

FOR THE PHOENIX TO FIND ITS FORM IN US. ON RESTITUTION, REHABILITATION, AND REPARATION

A SAVVY CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH, EXHIBITION, PERFORMANCE
AND PUBLICATION PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH JAMEEL ARTS
CENTRE, DUBAI, AND IFA GALLERY BERLIN

EXHIBITIONS

OPENING 23.06.2021 16:00-22:00

AT SAVVY Contemporary

ON VIEW 24.06.-22.08.2021 Thursday-Sunday 14:00-19:00

WITH Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme Rand Abdul Jabbar Tanya Aguiñiga Nora Al-Badri
Daniela Zambrano Almidón & Pablo Santacana López Memory Biwa Benji Boyadgian Hamze Bytyci
Nora Chipaumire Julien Creuzet Ndidi Dike Gladys Kalichini Maurice Mboa Senzeni Mthwakazi Marasela
Noara Quintana Michael Rakowitz Gabriel Rossell Santillán Akram Zaatari
And Saitabao Kaiyare & Elena Schilling (SAVVY.doc)

AT ifa Gallery Berlin

ON VIEW 24.06.-29.08.2021 Tuesday-Sunday 14:00-18:00, Thursday until 20:00

WITH Pio Abad Samia Henni Jumana Manna Oumar Mbengue Atakosso
Bhavisha Panchia Michael Rakowitz

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Art Jameel and ifa Gallery Berlin. The installation "The invisible enemy should not exist" by Michael Rakowitz is
made possible by courtesy of Galerie Barbara Wien.

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS

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ifa Institut für
Auslandsbeziehungen

Untie to Tie

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Gudipudi (Jameel Arts Centre) Alya Sebti (ifa Gallery Berlin)

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DIGITAL COMMUNICATION Anna Giannessi

COLLABORATION This is a S A V V Y Contemporary project in collaboration with Jameel Arts Centre,
Dubai, and ifa Gallery Berlin.

LABORATORIES

This project is being developed in local laboratories with our international partners in Cameroon, Colombia, Nigeria,
Palestine, Philippines, Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates
(January 2021–June 2022)

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TRACING FOR THE PHOENIX TO FIND ITS FORM IN US. ON RESTITUTION, REHABILITATION, AND REPARATION

Tuesday: The Phoenix

It is enough that you pass by words
For the phoenix to find its form in us,
And for the spirit born of its spirit to give birth to
a body...
Spirit cannot do without a body
To fire with itself and for itself, cannot do without
a body
To purge the soul of what it has hidden from
eternity
So let's take fire, for nothing, but that we become
one!

Mahmoud Darwish, from "The Seven Days of
Love"

How does one complicate the current discourse on restitution, which seems to have manoeuvred itself into a cul de sac? The debates centre the notion of return, thereby limiting the rather expansive and layered subject of restitution. The notion of return, as colloquially used, means going back to a particular geo-spatial space. But to return, one must have a sense of a space and time of departure. Which is to say we cannot think of restitution without thinking of the wounds that were inflicted upon dispossession at any given time, as well as the violences that accompany epistemic, material or human deprivation and destruction, as we see in Anglophone Cameroon, in Palestine, in Myanmar

or in Colombia. We cannot reduce restitution to the return of objects while the people who are to receive these objects neither have the luxury of breathing, nor the lands on which to plant their seeds, or are deprived of the abode in which they shelter. So, how can we deliberate restitution in a context wherein time and space have not only changed but have become more precarious and the savagery of coloniality has assumed other forms?

With the project **FOR THE PHOENIX TO FIND ITS FORM IN US. ON RESTITUTION, REHABILITATION, AND REPARATION**, SAVVY Contemporary is dedicating a series of laboratories, Invocations, publications, and exhibitions on the entanglements of the three key subjects restitution, rehabilitation, and reparation as a possibility of going beyond the notion of just return. Together with artists, writers, and other intellectuals and activists we intend to reflect on notions of restoration – not only of the subjects/objects taken away from peoples and particular places, but also to think of a restoration of the peoples and places that have had to exist in a state of cultural and psychological deprivation. This demands of us to think of any form of restoration as a possibility of re-integration, and rehabilitation. Which is to say the possibility of re-accommodating beings once taken away into systems that have experienced both time and spatial shifts.

We also intend to cogitate the connection between the forceful seizure of subjects/objects, their storage in ethnographic museums in Europe and North America, and the destruction of the techno-heritage of many places in the non-West. Looking at the destruction of spiritual entities when they are locked up in ethnographic museums, also demands the acknowledgement that histories of technologies were destroyed and these too have to be restored.

With this project, we intend to address the restitution debate from a different positionality within the German context and beyond, advocating for more inclusion of different perspectives and voices. Critically questioning and contemplating the role of European institutions and ethnological museums – examining precisely the political, economic and institutional contexts in which these organisations situate themselves – we wish to ponder the power structures, the asymmetries and the colonial continuities within the discourse. Confronting ourselves with possibilities of complicating the current discourse with situated reflections around issues of rehabilitation and reparation, we strive to entangle the perspective of artists, activists, and engaged communities with the ones of scholars, researchers, and institutions: to offer a platform for a decentralised discussion able to include voices and positions across geographies and disciplinary perspectives.

With her installation *Commodities of Consumption and Sites of Extraction in the Global South* at SAVVY Contemporary, N D I D I D I K E accompanies us through the threshold of the exhibition space, pointing to the continuous looting of communities and the ruthless politics of extraction in West Africa by European industrial economies. Her piece reminds us that one cannot seriously engage with any debate about museological restitution without confronting the reality that colonialism is not a past experience.

In the street windows looking on the Gerichtstrasse and in the interior of SAVVY Contemporary, artist R A N D A B D U L J A B B A R discloses family archives, historic maps, and architectural plans excavating the histories of the lost town of 'Anah in Iraq and its minaret. The work not only shows the challenges of cultural preservation in conflict areas but also stands as a symbol of resilience and communal rehabilitation in the face of persistent violence and terrorism.

Continuing in walking through the space, the visitor encounters a letter: a letter signed by artist M I C H A E L R A K O W I T Z and addressed to a universal/encyclopedic museum curator as a response to an invitation to participate in an exhibition. Confronting the West's insatiable appetite for Eastern artefacts and objects, the artist is asking the Western institution to return the stolen pieces in their collection to their people in Iraq: to consider the

possibilities of repairing their loss by engaging with accountability and responsibility, beyond apologies without action.

M A U R I C E M B O A's two paintings, welcoming the visitor on the left wall of the space, suggest the imponderable labour of restorations that looted communities across the planet have done, and continue to confront, after centuries of exploitation and humiliation. Individuals and subjects search for the spiritual realm of their ancestors, crave a reconnection with their traditions and land, and ponder the expectations of contemporaneity through struggling for the collective making of identities.

Floating in the space as living presences and beings, the sculptures of J U L I E N C R E U Z E T speak with the visitor. Conceived by the artist as "votive forms" filled and forged with emotional connections and spiritual ancestral relationships, these living assemblages can be understood as scores and songs of lament and rebellion: offering a counterweight assertion of human potential in the face of repressive colonial regimes, inextricably linked with current social and environmental injustice.

The work of N O R A A L - B A D R I expands on speculative archeology and on the potential decolonial use of artificial intelligence and machine learning-based museum practices to generate a technoheritage. The subjects/objects featured in the videos and the images on the light table are non-physically existing objects generated by a neural network trained with 10.000 images from five different museums with the largest collections of Mesopotamian, Neo-Sumerian, and Assyrian artefacts.

B E N J I B O Y A D G I A N's *The Temporary Ruin (Cabinet of Curiosities)* troubles the Western narrative of the Wunderkammer and assembles objects collected by the artist over several years from the grounds of Wadi Al Shami in Jerusalem. Already cut off from Palestinians and many of its proximate residents, the Wadi (or Valley) is soon to be taken over by Israeli settlements. Boyadgian's collection can be read as testament to lives lived in and around the valley, as well as a record of erasure and loss – while questioning whose histories are preserved and displayed, and whose are relegated to oblivion.

Further in the interior space, B A S E L A B B A S A N D R U A N N E A B U R A H M E's *And Yet My Mask Is More Powerful Part II* brings together traces of human and more than human life taken from sites of destroyed Palestinian villages in present day Israel. The objects, images and scripts take us backwards and forwards in time, creating a dense story of erasures and reappearances, dispossession and resistance, and the archaic resonating in the contemporary.

Following on from this is *May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth* – a digital, multipart artwork, accessible via Jameel Art Centre’s website and the forthcoming online version of this exhibition. Connecting videos, images, sound compositions, and texts, the work draws on many years of research by the artists into forms of collective resistance and witnessing through songs, somatic presence, and performance and image making. Currently accessible, *Part I Postscript: after everything is extracted* looks at mourning and loss.

Twenty seven hanging prints unfold the narrative of Theodorah, the alter ego artist S E N Z E N I M A R A S E L A embodies in this series, whose story is echoed by many black women in South Africa: women who have been made invisible in urban and public space, and whose freedoms of movement have been deprived. Theodorah travels across different spaces to make her presence bold and demanded, marking the presences of various absences.

In the corridor next to S A V V Y ’s pillar Colonial Neighbors is M E M O R Y B I W A ’s sound installation: the piece is conceived as an “aural procession” of voices, instruments, and movement containing a multi-layering reverberation and a cacophony of a lullaby sung at dawn. It is made up of battle cries, chants, ululations, bow-playing, all in landscapes which trace narratives and re-enactments of resistance to German colonization in the early 20th century Namibia. These traces are drawn from aural, sartorial, and performative practices, which inform notions of subjectivity and the re-centering of epistemologies and imaginaries.

With *HumboldtHuaca*, D A N I E L A Z A M B R A N O A L M I D Ó N A N D P A B L O S A N T A C A N A L Ó P E Z reconnect with the series of actions that were carried out in Berlin in 2020 in the context and prospect of the opening of the Humboldt Forum. The work makes visible the resistance and struggles of associations, collectives, and artists from Peru and Latin America who continue to transmit and dignify cultures with indigenous roots that are still subjugated and oppressed today, working resiliently to claim access to the lost, denied, forbidden, desecrated, and institutionally privatised knowledges of indigenous peoples, subject/objects and beyond, from colonial times to the present.

As ghostly presences, N O R A C H I P A U M I R E ’s three videos are encountered and activated in the space by the movement of the visitors. They speak to the women, spirit, and medium of Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana, a female ancestral Shona spirit who rose to lead the first Chimurenga – spirit war – against the British South African company’s colonisation led by Cecil John Rhodes in 1889, speaking about repair, reparations, and rehabilitation.

In *An extraordinary event*, A K R A M Z A A T A R I brings together eight photographs by Osman Hamdi Bey, taken in 1887, which document the excavation of nineteen sarcophagi in Sidon, South Lebanon of which two containing the remains of a father and son, are now kept apart at the Louvre in Paris and the Istanbul Archeology Museum.

Walking down the stairs and entering the underground spaces of S A V V Y Contemporary, we meet the work of T A N Y A A N G U I Ñ I G A : her fibrous pieces on the ground, and on a pillar, honor the experiences of child rearing, eliciting new planes of meaning towards subjects/objects. The relations reflect on family, and the possibilities of raising connections that can bring about altered states of mind and body - opening metaphors for nurturing, memory, and time.

Shining and embedded by green light, N O A R A Q U I N T A N A ’s lamps and hanging works are made up of hevea brasiliensis, latex, and rubber. They are underpinned by concepts tracing the transportation of materials and peoples; export, expropriation, and extractivism; and the theft of histories, mythologies, and technologies. The works reflect on the industrial revolution, imperial aggregations, and their colonial violences – where in the rubber works an elastic ancestry which cannot be erased is inscribed.

Emanating from the back side of the basement, G A B R I E L R O S S E L L S A N T I L L Á N ’s compilation of works echo his drawings upstairs, where the direction of where the sun goes down and into the underworld is written in Wixárika letters. His photograph and video works are grounded in his long standing relation to the indigenous Mexican communities he has lived with and near to. His pieces serve as dialogues, forms, visual spaces, and assemblages intended to unfurl a possible recovery and reactivation of collective memory for the recovery from colonial spiritual invasions and material dispossessions.

In a room of its own, H A M Z E B Y T Y Ç I ’s short film can be encountered. A documentary, Bytyçi’s work shifts attention to South Bohemia where Josef Miker participates in protests against the establishing of a pig farming facility at the location of a former concentration camp where hundreds of Roma lost their lives, including half of Miker’s wife’s family.

With a triptych of films and a white cloth as a sibling to the fabrics in the videos, G L A D Y S K A L I C H I N I ’s installation bridges ideas of remembering and of caring. To care, as a gesture of solidarity and of resistance against loss of one’s history, is a political act that is embodied here in the practices Kalichini captures of different women: washing hands, washing feet, and washing faces. Kalichini’s work addresses the lacunae in nationalist histories where women are missing from the story (stories), visualising what has been, so far, invisibilized.

At ifa gallery, the exhibition opens with *Archives: Secret Défense?* in which S A M I A H E N N I confronts the abrupt classification of declassified documents. The French Secretary General of Defense and National Security activated an existing law that ordered the formal declassification of every classified archival document – including already declassified records – from 1940 to the present. Her work faces the imposed paradox denying the right to reparation coming from the violent status of legality in colonial and military contexts which highlight the entanglements of/between restitution, rehabilitation, and reparation.

B H A V I S H A P A N C H I A ’s audio collage, *Imagine you’re in a museum. What do you hear?*, puts an ear to the authoritative voice with which museums speak. Knitting together a collage of sounds – interviews and speeches, musical tracks and audio notes – Panchia’s work questions how one listens to the extractive logic of the colonial institution, to the subjects/objects it “houses”, to the resonances of dislocation, and dispossession.

J U M A N A M A N N A ’s body of work reflects on the spaces of archeology and heritage as theaters of modern myth productions, and on the tensions between preservation and ruination. *Cache (Insurance Policy)* is a series of sculptural forms based on the *khabya*, a domestic seed storage chamber common in rural Levantine architecture.

M I C H A E L R A K O W I T Z ’s multifaceted practice deals with notions of returns, hauntings and memory, particularly in relation to his maternal homeland of Iraq and the violence inflicted upon it by successive US wars, invasions and occupations. *The Ballad of Special Ops Cody* is a stop motion animation based around the strange story of Special Ops Cody, a toy figurine given to children of deployed US soldiers. who we see in a mission to free the unwilling Mesopotamian votive statues encased in its vitrines. *The invisible enemy should not exist* is a life-long project by the artist to produce ghosts of looted and destroyed artefacts from Iraq, these are produced to scale from food and newspaper packaging found in shops catering to the Middle East’s diasporas in the US and elsewhere.

P I O A B A D ’s *Thoughtful Gifts* investigate objects and documents uncovered by the artist while conducting research at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Archives in California. Confuting the myth that the sociopolitical legacy of the Marcos family is one isolated to the Philippines, the works summon a transnational cast of characters that have either been in favor of or vitiated by the United States’ quest for empire and the perpetuation of its political mythologies.

