MAGICAL HACKERISM OR THE ELASTICITY OF RESILIENCE ⁓

RESEARCH, EXHIBITION, NETTING, PERFORMANCE AND PUBLICATION
PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH   PANKE.GALLERY

EXHIBITIONS
AT SAVVY CONTEMPORARY Reinickendorfer Straße 17   13347 Berlin
ON SHOW   14.09.–04.11.2022   THURSDAY–SUNDAY   14:00–19:00
INVOCATIONS   05.–06.11.2022
WITH   Aarati Akkapeddi   Theresah Ankomah   aruma   Erick Beltrán   Shailesh BR   Jung Hsu & Natalia Rivera
Tania Candiani   Cian Dayrit & Mark Sanchez   Nolan Oswald Dennis   Merv Espina   Los Carpinteros
Joiri Minaya   Sheila Nakitende   Vernelle A. A. Noel   Sahej Rahal   Eliécer Salazar   Corinne de San Jose
Juliana dos Santos   Sindicato Virtual de Mods & Club Matryoshka   Cem Sonel   Gabriella Torres-Ferrer
Abel Rodríguez   Wakaliga Uganda

AT PANKE.GALLERY Hof V Gerichtstraße 23 13347 Berlin
ON SHOW   14.09.–04.11.2022   WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY   15:00–19:00
WITH   Brian Mackern   Cristóbal Cea   Giselle Beiguelman   Bruno Moreschi & Bernardo Fontes
Gustavo Romano   Fabiola Larios   Liliana Farber   Miyö Van Stenis   Molly Soda   Thiago Herzan

AT /ROSA Rosa-Luxemburg-Straße 35   10178 Berlin
OPENING   16.09.2022   19:00–22:00
ON SHOW   16.09.–06.11.2022   FRIDAY 15:00–19:00 & SATURDAY–SUNDAY 14:00–19:00
WITH   Brian Mackern   Gustavo Romano   Homeostasis Lab   Alcides Martínez Portillo   Mari Nagem
Mariela Yeregui   NETescopio (MEIAC)

NETTING GROUP
Immy Mali   Czar Kristoff   Neema Githere   Alejo Duque   Sahej Rahal   Morehshin Allahyari

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS

panke.gallery

Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa | BERLIN

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WEEK

TEAMS

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY
ARTISTIC DIRECTION   Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Elena Agudio
CONCEPT & CURATION   Juan Pablo García Sossa
CO-CURATION   Raisa Galofre   Lili Somogyi
RESEARCH   Raisa Galofre   Juan Pablo García Sossa   Sarah Grant   Lili Somogyi
TECH DEVELOPMENT   Sarah Grant
NETTING GROUP WEAVING / COORDINATION   Daniellis Hernández   Aditi Kapur
PRODUCTION   António Pedro Mendes
MANAGEMENT   Lema Sikod   Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock   Onur Çimen
COMMUNICATION   Anna Jäger
GRAPHIC DESIGN   Juan Pablo García Sossa

PANKE GALLERY
ARTISTIC DIRECTION   Sakrowski
CURATION   Jazmín Adler   Paloma Oliveira
MANAGEMENT   Noemi Garay
SOCIAL MEDIA   Igor Štromajer

Alvin Pang
WHEN THE BARBARIANS ARRIVE

lay out the dead, but do not mourn them overmuch.

a mild sentimentality is proper. nostalgia will be expected on demand.

cremate: conserve land, regret no secrets. prepare ashes for those
with cameras.

hide your best furniture. tear down monuments. first to go are statues
with arms outstretched in victory, and then anything with lions.

it is safer to consort with loss, to know the ground yet suggest no
mysteries.

purport illiteracy.

have at hand servants good with numbers. err in their favour
between schemes.

keep all receipts out of sight. as soon as is proper, embrace their
laws and decline all credit for your own.

confound their historians. give up the wrong recipe for ketupat, for otak.

lay claim to the tongue of roots, the provenance of trees. when the
chiku blooms, tell them it is linden. when linden, tell them it is ginko.

recommend laxatives as love potions. attribute pain to the passage
of hard feelings. there will be a surge

of interest in soothsaying. do not tell them how it will end, or when.
progress, while difficult, is always being made.

on no account acknowledge what your folktales imply.

never deal in the dark unless you can see the whites of their eyes.
when they speak of god

bow your head to veil piety, shame, laughter, or indifference.

dress your children like their long-dead elders. marry your daughters
to them.

soon you will attend the same funerals.

