

4 ≠ 3 ≡ 1

THERE ARE STORIES
TO BE FORGED FOR
COMMON DENOMINATORS
TO COME FORTH
AND SOCIAL BALANCE
TO BE RESTORED

RESEARCH, EXHIBITION, PERFORMANCE AND PUBLICATION PROJECT

EXHIBITION

OPENING 22.07.2022 19:00

WITH PERFORMATIVE ACTIVATIONS BY

Léuli Eshrāghi at 20:00 and Marie Lloyd Paspe at 21:00, followed by a DJ-Set by Yha Yha from 22:00 on.

ON VIEW 23.07.-04.09.2022 THURSDAY-SUNDAY 14:00-19:00

(CLOSED ON 29.07. & 30.07.2022)

WITH Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro Qianxun Chen Diana Ejaita Bilge Emir Léuli Eshrāghi

Azin Feizabadi Al Hassan Issah Lito Kattou Rie Nagai Eli Wewentxu & Sharon Mercado Nogales

Zohra Opoku Mithu Sen Viron Erol Vert

CEREMONY / PARTY AS METHOD

18.08.2022 20:00

WITH Maryisonacid Cali Rose and Jewel

AT Trauma Bar and Kino [Heidestraße 50, 10557 Berlin]

SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES

29.07.2022 17:00 In English with Kelly Krugman and Arlette-Louise Ndakoze

29.07.2022 18:00 In German with Arlette Louise Ndakoze

05.08.2022 17:00 In English with Kelly Krugman

12.08.2022 17:00 In German with Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock and Anna Jäger

26.08.2022 17:00 In Spanish with Kelly Krugman and Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock

02.09.2022 17:00 In English with Kelly Krugman and Arlette-Louise Ndakoze

INVOCATIONS

03.09.2022

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

be  **Berlin**

Senatsverwaltung
für Kultur und Europa

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T R A C I N G

4 ≠ 3 ≡ 1 „

THERE ARE STORIES
TO BE FORGOTTEN FOR
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Since time immemorial, Western ideologies have generated and narrated commons: those points when circles intersect into commonplaces. Yet, these commonhoods have been produced by systems of limitations, dualities, and exclusion, lacking relationality and equilibrium between humans, as well as humans and nature. Alternative commons have long existed, African philosophies extend plural ecosystems of connection: As underlined by Marimba Ani, in Ancient Bantu philosophy “nature” was and still is understood as “ntu”, the “rhythm”, the “universal life force” that humans are a part of.¹ Considering their inclusive ground, within this research and exhibition project, we seek knowledge from ancient non-Western philosophies and narratives, to better understand and enact the common denominators that can regulate our societies today. One of these trajectories we look into are the ancient Egyptian traditions of composing “beings” based on nature’s forces: in it, feminine forces are symbolised by the number 4. It carries the masculine, and the society in general. Masculine forces are symbolised by the lower number 3.² The equation hence becomes: Four + Three = Community. FourPlusThreeEqualsOne.

Fundamentally, the project asks: How can we integrate the performative multiplicities that the feminine,

masculine, fluid, or non-conforming hold into our shared realities? In the core, it is about understanding that they can mutually carry and influence one another – within the subjective embodiments of their experiences, and their manifold existences in societies. How can ancestral philosophies in their embraces of coalescing and varied forces teach us ways of recalibrating community nourishment?

As M. NourbeSe Philip writes, history is underscored by memory and tethered to etymologies of deliberation, grief, recollection, documentation, and martyrous sacrifice. As narrations and stories are recalled, told, retold, dormant, forgotten, and revived, they are simultaneously vested with life, death, and circulations of spirit. We trail the potency of ancient mythologies and their cosmogonies that ask us to remember and preserve ancient archives. We step with the ancestral into elliptical and transversal presence, near to stories seeking equilibrium. Together, passing into futures through limbic wings of intersecting time.

1 Ani, Marimba, Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior, 1994.
2 Doumbi-Fakoly, Les chemins de La Maât, 2008.3 Mbog Bassong: La méthode de la philosophie africaine, 2007.

Visiting $4 + 3 = 1$, we arrive with an ancestral invocation, leading us from the skies and exterior of SAVVY Contemporary into the exhibition with its plural conceptions of time-space, where ELI WEWENTXU AND SHARON MERCADO NOGALES, together the Berlin-based duo MOVIENDO TERRITORIOS, act as migrant artists of Abya Yala/Latin America within diasporas in Germany. The clouds meet with our joined grounds as two symbols made of charcoal, soil, salt, and water cross points on the cement at our feet – carrying us into the cosmovisions of the Mapuche and Andean. A trio of videos shows interviews with indigenous elders alongside dance-activations, where acts of reciprocity with the body and for the earth coalesce.

BILGE EMIR’s tapestries for the $4+3=1$ RadioBooks bring their digital designs to life in the physical, unfolding at different heights throughout the space. Bilge Emir’s immersive illustrations manifest her perception of each of the eight RadioBooks into the visual spectrum, conveying the visual constellation of works in the space.

We listen to the voices of plants with QIANXUN CHEN, as their biodata is transmitted through modulations. We channel into a relation towards environments as speaking beings, where their engagements are slow and subtle. The organic rhythmic cycles they emit rise into focus and share resonance with the ancient Chinese text 庄子齐物论, The Adjustment of Controversies, where agency exists across all life forms.

From the windows and onto the carpet, moving through the space with green and purple light sourcing relations to ultraviolet zones, VIRONEROL VERT emanates ruptures of many fragments, filling a carpet with family portraits of his parents, their images refusing to fit into the given frames. We are forced to question the sacred and the presumably profane as we meet perspectives cracking from conventions of group identity and self to enable our most potent and resonant expressions of integrity.

LITO KATTOU greets us with hybrid interspecies beings beaming as shadows; with heads of trees and arms of insects they stand as warnings rising from the terrains: the fluid, mythical creatures speak of the repercussions of climate change and ask us to confront the ways the absences of honor towards relational cosmologies of care have brought us to points of earthly devastation.

ALHASSAN ISSAH translates and echoes public space from within, teleporting us from Germany to the ornamental and emblematic historicity of Ghana, in the forms of textures, sound, and materials representing separations of class or power within its urban centers and potential for re-equilibriums of social restoration.

Nearby, tagata a nu’u po’o tagata a fagu’u, LÉULI ESHRĀGHĪ’s work which translates as “people of the villages/land or people of the bottled oil”, creates an alofisā (ceremonial circle) dedicated to Sāmoan ancestors that is founded on vā (spatial, multidirectional relationships with all kin) to call for ecological and genealogical repair.

We then move to realms of inner architectures of the seen and unseen, where RIE NAGAI’s process of “kuuki wo yomu,” which in Japanese loosely conveys “reading the air”, connects to her ongoing research on places where people come together beyond the rules of the mundane. In her research on nightclubs in Berlin, she foregrounds the emotional charge to traverse the energetic remnants of collective spaces, transmitting their spirited expressions.

SAVVY.DOC AND THE ARJUN APPADURAI LIBRARY present books traveling with cosmological multiplicities; ancestral commons, regulations, and shapeshifting ancients which stand at the focal core of their shelves with stories and tracings across transdisciplinary thought.

MITHUSEN’S video installation, *I have only one language, it is not mine*, exists in its own time-space, in a no-place of fantastical dimensions. The film follows Mago, a seemingly homeless person who speaks her own language, playing, sharing, and building intimacy with young orphaned girls in Kerala. Despite strugglesome realities, warming relations unfurl outside the narrow alleys of comprehension by means of the knowledge of the body.

ZOHRA OPOKU’S three canvases stitched with sutures are part of her series *The Myths of Eternal Life*, where in the wake of her cancer diagnosis she wove stories of devastation and rejuvenation from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. The texts sprawled atop linen dyed with indigo are communicating with ancient learnings on healing and protection for reclamations of power.

DIANA EJAITA’s bronze sculptures ascend from the floors in a shared constellation speaking to a wall filled with multicolored and symbiotic shadow-beings where the wound becomes the passage transporting us to a magic-based, spiritual world encompassed by West African myths: where in-between spaces bustle with ancestors existing along planes of light and darkness, each sharing lessons on possibilities of living a full life.

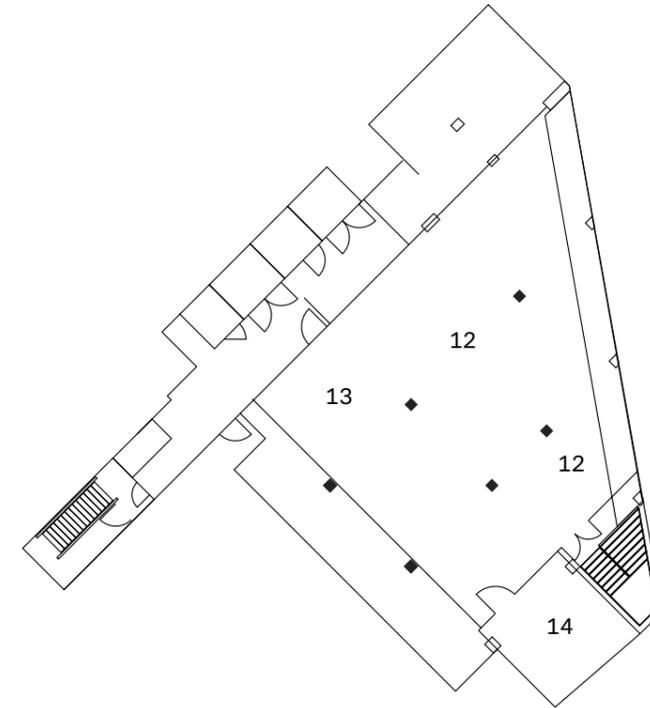
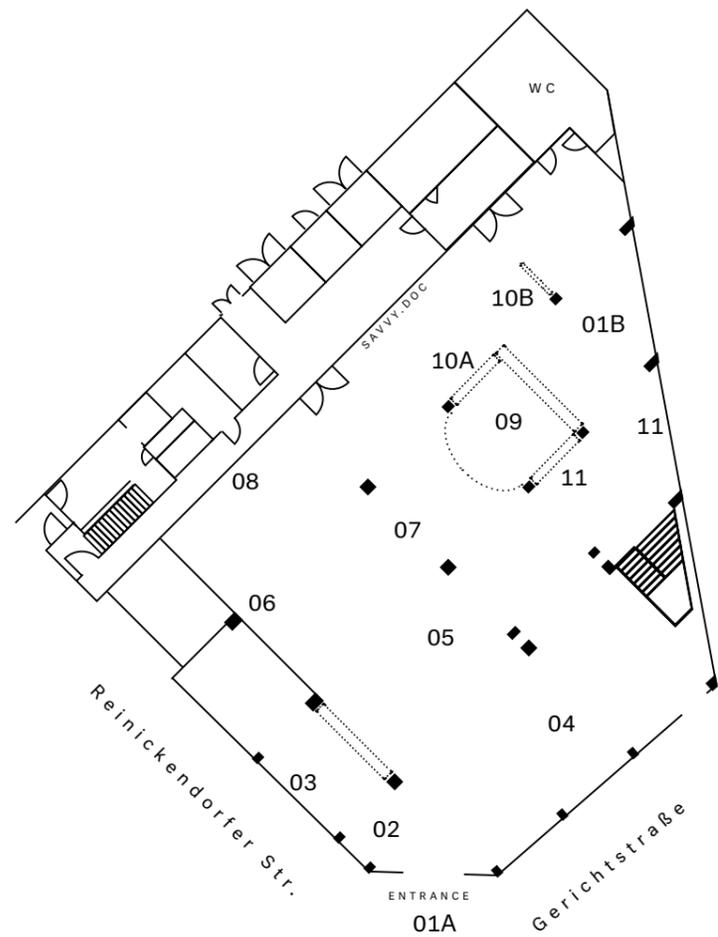
The staircase of SAVVY descends us into territories of the subconscious and transmutational. In the basement, AZIN FEIZABADI’s triptych film *Uchronia* extends a shape-shifting tale of the ancient Persian love story, *Layla and Majnun*. The characters serve as a non-static vessel of the ancient tale underpinned by the yearning for corporeal proximity, societal sense-making, and love; a trans boy, older

lovers, and children are the protagonists each echoing the film's mantra, "We carry the past together" .