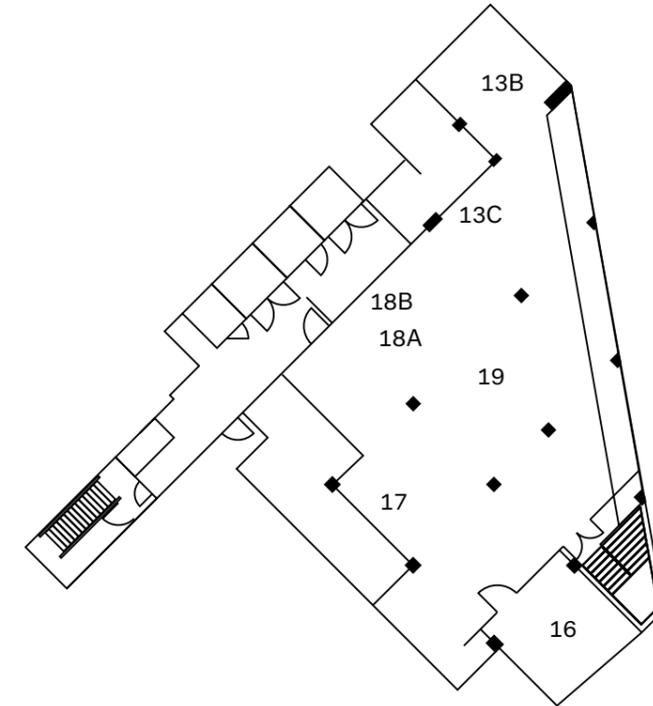
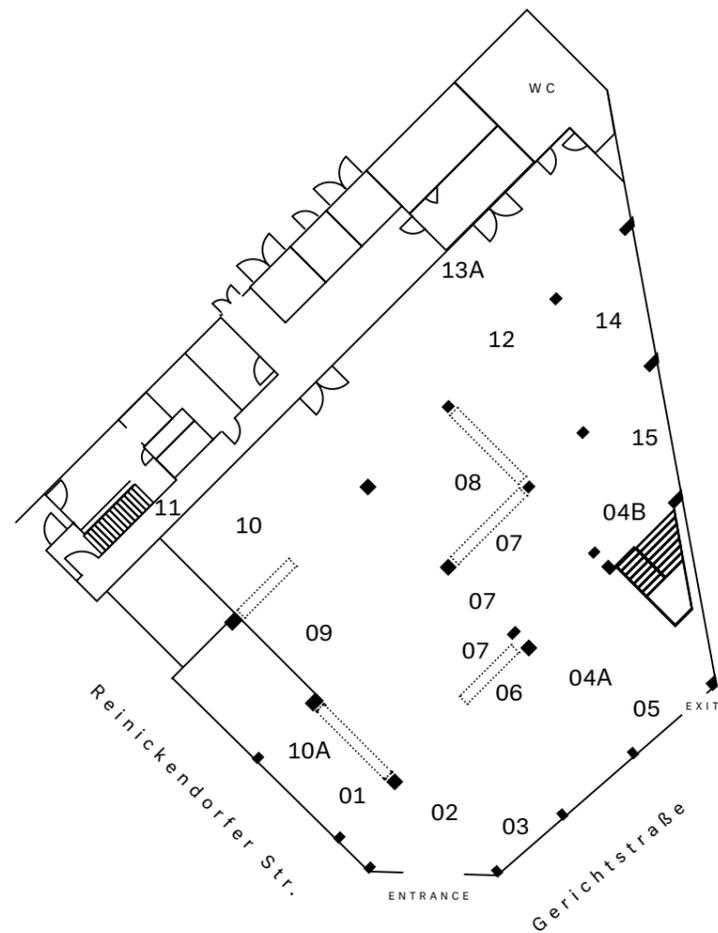
O U M A R M B E N G U E ’s installation *Lost & Found (gris gris)* is a work made of multiple elements and dimensions, centred on the idea of the postmodern immigrant’s encounter with the West. Thinking through the layering of identity, its arithmetics and geometries, the artist highlights the movements and motions of this journey and metamorphosis – offering space, too, to the role of dignity, self-respect, and personal beliefs in this process.

Listen to Things
More often than Beings,
Hear the voice of fire,
Hear the voice of water.
Listen in the wind,
To the bush that is sobbing:
This is the ancestors, breathing.

Birago Diop, “Spirits”

FLOORPLAN

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY



01 SAVVY. DOC WITH SAITABAO KAIYARE & ELENA SCHILLING
If Objects Could Speak
Documentary Film / Augmented Reality Installation, 30min, 2020

02 NDIDI DIKE
Commodities of Consumption and Sites of Extraction in the Global South
Installation, Vanilla, gold, indigo, cotton, curtains, mixed objects, fiberglass, cake stands, table cloths, variable dimensions, 2020

03 RAND ABDUL JABBAR
Minaret of Anah
Multi-media installation of archival documents, drawings, photographs, and film, 2018–ongoing

04 JULIEN CREUZET
04A *ils ont fait du mal à coeur / ils ont fait du mal à mon corps / ils ont fait du mal à coeur / ils ont fait du mal à mon corps (...)*
Installation, Metal, plastic, fabric, string, netting, rice, dried cotton plants, sea shell, dried gourd, electrical wiring, 230 x 100 x 40 cm, 2019

04B *pourquoi nos chemins / se sont croisés / à une névralgie si chaotique / Kepone Merex Curlone / écotoxique exotique / épileptique / fuck you (...)*
Installation, Metal, plastic, fabric, string, feather, electrical wiring, 250 x 140 x 70 cm, 2019

05 MICHAEL RAKOWITZ
Letter To An Encyclopedic Museum Curator
Text from email correspondence, ongoing

06 MAURICE MBOA
Piece for the unknown soldier
Painting, 11 x 87 cm, 2021

Wamba
Painting, 11 x 87 cm, 2021

07 NORA AL-BADRİ
Babylonian Vision
GAN video, and neuronal ancestral sculptures series, images, 2020

08 SENZENI MTHWAKAZI MARASELA
Izithombe Zethandawo Esizithandayo
Archival prints, 29 x 29.7 x 42 cm, 2017

09 BENJI BOYADGIAN
The Temporary Ruin: Cabinet of Curiosities
27 Watercolors on Bristol paper, plywood and found objects from Wadi Al Shami, Jerusalem, Palestine, Variable dimensions, 2010–2019

10 BASEL ABBAS AND RUANNE ABOU-RAHME
10A *May Amnesia Never Kiss Us On The Mouth*
Web project made available on ipad

10B *And Yet My Mask Is Powerful Part 2*
3D-printed masks, tables, corkboards, documents, images, drawings, books, tools, cardboard boxes, wooden pallet, bricks, dried plants from sites of destroyed villages, pine branches, burnt wood, log, rocks, house remains/foundations, broken ceramics, garbage, mini projections, 2016

11 MEMORY BIWA
SunBorn Lullabies and Battle Cries
Audiowork, 2020

12 DANIELA ZAMBRANO ALMIDÓN & PABLO SANTACANA LÓPEZ
HumboldtHuaca: Respect for the Ancestors! Rituality in Resistance and Desecration of Western Spaces
Single-channel video and multimedia installation, 21:07 min, 2021

13 GABRIEL ROSSELL SANTILLÁN
13A *Colibri, Koos, Guie'Ripapa, Maxa, Axolotl*
Life of the sun, death of the sun, and emotional plant transfer
Iron oxide image with Wixarika letters

13B *Obsidiano*
Video installation, Mini DV on DVD, Obsidian stone, laptop and labyrinth, 2006

Huehuillas
Three curtains, 2m x 140 cm, 2017

Los Lobos
Film, 2017–2021

El Quemado
Film, 2011–2013

Despedida de los muertos
Photograph, 140 x 112 cm, 2012

14 NORA CHIPAUMIRE
Arias
Three-channel video installation, 2021

15 AKRAM ZAATARI
An Extraordinary Event
8 Inkjet prints, 30 x 43 cm each, 2018

16 H A M Z E B Y T Y Ç I

JOŽKA

Film, 26', Czech Republic/Germany, 2016

17 G L A D Y S K A L I C H I N I

... still these practices are done in sharing her stories

Three-Channel Video Installation, 2020-2021

18 T A N Y A A N G U I Ñ I G A

18A Swaddle Stool (Underbelly)

Sculpture, Self-drying terra-cotta, canvas, wool,

50.80 x 48.26 x 48.26 cm, 2015

18B Preserve 2

Sculpture, Copper electroplated gauze,

53.34 x 40.64 cm, 2015

19 N O A R A Q U I N T A N A

Dense forest (Mandioca e Tamba-tajá)

“Belle Époque of the tropics” series

Drawing, Latex, graphite and silk,

130cm x 90cm, 2021

Dense forest (Patauí e Caeté)

“Belle Époque of the tropics” series

Drawing, Latex, graphite and silk,

130cm x 90cm, 2021

Evenings of water

“Belle Époque of the tropics” series

Object, Latex, silk, resin, metal, cotton and LED,

48cm x 48cm x 8cm, 2021

01 SAVVY.DOC WITH SAITABAO KAIYARE & ELENA SCHILLING

If Objects Could Speak

Documentary Film / Augmented Reality Installation, 30min, 2020

The storages of European museums are filled with countless objects/subjects whose stories and histories have not been remembered. The filmmakers Saitabao Kaiyare and Elena Schilling are interested in one that is stored in the Linden Museum in Stuttgart. All that is known there about its origin is that it was taken from Kenya and entered in the inventory book in 1903. The physical object/subject doesn't have the freedom to travel, so they create a 3D digital copy in order to bring it back and bring it forward to Kenya in an attempt to maybe find its stories and histories. Through this precise example and through the openness of listening, the filmmakers unfold the urgency of colonial histories and continuities, and expand the notion of restitution.

SAITABAO KAIYARE is a writer, director, and producer from Nairobi, Kenya. He was part of the International Class at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg in Germany. His films and TV shows have been critically acclaimed across film festivals internationally in Africa and Europe. He is one of the company directors at Baruu Collective, a Film, TV, and documentary production company based in Nairobi, Kenya.

ELENA SCHILLING is a filmmaker based in Stuttgart, Germany. She works on movies, multimedia projects and installations for public institutions, and creates media workshops for kids and teenagers. She graduated from Eberhard-Karls-University in Tübingen in 2016 with a bachelor thesis about the use of virtual reality. She has been working as a production assistant and freelance journalist in Tübingen, Hamburg and Stuttgart, e.g. at the European Media House (SWR) and the Children film house in Ludwigsburg.

02 NDIDI DIKE

Commodities of Consumption and Sites of Extraction in the Global South

Installation, vanilla, gold, indigo, cotton, curtains, mixed objects, fiberglass, cake stands, table cloths, variable dimensions, 2020

The ongoing catastrophic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and intertwined socio-

economic emergencies have exposed fault lines of our various marginalised and disenfranchised societies. Other exigencies can be linked to the Anthropocene and historic acts of abuse carried out over the course of centuries.

Within this multi-faceted and ongoing artistic research project, Ndidi Diki has been intensely engaging with historical archives and working across a range of artistic media including lens-based technologies, collage, installation, painting, and sculpture. These foregrounding modes of practice have guided her investigations, across time and with a global reach, that dive into pre- and post-colonial histories of slavery, forced migration, displacement, decolonization, identity, gender inequality, and patriarchy. Dike has also been concerned with the political dimensions of commodities: their consumption, circulation, manufacture, as well as geo-political policies that underwrite the control and extractive industries that govern natural resources and appropriation in Africa. Part of her interest in these histories is the truth that the effects of the past survive in the present. Or, as Maya Angelou puts it, "History despite its wretched pain cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage need not be lived again."

This installation takes up consumer products connected with the transatlantic slave trade along with current day global commodity markets. For instance, Ndidi uses a three-tier cake stand and paper doilies that are commonplace in British high tea ceremonies as recurring modes of display in the work. The cake stand metonymically symbolizes colonial powers in the transatlantic space, and their stacking of resources used to prop up and feed European industrial economies. She connects these devices and metaphors with the materiality of the products from some of the seaports and "sites of extraction" along the West African coast. Four key products are addressed in the work: gold, cotton, indigo, and vanilla. Each resource-cake stand unit within the overall installation depicts the varied stages and lives of the processes that eventually become the commodities of consumption. The stands are situated within a tableau of hanging photographic transparencies, each similarly dedicated to one of the four products/natural resources. These hanging transparencies feature layered photographs, collage, reworked imagery and symbols, derived from both her personal archive of images assembled through research and site visits, as well as imagery publicly available online.

NDIDI DIKE is a contemporary British Nigerian artist who works across a multiplicity of fields including painting, sculpture, collage, lens-based media, video, and installation. Born in London, she returned to Nigeria to train as a painter and emerged from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with a BA degree in Fine and Applied Arts in 1984. She is a self-taught sculptor with decades of transgressive sculptural practice. Dike primarily works with a special interest in personal archives and long term research-based projects, engaging with global histories to address the pre- and post-colonial historic and social-economic legacy of the enslaved by forced migration, tied in with "Atlantic World Relations". Dike also engages the geo-political era of the natural resource extraction industries that investigates the global entanglements of material (dis)possession and postcolonial exploitation in the Global South, focusing on the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Other topics include cross-border/country migration, market aesthetics, consumerism, globalization, living patriarchy, gender equity, multiculturalism, decolonization, identity, and contemporary politics. Dike resides in Lagos where she runs her own studio.

Recent solo and group international exhibitions include: *State of The Nation: New Works and Installations*, National Museum Onikan, Lagos, Nigeria, 2016; *Ndidi Dike – Constellations Floating Space, Motion and Remembrance*, Iwalewahaus Bayreuth, Germany, 2017; *In The Guise of Resource Control*, Villa Vasslieff, Paris, France, 2017; *Exafrica exhibition*, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 2017-2018; *Vanishing Voices*, special project 11th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2018, *Dak'Art Biennale*, Dakar, Senegal, 2018; *Feedback: Art Africa and the 1980s*, Iwalewahaus Bayreuth, Germany, 2018; *Prince/sses Of The City*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France, 2019; *Lagos Biennial*, Independence Building Lagos Island, Nigeria, 2019; *Memoria accounts of another history*; Frac MÉCA, Bordeaux, France, 2021.

03 RAND ABDUL JABBAR

Minaret of Anah

Multi-media installation of archival documents, drawings, photographs, and film, 2018–ongoing

In the 1980s, the historic town of Anah in Iraq, once described by Gertrude Bell as "3 hours long and one street wide", was completely submerged as part of a large-scale damming project. The town and its inhabitants, including an 11th century minaret, were extracted and re-located nearby to new Anah. Rand Abdul Jabbar excavates the histories of the lost Anah, taking as a focal point the tumultuous history of the town's minaret, which was destroyed and reconstructed all of three times. In the 1980's the minaret succumbed to forces of modernization; in 2006 it was destroyed as part of a campaign targeting Iraqi cultural heritage sites; and again in 2016, this time by ISIL. Collaborating

with local craftsmen and archaeologists working to once more re-build the minaret, as well as with family and government archives related to the old and new towns of Anah, Abdul Jabbar's work transforms the "ruin", historically a romantic space that stands within the matrix of paradigms of modernity, into a site for the reclamation of agency and community empowerment.

RAND ABDUL JABBAR borrows from and reconstructs the ephemera of place, history and memory, employing design, sculpture and installation as primary mediums of operation. Current research pursuits examine historic, cultural, and archaeological narratives surrounding Iraq, interrogating the fragility of its remnants to create and compose forms that draw on artefacts, architecture and mythology. Simultaneously, she explores and contests with individual and collective memory to produce fragmentary reconstructions of historic events and past experiences. In her latest work, *Every Act of Recognition Alters What Survives*, Abdul Jabbar led a participatory process in which women of the Iraqi and Arabic diaspora engaged in dialogue around the role of memory in relation to place and history. The result is a dynamic, episodic installation for the Shubbak Festival (2021) at London's Chelsea Physic Garden consisting of a series of sculptural interventions, performances and a digital archive. Her work has been exhibited at the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, Jameel Arts Centre, Rabat Biennale, and the Biennale d'Architecture d'Orléans (2019). Abdul Jabbar received a Master of Architecture from Columbia University in 2014.

04 JULIEN CREUZET

04A *ils ont fait du mal à coeur / ils ont fait du mal à mon corps / ils ont fait du mal à coeur / ils ont fait du mal à mon corps (...)*

Installation, Metal, plastic, fabric, string, netting, rice, dried cotton plants, sea shell, dried gourd, electrical wiring, 230 x 100 x 40 cm, 2019

This composite installation is made of disparate, sometimes antagonistic, synthetic, and organic elements. Grains of rice trapped in a plastic bag combined with a seashell and dried cotton plants evoke the violent history of distant colonies overlaid with today's global food economy, in which rice represents the staple food of more than half of the world's population. Rope emerges as a common thread. Often entangled and knotted, it binds up amorphous forms to the point where the individual elements become indistinguishable.

