapter at ifa-Gallery that opens almost at the same time as the show at S A V V Y Contemporary, the exhibition unfolds and culminates the same narratives of subversiveness and resistance to normalisation, beholding microcosms of distress and vulnerability, and investigating the potential of healing strategies inscribed in the labour of relationality, of community and cross-generational collaboration. Addressing the claustrophobic structures of discipline imposed on us by society and in particular by educational systems, the different works installed at S A V V Y Contemporary and at ifa-Gallery deal with the possibility of challenging and dismantling contrivances of control and apparatus of confinement through the poiesis of collective engagement. Philosophers and thinkers, activists and practitioners have been writing and pondering the violence of psychiatry, fighting for the dismantling of sites of contention and against the oppressive loops of normalisation and control. With this project, we want to address and challenge the infrastructures that made and continue to maintain this system of violence. Yet, we also want to engage with the generative lucidity of madness, cogitating the value that madness assumes across societies and cultures.

We owe to my colleague Bonaventure the neologism of Ultrasanity. But I owe to my late father, who was a very particular psychiatrist, or, as I affectively came to think of him, cosmonaut of the psyche, the very experience of it. From them both, I learned to understand curatorial practice as a form of troubling, a space fostering the insurgency of alternative epistemologies.

It is maybe in madness that one can find one of the most troubling spaces of disturbance. In September 2018, invited by the Association of Neuroesthetics to engage in a conversation with artist Ulf Aminde on the Socialist Patient Collective's (SPK) statement to “Turn illness into a weapon”, sociologist Monica Greco suggested the possibility of thinking through the generative matter of “outrageousness” and “outrageous propositions.” Inspired by the work of physician and writer Georg Groddeck, who was constantly distancing himself from the “rigours of pure science”, and inviting his patients to regard their illness as a work of art – she embraced our proposal of ultrasanity (and the SPK call) as one of these outrageous “propositions whose lure is to offer a springboard for the imagination of different possible futures. In the possibility of thinking ‘against the grain’, we might find ourselves in the penumbræ of liminal disciplinary locations, but we also strive to take care of the possible, reaching towards the improbable

and the inconvenient to activate new possibilities.”⁶ It is exactly in this spirit that we engage with the potential and the transformational force of madness, with its disruptive troubling forces.

In the first chapter of our year-long exploration of Ultrasanity, which took place in Venice on the Island of San Servolo during the Biennale di Venezia and was titled *S/he Spoke 'I and I' for We: On the Poiesis of Collective Healing*, we first pondered the problem of the pharmaceuticalization of care.

The island of San Servolo presented an odd space itself; a former psychiatric clinic and mental asylum in and yet outside the city of Venice; a total institution, an heterotopic place to make the other, the abominable, the anormal and the disobedient unseen, and neutralise the generative potential of diversity.⁷ A place for the unwanted, the sick, mentally ill and homeless being marginalized and constructed as other. In this meeting, that I curated together with my friend and psychiatrist Ana Gomez-Carillo, we departed from the observation that hegemonic therapeutics is primarily based in a Western ethnocentrism that disregards the healing possibilities of collective, mythic and historical narratives. We endeavoured to engage both discourse and praxis, disputing ideas of normality, expanding nosologies and questioning dimensions of a therapeutics grounded in scientific objectivity and ethics ignoring phenomenological and social dimensions, power agendas and collective meaning. As Sylvia Wynter argues, re-elaborating Fanon's theorization of sociogeny, human being, as experience, is not merely biological, but is grounded in stories and articulated through the symbolic meanings produced within culturally specific contexts.⁸

Clinicians and practitioners – including Jaswant Guzder and Frederick W. Hickling – have engaged and sought alternatives to “the failure of white psychiatrists to ‘overstand’ the psychotherapeutic dynamics of black people”⁹, minorities and marginalized groups within Western societies.

