

G A R D E N S

I N

T R A N S I T I O N

C O M M I T M E N T S ,

O B L I G A T I O N S

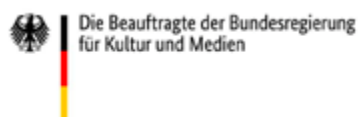
A N D P R A C T I C E S

26. & 27.04.2024

W I T H Ayham Allouch Ali Bakhtiari with Farshid Mesghali & Ali Akbar Sadeghi Felisha Carenage & Xavier Robles de Medina Kamari Clarke Ragil Huda Sarah Imani Rada Iveković Eman Karmani Savanna Morgan Hibatolah Nassiri-Vural John Njenga Karugia Glenda Obermuller Helena Uambembe Jorge Vega Bodhari Warsame Mali Wu Samba Yonga Roberta Zollo Joël Zouna

The conference takes place in the framework of the 15-months-long programme **T R A N S I T I O N S**, funded by Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien.

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



TEAM

ARTISTIC DIRECTION Renan Laru-an

CURATORIAL TEAM Sagal Farah Billy Fowo Hajra Haider Karrar Anna Jäger Mokia Laisin
Meghna Singh

SCENOGRAPHY BPA// Berlin program for artists with Felisha Carenage and Xavier Robles de Medina

COORDINATION Billy Fowo Mokia Laisin Meghna Singh

PRODUCTION Sagal Farah Abhishek Nilamber

PROJECT MANAGEMENT Grace Baggott

GENERAL MANAGEMENT Lema Sikod

COMMUNICATIONS Anna Jäger

GRAPHIC DESIGN Juan Pablo García Sossa

HANDOUT DESIGN Aditi Kapur

TRANSLATION Anna Jäger

INTERNSHIP Vanessa Garcia

SOUND Rey KM Domurat

LIVE STREAMING Boiling Head Media

LIGHT Santiago Doljanin

C O N T E N T

CONCEPT 04

SCHEDULE 06

DETAILS & CONTRIBUTORS'
BIOGRAPHIES 08

CONCEPT FOR GARDENS IN TRANSITION

„The past is not dead. It is not even past. We separate it from ourselves and pretend to be strangers.“

– Opening lines of Christa Wolf’s *Kindheitsmuster*

S A V V Y Contemporary’s upcoming artistic program takes colonial heritage and decolonization as facts and practices of transition. Relying on experimentation, the programme *T R A N S I T I O N S* will show that decoloniality, as the anthropologist Rosalind Morris describes it, immerses us in lifeworlds and artworlds known to be “an incomplete dialectic.” Thereby, we will put an emphasis on deepening the study of decolonization in methodologies and assemblages: the historical and contemporary links in Afro-Asia colonial intricacies and decolonial futures; the theater of developmentalism in the Pacific; and the underrepresented roles of settlement – say Germany’s deep migration history in its neighbouring regions. These co-responding geographies and their geopoetics complicate colonisation and decolonization that may have stagnated in specific discursive milieux.

The current German discursive architecture disallows the study of the evolution of colonial ideologies to translocal, supranational and extraterritorial policies covering topics, such as justice, education, migration, climate change, labour or even war and other conflicts. There is a huge gap in discussions of colonisation and decolonization. In this chasm, S A V V Y Contemporary’s experiments continue the process of what Rada Iveković calls “permanent translation” of colonisation as a practice and concept that coexists in the daily fabric of Germany and in the long arc of this ideology. By translating the quotidian as well as affective dynamics of colonial thought and in effect, deliberating its “non-translation” as a legitimate progress of history, the overall program called *T R A N S I T I O N S* pays attention to segments, holes, fragments, and patterns of colonial ideology, action, fantasy and afterlife within the waves of pressing contemporary issues.

Opening this new artistic program, S A V V Y Contemporary invites all of you to a two-day gathering of artists, thinkers, cultural workers, critical friends, and allied communities under the mantle of *G A R D E N S I N T R A N S I T I O N . C O M M I T M E N T S , O B L I G A T I O N S A N D P R A C T I C E S* – a global conference on decolonization as a mode of artistic transition. Like many traditions of cultivation, the conference-like commencement is conceived to be a chance to commune before the labour of preparation, maintenance, and production, in which a moment to reflect

on the tasks ahead generates motivations and aspirations. It celebrates the pause as much as it savours the frenetic rush to start anew. A waiting room, brimming with second-chances: How do we make the processes more gentle, enjoyable? How can I get to know my peers better? What can we change the way we approach our collaborators? What did I miss when there was a misunderstanding? How can we do this again? Against productionist tendencies, envisioning an assembly hopes that renewal, remembrance, and restoration become tools for a collective labour that promises mutual support, care, and protection when things turn difficult, unbearable, or painful. Coming together to receive each other’s joys and lamentations, confessions and desires, worries and excitements or even suspicion and adulation appears in the vicinity of many transformations.

G A R D E N S I N T R A N S I T I O N .

C O M M I T M E N T S , O B L I G A T I O N S A N D P R A C T I C E S welcomes the fact that transition builds a world of organisation and disorder akin to the wildness in a tropical garden. For some, the transitional nature of world-making remains to be a metaphor that requires forms and translations; in other contexts, it is a matter of survival. Moral rifts growing in the ground, it has been more challenging to propose the values of intersectional tending and sowing that can engage with shared socio-political concerns. Acknowledging this, we revisit the irregularities of transition that transcend the utterance, “Something must be changed,” or “It will never be the same.” Transitions excite a language that is not fully translated, they only and permanently cite the situatedness of those who have committed to the direction of a new ideology, movement, and fiction. The charisma of such a radical shift is something we would like to offer alongside other methods that have attracted us into critical thinking.