Neighboring is C A S T I E L V I T O R I N O B R A S I L E I R O 's *Quarto de Cura*, the first of her five site-specific temples to occur outside of her birthplace Brasil. The circular structure is entered from behind, where Bantu ontologies and modes of transmutation are traced; moments of safety, liberation, recalibration, devotion, and other mysteries embedded with astronomy, black life, and solidarity speak forth.

A synthesized mix by E L I Z A B E T H G L A U S E R blends sessions of the 4+3=1 R A D I O B O O K S , emitting a manifold soundscape across practitioners and artists, who have joined in a chorus of research and knowledge emissions over the course of the last months through SAVVYΛΛR with conversations across cosmologies streaming across sonic ethers. E M I L I O C O R D E R O 's light design aids our journeys into other time-spaces and dimensions with red and darkened shades, initiating us into plural realities across geographies, philosophies, and rhythms.

FLOOR PLAN



01 MOVIENDO TERRITORIOS
(ELI WEWENTXU & SHARON MERCADO NOGALES)

Nuevos Territorios
01 A Installation, Kutxln and Chakana, charcoal, soil, salt, and water, 4 x 4 m, 2022

01 B Videos

02 QIANXUN CHEN

The Plant Quartet
Sound Installation, printed circuit boards, speaker membranes and metal stands, 2021–2022

03 BILGE EMIR

4+3=1 RadioBooks
8 tapestries, 1,5 m x 1 m, 2022

04 VIRON EROL VERT

“Sorry, but are you Turkish? / Afedersiniz, Türk müsünüz?”
Installation, Filled water basin with pump and fountain, Eastern-style squatting stainless steel toilet, lights, digital print on 75 custom-made rugs, purple, green, and windows, 400 x 900 cm, 2017

05 LITO KATTOU

Rain Calling (featuring Sunset VI & VII, Body XVI, Body XVII, Dragon I-IV)
Installation, Aluminum, acrylic, steel, nickel plated copper, Various Dimensions, 2022

06 AL HASSAN ISSAH

The Wind's Eyes
Installation, Galvanized/Steel pipes, iron rods, cast aluminum, auto base paint, 610 x 305 cm, 2022

Rex[onance]

Sound work, 4 min 38 s, 2021

07 LÉULI ESHRĀGHĪ

tagata a nu'u po'o tagata a fagu'u
Ceremonial circle, coconut water bottles, fluoro lights, emergency blankets, metal bowl, hibiscus flowers, Various dimensions, 2022

08 RIE NAGAI

Night (52°30'03.8"N, 13°26'42.9")
Painting, acrylic on paper, 265 x 665 cm, 2020

09 MITHU SEN

I have only one language, it is not mine
Film, 29 min (as long as you would like to watch), 2014

10 ZOHRA OPOKU

“I have hacked up the sky. I have opened the horizon. I have traveled through the earth (to) its edges.” (Chapter II: About Dying)
Screen Print collage on monotype print, hand stitching, embroidery, 247 x 181 cm, 2022

“Maat is in my belly with the turquoise (and) faience of its monthly festival. This field of mine is lapis lazuli in his festival. I am the Nun who makes the darkness shine bright. I have made the akhmy-demons fall. Those who were in the darkness worship me. I have made the mourners stand whose faces were hidden (and) who were weary.” (Chapter IV: The Book of the Dead)
Indigo dyed linen & screenprint, screenprint applications, embroidery, hand stitched, 160 x 176 cm, 2021

Both works from the series *The Myths of Eternal Life*, 2020–ongoing.

11 DIANA EJAITA

Bodies, Tales, and Landscapes
Posters, 6 Bronze sculptures, 546 x 356,4 cm, 2022

12 AZIN FEIZABADI

Uchronia
Film, 93 min looped, German with English subtitles, 2019

13 CASTIEL VITORINO BRASILEIRO

Quarto de Cura [V]
Installation, cola, fishing net, flowers, pokal glass, natural stones and bricks, 2022

14

ELIZABETH GLAUSER WITH EMILIO CORDERO
4+3=1 RadioBook Spirals
Installation with Sound and Shapes of Infra-Light

W O R K D E S C R I P T I O N S & A R T I S T S ' B I O S

01 M O V I E N D O T E R R I T O R I O S (E L I W E W E N T X U & S H A R O N M E R C A D O N O G A L E S)

Nuevos Territorios

01 A Installation, KutxIn and Chakana, charcoal, soil, salt, and water, 4 x 4 m, 2022

01 B Videos

Interview with Francisca Chambilla, Video by Froilan Urzagasti, Editing: Eli Wewentxu and Sharon Mercado Nogales, Translation: Francisca Vera, 2:43 min, January 2022

Interview with Manuel Oquendo, Video by Froilan Urzagasti, Editing: Eli Wewentxu and Sharon Mercado Nogales, Translation: Francisca Vera, 2:41 min, January 2022

Interview with Radio Wayna Tambo, El Alto with Eli and Sharon, Video by Froilan Urzagasti, Editing: Eli Wewentxu and Sharon Mercado Nogales, Translation: Francisca Vera, 4:41 min, January 2022

Intervention New Territories against Humboldt Forum, Video: Nicole Kramm, 3:27 min, September 2022

We arrive with an ancestral invocation, leading us from the skies and exterior of SAVVY Contemporary into the initiation of the exhibition and its walks along plural conceptions of time-space. The overlapped symbols on the entrance floor, the KutxIn and Chakana, are learned from the artists' ancestors. They hold the agricultural cycle of the Andes (from Bolivia to Chile and Peru) and Wallmapu (of Chile's south and Argentina). We are carried into the cosmovisions of the Mapuche where the KutxIn mirrors their cosmovision's three heavens and the cycles of the earth, and serves as a guide through the temporality of their regions, often finding its form drawn on a ceremonial percussion instrument. The Chakana, an Andean representation of a southern cross, encases – within it a complex ecosystem – observations of the stars and ceremonial dates opening and closing a new cycle. Both share similar characteristics and complex representations that structure the seasons,

while at the same time, embodying distinct aspects from the two places/ecosystems of which they belong. *Moviendo Territorios* joins these ancestral symbols, expanding them beyond their functions as calendars to ask themselves: "How can these symbols serve to choreograph us?" The movements in and with these symbols called forth a structure of "meeting and un-meeting points", grounded in a composition dedicated to honoring and engaging the space one is embedded in, as well as one's own body in relation to those of others. *Moviendo Territorios* has engaged this practice of ancestral listening, towards spatial and relational movement to intervene in public spaces, since February 2021.

This forthcoming August, Eli Wentwexu and Sharon Nogales will re-engage the KutxIn and Chakana with a performative activation at SAVVY Contemporary. To generate food autonomy, self-sustainability, and to share the knowledge of generations prior to territorial displacement and their care of seeds, *Moviendo Territorios* decided the work inside of their collective must be not only in the artistic frame, but also in community work that for them is essential and necessary for the resistance against colonialism in their homelands. Building two greenhouses, the collective co-conspired with the local communities, and queer artists from various parts of the world, to create spaces of sustainable nourishment and knowledge transfer that esteems the earth and its inhabitants. The work has been documented by a visual artist who also traveled to help in the construction.

It is in the form of the Chakana's southern cross, inside of SAVVY Contemporary, that Eli Wentwexu and Sharon Nogales share four films. The compilation is composed of interviews with elders of the indigenous circles with whom they collaborated in the making of greenhouses built in Wallmapu, Chile, as well as in the community of Cusijata located on the shore of Titicaca Lake in Bolivia, with Awichas and Aymara women. The final video is a documentation of their dance-activation

and protest against the Humboldt Forum, demanding restitution of sacred subjects/objects of indigenous peoples. Together, these four videos bridge shared urgencies across generations of ancestors, old and new.

M O V I E N D O T E R R I T O R I O S is a collaboration of two migrant artists (Eli Wentwexu and Sharon Nogales), acting together within the diasporas in Germany. Their practices come together from the need to reclaim spaces, places and territories that have been denied, taken away or difficult to inhabit due to the framework generated by the academy and historical social constructions triggered by colonialism.

E L I W E W E N T X U is a Mapuche artist, originally from Wallmapu, Temuco who lives and works between Berlin and Chile. Trained as a violinist at the Conservatory of Music of the Universidad Austral de Chile, he is part of the Mapuche collective Mawvn in Berlin and of the community of Juan Huehuentro in Chomio Mapu. In his work with musical composition and specifically with the violin, he seeks to criticize the current aesthetics of music, imposed by the Eurocentric academy and the hegemony of this instrument, turning it instead into a narrative medium bridging with his identities, linked to his cultural heritage.

S H A R O N M E R C A D O N O G A L E S is a dancer and choreographer from La Paz, Bolivia, based in Berlin. She seeks to confront the current cultural spectrum through her body by working with the deconstruction and resignifiers of various materials. She aims to create decolonial body practices, setting the knowledge of her ancestors and current life experience as conditions to rethink and transform them. In 2020, she created the dance practice Technocumbia, inspired by the 1990s dance contest "Sábados Populares" in Bolivia, and supported by Heizhaus Berlin. She is also part of the collective cobracobra focused on the research of geographical parallels between Bolivia and Iran.

02 Q I A N X U N C H E N *The Plant Quartet*

Sound Installation, printed circuit boards, speaker membranes and metal stands, 2021–2022

We listen to the voices of plants as their biodata is transmitted through modulations. We channel into a relation towards environments as speaking beings, where their engagements are slow and subtle, very different than that of human and animal responses. The organic rhythmic cycles they emit rise into focus and share resonance with the ancient Chinese text 庄子齐物论, *The Adjustment of Controversies*, where agency exists across all life forms.

The Plant Quartet is a sound installation that provides an ambient listening experience of plants by using

multiple Soniplasts, a custom-designed instrument that translates biodata from plants into sound. Similar to Chloroplasts, which are organelles that conduct photosynthesis in plants, a Soniplast takes bioelectric potential data from a plant and translates it to sound by using the signal to modulate a simple sine wave.

The installation puts plants at the centre of the focus: they react to the environment in a gradual and minute manner. The project pays attention to the relative differences in rhythmic cycles among plants and how they contribute together to a sonic composition. By amplifying the existences of plants through sound, the objective of the project is to encourage an intimate relationship with plants in a relational manner of cross-communications.