These hegemonics have been transported to the non-West without an imagination and reformulation

1 As Nora Sternfeld has been defining S A V V Y Contemporary, in a recent panel she convened for the Symposium *AUTONOMY* at the Kunsthochschule Kassel: Para-Institutions. Beside and Beyond the Museum, the University (see: <https://documenta-studien.de/en/para-institutions-pannel-2018-1>)
2 See for example exhibitions: *The Incantation of The Disquieting Muse* (S A V V Y Contemporary, 2016); *Yet Incomputable. Indetermination in the Age of Hypervisibility and Algorithmic Control* (Falckenberg Sammlung, Hamburg, 2017); *Ivana Franke: Retreat Into Darkness. Towards A Phenomenology Of The Unknown* (Schering Stiftung, Berlin, 2017); *Ecologies of Darkness* (S A V V Y Contemporary, 2018); *Ecologies of Darkness. Building Ground on Shifting Sands* (S A V V Y Contemporary, 2019).

3 Hartmut Rosa, in his work *Beschleunigung. Die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne* (2005, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), has already pointed to the ambivalences of modern obsessions with sped-up temporalities and processes, leading, often, to the precise opposite of what they aim for: confusion, a perception of a lack of time, stress, and loss.

4 Antonin Artaud, *Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society*
5 See Bonaventure Ndikung's concept note for *Ultrasanity*, in this same handout.

6 Monica Greco, *Thinking with Outrageous Propositions* in: Savransky, M., Wilkie, A. and Rosengarten, M. (eds), *Speculative Research: The Lure of Possible Futures*, 2017, London and New York: Routledge. See also: Monica Greco, *On Illness and Value: Biopolitics, Psychosomatics, Participating Bodies* in *Medical Humanities* 2019 Jun; 45(2): 107–115. Published online 2019 Jun 7. doi: 10.1136/medhum-2018-011588: “propositions (...) likely to sound distinctly unpopular, even outrageous, today—not, as one might imagine, because they are pseudoscientific, but because they spell out the misplaced concreteness of medical assumptions derived from scientific materialism. If I repropose them here it is not because I think they should be uncritically endorsed, but again as lures for thought and spurs for discussion.”

7 Away from the main islands, excluded and yet within the surveilling gaze, the mental asylum of San Servolo was a place designed to alienate people from time and from the society, a total institution of othering. San Servolo for almost three centuries has been a place of reclusion and manicomial dispositive, a place that carries the history of the horror of segregation, internment and containment. From mid-19th-century the hospital island became the island of the excluded, those ones that society didn't want to see. Among those “the idiots, those with mental pathologies, with dementia, children with brain pathologies, paralyzed, refused, intoxicated, lepers, those considered degenerate and so on”. Today the island is a research center for social and cultural marginalisation, and host an archive of Franco and Franca Basaglia.

8 Sylvia Wynter, *Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to be “Black”*. in *National Identities and Socio-Political Changes in Latin America*. Ed. Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana. New York: Routledge, 2001.

9 Hickling is here using the Rastafarian word “overstand” instead of understand, meaning to have complete or intuitive comprehension, to understand fully. Rastafarian language often employs play on words as a form of subversion of the colonial language, as a symbol of separation from the Western ideology and as well as a continual remembrance of the struggle for emancipation. See: FW Hickling, *Popular Theatre as Psychotherapy. Interventions*. International Journal of Post Colonial Studies Vol 6 (1), 2004, 45-56.

of cultural embedding. In this symposium in Venice, we questioned the gaps and deletions of mythic and social realms created across cultural realities. Collectively, we endeavoured to challenge the primacy given to the “rigours of pure science” and Western Cartesian thinking, together with the innovations introduced by artists, practitioners and neuroscientists. We focused on scientific (mis-)conceptions of psychopathologies, methods of treatment and modes of public policy management, but also address the complex network of family, medicine, state and economy to explore the potential of healing through collective practices. In neoliberal conditions, the responsibility of individuals to take on the burden of care has been transposed onto themselves. We therefore consider the importance of seeing “psychiatric conditions not as individualised and depoliticised as often represented”, and seek to understand “how wider structures of global capitalism, geopolitical narratives and neoliberalisation of the state have impacts on our understandings of self on an everyday basis”.¹⁰ At the same time “the risk of medicalization of social problems and the limited way in which ‘community’ has been conceptualized in global mental health discourses” were addressed: “Rather than being used as a method for increasing economic efficiency (i.e., reducing healthcare costs), ‘community’ should be promoted as a means of harnessing collective strengths and resources to help promote mental well-being. This may be particularly beneficial for contexts (...) where community life has been disrupted by collective violence, and the resulting social isolation constitutes an important determinant of mental distress”.¹¹