Text by Laura Herman

04B *pourquoi nos chemins / se sont croisés / à une névralgie si chaotique / Kepone Merex Curlone / écotoxique exotique / épileptique / fuck you (...)*
Installation, Metal, plastic, fabric, string, feather, electrical wiring, 250 x 140 x 70 cm, 2019

My chewing gum is so limp under the heat of the sand of the Prêcheur, an acidic chemical under the feet, in the sand before entering the acidic water: salty, salty, very acidic. My root, potato, and purplish root chewing gum. Intuition follows crevices, fluorescent scars.

Starting point. Mom will have a breast, a plastic church, plastic cross. Mother weeping for the plundered glass, a breast, the holy spirit. The islands of paradise, fusion of the volcano.

Uterus reeks of it, purulent body sweats, sex of sex, latex, oily skin, plane spits on us, plane vomits environmental laws. One breast, electric wire jellyfish.

Poem by Julien Creuzet

Suspended like pendulums from fixed points in the ceiling, vertical assemblages gently twirl under the influence of passing visitors whose bodies set the air in motion. Rather than speaking of objects or sculptures, Creuzet prefers to call them “forms”. Even more specifically, he describes these large assemblages as “votive forms” that are filled and forged with emotional connections and spiritual relationships: emblematic of recovery, ritual, mystery, and sensuous forces of supernatural absorption.

Informed by Antillean poetics, Creuzet refuses to privilege one form above others. Instead, elements thwart categorical positions of alterity – the forms emancipate themselves. They learn from the past and continue doing so, morphing and becoming. As living entities, his assemblages break with one of the primary conventions of the visual arts, namely the material object. Creuzet embeds energy into these forms by activating what he calls “imaginary batteries.” The heterogeneous elements are gleaned from across geographies – collected, purchased, or created – and enter into new and ongoing relations within and across forms.

Creuzet’s works can also be understood as scores: songs of lament and rebellion, which offer a counterweight and an assertion of human potential in the face of repressive colonial regimes, inextricably linked with current social and environmental injustice.

JULIEN CREUZET is an Afro-Caribbean artist living and working in Montreuil, France. He creates protean artworks incorporating poetry, music, sculpture, assemblage, film, and animation. Evoking trans-oceanic postcolonial transactions in relation to multiple temporalities, the artist places his own inherited past, present, and future at the heart of his production. Eluding generalized narratives and cultural reductions, Creuzet’s work often spotlights anachronisms and social realities to construct objects of irreducibility. Akin to relics from the future brought ashore by an oceanic

tide, Creuzet’s works materialize as amplified tokens of history, technology, geography, and selves.

Recent solo exhibitions include: Camden Arts Centre, Londres, Angleterre (tba); Document, Chicago, USA, CAN Centre d’art Neuchâtel; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; Fondation Ricard, Paris, France; Bétonsalon, Paris, France. Recent group shows include: Manifesta 13, Marseille, France; Wiels Contemporary Art Center, Bruxelles, Belgique; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany; Kampala Art Biennale, Kampala, Uganda; Dak’Art 2012, Biennale de l’Art Africain Contemporain, Senegal; Biennale de Gwangju, South Korea Biennale des Rencontres de Bamako, Bamako, Mali; Lafayette Anticipations, Paris, France; Biennale de Lyon, France; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France. Julien Creuzet is currently nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp 2021.

05 MICHAEL RAKOWITZ

Letter To An Encyclopedic Museum Curator
Text from email correspondence

This letter by artist Michael Rakowitz is one of many addressed to a curator at encyclopedic museums in America. His response to an invitation to participate in an exhibition is to call the curator and the institution to confront the West’s insatiable appetite for Eastern artefacts and objects. The artist is asking the Western institution to return the stolen pieces in their collection to their people in Iraq: to consider the possibilities of repairing their loss by engaging with accountability and responsibility, beyond apologies without action.

Further works by Michael Rakowitz are shown in this exhibition’s other chapter at ifa Gallery Berlin.

MICHAEL RAKOWITZ is an Iraqi-American artist working at the intersection of problem solving and troublemaking. His work has appeared in venues worldwide including dOCUMENTA (13), P.S.1, MoMA, MassMOCA, Castello di Rivoli, Palais de Tokyo, the 16th Biennale of Sydney, the 10th and 14th Istanbul Biennials, Sharjah Biennial 8, Tirana Biennale, National Design Triennial at the Cooper-Hewitt, Transmediale 05, FRONT Triennial in Cleveland, and CURRENT:LA Public Art Triennial. He has had solo projects and exhibitions with Creative Time, Tate Modern in London, The Wellin Museum of Art, MCA Chicago, Lombard Freid Gallery and Jane Lombard Gallery in New York, SITE Santa Fe, Galerie Barbara Wien in Berlin, Rhona Hoffman Gallery in Chicago, Malmö Konsthall, Tensta Konsthall, and Kunstraum Innsbruck.

He is the recipient of the 2020 Nasher Prize; the 2018 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts; a 2012 Tiffany Foundation Award; a 2008 Creative Capital Grant; a Sharjah Biennial Jury Award; a 2006 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship Grant in Architecture and Environmental Structures; the 2003 Dena Foundation Award, and the

2002 Design 21 Grand Prix from UNESCO. He was awarded the Fourth Plinth commission (2018–2020) in London’s Trafalgar Square. From 2019–2020, a survey of Rakowitz’s work traveled from Whitechapel Gallery in London, to Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea in Torino, to the Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai. Rakowitz is represented by Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York; and Barbara Wien Galerie, Berlin. He lives and works in Chicago.

06 MAURICE MBOA
Piece for the unknown soldier
Painting, 11 x 87 cm, 2021

It all starts with a uniform, a military garment which is the colonial expression of that which has been imposed on us. Indeed, domination is represented in this piece of cloth: a blindfold in the imagination of the oppressed and the conqueror. These military men in uniform are often portrayed as supreme individuals who possess a knowledge that must be imposed upon others.

Sankara is a fighter: cancelling debt, and championing the earliest debate for restitution. He is young, dynamic, and confident, though some of his actions seem doubtful. One could say he inspires and imposes the counter-logic of colonialism. He advocates for equality amongst his people and for development to be collective. He questions the military outfit and the fragile equilibrium within. He governs, but is a gentle, tolerant person who arrived at that leading position as a military figure with this garment that imposed colonised attributes and signs of royal chieftaincy. This garment, coming from the West, dominates and signifies power. It can thus be perceived as a sign of colonisation in both the conscious and the unconscious.

Mboa uses this garment to show the impact it maintains on our naivety regarding the pressured force of external power and its subsumption: describing unconsciousness in its pictorial decomposition. Through this analysis, he deconstructs Sankara’s positionality.

Wamba
Painting, 11 x 87 cm, 2021

Africa is a mother: vitality is within her body. We watch a movement, blossoming with hope and richness. The other has been tarnished by her imprisonment as a victimized soul, a martyr of inflicted sin, enshrouded in a “mistake” that never existed. One cannot be of blame in this fabrication, of and for something, possibly unrealized. Mboa embraces and demands a consciousness of divine enrichment.

MAURICE MBOA is an artist and painter who has been based in Geneva for several years. His approach is delocalized, outside of time and space.

He uses abstraction as a methodology by creating anthropomorphic figures, universal and hybrid characters with facial features made of grooves. These figures evoke without representing. The particularity of metal engraved with streaks, circular, and furrowed forms, are covered with acrylic and gold leaves. He incorporates touches of color that transform into steel plate expressions. Each of Mboa’s works require him to cut into the metal for weeks with his engraving cutter, handled like a pen. His intensely physical creative work is combined with reflections on identity. Mboa’s figures are more often feelings rather than defined characters and his artistic path is like his journey: of multiplicity.

07 NORA AL-BADRI

Babylonian Vision
GAN video, and neuronal ancestral sculptures series, images, 2020

Al-Badri expands on speculative archaeology, and decolonial as well as machine learning based museum practices by generating technoheritage. A pre-trained neural network based on GAN technology (General Adversarial Networks) was trained with 10.000 images from five different museum collections with the largest collections of Mesopotamian, Neo-Sumerian and Assyrian artefacts. The images were in the majority collected through web crawling and scraping and without the institutions’ approval (even though she asked each museum beforehand) and just two through their open API programmes. Subsequently new synthetic images evolve as a living memory of the images.

The generated image is at the same time the artefact itself. Yet, materiality is very important, since the input images are images of material objects of our past. If MI (Machine Intelligence) is seen as a technology performing and processing our collective memory it makes sense to apply it to our big cultural data of the past and to generate new images as traces and circulating image worlds. Applying MI to cultural big data, supplies other, more speculative and abstract insights on the search for a visual language, form and pattern of an era within a specific spatial context: Babylonian. The input images of these databases carry time and memory themselves (patina, broken pieces, most of them mid- to low-res). The series consists of over 150 GAN videos and over 200 images.

NORA AL-BADRI is a multi-disciplinary and conceptual media artist with a German-Iraqi background, living and working in Berlin. Her works are research-based as well as paradisciplinary and as much post-colonial as post-digital. She graduated in political sciences at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt/Main and was the first artist-in-residence at the Swiss Federal Institute for Technology (EPFL) and its Laboratory for Experimental Museology (eM+) in 2020. Her practice focuses on the politics and the

emancipatory potential of new technologies such as machine intelligence or data sculpting, non-human agency and transcendence. Al-Badri's artistic material is a speculative archaeology from fossils to artefacts or performative interventions in museums and other public spaces, that respond to the inherent power structures.

Her work was featured in *The New York Times*, *BBC*, *The Times*, *Artnet*, *Wired*, *Le Monde Afrique*, *Financial Times*, *Arte TV*, *The Independent*, *New Statesman*, *Hyperallergic*, *Smithsonian*, *Al Ahram*, *Egypt Today*, *Vice*, *Hürriyet*, *Dezeen*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, *Spiegel Online*, *Heise*, *The Boston Globe*, *Dezeen*, *Archdaily*, *Polska*, *La informacion*, *De Volkskrant*, *Gizmodo*, *New Scientist*, *Popular Science* and *The Verge*, amongst others.

08 S E N Z E N I M T H W A K A Z I
M A R A S E L A
Izithombe Zethandawo Esizithandayo
Archival prints, 29 x 29.7 x 42 cm, 2017

Senzeni Mthwakazi Marasela performed her alter ego Theodorah for six years, 2013 to 2019. The images shown here were a way she chose to document the journey. She remembers: "When I was growing up as a child, we used to have studios where we took images with luxurious backgrounds as a way to escape the harsh realities of their 1980's South Africa." These images are about the escape from the life Theodorah has to live, searching for Gebane. Marasela makes a conscious choice to never represent Gebane. The journey is about the evolution Theodorah goes through while she waits.

In the project, Marasela wears a yellow dress that her mother gave her, taking on Theodorah as an alter ego. Senzeni has always felt that Theodorah's story is representative of that of many black women in South Africa. The emblematic yellow dress has been translated into drawings, prints and thread works, always with the figure's back to the audience. The story of Theodorah is important in Marasela's work and is at times combined with that of Sarah Baartman (who was "exhibited" around nineteenth-century Europe as the "Hottentot Venus") and of the artist herself.

S E N Z E N I M T H W A K A Z I M A R A S E L A
is a cross-disciplinary artist who explores photography, video, prints, and mixed-medium installations involving textiles and embroidery. Her work deals with history, memory, and personal narrative, emphasizing historical gaps and overlooked figures. Senzeni graduated from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in 1998, and shortly thereafter completed a residency at the South African National Gallery, culminating in her work for the Gallery's Fresh exhibition series.

Senzeni Marasela's work in media which includes embroidery, print and video as well as performance

has been widely exhibited in South Africa, Europe and the US. Her work features in prominent local and international collections, including MoMA, New York. She was recently part of the Johannesburg Pavilion at the last Venice Biennale.

Born in Thokoza, South Africa, Marasela studied at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, where she obtained a BA Fine Arts in 1998. In 2003 she started a project titled "Theodorah comes to Johannesburg", a durational performance based on her mother Theodorah's stories about travels from the rural area of Mvenyane to Johannesburg, a journey of 11 hours. Like many young black women in the city, her mother was traumatised by events that took place in apartheid South Africa during the 1960s. Many black women returned to live in the countryside and many more were forced to undertake journeys into strangeness.

09 B E N J I B O Y A D G I A N
The Temporary Ruin: Cabinet of Curiosities
27 Watercolors on Bristol paper, plywood and found objects from Wadi Al Shami, Jerusalem, Palestine, Variable dimensions, 2010-2019

For over ten years, Palestinian artist Benji Boyadgian has roamed the Wadi Al Shami, or the "Valley of Garbage" as it is known to Israelis, collecting surface materials that testify to past and present lives around the valley. His "surface archeology" approach gathers together objects ranging from discarded building materials to fragments of destroyed olive trees and historic artefacts, producing a layered reading of the valley's history. Located between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, between highways and Israeli settlements, Wadi Al Shami is slated for settlement. In light of this fact, the collection slowly transforms into a historical record of loss.

Courtesy of Art Jameel Collection

B E N J I B O Y A D G I A N studied architecture at ENSAPLV School of Architecture (L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris La Villette), specializing in urban sociology in post-conflict areas. Boyadgian works on research-based projects that explore themes revolving around perception, memory, territory, architecture and landscape. Boyadgian lives and works in Jerusalem. His recent exhibitions include; 2020: *Yerevan Biennial*, digital exhibition; *Guests: Artists and Craftspeople*, Istanbul Modern, 2019; *CrossSections_notes*, Exhibition Laboratory at the University of the Arts Helsinki (Uniarts Helsinki), 2019; *CrossSections_perspectives*, Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm, 2019; *Phantom Limbs*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, 2019; *Shared Religious Sites*, DEPO, Istanbul, 2019; *Intimate Terrains*, Palestinian Museum, Birzeit, 2019; *Climbing through the tide*, B7L9, Tunis, 2019; *Jerusalem Show IV, 'Actual and possible'*, Al Ma'mal Foundation for

Contemporary Art, Jerusalem, 2019; *CrossSections Trilogy*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, 2018; *Sharjah Biennial 13 Offsite: Shifting Ground*, Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah, 2017; among many others.

Boyadgian attended the Young Artists Residency Program of Confrontation Through Art Project, organized by EMAA and Rooftop Theatre Group, Nicosia. She is a grant holder of IASPIS, Stockholm and was a guest artist at Villa Romana, Florence. She joined the International Artist Residency Program at Istanbul Modern.

10 B A S E L A B B A S A N D R U A N N E
A B O U - R A H M E
10A *May Amnesia Never Kiss Us On The Mouth*
Web project made available on ipad

In development for nearly a decade, May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth examines how people bear witness to and narrate experiences of violence, loss, displacement, and forced migration through performance. The title of the project is lifted from a translation of writer Roberto Bolaño's "Infraredist Manifesto," written in Mexico City in 1976. It is at once an indictment of the presiding artistic community's complacency and an urgent call that artists remain attentive: "May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth. May it never kiss us." Currently accessible, *Part I Postscript: after everything is extracted* looks at mourning and loss.

"May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth," is co-commissioned by Dia Art Foundation, New York, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York."

10B *And Yet My Mask Is Powerful Part 2*
3D-printed masks, tables, corkboards, documents, images, drawings, books, tools, cardboard boxes, wooden pallet, bricks, dried plants from sites of destroyed villages, pine branches, burnt wood, log, rocks, house remains/foundations, broken ceramics, garbage, mini projections, 2016

First the air is blue and then
it is bluer and then green and then
black I am blacking out and yet
my mask is powerful
it pumps my blood with power
—Adrienne Rich

Neolithic masks taken from the West Bank and surrounding areas, and stored in private collections are hacked and 3D-printed. The oldest known masks, dating back 9,000 years, mutate from dead fossil to living matter. Copies circulate in Palestine, eerily akin to a black ski mask. A group of youth wear them at the site of a destroyed Palestinian village. They become other and anonymous in this accidental moment of ritual and myth: initiating a series of trips to possess and almost be possessed by these strangely living sites of erasure and wreckage.