Not all transitions can be experienced or assigned or encountered. Especially when they are converted in contexts that demand them to be fundamentalist, for example in the fields of eugenics. Any attempt to transcend the difficult now and to repair the abusive past exposes us to slow violence. If this would be the case, who can refuse it and why must one accept transition? Is it a medium of an impossible return? When we imagine transitions in the poetics and ethics of their undoability, might we be able to cushion ourselves from the maddening cycle of development, progression, or even revolution? This calls for becoming artificial: that is to transition *artistically*.

Over two days, G A R D E N S I N T R A N S I T I O N alleviates the loneliness of (self-)reflection by choreographing the public space with artistic interventions and poetic intermissions that extend the tenure of discourse and speech. We believe, as always, in the conviviality of thinking and the diversity of embodied knowledges. Our door is always open, and we insist on a hospitality that accommodates diverse bodies: How can they come closer together? And what songs can embrace them as they whisper tactics, secrets, wishes, and critiques to each other? We want a garden that blossoms into a jungle! For this goal, we navigate a forest of ideas and gestures through patches of appreciation and well-being offered by talks and conversations that promote practices, obligations and commitments. As we veer away from strict thematic alliances, we pay attention to the interconnectedness of these actions and how they might cohere to be an ethico-aesthetically significant vision for an artistic institution in transition. Contemporary. The curatorial concept introduces the reader to a series of themes and events that, on the surface level, seem to be unrelated but that, on closer inspection, will show shared symptoms or bear witness to points of convergence through unlikely common denominators. Pay close attention, and new manifestations of our research journeys will find their way into our rooms. As the project progresses, the curatorial text will also reappear in new variations wherein new authors will speak.

G A R D E N S I N T R A N S I T I O N is enlivened by the romance with archipelagic contours, almost imperceptible soundscape, and objects of utility and documentation from and for memories of home gardens – a scenographic intervention conceived by Felisha Carenage and Xavier Robles de Medina from BPA// Berlin program for artists. It perforates the common perception of a conference, animating the space to allow porosity of opinions, to take pauses as well as to be distracted from speeches. This convening is also imagined to be an open house in which members of SAVVY Contemporary discuss the projects they are working on, for students to interact with the organisation's research topics, and for the general public to visit it as a place of recreation.

New transitions must be invented.

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

26.04.2024

15:00

SAVVY Team

WORDS OF WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

15:30

Mali Wu

Art as a Catalyst for Change – The Neighborhood as Artistic Site

OPENING LECTURE

16:30

COFFEE & TEA BREAK

17:00

Ali Bakhtiari

Interminable Dream

PRESENTATION & FILM SCREENINGS

18:00

Savanna Morgan

Sapphire Tongues

PERFORMANCE & READING

18:30

Rada Iveković

Mooring and Unmooring Language and Translation

LECTURE [PRE-RECORDED]

19:30

Renan Laru-an

Loob-1, Island of Romance

PRESENTATION

20:15

DINNER

SATURDAY 27.04.2024

11:00 SAVVY Team
WORDS OF WELCOME & RECAP

11:15 Roberta Zollo (Universität Hamburg), Eman Karmani (Universität Hamburg),
Ragil Huda (Universität Hamburg), Hibatolah Nassiri-Vural (Freie Universität Berlin),
Jorge Vega (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Joël Zouna (Technische Universität, Berlin)
(In)Completing Dialectics: Glimpses into Student Research Projects
RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

13:00 LUNCH

13:50 Felisha Carenage
DORA IXORA \\ fajalobi
REMARKS ON THE CONFERENCE SCENOGRAPHY

14:00 Glenda Obermuller
"This is a holy space!": Self-organising and Activism – Creating Decolonial Spaces
PRESENTATION

15:00 John Njenga Karugia
New Silk Roads: Violent Ecologies, Ambivalent Decoloniality and Symbolic Modernity
PRESENTATION

15:45 COFFEE & TEA BREAK

16:15 Bodhari Warsame
*The African Völkerschau in Europe and its Archival Legacy: The Case of the Touring
Somali Troupes in Germany*
PRESENTATION

17:00 Samba Yonga, Sarah Imani & Helena Uambembe
On Collective Repair and Return
PRESENTATIONS & CONVERSATION

18:30 BREAK

19:00 Helena Uambembe
Those that we left behind (those in between)
PERFORMANCE

19:30 Kamari Clarke
GARDENS OF THE FUTURE: Archives of Knowledge and Methods of Radical Possibility
KEYNOTE LECTURE

20:30 DINNER

21:30 Ayham Allouch
DJ SET

PROGRAMME & BIOGRAPHS

FRIDAY

26.04.2024

15:30 Mali Wu

*Art as a Catalyst for Change –
The Neighborhood as Artistic Site*
OPENING LECTURE

In her talk, Mali Wu will share her journey as an artist, curator and how she began to work with and within communities. She will speak about two of her projects: Mending Broken Land with Water – Plum Tree Creek Project (2009-2012) and Taste of the Empire – Stories of Cijin (2022). In these collective works not only artists and communities, but also schools play important roles. We have invited Mali Wu to guide and advise us in the reflections and doings of working with and within communities.

