

Dispersing towards being & becoming together: frequential reconfigurations

A SAVVY Contemporary Public Programme
Echoing Oscar Murillo's exhibition
A Storm Is Blowing From Paradise
17.09—27.11.22

ARTISTS



Phyllis Akinyi, Ekow Alabi & Drummers of Joy, Archive Books (Leila Bencharnia, Wissal Houbabi, Omar Delnevo), Frank Báez, Blick Bassy, Maria Buenaventura, Tanka Fonta, folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera, Oscar Murillo, Kettly Noël, Saca Sal, and Michelle M. Wright

SAVVY CONTEMPORARY



Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Elena Agudio, Mario Alberto Llanos Luna, Lema, Lia Milanesio, Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock, Anna Jäger, Sagal Farah, Billy Fowo

OSCAR MURILLO STUDIO



Marta Barina, Tim Bowditch, Juliana Caicedo Hurtado, Alfonso Calixtro S, Angela Patricia Cardenas Echavarría, Clara Dublanc, Vanja Graovac, Georgia Guirguis, Reinis Lismanis, Alberto Herrera Martinez, Luz ObandoVinasco, Ehizena Olokpa, Maite de Orbe, Ryan Orme, Anna Pigott, Dominique Russell, Andrea Catalina Zamudio Obando, Emily Zapata Caicedo, Juan Carlos Zapata Trujillo, Victor Zapata Caicedo, Marlene Zotti

CONCEPT



SAVVY Contemporary and Oscar Murillo cordially invite you to the exhibition *A Storm Is Blowing From Paradise* which SAVVY Contemporary will echo, expand and jam with the different tones, marks, gestures, beats, and temporalities sedimented by thousands of children from different corners of the world in Oscar Murillo's project *Frequencies*. Through the duration of the exhibition, SAVVY Contemporary amplifies the rhythms and murmurs of this multivocal and kaleidoscopic project through a series of INVOCATIONS brought forth through gestures of collective nourishment expanding across dancing together, cooking with one another, and listening to the incantations and readings of our past, present, and futures.

Initiated by Oscar Murillo in 2013, *Frequencies* has been grounded in the dispersal and sending of pieces of raw canvas to schools around the globe. Over the past nine years, the project has visited more than 400 schools in over 30 countries and affixed artist canvas to classroom desks for a semester, inviting students to freely mark, draw and write on their surfaces. The canvases, with their accumulated intentional and unintentional marking, are collected after approximately six months of "sedimentation" in the classroom. The growing archive has collected, to date, more than 40,000 canvases from all corners of the world.

Intervening in and attuning to the cadences, the pulses, and frequencies of these collective archives brought together for the first time in such magniloquence in Venice, at the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, SAVVY Contemporary will embrace *A Storm Is Blowing From Paradise* – the title of the exhibition – by weaving together the winds, sounds, and water molecules, the thunder, lightning, and warm and moist airs in a collective orchestration of these forces and tempos to embody the plurality of Murillo's project.

As a response to the different moments and movements that *Frequencies* elicits, the public programme cooked by SAVVY Contemporary unfolds through four different focal investigations and perspectives of analysis and engagement. The first movement is the one of DISPERSAL, which reflects on the experience of the diaspora, of being parted from a place and dispersed in the world, as the initial phase of dispersing the canvases of *Frequencies* into the world. The second path the one of CONVERGENCE, referring to the getting together and sharing of a struggle across differences and geographies, evoking movements such as the Rastafarian, the Harlem Renaissance or the Panafrican – among others – when thinking through black experience, as much as the coming together of the canvases from the different parts of the world. The third momentum is the one of FRAGMENTATION, the recognition of difference in the common struggle, and the importance of fragmenting to refine the struggle, "to become one, and yet many" as Ralph Ellison put it, while the last tempo is the one of RECONFIGURATION, the crossing of the canvases into each other and the new meanings that are created, the paths that are opened by these encounters and the new senses of belonging brought together.