In particular, the event focused on the healing effort emerging from alternative work of large-group psycho-therapy processes of “sociodrama” and “psycho-historiography” frameworks used in the deinstitutionalization of Jamaica through theatre and poesis at Bellevue Mental Hospital in the mid-70s by psychiatrist Frederick W. Hickling, and in more recent child interventions in Jamaican schools. These latter efforts introduced poesis and performance to address high rates of violence and risks for children in a post-slavery context. These frameworks mobilize the concept of group “reasoning” inspired by the Jamaican Rastafarian methodology of deep discussion through group process, which leads to the possibility of collective “overstanding”, a Rastafarian term denoting insight.

Invoking the affective agency of popular culture and theatre, Hickling contends that “central to deinstitutionalisation is the existence of a community capable of tolerating mentally-ill persons and providing a place for them in the society”.¹²

Doing that, we tried to deliberate on different trajectories through which psychopathologies – especially but not limited to the non-Western – could be understood. Beyond a romanticisation of madness, with the collaboration and participation of patients, clinicians, artists, cognitive scientists, scholars and practitioners, we raised issues that question several grammars of violence, among them those inscribed in currently practised universal therapeutic models and the primacy of psychopharmacology which often deletes the significance of spiritual, systemic, intra-generational histories and community in formulating healing strategies. In addition, it interrogates and involves recent international experiments addressing relational and psychosocial dimensions, such as community-based collaborative care, and reparation through experiments with arts-based and collective processes of cultural therapy.

Along the same lines, we also addressed the invention of hysteria as a *furor uterinus* in the history of Western medicalisation. For hundreds years in Europe women showing symptoms “including anxiety, shortness of breath, fainting, nervousness, sexual desire, insomnia, fluid retention, heaviness in the abdomen, irritability, loss of appetite for food or sex, (paradoxically) sexually forward behaviour, and a ‘tendency to cause trouble for others’”¹³, were considered and diagnosed as hysterical.¹⁴ Nowadays hysteria is seen as a discredited medical diagnosis, recognized as a patriarchal strategy to group, pathologize and control a wide range of women’s disruptive behaviors.

As Sabine Arnaud explains in *On Hysteria*, hysteria as a medical category was invented in the eighteenth century and through the nineteenth century a therapeutic practice to treat it was established. Initially catalogued as a predominantly aristocratic malady, hysteria was at the beginning attributed to both men and women, and it was only after the fall of the Ancien Régime that it began to be diagnosed across class boundaries, and to be limited to women.¹⁵

In 2003, the art historian Georges Didi-Huberman showed in *The Invention of Hysteria. Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière* how Jean-Martin Charcot intently codified an iconography of hysteria, cataloguing a series of photographic depictions of the hysteric type: through the instigation of hysterical symptoms in his patients, Didi-Huberman claims, sometimes even inciting rancour and resistance on their part through techniques such as hypnosis, electroshock therapy and genital manipulation, the patients of the Salpêtrière identified as hysterics were

methodically photographed, providing the visual proof of hysteria’s specific form.¹⁶ These images were collected in the renowned album *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*, a milestone in the history of psychiatry. During the 20th century, several studies postulated the decline of the myth of the hysterical woman amongst occidental patients, but at the same time interestingly assumed the escalating of this disorder in non-Western countries.