Q I A N X U N C H E N is a media artist, programmer and researcher. She works at the intersection of art, technology and language, with a focus on generative poetics, the aesthetics of algorithm and digital textuality. Her works tend to bring up artistic and non-human perspectives of the world through alternative usage of technology.

03 B I L G E E M I R *4+3=1 RadioBook Tapestries* 8 fabrics, 1,5 m x 1 m, 2022

The fabric prints of Bilge Emir are based on her digital designs for the 4+3=1 RadioBook series and bring them to life in the physical, as we step through their expressions, unfolding at different heights through the backside corridor of the space.

B I L G E E M I R working in illustration, comics and video, is a graduate of Visual Communication at the Weißensee KHB and based in Berlin since 2017. Her practice is shaped by combining time and space based media to think about image and representation politics through non-linear narratives of visual storytelling. Besides her personal work, she values collective & self-organized production, currently is a part of the media archiving collective bak.ma, dealing with collective social memory, and a member of Raumerweiterungshalle collective. Her works were shown in various group exhibitions including *The Good Cause: Architecture of Peace and Vocabulary of Hospitality* at Studio-X Istanbul (2015), *Here and Elsewhere: The Contemporary Disobedient Art Practices from Turkey* at Museum of Contemporary Arts Vojvodina, Serbia (2019). She was previously a member of the project group in the *Interflugs 30: Feral Methods* (2020) research project and exhibition at nGbK, Berlin, examining the context of autonomous, collective educational and cultural practices. Currently, she works within SAVVY Contemporary as a designer and visual artist.

04

VIRON EROL VERT

“Sorry, but are you Turkish? / Afedersiniz, Türk müsünüz?”

Installation, Filled water basin with pump and fountain, Eastern-style squatting stainless steel toilet, lights, digital print on 75 custom-made rugs, purple, green, and windows, 400 × 900 cm, 2017

In a meditation on the complex webs of ancestry, given and chosen identities, community, and distortive gazes of stereotypes, Viron Erol Vert takes us into a reflection on belonging and the liberatory potentials of living beyond imposed norms. Green and purple windows stream into the installation and the S A V V Y space, made up of hues that morph along their color spectrum; the green symbolic of fuel and insight across varied voices, within an empowered group, and the purple relating to the ultraviolet zones invisible to the human eye. The colors summon us to look through stale fixed realities and into zones of the hidden and the possible.

The floor unfolds with a 75-piece carpet filled with portraits of the artist's parents; each of their images refusing to be subsumed by the designated frames. These tiles of refusal, making up the larger whole, build a courtyard of an irreducible family history and series of manifold identities. As we draw into the centerpiece, prescriptions of all types are put into question, such as the sacred and the presumably profane. Here, a urinal becomes a fountain and source of springing water as we join with perspectives cracking from hereditary conventions of group identity and self, to enable our most potent and resonant expressions of integrity to arise, deviating from enforced norms. Viron Erol Vert offers a space for plurality and multiplicity where new understandings and meanings can take shape and root, where the non-conventional is placed in a position of high honor.

VIRON EROL VERT lives and works between Istanbul and Berlin. He is strongly influenced by his multicultural background that arches between Orient and Occident. This cultural matrix is one of the reasons that leads him to question identity and affinity which are the central subjects in his artistic work. Vert analyses human kind regarding social and cultural topics in society. He is interested in the contrasts evolving from the results of combining antagonizing elements. By confronting mythological as well as figurative elements with issues of the present, he is searching for new realities.

His choice of media is related to the topic at hand and involves a wide range from sculpture and collage over painting on paper and canvas to print on fabric and sound. The diversity of his work is mirrored in his artistic expression and his unique way of selecting and combining unusual materials reflects his contextual artistic aspects. The collision of all those aspects allows Vert to override fixed positions and to look for new solutions in form and content. Vert studied at the UdK in Berlin and the Department for Visual Art at the

Royal Academy in Antwerp. He has graduated with mentionable honors from his master class in Fashion design at the HTW, Berlin and at the Department for Experimental Surface at the KHB in Berlin.

His solo exhibitions include *Der Chronist*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Stuttgart (2014), *Born in the Purple*, Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien, Berlin (2017), *The Name of Shades of Paranoia*, Galerie Wedding, Berlin (2017) and *Ich mag keine Ausländer aber bei dir es something anders*, Kunstverein Hamburg (2020). Vert has also participated in international group exhibitions, including *The Conundrum of Imagination* at the Leopold Museum, Vienna (2017), *DE-HEIMATIZE IT!*, 4. Berliner Herbstsalon, Maxim Gorki Theater, Berlin (2019) and *A Handful Of Dust*, Ehrenhalle, Berlin (2020). In 2018, Viron Erol Vert was holder of the Villa Romana Prize and presented in the same year his exhibition project *Ambereum* at the Riga Biennale (RIBOCA) and later at the Roskilde Festival in Denmark in 2019. Vert was a scholarship holder of the Tarabya Cultural Academy, Istanbul (2020 and 2021).

05

LITO KATTOU

Rain Calling (featuring Sunset VI & VII, Body XVI, Body XVII, Dragon I-IV)

Installation, Aluminum, acrylic, steel, nickel plated copper, Various Dimensions, 2022

Multi-dimensional and cross-temporal, Lito Kattou's characters stand as warnings of yet-definite climate fates built by colonial repercussions, while offering opportunities for reimagined destinies. The foregrounded hybrid, interspecies beings beam as shadows, with heads of trees and arms of insects, as Kattou's "weather witches". Emblematic of marginalized bodies which do not comply to dominant stereotypes of western categories of what a "normalized" human is, her characters asks we look towards the consideration of fused forces as a way to dismantle hierarchies, to bridge connections (ancient and re-imagined) between animals, nature, phenomena of shared reality, humans, and technology.

When we turn our attention upward, we encounter floating dragons cloaking the space with their wings: with them, we focus on senses of other-worldly power, protection, and the possible command of beings across life-forms. The dragons hold a multitude of meanings as they draw upon their associated myths as protectors of the harvest and agriculture; also problematizing Western folklore's view of dragons as beasts that ought to be defeated in Western thought. Kattou reverses the associations of dragons as enemies to present them as guardians, figures asking us to think about where we stand in historical responsibility to the land and each other, as well as who we are taught to be against by hegemonic violence, and why.

The enveloping sunrise and sunset surround the creatures and us with fiery light and darkness. The inflamed landscapes are representative of the ongoing realities and immanence of climate change, in hot spots in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, such as Cyprus where Kattou is from. By hearing the pleas of these non-gendered guardians of nature as fighters, endless walkers, and dreamers of places for symbiosis, their fluid mythologies ask us to confront the ways the absences of respect towards relational cosmologies of care have brought us to points of earthly devastation. They echo alarms of the needs to include the wisdom and knowledge of horizontal ancients, and dignified ecologies, to ameliorate our current conditions brought into being by the racial capitolocene's violence.

LITO KATTOU is a Greek Cypriot artist whose work engages with the traditional limitations of sculpture as a medium and by reconsidering and incorporating flatness and volume, material gestures, electrochemical procedures, and digital fabrications attempts to propose different relationships across species, land, and technology. Kattou was the 2019 recipient of the Ducato Prize 2019 and the New Positions Award for Art Cologne 2018. She has been a resident artist at Fondation Thalie, Art Hub Copenhagen, Polyeco Contemporary Art Initiative, and 89plus Google Residency. Recent solo shows have been presented at Galeria Duarte Sequeira (Braga), T293 (Rome), Artothek (Cologne), Tile Projects (Milan), Benaki Museum (ATHENS), Point Centre for Contemporary Art (Nicosia), while she has also participated in various group shows in museums and art spaces such as the ATHENS Biennale 7, the National Gallery in Sofia, Culturgest (Porto), Fidelidade Arte (Lisbon), Ludwig Muzeum (Budapest), Nottingham Contemporary, Midway Contemporary, and DESTE Foundation.

06

AL HASSAN ISSAH

The Wind's Eyes

Installation, Galvanized/Steel pipes, iron rods, cast aluminum, auto base paint, 610 x 305 cm, 2022

Rex[onance]

Sound work, 4 min 38 s, 2021

With Al Hassan Issah, we are teleported from Berlin to the ornamental and emblematic historicity of Ghana. The forms, shapes, colors, textures, symbolisms, and contexts that are employed in the "forging" and fabricating of the works are all imported from everyday objects: made up of gates, balustrades, and sign boards which usually represent separations, difference, class, or power within urban centers. The references range from domestic wall paintings in compound houses within the "zongo"/ slum community where the artist grew up in Ghana, to canons that emerged from Africa's encounter with Islam, the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, and the traces of colonialism and modernism in shared

public spaces. The gold wall and lacquer on the gates echo the regular use of gold ornaments and decorations in Kumasi.

Looking through the signs and signifiers of these windows and gates pregnant with history, across layers of time, the work highlights systemic hierarchies and social stratifications as well as potentials for social repair.

Al Hassan Issah's transformed symbols of thresholds, perspectives, and marks of an in-between tension, are wrapped in various sounds collected through the period and process of their production – such as welding, grinding, cutting, hammering, and even transporting. These recorded sounds are reworked through computer layering, juxtapositioning, and editing to transmute into a rhythmic score. Al Hassan calls the viewer in to listen to the work as well as to see it, engaging beyond the optics to a complex point where the viewer is welcomed to walk, listen, and even smell through the space, in order to experience a holistic sensuousness of transmission. As this work collapses material space and linear time, we are invited from the mind into its joined body and spirit, beckoned to look through and towards an alternative collectivity. We turn towards Issah's entry-points, which call to mind echoes of "the Doors of No Return", places and points of forced departure which enslaved people had to face on their passageways. Here, the gates transcend forms to invite access for alternative and generative lives: a simultaneity of time past-present-future, looking towards what is yet to be balanced, in generational cycles.

With thanks to the team:

Studio Team: Enock Abekah, Usman Ibrahim, Gidisu Gershon
Sprayers: Gilbert Aidoo Yankson, Yaw Nkansah, Kingsford Osei Tutu
Shipment: Enoch Kojo Fordjour Boachie, Ofori Agyemang

AL HASSAN ISSAH is a Ghanaian artist who lives and works in Kumasi. His work explores power in relation to architecture and modernity, and its effect on our contemporary society. He is currently an MFA student in the Department of Painting & Sculpture, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Issah has participated in the OfKob Residency in 2016 at Akuse (Ghana) and also in 2018 at Oyarefa (Accra, Ghana). Issah has also participated in various group exhibitions around the world, including, *Convos on the Wind: an ode to the wilderness* curated by Foundation for Contemporary Art (FCA) at Akropon (Odwira Festival), *Failure is the Key*, at the K.N.U.S.T. Botanical Garden, in Kumasi, Ghana, and *Of Materials and Things*, curated by Exit Frame Collective at La Condition Publique, in Roubaix, France. Issah also had his debut solo exhibition titled *Seduced by the Charms of a Mistake* at Nubuke Foundation, Accra in 2022. He uses painting as a point of entry into his explorations of

ideas on theatricality, objecthood, and situations, while raising questions on what drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture could mean in our contemporary world. Issah's interest in the material and object culture in the Zongo communities, especially within Kumasi where he grew up has led him into employing materials such as posters, acrylic/oil paints, henna on canvas, and objects like cast irons/aluminum and steel pipes. These entities are usually welded or constructed together into a constellation of objects and installations that references aesthetics from specific epochs in history (Baroque, Rococo, Abstract Expressionism) that reflect the ordinary.