The piece confronts the apocalyptic imaginary and violence that dominates our contemporary moment. Taking Adrienne Rich's poem "Diving into the Wreck" as the beginnings of a script, it asks what happens to people, places, things, and materials when a living fabric is destroyed. The project uses the trips taken by young Palestinians to the sites of their destroyed villages inside Israel, as an avatar for re-thinking the site of the wreckage. In these returns, the site of wreckage becomes the very material from which to trace the faint contours of another possible time. Something strange happens in these returns - the destroyed sites emerge not just as places of ruin or trauma, but appear full of an unmediated vitality. The young people making these trips treat the site as a living fabric. They reactivate the disused spaces, camp out on site, eat, sing, dance. But even more, something in the very tissue of the site itself is undeniably living and resisting colonial erasures. It permeates from the soil into the stone and back into every bit of vegetation. There is a swarm of non-human life forces here, from the insects to the wild thorns, to the pomegranate trees that are inscribed with the living memory and story of the site. And it is here in the living archive of the vegetation itself that the site lives and breathes.

In its intersections between performativity and ritual, body and artifact, thingness and virtuality, it begins to splice together a counter-mythology to the dominant mythologies of the present. The layers of images, texts, sound and things perform and activate various forms of returns, flashforwards and déjà vu unfolding in this gesture a dense story of erasures and reappearances, dispossession and resistance, the archaic resonating in the contemporary.

In development for nearly a decade, May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth examines how people bear witness to and narrate experiences of violence, loss, displacement, and forced migration through performance. The title of the project is lifted from a translation of writer Roberto Bolaño's "Infraredist Manifesto," written in Mexico City in 1976. It is at once an indictment of the presiding artistic community's complacency and an urgent call that artists remain attentive: "May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth," is co-commissioned by Dia Art Foundation, New York, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Currently accessible, *Part I Postscript: after everything is extracted* looks at mourning and loss.

B A S E L A B B A S A N D R U A N N E
A B O U - R A H M E work together across a range of sound, image, text, installation and performance practices. Their practice is engaged in the intersections between performativity, political imaginaries, the body and virtuality. Across their works they probe a contemporary landscape marked by seemingly perpetual crisis and an endless "present", one that is shaped by a politics of desire and disaster. They have

been developing a body of work that questions this suspension of the present and searches for ways in which an altogether different imaginary and language can emerge that is not bound within colonial/capitalist narrative and discourse. In their projects, they find themselves excavating, activating and inventing incidental narratives, figures, gestures and sites as material for re-imagining the possibilities of the present. Often reflecting on ideas of non-linearity in the form of returns, amnesia and déjà vu, and in the process unfolding the slippages between actuality and projection (fiction, myth, wish), what is and what could be. Largely their approach has been one of sampling materials both existing and self-authored in the form of sound, image, text, objects and recasting them into altogether new “scripts”. The result is a practice that investigates the political, visceral, material possibilities of sound, image, text and site, taking on the form of multi-media installations and live sound/image performances.

11 M E M O R Y B I W A
SunBorn Lullabies and Battle Cries
Audiowork, 2020

“The embers left in hallowed fireplaces are now burning, for many suns to rise.”

Memory Biwa’s piece is conceived as an “aural procession” of voices, instruments, and movement. It contains a multi-layering reverberation and a cacophony of a lullaby sung at dawn: battle cries, chants, ululations, bow-playing, all in landscapes which trace narratives and re-enactments of resistance to German colonization in the early 20th century Namibia. These traces are drawn from aural, sartorial, and performative practices, which inform notions of subjectivity and the re-centering of alternative epistemologies and imaginaries.

Biwa’s inaugural sonic installation was on a train journey between Cape Town and Stellenbosch in 2014; as part of a transnational exhibition and research project Artificial Facts. Extracts of that piece will be heard in this exhibition, bringing together these moments, and “returning” it to the place, in Berlin, where it was first recorded in 2011.

M E M O R Y B I W A is a historian, she works with both historical and contemporary sound collections/archives. Biwa conducted research during the centennial commemorations on anti-colonial resistance in Namibia. Her written and visual/sonic research on narratives and performances as archives inform notions of subjectivity and the re-centering of alternative epistemologies and imaginaries.

As part of a duo on the project Listening at Pungwe with Robert Machiri, Biwa has presented lecture performances, installations and exhibitions in Cape Town, Durban, Accra, Dakar, Perth, Lausanne, and

Berlin. Biwa is from southern Namibia, and has recently relocated to Germany.

12 D A N I E L A Z A M B R A N O A L M I D Ó N
& P A B L O S A N T A C A N A L Ó P E Z
HumboldtHuaca: Respect for the Ancestors! Rituality in Resistance and Desecration of Western Spaces
Single-channel video and multimedia installation,
21:07 min, 2021

The project brings together, through relational art, different groups of cultural resistance and indigenous vindication, in assemblies of debate, performance, and action. The central theme is the access to the lost, denied, forbidden, desecrated, and privatised knowledge of the indigenous peoples from colonial times to the present, in the recently reconstructed Berliner Stadtschloss, housing the Humboldt Forum.

It has taken shape as a collective and ritual process: together with the Latin American community in Berlin, the aim is to call for the return of looted heritages from the ethnographic museum in Berlin.

Since the conquest of the Americas, indigenous peoples have been subjected to a Western civilisation process based on the delegitimization of existing societies. In order to justify colonialism, the invaders invalidated pre-existing systems of life, branding them as “primitive and savage practices of barbaric, uneducated, and inhuman people. Indigenous communities, however, through their resistance, continue to maintain and transmit their knowledge to the present day, even in processes of migration to colonising countries, where many communities intensify their activity. They celebrate their memory and identity in order to reclaim and dignify what was taken from them and is still a source of discrimination today. Numerous human remains and sacred subjects/objects from these cultures are now exhibited in contexts such as the Humboldt Forum, which houses the collections of the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin-Dahlem, one of the most extensive ethnographic collections in the world.

In the context of its opening in 2020, a series of actions were carried out to make visible the work of associations, collectives, and artists from Peru and Latin America who struggle to transmit and dignify cultures with indigenous roots that are still subjugated and oppressed today. The actions built a critical dialogue with the museum as a Western symbol of knowledge production and colonial perpetuation. The actions culminated in a ritual-protest in front of the Humboldt Forum, where the importance of the restitution of indigenous human remains back to their place of origin was clearly stated. The claim focused on the specific case of a MALLQUI (indigenous sacred human remains) looted from the lower Chillón Valley (the former Chuquitanta hacienda, in Lima, Peru).

D A N I E L A Z A M B R A N O A L M I D Ó N is a Peruvian researcher and interdisciplinary artist, with experience in artistic projects and research on Andean-Amazonian popular culture in Peru, migratory groups, interculturality, and memorial culture. She received her bachelor in Plastic and Visual Arts, with a specialisation in Sculpture and Interdisciplinary Arts from the Escuela Nacional Superior Autónoma de Bellas Artes del Perú, and is currently studying for a Master of Art in Context at the Universität der Künste in Berlin. Since 2011, she has been working on researching textile art with the EnRedLanita Project. She is director of the project “Tejiendo Caminos”, a decentralised intercultural art project founded in 2014 together with community leaders, regional environmental activists, and artists. She is also founder of Ashlanqueras Collective, Laboratory of Interventions in Urban Public Space, and of Yakunewen association in Berlin. Since 2011, she leads workshops and courses in plastic and visual arts, weaving, visual culture, and artistic research. In Berlin, she works on projects of cultural management, mediation, intercultural pedagogy and participatory art. She is part of Berlin platform DecolonizeM21, with whom she organized the international panel discussion, “Devuelve pe: Restitution and self-determination of Latin American heritage”. Her work has been exhibited in Germany (ifa Gallery, 2021; n.g.b.k., 2019; SAVVY Contemporary School of Design, 2019; ONK-Festival Offenes Neukölln, 2019, AWO Kreisverband, 2018), Lima (Galería Municipal Pancho Fierro, 2018; Galeria Ignacio Merino, 2014; Museo Metropolitano de Lima, 2014), Cusco (Museo Santo Domingo de Qorikancha, 2016).

P A B L O S A N T A C A N A L Ó P E Z is a visual artist and art researcher. He holds a Master in Architecture from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and the Faculdade de Arquitectura de São Paulo, a Master of Arts from the Institute for Art in Context at the Universität der Künste Berlin, and currently enrolled as PhD student at the Research training group “Identity and heritage” at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. His interdisciplinary work questions the visual cultures and customs of our social environments from an affective and political perspective. He is co-founder of the art collective Vendedores de Humo and Humo Estudio, and is a member of the platform DecolonizeM21 and the research group Commongrounding at Haus der Statistik. He has written for specialised media such as *Contemporary&, Arts Of The Working Class, Texte Zur Kunst* or *ARCH+*. His work has been exhibited in Spain (El Ranchito, Matadero Madrid, 2014; Photoestudios, Photoespaña, 2015; La Fresh Gallery, 2016; La Colmena, 2017, ArcoMadrid art fair 2018); Brazil (FAU USP, 2014; Galeria Pivô, 2015), Uruguay (Campo Abierto, 2018), Belgium (Vooruit Gent, 2019), Germany (Acud Macht Neu, 2019; n.g.b.k. 2019; S A V V Y Contemporary School of Design, 2019; Lite-Haus Gallery, 2020) and Italy (Venice Architecture Biennale, 2018). In 2018, he coordinated the project-space Octagon at

the Universität der Künste Berlin. In 2020, he was a beneficiary of the Injuve Creation Grants and has been selected as a resident of the Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (ZKU) in Berlin.

With the participation of Comunidad Sikuris Berlín, Grupo Luz Y Color, Asociación Cultural Kapaq Sumaq Ayllu, Bloque Anticolonial Berlín, Museo Afroperuano de Zaña- Lambayeque, Perú), Duo Rhaza, and Asociación Kapaq Sumaq Ayllu.

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13 G A B R I E L R O S S E L L S A N T I L L Á N
13A Colibri, Koos, Guie’Ripapa, Maxa, Axolotl
Life of the sun, death of the sun, and emotional plant transfer
Iron oxide image with Wixarika letters

Extending from the current exhibition at ifa Gallery Stuttgart where the spring equinox is drawn in blue cobalt and white, Hix+a’ta opens: the direction of where the sun comes out. With the summer solstice, the spirits of the dead go into the Pacific ocean and in response, Rossell Santillán draws TSUT+A. With this seasonal shift, Germany turns to a solar clock for three months. Time travels through the underworld and begins anew.

13B
Despedida de los muertos
Photograph, 140 x 112 cm, 2012

Gabriel Rossell Santillán’s work does not seek to inflate a bubble in which he, as an artist, appears as the origin and source of what is made. On the contrary, he seeks to show the links with the environments he works with, assuming the responsibility that making work in those contexts demands. In the Wixárika community where the artist has lived for long periods (three to five months each year, since 2011), Rossell Santillán works alongside them on their offerings and ceremonial utensils. Through his work, he seeks to make visible his ties with the Wixárika community. With them, the artist has produced several audiovisuals with the aim of sharing knowledge regarding the original use of these offerings and ceremonial utensils – which were taken to Germany and, today, are in the Anthropological Museum of Berlin (Dahlem), cataloged as “ethnographic objects”. Through this audiovisual process, a dialogue has been established with the Mara’akate and other members of the community about the implications of the transfer of the ceremonial offerings and utensils to Berlin-Dahlem

and their preservation. With this dialogue, forms, visual spaces and assemblages are developed for a possible recovery and reactivation of collective memory. Through this recovery, a historical debt to the indigenous peoples is sought to be confronted for the spiritual invasion and material dispossession that has marked the colonial relationship between the different forms of government that today comprise the Mexican Republic and that have always been unequal (from the beginning of colonial history, through the emergence of the Mexican Nation-State and today). The history of the acquisition of the offerings and ceremonial utensils by Europe, their multiple transfers, their current presence in Berlin, Germany, and the impossibility of their physical return to the Wixárika nation speaks of a history of permanent and irreversible dispossession.

In this sense, the artist's objective has been to elaborate ways of reactivating and accessing an ancestral memory that was fragmented through the extraction of ceremonial elements and Wixárika thought. Through visual art, he proposes – together with the communities and in dialogue with them – ways of relating and repairing, little by little, the ruptures.

Text by Andrea Meza Torres

Huehuillas

Two curtains, 2m x 140 cm, 2017

Continuing the constellation of works, the printed curtains have a functional place in the Wixárika community, with a spiritual content: as they showcase offerings that are rare, or might have disappeared. The quality of the imprinted photos enable their people to remake their subjects if necessary, as a way to give voice to their knowledge systems and connect images from their episteme, to further extend their presence in the everyday of their community. Rossell Santillán learned the functional bridges with the spiritual through Wixárika thought.

Los Lobos

Film, 2017-2021

The permission from Mara'akame Don Dionisio de la Rosa from the Wixárika community continues into a second re-encountering and consulting of the community and their offerings in the ethnological archive in Dahlem.

This video, started in 2016, is of when two Mara'akame of the community, Don Niuweme and Don Agustin, as well the activist and professor Xaureme, came to Dahlem to make a selection of ceremonial utensils that were rare and nearly lost. They saw that there were elements in the archives of Dahlem positioned in a way that should never be placed together. They then showed the proper way the subjects should be placed. The three together decided the content of the video, and collaborated on the process of editing. All came together to focus on the Wixárika and to show the

procedures of their offerings, confronting the problems of the Western / North Atlantic gaze and the stains of their positions of abused power.

El Quemado

Film, 2011-2013

In this film, two different forms of archival material come together. The first is the initial encounter between Mara'akame Don Dionisio de la Rosa and professor and activist Xarureme Candelario from the Wixárika community in Berlin-Dahlem in 2005. Their starting point is the ceremony shown in the obsidian, where Dionisio says the subject/objects have died: this being the underpinning reason he gives permissions to unfurl the project.

The other form is audio-visual, where the community assigned five people to produce material regarding the meeting for the ceremonies which ended, to ask which position the Wixárika community should have in the case of the Mexican state selling the rights to mining companies to exploit the sacred desert of Wirikuta and the holy mountains. The community decided what each of the people and their team would film.

Obsidiano

Video installation, Mini DV on DVD, Obsidian stone, laptop and labyrinth, 2006

In the installation "Obsidiano", a ceremonial space opens up between the obsidian and the laptop, where the bodies of the viewers become the medium of interaction, allowing participation and exchange. Through the body, viewers sense how colonial structures break down, social relationships change as a result, and social representations recreate themselves.

The obsidian is not a metaphor. In front of a laptop, this volcanic rock serves as a projection screen for a ceremony, recorded in the ethnological archive in Berlin-Dahlem, which is meant to be seen only in its opacity. The images were not made to be shown in direct light, without filters, or in the mass media. The Obsidian transposes video into the space of painting, even though the video was designed as a medium to depict moving images for the masses. Only a few people can approach the installation at a time. Viewers must move close to the obsidian and shift their location. Thus, the projection in the installation draws viewers to it and into the temporality of the ceremonial space.

When the work was shown before at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin-Dahlem, the chants of the Mara'akame¹ Dionisio made the institution tremble. During the ceremony, the aura of classification of knowledge that the museum normally represents

1 Mara'akame (translated into Spanish by the Wixáriteri community as "cantador" or in English, "singer") is a person with a specific role within the Wixárika community who communicates with other subjects through their singing during ceremonies. These can be human, non-human, living, or non-living.

faded. The presence of Dionisio transformed the space where the offerings and ceremonial paraphernalia were located, taking away the mask of the "other."