MALI WU is a socially engaged Taiwanese curator, installation and conceptual artist. She was a professor at Graduate Institute of Transdisciplinary Art, National Kaohsiung Normal University (NKNU). A highly influential practitioner and theorist of socially engaged art in Taiwan, WU has developed numerous projects over a thirty-year long career. Her most recent solo show, *Dàng (Swing)*, took place in Kaohsiung in 2023. Her work has been included in biennials such as Taipei Biennial (2008, 2018), the 9th Shanghai Biennial, China (2012); 3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, Japan (2005); and 46. Venice Biennial, Italy (1995). She received Taiwan, National Award for Arts in 2016, the Taishin Arts Award in 2013, and was appointed co-curator of the 11th Taipei Biennale, *Post-Nature: a Museum as an Eco System*, 2018. From 2020, Wu works for National Tainan Living Arts Center as a project director of "Art for Social Change".

17:00 Ali Bakhtiari

Interminable Dream
PRESENTATION & FILM
SCREENINGS

Tehran-based curator Ali Bakhtiari will discuss the idea of radical hope in artistic practices. He will take a specific period of Kanoon – The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Young Children and Adults as a point of departure. From multiple impulses of modernism in Tehran to current cultures of expression, he will reflect on the production of artistic agencies

dedicated to children and how the concept of children shapes creative pursuits.

FILMS

Farshid Mesghali: *Mr.Monster*, 1970, Color Animation, 8 minutes

Ali Akbar Sadeghi: *Flower Storm*, 1972, Color Animation, 7 minutes

ALIBAKHTIARI is a Tehran based curator focused on cultural studies and modern and contemporary art history. He collaborated with many international museums and centers such as Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, MOMA, The British Museum, Museo MAXXI. In 2019, Ali curated "Of Being and Singing", National Pavilion of Iran in 58th Venice Biennale.

He edited books and monographs about Iranian culture and artists such as *Fereydoun Ave, Designer*, 2014; Ali Akbar Sadeghi, *The Complete Works*, 2016; *Parvaneh's Book*, 2021, and his essays are published in numerous national and international journals and magazines.

He founded the ABBookness project in 2011 which is the first Middle Eastern project collaborating with artists on the publication of artist books. ABBookness has published works of artists such as Farideh Lashai, Parviz Tanavoli, Farshid Mesghali, among others.

18:00 Savanna Morgan

Sapphire Tongues
PERFORMANCE & READING

Savanna will be reading and singing for us from her book *cow tripe* in addition to further blues and folk songs.

SAVANNA MORGAN is an inter-disciplinary, neo-traditionalist musician, writer, and performer from East Texas. Her upcoming project "marginal delicacy", arriving in August 2024, will be the debut EP for her pop-adjacent, jazz-influenced, neo-soul band Savanna Morgan and the Lovers. She is classically trained in both European and American (jazz) vocal styles. As the lead vocalist for the Notre Dame Jazz Band, she performed with the jazz orchestra and New Orleans Brass Band in the Collegiate Jazz Festival three years in a row.

She is also trained in acting and devised performance, earning her B.A. in Film, Television, and Theater from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana (USA) in May 2020. She came to Berlin in Fall 2020 to earn a Master's in Performance Practice, and has since joined the art publishing collective, Archive Ensemble where she is an editor and performance-researcher. Her recent publications include debut poetry book, *cow tripe* (Hopscotch Editions, 2022), *Parabolis Virtualis* (Querverlag, 2023), and *Togetherward* (Archive Books, 2023). Her performances, ranging from concerts to choreo-poems, have been presented at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (The Whole Life, 2022, O Quilombismo, 2023), Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien (Freistaat Barackia, 2021), Gropius Bau (GABAN, 2022), ChertLuedde (Bungalow Berlin, 2022), Villa Romana Florenz, Archive Sites % SAVVY Contemporary (Weaving the Inner Bark Festival, 2023), TanzFabrik (Ko Shebeen, 2021), amongst other socio-cultural institutions. *Blues for Mrs*, a film written and performed by Savanna and directed by Dr Anton Juan, had its Berlin premiere at Ballhaus Naunynstrasse in January 2024.

18:30 Rada Iveković
Mooring and Unmooring Language and Translation
 LECTURE [PRE-RECORDED]

In her lecture, Rada Iveković pursues her work on language and translation, first of all by presenting the articulation of the last two terms.

There is no language that cannot be translated. We learn a foreign language through another language, a first language, which means that everyone is capable of learning languages and there is no fundamental difference between a first language and a foreign language. The difference in the possibility of acquiring a new language is a class issue, and an issue of cognitive justice. Although translation is never perfect, it is a fundamental capability and characteristic of any language. This means that languages intersect and communicate with one-another, before we even come to language as words. Language and translation (being basically two facets of the same competence) are understood as including also non-verbal activities, body-language, expression, communication and interacting through other means. We translate from our inner world towards exteriority and others, and thinking itself is a translation activity. Mooring a language to a nation or an "identity" is politically damaging, and it limits our horizon. National languages and mother-tongues are such traps. Through an adequate politics of translation which, however, cannot be determined in advance nor generally, we can reach the other language, the other culture, or political and artistic positions within one and the same language. Any one language possesses infinite possibilities of translation

within itself, translating different grids, standpoints or positionings, without even leaving «one language» linguistically. We also translate in arts, in expressing or displaying moods and emotions.