07

L É U L I E S H R Ā Ğ H I

tagata a nu'u po'o tagata a fagu'u

Ceremonial circle, coconut water bottles, fluoro lights, emergency blankets, metal bowl, hibiscus flowers, Various dimensions, 2022

The performance installation of Léuli Eshrāghi, *tagata a nu'u po'o tagata a fagu'u* (2022), literally meaning “people of the villages or people of bottled oil” in Sāmoan, is a contemporary fa'amalama, “offering to ancestors, spirits and guardian spirits”. Through a performance score in Sāmoan, French, and English, Léuli moves through an alofisā (ceremonial circle) made of coconut water bottles, echoing the form around which all customary architecture in the Sāmoan islands is expressed. Commercially available coconut water tetra-packs are present here in order to actively consider vā (spatial, multidirectional relationships) with human and beyond-human kin. Each coconut water tetra-pack represents a year of cumulative Gregorian shame-time imposed on all kinds of bodies, sexualities, and kinships since 1830, when John Williams brought the “civilising mission” to the artist's ancestral archipelago of multiple animist chiefdoms. Blue fluoro lights cocoon our shared present of faiga fa'akolonē (colonial structures), marking the lingering haunts of German, American, and British empires.

During the performance, the golden sheen present on the artist's hips references the healing properties of electrolyte-rich coconut water, that effectively hide the nefarious effects of monocrop plantations across the global south, in a system of abstraction of responsibility that the artist terms hydrodecadence. This iteration of the performance installation foregrounds the enjoyment of sensuality in the context of sacred relationships. In the tala (history) of the coconut tree, it shapeshifted from the form of an eel to provide for its human lover Sina. Understood through the figure of Sina, humans sustained by lands and waters can consider the enjoyment of balance.

Immersed in a sonic composition created on Upolu island by Tiafau Nadeem, Léuli endeavours to move beyond intersecting forms of domination towards body, land, mind and water, to ecocritical states of softness, plurality, and pleasure.

Across iterations, this work has been supported by S A V V Y Contemporary, Bleach Festival, Performatorium: Festival of Queer Performance, Sharjah Art Foundation, Watch This Space, Para Site, Open Space, Paradise Cove Collective, and the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. Léuli thanks for their critical sonic, poetic and gestural contributions to this work's development: Tiafau Nadeem Eshraghi, Kelly Krugman, Arlette-Louise Ndakoze, Rosanna Raymond, Ricky Tagaban, Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada, Peter Morin, Tania Willard, Sone Eshrāghi, Yara El-Ghabdan, Louis-Karl Sioui-Picard, Angela Tiatia, Tyson Campbell, Julia Packard, Doug Jarvis, France Trépanier, Lee Sum Yi, Qu Chang, and Zoe Butt.

L É U L I E S H R Ā Ğ H I is a Sāmoan/Persian/Cantonese artist, writer, curator and researcher working between Australia and Canada. They intervene in display territories to center global Indigenous and Asian diasporic visuality, sensual and spoken languages, and ceremonial-political practices. They engage with Indigenous futurities as haunted by ongoing militourist and missionary violences that once erased gender plural fa'afafine-fa'atane people from kinship and knowledge structures. In 2021, the solo exhibition *The end is where we start from* took place at Diagonale (Montreal QC) as part of Sensing Nature: MOMENTA Biennale de l'image curated by Stefanie Hessler, Himali Singh Soin, Camille Georgeson-Usher and Maude Johnson. A duo exhibition alongside Jessica Karuhanga titled *Projections* also took place at the Dunlop Art Gallery (Regina SK) as part of the Queer City Cinema and Performatorium Festivals curated by Gary Varro.

08

RIE NAGAI

Night (52°30'03.8"N, 13°26'42.9")

Painting, acrylic on paper, 265 x 665 cm, 2020

Night foregrounds indoor landscapes and their emotional charges to traverse the energetic remnants of collective spaces, transmitting their spirited expressions; where places are envisioned to speak and convey, as much as the beings within them. Rie Nagai's work connects the Japanese custom called, "Kuuki wo yomu," which loosely translates as “reading the air”, with her ongoing research on places where people come together beyond the rules of the mundane. There, where there are specified codes, secrets, and behaviors bound to social relations to a shared mood of a given situation and place.

As the starting point for this project, the artist visited a number of nightclubs in Berlin including Berghain, Tresor, Watergate, and Sisyphos, which she sees as cultural symbols of the German capital as well as spaces with intense energies tethered to the social. In this series, color plays a key role and is devised to express emotional moods and atmospheres of pressure. While no people are depicted in the painting, the smoke and swirling atmosphere indicates that the dance floor is alive. In the wake of the disruption to Berlin nightlife wreaked by Covid-19, the series took on unexpected meanings. As the artist put it, “[When the] clubs closed, the situation inside them [became] as obscure as Schrödinger's cat. It's a fantastic fantasy, but I sometimes imagine it's possible to hear music blaring by itself in an empty nightclub.”

R I E N A G A I is a Japanese visual artist born and based in Gunma. Rie Nagai's indoor landscape paintings explore the cultural imperative, dominant in Japanese culture, to prioritize the needs of a group over one's personal interests. Recent solo exhibitions include *Area*, Galerie Suiran, Gumma (2017), and *The rising generation*¹³, Rie Nagai and Yuki Yanagisawa, The Museum of Shibukawa City, Gumma, Japan (2015). As a fellow of the Pola Art Foundation, Rie Nagai has worked and exhibited her new artworks at Künstlerhaus Bethanien between November 2019 and September 2020.

09

M I T H U S E N

I have only one language, it is not mine

Film, 29 min (as long as you would like to watch), 2014
Communication outside the narrow alleyways of comprehension...

Language imposes a strange and alien logic that tells us not to smell poetry, hear shadows, or taste lights.

Escaping this rigid framework, this project seeks to not only locate communication outside of limited forms while envisioning dialogue in ways that cannot be reduced and need not be entirely comprehended.

Mithu Sen's installation exists in its own time-space, in a no-place of fantastical dimensions; red, a color sensuous and dynamic, is below our feet with a matting holding us in a setting fueled by considerations of how to exist with radical hospitality across common denominators. Mithu's character in the film is named Mago, a seemingly houseless person who communicates in a sonic and verbal gesture of her own making: she plays, shares, and builds intimacy with young girls from a governmental orphanage in Kerala. Together, through the un-study of standardized language, the girls find rich grounds in a shared expanse of embodied communication born from the spirit and arising out of the ineffable and profound imputis towards connection.

Through a non-scripted, interactive, and experience-based initiative, extending into a few days long performance as Mago, Mithu Sen explored in an organic and exuberant manner a possible existence of pre-lingual moments of life in the orphanage. The innocent and young, some abandoned or neglected girls, of low self-esteem with anxiety and loneliness, were victims of various emotional and sexual violence, exposed to harmful behaviors of others, who may have also been receivers of unwarranted pain themselves, continuing a cycle of trauma from unprocessed or unsupported afflictions. Interacting with these children by challenging the preconceived notions, an understanding was developed concerning the constructed complexities of domesticity, family, and relationships.

Through the process, the identity of the children was not disclosed in any realistic manner which made it not an ethnographic documentary but more a fantasy film on a reality set. It was an experience of intimacy and trust, producing physical and emotional relations, making all involved believe in a possible alternative world. The documentation was done by the camera itself hanging on Mithu's neck while surrounded by the children, and also by giving the camera to them as well as volunteers, to get spontaneous shots and the visual conceptual / storytelling seen through their memories and emotions. Despite strugglesome realities, warming connections unfurl where emotive intuition leads.

M I T H U S E N performs conceptual and interactive multi-format byproducts which include drawing, performance, poetry, moving images, sculptures, installations, sound, and others to explore and subvert hierarchical codes and rules, with particular reference to the “myths” of sexuality, language, market, and marginalisation.

She constantly (un)defines concepts and their functioning with regard to acceptable modes of interactions, questioning pre-codified hierarchies that define the social performance of roles, and politics of tabooed identity. Through various devices and interventions, methodologies of play, vulnerability, and intuition she challenges the standards of social exchange, reconsidering for generative relationships, the codes we come to rely on. Her practice produces languages as “non-language,” in what Sen calls “lingual anarchy” – a practice that employs glitch, noise, and sonic effects in spontaneous creations that subvert social norms, including those around art production, exhibition, and reception. Through radical hospitality, counter-capitalism, untaboo sexuality, and unmonolith identity, the artist persistently explores the void of in-betweenness, where (un)constructs dwell, waiting to be (un)realised.

“I have hacked up the sky. I have opened the horizon. I have traveled through the earth (to) its edges.” (Chapter II: About Dying)

Screen Print collage on monotype print, hand stitching, embroidery, 247 x 181 cm, 2022

“Maat is in my belly with the turquoise (and) faience of its monthly festival. This field of mine is lapis lazuli in his festival. I am the Nun who makes the darkness shine bright. I have made the akhmy-demons fall. Those who were in the darkness worship me. I have made the mourners stand whose faces were hidden (and) who were weary.” (Chapter IV: The Book of the Dead)

Indigo dyed linen & screenprint, screenprint applications, embroidery, hand stitched, 160 x 176 cm, 2021

Both works from the series *The Myths of Eternal Life*, 2020–ongoing.

Two works from Zohra Opoku’s *The Myths of Eternal Life* take us into her canvases stitched with sutures, where among its many inquiries, an underlying question is posed: How do we hold everything together when existences are fragmented or have fallen to pieces? Opoku answers by presenting sewing as a metaphoric and literal means of repair. In this series, she brings together two years of works that she created in the wake of her cancer diagnosis to stitch together a story of both devastation and rejuvenation. Within the series, she weaves these accounts held by spells coming from nourishments of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. The texts sprawled atop linen dyed with indigo are collaged throughout her works, communicating with ancient learnings on healing and protection for reclamations of power channeled through ancient magic and hieroglyphic carvings from divine sourceings.

For her canvas, Opoku uses linen sourced from storage sacks found in her mother’s attic, as well as linen sourced in Senegal. Combining these materials, Opoku culls images from her own bodily and meditative archive made up of before and after images of her body as she underwent radiation and countless photographs of trees taken in a wintry Berlin park during the same period. The latter became a particular preoccupation for Opoku, as she contemplated how the trees, then emptied of their leaves, would soon blossom and produce new life in the forthcoming seasons. Opoku centered the trees as a protagonist in this series, where they appear screen printed as backgrounds in some works or in sculptural form in others.

Her turn to death and dying is informed by facing her own mortality, as well as by the Book of the Dead, an ancient Egyptian mortuary text which includes spells to prepare one for the afterlife. Opoku uses chapters from the book as titles for her works and also incorporates Egyptian hieroglyphs, which appear most prominently

in Chapter IV, hosted at S A V V Y Contemporary. The Greek word hieroglyph translates to “sacred carving” and Opoku approaches the works with a particular reverence to not only ancient traditions, but also her own grief and healing. Opoku is thinking about rejuvenation, the possibility that comes after weathering, aiding in reclamations of power after storms.