Enacting a space of performance as a space of possibility and of collective improvisation, engaging with phonic, poetic, and corporeal elements, with their ruptures, collisions, and reciprocal responses, this INVOCATION programme will materialise as an encounter itself, as an ensemble of notes and voices, a score to imagine new possibilities of thinking the multidirectional pasts and futures through presence, where materiality and animateriality cannot be separated.

Schedule

PREVIEW Friday 16 September
18:00–20:00

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18:00 **OPENING**
Folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera

BRUNCH & MUSIC Sunday 18 September
13:00–18:00

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13:00 **BRUNCH**

14:00 **ACOUSTIC INTERVENTION**
Tanka Fonta

14:30 **JAM SESSION**
Tanka Fonta with folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera

MUSIC 21 September–7 October [Every day]
16:00–18:00

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16:00–18:00 **JAM SESSION**
Folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera

WORKSHOP Tuesday 20 September
10:00–18:00

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10:00–12:00 **WORKSHOP**
On Convergence

13:00–15:00 **PUBLIC GATHERING**

16:00–18:00 **JAM SESSION**
folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera

WORKSHOP Sunday 2 October
10:00–18:00

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10:00–16:00 **LISTENING SESSION**

16:00–18:00 **JAM SESSION**
Folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera

INVOCATIONS Saturday 17 September
14:00–01:00

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14:00 **CALLING THE STORM, SETTING THE TONE**
MUSICAL OPENING
Ekow Alabi and Drummers of Joy

14:20 **INTRODUCTION & WELCOME**
SAVVY Contemporary

14:40 **READING & CONVERSATION SESSION**
Archive Books with Leila Bencharnia,
Wissal Houbabi, Omar Delnevo
Like an Infinite Vortex

15:25 **PERFORMANCE**
Ketty Noël

15:50 **MUSICAL INTERLUDE**
Ekow Alabi and Drummers of Joy

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM
16:10 **BREAK**

16:20 **IN CONVERSATION**
Oscar Murillo and SAVVY Contemporary

17:00 **MUSICAL PERFORMANCE**
Tanka Fonta
Pieces of Eternity

17:45 **BREAK**

DEW POINT
18:00 **KEYNOTE LECTURE**
Michelle M. Wright
Dew Point/Do Point: Black Identities in Europe

19:00 **FOOD CONVERSATION**
Maria Buenaventura
An Austerity Feast: Eat Earth. Eat Roots.

20:00 **FOOD TASTING**

20:30 **MUSICAL INTERLUDE**
Ekow Alabi and Drummers of Joy

THE HEAT
20:45 **POETRY READING & INVOCATIONS**
Frank Báez
Another Day on Earth

21:30 **PERFORMANCE**
Phyllis Akinyi
S/PACE

22:00 **BREAK**

22:15 **VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
Blick Bassy
Bikutsi 3000 City

23:10 **JAM SESSION**
Ekow Alabi and Drummers of Joy with folkloric mashup from Mar, Río y Cordillera

REPERCUSSION OF THE STORM
23:30 **SOUND INVOCATION & DJ SET**
Saca Sal

1:00 **SONIC HURRICANE**
SAVVY Contemporary

CONTRIBUTORS & BIOS



EKOW ALABI AND DRUMMERS OF JOY
(MUSICAL INTERVENTIONS)

Seated behind the conventional drum kit, Ghana-born Ekow Alabi Savage shows a vast understanding of what rhythm is about. He is able to blend Jazz, Highlife, Rock, Funk, Reggae and other styles. Across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, he has played with Jimi Tenor, Eek-a-Mouse, Ebo Taylor and Ade Bantu, among others. Ekow Alabi Savage is also a composer/songwriter/singer in his own right and has two albums, *Return To Zion* and *Going For Gold*, to his credit.

In addition to a standard drum kit, he is also a capable percussion player. On a good day, he surrounds himself with congas, bells, timbales, bongos, tambourines, triangles, maracas and cymbals to “sweeten” any kind of music. His journey to the current level of musical maturity started in Ghana where he began playing assorted drums at an early age. He played percussion for the famous Ghanaian band Sweet Beans before moving on to live in Germany. He joined hands with his drummer friend, Aryee Brown, to start the Our Music Festival in Ghana in December 2021. The festival’s main aim is to celebrate the different strands of Ghanaian popular music.