R A D A I V E K O V I Ć was Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore in 2013, and visiting professor at the International Institute for Cultural Studies at Chiao Tung University in Hsinchu (Taiwan) in 2019. Former programme director at the Collège international de philosophie, Paris (2004-2010), France, philosopher, indologist, writer, Rada Iveković was born in Zagreb, Yugoslavia in 1945. She taught at the Philosophy Department of Zagreb University until 1991, then, when the Yugoslav civil wars started, at universities in France (Paris-7; Paris-8 Saint-Denis; Saint-Etienne). She was visiting professor at many other universities in different countries, on all continents. Besides articles in many languages, her last books include: *Migration, New Nationalisms and Populism. An Epistemological Perspective on the Closure of Rich Countries* (2022); *Politiques de la traduction. Exercices de partage* (2019), *Réfugié-es. Les jetables* (2016); *Les Citoyens manquants* (2015); *L'éloquence tempérée du Bouddha. Souverainetés et dépossession de soi* (2014).

19:30 Renan Laru-an
Loob-1, Island of Romance
 PRESENTATION

In his vision statement for the new artistic direction of SAVVY Contemporary, Renan Laru-an proposes the fundamental value of *loob* (interior state/inner being) in cultural leadership and in the curatorial operations of an artistic institution. More than a year since the draft of this proposal, Laru-an revisits this conceptualisation in what could be termed as "less" theoretical and historical contextualisation, that is slightly leaning towards becoming critically romantic. What does it mean to find new romance in non-standardised curatorial methodologies? How can small- to medium-scale art institutions reclaim or even remediate romance as a feasible pathway to strengthen their core values against populist and proto-fascist demands to culture? As he reflects on these questions, Laru-an will share the new artistic program and its content in order to think and feel publicly the possibilities, potentialities, and limitations of *loob* to be shared, collectivised, materialised and eventually promoted beyond exhibitionary logics and programming requirements.

R E N A N L A R U - A N is the artistic director of SAVVY Contemporary.

11:15 Roberta Zollo (Universität Hamburg),
Eman Karmani (Universität Hamburg),
Ragil Huda (Universität Hamburg),
Hibatolah Nassiri-Vural (Freie Universität
Berlin), Jorge Vega (Humboldt-Universität zu
Berlin), Joël Zouna (Technische Universität,
Berlin)
*(In)Completing Dialectics: Glimpses into Student
Research Projects*

R E S E A R C H P R E S E N T A T I O N S

R A G I L H U D A : “ T R O P I C A L S P E L L S ”
“Tropical Spells” is an exhibition and research project
initiated by Sarnt Utamachote, Thao Ho, and Ragil Huda.
As independent researchers, academics, artists, and
curators, we focus on the Southeast Asian diaspora
and queerness. Through process-oriented research,
this collaborative project asks the question of what
queer anti-colonial liberation means in the context of
Berlin/Germany. We thus contribute to understanding
how the migrant world and knowledge formation, and
queer counter-politics function in postcolonial Europe.
How are our artistic, academic, and curatorial practices
building new transnational linkages that contribute to
the theorization of a unique and critical queer Southeast
Asian and migrant culture? How do these practices
respond to and reshape critical questions of racial and
gendered justice and equality in dominant cultures in
Germany?

The questions above will be explored in our upcoming
exhibition and public programming at the Gay Museum
Berlin later this year, bringing together artistic, activist,
and academic voices from Southeast Asia and its
diaspora in Berlin. “Tropical Spells” seeks to examine
sexual diversity and queerness through global, migrant,
and postcolonial lenses.

R A G I L H U D A is a graduate student at the Asien-
Afrika Institut, Universität Hamburg. He is also one of
the project coordinators of the international platform
and network called “Queer” Asia in Berlin and a fellow
founding member of QTIBIPOC Hamburg. Through
collaborative curatorial practices, his community
engagement focuses on queerness, intersectionality,
community building, and the intimacy of friendships.
With a commitment to critical pedagogy and the power
of Shine Theory, he believes in the importance of mutual

support and accountability, echoing the words of
Aminatou Sow & Ann Friedman:
"I don't shine if you don't shine."

E M A N K A R M A N I : “ T R A N S I T I O N A L
P E R S P E C T I V E S – D A R K A N D
L I G H T N A R R A T I V E – , O N C L I M A T E
C H A N G E ”

This study adopts a transitional perspective to examine
Climate Change on Pura Island, Alor Archipelago
(Eastern Indonesia), and it aims to suggest an
alternative environmental paradigm. I argue that
island communities offer invaluable insights into
the complex interplay between human societies
and their environments. How this society perceives
the ontological understanding on human-nature
relationship is still today enormously affected by the
superstructure of power brought by external agents
such as colonial officials or missionaries. Local
communities define the traditional value as “darkness”
and modernity as “enlightenment”. This guides to
a reflection to challenge a suitable knowledge and
paradigm of locals to mitigate the climate crisis.

E M A N K A R M A N I took his BA in Language
and Cultures at Arta Wacana Christian University,
(Kupang, Indonesia) and is currently an MA candidate
in Southeast Asia Studies at the University of Hamburg.
His research interest revolves around climate change
communication, de-colonization practices and small
island societies. He was an independent research
assistant on the study of Cultural Memory in Indonesia,
2019. His academic journey reflects his commitment
to rigorous scholarship, as evidenced by his Student
Research project (2022) at the Interdisciplinary
Research Institute (UHH).