Z O H R A O P O K U examines the politics of personal identity formation through historical, cultural, and socio-economic influences, particularly in the context of contemporary Ghana. Opoku’s explorations have been mostly through the lens of her camera. Her photography is expressed through screen-printing and alternative photo processing on varieties of natural fabrics. She repeatedly integrates family heirlooms and her own self-image into her visual observations of Ghana’s cultural memory. Her practice centers around textiles and traditional Ghanaian dress codes, which have been an inherent part of the country’s identity and industry throughout West Africa’s complex history. She was a 2020 artist in residence at Black Rock in Dakar, Senegal, and has exhibited internationally at the Nubuke Foundation, Centre for Contemporary Art, !Kauru Contemporary Art from Africa, Kunsthaus Hamburg, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Broad Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago), Southbank Centre Hayward Gallery and the Cleveland Museum of Art. Her work is collected by renowned institutions such as the Cleveland Clinic Collection, Faurshou Foundation, Royal Museum of Ontario, Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, CCS Bard College Hessel Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and most recently the Tate Modern. Zohra Opoku is represented by Mariane Ibrahim Gallery Chicago / Paris.

Bodies, Tales, and Landscapes

Posters, 6 Bronze sculptures, 546 x 356,4 cm, 2022

A wound opened exactly in the middle of her back, in between her shoulders on the wrinkly old skin.

By approaching, the wound enlarged, and became wider and wider.

The wound became a passage.

It was possible to enter the wound-- it was a door to another world, a hidden dimension.

Diana Ejaita’s bronze sculptures ascend from the floors in a shared constellation speaking to a wall filled with multicolored and symbiotic shadow-beings, where the wound becomes the passage. In her series of works, the

body serves as the bridge to a magic-based, spiritual world encompassed by West African myths: where in-between spaces bustle with ancestors existing along planes of light and darkness, where each share complimentary lessons to ensure possibilities of living a full life.

The escape and ability to change present realities through magic and transformation is the inspiration, particular to West African narratives that Diana Ejaita explored during residencies in Nigeria and Burkina Faso. There, she collected, recorded, and read fairy tales and stories, where survival depends on the knowledge of magical and spiritual worlds, and the ability to transform the spirit and the body into something else – with these methods being absolutely necessary for an existence of equilibrium. The landscape elements are the structures of possible homes of nutrition and healing: a formula where the body can revolutionize and live out a thorough cycle.

The body is the place that connects and dialogues with the natural surroundings and landscapes. Both are in constant dialogue and exchange where magic is the door that gives birth to bodies and landscapes opening into other multidimensional and spiritual spaces. These dialogues are keys to resurrect and resist. The subjects are an ongoing work investigating through visual sketches in the form of posters, sculptures either clay or bronze, and further mediums in the artists’ focus.

D I A N A E J A I T A works as an illustrator and textile designer in Berlin. What sets her illustrations apart is a combination of dramatically contrasting areas of black and white with soft patterns and textures that create images that emit the strength of femininities. Born in Cremona, Nigerian origins, her aesthetic pays homage to her lineage. Diana Ejaita’s works have so far been shown in Germany and Africa, for example at the Omenka Gallery in Lagos, at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, and as part of a project with the FAO of the United Nations. Her works are appearing in influencing media, including: *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post*, *Google*, *The Economist*, *Vogue*, *Apple*, and *Missy Magazine*.

Uchronia

Film, 93 min looped, German with English subtitles, 2019

In *Uchronia*, each screen extends a shape-shifting tale of the ancient Persian love story, “Layla and Majnun”, where presences made of dark matter come from the furthest parts of the universe to planet 52°N,13°E: Berlin, Germany, with the aim to realize their amorous union – an aim that would cause a cosmic catastrophe on their home planet. Earth enables them to incarnate into human bodies and become matter, offering the

promise of finally realizing their love. But, the bodies they have chosen are freighted with their own physical and social baggage, entangling them in a series of earthly complications they struggle to understand and make efforts to move through. Each series of characters serves as a non-static vessel of the ancient tale underpinned by the yearning for corporeal proximity, societal sense-making, and love. A trans boy, older lovers, and children are the constellation of protagonists, respectively making the trio of chapters; each with alternate resolutions to the story, as well as their own matrixes of truth. “We carry the past together” is a mantra of the film that echoes throughout.

For the 4 + 3 = 1 exhibition at S A V V Y Contemporary, Azin Feizabadi made an installative iteration of *Uchronia*, separating the three chapters, assigning each an individual screen and a direction for the audience for the viewing, providing the opportunity to re-edit of the cinematic work.

Cast: Michael Lewitscharoff, Elisabeth Helene Simon, Bashier, Abou-Essah, Lina Erdogan, Vince Tillots, Ignazio Caporrimo et al.

Narrator: Jasmin Tabatabai

Writer & Director: Azin Feizabadi

Director of Photography: Carlos Andrés López, Carlos Vasquez

Gaffer: Catalina Fernández

Music: Amen Feizabadi

Kamancheh Performance: Saba Alizadeh

Production Design: Merle Vorwald

Editor: Stephan Bechinger, Mohammad Abdel Gawad, Azin Feizabadi

Make-Up artist: Nuria De Lario

Sound: Jaime Guijarro Bustamante, Kai Ziarkowski, Simon Konrad

Sound Design: Jaime Guijarro Bustamante

Research and Director Assistant: Giorgi Gago

Gagoshidze

Production Manager: Viktoria Stolpe, Caroline Kirberg

Production: Maximilian Haslberger, Amerikafilm

Funded by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Einstein Stiftung, Graduiertenschule der UdK Berlin, KKWV & Amerikafilm GmbH

A Z I N F E I Z A B A D I born in Tehran and raised between Iran and Germany, lives and works as a filmmaker, visual artist, and educator in Berlin and elsewhere. His fiction feature debut *Uchronia* premiered in 2019, the same year his book *After Cinema. Fictions from a Collective Memory* – a collection of short stories, prose, and short screenplays – was published by Archive Books. Feizabadi has screened, staged, published, and exhibited his works in museums, film festivals, biennials, and theaters internationally. He is a member of the Berlinale Shorts selection committee and the programming team for the Kassel Video & Documentary Film Festival (short film section).

13

C A S T I E L V I T O R I N O B R A S I L E I R O

Quarto de Cura [V]

Installation, chalk, fishing net, flowers, pokal glass, natural stones and bricks, 2022

Quarto de Cura was born in reaction to and in resonance with the space of S A V V Y Contemporary, the fifth iteration of Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro's site specific temples taking its visitors to find planes of rest and contemplation. Entering this safe haven from behind, Bantu ontologies and modes of transmutation are traced for moments of protection, liberation, recalibration, devotion, and other mysteries embedded within astronomy, Black life, and solidarity to speak forth among us. Brasileiro's space bends time as it is inlaid with practices from ancestral pasts and shapeshifted presents: fragments from alternative futures and murmurs from a-temporal spirits call us forth to simply be, to ruminate, and to find ease and transformation in a shared present, mired with multi-scaled time and lineages.

C A S T I E L V I T O R I N O B R A S I L E I R O

was born in Brazil and belongs to an Afro-Bantu family lineage. She is a visual artist, writer, psychologist with a master's degree in Clinical Psychology. Her works include photography, video making, dancing, painting, and installations / temples. With her artistic and academic practice, Castiel is interested in studying the principle of Transmutation as an unavoidable destiny. For that, she dribbles, incorporates and immerses herself in the Bantu ontology, assuming healing [cura] as a perishable moment of freedom. Currently, Castiel studies and builds interspecific spirituality and ancestry.

14

E L I Z A B E T H G L A U S E R

W I T H E M I L I O C O R D E R O

4+3=1 RadioBooks

Installation with Sound and Shapes of Infra-Light

Elizabeth Glauser takes us into a mix weaving selections from eleven of the 4+3=1 RadioBooks created, produced, and delved into over the course of the last ten months: sharing excerpts of the multi-format 1-hour-long radio features, each of a different contributor, airing monthly on S A V V Y Contemporary's radio pillar S A V V Y Z Λ Λ R .

The RadioBooks have invited people and practitioners from all walks of life: including artists, philosophers, writers, DJs, and others in varied modes of knowledge transmission across mediums: either living in Berlin, or beyond, to think of the radio as a tool of research as well as a book in its own right. Each session is transmitted from the radio network of Berlin and carries on its frequencies to global streams, where

each chapter is shared to the next contributor, and the next one, creating a ripple effect of transferences and conversations. The radio program accompanies the project throughout its entire duration, with each visiting a segment, question, or chapter of our framework.

Emilio Cordero's light design, merging red with shades of darkness for a focus on tones of infra and invisible light, supports our journeys into plural realms of geographies. The old ancestors bridge with the new, as each book traces and honors inter-generational archives, hybrid-forms, and swirling paths of intertwining memory. The preservation of stories in their many forms share layered expressions and echoes along time-space: from rhythms to tales, dance to sciences, rituals to rites and further modes still to be named.

We are invited together into trance-states as passageways that connect the voices of the past to those of the present and becoming, which continuously circulate within and around us.

The one-hour mix features Eliyas and Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock, Tanka Fonta, Léuli Eshrāghi, bela, Mayra Rodriguez Castro, D'Andrade, Raisa Galofre Angelo Plessas, Leila Bencharnia, and Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, in chapters like *Subtle Energy in Poetry with a Beat, Cosmos | Time-Space / Ceremony, Spirits, and Earth / In-Between*.

E L I Z A B E T H G L A U S E R is a Swedish-Chilean researcher and time-based media artist, currently based in Berlin, Germany. Driven by curiosity and play, and steeped in a documentary tradition, her work is informed by people and their relationship to the internal and external world(s) that surround them. Her work gives space to the results of the encounters in the spaces in-between. She holds a BA in Anthropology and Media Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London, and an MA in Visual and Media Anthropology from Freie Universität Berlin.

E M I L I O C O R D E R O is a stage lighting designer, sound artist and creative engineer. He is dedicated to the production and creation of light-sound installations and interdisciplinary performing arts pieces. His work is dedicated to the interaction between live performance and new technologies, using light and sound to conjugate mechanics and human interaction on stage. He holds a master's degree with honors in contemporary, technical and performing arts from the University of the Basque Country.

His work has been shown in various theaters and festivals in Ecuador, Spain, the United States and Germany and he has participated in international events such as the Fête des Lumières (Lyon, France), the Fiesta de la Luz (Quito, Ecuador), the BAD (Bilbao, Spain), the VAQ (Quito, Ecuador) and the Berlinale (Berlin, Germany).

He is currently based in Berlin, where he is exploring new techniques in stage lighting design for his PhD, working with various art collectives and spaces, as well as dance, performance and theater groups.

C O N C E P T

How do we recompose a common in a society marked by separations? In the form of a research process, a series of storytelling sessions, and an exhibition accompanied by a discursive and performance programme, the project $4 + 3 = 1$ seeks to enact the common denominators that tell (hi)stories about the city of Berlin and its becoming. As it engages with the possibilities of repairing and restoring societal balance(s).

Since time immemorial, Western ideologies have generated and narrated commons. Those points where circles intersect into commonplaces. Yet, these commonhoods have been produced by systems of limitations and dualities, that up until today lack a balance between humans as well as between the human, hydro, bacterial, earthly, and cosmic world.

