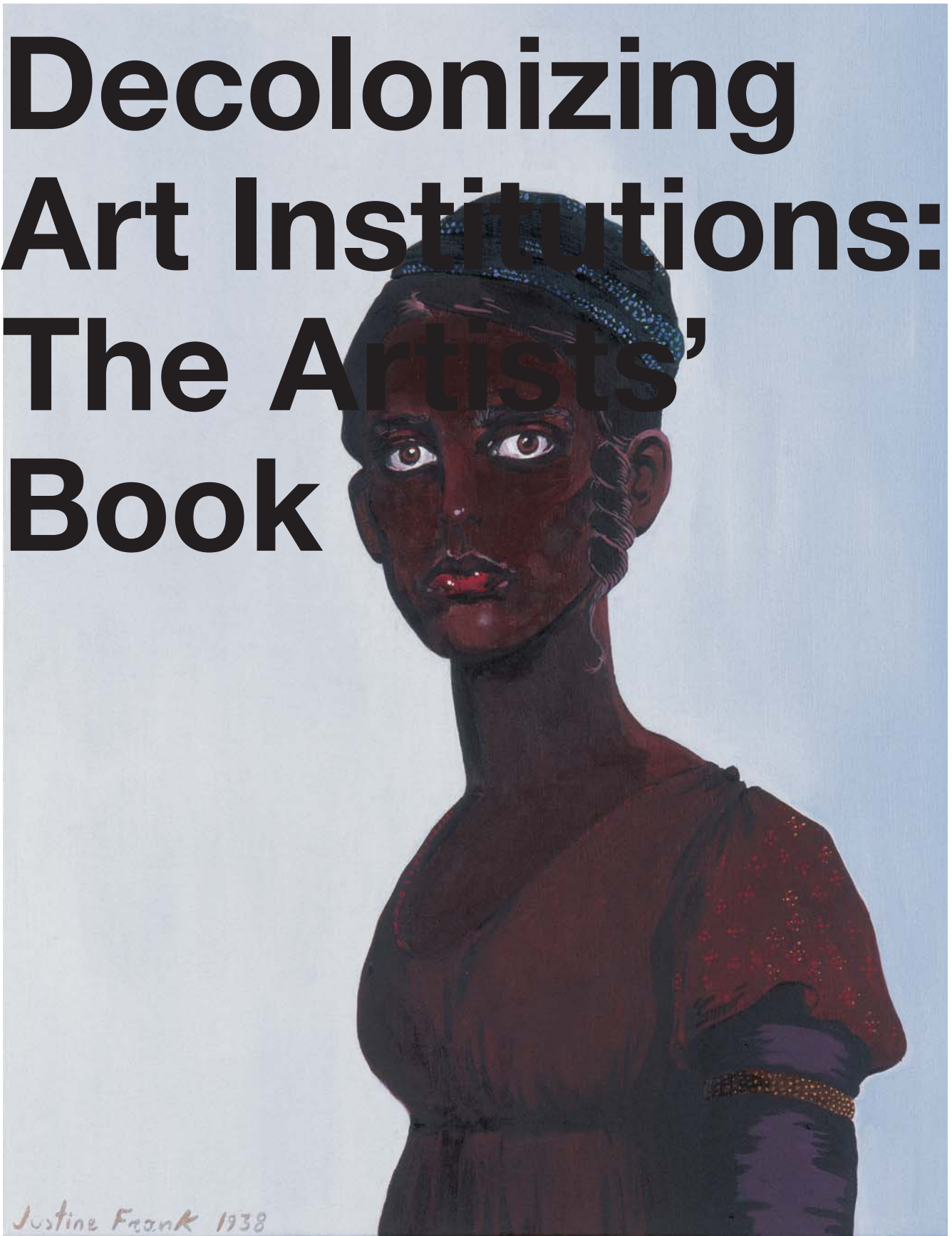


# Decolonizing Art Institutions: The Artists' Book



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# Editorial

## Dorothee Richter & Ronald Kolb

For the Ocurating Issue 34, we asked artists, theorists, and researches to send us their proposals for a decolonized art practice, or how to deal with institutions in that regard.<sup>1</sup> The 34 invited artists were given a *carte blanche* to contribute to the topic decolonising art institutions. The only restriction given was in the format, with artists' contributions to take the form of either an DIN A4 -sized PDF. The aim: to provide a platform for a multiplicity of voices from the arts. These voices would propose an image of a decolonised art practice, all the while raising questions with regard to how one can engage with pre-existing institutions in a congruent manner. The format of the material was crucial. It too was thoroughly accessible, printable by everyone from readers of the magazine, to the very students and teachers in the postgraduate Curating Programme who had initiated the project. Thus the form mirrored the democratic modes of presenting and distributing art that were being explored in the contents of the issue. This issue contains proposals from 34 artists and an implicit call to action. *You* can download the material and assemble it in *your* preferred way: a book, an exhibition, or something else. The curatorial role liberated, it stands open and available to any reader of the issue, mutable between various local contexts.