J O R G E V E G A : “ T H E M A R C H :
A S E N S O R I A L C L A I M F R O M T H E
M E X I C A N M O U N T A I N S ”

In 2018, the Canadian company Almaden Minerals
planned to establish an open-pit mine in the mountains
of Mexico. This project would have transformed
fourteen thousand hectares of forests, grasslands,
caves, and rivers into a desert and created a crater over
one kilometre in diameter, devastating the lands of
the indigenous people of Ixtacamaxtitlán. A group of
women, accompanied by their families, embarked on
a journey into the mountains. They trekked for a day,
braving the sun and rain, with a singular goal: to reach
the last family living at the mountain's edge and alert
them, “They are coming! The mine is coming!”.

“The march” is a video poem and semi-fictional
ethnographic work based on archival research from
the Francisca Zamora Archive. It utilizes video and
sound experimentation to capture and convey the
emotional and sensorial landscape experienced in the
fight to protect earth, water, and air in the Mexican
mountains. This piece reflects the pain, efforts, joy, and
profound connection to the land, the mountain, and its
inhabitants, articulated through video time-sculpting,
based on environmental sounds and colors.

J O R G E V E G A originating from Mexico, is a writer, visual artist, and researcher, currently furthering his PhD studies in European Ethnology at Humboldt University of Berlin. His work delves into the relationships among environmental conflicts, extractivism, and colonial power structures in the era of the Capitalocene. Jorge's interdisciplinary background spans literature, political philosophy, the biological sciences, as well as environmental activism. His engagement with environmental and social movements has deeply influenced his work, prompting investigations into the migration experience, the ongoing environmental crisis, and speculative end-of-world scenarios. In 2019, Vega, in collaboration with fellow Latin American scholars, initiated the [decoco] collective in Berlin, a project that merges decolonial art and research, showcasing his commitment to a critical exploration of decolonization through artistic and academic lenses.

H I B A T O L A H N A S S I R I - V U R A L :
“ C E L E B R A T I N G T R A N S I T I O N :
R E F L E C T I O N S O N T H E F I R S T P A N -
A F R I C A N F E S T I V A L I N A L G I E R
1 9 6 9 ”

The Pan-African Festival (PANAF) in Algiers represents an early experiment in transatlantic cultural exchange that defined culture as an instrument of liberation and decolonial nation-building. By putting decolonisation into practice, it served as a platform for both cultural and political movements, promoting critical dialogue between artists, writers, intellectuals, diplomats and revolutionaries. In this contribution, the idea of celebrating transition will be examined in the light of central themes of the PANAF. What was the significance of cultural events such as the First Pan-African Festival in Algiers in the decolonisation of African countries? What insights can be gained from these events that could inform future decolonial practices and spaces?

H I B A T O L A H N A S S I R I - V U R A L
is a Master's student of Art History in a Global Context with a focus on Africa at Freie Universität Berlin. She completed her Bachelor's degree in European Art History and Arabic/Oriental Studies at the University of Münster in 2022. In her bachelor's thesis, she dealt with the staging of the Other in European Orientalist painting. Her current research focuses on pre- and postcolonial art practices in the MENA region and Central Asia.

R O B E R T A Z O L L O (U N I V E R S I T Ä T
H A M B U R G) : “ T H E E F F E C T O F
G E R M A N C O L O N I A L I T Y O N T H E
B A T A K M A N U S C R I P T C U L T U R E ”
Using as a main case study the manuscripts produced by the Batak people (North Sumatra, Indonesia) in pre-colonial times, this presentation aims to examine the role of German missionaries as the main actors of coloniality. We will discuss the deep fracture that the

forced conversion created between the Batak people and this specific cultural production and highlight the transition moment that we are experiencing now between complete neglect of the past and the present efforts toward re-discovery and re-appreciation of these manuscripts. The final issue we will address is the question of repatriation and restitution for this (almost) forgotten heritage.

R O B E R T A Z O L L O took her BA in Language and Culture of Asia, with a major in Chinese language and a minor in Indonesian language, and an MA in International Relations from the University of Naples L'Orientale. Currently, she is a PhD candidate in Batak philology at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) of the University of Hamburg. Her project focuses on a corpus of 10 manuscripts, known in the academic literature as the porbuhitan manuscripts. These manuscripts include texts describing different divination rituals, which used to be performed during the sacrifice of the buffalo, one of the most important ceremonies of the Batak.

J O Ë L Z O U N A : “ E X H I B I T I N G
A F R I C A N P O P U L A R C U L T U R E : T H E
E X A M P L E O F “ F E L A A N I K U L A P O -
K U T I . R E B E L L I O N A F R O B E A T ”
A T T H E C I T É D E L A M U S I Q U E -
P H I L H A R M O N I E D E P A R I S (2 2 / 2 3) ”
This presentation is outlining the different aspects of what would be called a “joint narrative”, that means how the emerging questions of the restitution and museum decolonization are reshaping curational narrative making in the context of post-Emmanuel Macron's speech in Ouagadougou on the restitution of African heritage in France. The example taken here is the exhibition that was held at the Philharmonie de Paris between October 2022 and June 2023 on the famous Nigerian singer Fela Anikulapo-Kuti.