Legitimised by excluding norms that they have themselves induced through the divisive stories they create and propagate – ideologies of supremacy – Western narrations have produced systems of dualities, exclusion, and alienations in their definitions and regulations of what is denominated as the human being. Until today, Western and Westernised societies are still affected by: the division between mind and body, the marginalisation of non-normative beings from

the “active” society, the workers’ alienation from their humanity in the processes of industrialisation that have objectified them, and the division of the human race in the construction of “the white race”.

Contrary to the West, African philosophies for example argue – as underlined by author Marimba Ani – that in the ancient Bantu philosophy “nature”¹ was and still is understood as “ntu”: the “rhythm”, the “universal life force” that humans are apart of. In his groundbreaking linguistic study that led to the concept of the Bantu philosophy, philosopher Alexis Kagame had accentuated how “ntu”, “the universal life force” is the connecting element of existential concepts. In the Kinyarwanda language, for instance, “muntu” is “the existence with intelligence” (in the West understood as “the human being”). “Kintu” is “the existence without intelligence” (“the thing” in western concept). And “hantu” is the concept of “time-place” (a concept that thinks of time and place as correlated).²

1 Marimba Ani, Yurugu: "An Afrikan-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior", 1994.
2 Alexis Kagame, *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise de l'Être*, 1955.
3 Mbog Bassong: *La méthode de la philosophie africaine*, 2007.
4 In his encompassing study of Black Kemetic culture, Cheikh Anta Diop has underlined its inclusive societal model, in education, jurisprudence, politics. And how this is at the core of African traditional sociopolitics. A model that is a precursor to Western "democratic" concepts. See Anta Diop, Cheikh: *L'Afrique Noire précoloniale*, 1960.
5 Doumbi-Fakoly, *Les Chemins de la Maât*, 2008.
6 For variations of Ma'at jurisdictions in today's Africa, see article on the blog "Lisapo Ya Kama": Les 42 commandements de Maât.

Considering their inclusive ground, in this research and project we seek knowledge from ancient non-Western philosophies and narratives, to better understand and enact the common denominators that can regulate our societies today.

Ancient Egyptian Kemetic philosophy, for example, regulates societal order from a planetary perspective: from the sun's regulation of the earth. In this cosmogony, human beings are understood as particles of the sun. The sun, denominated as “the divine force” that connects the living, stands at the intersection of the “gravitating” and the “dilating forces”. The “solar wind” moves in fractals around the gravitation and dilation, starting from their point of intersection. In a spiral, it regulates the living as one.³

The forces of nature have been common denominators for the Kemetic societies. They have created reverberations in mythology, numeric systems, personhood, and jurisdiction.⁴ The aforementioned “solar wind” for instance, has been personified as a woman in the myth of “the Goddess Ma’at [who] symbolises Equilibrium, Harmony, Stability of Creation and the Justice within that Creation”, as analysed by Malian author Doumbi-Fakoly.⁵ Being the one who gives birth and regulates creation, the woman carries society. She is therefore attributed much value with the number 4, carrying the man who is symbolised with the number 3. Hence, Four + Three = Community. $4 + 3 = 1$. To this day, the law of Ma’at has ongoingly found relevance in African cultures.⁶

Various ancient non-Western cultures have found common ground in the question: how do we live a good life? They have developed methods that have been passed on to generations until today: in ideograms, colours, numbers, algorithms, and bodily enacted codes, to name a few. As philosopher Mbog Bassong observes, storytelling has been a significant method of African philosophy. As it enables us to carry on complex concepts that regulate societies. The proverbs, the tales, the poetry, and the chants: stories carry the rhythms that dance with our heartbeats. They form the sonic, intermediate stories within the interconnecting sonic history, that is actualised with each generation of a community. Letting the ancestors communicate with us. They convey the spiritual dimensions of the being – letting them vibrate throughout generations. And because they did not die, they have all lived knowingly, ever after, on to this day – in the invisible-sensing. The memory of those times that formed a culture is a guiding motivation for traditional historians. The griots

7 Siehe Muzungu, Bernardin: *L'historiographie rwandaise de la poétesse Nyirarumaga*, 2015.
8 Achebe, Chinua: Interview, live at New York State Writers, 1998.
9 Trachman, Paul: *A Brief History of Dada*, in: *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2006.
10 Sharifi, Azadeh: On the Representation of Artists of Color in German Theatre, in: "Textures - Online Platform for Interweaving Performance Cultures", 2013.
11 Label Noir Homepage: <https://www.labelnoir.net/> [own translation].
12 Khabo Koepsell, Philipp: Black German Literature - Home, Identity, Racism, in: Goethe Institut - Latitude Festival Website, 2019.

and memorialists of Africa, for instance. It was the impulse of the poet Nyirarumaga when she founded an academy of poets in Rwanda in the 15th century. And when she weaved into the classical art of poetry the form of the chorus, to keep the alternating moments of Rwandan history in memory. Her poems have been handed down to this day since Alexis Kagame transcribed them after the German colonial rule and during the Belgian colonial period in Rwanda.

In an interview of 1998, novelist Chinua Achebe brings into words what it means to tell a story: “It is a story that makes us human. Whenever we are in doubt of who we are, we go to stories. It is central to the very nature of our humanity to tell who we are.”⁸

Moments of doubt have accompanied cultural and artistic recompositions that articulate societal ruptures. The torn society found echoes in dissociative, fragmented or multiperspective narrations, as a response to the violent effects of linear and objective writing. The Dada movement has taken its driving force from the shreds of decay. Artist and writer Paul Trachtman evokes:

“In 1916, German writer Hugo Ball, who had taken refuge from the war in neutral Switzerland, reflected on the state of contemporary art: ‘The image of the humanform is gradually disappearing from the painting of these times and all objects appear only in fragments... The next step is for poetry to decide to do away with language.’”⁹

In the beginning of the 20th century, at a time of societal transitions and redefinitions, non-Western ancestral traditions are known for the ways they inspired the designated “avant-gardists” like Pablo Picasso in Spain and France, or the movement “Der Blaue Reiter” (“The Blue Rider”) around Wassily Kandinsky in Munich. Yet, the engagement with these ancient traditions has remained on the surface. Representatives of the ancient cultures have not spoken with their own voice. In fact, non-Western traditional art has been reduced to aesthetics in the West. Its multilayered components, that are part of their complex regulating system, have until today not fully been engaged with in Western institutions. For this, it needs an engagement with attention to its roots, grounded in non-Western and beyond-Western communities.

In German literature, the writers of the Gruppe 47 have questioned the normative narration in literature after WWII. Around that same time, the focus on the form in the Austrian literature of the “Wiener Gruppe”, engaged with the national socialist oppressive commonplaces in language and semantics. Yet, the voices and stories of German authors from non-Western upbringings are still rendered invisible. Hardly does any German publishing

house, theater venue, or TV channel, present the lives of non-Western ancestral traditions. Even in the self-proclaimed cosmopolitan Berlin. Despite the many efforts of their related communities living in Germany.

What scholar Azadeh Shariffi addressed in 2013, in regards to theater venues, is still the case today: “For several years, Ballhaus Naunynstraße was the only institutionalized post-migrant theatre in Germany. This changed when Shermin Langhoff was appointed the new artistic director of the Gorki Theater. But what about other venues? Since there are still hardly any artists of color in the national and city theatres, change has to happen not at an individual but at a deeper and all-pervasive level.”¹⁰

The non-representation of artists of colour in German theatres was one of the reasons for the creation of the Afro-German artists' collective Label Noir in 2009. Because, there was not only a lack of artists at German theatres, but above all a lack of stories that embody them without being reduced to their bodies. Thus, Label Noir sees "one of its main tasks in creating an artistic space in which the skin colour and/or origin of black actresses is not limited to generating strangeness and exoticism, while the skin colour and/or origin of white actresses has universal significance. Behind this is the longing for a theatre and film in which the actresses embody not their skin colour but their humanity."¹¹

Concerning Black German literature, author Philipp Khabo Koepsell pointed out in 2019: “Black German literature has a long history and embraces a broad spectrum – it ranges from poetry and autobiographies to academic and activist writings. Yet even today, black German authors are still less visible, especially when it comes to fiction.”¹²

The lack of representation of non-Western narrations is weighing strongly in the 21st century societal climate of doubt and enmity. The worldwide economic crisis since 2008 has increased the instabilities of work. Germany's long-standing social market economy has no longer sustained. Instead, the applied economic model has turned neoliberal. People are less assured of their work and living conditions, as housing and living had been steadily occupied by competing private sectors.¹³ The accelerated innovations in technologies, that were implemented in daily communications at work and privately, demand from the users constant readjustments. Seniors, and groups who are less active in the world of work, can barely partake in the daily exchange, being rendered invisible.

This climate of doubt has induced rapidly changing redefinitions of identities: of gender, family, work, and love. It has, at the same time, drastically fueled enmities between a significantly increasing number of dividing groups. What was understood as the political left and the center of society is no more clear. People who

identify as liberal, unify in protests against immigrants.¹⁴

Looking into the planetary movements of groups classified as “populist” or “anti-establishment” in the past decade, journalist Yasmeen Serhan¹⁵ foresees that “these forms are likely to continue into the new decade, though the main issue at play will probably shift from immigration to climate change, populist promises will become policy, and democratic institutions will be put even further to the test.” A climate of constant changes has become the norm.

A norm of constant deregulations. It affects the denominators that society had agreed on, it questions the ways to move us on as one. When changed too often, the ways become labyrinths - creating the stress of constantly looking for passageways, in a need to connect as interconnected beings. Missing the connection, is a factor of anxiety, when feeling isolated in the transit. Author Gloria Anzaldúa recalls what it feels like to live in a status quo that has for too long become frozen water under the bridge.

“There are passageways, conduits, connectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives. Bridges span liminal (threshold) spaces between worlds, spaces I call nepantla, a Nahuatl word meaning tierra entre medio. Transformations occur in this in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries. Nepantla es tierra desconocida, and living in this liminal zone means being in a constant state of displacement – an uncomfortable, even alarming feeling. Most of us dwell in nepantla so much of the time it's become a sort of “home”.”¹⁶

Yet, there is a flip side to the record on the turntable, a flip side to the cycling remembrance: as human beings we are in-between-existences, unsure about where our existence departed, and where it will arrive. By definition, we are bridges. On the bridges we are, we recreate bridges. Stories bring us back and forth on bridges, in imagination, imagery and vision: stories give meaning to the undefined, weaving into it a beginning and an end.

Stories are denominations for that which is complex to name. Denominations present what has been uttered

¹³ Journalist Katja Kullmann has described what the transition into the neoliberal model meant in the personal lives of creatives, while analysing their visions for a valuable life under the threat of the market. See Kullmann, Katja: *Echtleben. Warum es heute so kompliziert ist, eine Haltung zu haben*. Eichborn, 2011

¹⁴ The movement “Pegida”, for instance, emerged in 2014 in Dresden, at the height of a political debate about refugees arriving to Germany. It joined over 15.000 people already in its founding year. Today, a new protest formation against the Covid-19 regulations of has gathered in August 2020 38.000 people across Germany. These movements assemble an increasing number of people, of whom many are not self-proclaimed racist. They have induced a climate of insecurity within non-white communities, and overall in the society.

¹⁵ Serhan, Yasmeen: Populism is morphing in insidious ways, in: *The Atlantic*, 2020.