The work "Obsidiano" was created in 2006 and acquired in 2016 for the exhibition "Politics of Sharing - On Collective Knowledge". The exhibition was developed in co-production between ifa Galleries and Artspace Auckland in New Zealand.

Text by Andrea Meza Torres

GABRIEL ROSSELL SANTILLÁN is an artist born in Mexico in 1976, currently living in Berlin. In his work, Rossell utilises drawing, performance, photography and video in order to create specific narratives that act as epistemes in sharing authorships, indigenous critical thinking, and perspectives of feminists of colour and queer thinkers. These epistemes trace subaltern and ancestral forms of knowledge transfer, often highlighting the body and through interactions with smell, heat, humidity, and other means of generating through various forms of sensing. His works focus on steady processes of transformation.

14 NORA CHIPAUMIRE

Arias

Three-channel video installation, 2021

The three films, activated by motion sensors like spirits in the space, take place 86 years after Haiti gained independence in 1904. In 1890 in Southern Africa, Cecil John Rhodes carried the Union Jack flag of the United Kingdom past the Limpopo river, and three years later in 1893, he claimed "defeat" over the Ndebele, violently gaining mining rights under the dubious RUDD concession. He found himself defending the acquisitions on behalf of the queen, against the Shona people. It was then 1896, and it would take the Shona people 94 years to bring down the Union Jack: a work that began in 1896 and continues to today. The three videos speak to the women, spirit, and medium, of Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana, who at this moment rise to lead the first Chimurenga – *spirit war* – against the British South African company and its imperial oppressions.

NORA CHIPAUMIRE was born in 1965 in what was then known as Umtali, Rhodesia (Mutare | Zimbabwe). She is a product of colonial education for Black native Africans – known as group B schooling. Her work critiques colonialism and complicates notions of spectatorship and power. She has pursued studies at the University of Zimbabwe for law and at Mills College in Oakland, California for dance. As African knowledge acquisition does not come with baccalaureates, it is impossible to quantify what the African body holds. Chipaumire recognizes these various forms of knowledge, in addition to the Western forms she has absorbed since birth.

15 A K R A M Z A A T A R I

An Extraordinary Event

8 Inkjet prints, 30 x 43 cm each, 2018

In the spring of 1887, Osman Hamdi Bey excavated the Sidon Necropolis. Upon the extraction of the finds, he took these eight photographs at the location of the excavation in Boustan al Maghara in Ayyaa', Saida, South Lebanon. The site and most of the people who appeared in the pictures had probably never been photographed prior to this date. However, the photographs were not meant to feature people, but the 19 Phoenician sarcophagi, most of which were displayed temporarily in this garden before they left for Constantinople, where they remain in the custody of the Istanbul Museums until this day. These photographs taken by Hamdi Bey, represent the only record of these finds on location.

Because the excavation was one of the earliest led by an Ottoman official, it found itself at the center of the Imperial Museum. The photographs were later reproduced into Album #91533 of the Abdul-Hamid collection, representing all aspects of life at the Empire.

In the series *Extraordinary Event*, archeological finds, the central subjects of the photographs, have been withdrawn. The series invites the viewer to explore the peripheries of photographs and highlights the objects' longtime absence.

Courtesy of Art Jameel Collection

A K R A M Z A A T A R I is an artist living and working in Beirut. He has produced more than fifty films and videos, a dozen books, and countless installations of photographic material: all sharing an interest in writing histories and pursuing a range of interconnected themes, subjects, and practices related to excavation, political resistance, the lives of former militants, the legacy of an exhausted left, the circulation of images in times of war, and the play of tenses inherent to various letters that have been lost, found, buried, discovered, or otherwise delayed in reaching their destinations. Zaatari has played a critical role in developing the formal, intellectual, and institutional infrastructure of Beirut's contemporary art scene. He was one of a handful of young artists who emerged from the delirious but short-lived era of experimentation in Lebanon's television industry, which was radically reorganized after the country's civil war. As a co-founder of the Arab Image Foundation, a groundbreaking, artist-driven organization devoted to the research and study of photography in the Arab world, he has made invaluable and uncompromising contributions to the wider discourse on preservation and archival practice.

Zaatari represented Lebanon at the Venice Biennial in 2013. His work has been featured at Documenta13 in 2012. His films include three features: *The Landing*

(2019), *Twenty-Eight Nights and A Poem* (2015) and *This Day* (2003). His work is part of institutional collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Guggenheim Museum, Hammer Museum, Moderna Museet, K21, MACBA, MoMA, Sharjah Art Foundation, Serralves Foundation, Tate Modern, and Walker Art Center. He is a doctoral candidate at Cy, Paris and TU, Berlin.

16 H A M Z E B Y T Y Ç I
JOŽKA
Film, 26', Czech Republic/Germany, 2016

The short documentary film follows Jozef Miker during his protests against a large-capacity pig farm built on the site of the former concentration camp near Lety in South Bohemia in which hundreds of Roma lost their lives under the Nazi regime – including half of Jožka's wife's family. While fallen ill after many years of working in coal mines, the protagonist with the nickname Jožka has never lost his persuasive optimism, humour, and faith in better society.

Director: Hamze Bytyci; Cinematography: Milan Durňak; Sound: Veronika Patočková, Andreas Fertig; Music: Herr von und zu; Editor: Mirja Gerle; Production: Veronika Patočková

H A M Z E B Y T Y Ç I was in Prizren/Kosovo, he lives and works in Berlin. In 2005, he graduated from acting school in Freiburg and founded the organization Amaro Drom (Our Way). After a one-year engagement in Zurich, he moved to Berlin in 2006, where he performs and directs at Ballhaus Naunynstraße (Romeo rennt), Maxim Gorki Theater (Journey/Drom, Roma Armee), and smaller theaters. Since 2007, Bytyci has been working as an independent theater and media educator at various Berlin schools. In 2012, he founded the association RomaTrial e.V.; in the same year he developed his own interactive performance format, Hilton 437, in which he addresses social and political issues. In 2017, he initiated the AKE DIKHEA? Festival of Romani Film, which he has been artistically directing ever since. In 2018, together with Delaine Le Bas, he curated the 1st Roma Biennale COME OUT NOW! which took place at Maxim Gorki Theater. In 2020, together with Janko Lauenberger, he published the essay "Ein paar Sinti* sind geladen, noch mehr Roma* sind gekommen, reißt die Mauern ein, Genscher heißt uns willkommen!"; in *Erinnern Stören* by Lydia Lierke and Massimo Perinelli (eds.).

17 G L A D Y S K A L I C H I N I
... still these practices are done in sharing her stories
Three-Channel Video Installation, white cloth, 2020-2021

This series of works is a documentation of different women performing nuanced ritualistic practices such

as washing their hands, feet, and faces as a means of caring. To care is a complex gesture, it can be an act of solidarity but also an act of resistance against erasure and the loss of history. This series of films focuses on ideas of remembering, as opposed to forgetting, and hinges on ideas encircling the care to recall. The selection of films, stemming from a larger and ongoing compilation, draws upon notions of memory and focuses on highlighting absences and silences of female stories in history. It focuses on remembrance and stems from the necessity to recover lost, repressed, and forgotten histories about women. It asserts that remembering is a political act that is not passive. Gladys Kalichini's practice is centred on bridging complexities in connection to visibility and invisibility. Her work problematizes representations of women within larger, dominant, and nationalist histories marked by lack – vested in engaging with atypical absences, blind spots, and performative acts of recollection: tracing female figures throughout history, such as female freedom fighters, among others.

G L A D Y S K A L I C H I N I is a contemporary visual artist and researcher from Lusaka, Zambia. Her work centres around notions of erasure, memory, and representations and visibilities of women in colonial resistance histories. She is currently a PhD candidate at Rhodes University in South Africa and a member of the Arts of Africa & Global Souths research programme, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon foundation and the National Research Fund. She has participated in Àsikò International Art Programme with the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA Lagos) in Maputo, Mozambique in 2015, the Fountainhead Residency in Miami, USA in 2017 and the second iteration of the "Women On Aeroplanes" project in Lagos, Nigeria in 2018 themed "Search Research: Looking for Collete Omogbai" and Künstlerhaus Bethanien international studio programme in Berlin, Germany in 2019/2020, supported by the KFW Stiftung.

18 T A N Y A A N G U I Ñ I G A
18A *Swaddle Stool (Underbelly)*
Sculpture, Self-drying terra-cotta, canvas, wool,
50.80 x 48.26 x 48.26 cm, 2015

18B *Preserve 2*
Sculpture, Copper electroplated gauze,
53.34 x 40.64 cm, 2015

In these sculptures, first exhibited together under the exhibition title "Mothering the Form", Aguiñiga directs a personal narrative through objects that are cared for, covered, mended, protected and caressed. Utilizing materials that are both humble and primal: wood, fire, earth, metal and wool, Aguiñiga creates works that are culturally ubiquitous and ambiguous at the same time.

Fifteen months into motherhood, Aguiñiga finds that "every experience poses new questions and reflections on what it is to be human and how to raise a human."

Aguiñiga makes the connection between raising a child and the creation of this new body of work with ease. Rearing a child has led to the discovery of new planes of meaning; relationships have larger importance, family more resonance, and work reflective of an altered state of mind and body.

A well-versed maker and designer, Aguiñiga specializes in weaving fiber works, rendering the conceptual into the physical. Reveling in their liminal qualities, her practice produces pieces equally belonging to the worlds of art, design and craft. Steeped in Mexican and American cultures, her bilingual aesthetics and means of making blend traditions specific to each.

Aguiñiga's fibrous objects command investigation through intricate textures, playful forms and atypical and often humble materials. She constructs the objects utilizing the same instinctual, visceral nature of raising a child — using craft as a metaphor for nurturing, memory and time.

T A N Y A A G U I Ñ I G A is a Los Angeles based artist/designer/craftsperson who was raised in Tijuana, Mexico. She holds an MFA in furniture design from Rhode Island School of Design and a BA from San Diego State University. In her formative years she created various collaborative installations with the Border Arts Workshop, an artists' group that engages the languages of activism and community-based public art. Her current work uses craft as a performative medium to generate dialogues about identity, culture and gender while creating community. This approach has helped museums and non-profits in the United States and Mexico to diversify their audiences by connecting marginalized communities through collaboration.

Recent museum exhibitions include *Disrupting Craft: Renwick Invitational 2018* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. and *Craft and Care* at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York. Aguiñiga is a United States Artists Target Fellow in the field of Crafts and Traditional Arts, a NALAC and Creative Capital Grant Awardee. She is the inaugural fellow for Americans for the Arts Johnson Fellowship for Artists Transforming Communities. The award supported her creative work in communities throughout 2018 with AMBOS (Art Made Between Opposite Sides), an ongoing series of artist interventions and commuter collaborations that address bi-national transition and identity in the US/Mexico border regions, founded by Aguiniga in 2016. AMBOS seeks to create a greater sense of interconnectedness while simultaneously documenting the US/Mexico border.

Aguiniga has been the subject of numerous articles for *American Craft Magazine*. She has been featured in PBS's *Craft in America Series*, as well as in episodes of the Emmy® award-winning arts and cultures series, *Artbound*, from KCET. Her work is included in the Los

Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) Decorative Arts collection and Contemporary Arts collection, as well as in the collection of the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in New York, The Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and The Mint Museum in Charlotte.

19 N O A R A Q U I N T A N A
Dense forest (Mandioca e Tamba-tajá)
"Belle Époque of the tropics" series
Drawing, Latex, graphite and silk, 130cm x 90cm, 2021

Dense forest (Patauá e Caeté)
"Belle Époque of the tropics" series
Drawing, Latex, graphite and silk, 130cm x 90cm, 2021

Evenings of water
"Belle Époque of the tropics" series
Object, Latex, silk, resin, metal, cotton and LED, 48cm x 48cm x 8cm, 2021

Belém, Paris. Hevea brasiliensis, latex, rubber. The transportation of materials, the transportation of peoples. Export, expropriation, extractivism. The theft of histories, mythologies and technologies. Between wild nature and the savagery of the colonial: Belle Époque of the Tropics and Art Nouveau. The Grand Palais, Victoria Regia, Irupé. The industrial revolution, its colonial violence. Fordlandia and the Manaus Export Processing Zone. In the Amazonian state of Pará, the Paris of the Tropics. Designs of European foliage adorn Brazilian domestic space: lampshades, wallpaper, vases, facades, cups, cutlery. Imperial aggregation – Caotchu – the bouncing rubber ball, rubber tires, rubber erasers, rubber that inscribes. An elastic ancestry, which cannot be erased – tinged white or red, blue by the jenipapo dye – Tinga. Present, since the invasion of Pindorama, the "discovery of Brazil", testament to the juruá's distrust. Text written by Cláudio Bueno and João Simões

N O A R A Q U I N T A N A is an artist based between São Paulo and Berlin. Her research centres on the materiality of everyday objects and the historical and hemispheric relations that these index. Through installation and sculpture, Noara's work points to traces of economic exchange, architectural forms and narratives that reveal the legacy of a colonial imaginary. She has participated in various residencies and exhibitions including: FAAP Artistic Residency, 2018 and Pivô Pesquisa, 2021, São Paulo; "Iminência de Tragédia", FUNARTE, 2018, São Paulo, "Desterro Desaterro", MASC, 2018, Florianópolis, Brazil, and "Cuando no hay sombra es mediodía", Kiosko Galeria, 2021, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. In 2017 she was awarded an EHES Fellowship, via the Daniel & Nina Carasso Foundation, Paris, and in 2020 she was selected by the Institut Français for its residency programme at the Cité Internationale des Arts.



01 SAMIA HENNI
Archives: Secret Défense?
 Installation, Film, HD, 16:9, prints of archival documents,
 1954-2021

02 BHAVISHA PANCHIA
Imagine You Are in A Museum
 Audio Collage, 2020

03 JUMANA MANNA
Cache (Insurance Policy)
 Installation with ceramic and tadelakt (concrete, lime,
 pigments), steel grids, plinths, 2019

04 MICHAEL RAKOWITZ
 04A *The invisible enemy should not exist*
 Installation, Arabic newspaper and food packaging cardboard
 sculptures, museum labels, 2007-ongoing

04B *The Ballad of Special Ops Cody*
 Stop-motion video, Director of photography and editor: Robert
 Chase Heishman, 2017

05 PIO ABAD
Thoughtful Gifts # 2
 Drawing, Ink on Heritage woodfree paper,
 137 x 101 cm, 2020

Thoughtful Gifts # 3
 Drawing, Ink on Heritage woodfree paper,
 137 x 101 cm, 2020

Thoughtful Gifts # 4
 Etching, Laser engraved etching on Carrara marble,
 33 x 25 x 2 cm, 2020

Thoughtful Gifts # 6
 Drawing, Ink on Heritage woodfree paper,
 137 x 101 cm, 2021

06 OUMAR MBENGUE ATAKOSSO
Lost & Found (gris gris)
 Installation, Red triangles of safety, moving blankets, and
 mixed media, variable dimensions, 2018

01 S A M I A H E N N I

Archives: Secret Défense?

Installation, Film, HD, 16:9, and prints of archival documents, 1954-2021

On January 1st, 2020, the French Secretary General of Defense and National Security activated an existing law that ordered the formal declassification of every classified archival document – including already declassified records – from 1940 to the present. These involved the Second World War and two colonial wars: The First Indochina War (1946-54) and the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62). The law requires every document that was stamped “top secret,” “secret,” or “confidential” at the moment of its creation to be officially declassified by the agency that created it before it can be communicated to the public. Most of the archives affected by this sudden change were already declassified and open to the public. This imposed paradox and abrupt classification of declassified documents denies the right to reparation and impedes any attempts at writing or rewriting France’s colonial histories, which were often extremely violent.