J O Ë L Z O U N A is a student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris. His research interests are popular culture, critical discourses, and museum decolonization. He is currently doing a research stay with the team of Prof. Dr. Bénédicte Savoy at the TU Berlin.

14:00 Glenda Obermuller
*"This is a holy space!": Self-organising and
Activism – Creating Decolonial Spaces*
P R E S E N T A T I O N

In her presentation, Glenda will delve into her work as a community organiser and activist in Cologne. She will speak about the opportunities and challenges of navigating in colonial spaces and structures and how we can move and take matters into our own hands by creating our own decolonial spaces.

G L E N D A O B E R M U L L E R is a Guyanese woman of indigenous-African heritage who has found roots in Germany for the past 21 years. She sees herself as an activist, community organiser and people connector primarily in the Cologne, NRW region.

Glenda has co-founded numerous decolonial initiatives among them being the NGO "Sonnenblumen Community Development Group", N-Wort Stoppen, the Theodor Wonja Michael library (the first Black library in NRW), Black Sisterhood NRW, PROUD e.V., the yearly Black History Month program in Cologne, and numerous empowerment projects.

She's been appointed by the city of Cologne on its expert committee to make recommendations to working through its colonial past. Coming from a history of enslavement and genocide of people of African and indigenous descent in the Caribbean, Glenda has learned about community activism from a young age, her father being a grassroots politician who has contributed to the independence of Guyana from the British and working through the subsequent postcolonial pains of Guyana.

15:00 John Njenga Karugia
*New Silk Roads: Violent Ecologies, Ambivalent
Decoloniality and Symbolic Modernity*
P R E S E N T A T I O N

New Silk Roads are emerging across Africa, Asia and Europe as a result of investments undertaken by local and global actors and partners interested in modernising global infrastructure for the benefit of humanity as attempts are made to ensure optimal global trade despite competition. This presentation reflects upon how local communities and state actors in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Kenya are negotiating emergent notions of violent ecologies, ambivalent decoloniality and symbolic modernity and how this complicates notions of resource extraction, global trade and social justice within diverse contexts of interconnected New Silk Roads geographies and societies.

J O H N N J E N G A K A R U G I A is a researcher and lecturer at the Institute for Asian and African

Studies at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin within the De:Link // Re:Link research project which is analysing China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He has also researched on Indian Ocean Memories at Goethe University Frankfurt within the AFRASO project.

16:15 Bodhari Warsame
*The African Völkerschau in Europe and its
Archival Legacy: The Case of the Touring
Somali Troupes in Germany*
P R E S E N T A T I O N

The late 19th to early 20th century "Völkerschau" phenomenon, also known as "ethnic shows", "ethnic spectacle", and lately "human zoos", was what could be termed as "cinema before cinema" where many ethnic groups were recruited from far (mostly colonized) lands and brought to Europe to be displayed in front of paying audiences. These groups, including many Africans, who were engaged in such colonial showmanship left behind considerable multi-discipline, multi-archive, multi-media, multi-language historical legacy (both tangible and intangible) that should be researched, reworked, re-imagined, reclaimed, restituted..., or simply their stories of struggle should be retold in the context of today's world. This presentation will be a historical overview/background with audio/visuals from that bygone but forever present colonial era.

B O D H A R I W A R S A M E is an independent researcher and translator based in Gothenburg, Sweden. He has, through years, conducted multi-archival research on the history of the Somali groups who were involved in the late 19th to early 20th century colonial Völkerschau show business in Germany and beyond.

17:00 Samba Yonga, Sarah Imani & Helena
Uambembe
On Collective Repair and Return
P R E S E N T A T I O N S &
C O N V E R S A T I O N

S A M B A Y O N G A
Cracking The Code
The Women's History Museum has been working to centre indigenous knowledge systems in and with Zambian indigenous community knowledge keepers through the critical language of intervention. Working with artists, scholars, historians and museum practitioners, the museum has engaged in the practice and research of "cracking the code" of deactivated heritage knowledge systems and artefacts by challenging and critically reviewing the violence of historical inculturation, its resulting impact of cultural amnesia on communities and the restorative act of using the process of critical language intervention to reimagine creative, academic and artistic ways

to restore these knowledge systems and provide a pathway for new and nuanced ways of understanding the value and meaning of Zambian indigenous knowledge in our contemporary world.

S A M B A Y O N G A is an award-winning journalist, communications specialist and cultural curator based in Lusaka, Zambia. She is co-founder of the Women's History Museum of Zambia, established in 2017 with the mandate to research and restore African indigenous narratives, knowledge and "living histories" focused on women. In their work the Women's Museum has collaborated with art spaces, museums and universities in Africa, Europe and the US such as National Museums of World Cultures in Sweden, HIVOS, Mandela Legacy Foundation, Yale Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Institute for the Preservation and Cultural Heritage, Museum of Women in Umea, Sweden, Windybrow Art Centre in South Africa, Europeana in the Netherlands, University of Shanghai, International Council of Museums (ICOM) and many more.

Samba is founder and managing partner of Ku-Atenga Media, a firm specialised in designing strategic communications for African landscapes that has expanded its client network across the African region, US and European markets. She is also a Google Podcast Creator, TEDx Lusaka speaker and is a Museum Lab Fellow for 2022, Yale Director's Forum Africa Fellow 2024.