¹⁶ The “new enclosures”, as Silvia Federici states, “have also made visible a world of communal properties and relations that many had believed to be extinct or had not valued until threatened with privatization.”, in: Federici, Silvia: *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, 2018.

¹⁷ See article Ouroboros on the sharing blog “Token Block”.

and expressed through lives, but perhaps what has not yet been placed into words or named. Stories are the chorus resulting from our bridge – they are tiled with tales that entail messages: of cycling conditions. Of the ancient world moving the next ones. Of a back – as the shelter that holds us and moves us on. That feeds us back, and forth. That equals us. As one.

That the past feeds the contemporary, is a wisdom depicted in various ancient stories told in the sonic, in texts, images, and body articulations. Visually, it appears in the Sankofa Adinkra of the Akan culture in Ghana, showing a bird with an egg on its back, and the head turning backwards towards the egg. The cycling of Ancient Tradition and New Relevance further appears in the snake biting its tail in Ancient Egyptian culture, a sheltering visual story found again in “the Aztec serpent God Quetzalcoatl”, the “Chinese alchemical dragons”, and a variation in Hindu with “the dragon circling the tortoise which supports the four elephants that carry the world”.¹⁷

The flip side of the record is the reminder that choruses move their bridges on. And that a new constellation of existences call for the bridges to resettle and for choruses to be recomposed, carrying on the pattern of the past paving the present. Anzaldúa reminds us of the joined link to this, in that “constant state of displacement”:

“though this state links us to other ideas, people, and worlds, we feel threatened by these new connections and the change they engender. I think of how feminist ideas and movements are attacked, called unnatural by the ruling powers, when in fact they are ideas whose time has come, ideas as relentless as the waves carving and later eroding stone arches. Change is inevitable; no bridge lasts forever.”

Because, as humans, we are by definition moving existences, the project $4 + 3 = 1$ aims for a moving in rhythms, in the regulations of pluralities of commoned and marginalized experiences: deserving collective support and solidarity; receiving acknowledged value with attention to oppressive histories and resistant existences. By enacting Ancient Traditions + New Relevance = for a Society Weighing the Difference.

C O N C E P T Arlette-Louise Ndakoze

ON ANCESTRAL
COMMONS,
CONNECTIONS,
REGULATIONS,
AND SHAPESHIFTING
ANCIENTS

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

still at the centre

*history, n - L. historia, 'narrative, story, narration, account',
from Gk 'learning by inquiry, knowledge obtained by
inquiry; account of one's inquiries; narration, historical
narrative; history... .*

*memory, n - ME. memoire, fr OF. memorie (F. Memoire),
fr. L. memoria, 'memory', fr. memor, 'mindful', which
stands for *me-mor, and derives from I.-E. *mer-(s)
mer-, reduplication of base *(s)mer-, to care for, be
anxious about, think, consider, remember' . Cp. memoir,
commemorate, remember. Cp. also martyr, mourn, smriti.
Klein's Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the
English Language.*

Without memory can there be history?

- M. Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue: Her Silence
Softly Breaks*, Casa De Las Americas, 1988.

*On the future tense in Sanskrit: responses to the desire to
arrive at the present by means of the past...The future is
not the beginning, but the forerunner, of a new intense
formation.²*

- Nisha Ramayya. *States of the Body Produced by Love*.
Ignota, 2019.

Our centres are circumscribed by perspective, by notation, by crossing points, frictions, and atmospheres of relation. As M. Nourbese Philip writes, history is underscored by memory and tethered to etymologies of deliberation, grief, recollection, documentation, and martyrous sacrifice. As narrations and stories are recalled, told, retold, dormant, forgotten, and revived, they are simultaneously vested with life, death, and circulations of spirit.

In similar travels within and around memory, Trinh T. Minh Ha, filmmaker and writer, trails the potency of ancient mythologies and their cosmogonies that ask us to remember and preserve ancient archives. She maintains that the telling of stories refreshes the mind as a bath refreshes the body, as we are asked to exercise the intellect's capacities while testing our feelings and judgments for the common good. We step with the ancestral into elliptic and transversal presence, near to stories seeking equilibrium. Together, passing into futures through limbic wings of intersecting time:

...As a wise Dogon elder (Ogotemmel) pointed out, "issuing from a woman's sexual part, the Word enters another sexual part, namely the ear." (The ear is considered to be bisexual, the auricle being male and the auditory aperture, female.) From the ear, it will, continuing the cycle, go to the sexual part where it encircles the womb. African traditions conceive of speech as a gift of God/dess and a force of creation. In Fulfulde, the word for "speech" (*haala*) has the connotation of "giving strength," and by extension of "making material." Speech is the materialization, externalization, and internalization of the vibrations of forces. That is why, A. Hampate Ba noted, "every manifestation of a force in any form whatever is to be regarded as its speech... everything in the universe speaks.... If speech is strength, that is because it creates a *bond of coming-and-going* which generates *movement and rhythm* and therefore *life and action* [my italics]. This movement to and fro is symbolized by the weaver's feet going up and down... (the symbolism of the loom is entirely based on creative speech in action). "Making material: spinning and weaving is a euphonious heritage of wo/mankind handed on from generation to generation of weavers within the clapping of the shuttle and the creaking of the block-which the Dogon call "the creaking of the Word." "The cloth was the Word"; the same term, soy, is used among the Dogon to signify both the woven material and the spoken word. Life is a perpetual to and fro, a dis/continuous releasing and absorbing of the self. Let her weave her story within their stories, her life amidst their lives. And while she weaves, let her whip, spur, and set them on fire. Thus making them sing again. Very softly a-new a-gain.

COMMONS,
CONNECTIONS,
REGULATIONS.

In $4 + 3 = 1$, we encircle and confront the ways in which the conceptions of the "ancient" within Western definitions have often served a colonial mindset, frequently denying the continuity of the vital past in the present and future, claiming instead that the ancient is a prior reality "no longer in existence", as marked by dictionaries such as the Oxford. If we honor our processes of unfolding development and our interwoven threads of unceasing arrival: who are we if not accumulations and echoes, mimicking or shapeshifting, in response to the past? Who are we, if not shared stories made and held, learned and recollected, spoken or negotiated, fallen or flying?

Whether in the tectonics of the earth's movements from Pangea to its shifting terrains we now know as a parted earth or in the veins of memory, body, and mind that make up our genealogies, actions, and perspectives: the past conjoins with and through us. We carry those who influence us, dead and alive, for better and for worse, in the spectrums that move within and around us, from affection to trauma. Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, a social worker and mental health expert of the Lakota nation, has researched the realities of historical trauma as it relates to First Nations, whereby she found that trauma due to unresolved grief, disenfranchised grief and unresolved internalized oppression could continue to manifest itself through many generations. Polluted soils leading to loss of fertile land; pipelines that destroy sacred territories in the name of profit on Indigenous grounds across the world; climate catastrophe which has been produced from the racial capitalocene, coined by Françoise Vergès as the earth's pained contemporary position consequence of imperialist impositions on peoples and *tierras*; "The Chains of Slavery Still Exist in Mass Incarceration";¹ the past, the present, and the future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present.²

The ancient is not past. The past is not gone. It lives in us, through us, beyond us, and before us. "For the Aymara people living in the Andes, the past lies ahead and the future lies behind: an Aymaran woman describes her parents' generation, then her grandparents', and so on, extending her arm further and further in front of her as she does so. Then she switches to talk about how the values of those earlier generations have been handed back to her (her hand gradually returns to her body from out front), and how she will in turn pass them on to her children (she thumbs over her shoulder)".³ We gesture to marginalized bodies, to remember.

1 Matos, Kica, and Jamila Hodge. "The Chains of Slavery Still Exist in Mass Incarceration." *Vera.org*, 17 June 2021.
2 Anaïs Nin. *The Diary of Anaïs Nin*, Vol. 4: 1944-1947. Swallow Press, 1969.
3 Laura Spinney. "How Time Flies." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 24 Feb. 2005

It is useful for those in positions of power to abandon the past for the future they wish to be masters of. Trinh T. Minh Ha elucidates on this fraught reality, imitating callous and neglectful words, asserting we question the position from which they come, "Stop wallowing in the past. Haven't you heard these lines before?... hy continue to aspire after the colonial order of their language. The past? Past to whom?"⁴

In this project, we aim to trace the ancestral and ancient as a means of comprehending possibilities of restoration and balance within systems long broken, established by dominant narratives prioritizing white, heteropatriarchal identities and systems of oppressive stratification, fulfilling the needs of the powerful over the estrangement of those made powerless. Reflecting upon the failures of structurally imposed forgetting and its pillars of historical silence victims, Karfa Sira Diallo, essayist and editorialist specializing in cultural diversity and the impact of slavery and colonization on French contemporary society, parallels the necessities to acknowledge the ghosts and histories within us. He writes, "the "work" of memory is a responsibility. To do the work of memory is to be a "warrior of the collective consciousness", to take action in order to share a collective consciousness of diversity"⁵. In spaces burdened by the weights of colonialism and its normative prescriptions which have created anthropocentric, extractivist, sanitizing, and limiting confines of ideologies, we must not only be warriors of collective consciousness to support making further visible the vital cosmologies cast aside or at worst suppressed, we must also embody José Estaban Muñoz's activations of disidentification. Disidentification being an orientation of "cultural, material, and psychic survival" of minority subjects in majoritarian spheres lacking dignified support for existence: rooted and wavering through modes of being in dissent "in response to state and global power apparatuses that employ systems of racial, sexual, [gendered] and national subjugation."⁶

As such, we rise to nourish the everpresent diversity of cosmologies outspread before those spearheaded and underlined by western, canons of knowledge: those which continue to exist and resist among us despite longstanding attempts to diminish, silence, and marginalize their knowledge systems. Shapeshifting with nonstatic modalities. Stories are living, and thus can change, dissent, and alter in forms that dignify and enable their fertile sustenance. Through multidimensional myths, sonorities, communities, and relationalities to organic and plural life, we look to cosmologies moving with deities and conceptions

4 Trinh, T. Minh-Ha. "The Language of Nativism." *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989.
5 Karfa Sia Diallo. "Bordeaux's Forgotten Past." *Everything Passes except the Past Decolonizing Ethnographic Museums, Film Archives, and Public... Space*, STERNBERG PRESS, S.I., 2021.
6 José Estaban Muñoz. "Performing Disidentity: Disidentification as a Practice of Freedom." *Disidentifications Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2015.

tending to horizontal modes of living. Commons, connections, and regulations.

Here, we esteem nondominant and Indigenous epistemologies: alive, dormant, diasporic, displaced, struggling, and thriving in peripheries.