“Archives: Secret Défense?” disobeys to this order and displays random archives stamped “top secret,” “secret,” or “confidential,” which were used for the writing of *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (EN, 2017; FR, 2019). She photographed and collected these French military and colonial documents over years of research at the Service historique de l’armée de terre (Historic Service of Land Forces) at the Château de Vincennes, when they were open to the public. The show includes both excerpts of newspaper articles – denouncing the coloniality of the state order and reporting on the claims of various historians and associations – and interviews with people affected by this law. The installation questions the very status of legality in colonial and military contexts and highlights the entanglements of/ between restitution, rehabilitation, and reparation.

S A M I A H E N N I’s work focuses on the intersections between the built environment, colonial practices, military operations, and various forms of extraction from the nineteenth century until today. Her investigations of specific micro-histories of planned dispossession, exploitation and oppression disclose macro-histories of colonialism, imperialism and globalisation. Recently, her research has culminated in the exhibitions *Housing Pharmacology/*

Right to Housing (Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020) and *Discreet Violence: Architecture and the French War in Algeria* (2017–2019; Zurich, Rotterdam, Berlin, Johannesburg, Paris, Prague, Ithaca, Philadelphia), as well as in the multi-award-winning book *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (gta Verlag, 2017, EN; Editions B42, 2019, FR), and *War Zones* (gta Verlag, 2018). Currently, she teaches at the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning at Cornell University, USA. In the fall of 2021, she will be the Albert Hirschman Chair at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Aix-Marseille University (IMÉRA) and a Guest Professor in Art History in a Global Context at the Institute of Art History at the University of Zurich.

02 B H A V I S H A P A N C H I A

Imagine You Are in A Museum. What do you hear?
Audio Collage, 2020

Museums speak with a voice filled with the grain of quiet authority; so do the institutions that care for fragile archives. Can we listen to systems of colonial modernity and its extractive and accumulative logics? How can we listen to the acoustic impossibilities of objects housed in these institutions? Whose voices are we listening to as we move through a museum? Whose voices do we hear when we encounter these objects and archives?

Imagine you’re in a museum. What do you hear? is an audio collage that weaves together disparate musical tracks, extracts of interviews, speeches and audio notes as listening provocations that speak to the affective resonances of dislocation and dispossession of land, people and (im)material culture.

B H A V I S H A P A N C H I A is a curator and researcher of visual and audio culture, currently based in Johannesburg. Her work engages with creative practices under shifting global conditions, focusing on anti/postcolonial discourses, imperial histories and networks of production and circulation of (digital) media, and attends to the politics of listening, from the affective, sociological, technological to the political and cultural. She is the founder of Nothing to Commit Records, a collection and publishing platform committed to the production and expansion of knowledge related to the intersection of contemporary art, literature and music within and across the global South.

03 J U M A N A M A N N A

Cache (Insurance Policy)

Installation with ceramic and tadelakt (concrete, lime, pigments), steel grids, plinths, 2019

Cache is a series of anthropomorphic interpretations of khabyas. The khabya was a key feature of rural Levantine architecture, a traditional seed storage chamber built into the interior of homes to preserve grains for sowing and annual consumption. In the front room of the exhibition space, the khabyas are positioned as museological fragments uprooted from their architectural settings. In the second part of the installation, gridded metal shelves clad the backroom, displaying the cubic sculptures within an environment suggestive of storages found in institutional settings such as seed banks, ethnographic collections or museum vaults. Using the exhibition as a site to muddle the taxonomic impulses of such institutions, Manna proposes the transformation of systems of sustenance and knowledge from practices of survival to centralized economies of capital growth.

J U M A N A M A N N A is a visual artist working primarily with film and sculpture. Her work explores how power is articulated through relationships, often focusing on the body, land and materiality in relation to colonial inheritances and histories of place. Jumana was raised in Jerusalem and lives in Berlin.

04 M I C H A E L R A K O W I T Z

04A The invisible enemy should not exist

Installation, Arabic newspaper and food packaging cardboard sculptures, museum labels, 2007-ongoing

The invisible enemy should not exist unfolds as an intricate narrative about the artifacts stolen from the National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad, in the aftermath of the US invasion of April 2003; the current status of their whereabouts; and the series of events surrounding the invasion, the plundering and related protagonists. The centrepiece of the project is an ongoing series of sculptures that represent an attempt to reconstruct the looted archaeological artifacts.

Alluding to the implied invisibility of the museum of artifacts (initial reports about their looting were inflated due to the “fog of war,” stated Museum officials), the reconstructions are made from the packaging of Middle Eastern foodstuffs and local Arabic newspapers, moments of cultural visibility found in cities across the United States. The objects are created by a team of assistants using the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute database, as well as information posted on Interpol’s website. This project is an ongoing commitment to recuperate the 7000+ objects that remain missing.

04B *The Ballad of Special Ops Cody*

Stop-motion video, Director of photography and editor: Robert Chase Heishman, 2017

The Ballad of Special Ops Cody takes as its starting point a 2005 incident in which an Iraqi insurgent group posted a photograph online of a captured US soldier named John Adam. The group threatened to kill him if US-held prisoners in Iraq were not set free. The US military took the ultimatum seriously but were unable to identify John Adam within their ranks. As it turns out, this soldier was actually Special Ops Cody, a US infantry action figure made to exacting detail. These toys were sold exclusively on US military bases in Kuwait and Iraq and were often sent home to the children of active soldiers, functioning as a surrogate for their fathers deployed abroad.

The Ballad of Special Ops Cody plays off this story and gives life to the figurine through the production of a stop motion animation filmed at the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute, which has had a relationship with the National Museum of Iraq since the 1930s. In the animation, Special Ops Cody enters the Institute’s vitrines, which hold Mesopotamian votive statues taken during Western colonial exploits, left behind by worshippers. These votive statues, with their hands clasped in prayer, served as surrogates for those who visited the temples of their deities. Although Cody offers the statues liberation, urging them to leave their open vitrines and return to their homes, the statues remain, petrified and afraid, unable to return in the current context.

M I C H A E L R A K O W I T Z is an Iraqi-American artist working at the intersection of problem solving and troublemaking. His work has appeared in venues worldwide including dOCUMENTA (13), P.S.1, MoMA, MassMOCA, Castello di Rivoli, Palais de Tokyo, the 16th Biennale of Sydney, the 10th and 14th Istanbul Biennials, Sharjah Biennial 8, Tirana Biennale, National Design Triennial at the Cooper-Hewitt, Transmediale 05, FRONT Triennial in Cleveland, and CURRENT:LA Public Art Triennial. He has had solo projects and exhibitions with Creative Time, Tate Modern in London, The Wellin Museum of Art, MCA Chicago, Lombard Freid Gallery and Jane Lombard Gallery in New York, SITE Santa Fe, Galerie Barbara Wien in Berlin, Rhona Hoffman Gallery in Chicago, Malmö Konsthall, Tensta Konsthall, and Kunstraum Innsbruck.

He is the recipient of the 2020 Nasher Prize; the 2018 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts; a 2012 Tiffany Foundation Award; a 2008 Creative Capital Grant; a Sharjah Biennial Jury Award; a 2006 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship Grant in Architecture and Environmental Structures; the 2003 Dena Foundation Award, and the 2002 Design 21 Grand Prix from UNESCO. He was awarded the Fourth Plinth commission (2018-2020) in London’s Trafalgar Square.

From 2019–2020, a survey of Rakowitz’s work traveled from Whitechapel Gallery in London, to Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea in Torino, to the Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai. Rakowitz is represented by Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York; and Barbara Wien Galerie, Berlin. He lives and works in Chicago.

05 P I O A B A D

Thoughtful Gifts # 2

Drawing, Ink on Heritage woodfree paper, 137 x 101 cm, 2020

Thoughtful Gifts # 3

Drawing, Ink on Heritage woodfree paper, 137 x 101 cm, 2020

Thoughtful Gifts # 4

Etching, Laser engraved etching on Carrara marble, 33 x 25 x 2 cm, 2020

Thoughtful Gifts # 6

Drawing, Ink on Heritage woodfree paper, 137 x 101 cm, 2021

Thoughtful Gifts investigates objects and documents uncovered by the artist while researching at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Archives in California. Confuting the myth that the sociopolitical legacy of the Marcos family and their ill-gotten wealth is one isolated to the Philippines, the works summon a transnational cast of characters that have either been in favor of, or vitiated by the United States’ quest for empire and the perpetuation of its political mythologies.

A seashell-encrusted eagle, a sequin clad gown and a lace fan were some of the items presented to the Reagans during the Marcoses’ controversial state visit to the White House in 1982. They were subsequently categorised as “thoughtful gifts” in the Reagan archives, along with diplomatic presents from the disgraced Guatemalan president Otto Perez Molina and Lucia Hiriart, the wife of the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, among others.

A series of large scale drawings retrieves the objects from the bowels of the archive, where their problematic provenance has relegated them. The drawings perform a cartographic function – intricately rendering the details of these objects with ink, and in the process, mapping political alliances that have been obscured for the sake of historical convenience.

These acts of memorialisation and retrieval continue in a series of etchings in marble, based on correspondence also uncovered from the Reagan archives. A letter from Ferdinand Marcos to Ronald Reagan, signed off as “your faithful servant”, undermines the rhetoric of national self-realisation that the dictator weaponised during

his rule. The gesture of inscribing these ephemera onto marble monumentalises the paper trail of empire, functioning as a symbolic recuperation of a repressed chapter in American history and a material repudiation of ongoing attempts at historical revisionism.

P I O A B A D began his art studies at the University of the Philippines before receiving a BA from Glasgow School of Art and an MA from the Royal Academy Schools, London. Recent exhibition include: *Remember this House*, Brent Biennial, London (2020); *Things Entangling*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2020); *Phantom Limb*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2019); *Kiss the Hand You Cannot Bite*, Kadist, San Francisco (2019); *To Make Wrong/Right/Now*, 2nd Honolulu Biennial, Hawaii (2019); *Imagined Borders*, the 12th Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju (2018) *General Rehearsal*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (2018); *Recouvrir, Ensabler, Copier, Traduire, Restituer*, Kadist, Paris (2017); *Soil and Stone, Song and Soul*, Para Site, Hong Kong (2017) and *Still (the) Barbarians*, EVA International Biennial, Limerick, Ireland (2016).

Abad’s practice is concerned with the social and political signification of things. Deeply informed by the modern history of the Philippines, where the artist was born and raised, Abad’s work – which ranges from drawing, sculpture, text and photography – uses strategies of appropriation to mine alternative or repressed historical events, unravel official accounts and draw out threads of complicity between incidents, ideologies, and people.

For the past ten years, Abad’s work has engaged with the cultural legacy of the kleptocrat Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Imelda, who ruled the Philippines with an iron fist from 1965 to 1986. Through a series of exhibitions, collaborations and lectures, Abad traces the contours of dispossession under the Marcos regime. Presenting it, not as an isolated history, but as a nexus of intertwined histories: a story of empire, erasure, and impunity that is at once geopolitical and allegorical, speaking of both painful intimate histories and imminent collective futures.

06 O U M A R M B E N G U E A T A K O S S O

Lost & Found (gris gris)

Installation, Red triangles of safety, moving blankets, and mixed media, Variable Dimensions, 2018

The project *Lost & Found* is about the “postmodern immigrant” and what an individual, travelling through space and time has to lose or gain in their encounter with their destination: in this case, an encounter with the “West”. The visual research that comprises the installation is based on three aspects (an installation, a performance, and a fifth dimensional film) that are embodied by the concept of homothecy.

Homothecy here is a metaphor to describe one point in space from different perspectives. One can think of matryoshkas (Russian dolls) – one inside the other, geometrically occupying the same point and yet having a different relation to the outside world because of their relationship to each other.

It is the algebraic and arithmetic relation between what is lost and found, based on a qualitative gain: whether or not the immigrant’s newly encountered values can replace those lost. In the end, the immigrant will develop a morphed identity based on their changing conditions of life. Dignity and (self) respect play a key-role in this process.

Gris gris is an African charm or fetish that protects the wearer from evil or brings good luck. Gris gris usually describes a small cloth bag worn, where inside a mixture of the following is placed: herbs, oils, stones, bones, hair, nails, written texts containing Arabic characters or other personal items – gathered under the direction of a belief for the protection of the owner.

O U M A R M B E N G U E A T A K O S S O is a contemporary artist from Dakar, Senegal, based in the Netherlands, who has realized exhibitions, art projects, and lectures around the world such as *Lost & Found and Museum of Im/migration*, in which he explores the position of the “postmodern immigrant”, and what an individual, traveling through space and time has to lose or gain in their encounter with their destinations. With “Transformational with the Dishwasher”, an installation with film/photo, text and video about the postmodern im/migrant, he explores the stages of de- and re-composing identity.

Atakosso is founder of DocumentYourself, an Amsterdam based, global Shortcut Academy for exchange, collaboration and co-production, by exploring the self through film, photo and text. In 2019, he became the new Executive Director of Africa in the Picture (AIP) – Festival for film, audio-visual and performing arts from Africa and the African diaspora, in Amsterdam since 1987. He integrated Document Yourself as the educational and producing pillar into the AIP platform, in which Café Littéraire became another important pillar. With Café Littéraire Atakosso underlines the importance of written text in the process of filmmaking as well as in the process of exploring and documenting the Self.

FOR THE PHOENIX TO FIND ITS FORM IN US, ON RESTITUTION, REHABILITATION, AND REPARATION

CONCEPT BY BONAVENTURE SOH
BEJENG NDIKUNG

Tuesday: The Phoenix
It is enough that you pass by words
For the phoenix to find its form in us,
And for the spirit born of its spirit to give birth to
a body...
Spirit cannot do without a body
To fire with itself and for itself, cannot do without
a body
To purge the soul of what it has hidden from
eternity
So let's take fire, for nothing, but that we become
one!
Mahmoud Darwish,
from "The Seven Days of Love"

FOREWORD .

How does one complicate the current discourse on
restitution which seems to have manoeuvred itself into
a cul de sac?

In too many a case, the debates have centered around
the notion of return, thereby limiting the rather
expansive and layered subject of restitution merely
to return. To return, one must have a sense of a space
and time of departure. At least, a return that implies
and suggests a simplistic movement backwards to a
place from which someone or something was seized
tens of, hundreds of, thousands of years ago. No space
and no time stays put for one to return to. Spaces

are made up of energies, which indeed are enabled
and accommodated by those beings – animate and
inanimate – that occupy such spaces. The notion of
return, as colloquially used, means going back to a
particular geo-spatial space. Which is to say we cannot
think of restitution without thinking of the wounds that
were inflicted upon dispossession at any given time,
as well as the violences that accompany epistemic,
material or human deprivation and destruction, as we
see in Anglophone Cameroon, in Palestine, in Myanmar
or in Colombia. We cannot reduce restitution to the
return of objects while the people who are to receive
these objects neither have the luxury of breathing, nor
the lands on which to plant their seeds, or are deprived
of the abode in which they shelter. So, how can we
deliberate restitution in a context wherein time and
space have not only changed but have become more
precarious and the savagery of coloniality has assumed
other forms?

In many cases, especially in Berlin, the issue of
restitution has been hijacked by the politics of the
Humboldt Forum. The crucial question to be asked is
who benefits from a discourse on this level and who
speaks for whom in these conversations? So far, the
biggest benefactors of the debate of restitution are
the very museums critiqued for keeping objects and
subjects seized through often dubious circumstances
from their contexts of origin. These museums that
have been meant to reconstitute have to a large degree
complained of their limitations in terms of knowledge of
what they have in their storages, in terms of provenance
research, and in terms of storage and staff to do the
basic work required as the basis for any process of

restitution. So while none (in many cases) or very few
subjects/objects have been restituted, millions of
Euros have been accorded to these museums to make
restitution a reality.

At SAVVY Contemporary, we are of the opinion that to
be able to think about and carry out restitution, one
must imagine a constellation of three key subjects:
restitution, rehabilitation, and reparations.