Feminist studies contributed to unveil the patriarchal prejudices inherent to the medicalisation of the hysterics, arguing that hysteria is as a matter of fact caused by women’s oppressive social roles rather than by their bodies or psyches, and that this was a mere invention, brainchild of the misogyny of male physicians to persecute deviant women. As we can read in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*: “For some writers, hysteria has been claimed as the first step on the road to feminism, a specifically feminine pathology that speaks to and against patriarchy. For others, the famous women hysterics of the nineteenth century have been taken to epitomize a universal female oppression.”¹⁷

Providing a non-normative and fascinating reading of the history of hysteria¹⁸, in *Please Select Your Gender: From the Invention of Hysteria to the Democratizing of Transgenderism* analyst Patricia Gherovici complicates the binary perspective of this discourse, pondering and revising current notions of human sexuality to argue for a depathologization of transgenderism. In an effort to engage the broader dialogues of gender and sexuality, she draws inspiration from her clinical work with transgender patients in order to challenge “long-standing essentialist notions about sex and gender” and “to advance new ideas for the clinic that can be extrapolated to social and intellectual contexts.”¹⁹

In our research about healing and the possibilities of ultrasanity, we explored the depth and vastness of the sonic and performative rituals, focusing in particular on the Gnawa ceremonies in North Africa. Evoking ancestral saints capable of driving out evil, cure psychological troubles, or remedy scorpion stings, with these ceremonies (lilas) the Gnawa people heal diseases not only by use of music and dance, but also by employment of colors, perfumes, and dense cultural imagery, often even by elicitation of fright.

One can think of other traditions where physical and mental healing, material and moral reconciliation are reached through the performativity of liturgies and of community practices. One example is Tarantism, the hysteric behaviour popularly associated with the bite of the wolf spider “*Lycosa tarantula*”. In southern Italy, it is believed that through the performance of the folk dance

Tarantella, the sick and possessed are being healed. These rituals of exorcism through dance were common across cultures and times. As philosopher, historian of religions and anthropologist Ernesto De Martino suggests, we could compare the phenomenon to others observed in Africa (the Sudanese bori and the Ethiopian-Egyptian zar), in Haiti (voodoo) and in Sardinia (argia).²⁰

Historically, De Martino traces Tarantism back to pre-Christian orgiastic cults and Greek “maenadism”, which are functioning the same way as a socio-cultural response to maintain order among those affected by psychological crises. Maenads, which in ancient Greek translates as “the raving ones”, were the female followers of Dionysus, women who were able to enter a state of ecstatic frenzy through a combination of dancing and intoxication, and who of course were mythologized as the “mad women.”

The whole Ultrasanity project unfolded also as a personal path, a way of disorientation and transformation, wherein I found myself confronted with the urgency of traversing thresholds; everything, personal and psychological, crumbling around myself, yet my very investigations becoming more and more fleshed out. Again, I also had to learn the salience of disobedience, the accompanying emotional scars and conflicts, the risk of becoming unhinged by confronting the oppressiveness of structures, measuring their (long and) short-sightedness.

Along the whole route of these experiences and researches, many were the conversations that dispensed inspiration, lit up the way and offered fuel and fire to the investigations: those one with artists, friends, clinicians, and the ones that passed away. In particular, I owe to Pélagie Gbaguidi some of the most vibrant images and intuitions, for her ability to talk to those who were there before, for her highly imaginative force, for her decisiveness to subvert oppressive structures. She accompanied us on the island of San Servolo, her body as a metronome, filtering and refracting, diffracting, messages lingering in that space, a former total institution. She returned, to trace paths and build bridges before us in Lubumbashi, DRC, where this November we went to explore the history of the sanitary corridor and the colonial technologies of sanitation and segregation. Tying further threads that she wove in the time she spent there before us, we travelled to the quarry of Kipushi and Munua, where some women (even pregnant and with their children) break rocks and stones to make a living, working in a toxic and radioactive environment without any protection and safety. There, we met Marie Thérèse Salumu, a comedian who is using all her resources

¹³ These lists of symptoms are enumerated in the Wikipedia entry of *Female Hysteria*. See also: Maines, Rachel P. (1999). *The Technology of Orgasm: “Hysteria”, the Vibrator, and Women’s Sexual Satisfaction*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 23.