Samba has curated exhibitions and is conducting research that is focused on centering indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage that aims to correct asymmetries and centre voices from source communities in Zambia and Africa that will legitimise historical inculturated knowledge systems. She is also a Yale University Fellow for the Institute of Preservation of Cultural Heritage. The objective is to interrogate knowledge asymmetries inherited from the colonial legacy and to investigate transformative methods of how to impact the future of knowledge production in the museum, creative and knowledge sectors. Her work with Ku-Atenga Media and The Women's History Museum has established her work prominently on the African continent and globally.

She is a graduate of the Evelyn Hone College School of Journalism and holds an MA in Transnational Communications and Global Media from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

S A R A H I M A N I

The Coloniality of Extractivism in Land and Culture
Extractivism – violent takings of land, culture and even people in its crudest form – is in the epicenter of the colonial encounter. And while the European colonial project has formally been declared over, the same is far from true for the imperial logic behind it, namely the extraction of resources from the former colonised by

the former colonizing powers with no regard for their own violent legacy and the distinct responsibility for reparative justices.

The transtemporal dimension is what marks the Coloniality of Extractivism. This presentation focuses on two only apparently very distinct examples: the extraction of cultural belongings in the past as well as the extraction of natural resources (hydrogen) in the present. What past and present share is the same legitimation based on tales of scientific progress, promises of cures, shared knowledge, equal production and commodification of common goods for the benefit of humanity. All the while the benefits are (still) unequally shared and very much informed by (historically) grown structures of imperialism. Thus, this presentation is dedicated to the question: HOW DO WE FIND "DECOLONISATION" AS AN EXISTING CONCERN, MATTER, OR PRACTICE IN THE EVERYDAY WORLD?

Human and constitutional rights, though deeply entrenched in liberal (legal) thought, can and should be decolonized. The concepts and underlying normativities of indigenous rights are essential and radical instruments for the decolonization of law, reparative justice and change, especially in respect of the lived experiences and expectations of affected (indigenous) communities. What we need is a future that understands the importance of a cultural heritage for a person's and community's cultural identity and dignity as much as it understands climate justice and development to form a transtemporal, reparative encounter that acknowledges the harm done and speaks to a future beyond extractivist coloniality and towards repair between people, culture and nature.

S A R A H I M A N I is a German qualified lawyer and since 2024 a research fellow at the Deutschen Institut für Menschenrechte. She studied law at the Sorbonne, Paris and Universität Hamburg, Germany. She holds an LL.M. from New York University, USA, and a M.A. in Peace Studies from Bradford University, UK. Her areas of expertise are international law, international criminal law, human rights law and (international) legal theory. She worked in these areas as researcher and lecturer for various universities. Besides her work, she researches third world approaches to international law and Islamic international law and legal theory. Before joining the Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte (DIMR) she worked as Legal Advisor at European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) where she was responsible for its work on German and European colonial crimes, reparations and restitution as well as critical and decolonial perspectives on the law.

19:00 Helena Uambembe
Those that we left behind (those in between)
P E R F O R M A N C E

In this performance, the artist reflects on her recent trip to Angola, where she visited Luanda and Cunene Province. Uambembe explores what is invoked by the process of moving through lands, borders and territories, as well as notions of home. She invokes the various stories she has encountered throughout her practice from women who recount memories of crossing borders, mostly at night and questioning what trails are left behind and the trails these movements inscribe on the body.

Soil, a material present in her practice and in this particular work symbolises notions of burial and traces. In this performance the incorporation of bright river sand connects to arid desert terrains and the healing and spiritual properties of the ocean is juxtaposition with the rich dark soil reminiscent of more tropical terrains.

H E L E N A U A M B E M B E is an artist of Angolan descent and born in South Africa, whose work is heavily influenced by her heritage and experiences. Her parents fled the civil war in Angola and her father was a soldier in the 32nd Battalion of the South African Defence Force. Uambembe's artistic practice explores themes of the 32nd Military Battalion and her Angolan heritage. She obtained her Btech in 2018 from Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa and is a member of the collective Kutala Chopeto. In 2019, Uambembe won the David Koloane Award and completed a two-month residency at the Bag Factory in Johannesburg. She has exhibited at Art Basel Statement where she was awarded the Baloise Art Prize in 2022.

In 2023, Uambembe was awarded the DAAD Visual Arts Fellowship in Berlin, Germany, which supports international artists to develop their work through a residency program. With a unique artistic voice rooted in her personal experience and heritage, Helena Uambembe continues to explore and push the boundaries of contemporary art.

Helena Uambembe's body of work incorporates a variety of media. Her practice makes use of performance, printmaking and textiles, and her artworks serve as telling pieces that not only draw on her own life, but also seek to address the erasure of conflicts complicit in South Africa's wars in Angola and Namibia. Confronting these erasures is poignant, especially when one considers that the legacies of these past conflicts can still be felt today.

Uambembe's work has featured in a number of noteworthy exhibitions, among others at the Museu Nacional de Historia Natural in Luanda, Angola, as well

as the ABSA Art Gallery, Johannesburg, the Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Cape Town, and the Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg. With the installation titled "What you see is not that you remember", Uambembe was awarded the twenty-third Baloise Art Prize in 2022 shown at Art Basel, Statements Section. She held her first museum solo at MMK Museum Für Moderne Kunst, presenting "BLOOMING IN STASIS: 25.8230° S, 23.5312° E."