RESTITUTION . noun

1. The restoration of something lost or stolen to its
proper owner.
2. Recompense for injury or loss.
3. The restoration of something to its original state.
From Latin *restitutio*(n-), from *restituere* "restore", from
re- "again" + *statuere* "establish"

REHABILITATION . noun

1. The action of restoring someone to health or normal
life through training and therapy after imprisonment,
addiction, or illness.
2. The action of restoring someone to former privileges
or reputation after a period of disfavour.
3. The action of restoring something that has been
damaged to its former condition.
From Latin *rehabilitare*, from *re-* "again" + *habitare*
"make fit"

REPARATION . noun

1. The action of making amends for a wrong one has
done, by providing payment or other assistance to those
who have been wronged.
2. The compensation for war damage paid by a defeated
state.
3. The action of repairing something.
From late Latin *reparatio*(n-),
from *reparare* "make ready again"

With the project **FOR THE PHOENIX TO
FIND ITS FORM IN US**. On Restitution,
Rehabilitation, and Reparation, SAVVY Contemporary
aims at dedicating a series of workshops, invocations
and an exhibition on the entanglements of/between
restitution, rehabilitation and reparation as a possibility
of going beyond the notion of just return. Together with
artists, writers, and other intellectuals and activists we
intend to reflect on notions of restoration – not only
of the subjects/objects taken away from peoples and
particular places, but also to think of a restoration of the
peoples and places that have had to exist in a state of
cultural and psychological deprivation. This demands
of us that we think of any form of restoration as a
possibility of re-integration and rehabilitation. Which is
to say, the possibility of re-accommodating beings once
taken away into systems that have experienced both

time and spatial shifts.

We also intend to cogitate over the connection between
the forceful seizure of subjects/objects, their storage in
ethnographic museums in the West and the destruction
of the techno-heritage of many places in the non-West.
While we will look at the destruction of spiritual entities
when locked up in ethnographic museums, it is equally
important to acknowledge that histories of technologies
were destroyed and these too have to be restored. The
occupation, disappropriation and reappropriation, the
destruction of home and farm land, grain archives,
religious and cultural spaces as is the case in Palestine
or Anglophone Cameroon is also of concern to us.
**FOR THE PHOENIX TO FIND ITS
FORM IN US** takes its cue from the poem "The
Seven Days of Love", by Palestinian poet Mahmoud
Darwish, in which he tangentially refers to a form of
restoration: of becoming one, of a phoenix finding its
place in a body, of spirit finding a body – even if it means
taking fire to become one. This poetic piece invokes the
phoenix, and come what may it seems the phoenix will
rise. The rise of the phoenix – a bird that is forever born
again and cyclically regenerates, begetting new life by
arising from the ashes. While the legend of the phoenix
has stood for many things, in our context, it stands for
the tripartite of restitution, rehabilitation, and reparation
of those subjects/objects/beings/technologies that
have been hostages in the dungeons of ethnographic
museums and people/lands/cultures that have been in
the claws of the colonial enterprise worldwide.

WORD .

A CALL FROM OUAGADOUGOU .

There has been a marking interest in issues of
restitution in recent years, at least since July of 2017,
when the prominent French historian, professor at
Technisches Universität (TU) Berlin and Collège de
France, Bénédicte Savoy stepped out of the blue and
onto the pages of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: to vent
her frustrations and raise serious allegations against
the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Stiftung
Preußischer Kulturbesitz, SPK) and Berlin Humboldt
Forum, highlighting their lack of provenance research,
dearth of transparency, lack of autonomy, inadequate
scientific prowess, and general irresponsibility.¹ In that
now famous interview, Savoy also lamented that the
Humboldt Forum was like Chernobyl, as explosive and
as toxic, thereby drawing venom from the founding
directorate – SPK President Hermann Parzinger and art
historian Horst Bredekamp, as well as former British
museum and current Humboldt Forum director Neil
MacGregor.² Beyond the polemics that the interview
brought with it, one could finally hear from someone
who had had the privilege of being an insider, and who
had once thought that it was possible to change things
from within, step out and reveal to us that the within
is just as much a fiction as we all outside thought it
would be. The revelation that all the discourses about

¹ Jörg Häntzschel. "Das Humboldt-Forum ist wie Tschernobyl!", Interview mit Bénédicte Savoy, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 20.07.2017: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/benedicte-savoy-ueber-das-humboldt-forum-das-humboldt-forum-ist-wie-tschernobyl-1.3596423>
² Christiane Peitz, Kunsthistorikerin Savoy: "Da herrscht totale Sklerose", *Tagesspiegel* 21.07.2017: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/streit-ums-humboldt-forum-kunsthistorikerin-savoy-da-herrscht-totale-sklerose/20092228.html>

provenance, multiperspectivity, as well as sonically charming concepts like “Shared Heritage” were mere slogans, keywords, hashtags, pop and bling bling, came less as a surprise.

In November 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron gave a speech at the University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso stating that: “African heritage must be highlighted in Paris, but also in Dakar, in Lagos, in Cotonou.” And he went on to add that, “in the next five years, I want the conditions to be met for the temporary or permanent restitution of African heritage to Africa.”³ The world since then has gotten another temporal demarcation, namely the pre-Macron-Ouaga age and the post-Macron-Ouaga age. In celebration of Macron's call and in critique of the German context, Dr. Kwame Opoku noted that, “German officialdom is indeed at a loss; they do not realize that in this post Ouagadougou period, the old arguments and methods are no longer applicable. The only choice available is to keep up with Macron or to out-macron Macron; they can either follow the steps of the bold and imaginative French leader or take a step ahead of the Elysée: i.e. implement some of the implications of the Ouagadougou Declaration. They could do this, e.g. by returning without any further delay or discussion some of the 508 or more Benin artefacts they have been holding in the Ethnological Museum Berlin since 1897.”⁴ This clearly was another blow aimed at forcing out the blockage in the windpipe.

With the open letter initiated by Berlin Postkolonial, signed by artists, activists, and intellectuals and addressed to the chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, forcing her to take a stance on looted arts and artefacts in German museums, as well as the appointment of Bénédicte Savoy and Senegalese writer and economist, Felwine Sarr, as consultants for the repatriation of African artefacts held in French museums, pressure is mounting.

A HUBRIS THAT SMELLS OF THE DEBRIS OF COLONIALITY.

There is a certain arrogance of strength and greatness that wouldn't allow one to plead for help even if one were at the threshold of the yonder. That kind of condescension not only for the other, but also for oneself, remains masked under the guise of power. That power typically emanates from and accompanies patriarchy. That hubris smells of the debris of coloniality or the longing for a time gripped by the claws of the colonial enterprise. When Paul Gilroy wrote in *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture* that the inclination to romanticise colonial times reveals itself in our contemporary as “an unhealthy and destructive post-imperial hungering for renewed greatness”⁵ - he might as well have been writing an essay on the Humboldt Forum. It is this hubristic hunger for greatness that urged the rebuilding of a former Prussian Palace in the middle of Berlin. The process could stand

out as a masterclass on the re-writing of history through architecture: the Hohenzollern residence, whose foundations were laid in 1443, was previously reconstructed around 1700 as a baroque residence, then demolished after the Second World War; in 1973 it was restructured as the Palace of the Republic, serving as the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), but also a "place of happiness and sociability" for the citizens, then shut down after the fall of the Berlin Wall; and from 1998 to 2008, it was gradually demolished to make space for the one-to-one scaled rebuilding of the baroque palace.⁶ Maybe this wouldn't be a problem, if the building and the institution it is meant to house did not symbolise a manifold erasure of histories and an exaltation of the greatness of monarchical and imperial systems.

It is not unusual to hear that after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, West Germany basically usurped East Germany. Every effort was made to wipe out a system that was considered retrograde and to implement a capitalist democratic system befitting the 21st century that lay ahead. Not only did the people of the former GDR expeditiously lose their social, economic and political structures and ways of life: they also lost bearings, as their street names were changed, monuments contested, political figures chastised, identities questioned and history challenged, in an effort to erase the communist past. This, what is considered by many as a takeover of the GDR by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), is at the root of a lot of frustration in the Eastern part of Germany today, which has led to proto-fascist sentiments, the radical shift to the right, xenophobic attacks on foreigners, who have become the scapegoats. Thomas Oberender, director of the Berliner Festspiele, ruminating on why the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD or Alternative for Germany party) became so successful in the states of the former GDR stated that: “Thirty years after the fall of the Wall, Germany is building a Humboldt Forum to bring Humboldtian surveys of the world in line with German colonial history. For this, the Palace of the Republic was demolished, and in its place nothing reminds of it. How does one reflect on this inner German colonialism? This national ‘roof damage,’ does it imply that there is nothing left to worry about regarding the history of the GDR, except the deaths on the wall and the State Security Service (Stasi)? What remains of the GDR is a reminder of victims and perpetrators, of injustice and failure and of misbelief, this is the whole truth.”⁷ Architecture as a tool for erasure of history. That is to say construction as eraser. The destruction of

3 Annalisa Quinn, “After a Promise to Return African Artifacts, France Moves Toward a Plan”, *New York Times* 06.03.2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/06/arts/design/france-restitution-african-artifacts.html>
4 Kwame Opoku, “Parzinger's Cri De Coeur: Genuine Plea For Un/unesco Assistance Or Calculation To Delay Restitution Of Artefacts?”, *Modern Ghana* 24.01.2018: <https://www.modernghana.com/news/830590/parzingers-cri-de-coeur-genuine-plea-for-ununesco-assista.html>
5 Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture* (Routledge, London and New York, 2004), 331.
6 Announcement for the conference “Ein öffentlicher Ort. Berliner Schloss – Palast der Republik – Humboldt Forum” taking place on 03.11.2016: <https://recs.hypotheses.org/718>

the Palace of the Republic as a point in the tradition of tabula rasa urbanism.⁸ Tabula rasa and Wiederaufbau (reconstruction) as means of maintaining what Aníbal Quijano calls the coloniality of power.

The rebuilding of this palace in which objects and subjects – war booty and otherwise – from all over the non-West will be displayed and framed under the auspices of Humboldt must also be seen as a re-membering, as in re-piecing together as well as reminiscing about, and re-instituting of a historical era of Prussian greatness. This greatness was also characterised by the Brandenburg-Prussian endeavours to set up colonies on the West African coast in the 17th to early 18th centuries. With the establishment of the Kurbrandenburgische Marine (Brandenburg Navy) around 1676, and the Brandenburgisch-Afrikanische Compagnie (Brandenburg-African Compagnie (BAC)) in 1680, the Great Elector Friedrich Wilhelm sent commercial and military vessels to set up forts and colonies in West Africa. The frigate „Morian“ reached the Guinea coast in January 1681 and facilitated the build-up of a fort on the land of the Ahanta people on the coast of today's Ghana as well as commercial posts for the trading of gold, pepper, ivory and people as slaves. So did Brandenburg-Prussia enter the Transatlantic Slave Trade, selling an estimated 15,000 to 24,000 Africans in the years between 1680-1717 on 124 trade journeys. It should be noted that approximately 10-15% of these human resources did not survive the sheer brutality and harsh conditions of these trades. Friedrich I., King of Prussia from 1701–1713, continued the colonial endeavour after the death of his father the Great Elector in 1688, but later sold Prussia's colonies to the Dutch West India Company in 1717.⁹

7 Arno Orzessek, “Humboldt Forum statt Palast der Republik”, *Deutschlandfunk Kultur* 27.09.2017: http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/aus-den-feuilletons-humboldt-forum-statt-palast-der-republik.1059.de.html?dram:article_id=396926. In German, the expression “roof damage” implies mental problems.
8 The demolition of the Palast der Republik in 2008 is rooted in the tradition of tabula rasa urbanism. Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin for Paris (1922-25) and also Oswald Mathias Ungers' idea of a green urban archipelago in Berlin (1977) are the artistically outstanding urban models with a history of city planning that includes demolition, new building and reconstruction: urbanism as curatorial practice that views buildings as objects on display and the city itself as an exhibition. The Plan Voisin explicitly made room also for historical buildings; once historical monuments had fallen victim to the tabula rasa approach, they could, according to Le Corbusier, be rebuilt at any other random location in Paris. In his urban archipelago Ungers planned— subsequent to the destruction of entire city neighborhoods—to reconstruct historical architectural projects unrealized until today.
Kuehn, Wilfried and Stephan Trüby, “Display Architecture”, in: *Displayer 03*, Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, Ausstellungsdesign und Kuratorische Praxis, 2009, 247-257.
<http://kuehnmalvezzi.com/?context=book&id=Publication:10159>
9 Postkolonial Potsdam: “Brandenburg's Colonial Past”, *Postkolonial Potsdam* 27.05.2014: <https://postkolonialpotsdam.wordpress.com/2014/05/27/brandenburgs-colonial-past/>
10 Lorenz Rollhäuser, “Raubkunst im Humboldt Forum? Haus der Weißen Herren”, *Deutschlandfunk Kultur* 15.09.2020: https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/raubkunst-im-humboldt-forum-haus-der-weissen-herren.3682.de.html?dram:article_id=451366
11 Kwame Opoku, “Benin To Berlin Ethnologisches Museum: Are Benin Bronzes Made In Berlin?”, *Modern Ghana* 13.02.2008: <https://www.modernghana.com/news/157501/1/benin-to-berlin-ethnologisches-museum-are-benin-br.html>
12 “Dass der Erwerb von Ethnographica in der Kolonialzeit auf der Grundlage mehr oder minder 'struktureller Gewalt' erfolgte, soll hier in diesem Rahmen nicht näher verfolgt werden. Einzelnen Zeitgenossen war diese Tatsache im Übrigen durchaus bewußt. So schrieb der Afrikareisende und Resident des Deutschen Reiches in Ruanda, Richard Kandt, 1897 an Felix von Luschan, den stellvertretenden Direktor des Berliner Völkerkunde-Museums: Überhaupt ist es schwer, einen Gegenstand zu erhalten, ohne zum mindesten etwas Gewalt anzuwenden. Ich glaube, daß die Hälfte Ihres Museums gestohlen ist”, in: Cornelia Essner, “Berlins Völkerkunde-Museum in der Kolonialära: Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Ethnologie und Kolonialismus in Deutschland”, in: *Berlin in Geschichte und Gegenwart – Jahrbuch des Landesarchivs Berlin*, (Ed.) Hans J. Reichardt, Siedler Verlag, 1986, 77.
13 Michael Stothard, “Macron calls France's colonial past a 'crime against humanity'”, *Financial Times* 17.02.2017: <https://www.ft.com/content/87d6f430-f521-11e6-95ee-f14e5513608>

I M H A U S D E R W E I S S E N H E R R E N .

So, what does it mean to rebuild a Prussian base of power - naming it after the brothers Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, fashioning it as the world centre for culture and cultural dialogue housing works from the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and the Museum of Asian Art? How did these arts and artefacts, objects and subjects, get into these collections in the first place? And what does it mean to have one of the founding directors, Horst Bredekamp, claim openly – as one could hear in Lorenz Rollhäuser's radio feature “Haus der Weißen Herren: Humboldt Forum, Shared Heritage und der Umgang mit dem Anderen (House of White Men: Humboldt Forum, Shared Heritage and Dealing with the Other)”¹⁰ – that unlike other European cities like London, Brussels or Paris, Berlin did not collect colonially? The likes of Kwame Opoku have published numerous essays e.g. “Benin To Berlin Ethnologisches Museum: Are Benin Bronzes Made in Berlin?”¹¹, discussing the colonial contexts and dubious means through which too many of these “objects” were stolen, sold, or conned out of the African continent or from other parts of the world, and found themselves in European and North American museums. Also, Bredekamp's comments stand out in stark contrast to what Richard Kandt, resident of the German Empire in Rwanda, wrote in 1897 to Felix von Luschan, head of the African Department of the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (Royal Museum for Ethnology) Berlin, about the provenience of the “objects” in the museum: “It is especially difficult to procure an object without at least employing some force. I believe that half of your museum consists of stolen objects.”¹² This fact of 1897 is also the fact of 2018.