These local contexts were as apparent in the creating of this issue, as they are in the final product. The diverse group of students in the Postgraduate Programme in Curating – from Brazil, Mexico, the US, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, the UK, and Australia – incited a multiplicity of approaches to the topic. This, in turn, led to contact with a great assortment of artists. This was an opportunity to take into consideration the myriad of situations within which these practitioners work. Thus we could find not only highly specific solutions that work within their local contexts, but also provide platforms for strategies that might surprise us by extending across different, unexpected networks. They would become newly discovered constellations of decolonising tactics.

And yet, the longer the specifics of these ideas were engaged with, the more fraught it was to grapple with the very idea of decolonisation, as a broader concept. While there was an advantage in the variety of frameworks within which the issue was problematised, this also functioned as a point of friction. It exposed the difficulty of decolonising across such divergent contexts, and rendered it nearly impossible to speak on a common ground. Furthermore doubts were seeded about the efficacy of approaching these concerns from the perspective of the arts. Nabil Ahmed argues, for example, how colonialism, reinforced through capitalism, works in a destructive manner against the environment, with a breadth of reach and depth of effect one can hardly imagine. A malignant force spread far beyond the scope of the arts.

“Environmental violence can only be understood via the field of environmental history, which, broadly, gives a dialectic accounting of humanity-in-nature and nature-in-humanity. It incorporates a history of the externalization of nature, from the mineral to the vegetal, silver to sugar, that allowed for the fetishization and commodification of the environment in ways foreign to the peoples that colonialism encountered and whose forms of knowledge it would obliterate.”<sup>2</sup>

“Environmental colonialism” then, along with all its disastrous consequences, is enforced in accelerated capitalism. This naturally has implications for any discussion of decolonisation that takes art institutions as its basis, particularly when the focus inevitably broadens to that which is under a political jurisdiction – land, heritage, appropriation. And yet, as responses to the invitation manifested themselves, they provided further evidence for the ability of art-driven processes to disrupt representational space. The proposals were a microcosm of the broader reality of the art world, which constantly propagates ideas concerning how to live together in new and different ways; how to use representational space in a radical manner; how to disrupt the hegemonic ideas of communality and subjectivity.

What is clear is that how, who, and for whom a representational space is used is of utmost importance. These questions must be brought to the fore in order to effect structural changes, in policy and otherwise. What’s more they apply as much to the museum and the gallery, to these institutions respective collections, and modes of representation, as they do to society at large. Further a re-reading of existing collections through the lens of texts such as Fred Wilson’s “Mining the Museum” can dramatically expose those that have misjudged the parameters of these questions.

It is to that arena of discourse that exposes, enlightens and, proposes that the contributions collected herein may be added. They surprise, with unforeseen approaches, drawing our attention to specific issues, and ultimately, to specific understandings. Not a final word but diverse offerings to a diverse problem.

The material can be used to create an instant exhibition, wherever it can be printed. We are extremely grateful to the artists, who so generously shared their thoughts and images. And to you, the reader, or perhaps better put, the curator of the works collected herein.

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## Notes

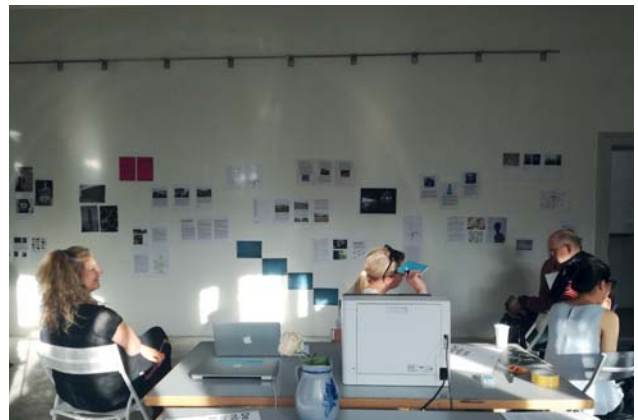
**1** The Oncurating Issue 34 arose from a shared project with the students of the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ZHdK in summer 2017. We invited artists related to the symposium “De-Colonizing Art Institutions” at Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland. The material we received was organized to print out and be displayed by us and the audience of the exhibition in the Oncurating Project Space.