¹⁴ Female hysteria was often attributed to sexual frustration, and literally to the inability to reduce stress via vaginal intercourse. This belief led to the hypothesis that physicians were recommending private clitoral stimulation at home, on their own, or offering their patients a genital massage. Even if contested, many think that the invention of the vibrator was a technology to treat the presumed “disease”.

¹⁵ Sabine Arnaud. *On Hysteria: The Invention of a Medical Category between 1670 and 1820*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015

¹⁶ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. Trans. Alisa Hartz. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003

¹⁷ “Hélène Cixous melodramatically inquires, “What woman is not Dora?” This ardent reclaiming of hysteria in the name of feminism is a new twist in the history of the disorder.” See: Gilman, Sander L., Helen King, Roy Porter, G. S. Rousseau, and Elaine Showalter *Hysteria Beyond Freud*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, 286.

¹⁸ With a particular focus on Lacan’s elaboration of Freud’s ideas about hysteria in terms of his model of sexuation and focus on jouissance

¹⁹ see: <https://www.patriciagherovici.com/>

²⁰ Ernesto De Martino, *The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism*, translated by Dorothy L. Zinn. London: Free Association Books, 2005. As De Martino noted with the help of an interdisciplinary research team (an ethnomusicologist, a medical doctor, a psychologist, a psychiatrist and a cultural anthropologist), Tarantism should be considered in its historical and religious roots, and not simply reduced to a form of disease. His thesis is that the refusal of magic started in the Counter-Reformation period and under the Neapolitan Enlightenment pulled this phenomenon to be transformed from a “choreutic-musical chromatic exorcism” to a kind of illness, described with typical medical formulations.

and energies to create a possible infrastructure for these women, offering them help to structure their economic autonomy and to provide them with a network of support. Designing masks, objects, anti-pollution textiles, including glasses, canvases, and embroidery, Pélégie connected and resonated with this sensitive situation and local communities, supporting the possibility of a careful, decolonial ecology. In this context of overwhelming pollution – both environmental and metaphorical –, “where injuries in the body and mobilization of survival strategies are activated,”²¹ we followed again the echoes of Pélégie and unfolded in an ambivalent whirlwind that became itself ultrasane.

²¹ As Pélégie herself suggested.

FLOORPLAN AT IFA GALLERY



01 *Room for Restoring Empathy* mixed media installation 2019 EVA KOTÁKOVÁ
Courtesy Eva Kotáková, Meyer Riegger Berlin/Karlsruhe

02 *Kumira Mutariro (Waiting in Faith)* Silkscreen on cotton paper 2017 VIRGINIA CHIHOTA

03 *Psycho-historiography* Series series of drawings 2005 JASWANT GUZDER

04 *La Nave Madre "Exterminate All the Brutes"* 4-channel colour video projection with sound length ad infinitum 2013-14, 4 TRACEY ROSE
Courtesy Museo Reina Sofia and Dan Gunn, London.

05 *Findings Through Principles of Phrenology, Literature, Sound and Advertising* mixed media, sound, porcelain 2019

(*diptych*) archival inkjet print in artist's frames 2019

(*ultrasonity anecdotes sound fractions*) fifteen sound-tracks, record sleeve and archival inkjet print (line engraving by M. Greuter, c. 1600 "A surgery where all fantasy and follies are purged and good qualities are prescribed") 2019

(*Reaching Out To The Tender Mother*) porcelain 2019

Primitive Art "Psychoanalysis and Primitive Art" reading matter 2019
LEO ASEMOTA

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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 Bodgan Bălan Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Bona Bell Marleen Boschen Federica Bueti Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein Olani Ewunnet Irene Fountedaki Billy Fowo Raissa Galofre Monilola Ilupeju Ahmed Isamaldin Anna Jäger Kimani Joseph Manmeet Kaur Laura Klöckner Cornelia Knoll Kelly Krugman Mahnoor Lodhi 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 Zielirńska

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