19:30 Kamari Clarke
GARDENS OF THE FUTURE: Archives of Knowledge and Methods of Radical Possibility
K E Y N O T E L E C T U R E

K A M A R I M A X I N E C L A R K E is the Distinguished Professor of Transnational Justice and Sociolegal Studies at the University of Toronto. Over the past twenty-five years, Professor Clarke has conducted research on issues related to legal institutions, international legal domains, religious nationalism, and the politics of globalization and race. She has spent her career exploring theoretical questions of culture and power and, in the field of law and anthropology, detailing the relationship between new transnational formations and contemporary problems. She is the author of nine books and over fifty-five peer reviewed articles and book chapters, including her 2009 publication of *Fictions of Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Challenge of Legal Pluralism in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) and *Affective Justice* (with Duke University Press, 2019), which won the finalist prize for the American Anthropological Association's 2020 Elliot P. Skinner Book Award for the Association for Africanist Anthropology and was the recipient of the 2019 Royal Anthropological Institute's Amaury Talbot Book Prize.

During her academic career she has held numerous fellowships, grants and awards, including multiple grant awards from the National Science Foundation and from The Social Sciences and the Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Rockefeller Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and, very recently, the 2021 Guggenheim Prize for career excellence in Anthropology. She is currently working on a project examining the Problem of Absence-Presence in the Black Atlantic World and is interested in knowledge, method and transmission as ways to foreground an Otherwise approach to Black social life.

21:30 Ayham Allouch
D J S E T

Ayham will be playing music that ranges from an archaeological exploration into memory to evoking rhythms that span from the Levant region and North Africa all the way to South Africa. Maybe not fully dance-oriented, but it will be something enjoyable to swing and listen to.

A Y H A M A L L O U C H born in Damascus, Syria, is a sound and multidisciplinary artist based in Berlin. He engages in sound installations incorporating 3D video collaborations, experimental art documentaries, and live performances. Ayham's works are deeply rooted in his experiences with displacement, and immigration, which influence his creative expression in spirituality, philosophy, and inner work. He is dedicated to reflecting on social issues and constructing decolonial narratives through his art. In his sound art, Ayham primarily utilizes field recordings to explore themes of memory. He also employs deconstruction techniques to develop generative experimental modular patches, which facilitate a variety of emotional experiences.

Ayham began his art education at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus and is currently advancing his studies in Electronic Music Production and Performance at the Catalyst Institute for Creative Arts and Technology in Berlin. Ayham's DJ sets are an exploration into uncharted sonic territories, merging diverse musical landscapes with traditional rhythms and ancient songs of resistance. This blending of sounds serves as a form of auditory archaeology, unearthing forgotten narratives and celebrating cultural resilience. Ayham has showcased his work at prominent venues and events, including Documenta 15 in Kassel, the CTM-Festival Vorspiel / Transmediale at Silent Green, Z/KU, Hosek Contemporary, and, most recently, Ball Haus Theatre in Berlin.

Felisha Carenage and Xavier Robles de Medina
DORA IXORA // fajalobi
S C E N O G R A P H Y

DORA IXORA // fajalobi is a scenographic intervention for SAVVY Contemporary's conference, G A R D E N S I N T R A N S I T I O N . It is a collaboration between S A V V Y and BPA // Berlin Program for Artists. Caribbean home gardens are cosmoses of the global intimate, representing global foodways, intimacies and spiritual practices. The *DORA IXORA // fajalobi* scenography is a mapping of those gardens which playfully uses the surfaces of the S A V V Y exhibition space as "plantable" topography. In its conception, the artists have considered the role of photocopied texts in the memory and reimagination of spaces of belonging.

F E L I S H A C A R E N A G E is an artist who uses – via painting, installations and performances – cultural commodities to explore ambiguities of desire and belonging. Central to the development of her work is the dialogue with initiatives for civic engagement, art and design archives and participative institutional spaces. Born in San Fernando, Trinidad & Tobago, she currently lives and works between London and Berlin.

X A V I E R R O B L E S D E M E D I N A is an artist working at the intersection of visual art and research-based approaches. Informed by his creolized queer subjectivity, he explores linkages between personal history and broader contexts, often deliberately disrupting linear readings. Following a process of methodical collecting of both found and original images and texts, he accumulates and collages these materials in a process of discovery, forming the basis for meticulously crafted works that are mathematically plotted and remain at once poetic and political.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Love is not a maybe thing ...*, Efremidis, Berlin (2024); *I will go away into the wild wood, and never come home again*, Alice Amati, London (2023); *What if the tongue is cut out?* with Catinca Tabacaru Gallery at Art Basel, Hong Kong (2022); and *Wan Destination Wanhoop*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (2020). In 2024 he published his first monograph, *Pengel* (coy koi books, Berlin), detailing the creation of a three-and-a-half-meter-tall bronze sculpture of Surinamese politician Johan Adolf Pengel by his grandfather, the Surinamese visual artist Stuart Robles de Medina. He is a current participant in the BPA// Berlin program for artists.

MORE INFORMATION

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

SAVVY Contemporary composes life-worlds through its commitments to exhibition-making, research, sonic and visual cultures, embodied knowledges, and other heritages of creativity. It is home to a participatory archive on German colonial history, a documentation center of performance arts, a library, a residency program, a series of SAVVY books, the record label SAVVY records, a radio platform called SAVVYZMAR as well as educational projects with schools. The art space engages with various publics facilitating translation and mediation of discourses, socio-political realities and difficult histories.

The space was founded in 2009 in Berlin-Neukölln by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, SAVVY'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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