Eric Owusu hails from the heart of Highlife and West-African music. At only 14 years, Eric left his home in Accra to seek his musical dreams. His first destination was Lagos, Nigeria, where he joined several traditional drumming and singing groups, and started playing regularly in local churches. Gaining increasing recognition in the West African music scene as a percussionist, Eric decided to move back to Accra, where he started playing with a few of Ghana’s most known musicians. Nowadays, Eric is a regular band member for legends Pat Thomas and Ebo Taylor and has played with world-renowned artists such as Richard Bona. Eric is now living in Germany and is the band’s creative force behind the lyrics and vocal melodies.

ARCHIVE BOOKS WITH LEILA BENCHARNIA, WISSAL HOUBABI, OMAR DELNEVO – *Like an Infinite Vortex*
(READING AND CONVERSATION SESSION)

A sonic activation is an aural stance for unheard storms.

Overcoming comprehension and performance to seek the carnality of word. Poetic form stripped back to its primordial sound nature, and vice versa, like an infinite vortex.

Leila Bencharnia is a sound artist, acousmatique interpreter and musician, born in El Kelaa and based in Milan. Daughter of a traditional Moroccan musician, her passion for music began in the western desert of Morocco where she grew up. Her sonic landscape is made out of analogic material, such as tapes, vinyls and synthesizers. She uses the listening practice as a modality of transmission of knowledge. Seeking to decolonise listening practices is a way to impact directly on social and political issues.

Omar Delnevo is a musician, composer and classically trained pianist, currently based between London and Milan. Their work focuses on practices of decolonising music by approaching sound organically, dismantling technique and repertoire, seeking fresh ways of perceiving sound and musical form, and how these can confront colonial heritage.

Wissal Houbabi, born in 1994 in Khouribga, is a poet, performer, artist and freelance writer. Her work moves across several fields, from feminist research to hip hop, to short novels that explore the condition of diasporic culture. She has collaborated with several online and print magazines such as *Jacobin*, *Zapruder*, *Noisey*, has collaborated on workshops and poetry projects with institutions such as IUAV, Goethe Institute, MamBo, Muciv, Mudec. Wissal is part of the direction team of the association *Il Razzismo è una Brutta Storia* (Milano) and collaborates with the poetry collective *Zoopalco_ZPL* (Bologna) and *Premio di poesia con Musica* Alberto Dubito (Milano/Treviso).

KETTLY NÖEL
(PERFORMANCE)

Kettyl Nöel is a dancer, choreographer, performance artist and actress. She began working with the Haitian-American Dance Theater at the age of 17. In the early 1990s she founded her first dance company in Paris. In 1996 she started a charitable art project in Benin and worked with young people in Cotonou. Kettyl Nöel moved to Mali in 1999, where she founded the dance centre Donko Seko and also established the Bamako Dance Festival. Over the past 15 years, Kettyl Nöel has created a large body of dance art that has been shown and awarded internationally. In 2014, the artist featured as Zabou in Abderrahmane Sissako’s film *Timbuktu*. Among many other places, she participated in documenta14 in Athens and Kassel, as well as the biennial festival Port au Prince Art Performance (PAPAP) in Haiti.

OSCAR MURILLO AND SAVVY CONTEMPORARY
(IN CONVERSATION)

Oscar Murillo is joined in a dialogue with curator and SAVVY Contemporary founder Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, along with the SAVVY Contemporary team. The conversation will explore the long running collaboration between Murillo and SAVVY Contemporary, and touch on the conceptual lines of enquiry which have informed *A Storm Is Blowing From Paradise*, and the wide-ranging programme of events they have co-created.

Oscar Murillo was born in 1986 in La Paila, Colombia, and lives and works in various locations. He earned a BA (Hons) in Fine Arts at the University of Westminster in 2007 and an MA from the Royal College of Art, London in 2012. In 2019, Murillo was one of four artists to collectively be awarded the prestigious Turner Prize. Murillo is represented by Carlos/Ishikawa, David Zwirner, Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie, Kurimanzutto and Taka Ishii Gallery. He is the founder of Frequencies Institute.

TANKA FONTA – *Pieces of Eternity*
(MUSICAL PERFORMANCE)

The six musical compositions presented here are thematically centered and premised on the subject of “transcendence in differences & similarities”. Originally composed for small or large ensembles and orchestra, the works are re-arranged for acoustic guitar & voice performance. They are thematic expositions, rhythmical and melodic explorations into the vibrational and resonant frequencies of deep time, centering around humanity’s timelessness, integral being-ness of the human individual as an eternal part of the totalities of the visible or non-visible realities of creation and humanity’s infinite connectivity, participation and an eternal part of the universes of things and non-things. These works seek to formulate structural motifs whose sequences will simultaneously be creating and sculpting intelligent enfolding forms of suspended tonal time envelope, which is intended to evoke within the listeners a sensation of moving backwards in time and vacillating between past, present and future.

Titles of Compositions:

“The Call”, “Chants of The Dawn”, “The Noon Angelus”, “The Portraits of Night of Day”, “Macha-Reh”, “The Exaltation Dance”

Tanka Fonta is a composer, author, performer, multi-instrumentalist, poet, researcher and scholar of the cultures of humanity. Tanka Fonta has also been actively engaged in other professions – as a visual artist, exhibiting at galleries in Cameroon, Canada, USA, and Germany. Fluent in diverse musical idioms, genres and styles, Tanka Fonta also writes from a lyrical, mytho-poetical, and philosophical background, his compositions and other works, often integrating variegated thematic motifs and musical insights from different musical cultures of the world. He has published over 250 works for orchestra, small & mixed ensembles, quartets, trios & for solo instrumentation and has been featured in the documentary film *African Brush Strokes*. He is a frequent performer in numerous festivals, concerts and has appeared in Vues D’Afrique, Coup de Coeur festivals in Montreal, du Maurier Jazz festival & many others. Tanka Fonta plays the piano, acoustic guitar, bass, and a variety of traditional African hand percussion and string instruments.

MICHELLE M. WRIGHT – *Dew Point/Do Point: Black Identities in Europe*
(KEYNOTE LECTURE)

We often think of an identity as being someone, but identity is no static “thing”. Rather, it is a dynamic, an action, a performance, a movement or a halting of movement, a freedom or a theft thereof. The illusion of “being” an identity is reserved for the elite of the collective, and thus it remains out of reach for most Black Europeans, because “being” European requires a denial of that Blackness.

Our Do Point as Blacks in the Diaspora is complex dance between time and space, as we exist in the here and now, and yet are constantly sent back, through brutal white forces and cruel fantasies, to an era of colonisation and/or enslavement – or to a mythical, savage past that lies solely in the imagination.

So our Do Point of doing Blackness must be a metaphorical Dew Point: an index of our survivability and hospitality, our resilience, a beginning that constantly sounds for an ending, a rejection of linear labels and an embrace of the Epiphenomenal, where labels are evanescent actions, and being can only be doing.

Michelle M. Wright is the Emory University College of Arts & Sciences Distinguished Professor of English, where she teaches courses on Black European, African American and African Diaspora literature and culture. Professor Wright was born in Rome, Italy, the daughter of an African American diplomat and a Polish-Czech American schoolteacher, and grew up in Italy, Morocco, Holland, and Belgium. She is the author of *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* (2004), which traces the intellectual history of Blackness in the West, and *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (2015), which creates a diasporic Black paradigm designed to represent all forms of Blackness.

MARIA BUENAVENTURA – *An Austerity Feast: Eat Earth. Eat Roots.*
(FOOD CONVERSATION)

There is an expression, “eat dirt” which means losing. It is the same as “bite the dust”. It is the image of someone who fell to the ground, with his face on the ground. However, we are always eating dirt. Soil and sun, that’s all, that is food. And when we leave our places, our food becomes our roots and firm ground.

Roots are a metaphor of our origins, and roots have been also the food of workers: full of energy, potatoes, manioc and beetroot can provide dinner for a large group of people. So, the proposal here is to cook together a feast of roots and earth, edible earth made with fungi, olives, dry manioc, beans, black quinoa, adding to this table landscape our dressings and sauces from multiple places.

“Eat earth, eat roots” has its roots in “We, the Diners” – a collaborative project by Liliana Sanchez and Maria Buenaventura, between 2015 and 2016 in Bogotá, Colombia. Following the initial presentations the artists now work separately on creating, reshaping and modifying the banquets.

Maria Buenaventura is an artist, philosopher, cook and writer from the northern Andes of South America. In the early 2000s she began to investigate the history of food in Bogotá’s savanna, where she lives and works: here and there, stories, old recipes, testimonies, and remains of landscapes started to appear; a cultural nature unknown to the inhabitants of the city. But also scenes of struggles, tensions, looting and demands that are buried in the daily drowning of a city of displacement and informality, behind the veils of media, too aware of the centres of power. The artist joined movements of urban cultivators and guardians of seeds, to commit to food autonomy, free seeds and living rivers, working especially with capitaine fish, an endemic species and main food source of her region, which is now almost forgotten.

Through actions with food, ritual banquets, workshops, talks, installations, video and multiple media, she invites people to think about the relationship between food and place, food and freedom.

FRANK BÁEZ – *Another Day on Earth*
(POETRY READING AND INVOCATIONS)

“Another day on earth” is a performance piece that simulates a newscast of approximately 40 minutes, in which the news are poems. In the era of post-truth and fake news, where information is controlled and regulated by the state and private companies, poetry can be a reliable way to document reality. In the face of mutilated communication, the art of poetry recovers a new language, in keeping with the times, a sort of zeitgeist. Newscasts represent the quintessential place where the manipulation of reality takes place. With this in mind, sitting at a desk, wearing a suit and tie, like a news anchorman, the Dominican poet Frank Báez deconstructs the news and using humour, irony, poetic resources and even tenderness, he conveys the most essential news of these turbulent times.

Frank Báez is a poet, a fiction and nonfiction writer and a performance artist from the Dominican Republic. He is the author of six collections of poetry, a book of short stories and three nonfiction books. Some of these have been awarded and translated into several languages. He is a founding member of the Spoken Word band El Hombrecito, which has released three albums. His work has been considered by critics as eclectic, innovative and authentic. He was included in Bogotá39-2017’s list as one of the most promising Latin American writers under 39 years of age.

PHYLLIS AKINYI – *S/PACE*
(PERFORMANCE)

S/PACE is a semi-improvised performance orbiting time and space, developed by choreographer and sonic-movement performance artist Phyllis Akinyi. On 17 September, *S/PACE* will create a temporary takeover of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia in Venice through an Africanist spiritual approach to sound and movement, letting the space and spirits speak. Using her body and listening to the voices of the space, Akinyi will create a live soundscape through a loop station, creating a realm of juxtapositions: silence and noise, individuality and community, past and future, anxiety and peace.

Pace [latin] – peace, permission
Pace the room
Keeping pace
S/PACE

Phyllis Akinyi is a Danish-Kenyan dancer, choreographer, performance artist, and dance researcher based in Madrid. Akinyi works with traditional and experimental flamenco and has spent many years developing artistic works that highlight African and Diasporan expressions within flamenco. Her general artistic practice investigates the betwixt and between, or more specifically the entanglements of movement, culture, and identity, from an anthropological lens of bodies caught in cultural “in-betweens”, and through that lens she has created the works *Sonar Siguiriyá* (2017), *FlamencÁfrica* (2018), *Nyar Kakan – I Contain Multitudes* (2019) and *GASP* (2020).

Over the last years, she created within a frame she calls Spatial Listening, where performance art meets Africanist Spirituality and sonic movement. This kind of work entails both solo performances and collaborations, the latest ones being: *G.R.I.E.F. Queer Magick Intervention* which premiered at Yellow Fish Festival (New York, May 2021); , commissioned by the festival Musik Installationen Nürnberg (July 2022); and *Anadyomene*, commissioned by Metropolis Copenhagen International Theater (Copenhagen, August 2022).

Akinyi enjoys teaching flamenco master classes to different types of movers – professionals and aficionados, and has taught at Amor de Dios, Cullberg Balletten (SE), the BA in Dance and Choreography at UniArts Stockholm, Dansehallerne (DK), Conde Duque (Madrid), and more, focusing her teachings on investigation, exploration and grounding through her Flamenco Lab Sessions.

BLICK BASSY – *Bikutsi 3000 City*
(VIDEO & VOCAL PERFORMANCE)

The contribution will begin with a video work: Afana, a regular journalist for the presidential party, has been infiltrated. In charge of the daily news, he passes on encrypted information from the bits of coded messages sent every day by the inhabitants of the Mintaba provinces, to prepare the creation of the contributionist city: Bikutsi 3000 City. This video screening will be followed by a concert.

Blick Bassy was born in Cameroon where he grew up between Yaoundé, the capital, and Mintaba, his native village where singing, dancing and music are customary. He draws his multiple inspirations from his childhood memories, travelling between music, dance, performing arts and cinema. Blick Bassy brings these disciplines into dialogue with brio. After spending ten years with the group Macase, which he created, he embarked on a solo career and produced four successful albums, making him one of the most inventive multidisciplinary artists of his generation. Winner of the Grand Prix Sacem Musique du Monde, his latest album 1958 evokes the year in which the independence leader Ruben Um Nyobe was assassinated by the French army.

Blick Bassy takes up this heritage and questions the conflicts of yesterday and today. His futuristic Afro music makes him an avant-garde artist mixing traditional and electro-modern sounds. In 2016, he wrote his first novel, *Le Moabi Cinéma*, published by Gallimard and awarded the Grand Prix which celebrates the continent’s French-speaking authors.

“In each of my projects, the same concerns drive me: how Africa can reconnect with its identity, emancipate itself from its colonial history, inspire its youth and invent its future.”

EKOW ALABI AND DRUMMERS OF JOY WITH FOLKLORIC MASHUP
FROM MAR, RÍO Y CORDILLERA
(JAM SESSION)

For Ekow Alabi please see above.

A folkloric mashup from a group of 14 singers, musicians and percussionists from the Valle del Cauca region of Colombia. Bringing traditional music from the Colombian Pacific, known for its connection to the African diaspora, three different music groups come together under the name of Mar, Río y Cordillera. Their instruments include a Colombian marimba, which resembles the African balafon; guasá, typically made from bamboo and filled with light seeds or rice; maracas, drums, and wind instruments.

Featuring: Lucio Murillo Asprilla, Emildo Granja Bonilla, Rufina Hurtado De Garcia, Maicol Estiben Castro Granja, Modesta Hurtado Granja, Jose Carlos Largo Granja, Didier Ferny Vente Grueso, Diego Mauricio Velez Londoño, Laura Marcela Asprilla Lopez, Nicolas Acevedo Palacios, Luis Alfonso Pino Ramirez, Angie Marieth Rengifo Peña, Ana Liza Albornoz Rivas, Milay Mosquera Rodriguez, Natali Sanchez Murillo.

SACA SAL
(SOUND INVOCATION AND DJ SET)

A musical collective ritual carried by rhythms and echoes from our ancestors that invite us to a space of joy and liberation. With music from the global south in vinyl format, this collective ritual catalyses and shakes emotions, pains and fears, welcoming them to be transformed by body movement and body listening.

Saca Sal is a ritual in the form of a sonic space that happens on the dancefloor when a collective of people come together to dance and be carried by the echoes and rhythms selected by its two hosts. Calamidades Lola is a record hunter and dj/selector born and raised in Barranquilla, a city on the Caribbean coast of Colombia with a powerful party culture where music is a sure path to joy and liberation. Based in Berlin, much of her music collection and selection is guided by her migratory experience. Amuleto Manuela is a Colombian sound artist based in Berlin. In her process-based work (soundscapes, sound sculptures, listening collective practices and radio shows), listening is the principle and arises as a context-driven response to the search for spaces of encounter. She addresses diaspora and questions of identity with the will to unlearn and remember other ways of inhabiting our collective life experience.