The invasion and destruction of the Edo Kingdom of Benin, and the humiliation of the Oba Ovonramwen by the British in 1897, were accompanied by the mass looting of an estimated 300,000 - 500,000 valuable bronze statues from the King's palace. These were later taken to the British Museum or sold to museums and individuals across the Western hemisphere. The very well documented correspondences of Felix von Luschan, as well as other archive materials, reveal that he was fully aware of the illegitimate acquisitions, provenience and blood attached to his purchases. The throne of a king does not belong to the king, but to his people. The Bamum people of Cameroon have had to do without their throne since it was allegedly given as a gift by Sultan Ibrahim Njoya to Emperor Wilhelm II in 1908. Ever since, the “Mandu Yenu” has been an economic and political gravitational force in the Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin-Dahlem. The question that obviously arises is, “what is a gift in the context of colonialism?” It is no secret that colonialism – in all its forms, shades and colours – was “a crime against humanity,” as Macron once pointed out.¹³ What is a gift in a context of an extreme power gradient and violence of coloniality? If a thief came to your home, pointed a

gun to your head and asked for you to give your most valuable goods as a gift, what are the chances for you to say no? The extortion of Makabu Buanga by Ludwig Wolf, colonial officer and Hermann Wissman’s doctor, from the Congolese Prince Ischiehwu, is another widely discussed case, with evidence of the extortion documented in Wolf’s travel diary.

THE ENTANGLEMENTS BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RACE .

At the height of Germany’s colonial era on the African continent, the Germans perpetrated what is widely regarded as the first genocide of the 20th century in Namibia. Between 1904 and 1908, German troops in the former Imperial German colony of South West Africa massacred – by shooting, hanging from trees, starving to death by banishing into the desert – an estimated 100,000 Hereros and Namas leaving just 15,000 survivors. These survivors were forced into concentration camps, women and girls were raped and even more people killed. As if the killing wasn’t enough, the skeletons/skulls of the Herero and Nama people were shipped to Germany for scientific racial experiments.¹⁴ Even more recently, more than 1,000 more skulls – until the last decade purportedly unknown to the institutions housing them – were found having been taken apparently from Rwanda and Germany’s former East African colonies for Germany’s racial “scientific” research.¹⁵ Due to the enormous pressure from groups within and without Germany, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation has been forced to step up efforts to research and publish information on the provenance of the skulls, as well as to repatriate them. While Germany has started repatriating some of the skulls, an important consideration arises – one which is not easily understood within Western epistemological and spiritual frameworks: the souls of the people killed, and whose skeletons were shipped out of the country, as well as the souls of the nations will not be healed just because the skulls are sent back. The healing commences only when the provenance is completed, which is to say, only when one can put a name on each skull. The spirits of the dead will linger and seek for abode, until they are named and laid to rest in their homes. The choking persists as bones are unpacked, cleaned, debated, and repacked, while the ghosts of the assassinated hover in a wondering state of anchorlessness.

Listen to Things
More often than Beings,
Hear the voice of fire,
Hear the voice of water.
Listen in the wind,
To the bush that is sobbing:
This is the ancestors, breathing.
— Birago Diop, “Spirits”

OF OBJECTHOOD VS SUBJECTHOOD .

One must acknowledge that the readiness of some Western museums to send back human remains – skeletons and more – to the colonies is a great moral and ethical gesture towards humanity and finally a recognition of their humanness. After centuries of objectification of other humans as tools, resources, utensils and the labour force that enabled slavery, colonialism, and racism, these museums and other scientific institutions seem to have realised that it is and was improper, unethical, immoral, illegal to have used other human beings for their experimentations, for their purposes of construction of otherness, and for their goals of objectifying fellow human beings. Or have they? It is important that we remind ourselves that other humans were treated this way under the guise of promoting Western civilisation, Christianisation, and “modernity”.

Let us assume that gone are those days when you would visit an ethnographic museum and see the skull of your great grandfather. Let us assume that morality and ethics permit the skulls to be locked up in boxes and stored in cellars, but not kept in the open. Let us assume that one day, when the provenance has been sorted out properly, that all these humans will be properly laid to rest alongside their people. All of this because it has finally been understood that Africans, Latin Americans, and Asians have subjecthood and possess subjectivity. Since Western institutions now recognise that these human beings are not objects, but subjects too, that once upon a time they had personhood, agency, consciousness, and realness within their societies, and that they must be sent back.

What many Western museums and institutions forcefully and wrongly harbouring many so-called “objects” from the non-West do not know, or have not yet recognised, is that most of the so-called “objects” have never been and will never be objects. The objectification of these ritual and spiritual beings, historical carriers, cultural entities, orientations, and essences goes in line with the dehumanisation and objectification of humans from the non-West. Which is to say that if the skeletons have been delivered from objecthood, it is about time that these so-called “objects” be freed from the bondages of objecthood in which they have been detained ever since they were taken away from their societies as captives, just like human slaves.

¹⁴ Vincent Moloi “Namibia: Skulls of my People”, *Al Jazeera* 26.05.2017: <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2017/05/namibia-skulls-people-170524084141641.html>
¹⁵ AFP, “Germany to investigate 1,000 skulls taken from African colonies for ‘racial research’”, *The Guardian* 06.10.2017: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/06/germany-to-investigate-1000-skulls-taken-from-african-colonies-for-racial-research>

Understanding the so-called “objects” as subjects necessitates a radical shift in Western understandings of subjecthood, personhood, and community, as much as a drastic shift in the Western understanding of art, authorship, and society, and obviously a seismic reconfiguration of what it means to be human. Firstly, to understand the subjectivity of the so-called “objects”, one must be able to understand that some of these so-called “objects” are indeed the ancestors of some of us. Not representations of ancestors, as might be the case with a painting in a church or the effigy of Jesus or the portrait of someone’s great grandfather. No, some of the so-called “objects” must be seen as incarnations, embodiments, and personifications of our ancestors. The transformation from a life of flesh to a life of wood or metal. The corporealisation of some of those that have travelled to that place of yonder. Indeed one must see some of these so-called “objects” as that yonder. In that case, how do the so-called “objects” differ from the skulls that are being currently repatriated? They too have personhood, agency, and consciousness. I for one, do not have any interest in seeing my ancestors, in whatever form – be it as skeletons, wood or otherwise – in a museum.

Secondly, to understand the subjectivity of the so-called “objects”, one must be able to understand that some of these so-called “objects” are indeed ritual entities that possess subjectivity. As such they have the possibility of healing, mediating between people, beings, and gods and are conscious of their community’s dynamics as they protect individuals in these societies. The so-called “objects” have feelings and desires – they hunger and thirst – and that is why they are fed, given sacrifices, prayed to, appeased in many ways to avoid them shedding their wrath on us. If agency is the capacity to act and make choices, then the so-called “objects” also possess agency, as they determine and act upon individuals and societies, as well as wield power over individuals and societies, and most especially give perspectives to their society. As Alain Resnais and Chris Marker pointed out in their 1953 classic film *Statues Also Die*, the placement of these ritual beings in glass vitrines in well-tempered museums in the West is a form of murder.

Thirdly, to understand the subjectivity of the so-called “objects”, one must be able to understand that some of these so-called “objects” were “created” or emerged within traditions or understandings of arts that stand at a yawning gap to Western traditions of artistry. In *Tilili Tlapalli: The Path of the Red and Black Ink*, Gloria Anzaldua writes: “My people did not split the artistic from the functional, the sacred from the secular, art from everyday life.”¹⁶ Here, Anzaldua is heading towards

¹⁶ Anzaldua, Gloria. “Tilili Tlapalli: The Path of the Red and Black Ink”, in: Rick Simonsson and Scott Walker, eds. *The Graywolf Annual Five: Multicultural Literary* (Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 1988).

¹⁷ Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*, (London: Verso), 2001.

a differentiation between what she called an “invoked art” – an art invested in the performance of ritual from the non-West and Western artistic practice. Anzaldua points out that invoked art is dedicated to the validation of humans, whereas most Western art is dedicated to the validation of itself. Invoked art, she writes, is communal and speaks to everyday life. Anzaldua thus argues that in indigenous cultures, art making aligned aesthetics into spiritual, functional and social contexts, pointing out that making art for just the sake of art, and for mastery purposes, which is common in Western cultures, leads to the objectification of said art. She believed, like her people did, in art’s capacity to make change, to heal, to mend, and to validate humanity. The difficulty of Western museums to recognise these qualities of the so-called “objects” as subjects lies thus also in the sheer discrepancy in perceptions of what art is and what art can do. Subjects from the native cultures of the Americas, Asia, Oceania, and Africa, lying as captives in ethnographic museums around the world are thus condemned to objecthood until they are repatriated and rehabilitated to subjecthood.

THE POLITICS OF HUNGER AND TOXICITY .

One of the weapons implemented by the Germans during the Herero and Nama genocide was the weapon of starvation. Those who survived the massive military attacks were sent into the desert without food and water. In *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*, Mike Davis states that in the later part of the 19th century, “millions died, not outside the ‘modern world system’, but in the very process of being forcibly incorporated into its economic and political structures.”¹⁷ He explores how colonialism and capitalism in British India and other British colonies increased rural poverty and hunger while economic policies exacerbated famine during the El Niño-Southern Oscillation related famines killing 30–60 million people due to the Malthusian economic ideologies of the colonial governments. Similarly, in Cormac Ó Gráda’s *Famine: A Short History*, Gráda expatiates on the history of famine in relation to political and economic histories for example in Mao’s China, Stalin’s Ukraine or the 1943 Bengal famine. With regards to one of the worst famines of all times, Rakhi Chakraborty’s essay “The Bengal Famine: How the British engineered the worst genocide in human history for profit” recounts how “Winston Churchill, the hallowed British War prime minister who saved Europe from a monster like Hitler was disturbingly callous about the roaring famine that was swallowing Bengal’s population. He casually diverted the supplies of medical aid and food that were being dispatched to the starving victims towards the already well supplied soldiers of Europe. When entreated upon, he said, ‘Famine or no famine, Indians will breed like rabbits.’ The Delhi Government sent a telegram to him painting a picture

of the horrible devastation and the number of people who had died. His only response was, ‘Then why hasn’t Gandhi died yet?’”¹⁸

The point being made here is that hunger, in the context of colonialism, has always been one more tool in the efforts to dehumanise, demotivate, de-spirit, and torture the colonised. An engineered hunger thus carries the possibility of stripping subjects of their subjectivities, in order to expose them as bare objects.

These same methods of objectification used on humans were and are still being exercised on the so-called “objects” in Western museums. It is very common that people in many non-Western cultures bring foods of all kinds and make sacrifices to their ancestors. Just as it is normal to see people pour libation to their ancestors. If one acknowledges that the so-called “objects” have feelings and desires, hunger and thirst, then one must consider a discourse on starvation when one thinks of them in the glass-boxes of museums. Of course, the hunger here is a concrete and physical hunger, but must also be seen as a spiritual starvation. Another means of elimination, dehumanisation, objectification often used in contexts of extreme power misuse is the usage of toxic gases. It is said that circa 90% of the so-called “objects” harboured by many ethnographic museums have never been displayed and most likely will never be seen. This is because in the massive storage spaces they have been banished to, these beings have been doused with arsenic and a cocktail of other gases, in an effort to sustain them and eventually make them ‘immortal’.

A N E X T R E M E S E N S E O F D E R A C I N A T I O N .

One of the many complaints that people who come from societies that have lost spiritual beings, historical artefacts or ancestors to Western museums make is that they feel an extreme sense of deracination and a loss of bearings. Many of the Benin bronzes for example are carriers of historical accounts. Whenever something special happened in their society, the Oba asked his guild of artists to record the event by making a sculpture. This is to say that without these historical scripts in the forms of arts, this society loses its past, and its history is bound to be narrated by and through the scripts of those who plundered the Benin palace. This sort of deracination is said to have led in many cases to a huge wave of rural-urban or Northern migrations, as humans do not want to inhabit spaces devoid of history.

If we agree with Anzaldúa that such spirited and living artworks have the potential to validate humanity in certain societies, then a loss of such beings that serve as bearings and coordinates of existence, which is to say the lack of such coordinates of navigation through life and society produces disoriented societies with extreme psycho-geographic problems.

A society that has lost a spiritual base is a society de-rooted. Though the physical spaces might still be inhabited, the deprivation of dwellings of their gods, mediums, and deities leaves them in a barrenness of elements of the divine, which is a form of deterritorialisation. Divinity and spirituality are territories that, once taken away, leave gargantuan cavities that can only be filled by restituting, re-instituting, and rehabilitating the spiritual and sacred beings. What is the psychological burden of a people that have had to exist for more than a century without their sacred throne?

You wan damé you mimba wi, you wan soulé you
mimba wi
Lapiro De Mbanga, “Mimba Wi”

T H E E C O N O M I C Q U E S T I O N .

An all too much sidelined conversation around issues of ethnological museums and heritage from other parts of the world concerns the economic question. As Lapiro de Mbanga rightfully put it in his song “Mimba Wi” which was directed to the political and economic elites: “You wan damé you mimba wi, you wan soulé you mimba wi” (If you want to eat think of me, if you want to drink think of me).

The Humboldt Forum is said to be a project totalling over 600 million euros in costs with a yearly budget of circa 60 million euros. It is roughly estimated that 3,5 million people will visit the museum yearly. The Quai Branly receives 1,4 million visitors per year (entrance ticket 12 euros) and the British Museum 6,7 million visitors per year (entrance ticket 15 pounds). If one considers this in addition to advertisement, merchandising, and other means of commodification, the mathematics are easy.

Shared Heritage must be dissected from an economic perspective. “You wan damé you mimbe wi, you wan soulé you mimba wi.” If this much money is being or must be made from our ancestors, spiritual beings, and historical vessels, then let Shared Heritage also mean having them in Cameroon, Nigeria, Mexico, Iraq, or Egypt, and have people from all over the world pay visa fees and air tickets to fly to these places, pay hotels and food, pay entrance fees to see the throne of Sultan Njoya, the Benin Bronzes, the headdress of Montezuma, the Ishtar Gate or the Nefertiti bust. These are also matters of economy.

18 Raksi Chakraborty, “The Bengal Famine: How the British engineered the worst genocide in human history for profit”, *Your Story* 15.08.2014: <https://yourstory.com/2014/08/bengal-famine-genocide>

A F T E R W O R D . D I S M A N T L I N G T H E E P I C E N T R E .

For ethnographic museums to get out of the dead end they find themselves in, they will have to listen to other voices. Listening to the whispers in the corners. Listening to the voices that do not make up the epicentre. Dismantling the epicentre as a whole. But what are we to do with such concepts and spaces called ethnological museums in the 21st century? Maybe it is queering the ethnological museums that will deliver such institutions from the perils of their own violent histories.

In the very beginning of *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, José Esteban Muñoz writes that “QUEERNESS IS NOT yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet Queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is Queerness’s domain. Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present. The here and now is a prison house. We must strive, in the face of the here and now’s totalizing rendering of reality, to think and feel a then and there. Some will say that all we have are the pleasures of this moment, but we must never settle for that minimal transport; we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds. Queerness is an ongoing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present. Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing. (...) Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.”¹⁹

It is worth replacing every “we” in Esteban Muñoz’ quote with “ethnological museum.” It is worth thinking of ways of ethnological museums by looking and activating ways of imagining and enacting futurities of the then and there. Ways of dreaming new and better pleasures and enacting other ways of being in the world. Ways of propelling ourselves beyond romances of the negative and enabling us to acknowledge that this world is not enough.

As much as this might sound like a dream, it is this dreamscape that we should be able to enact and navigate... and as Toni Cade Bambara wrote: “The dream is real, my friends. The failure to realize it is the only unreality.”²⁰

19 José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, (New York: New York University Press), 2009, 1.

20 Toni Cade Bambara, *The Salt Eaters*, (New York: Random House), 1980, 126.

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.

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