**2** Nabil Ahmed, „Negative Moment: Political Geology in the Twenty – First Century,“ in Quinn Latimer, Adam Szyceck, *South Magazine Issue 8*, documenta 14, 2017.

# Summer Academy & Symposium De-Colonizing Art Institutions: Questions And Ideas after Ten Days of Intensive Propositions Giovanna Bragaglia

In Zurich, studying at ZHdK in the MAS Curating Programme, one of my aims is to be able to look at cultural institutions from a distance and have the time to reflect on its structures. Taking part in the De-Colonizing Art Institutions Summer Academy & Symposium helped me to understand and exchange ideas about museums and art institutions that all over the world tend to have a uniform appearance, following “Western” examples. Today, it is more important than ever to understand and reflect on how art institutions and museums could work differently, and what and how would be the new formats.

With this in mind, in May 2017, a group of curators<sup>1</sup> asked artists and researchers worldwide to contribute with proposals, images and concepts regarding *De-Colonizing Art Institutions*. The material is available online<sup>2</sup> and can be freely accessed and download. Access to the material was also available within the On Curating Project Space, in an exhibition project, which was proposed to recreate and rethink the exhibition space and its visitor perspective. There, one could find a computer and a printer available to access and print out the contributions. Exploring and expanding the sense of curating, visitors could decide by themselves what to print out and hang on the space's wall (with hammers, nails, and tape), or take the printed material with them.



Exhibition project De-Colonizing Art Institutions, Oncurating Project Space, June 2017, Zurich. Photo: Giovanna Bragaglia



It is well known how intimidating the white cube can be. Curiously, in Rio de Janeiro, I was working in an institution that was once an inhabited house, the Instituto Moreira Salles, but I don't know if one can say that being there feels like home. It is not only about the architecture.

However, building a familiar environment can take time. When far away from home, in an unknown environment, it is more than natural to try to find a certain comfort so you don't feel like a stranger anymore, and you can feel safe to go wrong. By the way, who said what is wrong and what is not?

The Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves, one of the 34 artists invited to the project *De-Colonizing Art Institutions*, describes in her text an interesting passage about her mother approaching museums:

My mother had such fear of visiting museums that years later, when working as a maid in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and living quite close to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she never visited it until after I took her there. That day, she held back climbing up the stairs and even after we purchased discounted tickets and walked to the entrance door—which are quite tall and fascistic, she was dragging back and nervously whispered that the guard would not allow us to go inside. She thought he would shout at us to get out of the museum and as a naturally shy person feared being publically embarrassed. We made it in and after that she would often visit the museum but never one in Brazil.

In the book *The Birth of the Museum*, Tony Bennett narrates the emergence of museums, fairs, and exhibitions in nineteenth and twentieth century within a process that he calls the *exhibitionary complex*. Within it, visitors observe the show at the same time that they are observed. The author analyses how institutions have not only organized their collections, but also their visitors, teaching them how to behave and regulating their social routines.

### Home sweet home

Museums have, or at least should have, very different aims; however, how can they continue using the same structure as before? There is a need to rethink its nature as a social space, as a space of representation, observation, display, and regulation. How to build a place that people are not afraid of? How to engage people to be part of it? In order to make contemporary art more open to the world, perhaps the solution is to try to transform it into a home, where visitors and artists are not received as numbers or even guests, but in a place that they can feel at home.

The contemporary art space located in São Paulo, Casa da Xiclet, which was also invited to collaborate in the De-Colonizing project, briefly describes themselves in the received contribution as follows:

(...) the mixture of someone's house and art gallery, the latter being a kind of anti-gallery (since it is democratic, nonrestrictive and having a contaminated "whitecubeness") and the former, a kind of non-house (since the private ends up turning into public...). A blend, thus, of house and gallery.

And not by chance, they cite the concept of mess by Robert Filliou, who says that a real democracy is not possible if we do not welcome lack of discipline. Improvisation is needed in order to allow for creation.

And what is the concept of home if not a place where you feel comfortable, where mess is allowed, where you feel you can stay and that you are more than welcome? A place that is part of your life since it may contain stories with which you can identify and thus somewhere you may wish to go more often.