Magical Hackerism refers to the essential hacking of reality and the rendering of a multiplicity of worlds. The etymology of the word tropics comes from the ancient belief that the sun turned back at the solstices, the tropikós, from the greek word τροπή (tropḗ, "a turn, turning, solstice, trope"), meaning the point where things turn. Magical Hackerism is the manifestation of the tropical turn as a mindset.

In this collaborative and experimental project, the neighbours SAVVY Contemporary and panke. gallery come together to examine various forms of technologies from a tropikós perspective (both as region and as mindset), in order to diversify and redistribute the networks of technologies and cultural imaginaries towards pluriversal understandings of the planet. With this constellation, we aim to complexify the dominant cosmology of modern binary divisions and systems of classification, disrupt the vertical sight in our relationship to natural and artificial environments and establish dialogues between a multiplicity of worlds and cosmologies that exist by themselves and not by opposing to a contrary.

The project unfolds as a [15]-months-long research and public programme, reflecting on tools for the subversion of realities and for active world-making. It is punctuated with an exhibition in the two venues and a discursive programme composed of workshops, sound performances, experimental radio, video essays and the restoration of two historical net culture experiments. We will organize Wikipedia-Edit-a-thons to invoke net manifestations, occultations and realities from the tropics, among other experimental formats. With the intention of repositioning these notions of technologies, cosmologies and net explorations, the project culminates with a hybrid publication exploring print, web and USB drives as mediums.

"We're all cut to the same genetic cloth. It shows that race is a total fiction, has no basis in biology whatsoever, but the important corollary of that is, if we're cut from the same genetic cloth by definition, all human populations share the same raw genius, the same mental acuity, the same human potential. And critically, it's obvious that whether that's placed in the technological wizardry, the great achievement of the West, or invested by contrast in the complex task of unraveling the mystic memories of a myth, is simply a matter of choice or cultural orientation. There is no hierarchy in the affairs of culture."
— Wade Davis

Inside the word "emergencies", one finds the verb "emerge". Tropical territories are grounds of emergencies and of emergence. Between the imaginary lines of Capricorn, a circle line 23.5 degrees South of the middle of the planet, also known as the Equator; and Cancer, 23.5 degrees North, lie the tropics. The tropics are regions that have been historically disenfranchised, undervalued, exploited and (over-)exoticised. Very often the tropics are considered cocktails of sun, sand, sea, and crises where fertile grounds face troublesome and troubled realities that challenge what is possible and what is not, almost everyday. If crises can be understood as a turning point, with frequent states of crisis, the tropics have developed an elastic resilience that goes beyond resistance and is closer to re-existence. But the tropics are more than a physical and geographical space. In essence, the tropics must be understood as metaphysical, and even psychological dispositions. As a way of existing that is anchored in the meandering and swiveling of mundane notions of existence.

With the dearth of state infrastructures and an abundance in stranger-than-fiction realities, Magical Hackerism has emerged as an attitude. One could say that these parts of the world could only survive 500 years of colonial suppression and disenfranchisement because from the very onset they practiced Magical Hackerism. The writings of Gabriel García Márquez from Colombia, Ben Okri from Nigeria or Erna Brodber from Jamaica, among others, have been recognized under the concept of Magical Realism because of the supranatural, fantasmatic twist they give to that thing called reality. But one could actually say that what

1   Wade Davis, "Into the Wild: Anthropologist Wade Davis", *CBC Ideas Podcast*, aired on 18.2.2020. podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/ideas/id151485663?l=en&i=1000465989189 (accessed: 01.03.2021).

Magical Realism does at its foundation is a process of hacking reality, and with it its cultures and technologies, its norms and attitudes, its banalities and politics, even its geographies and economies and its laws of gravities: making up the core of its physics as much as other mundane occurrences. It is from this perspective and the analysis of this modus operandi that we are birthing the notion of Magical Hackerism.

Magical Hackerism is a manifestation of the tools, the methods, the ways of being that refuse impossibility and embrace it as a method and a medium. As Sun Ra wrote in the liner notes of his very first album: "The possible has been tried and failed. Now it's time to try the impossible."[2]

Imaginary lines were drawn on planet earth. Meridians and parallels (latitudes and longitudes) were composed in a way to intersect each other forming a grid, with a main intention to help humans understand and navigate the planet. This mesh of lines not only explored ways of understanding the planet but also of controlling and dominating it. A story tells that in 1492 a man departed from Castile with three ships looking for Indian spices and, on October 12th of that same year, arrived in a land that he initially called the Indies of America. He set foot in what some knew by the name of Abya Yala and claimed the land for Spain – the rest is "history". Half a century later, the navigational routes traced in the period of colonialism are drawn by submarine internet fiber optic cables that go from the African continent to their former colonial empires and from Latin America to corporations based in Madrid.[3]

A cosmology can be understood, beyond its mythological connotations, as a set of rules and principles, essentially a framework, that determines our understandings of the planet, our ways of being and what we perceive as conceivable or not. In this sense, globalism can be considered a cosmology too. A dominant cosmology we live in. This dominant cosmology is deeply rooted in binary category systems with embedded hierarchies that validate what is done at one side of the line and render invisible what is done at the opposite side.[4]

In our day and age, it is still a common belief that

technological innovations in the tropical belt are a direct legacy of colonial and postcolonial intervention, rather than a manifestation of genuine, blooming interactions between emerging technologies and endemic practices and costumes. Since the 1990s, there has been an ongoing obsession with the so-called "digital gap" or "digital divide" which refers to the division between those that benefit from the digital age and those who are not involved in it. The almost pervasive idea is that outside of the Global North technologies as such don't even exist. This resulted in donation programs aiming to give computers and related services to "people without access" and plans to bring the Internet to every corner in the world, by organizations such as Internet.org from Facebook. For some years already an idea has been growing: "DATA is the new oil". Repeated as a mantra of the modern world, this phrase was possibly coined in 2006 by British Mathematician Clive Humby.[5]

The tropics nowadays represent places not only to exploit resources but also data, as Cambridge Analytica did in the presidential elections in Kenya in 2013 and 2017.[6] Today, the vertical sight of satellite imagery is used in combination with algorithms for the exploitation of oil and other natural resources. [7] The tropics are only considered in the cycles of technologies as the regions from which to exploit minerals as cobalt,[8] used to produce lithium-ion batteries that power phones, computers, and electric cars. The transition of the planet to green energies might add to the irreversible wounds in the region. Similarly, as data started being conceived as oil, and considered "the most valuable resource",[9] this vertical sight was extended to our digital interactions. The same dynamics and models used towards our natural environments were now reproduced forming verticalities that resulted in exploitative and extractivist relationships.

The intersecting lines of the "matrix of power"[10] we live in have conditioned and influenced our understandings of the planet, our ways of being, and the way we relate to each other including living, non-living and hybrid beings. This matrix renders reality as a single global "normality" conditioning our responses to the frictions and challenges we face as planetary beings. Very often, whenever a post-capitalist scenario is envisioned it is still considered as a single global system. We can ask ourselves, to which extent would we keep perpetuating the verticalities we have performed so far if we keep thinking in terms of universal solutions. There is no single answer for the complexities of our planet but rather multiple responses. Similarly, at the moment when we are facing the promise of a more decentralized internet in the form of the web3.0, we keep perpetuating concentrations by translating the concept of "artificial scarcity" to a system that could operate with other laws of physics and logics. If we were truly to decentralize, why do we keep centering things only shifting from product-centered design, to human-centered design

2   John Szwed, *Space Is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).
3   James Bridle, *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future*, (London: Verso Books, 2018).
4   Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide*, (London / New York: Routledge, 2016 [2009]).
5   Michael Palmer, "Data is the New Oil", *ANA Blogs*, 03.11.2006. https://ana.blogs.com/maestros/2006/11/data_is_the_new.html (accessed: 01.03.2021).
6   Jina Moore, "Cambridge Analytica Had a Role in Kenya Election, Too", *New York Times*, 20.03 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/20/world/africa/kenya-cambridge-analytica-election.html (accessed: 01.03.2021).
7   Umar Ali, "Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on offshore oil and gas", *Offshore Technology*, 15.05.2019. Updated 31.01.2020. https://www.offshore-technology.com/features/application-of-artificial-intelligence-in-oil-and-gas-industry/ (accessed: 01.03.2021).
8   "Top tech firms sued over DR Congo cobalt mining deaths", *BBC*, 16.12.2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50812616 (accessed: 01.03.2021).
9   "The world's most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data", *The Economist*, 06.05.2017. https://www.economist.com/leaders/2017/05/06/the-worlds-most-valuable-resource-is-no-longer-oil-but-data (accessed: 01.03.2021).
10 Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, On Decoloniality: Concept, Analytics, Praxis, (Duke University Press, 2018).

to planet-centered design. How could we alter these logics? A deep rooted re-wiring that shakes the foundations of our grounds is still pending. To examine technologies from a tropikós perspective represent not only a recognition but also the opportunity of a re·cognition.

People in the tropics are commonly viewed as passive recipients of imposed foreign ideas of progress and development technologies. In reality, this technological stimulus is getting augmented by the possibility of establishing a dialogue with already existing systems of knowledges, cosmologies and technologies: from networks of support and communal care to the medicinal use of endemic plants, today countless dynamics are breaking social, geographical and infrastructural borders and redefining what it means to be a citizen, what privacy is, the idea of an individual or the forms of a net in the tropical belt and the digital age.

THE FLOW

> "When you hit a wrong note, it's the next note that you play that determines if it's good or bad."
> — Miles Davis

The tropical turn embraces inter- and intradependencies as modes of being together in a world in which our well-being, our breath is contingent on the well-being and breath of the other. The tropical turn is an advocacy of collaborations and cohabitations of different kinds and species rather than the competition and antagonisms between kinds and species. The tropical turn is an acknowledgement that with each tree that is destroyed in the Amazonas or the tropical rainforest, the reverberations are palpable as far as the North and South poles. The tropical turn is a radical refusal of the industrialised capitalist economic model as the only way and a fervent repudiation of a universalised Eurocentrism as the sole way of being in the world. And finally, the tropical urn is the embracing of the plethora of knowledges, arts, sciences, technologies, philosophies that facilitate our situated being in the world with and in relation to others.

In Hundred Years of Solitude, Márquez writes that "the world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point".[11] In this project we would like not only to point and visibilize historically disregarded forms of knowledges and technologies but to re-script the names and tools for agency to actively build a multiplicity of local worlds that coexist together and reframe our relationships to other beings, environments and the planet. As post-development theorist Arturo Escobar puts it, it is crucial

to unveil that "another possible is possible."[12]

The project has investigative lines defined by responses to natural as well as artificial and hybrid environments. Over a period of four months we form a Netting Group for the lateral exchange of knowledges and resources (value systems) with diverse technology practitioners within the tropical belt. Some of the practitioners joining the net(ing) are Estación Terrena & Alejo Duque in Colombia, Neema Githere from Kenya, Immy Mali from Uganda, Czar Kristoff from The Temporary UnReLearning (URL) Academy in the Philippines, Sahej Rahal from India, and Morehshin Allahyari.

PART I: ELASTIC RESILIENCE
Magical Hackerism as responses to the pulses of
NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Elastic resilience turns around these pulses and develops symbiotic relationships and dances with other living and nonliving beings and the planet, beyond the idea of control and domination. Within the tropical belt, endemic and endotic (opposed to exotic) knowledges and technologies have been developed as diverse strategies to respond to environments in symbiotic ways. Floating villages made out of reed in the Titicaca Lake in Abya Yala between Bolivia and Perú, living root bridges in the Indian Subcontinent, Mountain Terraces in Perú and Subak agrarian systems in Bali – these are some of the various examples of tropical resilience and endemic knowledges.

As anthropologist Wade Davis states: "If you view the world as being inert, a mountain is just a pile of rock, a forest is just board, feet and cellulose, you're gonna have a very different attitude toward it than if you're raised in the mountains of Peru and believe that a mountain is Apu deity that will direct your destiny. Now, it's not about who's right and who's wrong, who's to say, but the belief system mediates the relationship between the natural world and human populations with profoundly different consequences for the way of life and for the ecological footprint."[13]

PART II: MAGICAL HACKERISM
Magical Hackerism are responses to the pulses of
ARTIFICIAL ENVIRONMENTS.

With this project we reflect on manifestations of the tropical turn as a shift from FLOSS (Free Libre Open Source Software) technologies into FLOW (Free Libre Open Wild) systems. FLOW systems are technologies meant to be cannibalized which take diverse forms of

11 Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, (translated by: Gregory Rabassa, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970 [1967]), 1.
12 Arturo Escobar, *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible* (Durham: Duke University Press: 2020).
13 Wade Davis, "Into the Wild: Anthropologist Wade Davis", *CBC Ideas Podcast*, aired on 18.2.2020. podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/ideas/id151485663?l=en&i=1000465989189 (accessed: 01.03.2021).

situated knowledge according to the local specificities of a territory. They take the form in various ways of grass-root hacking, for example Brazilian Jeitinho and Gambiarra, Latin American Rebusque and Hechiza, Indian Jugaad or Goorgorlou in Ghana.

Magical Hackerism is embracing emerging technologies for the sub-version of realities. The way technologies are being "misused" or reappropriated in the tropics, develop scenarios that would otherwise be inconceivable in the Global North. From SMS based mobile banking systems as MPesa[14] in Kenya or using SMS commands to control cars in Cameroon as an effect of unreliable data packages because of internet blackouts in the anglophone part of the country,[15] to offline local networks using USB based distribution systems as El Paquete Semanal in Cuba[16] or USB drives in Colombia accessing any kind of digital content without even needing to use a computer (as drives are plugged into sound systems or TVs). At video halls in Uganda, people gather to watch audiovisual series or films that are neither dubbed nor subtitled but actually they are live interpreted and narrated by a host next to the screen.[17] Similarly, Magical Hackerism is a set of responses and not at all concerned with reading instruction manuals but rather interested in re-interpreting and rescripting them for spelling worlds and the sub-version of realities.

14 Ramesh Srinivasan, "Opinion: The Global South Is Redefining Tech Innovation", *Wired*, 11.07.2019. wired.com/story/opinion-the-global-south-is-redefining-tech-innovation (accessed: 01.03.2021).
15 BBC News, "Using tech to prevent car theft in Cameroon", *BBC*, 30.11.2020. bbc.com/news/av/business-55138291 (accessed: 01.03.2021).
16 Adam Pasick, "El Paquete", Quartz, 16.03.2018. qz.com/emails/quartz-obsession/1230913 (accessed: 01.03.2021).
17   Frédéric Noy, "Inside Wakaliwood: Kampala's action movie studio", *The Guardian*, 13.07.2018. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/13/wakaliwood-inside-ugandas-action-movie-studio (accessed: 01.03.2021).

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

S A V V Y Contemporary is Elena Agudio   Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock   Bona Bell   Cecilia Bien   Onur Çimen   Bilge Emir   Sagal Farah   Billy Fowo
Raisa Galofre   Juan Pablo García Sossa   Hubert Gromny   Hajra Haider Karrar   Anna Jäger   Kimani Joseph   Aditi Kapur   Laura Klöckner   Kelly Krugman
Mokia Laisin   Rafal Lazar   António Mendes   Hubert Gromny   Kamila Metwaly   Daniellis Hernandez   Nancy Naser Al Deen   Arlette-Louise Ndakoze
Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung   Abhishek Nilamber   Matthias Rademacher   Lema Sikod   Meghna Singh   Lili Somogyi   Ola Zielińska

S A V V Y Contemporary: The Laboratory of Form-Ideas   Magical Hackerism or The Elasticity of Resilience