From the Sami people to the Zapotec, from ancestral genealogies of the Yoruba and Dogon to the Egyptian Kemet, from Korean shamanism to Hindu philosophies, we travel alongside intergenerational archives moving in the streams of exodus: within the corporeal, oral, and otherwise. How can ancient modes of relationality teach us to rehabilitate balance in troubled and volatile terrains: with the land, organic worlds, communities of our own, and those of alliance? How can we learn through ancient systems of reciprocity the ever-rolling wisdom of matriarchal and heterogenous generations across geographies? How can we renew our fundamentally fluid multiplicities, swimming confidently against the streams of divisive societies that encourage our splitting in the name of capital and hierarchical separation? Our comprehension of the ancient and ancestral is aligned with a notion we have come to name as the "ancestors": an honorary term and means of tracing lineages of peoples with knowledge systems that have suffered epistemic rupture from the status quo conditionings of thinking since the enlightenments' universalizing and stoic approaches to science and reason:

Knowledge leads no more to openings than to closures. The idealized quest for knowledge and power makes it often difficult to admit that enlightenment (as exemplified by the west) often brings about endarkenment. More light, less darkness. More darkness, less light. It is a question of degrees, and these are two degrees of one phenomenon. By attempting to exclude one (darkness) for the sake of the other (light), the modernist project of building universal knowledge has indulged itself in such self-gratifying oppositions as civilization/primitivism, progress/backwardness, evolution/stagnation. With the decline of the colonial idea of advancement in rationality and liberty, what becomes more obvious is the necessity to reactivate that very part of the modernist project at its nascent stage: the radical calling into question, in every undertaking, of everything that one tends to take for granted which is a (pre- and post-modernist) stage that should remain constant. No Authority no Order can be safe from criticism. Between knowledge and power, there is room for knowledge-without-power.⁷

We invoke horizontal knowledge. We invoke the ancients while mutating, energizing, gratifying, sensing, and revising with a gentle and probing

caution. We move with collections of regional, organic commons of generations of peoples whose common denominators led them to nourish ways of surviving, sustaining, easing, and moving through day-to-days with joined rhythms. We ask how they cultivated their cultural formations and how they can aid, inform, and transmute while breathing new life in diasporic and ongoing genealogies in the present: through connections of resonance for the greater good - of reinvigorating balance in fractured, disabling, and othering societies.

Through constellations of kinship, we walk in parallel to the ancients. As traversed by Eeva-Kristiina Harlin and Čiske-Jovsset Biret Hånsa Outi / Outi Pieski's essay in the collection *Stronger Than Bone*, "the Sámi Goddesses, Mattarahkka and her daughters Sarahkka, Uksahkka, and Juosakkha can be seen as the very foundation of the cosmic order, as they provide life for human beings and domestic animals, like reindeer. They also symbolize the community's connection to the land. They create new life, mediate the soul, and create the body. They assist with menstruation, childbirth, and the protection of children."⁸ Through the uplifting of female, queer, and plural interrelations of community and mythology, we morph and speak alongside the past to recalibrate our presence, learning from the words and world of the animals and indigenous, who cultivate archetypes and narrations for internal and external guidance:

Salivate, secrete the words. No water, no birth, no death, no life. No speech, no song, no story, no force, no power. The entire being is engaged in the act of speaking-listening-weaving-procreating. If she does not cry she will turn into stone. Utter, weep, wet, let it flow so as to break through (it). Layers of stone amidst layers of stone. Break with her own words. The interrelation of woman, water, and word pervades African cosmogonies. Among the Dogon, for example, the process of regeneration which the eight ancestors of the Dogon people had to undergo was carried out in the waters of the womb of the female Nummo (the Nummo spirits form a male and female Pair whose essence is divine) while she spoke to herself and to her own sex, accompanied by the male Nummo's voice. "The spoken Word entered into her and wound itself round her womb in a spiral of eight turns ... the spiral of the Word gave to the womb its regenerative movement."⁹

The wound is entered, and a regeneration is birthed. In an interview with Nkiru Nzegwu on matriarchy, sexuality, and gender fluidity in Africa, the mythos of African cosmogonies are recalled in their vigor. There she notes, from political structures to the beginnings of the universe, "the female is a very strong figure in ancient Egypt and in different parts of societies prior to colonialism; the value and status that the mother had

is radically different from what exists today... In terms of the institutions of political governance in place in Uganda and amongst the Yoruba divinities, you would see an extension of what you would see in the Egyptian cosmogonies."¹⁰ As in our title, $4 + 3 = 1$, where the symbol of the four in Kemetic Egypt stands for the woman who holds the man, Nzegwu confirms global realities where the feminine had been highly saluted, esteemed, and acknowledged prior to the markings of colonialism.

Through broad prisms of ancestral visions of community and roles of nurturing, the contributors of our project are our commons, carrying lessons of balance to (re) coordinate the generative archives of regulating forces and lessons from memories placed in stories or bodily language: attempting to aid in equalizing shifts through time to empower subjective and group navigations through terrains of pain, war, and crisis. Echoed by AnaLouise Keating in reference to Gloria Anzaldúa, 'metaphors can literally – physiologically and psychically – transform us; images communicate "with tissues, organs, and cells to effect change" ("Metaphors" 121). Words can transform our bodies, altering our physical states."¹¹

Struggle stands as a receiver of understanding, where learned lacerations present openings activating the potential of transformation within the necessity of minority resilience. They can be met in the embodied libraries of a griot or an elder, those ancestors embodying wisdoms as sourcings who contain knowledge systems striving for life forces of relational access. Reciprocal connections to self through and with other beings are everpresent, despite these notions being pushed to a fringe by societies built on mastery. The ancients as systems of regulation for the wellness of common denominators – with their transmissions conjured in the oral, or corporeal – speak with nondual, permeable, and interwoven dynamism. The archives are continuously lived and breathed into. There and here, collections of ancestors can be accessed consciously or unconsciously, conjured by attentiveness of inquiry or summoned in the imagination. We are the accumulations of individuals who enacted systems of regulations and deregulations, some perhaps not fully recognized within and around us, until deeply revised. It is our duty to trace as a means of undoing and redoing the social web of relations of which we are made, for synchronizations of care:

The mechanistic and objectivist orientations in western cultures have not yielded to the considerable scientific evidence of a holistic world view... The major shift in contemporary science is a movement from viewing nature as

"a mechanics" (as did Descartes, Newton, and Bacon) not only to recognizing subjectivity in the natural world but also to organizing immensely complex capabilities for self-organization and self-regulation in vast systems, or communities. The notion of "mind" is no longer limited strictly to an individual organism. Self-regulating "decisions" for instance, are apparently made continuously by the great biocybernetic system that has been called Gaia, our planetary home."¹²

It is by learning and relearning our connectivity to the macro and micro, the vital traditions extending from trauma, incisions, and distortions of western universalisms and objectivising violences of vision, that we can revive and receive the unitive world views of indigenous peoples as noted by cultural historian, Charlene Spretnak. Where, "throughout much of the complex cultural diversity of native nations runs a commonly expressed perception that the Earth is alive and humans are not separate from it or from the rest of the cosmos. Traditional native peoples generally apprehend the Great Family of All Beings as consisting of forms that are diverse manifestations of the boundless Great Holy, or Great Mysterious. As ecofeminists have come to learn more about native cultures, many have experienced a resonance in the native holistic orientation, which finds countless assumptions of western epistemology to be absurdly discontinuous."¹³

By critiquing information versus knowledge, where the west is associated with information as a linear limitation rather than a practice of manifold comprehensions, the ancients unite intentions for the community beyond the self. Pain is not the ancestor necessarily, although the ancestors of these lineages are those resisting external suppression and feeding regulations of the hearts' conscious by means of teachings where knowledge is complex, analytic, and synthetic. Wisdom connects. The experienced encounters of fruitful access to varied perspectives is of sliding scales, and tales of plurivocality based on circular time can be revised. Wisdom and its delineations embrace irregularity and move with its transformations for a common good.

It is through the revising of ancient traditions that we can view them from manifold, dignifying, and nuanced transversal social and symbolic perspectives. In "Revisionist Mythmaking with a Difference", AnaLouise Keating recalls Trinh T. Minh Ha's assertions,

the return to a denied heritage allows one to start again with different departures, different pauses, different arrivals" (*Woman* 14). These "returns" are performative, not descriptive, and enable them to construct nondual epistemologies that destabilize the boundaries between writer, reader, world, and text. They engage in to-and-fro movements that take up yet disrupt status-quo stories. These disruptive oscillations invite readers to go beyond conventional feminist identity politics, opening up new thresholds, textual and psychic locations where transcultural identifications and radical interconnections can occur.¹⁴

Keating describes Anzaldúa's transformational theories of language as inventive, (re)claiming and (re) interpreting by routes which do not claim nor want to be historically authentic, but rather, inventive. An example Keating points towards is of the discussion of Coatlicue, an ancient Mesoamerican creatrix, in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, where "Anzaldúa invents a mythic narrative where historical and contemporary issues of gender, culture, sex, nationalism, and class converge: As she traces the shifts in Coatlicue's story, from her high status in pre-Aztec myth – where she was depicted as an all-encompassing, multigendered divine being – to her current status as the demonic Serpent Woman, Anzaldúa charts the transition to increasingly male-dominated, hierarchical social structures that occurred when the indigenous Mesoamerican peoples were conquered by the Aztecs and Spaniards. Stripped of her all-inclusive cosmic powers, this god/dess – who originally "contained and balanced the dualities of male and female, light and dark, life and death" – was doubly divided, first feminized then split into two: As Tlazolteotl/Coatlicue, she was banished to the underworld, where she became the embodiment of darkness, materiality, and female evil; and as Tontantzi/Guadalupe, she was purified, christianized, "desexed," and transformed into the holy virgin mother."¹⁵

Restoration. Recollection. Recalibration. We enter into these stories pulsating with changing rhythms and universal – yet unique – life forces of struggle, distress, and balance. The spirals in the cosmos mimic the spirals of the self: gravitations and fluctuations from the bacterial and animal to the human and psychological. Each with value, and each detailing of calls asking for us to attend to a nourishing recalibration. We look towards cosmological stories and anecdotes beyond the west in the shape of chants, tales, stories, sonority, dance, poetry, and relationality for rehabilitations. bela, a Seoul-based sound artist and dj part of our project, whose dive into traditional Korean Nongak music and its electronic translations and alterations, articulated to us in a recent conversation on the ancients a synthesis that, "time can be traveled up and down if you have the volition. As time flows, structures can become solidified, but the building blocks of the future can be mutated through our wishes."

7 Trinh, T. Minh-Ha. "Commitment from the Mirror-Writing Box." *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989.

8 Eeva-Kristiina Harlin and Čiske-Jovsset Biret Hånsa Outi/Outi Pieski. *Stronger than Bone*. ARCHIVE BOOKS, 2021.

9 Ibid 9.

10 Nkiru Nzegwu. On Gender In African Tradition. *History of Philosophy*, 19 Mar. 2019.

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We inquire into the rotating codes of ancients who personify lives embedded with horizontal systems of being adapting to catastrophes of loss, violation, exile, and enforced separations by harnessing troubles with modes of ease. We center marginalized voices and invite your immersed attention, aligning with bell hooks' articulation that epistemologies made marginal, "offer the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds"¹⁶ in such spaces where we can feel the echoes of the old. Horizons opened. It is by questioning the division of contemporary systems and gleaming into the fluidity of ancestral pluralities of narrations, archetypes, genders, and generative expressions beyond conventional binaries in the non-west and west alike that we can read the ancestral as a vital continuum.

We cultivate the ancestral as a means of communication, within the communities of Berlin and beyond.

C O N C E P T N O T E Kelly Krugman

¹⁵ GLORIA ANZALDUA. *Borderlands / the New Mestiza*. SMALL PRESS DISTRIBUTION, 2021.

¹⁶ bell hooks. Marginality as a Site of Resistance, *Lectito Journals*, 1990.

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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.

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