### Take Your Time And Feel Free

The concept of home also carries the idea of a place where you can fail, such as The Centre for Less Good Idea. Founded by the artist William Kentridge, it is an interdisciplinary incubator space for the arts based in Maboneng, Johannesburg. The place's aim is "to find the less good idea by creating and supporting experimental, collaborative and cross-disciplinary arts projects," as described on the website:

The Centre is a space to follow impulses, connections and revelations. It's a physical space for artists to come together over two seasons every year and for curators to bring together combinations of text, performance, image and dance. The Centre believes an ensemble sees the world differently to how one individual does.<sup>3</sup>

The place functions as a home for artists. "It is a safe space for failure, for projects to be tried and discarded because they do not work. It's a space for short form work, which doesn't have a natural home in a theatre or gallery."<sup>4</sup> As pointed out by Jeebesh Bagchi in his talk at ZHdK, art is not an object; it is about the production of a space. It is perhaps something that you inhabit rather than see. However, it is not a laboratory, as one might think, since no one is looking for results.

Still reflecting on the production and role of this space called museum, the Brazilian artist Daniel Jablonski, another of the invited artists of the project, presents "No museum exists, none has ever existed," a montage over the introductory pages of the book *Le Musée Imaginaire* by the French writer André Malraux. Jablonski simply flipped the colors of the facsimile, showing its "reverse" side and replacing the original images—an image of an exhibition room at MoMA and a reproduction of a painting by David Teniers—with two photos of the fire that destroyed the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro in 1978. It is interesting to point out, in this introduction, Malraux reminds us how museums seem so fundamental nowadays that we can no longer understand that they are a very recent Western invention.

Art is the world without absolute answers, boundless and timeless—it is not possible to delimit either the beginning or the end. Museums and art institutions should be a place where people should feel safe to navigate, since, "It is navigation out of any ship, sometimes with any safe or correct direction, with no wave, and with no sand," as the Brazilian poet and politician Jorge de Lima<sup>5</sup> once wrote. We may never arrive, and even when we arrive, we will never have actually arrived anyway, because there will be always more and more paths to navigate. What is most important is not drowning and having the tools to be able to go forward, looking for the means to grow and overflow.

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### Notes

**1** The curatorial team of the project De-Colonizing Art Institutions: Giovanna Braggaglia, Emilie Bruner, Ronald Kolb, Miwa Negoro, Swati Prasad, Dorothee Richter, Silvia Savoldi, Regula Spirig, Laura Thompson.

**2** All the contributions of the project "De-Colonizing Art Institutions" described in the

text can be found in this publication or accessed online <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-34.html>

**3** “The Center for the Less Good Idea.” Accessed 19.06.2017. <https://lessgoodidea.com/>.

**4** Ibid.

**5** A reference taken from the 29th São Paulo Biennial, 2010, titled *There is Always a Cup of Sea to Sail In*—a line borrowed also from the poet Jorge de Lima in the work *Invenção de Orfeu* (The Invention of Orpheus), 1952.

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For about six years, **Giovanna Bragaglia** has worked in cultural institutions in Brazil focused on contemporary art. At *Paço das Artes*, an experimental, dynamic, and multidisciplinary institution, linked to the Cultural Secretary of São Paulo, she worked closely with young critics, curators, and artists as a researcher and as a producer, promoting national and international art through exhibitions, catalogues, and educational activities. After that, she worked as a curatorial assistant on international exhibitions at *Instituto Moreira Salles* in the Visual Arts and Photography Departments, including shows of Richard Serra, Tacita Dean, William Kentridge, and Luigi Ghirri. She curated the exhibitions *Processos Públicos* (2010), *Paço das Artes*, São Paulo; *Alice Brill: impressões ao rés do chão* (2015) IMS, São Paulo; *De-Colonizing Art Institutions* (2017), OnCurating Project Space, Zürich, and *Say The Same Thing* (2017), OnCurating Project Space, Zürich. She currently lives in Zurich and studies in the MAS Curating Programme in ZHdK.



# Exhibition images at the Oncurating Project Space







All images taken from the opening of the exhibition in the Oncutating Project Space, Sihlquai 55, Zurich, 2017.

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## A Question of Aesthetics and Colonization

*Maria Thereza Alves, May 10, 2017, Berlin*



Domingos Fernandes and Maria Thereza Alves (along with Jose Gaspar Ferraz dos Campos), founders of the Green Party of São Paulo . Photograph by John Ashley of the Missoulian.

In 1987, I along with Domingos Fernandes and José Gaspar Ferraz de Campos were discussing how to make politics in the new possibility of the end of the military dictatorship and the beginnings of democracy in Brazil. At the time, there was a celebration of political freedom and there were over fifty parties registered for the upcoming elections and we tried to figure out where we would best be able to contribute politically to Brazil. I had worked as the representative for the Workers' Party of Brazil (the Partido dos Trabalhadores - PT) but was no longer active within the PT due to an influx of upper class people who had taken over many positions within the party. Both Domingos and Jose Gaspar had belonged to a wide range of political parties and movements. We thought that none of the parties reflected new potentials of working in politics and founded the Green Party (Partido Verde) in São Paulo. In between this and my paying job, working as an English teacher I would also work on my art. The Museu da Imagem e do Som in São Paulo was in my neighborhood, Pinheiros. I took my heavy and large portfolio which was not allowed on buses and walked the 2.6 kilometers to the museum. I had previously called and made an appointment with the director, whose name I can no longer remember. I arrived just as Domingos of our nascent Green Party was coming out of the director's office. He asked me what I was

doing there and I in turn asked him, who did not like art, why he was in a museum. He said that he had just done a political favor for the director, a large one and suggested that we both go and speak to the director and I could ask for a solo exhibit and we could look at the calendar and see when was the best time for me. I was shocked and said that that was not how things are done in the art world. I had graduated from art school three years previously. Alone I went into the director's office. He asked my name. He asked which Alves family was I related to. I said, "None that you would know". He would not, my family at the time were peasants or small scale farmers in the countryside of the state of Parana. The director then refused to look at my portfolio. This was the first time, as an artist that I was presenting my work to a museum director having followed all the steps I had been taught in art school. So I placed the portfolio on the table but he would not flip through it. I then opened the portfolio. He still would not flip through it. I then flipped it for him. As we were reaching the end, and he had been silent throughout, I explained to him that it was his obligation to discuss with the artist about the work – what he thought was interesting or not. At this point, my frustration with his rude and arrogant silence was obvious. The director was then forced to explain that he was actually a medical doctor and that his family had been helpful in getting the mayor elected and in return the directorship of the museum had been given to them. He confessed he knew nothing about art.

A few months later, I dropped off my portfolio at a renowned local cultural center, SESC also in São Paulo. They also did not bother to look at my portfolio. Then I asked Domingos to call in a political favor. Some months later, I received a call from the cultural institution who were now enthusiastic about giving me an exhibit whenever I wanted one. I declined to participate in corruption and explained I was only verifying if that was how things were done in Brazil.

A few years later, I was working on an issue of Documents magazine published in New York



and met with some people from the culture department of the state of São Paulo. I was treated well – I mean I was taken seriously as a person. I was not interrogated as to which family I am connected to and if I am not connected to any important family who was my political ‘godfather’. (As a young woman with a family of no political or social import at the time, all this could possibly mean would be that I was the mistress of politically or socially powerful people. I was given this opportunity several times –that is to be the sexual mistress of someone - as I looked for employment in fields for which I was qualified but had no social connections to assure employment and finally settled for teaching English for a small company run by a woman who agreed I did not have to accept any sexual offers to hold my job.) I returned a week later to continue my discussions with the cultural department and was treated as I am normally treated – that is as an intrusion where I am not welcomed because I do not belong – and wondered what I had done wrong to merit this. I was to be enlightened - they explained that originally they thought I was connected to the secretary of culture of Rio de Janeiro who was an Alves and were disappointed to have discovered during that week that I was not.

Lina Bo Bardi’s Museo de Arte de São Paulo is thought to be appealing due to what is considered by some to be its “democratic openness” in design. To us it is a fortress which begins with its moat like entrance as the building floats above the ground and becomes more intimidating because the entrance is not visible and is reached only after a flight or two of stairs and therefore you cannot figure out if someone like you would be allowed in. I must confess that I myself never thought I would be allowed in and only finally went in when I was invited to participate in the São Paulo Biennale in 2010. And neither my mother nor my father, who lived in the city would ever have thought they would be allowed to visit such a place. My mother had such fear of visiting museums that

years later, when working as a maid in the upper east side of Manhattan, and living quite close to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she never visited it until after I took her there. That day, she held back climbing up the stairs and even after we purchased discounted tickets and walked to the entrance door – which are quite tall and fascistic, she was dragging back and nervously whispered that the guard would not allow us to go inside. She thought he would shout at us to get out of the museum and as a naturally shy person feared being publically embarrassed. We made it in and after that she would often visit the museum but never one in Brazil. It would take me another year to have enough nerve to walk into the Guggenheim and Whitney in Manhattan.



Detail of the installation: The Return of a Lake. Courtesy CAAC.

In 2014, I exhibited at the MUAC in Mexico City, a large installation, The Return of a Lake, originally made for dOCUMENTA (13) of 2012. The aesthetics of the work is in homage to the Museo Comunitario del Valle de Xico in the state of Mexico, whom I have worked with since 2009. Some of the staff of MUAC did not and still do not consider this work to be art, due to its popular aesthetics.

How to decolonize the museum? Staff that have a colonial idea of art can retire to Europe and the Museo Comunitario del Valle de Xico, can take over.

[www.mariatherezaalves.org](http://www.mariatherezaalves.org)



Genaro Amaro Altamirano of the Museo Comunitario del Valle de Xico and Maria Thereza Alves during the installation of *The Return of a Lake* in MUAC in Mexico City. Photograph by Pedro del Llano.



Meeting of members of the Museo Comunitario del Valle de Xico. Photograph: Courtesy of the Museo Comunitario del Valle de Xico

# ***Silent Walk***

Song-Ming Ang

*Silent Walk is an improvisational exercise in which a group of participants takes an improvised walk through their immediate environment.*

*Participants stay silent throughout the walk, listening to the sounds they encounter.*

## **Instructions**

- 1.** Participants should turn off all phones and sound-emitting devices, and remain silent during the walk.
- 2.** There should be at least one timer/watch to keep time.
- 3.** Participants take turns to become the group leader, who leads the walk for five minutes. The suggested group size is six to ten participants.
- 4.** During these five minutes, the leader decides which path or direction to walk in. All other participants follow the leader.
- 5.** After five minutes, the leader tags another group member who has not yet been the leader. This tagged participant becomes the leader and leads the group for five minutes.
- 6.** The tagging process continues until every participant has led the group once. The walk ends when the last leader has led the group for his/her five minutes.
- 7.** It is suggested that the group gathers after the walk to exchange experiences on what they heard during the walk. This can be done in a formal or informal setting.





Photo credits:  
Song-Ming Ang, *Silent Walk*, Institute of Contemporary Arts  
Singapore, 2014. Documentation photos by Olivia Kwok.

## PAÇO COMUNIDADE (PAÇO COMMUNITY) PROJECT | PAÇO DAS ARTES – SÃO PAULO – BRAZIL

Paço Comunidade (Paço Community) is an art education project whose objective is to generate closer ties between Paço das Artes—an institution connected to the Culture Secretariat of the State of São Paulo—and the surrounding community. The program aims at expanding sociocultural accessibility, contributing to contemporary art training of the participants and encouraging the creative potential of these individuals based on the demands of the community itself.

It was from the perspective of rethinking its institutional role, aiming at creating devices that are more connected to the community surrounding the institution, that Paço das Artes created the project in 2013. Idealized by Priscila Arantes, the project was born from a basic perception: that most of the Paço das Artes visitors were middle to upper class, and that the population surrounding the Paço das Artes, especially the residents of the São Remo community, did not know or visit the institution. The project objective was to create a device that could somehow bring Paço das Artes closer to the people who lived nearby but who did not have access to what it provided. Based on this initial perception, we started investigating and mapping the region to bring us closer to Jardim São Remo, a poor neighborhood in the western zone of São Paulo while Paço was based at the University of Sao Paulo (USP), the major institution of higher learning and research in Brazil.



*Stencil and painting workshops in the São Remo community (Photos: Mariana Ambrosio/Paço das Artes)*

Thus, we established a fluid “format” for Paço Comunidade, and it is remodeled with each edition, based on dialogue between the participants and featuring a guest artist to offer workshops to the residents of the community. As a result of the workshops, an activity is developed, be it an exhibition and/or intervention at the Paço das Artes space or in the community itself. The first edition of the project took place in 2013, based on the stencil and painting workshops taught by artist Anderson Rei. Topics covered included urban interventions and public spaces, and the actions developed at the workshop culminated in a collaborative intervention at Jardim São Remo, especially on a wall that separates São Remo from the University.

In the first half of 2014, it was the turn of artist, teacher, and art educator Alberto Tembo. Working on the theme “Obra-jogo de construção, uma instalação artística coletiva” (*Building work-game, a collective artistic installation*), Tembo and the participants, based on several workshops, collectively created tridimensional objects, like toys, sculptures, and prototypes for a playground that was set up together in the community.

For the 3rd edition of the program, Paço das Artes invited artist Mônica Nador, a reference in the art/community field, to teach weekly workshops on stenciling on fabric to women at the NGO Girassol. During the meetings, the participants created forms from their experiences and personal memories that were replicated in stencils and printing. Later, the fabric and the prints gained another conceptual dimension, being transformed into clothes by textile designer Renato Imbroisi, invited to participate in the project by Mônica Nador. In addition to the clothes being made with prints developed by the participants, the model for each garment was a replica of the preferred clothes of each participant in the workshop. The results of these workshops—the prints, as well as the clothes developed—were then exhibited at Paço das Artes, at the [exhibition Mônica Nador + JAMAC + Paço Comunidade](#), January 25 through March 22, 2015. On the day of the opening, the participants got dressed and presented a fashion show with the items they printed, to the sound of live music.



*Exhibition Mônica Nador + JAMAC + Paço Comunidade (Photos: Leticia Godoy / Thais Scabio)*

For the 4th edition, Paço das Artes promoted activities in several phases to resignify the community space at the [Circo Escola \(Circus School\)](#). For the activity, Paço das Artes invited the artists of the SHN (Coletivo Rua Produções Artísticas [Street Collective Artistic Productions]), which includes Eduardo Saretta and Haroldo Paranhos), responsible for street art theoretical-practical meetings and for the occupation of the spaces with contributions by graffiti artist Izu, who lives in the São Remo community. As a result, as proposed by the young participants, walls were painted in the lateral and external areas of the Circus School, in São Remo, covering 100 sq m in paintings.

In 2016, while searching for a permanent headquarters (Paço das Artes lost the headquarters in which it had operated from 1994 to 2016, at the University of São Paulo/USP), the program expanded its coverage and started running throughout the city of São Paulo. Thus, Paço das Artes promoted the 5th edition of the project between September and December, within the sewing workshop in the Occupation at the former Hotel Cambridge, located at Avenida Nove de Julho, 216, in partnership with the Occupation of the Homeless Movement in the Downtown Area (MSTC).

This Occupation, which includes over one hundred families, currently counts on several external and internal activities, including language teaching to foreigners; an artistic residence; a bakery; a sewing workshop; a beauty parlor; a vegetable garden; a second-hand clothes store; a dentistry office, etc. In 2016, the occupation also started housing several activities geared towards culture and arts, fields that include Paço das Artes' activities. For the



occasion, curators Claudio Bueno and Priscila Arantes invited artist, stylist, and fashion consultant Agustina Comas to hold workshops alongside the Occupation sewing team, focusing on the *upcycling* concept.

*Upcycling* is the process of making residues or disposable products into new materials, increasing their value, use, or quality, and placing it back into circulation. Different from discarding a product for a new one to be produced—as is typical in the recycling process of plastic material—the *upcycling* work method makes use of the structural qualities of something existing. Working together with the sewing group of the Occupation, it was, therefore, proposed as the sharing of practices by artist Agustina Comas, with the production of garments that use the waste of the textile and garment industries in the city of São Paulo as input.

Finding the fabric or the discarded clothes to be remodeled allowed us, in this context, to find an abandoned building that we desired to inhabit, but it was, firstly, necessary to transform it, sensitize it another way, turn it inside out, from hotel to housing, from square to cultural institution (current situation of Paço das Artes, while prospecting new spaces, in 2017). In the process experienced, the garments—produced intentionally by the industry, as excess material, something that was known would not be turned to sales—were transformed by manual manufacturing, modelled to the singularity of each body, in the time and intimacy of the creative school-workshop, with no engagement with the fashion market or the industry, but with total freedom for experimentation.



*Paço Comunidade in the Occupation in the former Hotel Cambridge (Photos: Carolina Ferreira)*

The five editions of Paço Comunidade are a testament to how it is possible to build alternatives that, in fact, may contribute to the formation of citizenship and empowerment of individuals. We hope that, with these actions, and with the future editions of Paço Comunidade, Paço das Artes, as a public and democratic institution, may play its role: contributing and fostering the creative potential of an audience that often has no access to institutional subsidies.

#### **Priscila Arantes**

Artistic director and curator of Paço das Artes

Creator of Paço Comunidade

[www.pacodasartes.org.br](http://www.pacodasartes.org.br)

BALTENSPERGER + SIEPERT

**DESTINED TO FAIL**

text fragments by Stefan Baltensperger + David Siepert

We are used to fail  
 People expect us to fail  
 Failure is in our DNA

The terms Decolonizing and Institution fit so well together – just like Diversity and Unity. We are stuck trying to think about the idea of Institution without thinking about power structures, the apparatus that defends values.

**We fail**

The field of art is a hierarchic one and aesthetics is just another word for the way we perceive and interpret what surrounds us – the world. Visual expression is embedded into culture and tradition. To develop a forward-looking visual discourse means to encourage a continuation of modernism and a declassification of everything that does not originate from a western tradition.

We try to spin the wheel, mix the ingredients and squeeze them through the pastry tube — another device, a kaleidoscope for reality. It's great to be curious and to have no expectations. If we try to think beyond the scope of a single civilization, we have to forget about traditional terms and think about their meaning within the context of other traditions. At this point it starts becoming complicated when we try to use intellectual terminology.

Maybe it is more of a burden to have gone through a formal education, to know what other people have approved as important, to find oneself in this tried-and-tested system, and to repeat what already has been said before. If you aren't familiar with existing traditions, you are less likely to follow them.

Institutions are bound to the established. Consequently they are backward looking, one foot in the past, the other in the present, while trying to exercise their influence and authority onto the future.

We invent imagination machines through which we dare to try and understand the world, a kaleidoscope for reality, which is, philosophically speaking, just another fiction. Machines for confusion with no answers but countless questions – We really should think about establishing our own institution to defend our own values.

At birth we're all allocated a place in society. We learn how to behave according to this placement and we value ourselves accordingly. This applies to social class, as well as to regional identities. We learn to identify ourselves through what we were taught to be like. Over time it becomes natural ... the stigma is internalized.

Baltensperger + Siepert [www.baltensperger-siepert.com](http://www.baltensperger-siepert.com)

Players continue to push the ball across the field. De- and re-contextualizing thoughts and values, goods and individuals, and thereby accepting that individuals are subjected by being divided into the different functions of a economic system. This stigma, the “trust machine” works well, and spins the wheel again and again.

Shall we really limit the ability to shape one’s society to a few selected people, or do we have to invent a new machine to make the subaltern heard?

We are in a whirl, playfully oscillating between definition and redefinition. Defining one-self through the other, through differences, stigmatizing not only the self, but creating the other as a fiction, a collage of exoticism and fears. A house of cards, built to collapse, endangered by knowledge and a lack of distance and imagination.

Friction can be produced by confusion and unusual connections. Deviations from leading discourses, displacement and fragmentation of things we thought were clear, but actually aren’t. A multifaceted network of thoughts, emotions, and connections, right and wrong ones (the wrong ones

are usually the more interesting ones). If we think about new fictions, we create a multitude of fictional spaces — third spaces located on a neutral playground that make no claim to truthfulness – spaces in which we might be able to escape our prejudices – Different shades of gray appear inside of zones that used to be black and white, defining a new field by renegotiating space.

### **Again, we are destined to fail**

There is a belief in tomorrow. A tomorrow that will be brighter — if not for us, maybe for a future generation. More specifically, we wish that better and brighter future particularly for our own offspring, much more than for somebody else’s descendants – Again we should establish a different institution.

It seems that tomorrow is more related to space than to anything else. Tomorrow happens on a stage somewhere, and if you want to participate, you need to be the actor who is there, moving toward the future, to those places where anything is possible, to write your own story of success. The further you are physically from those places, the longer it will take you to get there. You actually might never get there, or else, you’re already there, but access is denied to you. And then there is also the day after tomorrow — and one day you will die.

## FITEIRO, KIOSQUE, PERIPTERON, KIOSK, etc...

### 18 ans d'une œuvre d'Art Public

Fiteiro Cultural [Kiosque à Culture] a été créé pour la première fois lors d'une résidence artistique entre la Suisse, la France et le Brésil, à João Pessoa, au nord du Brésil, en 1998. C'est alors que Fabiana de Barros a créé Fiteiro Cultural, un espace qui représente pour elle un lieu culturel idéal, pouvant être transformé en atelier, en espace d'exposition, en scène de théâtre, en lieu de rencontres privées ou publiques, ou même en espace de relaxation, de lecture ou de réflexion.

L'artiste a pensé cet espace comme un kiosque aux multiples possibilités d'ouvertures, de configurations et de positions. Fiteiro Cultural est inspiré de la forme prise par les kiosques de rue à Joao Pessoa, propre au Nord du Brésil. De fait, après avoir dépensé toutes leurs économies pour la construction et l'installation de leur kiosque, les marchands n'ont plus l'argent nécessaire à l'achat de marchandises. Ils ouvrent alors leur commerce tel quel, sans rien à vendre et attendent que les clients les conseillent sur les besoins du quartier et de ses habitants. Ainsi, certains *fiteiros* réparent des objets électroniques, d'autres vendent de la glace, donnent des conseils thérapeutiques, vendent des tickets de transport ou du café et des gâteaux près des arrêts de bus. Ils offrent de tout et tout est décidé collectivement, à l'écoute de la communauté dans laquelle le *fiteiro* est installé. C'est inspirée par cette démarche que Fabiana de Barros a nommé son kiosque *Fiteiro Cultural*.

A l'invitation d'artistes ou de commissaires, en relation avec un lieu dédié à l'art, