

CURES:
CHRONIC
PROMISES

EXHIBITION

WITH Clara Cheung & Gum Cheng Yee Man (C&G Artpartment)
Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa (Another Roadmap Africa Cluster) Imelda Cajipe Endaya (Kasibulan)
Kamruzzaman Shadhin (Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts) Lujza Gecser & Margit Szilvitzky (Spatial Textile
Movement) Lili Nascimiento & Hiura Fernandes (Loka de Efavirenz Collective) Nikhil Chopra (HH Art Spaces)
Venuca Evanán (Retablos por la Memoria and SOFRASAREL – Sociedad de Sarhuinos residentes en Lima)
Sam Sráč (Sam83 Gallery) Shūji Terayama (Tenjō Sajiki) – accompanied by commissioned artistic researches by
Shaunak Mahbubani for SAVVY.doc, and Esinam Damalie (blaxTARLINES) for Colonial Neighbours

ON VIEW

10.05.–21.06.2024 THURSDAY – SUNDAY 14:00–19:00

INVOCATIONS

22.06.2024

SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES

16.05.2024	17:00	DEUTSCH	Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock und Anna Jäger
25.05.2024	16:00	ENGLISH	Lili Somogyi and Kelly Krugman
07.06.2024	17:00	ENGLISH	Kelly Krugman
16.06.2024	17:00	TAGLISH / ENGLISH	Renan Laru-an
20.06.2024	18:00	ENGLISH	Lili Somogyi

Further dates will be updated on our website.

TEAM

ARTISTIC DIRECTION Renan Laru-an
CURATION Kelly Krugman Renan Laru-an Lili Somogyi
CURATORIAL ASSISTANCE Sagal Farah Daniellis Hernandez
PRODUCTION LEAD Waylon D'Mello
PRODUCTION TEAM Santiago Doljanin Dušan Rodić Jessie Omamogho
SCENOGRAPHY Juan Pablo García Sossa
PROJECT MANAGEMENT Grace Baggott
GENERAL MANAGEMENT Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Lema Sikod
INTERNSHIP Vanessa Garcia
COMMUNICATIONS Anna Jäger
GRAPHIC DESIGN Juan Pablo García Sossa
TRANSLATION Anna Jäger
HANDOUT EDITING Hajra Haider Karrar Anna Jäger
VIDEO & SOUND Bert Günther
LIGHT Sanja Gergorić
SAVVY.DOC Sagal Farah
COLONIAL NEIGHBOURS Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Matthew Hansen

FUNDING The exhibition takes place in the framework of the 15-months-long programme TRANSITIONS,
funded by Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien.



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien

C O N T E N T

THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

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THE NEW HUNGARIAN TEXTILE ART IN THE SEVENTIES:
MARGIT SZILVITZKY AND LUJZA GECSEK BY KATA OLTAI

I N T R O D U C T I O N

“There are no sanctuaries
except in purposeful action;
I could say to my child,
There are wounds deeper
than flesh. Deeper and more
concrete than belief in some god
who would imprison your eye
in the sterile sky instead of
thrusting it on the piece of earth
you walk everyday and say,
Reclaim it.

But I let it pass since
it is really about knowing today and how.
This is what it has come to. Daughters
and sons are born now and could ask,
you know: Knowing your impotence why
did you bring me here?

I could say:
Life is the unarguable referent.
What you know is merely a point
of departure. So let's move. [...]"

– Excerpt from “Notes from No Sanctuary” by
Keorapetse Kgositsile

CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES opens a series of exhibitions deliberating on the power of artistic transitions. It will effloresce into many intertwined, yet autonomous, figments of exhibitionary forces akin to a rainfall or a shower of petals. Situated in the troubled milieu of (German) decolonization, the exhibition explores the work of art and artists that emerged from practices of collectivity, a quality of alternative world-making that has been endorsed by, and celebrated in, global contemporary art.

CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES inaugurates a question that challenges the conventional notion of an illness-progression timeline (whether bodily, psychic, or ecological) imagined to have a finality. We ask: What if cures – like decolonization – produce no cure? How do we imagine decolonization beyond the remit of cure? This exhibition looks towards

artists in collectives, institutions, and movements who have offered utopic proposals or promises for decolonization. Accessing them through diverse art histories and sites of production, works previously presented in different contexts meet non-western examples of modernism, while various forms of avant-gardism are renewed in their presentation with contemporary non-object based art. This aesthetic background situates our engagement with Germany's colonial histories and its ongoing presences, as we expound the lens to examine different mediums of artistic transmissions and diverse epistemes: in order to meander within the questions, rather than explain our fractures away. We trail pedagogies and methodologies of artists entwined in collective practices to learn from their tools within their distinct geographies and legacies.

The exhibition and research project challenges the perceptions of “cure” and its promises. In recent years, we have found ourselves in a troubling gap and period of foreclosure that has cultivated more extremist views opposing decolonization, where conservative and authoritarian politics inhabit the frameworks of a supposedly democratic life. These challenges to emancipatory struggles demand new appraisals and even inventions of language, foundational values, and spaces of well-being. In this vein, together with the artists, CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES dilate the nodes of decoloniality, cures, and collectivity in the frames of wound, motherhood, and chaos. We follow the provocation by anthropologist Bharat Venkat, that the idea of a final cure is often elusive and unknown.¹ When thinking of chronic illnesses with ambiguous, if not impossible ends, we can see our broken “post”-colonial systems as structures that fail communities who try to be held by crutches of their own, often without structural support. We hope to find routes of articulations in looking at the material universe, linguistic aptitude, performativity, and relational pedagogy of artists who have approached notions of wound, mothering, and chaos in their creative output.

1 Bharat Jayram Venkat (2021). *At the Limits of Cure*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Cures and collectives operate in symbolism and towards a catharsis of expression. Symbols of cures and collectivity that we may gather from the recontextualization of mothering, chaos, and wound in the works of art collected in the exhibition revitalize subjective experiences. With the intention of problematizing western and hegemonic impositions of a singular, static, universal, or linear mode of being, we reposition ourselves in relation to “chaos”, expanded upon by Édouard Glissant as an embrace of fluidity, diversity, migrational dispersal, and resilient transformations. The chaotic is a process of being coupled to the alterable as well as the restorative, where disruptive or conflictive grounds of passage call for fertile renewals and emergences. Inscribed within wounds and scars are the realities of stories and traumas, standing also as a perpetual testament to the body’s innate ability to move towards healing. They signify mending without forgetting, repairing by tending to it. We invite the dynamic lessons of wounds, mothering, and chaos as a foundation for critical learning, as calls for intersecting forms of protection and transmutation within crisis.

Like illness, particles of C U R E S : C H R O N I C P R O M I S E S subsists around us: soft and hard, minor and major, acknowledged and unacknowledged. The art of juxtaposition is “the method of cure writ large.”² Within the exhibition, the interweaving of juxtapositions as opposed to comparison and association is the blossoming of political, ethical, and moral possibilities for artists to sustain their utopias. Can the powers of mothering, chaos, and wound sustain and accomplish life-producing dreams of utopia? The dynamics of juxtaposition operate in such a way that propositions can work, that the art of proposing is the magic of cure and collectivity. It returns us to how this symbolic order creates meaning in the chronicity of life.

Venkat notes the gendered dichotomy within the biomedical and its typically masculine view of cure as opposed to care work, a practice conventionally considered feminine and a process without end.³ Speaking in relation to this chasm, Brea Johnson invites us to further consider feminist genealogies embedded within care ethics which, thus, examine the realities of death and disability, as well as their prevalent possibilities for many:⁴ for an embrace of “interdependen[t] ... mutual (nondominant) differences”⁵ as necessary for dismantling institutional oppressions. Moving past binary worldviews, the exhibition troubles monologues and insists on forms of communing that mothering has achieved, as a form of treatment to the violent and oppressive context they exist within.

C U R E S : C H R O N I C P R O M I S E S also pays tribute to one of the most persistent manifestations of coloniality: a newly commissioned research looks into the history of H I V / A I D S and the cultural production that accompanies the experience of non-western relations to the epidemic. The open-endedness of this research invites further inquiries in the following exhibitions.

2 Ibid.

3 Bharat Jayram Venkat, “At the Limits of Cure”, Lecture at the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, September 15, 2022, [youtube.com/watch?v=MN3WA4V2gvY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN3WA4V2gvY).

4 Brea Johnson, “Black Women Care Ethics, Radical Love, and the Anti-Black World”, March 27, 2022, [youtube.com/watch?v=KJFHOAFaVA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJFHOAFaVA)

5 Audre Lorde. 1984. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Ed. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. 110–114.

NOTES ON CHRONIC PROMISES

BY RENAN LARU-AN

CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES is the first presentation in a series of exhibition programs that deliberates on the power of artistic transitions. Situated in the troubled milieu of (German) decolonization, CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES explores the work of art and artists that emerged from practices of collectivity, a quality of alternative world-making that has been endorsed by and celebrated in global contemporary art. A majority of participants in art believe in the accomplishments of collectivity in facing persistent problems, such as coloniality, capitalism, racism, etc. The history of collectivism is now intertwined with art's transformative agency. In recent years, cultural institutions, government entities, informal organisations as well as supranational and corporate businesses have invested interests in the potential of collectivism among artists and creative producers. While it remains far from becoming a mainstream methodology, the ethos of collaboration and non-hierarchical management is implemented in diverse settings and experimented by many practitioners beyond art.

However, why should collectivity and its artistic achievements be instructive in studying the concept of cures? In tracing the historical development of cures as the intended medicinal finality to illness, we revert to how inextricable the term is in the discourse of pathology. Disrupting this understanding means destabilising the foundations where cure emerges from. It is no coincidence to find collectivity in the middle of this question. In the context of contemporary exhibition-making, there is an abundance of curatorial arguments that have positioned the tenure of artists' collectivism and self-organisation in responding to sociopolitical as well as economic issues. The juxtaposition of the curative and the collective activates new definitions and processes of art's role in the society. This perspective underlines the ethical significance in artistic vocation as it challenges the autonomy in individualised creative pursuits. There are persuasive comments to the status of art and artists within this constellation of values: How do artists make use of these definitions of collectivity that describe their relationships and subjectivities

in order to operate in a larger social world? What happened to their utopic proposals, experiences and aspirations in the chronicity of constraints? How have emergent and diverse practices of collectivism been theorised and translated, especially outside their communities? For some who are keen on their practical dimension, they ask about the usefulness of collectivity in the timeline of cure which describes a process that might include the stations of diagnosis, medication, surgery, remission, rehab, and more.

This is where the pulsating logic of the exhibition CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES finds itself. Knowing that collectivity cannot be simply represented and that cure is never contemporaneous to the end of treatment, we locate the intersections of cure and collectivity in artists whose practices have been formed by collectivist ideals but at the same time have slipped into the gaps of interpretation or even resisted convenient articulations of the term. When reconsidering artists who are members of collectives or art schools, founders of art galleries and residency spaces, initiators of civil society organisations or non-profit foundations, and practitioners of a school of thought, ideological movement or cooperative in the discussion of cures, we are introducing (with Annie Ernaux in mind) a specific ethnography that is quotidian, seemingly bureaucratic, and insistently iterative in analysing the shared and different characteristics of the curative and the artistic. The next task then is to figure out the modes of grasping these features, and how they could be promoted as viable points of entry for a discussion in the public sphere.

In this endeavor, artists are invited to the curatorial orbit of wound, motherhood and chaos. CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES believes that by meandering through a multitude of practices in these three vectors we appraise the incongruencies and parallel fates of collectivism and cures as methods of possibility. We hope to find routes of articulations in looking at the material universe, linguistic aptitude, performativity, and relational pedagogy of artists who have approached wound, mothering and chaos in their

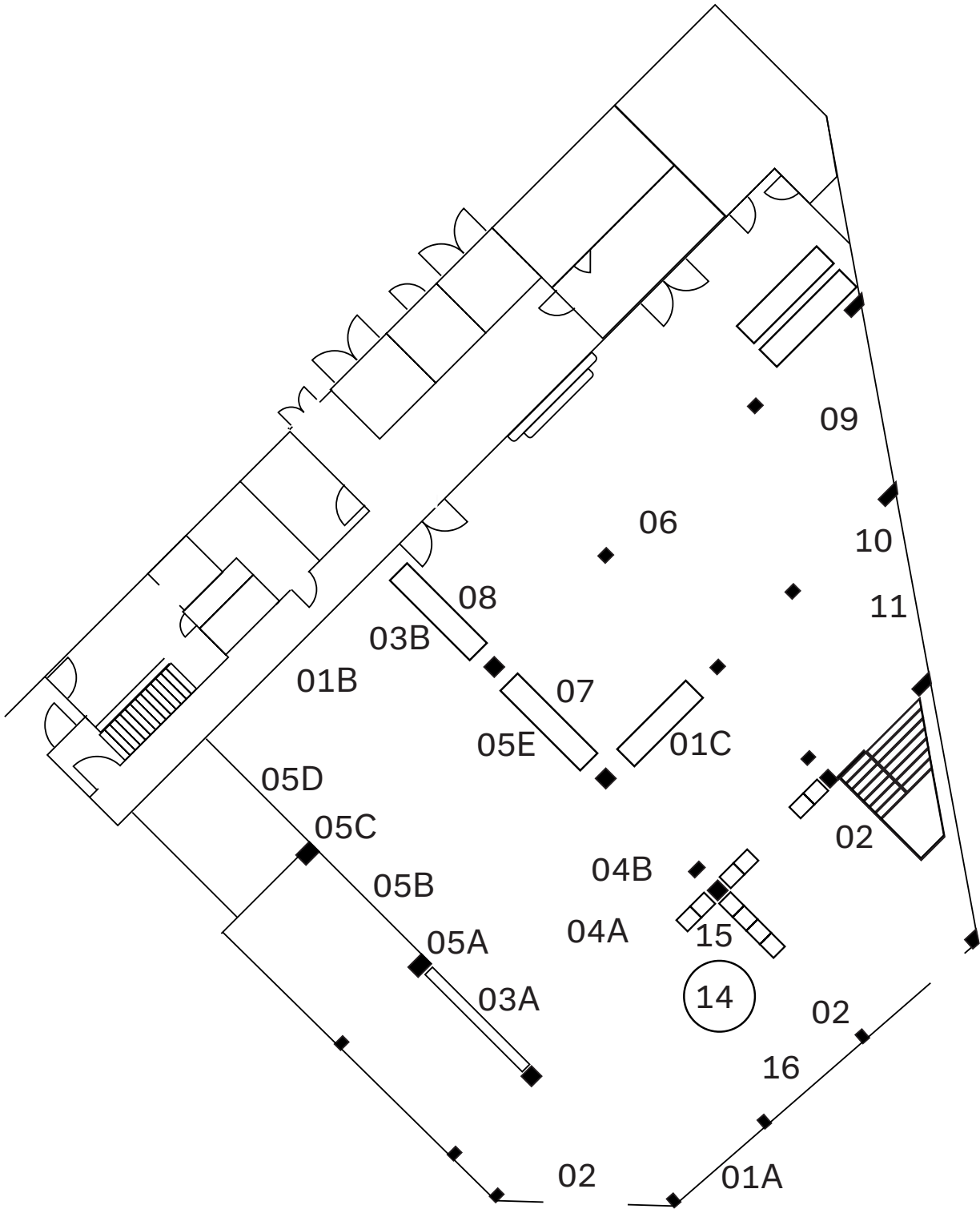
creative output. How these artistic qualities manifested is crucial in converting these knowledge(s) into tools. Here, our interests pursue the curative imagination of collectivity akin to an intercession in which we trust that the transmission of these proposals improvise styles and ways of engaging with adversity. It puts the activities of cures and collectivity into a cycle of remission and relapse that is also a life of rehearsals and refusals. What does this training do to the body of the artist or to the body of artworks? Will it make us sick?

As the title of our exhibition suggests, we are attracted to the pause that the colon offers between the original commitment of the word “cure” and the phrase “chronic promises”. Intermediary in function, reflecting on its speed as a punctuation, the colon envisages the coming of obligations to the task of cure. It is a positionality like being and becoming a collective. Neither speech nor expression, the exhibition therefore comes to a realisation in its curatorial strategy that demonstrating the relationships between collectivity and cure means showing the assemblage of artistic propositions, geopoetic alliances, intellectual kinships, and relational materiality in the shape of a colon. Following its contours delivers the viewers and readers of the exhibition a counterpoint that clarifies, distils, and enumerates the connections or nodes of interests among artists and curators, who are eager to learn how collectivity and cure can nourish one another. By doing so, this entire enterprise of display animates the art of juxtaposition to be the generative method at our disposal, which as the anthropologist Bharat Venkat reminds us, is “the method of cure writ large.” Writing this introduction presents many challenges in the literalization and thematization of exhibition subjects that set the stage for the so-called contextualization. In this vein, the much maligned magic of the exhibitionary is invoked again: symbolism. The symbolic if we were to return to this juncture of world-making upended by catastrophe and violence may welcome accusations of complacency if not complicity; but would this return bring a restoration of faith in the symbolic order that could pair one incomprehensible matter with one that is something more visible, say pain to image, trauma to utterance? In the case of collectives, the prevailing discourse is tied to a materialist reading, which has launched a closed-circuit context of such commitments to the question of funding. Granted it motivates artist participation in collectivist endeavours, the promise of collectivity manipulates the affective into a new structure of beliefs. That is why fundamentally cults are a collective that is equally artistic and strategic. Cures and collectives operate in symbolism.

Symbols of cures and collectivity that we may gather from the recontextualization of mothering, chaos and wound in the works of art collected in the exhibition revitalise our experiences. As we find ourselves in worn-out contexts of action and in spaces of no-cure, new

juxtapositions may illuminate pathways for attaching meaning to the impossibility of cure. In the program of decolonization, in which this presentation is articulated, symbols are signals of life-affirming reconciliation. Going back to the metaphor of colons, they are helpful in long-term struggles like decolonization because they enforce interlocution in the relentless pursuits of solutions that may or may not work for everyone. At the limits of art and exhibition, cures and collectivity – where all these are incurable fantasies, what are the good fantasies that we can inhabit as believers of the artistic?

FLOORPLAN



01 S A M S R Á Ć

A *Calendar Full of Chocolate and Universal Joy*
2020/2021, window poems translated to English from Czech
B *How to Deal with Stolen Skin*
2024, installation, leather, text on canvas, variable dimension
C *Cypress*
2009, aradecor textile piece, wool, 145 x 105 cm

02 K A M R U Z Z A M A N S H A D H I N

Songs Adrift
2024, installation, jute and thread, sound, 457 x 335 cm
and 457 x 345 cm
A collaboration with the weavers Samin Begum, Shahinur Begum,
Johura Begum and Shefali Begum; Song contributions with
communities near the rivers of Pathraj, Vulli, and Chhoto Dhepa

03 I M E L D A C A J I P E E N D A Y A

A *Anghel ng Teknolohiya (Technology's Angel)*
1997, painted paper mache, plaster-bonded textile and metal,
110 x 77 x 17 cm (irregular)
B *Balabal ni Lola Minggay (The Shawl of Grandmother Minggay)*
1995–1996, painted paper mache, acrylic on assemblage and
plaster-bonded textile, 85 x 131 cm (irregular)

04 M A R G I T S Z I L V I T Z K Y

A *Floor Object 1*
1977, textile object, folded and sewn linen, 18 x 32 x 45 cm
B *Interior*
1977, textile object, constructed, folded canvas, ribbon,
20 x 20 x 20 cm

05 L U J Z A G E C S E R

A *Garden I.*
Undated, mixed media on paper, 56 x 105 cm
B *Untitled*
1986, collage, monotype, grattage, 30 x 21 cm
C *Untitled*
Early 1970s, textile, sisal, 102 x 24 cm
D *Untitled*
1968, work on paper, print paper, 52 x 43,50 cm
E *Golden Butterfly*
1970, textile, gobelin, 70 x 80 cm

The works by Lujza Gecser and Margit Szilvitzky have been
selected in collaboration with Kata Oltai.

06 V E N U C A E V A N Á N

A *Sarhuinas emprendedoras en la ciudad de Lima (Sarhuina
vendors in the city of Lima)*
2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm
B *Dunia Felices Rojas*
2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm
C *Flor Andina (Andean Flower)*
2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm
D *Aula Mali*
2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm
E *Kuya Kusqay (Delicious Food)*
2023, painting, acrylic on cloth, 40 x 30 cm
F *Taqi warmicuna (Female singers)*
2023, painting, acrylic on carved wood, 98 cm x 3 cm and 97
cm x 2 cm

07 E M M A W O L U K A U - W A N A M B W A

Promised Lands
2015, video, 20 min

08 F I C T I O N O F P O S S I B I L I T Y

Tribute to Shūji Terayama

09 N I K H I L C H O P R A

From Water to Fire
2024, live performance and drawing, commissioned by SAVVY
Contemporary, duration: 3 hours
Accompanied by Rittik Wystup on piano, costume design by
Tabsheer Zutshi

10 L I L I N A S C I M E N T O A N D H I U R A
F E R N A N D E S

Aquela criança com AID\$ (That Child with AID\$)
2023, video, 11:31 min
Commissioned by Visual AIDS for Day With(out) Art 2023:
Everyone I Know Is Sick

11 L E M M I N G M U N Y O R O

Found Poetic Prose

—

14 A T L A S

Artist presentations of their collectives: transmission,
pedagogy, and knowledge production
2024, interviews, video and photo documentation, articles,
publications, social media

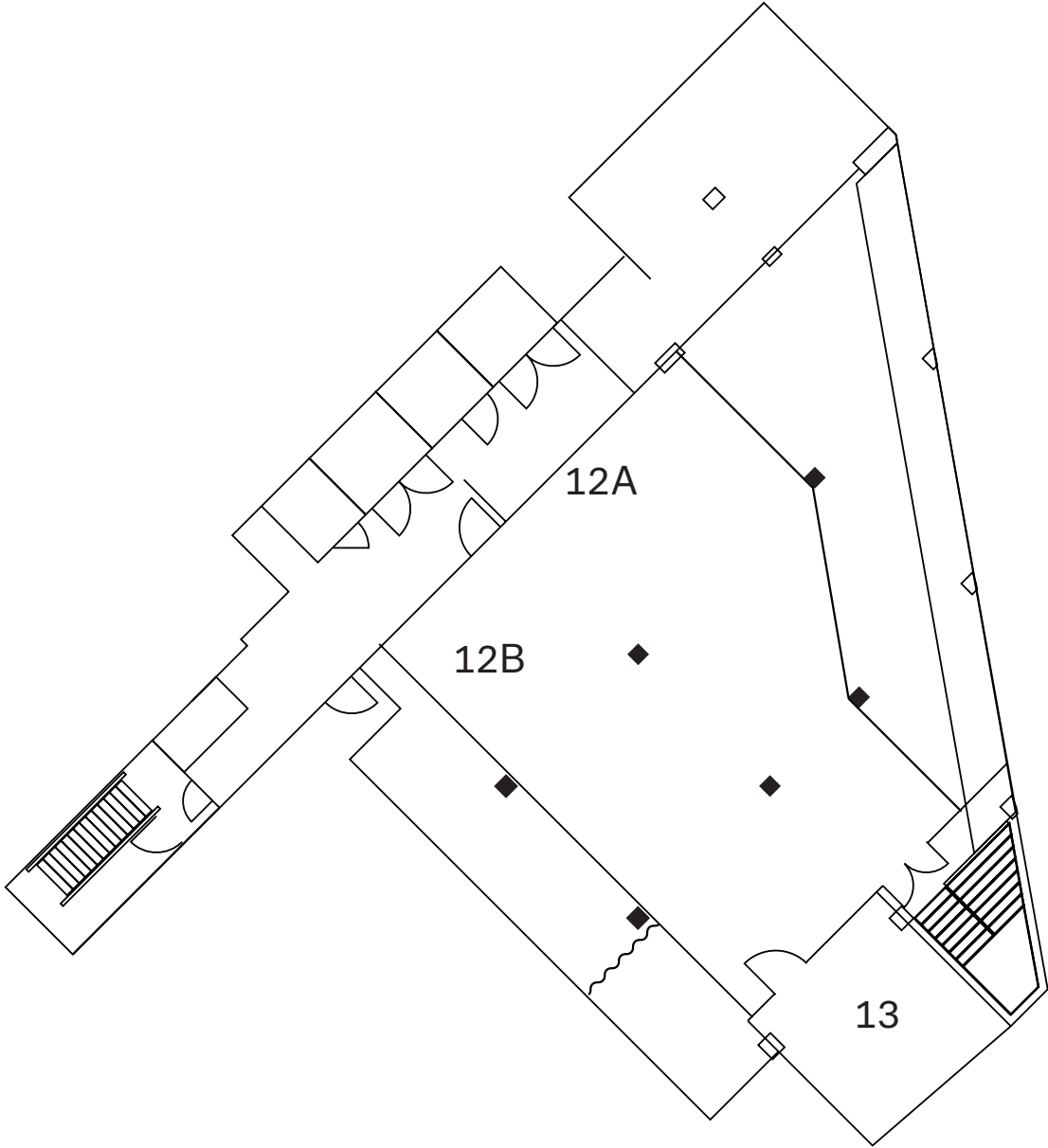
15 S H A U N A K M A H B U B A N I
W I T H S A V V Y . D O C

*Dis-visible Narratives: Non-western Cultural Production
around HIV/AIDS*
2024–ongoing, Research commission

16 C O L O N I A L N E I G H B O U R S

Archival presentation with research activation by Esinam
Damalie (blaxTARLINES)

FLOORPLAN



12 SHŪJI TERAYAMA

A *Hōsō-tan* 疱瘡譚 (A Tale of Smallpox)

1975, single channel video installation, 31:18 min

B *Keshigomu* (The Eraser)

1977, single channel video installation, 20 min

13 C & G ARTPARTMENT (CLARA
CHEUNG & GUM CHENG YEE MAN)
WITH

TANG KWOK HIN

The Mood Of Searching For Traces Of C & G

2024, digital print on paper, A3, 13 prints

MICHELLE WUN TING WONG

Under The Bed Zine

2024, digital print on paper, A4, 16 prints

WONG WING TONG

Flash Mob? This Guy Thinks It's A Flesh Mob

2024, digital print on paper, 42 x 59.4cm, 6 prints

CANDY YEUNG

Novus Murmur

2024, single channel, HD, colour, with sound, loop, 02:25 min

YANG YEUNG

to be continued

2024, audio recording of words presented in the voice of Yang
Yeung, 16:33 min

ARTWORK ANOTATIONS & BIOGRAPHIES

01 SAM SRÁČ

A *Calendar Full of Chocolate* and *Universal Joy*
2020/2021, poems in the window, translated to English
from Czech

These two poems were featured in the 44th edition of *PIŽMO* magazine in 2020/2021, published by Sam Sráč and Galerie SAM83 collective. Sam Sráč's poetry delves into how societal issues manifest and are experienced in everyday life. She fearlessly portrays the ordinary joys and sorrows of daily existence, addressing the challenges faced by women in a misogynistic society and the stigma surrounding the expression of motherhood's hardships. "A Calendar Full of Chocolate" delves into the bitter irony that in a capitalist society, the act of purchasing something as simple as chocolate can unexpectedly provide solace and upliftment to the soul. Throughout the poem "Universal Joy", each line delves into various perspectives, shifting between the speaker ("I"), the addressed person ("You"), collective experiences ("We"), and a character named Kristina. These perspectives intertwine to explore seemingly mundane events of daily life, such as continuously tidying up, and gradually expand to deeper reflections, like how the sensation of the cold floor serves as a reminder of mortality.

B *How to Deal with Stolen Skin*
2024, installation, leather, text on canvas, variable
dimension

Anticipation of youthful, unrequited love. *How To Deal With Stolen Skin* presents a series of animal hides that Sam Sráč was gifted during a particular phase of her life in her early twenties. These pieces were taken by a young man employed in a factory, concealed beneath his jacket, displaying little fear of repercussions during the communist era in the Czech Republic.

What narratives lie beneath each stratum of tales, such as that of the deceased animal whose skin was stripped away? What about the numerous sacrifices that preceded the one supposedly made for love? Leaning closer to the fabric, questions and statements can be read and uttered:

"The prison of relationships"
"The Wretched of the East"
"Formulating a statement about a contradictory reality"

What happens when love is disguised in aggression or vice versa? When a love letter is written on flayed skin? A blend of sweetness and bitterness in love, an unbidden presence that cannot be turned away. And what unfolds when one is smothered by the ever-present scent of leather?

The burden of not loving someone enough or the incapacity to fall in love inscribes guilt and shame. The pressure of displaying and experiencing affection, coupled with feeling overwhelmed and tied down by gifts. David Graeber poses the question: "What is the difference between a mere obligation, a sense that one ought to behave in a certain way, or even that one owes something to someone, and a debt, properly speaking?" In this context, when love transforms into a commodity, anticipated and demanded, it inevitably diminishes in its potency. As a love letter morphes into an unsigned contract it exemplifies this shift, indicating that one cannot be indebted to love in the same way. Through Sam Sráč's act of transforming the leather pieces into artwork (another form of commodification), the burden of guilt is gifted to the viewer and, finally, released. The installation beckons you to traverse its space and among the hanging pieces contemplate the questions posed, the statements articulated, and to reflect on the myriad forms of violence intertwined with affection that are inscribed in the familiar yet distinct scent and texture of the leather pieces.

C *Cypress*
2009, aradecor textile piece, wool, 145 x 105 cm

Cypress presents layers of symbolism weaving together both personal and collective histories embedded within this non-woven fabric piece. Sam Sráč is a community organiser who has constructed every aspect of her life from the ground up – from her home as well as the artistic community she is a part of, to the residency place she organises. Community work and the ethos of "Doing It Together" (DIT) are at the core of her practice. In front of the summer house she dreamt of and later built with her late husband stood a particular cypress tree. Sam Sráč found herself drawn to this tree, making it a ritual to incorporate it into her daily life in various forms and expressions. It swiftly evolved into a recurring motif in many of her artworks spanning across all mediums. It graces a large painting adorning her living room wall, appears in a video piece depicting a grotesque, crime-like narrative of two cypresses in love, and manifests in various other forms across mediums.

The cypress is ever-present, to the extent that at times it seems to embody her essence and symbolises that which she holds dear.

The creation of the art work's particular fabric carries a unique quality. Crafted by a singular machine, the only one of its kind in the entirety of the Czech Republic, it employs a technique known as aradecor. This method, shrouded in misunderstanding and stigmatisation, diverges from traditional weaving practices by compressing wool laces layer upon layer. "The aradecor is a failed invention from the 1960s for the creation of nonwovens for practical use."¹ Primarily used for decorative purposes, it was celebrated by the communist government of the time. Exactly for this reason, many people still harbour negative memories and associations linked to these textiles. After the 1989 revolution, this machine was rescued from disposal by artist Milada Hynková, who transported it to her home and has maintained it ever since. Sam Sráč, intrigued by exploring uncomfortable territories and posing unsettling questions, has collaborated with Milada Hynková and invites other artists for workshops to re-contextualize the technique within a contemporary framework.

S A M S R Á Č involves in her works the reassessment of the linguistic, visual, and social models that grow out of power relations. She founded Galerie Sam83, she organises the residency programme Artist in Cottage, she publishes the independent magazine *PIŽMO*, and she is the author of the books *Vanda, Kuniba Likes Things in Threes*, and *My Husband's Fear*. By adopting a sense of socio-economic responsibility, she was among those artists who consciously anticipated the ethical shift in art. The situations that Sam creates are environments in which she exposes the various aspects of manipulation and approaches to reality. In differing proportions, these scenarios move from the distinctly artificial, as explicit performances, to the completely natural, indistinguishable from reality. In every case, the result is a new experience for the participant, even when it only concerns the recollection of memories.

G A L E R I E S A M 8 3 is a platform for the free development of culture. In 1989, Sam Sráč formulated her *Vision for New Culture and Its Place* to express her idea of creating a liberated field for art that is not limited by power structures. She understood art as a transformational tool regardless of its form. One reason for these comprehensive reflections on the creation of a "place for the development of art" was her previous experience with totalitarianism, combined with a mistrust of the newly emerging capitalism. The goal of this vision was to create a stable environment for the creation of culture whose existence would not be dependent on outside resources, which are usually tied to political considerations. She has worked to

create these conditions since the early 1990s, and her *Vision for New Culture and Its Place* has become a comprehensive system for achieving this objective. Thirty years later, we can look back on this concept as a temporary autonomous zone.

In 1993, a stable platform was established in the village of Česká Bříza. Besides the operational difficulties associated with the lack of infrastructure, existing outside established centres of art had certain liberating advantages such as breaking free of the centre's competitiveness. A tangible outcome of this approach can be seen in the activities of Galerie Sam83, whose program has been able to develop independently of the latest trends. The gallery has functioned without outside support for more than fifteen years, making it a model example of the economical and effective use of scarce resources and an inspiration for new autonomous projects. In its program and in the concepts behind its exhibitions, the gallery responds to the contemporary art industry, among other things through critical reflection and repeat collaborations with artists. As a part of its activities and with the goal of enabling more concentrated work, it also offers artists' residencies. Another clear example of active involvement in shaping the field of culture was the founding of *PIŽMO*, a cultural quarterly in which Sam and other contributors publish their critical writings.

02 K A M R U Z Z A M A N S H A D H I N *Songs Adrift*

2024, installation, jute and thread, sound, 457 x 335 cm each

A collaboration with the weavers Samin Begum, Shahinur Begum, Johura Begum and Shefali Begum; Song contributions by communities near the rivers of Pathraj, Vulli, and Chhoto Dhepa.

How can we listen to rivers, and how might they listen to us? Kamruzzaman Shadhin asks these questions in his "a river series" – honouring his ongoing, intimate search of communication with three vulnerable rivers of north Bengal: in memory, in craft, and in voice. The work aims to trace remembrances of the rivers and small streams that Shadhin was surrounded by in his childhood and that slowly have started to disappear due to erosion. Since 2019, he has been visiting communities that lived on the banks of such water bodies, engaging with the women of the community; ecological migrants and the victims of river erosion's dire effects on homestead and crop land. Together, they call upon the impressions the rivers have left on them, and leave us to consider those that they left upon the river.

The work has been created through a collective jute-shika weaving workshop where the artist and community members together recollected memories of, and music for, their local rivers, that had been buried in their body and mind. Although many of the water bodies

¹ Matter of Art. "SAM SRÁČ": <https://matterof.art/2022/exhibition/ghmp-20>.

are either gone or dissipating, they have left these marks of reverence etched upon the people. In this jute-weave and archive of stories and songs, within the tapestry and in voice, the rivers' echoes find their continuation of life even when a physical body of its waters no longer remains. For the communities, it is through collective memories that the rivers' spirits endure, kept alive through stories, melodies, and myths told around its presence.

The corresponding sound recordings are mainly a selection of songs, rhymes, and sayings about the rivers collected from the river communities of Pathraj, Vulli, and Chhoto Dhepa alongside the elders of Shahdin's village. They focus on how the village connects with these lost water bodies and remembers them as beings, flowing with life. These songs depict everyday life in connection to the rivers, speaking about the fruit trees on the banks, habitations, markets, insects, children's swimming games, travels, boats moving through them, and further.

The jute weave emerging from this workshop now trickles in whispers netted above the SAVVY staircase; a flowing stream, the threads mimic the curves of the waters. The braided patterns of material of the jute, for Shahdin, evoke not only the river but also the portrayal of the reality of the intertwining nature of all beings within it, as the history of the jute and its crop has a powerful relationship to the village of Thakurgaon in Bangladesh, where many live and work. In his village, the Shika technique is a craft that is situated within a multitude of associations: while its historical roots predate colonial times, it became fundamental in its role in British colonial economy and interests. The words of the community float in shadow form amidst the tapestry and their voices can be heard both in the weave and in the songs and tales emanating from them.

This exploration encompasses a range of losses, from cultural to migratory and communal, focusing on how the water bodies have shaped the ways of living for all the beings linked to them. Shahdin in this work wonders, did the rivers have their own songs and stories about the communities, as they had for them?

K A M R U Z Z A M A N S H A D H I N is an artist based in Dhaka and Thakurgaon, Bangladesh, with a participatory practice incorporating installation, performance, video, and public art interventions exploring themes of migration, environment, and history. Shadhin's work is shaped by his interactions with the people and communities he collaborates with, as well as his research of the materials he uses in the collective process. A deep interest in the community traditions in Bengal region and their connection with geopolitics, ecology and colonial history has become a major part of his artistic research and journey. He is the founder of the Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts.

G I D R E E B A W L E E F O U N D A T I O N O F A R T S started its journey in 2001 as a multidisciplinary platform focused on cultural and artistic explorations. It is a community-based arts organisation running various creative programs and research projects in the village of Balia in Thakurgaon, in the northwestern corner of Bangladesh, with participation of several culturally diverse communities. Through its social practice and community focused activities, the organisation attempts to create a balance of influence in the artistic process, and through that process, develop projects that respond to local history, culture, and the environment.

03 I M E L D A C A J I P E E N D A Y A
A Anghel ng Teknolohiya (Technology's Angel)
1997, relief painting, plaster-bonded textile and metal,
110 x 77 x 17 cm (irregular)

This sculptural relief painting came from a paper mache torso the artist made for an installation entitled *Experiences of Surviving* in which she recycled old blankets and curtains from a past piece to create what she describes as "an earthly angel with a metal abdomen", in an attempt to "draw attention to women's roles in using appropriate technologies to the advantage of the have-nots". Following her breadth of work, Imelda Cajipe Endaya employs re-used materials to invoke home, a heart of safety, and the necessity of agency in one's bodily vessel to decide to host and birth life. She urges us to consider the vulnerability of environments, of both one's body and one's exterior conditions, that a child could be born into, when making such a choice – advocating for a woman's own authority through the delicacy of selection. The angel hovers above us with a smile as if to ease us, a maternal gaze that embraces even without standing as a designated mother, she floats as if to protect the communal feminine: her head surrounded by swirls mimicking the wisp of clouds in an upper-sky. The heart that envelops her is the backdrop of her landscape, merging with the hat above her head, which stands as a mountain and refuses differentiation from her body. The technologies in a frame and structure as complex as that of our organs is one of safe-guarding, of self-preservation and ideal sanctuary, for the female's many forms and for any beings to come; on the surface, it takes the place of her lungs, perhaps holding them below.

B Balabal ni Lola Minggay (The Shawl of Grandmother Minggay)
1995–1996, acrylic on assemblage and plaster-bonded textile, 85 x 131 cm (irregular)

Influenced by the local culture of Lugana in the Philippines, the paper mache (taka) traditionally used in carved wooden structures as a mould, recurs in this work, as in its sibling featured alongside. *Balabal ni*

Lola Minggay, like *Anghel ng Teknolohiya* is made with recycled materials from previous exhibitions. This methodology is showcasing the economy of distribution revealing the precarity of female artists whose works do not sell given the difficulty of selling installative works. Rooted in the new consciousness of feminist artistic practices alongside others in her collective Kasibulan, each member departing from a softer ground of political action within the veins of social realism, Endaya here recalls her grandmother and the embrace of her shawl upon her and her beloved's world. The resting head of her closed-eye grandmother sits, with her shawl dripping below, enwrapping the entire relief painting: holding three women within and around it. These daughters, perhaps both biological and symbolic, are seen with their full bodies – as if to grow from their grandmother whose mind watered the seeds that emerged as their autonomous selves.

A frame sits in the centre of the painting encompassed by all female figures, with a fruit tree standing on an Earth of red, as blood. Crustaceans and fish are touched by raining clouds toned by the United States' red, white, and blue as Endaya places our eye's focus on the 48-year colonial military occupation of the US upon the Philippines, its imperial veil hovering around the life forms of the natural landscape and the women.

I M E L D A C A J I P E E N D A Y A lives and works in Manila, Philippines. Her artistic career has been devoted to contemporary social issues from the viewpoint of female empowerment. In her art, she has dealt with issues such as cultural identity, human rights, migration, family, reproductive health, globalisation, children's rights, environment, and peace. Her mixed media paintings and installations are richly coloured and textured with crochet, laces, textiles, window, flatiron, suitcases, papier mache craft, and found objects from home and popular culture. In so doing, she developed a visual language that is distinctly honouring the feminine and the Filipino.

Endaya is also a writer, curator, and art projects organiser. She co-founded KASIBULAN, a collective of women artists, and *Pananaw: Philippine Journal of Visual Arts*, an initiative in contemporary art discourse. She was affiliated with the Philippine Association of Printmakers from 1970 to 1976 and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts Committee on Visual Arts from 1995 to 2001. An art educator in the non-formal set-up, she conducts lectures and art workshops.

K A S I B U L A N – Kababaihan sa Sining at Bagong Sibol na Kamalayan (Women in Art and Emerging Consciousness) was founded in 1987 by Cajipe Endaya with sculptor Julie Lluch, illustrator Anna Fer, craft maker Sister Ida Bugayong, and visual artist and educator Brenda Fajardo who were driven by their fervent desire to continue making an impactful

change in society. It was formally registered in 1989. Prolific Filipino writer Ed Maranan suggested the name Kasibulan to streamline Cajipe Endaya and her friends' aims to a blossoming chapter in the art scene and Philippine feminism. Cajipe Endaya, one of the staunch pioneers of feminist art in the Philippines, was surrounded by her "sisters" in giving voice to the voiceless. Its objectives are to provide members with opportunities for creativity, growth, and self-sufficiency; to nurture and sustain sisterhood among its members, and to link its members to a larger community of artists and women's groups here and abroad. KASIBULAN extends to raising awareness on the plight of women in various fields, industries, and professions and takes an active role in catalysing social change and development.

04 M A R G I T S Z I L V I T Z K Y

A Floor Object 1

1977, textile object, folded and sewn linen, 18 x 32 x 45 cm

B Interior

1977, textile object, constructed, folded canvas, ribbon, 20 x 20 x 20 cm

05 L U J Z A G E C S E R

A Garden I.

Undated, mixed media on paper, 56 x 105 cm

B Untitled

1986, collage, monotype, grattage, 30 x 21 cm

C Untitled

Early 1970s, textile, sisal, 102 x 24 cm

D Untitled

1968, work on paper, print paper, 52 x 43,50 cm

E Golden Butterfly

1970, textile, gobelin, 70 x 80 cm

The works by Lujza Gecser and Margit Szilvitzky have been selected in collaboration with Kata Oltai.

In this section, presented by Kata Oltai, we feature two female artists from the 1960s and 1970s Hungary. Our conversation initially explored the educational role of the art community during the socialist era, with a focus on the influence of Erdély Miklós. However, during one of our early discussions with Kata, she posed a thought-provoking question: "What about his wife?" This question sheds light on the relative obscurity surrounding her and other female textile artists of that time. It invited us to delve into a previously overlooked area, opening up new pathways for exploration and discovery.

Lujza Gecser and Margit Szilvitzky belonged to a loosely organised spatial textile art movement without a defined name, which operated fluidly outside of institutional constraints during that period. Here, they form a duo, representing both younger and older generations of textile artists from that era. Margit Szilvitzky's display of two textile objects reflects her fascination with geometric shapes and spatial textiles. Meanwhile, Lujza Gecser's wall-bound pieces reveal her diverse interests in mediums, formats, and techniques, ranging from sisal weaves portraying cascading braids to the intricate details of the Golden Butterfly textile alongside depictions of gardens in painting. Additionally, a smaller collage piece illustrates a swirling, chaotic emotional turmoil installed side by side with her print work, depicting a deity with uplifted hands. Several of her pieces remain untitled, perhaps for various reasons, inviting viewers to engage in intuitive interpretations.

Please, find a longer and detailed text about the contextualization of these artworks written by Kata Oltai in the OFFERING section of our handout.

L U J Z A G E C S E R (1943–1988) was a pioneering figure in Hungarian experimental textile art. Graduating from the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts in 1968, she emerged during a period of institutional reform in textile art. Her career took off with the Textile/Wall Hangings exhibition in 1968 at the Ernst Museum, marking the resurgence of Hungarian textile art. Gecser became pivotal in the second generation of this revival, participating in national and international exhibitions, notably the Szombathely Textile Biennial and the Velem Textile Art Workshop (1975–1983). Velem was particularly influential, shaping much of her career and experimentation.

Breaking from traditional wall presentations, Gecser delved into spatial textile art in the mid-seventies, exploring textile structure, fibres, and new materials. Her work aligned with broader interests in textile and visual arts, leading to the emergence of the term "fibre art." By the 1980s, Gecser, alongside peers like Anikó Bajkó and Judit Gink, transitioned to conceptual art, departing from applied textile roots to embrace autonomous artistic expression. Experimental film, environment, and installation became significant mediums in her pursuit of innovative artistic avenues.

M A R G I T S Z I L V I T Z K Y (1931–2018) graduated from the textile and fashion design department of the University of Applied Arts Budapest in 1954. She became an acclaimed designer by the end of the 1950s. She was invited after a theoretical reform to teach at the University of Applied Arts where she became a mother figure and master for several generations of textile designers and artists. She started her autonomous works using embroidery and it was heavily inspired by Hungarian folk art in the beginning.

With artist friends, like Zsuzsa Szenes or Marianne Szabó, they started to think and organise new ways for textile expressions. Linen and fabrics from traditional rural households became her starting points and main inspiration for the first spatial textile works. She began experimenting with various textile fabrics, and her sewn collage pictures, made from linen and hemp materials she had dyed herself, made her by the latter half of the 1960s one of the leading figures of Hungarian textile art.

K A T A O L T A I served as a curator at the Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest. Since the major political upheaval in Hungary, which affected state-funded institutions, she has primarily worked on project-based endeavours, mainly in the field of photography. She has curated several international shows on topics such as gender, identity, transitionality, and social prejudices.

In 2015, she founded her own gallery, FERi gallery, as a feminist non-profit project gallery. FERi was an independent feminist exhibition space in Budapest committed to challenging Hungary's far-right government and political discourse by broadening the conversation on gender, equality, and the female body – topics that are typically treated conservatively by the largely state-controlled right-wing media and educational institutions. It was located in Budapest's 8th district, an area home to numerous independent cultural initiatives as well as a number of low-income and marginalised communities threatened by gentrification. As Budapest's only feminist art space, FERi gallery operated for 6 years.

She initiated her latest ongoing project based on the core values of this gallery – the TANGÓ project. Designed around research and presentation, new methods of "exhibition as a situation" were developed in this local history project with strong ties to contemporary visual culture and institutional self-reflection.

06 V E N U C A E V A N Á N

A Sarhuinas emprendedoras en la ciudad de Lima (Sarhuina vendors in the city of Lima)

2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm

B *Dunia Felices Rojas*

2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm

C *Flor Andina (Andean Flower)*

2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm

D *Aula Mali*

2019, painting, acrylic and cloth on wood, 36 x 18,5 cm

Venuca Evanán's four part series is consistent with her ongoing legacy of painting Tablas de Sarhua, boards of Sarhua, an artistic tradition of her hometown in

Ayacucho, Perú. The boards were traditionally long planks gifted to new home owner families and couples within the Sarhua community, with designs invoking Andean customs and scenes, spiritual and religious symbols, and images of the home owners' families and friends. Intended to be hoisted on the ceiling of a family home as an homage to those pictured, Evanán moves them further and expands their depictions into realms of feminist and quotidian topics, as in this series: honouring the lives of diasporic Sarhuines in the city of Lima and in Ayacucho.

In *Sarhuinas emprendedoras en la ciudad de Lima*, she shares the lives of mothers and women in Lima who, to support their family, go to the streets to sell breakfast to passersby: to students, factory-workers, and anyone who can benefit from being fed by their food. A woman has a baby wrapped in a shawl tied around her arms as she readies to serve milk to those before her; another female vendor sells potatoes, eggs, and Peruvian corn.

The dedication in *Dunia Felicias Rojas* is an homage to her fellow Sarhuina by the same name, a resilient artist and athlete, who despite the hardships of having her hands and feet amputated at the age of 15, due to a condition that attacks her blood vessels, represents Perú as a parasports sportswoman. Asked in an interview how she dealt with her operation, Dunia cited the power of her sisters' voices, who upon seeing her pensive or sad would say, "You can't let them look at you, but you can choose how you want to be looked at". Evanán uplifts Rojas and her resolve in breaking from fears of our impediments, to insist upon the memorialising of her living story, in constructing Sarhuin and Peruvian history.

Flor Andina presents a Sarhuina female musician and singer among fellow instrumentalists and dancers in Chorillos, a district in Lima. The diasporic Sarhuines travel across landscapes in the works of Evanán with their relatives, friends, ceremonial practices, and voices held in communal support despite socio-political fractures and vulnerabilities.

Continuing the acknowledging of what Evanán names "a deep Perú", a Sarhuan and Indigenous Peru, *Aula Mali* paints a historical moment from the 13th to the 19th of May in 2019, where in the Museum of Art in Lima, she notes: "OTHER POSSIBLE HISTORIES: THE SERIES "PIRAQ KAUSA", PAINTED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF POPULAR ARTISTS OF SARHUA (ADAPS) BECAME RECOGNIZED AS WORKS OF ART. EXPRESSIONS OF DEEP PERÚ AND THE REALITY OF THE ANDEAN". In the work, she is painted discussing and sharing Sarhuin customs in the museum, which has an archive of Sarhuin works from the 1980's. Alongside her father, a spearheader of the Tablas de Sarhua and her teacher, and a Sarhuin musician, she is shown giving a workshop to children using feathers as brushes, and natural tints as hues: inviting them to

document and chronicle their own stories, painful and pleasurable, within this ancestral custom. The Andean spirit of the tablas moves from the ethos of their traditions into the contemporary, as Evanán ongoingly inscribes the lives of new generations into her archives.

E *Kuya Kusqay (Delicious Food)*
2023, painting, acrylic on cloth, 40 x 30 cm

In *Kuya Kusqay*, Evanán paints quotidian life in the Andes. She paints a queer couple, who escape into nature to enjoy their love, far from others and the public view. Surrounded by cactuses speckled both with thorns and flowers, they hold each other in the joy that they find in each other's protected companionship. "Delicious Food" is the meaning of the title which continues in the veins of Evanán's erotic portraits, for which she has been confronted by her community, who violently rejected pieces such as this, deeming them inappropriate and foreign to their Sarhuin history. Before returning to the erotic pieces, she expresses she had to think carefully about how to approach the topic of sexuality so as not to be disowned by her community, where some had even articulated that what she paints does not happen in Sarhua. Evanán then insisted on presenting her own erotic self-portraits, which could not be refuted. Continuing to paint such themes, others have started to request that she paints erotic portraits of them, too.

F *Takiq warmicuna (Female singers)*
2023, painting, acrylic on carved wood, 98 cm x 3 cm and 97 cm x 2 cm

The two "varas" of *Takiq warmicuna*, as they are called by the artist, are wooden canes. Their use arose for Evanán at the beginning of 2019, when the Municipality of Sarhua hired her to give painting workshops to children. After living in Lima for several years, when she moved back to Sarhua with her daughter, she began to observe her community and became interested in the varayuq, communal authorities who carry command staffs painted with traditional themes. She began to wonder why varayuq, traditional Andean authorities, have only been men until now. She asked: "Why is it believed that Sarhuina women cannot also assume roles as authorities?" She spoke with a fellow artist, Teófanés Pomasoncco, who carves sticks, and bought some specimens from him with carved heads, but unpainted. She then brought them to Lima and intervened with her own style, returning them to the themes that she has focused upon: the valorization of the Sarhuina, Andean, migrant woman.

In these two works, as in the Tablas de Sarhua, she captures distinct scenes and stories. Here, two female figures, mermaids under the moon, are painted performing spiritual songs that invoke the mystical force of music, playing musical instruments that are

normally reserved only for men; she paints sirens across the canes, voices that have the power to liberate the women's energies and illnesses, healing and easing their emotions with the force of the music's pulsations. The varas are two works part of a larger series, in which she uses this medium linked to ceremonies and responsibilities typically carried out by male authorities, to encourage and empower women and to tell stories of female liberation.

V E N U C A E V A N Á N is a visual artist, activist, educator, and autodidactic artist. She is a keeper of the artistic expressions and traditions of the Sarhua community, in the region of Ayacucho in southern Peru. She specialises in painting with natural colours and bird feathers. For more than twenty years, Evanán has continued with the development of the traditional painting techniques of the "Tablas of Sarhua", the painted boards, of Sarhua, an Ayacuchan artform declared to be part of Peru's National Cultural Heritage in 2018. She is the daughter and student of pioneer disseminators of this artistic tradition, Primitivo Evanán and Valeriana Vivanco. She combines her technique with experimentation on various surfaces and objects within the everyday life of women such as stone, wood, and textiles. Venuca is one of the first women to break the patriarchal systems for creating Sarhua tablas, which were typically masculine forms of artistic production. She also expanded the themes of the tablas, to incorporate contemporary stories and struggles across eroticism, LGBTQ+ identities, sexual violence, feminist protest, and themes of everyday life that center the agency of migrant women.

As part of her interest in promoting Sarhua art, Venuca currently organises workshops in which she teaches participants how to create Tables of Sarhua in Peru and abroad.

Venuca obtained the Kuna Expression award from ArtLima in 2019 and the Ipcna Contemporary Art award in 2020.

R E T A B L O S P O R L A M E M O R I A ("Altarpieces for Memory") is a collective that emerged as a result of the killings of people from Southern Peru by the government of Boluarte in Ayacucho, for protesting against the removal of the democratically elected president, Pedro Castillo. The title comes as a reference to the art of Ayacucho altarpieces, a symbol for the representation of the demands of the protesters against the dictatorial government of Boluarte. The altarpieces are painted and used for street-based protests. The collective came into being as an urgency, where Venuca Evanán and various female friends and artists started organising in the city for murdered members of the community, demanding an end to the killings and calling for justice for those lost.

S O F R A S A R E L (Society of Sarhuinos living in

Lima) is a space created for the congregation of migrant Sarhuinos, of a district in Ayacucho, who are located – or forcibly displaced – to the capital of Peru, Lima. It is a space for the diffusion of Sarhuino art, culture, and community.

07 E M M A W O L U K A U - W A N A M B W A
Promised Lands
2015, video, 20 min

This video work is a meditation on land and displacement. The scene remains tranquil, with the camera fixed in place while the scenery evolves, shifting as the sun descends behind the trees, casting shadows over the distant mountains. It weaves together voices, both spoken aloud and written, in response to the monologues audible to the ears. The work delves into language and its subversive potential within the Ugandan context where the narrative unfolds. By speaking the language of the colonisers, one that is not one's own, and finding power in mispronunciation, one is empowered to "encounter the word on their terms." It evokes the writings of an Austro-Hungarian writer, Theodor Hertzka, who envisioned the free-market in East Africa in his novel, *Freiland: Ein Soziales Zukunftsbild*, published in 1890. Here, utopia transforms into Canaan, depicting a seemingly perfect natural setting achieved through the displacement of those who originally inhabited the land. It serves as the oppressive instrument of the settlers and a futuristic vision of the colonies they have established.

"NOT YOUR ENCHANTMENT"
"NO TO YOUR EMPTY SPECTACLE"

Wolakau-Wanambwa's emphasis on the word "NO" permeates the entirety of the film. As she recites excerpts of Hertzka's vision, flashes of "NO" disrupt the seemingly idyllic landscape we are observing. Then suddenly, we hear her conversing with her father. We can hear them talk about the land that is in front of them, the land that they know well and that they are part of. We can only hear them – like all the things we encounter throughout the movie. She deliberately "points her camera away at the view", so we can't see what has not been protected. It becomes a method of "rehearsals in nonimperial thinking" as Ariella Aïsha Azoulay puts it in *Unlearning Imperialism*, where the imperialistic nature of photographic gaze is questioned and challenged.

E M M A W O L U K A U - W A N A M B W A (1976–2023) was an artist, researcher, and founder of the collective Another Roadmap Africa Cluster (ARAC) within the constellation of the Another Roadmap School, a global research network fostering critical conversations and alternative practices in art and education. Wolukau-Wanambwa's artistic practice uses a wide range of media, including installation,

video, photography, printmaking and drawing, while involving long-term investigations and a research-based approach. Wolukau-Wanambwa's work traverses across decoloniality, Pan-Africanism, the study of museums and cultural institutions, art education as well as "the stories no one cares about". Her projects circulated in the academic world in the form of talks, workshops, texts, and lecture-performances. Her exhibitions included: *Actually, the Dead Are Not Dead*: Bergen Assembly 2019 (Bergen, NO); 62nd BFI London Film Festival (GB); *Women on Aeroplanes* (The Showroom Gallery, GB & Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw PL); *We Don't Need Another Hero* (10th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art, DE); *A Thousand Roaring Beasts: Display Devices for a Critical Modernity* (Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo – CAAC, Seville, ES); and *Kabbo Ka Muwala* (National Gallery of Zimbabwe, ZW, Makerere University Art Gallery, UG & Kunsthalle Bremen, DE). Her essay, "Margaret Trowell's School of Art or How to Keep the Children's Work Really African" was published in 2018 in the *Palgrave Handbook on Race and the Arts in Education*. She passed away after a long illness in 2023.

THE ANOTHER ROADMAP AFRICA CLUSTER (ARAC) is a group of scholars and practitioners of artistic and cultural education who operate in both formal and informal contexts across the African continent. Since 2015 they have been collaborating to pursue a joint programme of research into arts educational practices in their respective localities. The cluster's aim is to build a shared knowledge base and a structure of mutual learning that will benefit African practitioners and contribute to advances in thinking and practice worldwide.

ARAC is a "cluster project" of the Another Roadmap School, which is a self-organised network of practitioners and researchers of artistic and cultural education based in 24+ cities on four continents worldwide. ARAC's working groups are based in African cities and are currently active in the cities of Kampala, Nyanza, Lubumbashi, Kinshasa, Maseru, Johannesburg, Lagos, and Cairo.

08 FICTION OF POSSIBILITY

Tribute to Shūji Terayama

a summer butterfly
passes over me
as I sell Red Flag
mother must be tilling
the rice field in my hometown
— Shūji Terayama²

In a tribute to our featured artist, Shūji Terayama, we invoke his assertion that we can all embody and rise into "the fiction of possibility", imagining a life not our own to feel its struggles, its urges, its textures, and to be stirred into an inner and outer action of compassionate reflection. Along with the aforementioned tanka poem, we feature six additional ones throughout the exhibition space, placed on structures designed to welcome visitors to enter into the poetics of Terayama and to pause, reflect and rest on them.

We reference a blog-post encountered, touching upon Terayama's tanka-poem writing tradition:

"The dramatic construction of this tanka is a skillful montage of two scenes (about the speaker/youth, who has come to Tokyo, selling the communist newspaper, *Akahata / Red Flag*, and his mother, who now lives in his hometown, tilling the rice field). This tanka not only overlaps the reality of Terayama who came from Aomori to study at Waseda University in Tokyo while his mother was working, even if not in the rice field, at a US military base to send him money), but also raises 'an ethical question at the heart of left-wing politics: who will bear the labour burden on the road to social change?'³ Most of his critics cared little about the ethical dilemma or the suggestive power of the image of a summer butterfly that might transcend and bridge mother and child (ibid.), but more about the questions regarding if Terayama had ever actually sold the communist newspaper, or if he was really a communist, or if his mother was a farm worker. He addressed these challenging questions at a published round table shortly after his debut:

'I'd like to unravel one more thing: the problem of fiction. It seems that until now whenever people say fiction they only ever mean absolute fantasy. I feel that we've got to integrate something else we might call 'the fiction of possibility' [kanosei fikushon] into our work. For example, when I composed the poem, 'a summer butterfly passes over me as I sell *Red Flag*,' everyone instantly started asking: 'you sold *Red Flag*?' or 'stop lying' or 'you are dishonest.' Kitamura and I had a long debate about this the other day, and it's true, I have never sold *Red Flag*, but I know a lot of people who do, and when I muster up my empathy for those people I feel justified in saying 'I sell *Red Flag*.' By giving tanka primary significance and subordinating everyday life to the poem, I was able to live within a consciousness that was selling *Red Flag*, even if I hadn't physically stood there selling it. We've got to start using this type of fiction of possibility." (ibid., p. 29)

— Chen-ou Liu, 劉鎮歐 (NeverEnding Story,⁴ First English-Chinese Bilingual Haiku and Tanka Blog)

² Shūji Terayama. 2008. *Kaleidoscope: Selected Tanka of Shuji Terayama*, translated by Kozue Uzawa and Amelia Fielden, Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press.

³ Ridgely, Steven C. 2010. *Japanese Counterculture: The Antiestablishment Art of Terayama Shuji*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁴ "Never Ending Story: Haiku Tanka." Accessed 3 May 2024. neverendingstoryhaikutanka.blogspot.com

09 NIKHIL CHOPRA

From Water to Fire

2024, live performance and drawing, commissioned by

SAVVY Contemporary, duration: 3 hours

Accompanied by Rittik Wystup on piano, costume

design by Tabsheer Zutshi

From Water to Fire is a performance that contemplates the predicament of the human and our relationship to ecology. According to science, life began in water and as the planet cooled, we crawled out of our fluid waterscapes to breathe air and walk on land. As humans what has distinguished us from the rest of the organic world is a collective act, in which fire became a major force to bring us together, to cook our food, to keep us warm, to blaze our nights, and to enact war. The energy harvested by the sun became implemented to burn to flames. And as moths to a flame, those distracted and turned magnets to a destructive fire emboldening borders and impositions upon Indigenous land and its communities, threaten to burn the very wings that set us free. As we run out of fuel to burn, those powers of imposition causing climate change have never been more palpable. Chopra asks us to consider the work of Francois Vergès on the Capitalocene, identifying various hierarchies of agents responsible for such global destruction: highlighting how capitalist economies prioritise profit over environmental sustainability, leading to exploitation of resources and labour, particularly in marginalised communities. This capitalist-driven devastation, fueled by imperial and colonially-tied corporations, governments, and economic systems, exacerbates climate change and perpetuates social inequalities on a global scale while political majoritarian powers reign.

For a duration of three hours, Nikhil Chopra, in the persona of Nasha Talash, will make a drawing of the endless ocean with a solitary island and a volcanic fire upon it: with flames transfiguring into missiles overhead, stirring associations to regions around the world that are violently militarised and occupied. Nasha Talash is the literal Urdu translation of “being in search of intoxication”; Nasha is loosely based on a decadent Mughal demi-king in a state of intoxication. He is drunk with art, music and poetry, walking the line between medicine and poison, the beautiful and ugly, the joyful and painful, consumption and creating. Chopra asks us to consider the balance between each, the equilibrium we must seek, together and alone, in our paths as we walk in unison.

The charcoal on paper drawing left behind as a footprint of the performance will be mounted on a wall. The process of making the drawing is scored by an improvised piano composition played live by Berlin-based musician and sound artist, Rittik Wystup. The performance will be punctuated with a series of transformations in Nikhil’s persona: we will see him go from a muddy masked body to a bejewelled *Nasha*

Talash. How does this transition take place? What are the wisdoms and the dangers found within it?

NIKHIL CHOPRA interweaves in his artistic practice live art, drawing, photography, sculpture and installations. His performances, in large part improvised, dwell on identity and its construction, autobiography and authorship, the pose and self-portraiture. His work reflects on the process of transformation and the part played by the duration of performance. Nikhil Chopra combines everyday life, memory and collective history; daily acts such as eating, resting, washing and dressing, but also drawing and making clothes, become the process of making an artwork, becoming an essential part of the show.

Performances on the international art and theatre scene began in 2008, when the artist was invited to contribute to Time Crevasse (Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama), kunstfestivaldesarts Brussels, Making Worlds (53rd Venice Biennale), Performa (New Museum New York) and Marina Abramovic Presents (Manchester International Festival, The Whitworth Gallery, Manchester). After a one year research fellowship at Interweaving Performance Cultures, Freie Universität Berlin in 2011, his work took him back to the Whitworth Art Gallery to make a solo project for the 2013 Manchester International Festival where he received critical acclaim for his performance “Coal on Cotton”. Between 2014 and 2017 he performed at the Kochi Muziris Biennale, Bienal de la Habana, the 12th Sharjah Biennial and documenta 14. In 2019 he presented a nine days long solo performance titled *Lands, Waters and Skies* for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Nikhil Chopra was born in Calcutta in 1974, and lives in Goa where he runs HH Art Spaces with partners. After studying at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Maharaja Sayaji Rao University in Baroda, India, the artist continued his studies in the United States in 2003 to return to India in 2005 with a Masters from Ohio State University.

HH ART SPACES is an artist-run movement and collective that has worked with live art and performance, visual, sonic, and installation artists locally, regionally, and internationally, over the last ten years. It was set in motion in October 2014 by Romain Loustau, Madhavi Gore, and Nikhil Chopra as a physical space based in North Goa, which facilitated and curated residencies and workshops with a focus on contemporary live art and performance. Over time, HH has added newer members to the team: Shivani Gupta and Shaira Sequeira Shetty as Partners and Mario D’Souza as Co-Artistic Director and Resident Curator.

HH has built a long standing position of credibility in the contemporary and experimental art scene in South Asia and abroad. Given its ambiguous position between the conventional and dominant art industry, and the

independent and upcoming art movements celebrated by younger artists, HH's audience is both distinct and diverse. Furthermore, the space is deeply invested in the documentation and recording of live artwork and its residual effects, to create and nurture an archive, and build an active resource pool.

Some of HH's collaborators over the years, include The Tetley Museum, Leeds; Tate Modern, London, Fondazione Elpis, Milan; Britto Arts Trust, Dhaka, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Dhaka Art Summit; Chatterjee & Lal, KHOJ International Artists' Association, Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation, India Art Fair, Theertha International Artists' Collective, Sri Lanka, Serendipity Arts Trust, Magnetic Fields Festival, Sunaparanta Centre for the Arts, and Japan Foundation, Alliance Française, Canada Council for the Arts, British Council, Pro Helvetia and the Ontario Arts Council.

With support from institutional as well as non-profit funding through grants and commissions, HH wears several hats that uplifts and cultivates different voices from South Asia and beyond. Because of HH's enigmatic position, its mentorship programme continues in an imperceptible way. It has had an influence on developing contemporary practices in live and performance art in a pedagogical and art historical way in India. HH's extended community continues to grow over time, space, and the ever expanding domain of live art.

10 HIURA FERNANDES AND LILINASCIMENTO

Aquela criança com AID\$ (That Child with AID\$)

2023, video, 11:31 min, 2023

Commissioned by Visual AIDS for Day With(out) Art 2023: Everyone I Know Is Sick

"Your mother went to Itapecerica to get seeds, she planted the cure in her chest, at some point it will flourish."

The collaborative film by Lili Nascimento and Hiura Fernandes pays tribute to those forsaken by both the pharmaceutical industry and society as a whole. It portrays Lírio Nascimento assuming his artistic alter ego, Lili, a name symbolic of liberty. Structured into five distinct chapters – Birth, Growing Up Part 1, Growing Up Part 2, Aging, and Death – the film narrates the challenges faced by their community struggling with AIDS. The scene is Brazil, the conditions are unbearable. One of Lili's earliest memories is having to begin medication for the virus. This burden of illness weighs heavily, depriving children of the carefree play that should define their early years in an ideal world. The film seamlessly intertwines information and awareness with profound poetry and spirituality. Lili evokes the spirits of the ancestors, piecing together fragments of the stories of those forgotten and defeated by the virus, and consequently, by the system that neglects to

protect them. "I am water," she declares, embodying the tears held within her spirit because her five mothers couldn't cry out loud. She articulates the stories, remembering and reminding by invoking the ancestors, cultivating the practice of honouring the living through remembrance. By breaking the silence and confronting the stigma surrounding AIDS, the film sheds light on the exploitation of children in experiments aimed at advancing the treatment and management of the disease. Children, already burdened by the most challenging circumstances upon their arrival on this planet, occupy the most vulnerable position in our society.

The film is a beautiful reminder of the power of community and the role of fabulation when healing becomes an integral part of our daily lives, without the expectation that illness will ever completely disappear. The mother's chest, which produces milk carrying the virus, can indeed become a field of potential for nurturing the seed that may one day blossom into a cure. Or perhaps this has already occurred, reconciling profound contradictions.

HIURA FERNANDES is a multidisciplinary artist, cultural producer, and product designer living in João Pessoa, Brazil. Her audiovisual and performance work seeks to unite the body with cinematographic practices. Her work considers original forms of communication through the body and ancestry as pathways to healing and embodied living. As a Black travesti, she lives in her body and in her art the stereotypes of counter-hegemonic experiences. She seeks to understand the expressions of the body as a power capable of generating love, fear, anguish, and hate.

LILINASCIMENTO is a transpersonal psychologist, columnist, and artist who studies and works with children living with HIV and AIDS in Brazil. They work at the intersection of the artistic and the clinical, provoking poetic and political possibilities for existence. Lili is the artistic persona of Lírio Nascimento (he/him), artist, cultural producer, and psychologist whose research focuses on the intertwining between art and clinical practice. He combines visual elements, performance and poetry in his works, investigating the connection between artistic expressions and mental health, as well as the points of convergence between creativity and well-being. Research member of the International AIDS Society (IAS) since 2018 and co-founder of Loka de Efavirenz. Some of his works have been published in *EDUSP* (2015), *Canadian Science Publishing* (2016), *HIV Howler* (2018 and 2021), *Artishock Magazine* (2023) and *DWA Visual AIDS* (2023).

LOKA DE EFAVIRENZ is a social organisation that was founded in 2016 by a group of researchers, artists and activists from the AIDS social movement with the aim of devising effective strategies

for social and biological healing. Since then, Loka has articulated and produced decolonial strategies for coping, denouncing, survival, access to health and culture, and for promoting the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS, based on the promotion of counter-narratives that break silencing.

11 L E M M I N G M U N Y O R O

Found Poetic Prose

During a research trip to Bayreuth's Iwalewahaus, the exhibition curators Renan Laru-an, Kelly Krugman, and Lili Somogyi found this poem, or rather, the poem found them. Written on the backside of the painting *Awareness of AIDS* by Lemming Munyoro (1938–2000), it speaks his story of ambiguous (non)fiction, of being exposed to and acquiring AIDS through an amorous embrace. Anchored still in hope, he narrates the journey of following a bird, his intuition, and his dream: leading him into a forest with the gift of a remedy, developing a plant-based medicine for those living with AIDS, with a traditional healer.

Munyoro, an artist from Zimbabwe, is known for his artwork characterised by vivid colours, strong emotions, and intricate symbolism. Munyoro's work focuses on social and political issues affecting Zimbabwe, including HIV/AIDS awareness, political corruption, and poverty.

12 S H Ū J I T E R A Y A M A

A *Hōsō-tan* 疱瘡譚 (A Tale of Smallpox)

1975, single channel video installation, 31:18 min

In the underground of *S A V V Y*, a microcosm of selected films by Shūji Terayama are met in a state of open wounds seeking closure. Bruised emotional environments breathe with a secret order of personal chaos, with visions of self and communion that transfigure in search of transformation. Processing the hardships of a broken relationship with his mother and the fractured state of his native-country, Terayama takes us through the necessity of catharsis and creative expression: to look wounds in the eye, so to find ways out of their grasp. To cultivate new relationships, to wounds becoming scars:

With themes of sickness in the foreground of a film that is mired with bandages, *Hōsō-tan* 疱瘡譚 (A Tale of Smallpox) stirs with evocations of fears, desires, and tumultuous sensations lodged in the body. Of dreams within dreams. We step into the enigmatic and chaos-bridled realm of Shūji Terayama's avant-garde filmmaking, where celluloid becomes a visceral journey through the depths of a mind and heart's processing of its aches. The protagonist, an adolescent boy, stares at us from inside the screen, as if to stare in a mirror, with his face increasingly encircled by gauze that swallows

his head whole. At the age of eighteen, Shūji Terayama himself was diagnosed with nephritis, a disease that eventually took his life. The blue-tinged boy plays the host of an unfurling, cathartic story of an existence touched by chronic illness that lingers also in the psyche, while entrenched in the context of Postwar Japan. The nails that hammer into the boy pulsate with a trauma that itches beneath the skin, swirls with confusion, and still, runs towards a way out.

An array of theatrical characters travel through the film as if birthed from states of consciousness from within a fever dream: probing depths of anguish while maintaining a fervent desire to break free. A troupe of women hold birds, undo bandages, and perform like angels merging with demons of the night; creatures near to the mundane; they make a bicycle's wheels turn backwards, laughing at the screen, as if at us: not only is the protagonist menaced, but we are too. We are also implicated in a pain not ours.

We witness the frantic brushing of teeth by women with dishevelled hair, as though an attempt to rid oneself of literal and symbolic contaminations, and an agonising dance at the threshold of a door at sea, that tantalisingly leads to another realm. Questions sing out, as if to ask what exists beyond life with pain: is it a yearning for an afterlife, another life beyond this one, a new life within one's own, a passage to another dimension? Might it be suggested that they are all one and the same, and accessible in this life? As the film ends with flickers and distortions, it leaves behind only the smouldering ember of a golden black flame. At last, Terayama signals towards the possibility of exit routes amidst chaos: where extending hands opens the door to an endless sea. A feminine force that offers support, solace, and guidance to a portal elsewhere amidst torment.

B *Keshigomu* (The Eraser)

1977, single channel video installation, 20 min

We begin at sea, near to where *Hōsō-tan* 疱瘡譚 (A Tale of Smallpox) ended. The waves dance to the beat of a drum as a microorganism with a ghostly tinge appears to grow on the edge of the screen; like frost forming on a window, as with the juxtaposition of exposure to cold air on the outside with moist air on the inside, we are led into feelings that move in friction and sit in sombre contemplation. A violin follows the hand of an unknown central figure who moves between encounters that we cannot distinguish as being part of a dream, or reality. Punctuated by photographs that linger as if to haunt memory, a hand continues to meet these found documents with an eraser that blurs out, or rips up, the bodies and faces that are their subjects. Not even the sea is immune, those rippling waters we see at the start appear in a photograph as well, first torn, then nearly entirely erased. Military figures, ropes for seafaring, the head of a woman – perhaps a mother, aunt, or

grandmother – parallels a seated woman in white alone in a room, bodies dance around the elder woman as if to be her own children or spirits from a distant past. She later extends her hands as if sleep walking, feeling for the space beyond her so not to fall on her feet.

The microorganism recurs as if to become bullet shots, upon images of the back of a person surrounded by rubble. Undressing bodies in contortion outstretch themselves in another solitary room while the characters from the photographs come to life in moving form. The palm of the hand that is acting is analysed as chanting lingers, the female lays down on the ground as if no longer living. The dances upon the waters near to a chair on the shore presents these figures reaching for each other and for themselves. Terayama here showcases the wound as it mystifies, as well as the desired process to edit our own recollections so as to ease the hurt of their touch upon us. But when the characters insist to proliferate, transform, and mutate, we are left to consider the impossibility of erasure, as well as the impossibility of stagnance. Terayama's chaos is an ongoing emergent form that surpasses one's own impulse to control. How can we allow our memories to take new shapes beyond suffering, how might we imagine those we believe to have hurt us to attend to their own harm, to transition to another shore?

SHŪJI TERAYAMA (1935–1983) was an avant-garde Japanese poet, playwright (for stage and radio), filmmaker, and photographer associated with the New Wave cinema and underground theatre movements such as post-shingeki. Born in Aomori Prefecture, then raised by relatives after his father died in the Pacific War and his mother moved to distant Kyushu to work, he settled in Tokyo, where he would spend the majority of his adult life. After studying literature at Waseda University, he began writing poetry, making his mark with a major prize for new tanka writers in 1954. In 1967, with his wife Kujo Kyoko, he co-founded the experimental theatre group *Tenjo Sajiki* [天井棧敷], usually called “The Gallery” in English; the name is a reference to the Japanese translation of Marcel Carné's film *Les Enfants du Paradis*. The same year, he founded the Universal Gravitation Drama Laboratory [Engeki-jikkenshitsu Banyu Inryoku], an experimental gallery, cinema, and theatre space which later spun off the theatre group A Laboratory of Play: Ban'yu Inryoku. His films investigate the relationship between revolution, eroticism, youth culture, family psychology, and identity. Terayama's works explore new formal and aesthetic techniques, while simultaneously forwarding and constantly questioning the radical politics of post-Second World War avant-garde arts in Japan.

TENJŌ SAJIKI, also Tenjou Sajiki (天井棧敷), meaning the highest part of the theatre of the gods, was a Japanese independent theatre troupe co-founded by Shūji Terayama and whose members include Kohei Ando, Kujō Kyōko, Yutaka Higashi, Tadanori Yokoo, and

Fumiko Takagi. It was led by Shūji Terayama and active between 1967 and 1983 (until Terayama's death). A major phenomenon on the Japanese Angura (“underground”) theatre scene, the group has produced a number of stage works marked by experimentalism, folklore influences, social provocation, grotesque eroticism and the flamboyant fantasy characteristic of Terayama's oeuvre. Tenjō Sajiki benefited greatly from collaborations with a number of prominent artists, including musicians J. A. Seazer and Kan Mikami, and graphic designers Aquirax Uno and Tadanori Yokoo.

13 CLARA CHEUNG & GUM CHENG
YEE MAN (C & G ARTPARTMENT)
WITH

TANG KWOK HIN
The Mood Of Searching For Traces Of C & G
2024, digital print on paper, A3, 13 prints

MICHELLE WUN TING WONG
Under The Bed Zine
2024, digital print on paper, A4, 16 prints

WONG WING TONG
Flash Mob? This Guy Thinks It's A Flesh Mob
2024, digital print on paper, 42 x 59,4cm, 6 prints

CANDY YEUNG
Novus Murmur
2024, single channel video, HD, colour, with sound, loop,
02:25 min

YANG YEUNG
to be continued
2024, audio recording of words presented in the voice of
Yang Yeung, 16:33 min

C & G Artpartment comprises two artists, Clara CHEUNG and Gum CHENG Yee Man, whose artistic and community-oriented practice challenges the notion of public and private space. They explore the intersection and merging of these realms. As an artistic duo and a couple, they embody various forms of collectivity. For CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES, they opted to maintain their community-based approach, inviting five long-term collaborators from different artistic backgrounds – TANG Kwok Hin, Michelle WONG, WONG Wing Tong, Candy YEUNG, and Yang YEUNG – to reflect on their institutional history both before and after their relocation from Hong Kong. The artpartment, which has served as a gathering place for people to create, brainstorm, organise, and resist, is further recreated within our exhibition space. The pieces exhibited, spanning different mediums including video, newspaper collage, posters, and sound piece, raise significant questions about C & G's practice, which politically positions itself in resistance to Chinese oppression. They deploy humour and metaphorization while creating their response to the institutional archive of C & G.

The artist duo is posed with the question: how do you reconstruct a political art space within an entirely different context? How do you evoke the essence of your homeland without succumbing to the allure of nostalgia, which possesses the potential to create distance from that which we hold dear?

The works presented are highly conversational and depict a long-standing discussion among all the artists involved. However, the conversation doesn't conclude there; visitors are encouraged to inhabit the artpartment at SAVVY and sit with the newspapers and publications of C & G and their extended community. A keyboard rests on a table, awaiting the audience for experimentation, while a drawing book invites people to sketch portraits of one another. This activity follows Clara and Gum's drawing performance, which they will conduct with strangers in the Wedding area outside prior to the opening.

CLARA CHEUNG has practised as an artist, independent curator and art educator for the past 20 years. Her works have strong emphasis over performance art in public space and community-based projects. She is currently a PhD candidate in the History of Art Department at University of York. Her research interest is about the art exhibition history of Hong Kong and South-East Asia.

GUM CHENG YEE MAN was born in Hong Kong. Gum is a registered social worker, founder and curator of C & G Artpartment. His curatorial directions mainly criticise politics, social issues and the art eco-system. His artworks explore various media, like painting, performance, photography, video and installation. Now Gum is living and working in the UK.

C & G ARTPARTMENT (CLARA CHEUNG & GUM CHENG YEE MAN) founded the art space C & G Artpartment in Hong Kong in 2007. From 2007–2021, they curated more than 100 art exhibitions in response to social and current issues. Their essential goal is to become an art space for idea exchanges, and for artists to defend and celebrate the value of freedom of expression via exercising it with the language of the arts. Their activities are often collective and participatory. C & G were invited to participate in the Shanghai Biennale (2018) and the Singapore Biennale (2019), among others.

In 2020, the People's Republic of China imposed the National Security Law onto Hong Kong and, thereafter, started a massive political persecution that further destroyed freedom of speech and the civic society in Hong Kong. In August 2021, C & G Artpartment had to relocate to the UK where they continue their critical art practice. In 2024, they re-opened the C & G Artpartment art space in Sheffield to facilitate artistic exchanges between the UK and East and Southeast Asian countries, while engaging in the ongoing dialogue of decoloniality that goes beyond Hong Kong.

In 2022, C & G Art Triangle Limited was formed to continue the artistic development and mission of C & G Artpartment after it moved to the UK. This charity art organisation is run by five close friends of C & G in Hong Kong.

TANG KWOK HIN is a mixed media artist. He was born in 1983 and raised in Hong Kong. He received his Master of Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2008. Tang's artistic practice originates in his inquiries into his own background as a village boy and into pieces of life. His explorations are developed and closely related to his own life journey and experiences, as well as to the place where he lives. He is always immersed in the complex, contradictory and struggling present. He has participated in different art exhibitions around the world.

MICHELLE WUN TING WONG is a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of Hong Kong. Her writing has been published in *Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art, 1945–1990* (2018) and the journal *Southeast of Now* (2019) amongst others. From 2012–20 she was a researcher at Asia Art Archive (AAA). Curatorial projects include *Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys at Tai Kwun Contemporary* (2021), *Afterglow, Yokohama Triennale 2020*, and *11th Edition of Gwangju Biennale* (2016). She runs the independent space New Park.

WONG WING TONG is a Hong Kong artist and community arts organiser. He graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from a joint program between RMIT in Australia and the Hong Kong Art School. His work is primarily focused on painting and crafts. Engaging in various community art initiatives and educational programs, Wong shares artistic experiences within the community and focuses on socially engaged art practices recently.

CANDY YEUNG is a Hong Kong artist. She previously taught drawing courses at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. In recent years, she has relocated to the UK to continue focusing on her creative pursuits. Her work primarily revolves around the sense of helplessness generated by people and events around them.

YANG YEUNG is a writer on art and an independent curator. She founded the non-profit soundpocket in 2008 and is currently its Artistic Director. Currently she is co-curator for The Listening Biennial (since 2021). She is a member of the international research network Institute for Public Art, the independent art critics collective Art Appraisal Club (HK), and the International Art Critics Association (HK). She teaches ancient and modern classics of various cultural traditions at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

14 A T L A S

Artist presentations of their collectives: transmission, pedagogy, and knowledge production
2024, interviews, video and photo documentation, articles, publications, social media

Approximating the atlas format, the artists participating in *CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES* have been invited to share documentation of their collectives' practices of transmission, which are often hard to represent in exhibition settings. While these materials do not cover the entirety and nuances of every process employed by members as well as the specific role of the exhibiting artist, the Atlas offers an entry point for the viewers to situate the individual artist in the work of the collective. Some elements found in these articles may also point the readers to the in/direct links between the actual artistic output (artwork exhibited here in the exhibition) and the contribution to the collective, which may not be visible or acknowledged by artists themselves, or previously deemed irrelevant to each other. Among other questions, the Atlas is curious to ask: how permeable is the collective to the artwork and vice versa?

15 S H A U N A K M A H B U B A N I W I T H S A V V Y . D O C

Dis-visible Narratives: Non-western Cultural Production around HIV/AIDS

2024, Research commissioned by S A V V Y
Contemporary

The installation was designed by Pablo Santacana López. The font used for questions was designed by Amélie Dumont.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is not a thing of the past. In 2022, UNAIDS estimated 39 million people around the globe live with HIV. Although we have made enormous leaps in awareness and medical research since the peak of the epidemic in 1995, 1.3 million people became newly infected with HIV in 2022, and 630,000 died due to AIDS related-causes, a statistical snapshot of how much further we must go.

Since the early days of the epidemic artists living with the virus and artists who lost loved ones to it have been visualising its complexities. However, most of this cultural production has been and continues to be concentrated in the USA and Europe, even though a majority of new infections now occur outside these regions. *Dis-visible Narratives* – initiated as an intervention into *SAVVY.doc* and guided by curator Shaunak Mahbubani – probes the reasons for this asymmetry, imagining models of archiving and display that centre the specific social dynamics of living with HIV in the Global South, towards creating an archive hospitable to published and unpublished narratives.

Building on Mahbubani's articulation of the wounded archive (2023), *dis-visibility* is proposed as a form of epistemological wounding caused primarily by structural stigma. The prefix "*dis-*" locates its tactics within the realm of disablement, or the enactment of restrictions "by the political, economic and cultural norms of a society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity" (Mike Oliver, 1990). In the case of cultural production around HIV/AIDS in the Global South, this *dis-visibility* sits atop the wider effects of neo-colonial structures that advantage white creators and those located in the Global North. It is aggravated by social, material, and in some locations, legal discrimination against those who speak publicly about their positive HIV status, as well as increased costs of survival for PLHA without arts infrastructures that can support this, amongst other factors. Rooted in the shame attached to HIV via its deplorable early labelling as GRID, as a condition caused by deviance and hedonism, compounded by the nascent nature of movements for queer equality across the South, *dis-visibility* is often enacted through self-censorship, hindering the very creation of artwork and as well as its emergence into the public realm.

T R I A G E, the first of four research phases, seeks to understand and organise the impact of external factors in making artwork around delicate subjects public. Which questions of structure, of safety, of visibility and opacity must we ask ourselves – as researchers, archivists, curators – in the process of assembling and exhibiting a wounded archive? Alongside broader considerations, we also survey the conditions under which art around HIV/AIDS is made public, challenging us to create measures of agency, mutability, and reciprocity as part of making these *dis-visible* narratives cautiously visible. The project will grow iteratively across each exhibition chapter of *SAVVY*'s new artistic programming, beginning now with *CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES* and followed by exhibitions on Labour, Society, and Historical Children.

S H A U N A K M A H B U B A N I is a curator-writer based between Berlin and Mumbai. They explore possibilities of co-visioning futures grounded in the pursuit of non-duality, striving to hold complexity, fluidity, ambiguity, and mutability in investigating the boundary between the self and other. Their work focuses on practices that foreground personal and ancestral lived experiences, towards the resuscitation of wounded archives. They are currently working towards *Wrapped in the Shadow of Freedom* (Prishtina, Aug 2024). Recent projects include *The Albanian Conference* (initiated by Anna Ehrenstein) at the 4th Lagos Biennial (2024), *When the Moon was Nine Months Full* by Seema Kohli (Tao Mumbai, 2024), *Parag Tandel: Archipelagic Archivist* (TARQ Mumbai, 2023), *AUTOPOIESIS* (2022—ongoing, Mexico City, New Delhi, Berlin), Party Office at documenta fifteen (co-curated with Vidisha-Fadescha,

Kassel 2022), *DANCE TRANS* REVOLUTION* (Curated by After Party Collective, New York 2021), *Entre Sures* (Co-curated with Eli Moon, Mexico City, 2021), and *Saavdhaan: The Regimes of Truth* (New Delhi, 2018). Their art writing has appeared in *NO NIIN*, *Hyperallergic*, *Artforum*, *Critical Collective*, *Mezosfera*, *ifa Biennale stories*, and other platforms.

16 COLONIAL NEIGHBOURS

Archival presentation with research activation by Esinam Damalie (blaxTARLINES) commissioned by SAVVY Contemporary

Translations to Ewe by Chris Parker Edzordzi Sefogah

Colonial Neighbours is SAVVY Contemporary's participatory archive and research project investigating the colonial history of Germany, including its ongoing impacts upon the present. The long-term project aims to address gaps in Germany's politics in order to question dominant knowledge structures and historical narratives. The archive serves as a platform for discussion, exchange, and collaborations with actors from various fields.

Today, knowledge of this history and its impact is hardly present in the German public sphere. Official German "collective memory" actively displaces, silences, or denies this history. Many schoolbooks, media outlets, and politicians ignore this period, downplay its importance, or portray it as if it evolved in isolation from an alleged "core" of "German history." As a consequence, colonialism is often seen as part of the "distant" past. However, we cannot understand Germany without understanding its role as a colonial power. Germany's colonial past is a history of ignorance and *Verschlossenheit*. But: The "periphery" as well as the "metropole" have been influenced strongly by the colonial encounter.

The city of Berlin, with its long history of migration, plays a crucial role in the history of colonialism. Its representatives in power chose the capital to host the famous Berlin Conference, also known as the Congo Conference, in 1884–1885 where the African continent was divided between European rulers. Berlin consolidated the process of global European expansion, as it was here that the political rules which would install formal colonial power over African territories were established. Colonialism is connected to the history of racism, and that racism haunts us still today.

The open display format where objects from the archive gather alongside research materials is an invitation to sit with the past, connect and add towards the fragmented map of collected memories. For the CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES exhibition, Accra based curator Rose Esinam Damalie was invited to activate the archive through an in-

depth research in the Volta region of Ghana to share fragments of entangled histories of Germany's colonial past. Parts of the text are translated into Ewe to reverse the imposition of language in the colonial endeavour within the region as an attempt to restore and to heal.

The roots of Ghana's connection with Germany can be traced back to 1683, possibly even earlier, with the establishment of Fort Gross Frederiksburg, the first German fort in Ghana. Led by Benjamin Raule, the Brandenburg Africa Company constructed this lavish fort between 1683 and 1684, with aspirations for wealth and influence in the Gold Coast. This fort, unique in Ghana for its Germanic origins, served as a bustling trade hub, exchanging goods like gold, and palm oil as well as enslaved people with merchants from various nations along the coast. Operated by the Germans from 1684 to 1717, Fort Gross Frederiksburg was eventually sold to the Dutch after 33 years.

Before World War I, Germany held four African colonies: Kamerun, Deutsch-Süudwestafrika (now Namibia), Deutsch-Ostafrika (now parts of several countries in East Africa), and the smallest, Schutzgebiet Togo (Togoland Protectorate). The study conducted within the exhibition CURES: CHRONIC PROMISES focuses specifically on Togoland, a German protectorate from 1884 to 1914, which included present-day Togo and most of Ghana's Volta Region. After Germany's defeat, Togoland was divided into western and eastern portions, with the western part, now part of Ghana, undergoing a plebiscite and later becoming the Trans Volta Trust Territory, forming what is now known as the Volta Region.

German colonial policy in Togoland centred on direct rule, often exacerbating divisions among the Voltarians. However, certain towns, such as Ho, Kpando, and Amedzofe, and their chiefs, gained prominence due to their cooperation with colonial and missionary policies. With the establishment of mission stations by the North German Missionary Society (Bremen Mission) in 1847, Kpando saw rapid development under German rule. This archive activation focuses on Kpando, formerly known as Kpandu/Akpini, a town and capital of the Kpando Municipal District in the northern Volta Region of Ghana.

Three significant locations in Kpando associated with the German colonial era include Kpando Prison in Todzi, the district administration offices in Gabi, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kpodzi. Kpando's strategic location on a trade route from Salaga to Lome led to a treaty between the Germans and Chief Dagadu of Kpando in 1894, ensuring control over this vital trade route.

With this research we aim to uncover findings, including other scholarly works, on the German colonial period in the Volta Region of Ghana. It seeks to create an archive that would stimulate conversations and discussions and provide source material for artists and researchers

interested in this historical period.

ROSEMARY ESINAM DAMALIE is an artist and curator based in Accra and Tamale. She holds a Fine Art Degree in Painting and Sculpture from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana.

Throughout her career, Damalie has participated in numerous exhibitions – among others at *Cornfields in Accra* (2016) and *Orderly Disorderly* (2017), both organised by blaxTARLINES KUMASI, a collective she is a member of. In 2018, she achieved recognition as the 2nd runner-up for the Kuenyehia Prize for Contemporary Ghanaian Art.

From 2017–February 2024, Damalie served as General Manager and Workshop Coordinator at the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in Tamale founded by the artist Ibrahim Mahama. In 2022, Damalie participated in documenta Fifteen as an artist in residence under the program CAMP, Notes on Education. This residency provided an ideal platform for collaboration and exploration of the theme of education, fostering vibrant exchanges among artists, art educators, and researchers.

In September 2023, Damalie curated the exhibition *Dig Where You Stand, From Coast to Coast – Seke* at the Palais de Lomé in Togo, organised by the African Artist Foundation in Lagos. Emphasising themes of restitution, reparation, and repatriation, the exhibition showcased works by 20 African and African diaspora artists, highlighting the significance of community engagement in the realm of art.

BLAXTARLINES KUMASI is a trans-generational and trans-cultural community affiliated to the Department of Painting & Sculpture at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. It is an experimental incubator of contemporary art and a sharing community. With a lineage of radical art and community projects dating back to the 1990s, the coalition operates on the universalist principle of preemptive equality towards economic and intellectual emancipation.

DUTANYIGBADZIDUDU AFELIKAWO

NUDZRAÐOFE SI ME WOKPOA
GOME LE KPLE NUMEKUKU
DOWONA LE GERMANY FE
DUTANYIGBADZIDUDU NUTINYA
NU

Dutanyigbadzidudu Afelikawo nye SAVVY Contemporary fe nudzraðofedɔ kple numekukudo si me wokpoa gome le le Germany fe dutanyigbadzidudu nutinya me, si me nusẽ si wòkpɔna de fifi yeyiyia dzi yi edzi hã le. Dɔa fe taɔɔdzinue nye be yeakpo dometsotso

siwo le Germany fe dunyahehe me gbo be woatsɔ ake di sidzedze fe ɔɔɔ siwo xɔ afe de amewo me kple nutinya me nunlɔɔiwo. Nudzraðofea nyea numedzodzro, asitɔtrɔ, kple nuwɔwɔ aduadu kpa kple dɔwɔla siwo tso dɔ vovovowo me.

Y E Y I Y I S I W O V A Y I U U U U

Egbea la, nutinya sia kple nusẽ si wòkpɔ de amewo dzi megabɔ kuraa de Germanytɔwo fe dutɔfo o. Germanytɔwo fe dziɔɔɔmugãwo fe “nkuɔɔdzinya fokpli” tsɔa veviedodo dea nutinya sia de, zia dzi, alo gbea esia.

Agbalẽsɔsrɔgbalẽ, nyadzɔdzɔgblɔmɔnuwo, kple dunyahela geɖe nea aɔaba fua yeyiyi sia dzi, bua efe vevienyenye nu tsɛe, alo deɛ fiana abe de wòde eɔkui de aga tso “Germanytɔwo fe nutinya” fe “nu vevi” aɔ si wosusu be enye nu ene gbo. Esia wɛe be wobua dutanyigbadzidudu zi geɖe be enye “didife” yeyiyi siwo va yi fe akpa aɔ. Gake abe alesi ame aɔewo le agbagba dzem be yewoagblɔ fifia ene la, miate nu ase Germany gome ne miẽse akpa si wòwɔ abe dutanyigbadzidudu ene gome o. Germany fe dutanyigbadzidudu fe yeyiyi siwo va yi nye manyamanya kple nutsitsi fe nutinya. Gake: Dutanyigbadzinlawo fe gododo kpɔ nusẽ de “nutome” kpakple “dugã” hã dzi vevie.

Berlin-dugã si me uuu le yeyiyi didi aɔee nye sia la wɔa akpa vevi aɔ le dutanyigbadzidudu fe nutinya me. Etefenola siwo nɔ dzi dum la tia fiadu be woawɔ Berlin Takpekpe xɔnkɔ si wogayɔna be Congo Takpekpe le fe 1884–1885 me, afisi woma Afrika-nyigbagã la de Europa dziɔɔlawo dome. Berlin do nusẽ xexeeame katã fe Europa kekededzidɔa, elabena afisiae woɔo dunyahehe fe se siwo aɔo dutanyigbadzidudu le se nu de Afrika-nyigbawo dzi na Europa dziɔɔlawo. Dutanyigbadzidudu do fome kple amefomevinyenye fe vovotododeameme fe nutinya, eye amefomevinyenye ma le fu dem na mí vaseɖe egbe.

N U M E K U K U F E N Y A W O

Woate nu akpo kadodo si nɔ Ghana kple Germany dome tso fe 1683 me, dewohĩ do nɔo gɔ hã, esime woɔo Fort Gross Frederiksburg, si nye Germanytɔwo fe nɔfe mɔ sesẽ gbãto le Ghana. Brandenburg Afrika Dɔwɔfe si Benjamin Raule nɔ nɔo na, si di vevie be yeakpo kesinɔnuwo ahakpo nusẽ de Gold Coast dzi lae tu nɔfe mɔ sesẽa le fe 1683 kple 1684 dome. Mɔ sesẽ sia le etɔxe le Ghana le Germanytɔwo fe dzɔtsofe ta, eye wònye asitsafe si amewo sɔ gbo ɔo, eye woɔɔlia adzɔnuwo abe sika, detsimi ene kpakple ame siwo wowo kluiwoe kple asitsala siwo tso futaduko vovovowo me. Germanytɔwoe kpɔ Fort Gross Frederiksburg dzi tso fe 1684 va ɔo fe 1717 me, eye mlɛba wodzrae na Hollandtɔwo le fe blaetɔ vɔ etɔ megbe.

Do nɔo na Xexemeva I la, Afrika-duko ene nɔ Germany si: Kamerun, Deutsch Sudwestafrika (si nye Namibia fifia), Germany Yedzefe Afrika (si nye Yedzefe Afrika duko geɖe fe akpa aɔewo fifia), kple sueto kekeake, Schutzgebiet Togo (Togonyigba Takpɔfe). Numekuku

sia si wowo le dɛdɛfia si nye C U R E S : C H R O N I C P R O M I S E S me la ku dɛ Togoland, si nye Germanytɔwo fe ametakpɔfe tso fe 1884 va dɔ fe 1914 me, si me egbegbe Togo kple Ghana fe Volta Nutome fe akpa gãto no la nju koŋ. Le Germany fe dziɔdu megebe la, woma Togonyigba dɛ yetoɔfofe kple yedzefekpa dzi, eye yetoɔfofekpa si nye Ghana fe akpa aɔfe fifia la, wowo amewo fe nyametsotso eye emegbe wova zu Trans Volta Trust Territory, eye wova zu afisi woyona fifia be Volta Nutome.

Germanytɔwo fe dutanyigbadziɔdu fe dɔdɔ si wowo le Togonyigba la ku dɛ dziɔdu tẽ nju, eye zi geɔ la, enaa mama si no Voltariantɔwo dome la nu sɛna dɛ edzi. Ke hã, du aɔewo, abe Ho, Kpando, kple Amedzorfe ene, kpakple wofe amegãwo xɔ nko le wofe nuwɔwo aduadu kple dutanyigbadziɔduwo kple mawunyadɔgbedelawo fe dɔdɔwo ta. Le ntinya katã me la, avako aɔeke menɔ Eweawo si le tsitreku kpo o, elabena wotso nunɔlawo fe to aɔe me. Woate nju abu asrafowo fe anyimanɔmanɔ sia be enye nu dɛka si na wowo nu aduadu ne wotsɔe so kple Germany-duko bubu siwo dzi woɔ abe Tanganyika ene, afisi aglãdzedzewo dzo le. Ame eweawo mekpo dzidefo bo aɔeke be yewoafɔ yewo dokuɔ dɛ dzrewɔwo alo aglãdzedze me o. Eye esi Dziehe Germany Dutanyanyuigblɔlawo fe Habɔbo (Bremen Mission) dɔ mawunyadɔgbedefewo le fe 1847 me la, Kpando kpo ngoyiyi kabakaba le Germanytɔwo fe dziɔdu te. Nudzraɔfofe fe do sia ku dɛ Kpando, si woyona tsã be Kpando/Akpini, si nye du kple fiadu le Kpando Dudzikpɔfe fe nuto me le Volta Nutome le Ghana fe dziehe gome.

Tefe vevi etɔ siwo le Kpando siwo do fome kple Germanytɔwo fe dutanyigbadziɔdu fe yeyiyia dometo aɔewo nye Kpando Gaxɔ si le Todzi, nutomedzikpɔfe siwo le Gabi, kple Nyanyuigblɔlawo fe Presbyteria Solemeha si le kpodzi. Alesi Kpando no tefe nyui aɔe le asitsamɔ aɔe si tso Salaga yi Lome dzi la na Germanytɔwo kple Kpando fe fia Torgbui Dagadu wo nubabla le fe 1894 me, si na wokpo egbo be wokpo nusẽ dɛ asitsamɔ vevi sia dzi.

Numekuku sia fe taɔdɔzinue nye be woake dɛ nusiwo nju woke dɔ, siwo dome agbalẽ bubuwo hã le, le Germanytɔwo fe dutanyigbadziɔdu fe yeyiyia me le Volta Nutome le Ghana nju. Edina be yeawo nudzraɔfofe aɔe si avã dzedɔdɔ kple numedzodzro eye wɔana nyatakakatsofe aɔanudɔwolawo kple numekula siwo tso dɛ le ntinya fe yeyiyi sia me.

R O S E M A R Y E S I N A M D A M A L I E
(si wodzi le fe 1993 me) le Ge, nye nutala kple nudzraɔla si le Ge kple Tamale. Exɔ Nutata kple Nononmekpetatameme fe Dzeside le Kwame Nkrumah Dzodzɔmenɔtinunya kple Mɔɔaɔnununya Yunivesiti le Kumasi, Ghana. Esi Damalie xɔ hehe fe enyi eye wɔwo do le Aɔanudɔwo me ta la, efe didi vevie nye be yeade nu yeyewo afia.

Le efe agbemenɔkekewo katã me la, Damalie kpo gome le dɛdɛfia dɛdzesi geɔewo me vevie, eye wɔdɛ

efe ntutete kple ntutega fia. Nusiwo dɛ dzeɔ le esiawo domee nye "Cornfields in Accra" (2016) kple "Orderly Disorderly" (2017), siwo blaxTARLINES KUMASI, si nye habɔbo si me wɔle, wo dɔdɔ dɛ nu dɛdɛ dɛ go evea siaa nju. Le fe 2018 me la, exɔ nko le Kuenyehia Trust fe nko kpuiwo fe dɛdɛfia me, afisi wɔxɔ evelia fe nofe 2 lia le Kuenyehia fe Egbege Ghanatɔwo fe Nutata fe Nunana, si nye fe sia fe fe aɔanudɔwo fe fetu si wole du dzi tso yemayi

Tso fe 2017 Vaseɔe Dzodze 2024 me la, Damalie nye Dɔdzikpɔlagã kple Dɔwofe fe Dɔdɔwɔla le Savannah Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA) le Tamale si Ghanatɔ nutala xɔnko, Ibrahim Mahama dɔ anyi. Efe dɔwɔwo kple Dɔwofe na wɔte nju wo akpa vevi aɔe le aɔanudɔwo fe xexeeame . Efe gomekpɔkpo le dɛdɛfia eve siwo wowo le nusiwo dzo va yi me kple gomekpɔkpo vevie le fufofo fe dɛdɛfia etɔ me, tso kpe dɛ efe aɔanudɔwo fe hehexɔ dzidzedzetɔe nju te gbe dɛ efe dɔkuitsotsona be yeafe ntutete siwo le dodom la dzi. Tso July vaseɔe August 2022 me la, Damalie kpo gome le Documenta Fifteen me abe nutala si le afeme ene le dɔdɔ si nye CAMP, Notes on Education te. Nofe sia na mɔnukpɔkpo nyui aɔe si dzi woato awɔ nu aduadu ahadzro sukudede fe tanya me, si na nutalawo, aɔanudɔwo nɔti hehenalawo, kple numekulawo fe asitotro sesẽwo va no anyi.

Le September 2023 me la, Damalie kpo dɛdɛfia yeye si fe tanyae nye "Ku Afisi Nɛtsi tre Le, Tso Futa Yi Futa “ Seke” le Palais de Lome le Togo, si nju Afrika Nutalawo fe Habɔbo si le Lagos wo dɔdɔ dɔ. Esi dɛdɛfia te gbe dɛ nyati siwo nye nugbugbɔgaxɔ, nu gbugbɔgaɔdɔ, kple amewo gbugbɔgaɔ dɛ wo denyigba dzi dzi la, woɔ Afrika kple Afrikatɔ siwo le duta fe nutala 20 fe nutatawo fia, eye wɔhe susu yi vevienyenye si le nutoa me tɔwo fe gomekpɔkpo le aɔanudɔwo me dzi. Damalie fe aɔanudɔwo fe mɔzɔzɔ gã kple efe gomekpɔkpo deto le aɔanudɔwo fe habɔbo me nye dɔasediɔ le efe didi vevie, dɔkuitsotsona, kple akpa si wɔwɔna mavãmavãe wɔdɔdɛamedzi le egbegbe aɔanudɔwo me, le Ghana kple dukɔwo dome siaa.

OFFERINGS

THE NEW HUNGARIAN TEXTILE
ART IN THE SEVENTIES: MARGIT
SZILVITZKY AND LUJZA GECSE

BY KATA OLTAI

“The designers have decided that they will no longer initiate mixed, grey mammoth exhibitions. Applied art is divided into separate goldsmith, ceramic, and textile exhibitions. We want exhibitions that smell of life and realistically present our professions. We don't hide our mistakes either. The textile is autonomous. A mural is not created by painting a picture and then fabricating it,” said Gábor Attalai, textile designer, one of the leading members of the association that defines the Hungarian textile scene. Art history knows slow transitions, but sometimes it is also eager to associate large-scale breakthroughs with symbolic dates. Such was the *Textil Falikép* (Textile/Wall Hangings) exhibition held in 1968, representing the renewal of textile thinking in Hungary, or rather related to it, the declaration of a generation that is referred to in the quote above.

In reality, however, it is a multi-actor process based on a series of exceptional collaborations, which for a short time and in a way rarely seen in the history of Hungarian art, burst out in full synchrony and kept pace with the international textile art scene as a whole.

As one of the member states of the Soviet socialist bloc, Hungary led culture and art in the same controlled manner as the other countries of the region. A hierarchical and centralised system of art institutions “filtered” and judged the works that were presented to the public, keeping “artistic freedom” in a safe middle ground. In the famous “3T” system, there were artists who were “banned, tolerated or supported” [Tiltott, Türt, Támogatott] which rarely affected just one work, but rather the entire oeuvre of an artist. In this system, the primacy of visual arts prevailed in the same way as in other systems of artistic interest. On the other hand there was relative freedom in applied arts genres, including textiles: stronger professional advocacy, appearances and exhibitions abroad, state orders. The official cultural policy considered textile art less dangerous also because it had a close and mutually dependent relationship with the actors of the Hungarian textile industry: textile factories sent students with scholarship to the School of Applied Arts, textile artists who graduated were invited to experiment with materials, develop them, and work there as temporary or permanent designers.

The generation that appeared on the scene at the end of the 1960s had a tight professional representation, they looked for a permanent forum for the presentation of textiles and created a textile biennale based on a foreign example. Modelled on Łódź in Poland or Lausanne in Switzerland, Szombathely became its centre – a large city in western Hungary, close to the Austrian border, where the Savaria Museum has been the site of the textile biennales for several decades, and as a result, the most important public collection of the Hungarian textile art was formed.

The change in textile thinking in the early 1970s was fundamentally based on a change in the educational approach: the then rector of the School of Applied Arts made a major change in the drawing and collecting practices that preceded the textile studies. He invited young teachers and declared a different path in the course that was previously based on tapestry, i.e. a way of thinking related to painting. Margit Szilvitzky was one of the young instructors who came to the Department of Textiles with a background in fashion design. She became a defining master for the generations that followed her. With a determined gesture, she freed the basic forms of textile thinking, with drawings, collecting covering the everyday environment, observing research and analytical material, she instilled a completely different attitude.

The works reflected an amazing form and intellectual growth, the dimensions increased, the processes of thinking about textiles were also shown, new materials appeared: sisal, hemp, felt, plastics, celluloid. As a quiet and charismatic mother figure, Szilvitzky laid the foundation for the next generation of textile artists, among whom Lujza Gecser was also a member. The period of introspection and textile experimentation was also a horizontal opening, where several generations of women created and exhibited together, leaving behind the sometimes hierarchical, often exclusionary and strongly male-oriented characteristics of fine art. The professional achievement of this period is the creation of an annual professional workshop and creative community in Velem, near Szombathely. With a fresh approach, the Textile Art Workshop of Velem provided an opportunity for experimentation and research, and in the form of a final exhibition, it enabled the discursive involvement of theoreticians and other creators.

Margit Szilvitzky's exhibited works clearly show the shift from the second half of the 1970s to her interest in edited and folded textile compositions. The starting

point is still natural plant-derived materials, mainly linen, and raw colours, in addition to white, sunny yellow, red, black. It is becoming more and more emphasised that it abandons the previous direct organic references, sacred or cultic motifs, and the abstract elements of the folk art framework. These are just familiar starting points and she uses the basic tools of geometric formation: she is interested in spatial formation and spatial demarcation, and then more and more people begin to interpret her textiles as sculptures. In 1976, in Kőszeg, she received the first prize at the III. Wall and Space Textile Biennale for *Igazodás* with its huge, right-angled linen forms and soft, lined ribbon composition that lifts a ladder as the installation's carrying base. "Finished things are of little interest to me, processes – transformations – intermediate states: those are what interest me," writes Szilvitzky in an exhibition text from 1979, where she believes that she views her objects more as opportunities, which are gained in the given exhibition space. Of course, this way of thinking strongly brings the late elements of the modernist conception of art (essentialism, emphasis on matter, emphasis on the creative creator, space-situation-light), but at the same time, it also reveals an explicit and strong "textile" thinking, which the media that uses a fine arts-based dictionary rarely takes note of: the natural, plant-derived materials are characterised by fibre defects, uneven weaving, and reaction to light or humidity, which gives her works a formative and sometimes unpredictable character.

The original motivation of the textile movement was to apply the architectural and community-oriented functions of the Ministry-approved textile presentation program. However, this proved to be an illusion, and by the end of the 1970s, the solution became "exhibition making": the experimental textile, which willingly moved in a direction that either uses non-classical textile raw materials or builds an environment. Lujza Gecser's thinking is explicitly related to this direction. After her early large-scale textiles (*Zygote*, 1972 or *Bridges*, 1975) she started creating real textile sculptures. She experimented with many methods of processing plastic or textile waste, working in the Tisza Chemical Combine, where she exhibited shiny, translucent, amorphous, bubbly plastics. The first pieces of the *Draperies R* series were made in the last workshop in Velem. She shaped and stiffened the rough canvas or silk into female figures with varnish. The draperies stand for themselves, they do not cover anything, they are ghost figures, conjurers of disembodied women.

MORE INFORMATION

savvy-contemporary.com

S A V V Y Contemporary – The laboratory of form-ideas is an artistic organisation, discursive platform, place for good talks, foods and drinks – a space for conviviality and cultural plurilog. S A V V Y Contemporary is a public and independent organism in perpetual becoming, animated by around 25 members and a network of collaborators, co-creating community and communities it breathes with. Founded in 2009, S A V V Y Contemporary situates itself at the threshold of the West and the non-West to understand their conceptualisations, ethical systems, achievements, and ruins. It develops tools, proposes perspectives and nourishes practices towards imagining a world inhabited together.

The space was founded in 2009 in Berlin-Neukölln by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, S A V V Y 's artistic director until 2022. From 2023 onwards, the space – located in Berlin-Wedding since 2016 – is under artistic direction by Renan Laru-an alongside the executive directors Lema Sikod and Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock.

S A V V Y Contemporary is Grace Baggott Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Bona Bell Onur Çimen Sagal Farah Anna Fasolato Billy Fowo Raisa Galofre Manuela Garcia Aldana Juan Pablo García Sossa Hajra Haider Karrar Daniellis Hernandez Anna Jäger Aditi Kapur Laura Klöckner Lisa Kolloge Kelly Krugman Mokia Laisin Renan Laru-an Matthew Hansen Rafal Lazar Nancy Naser Al Deen Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung Abhishek Nilamber Matthias Rademacher Lema Sikod Meghna Singh Lili Somogyi Ola Zielińska

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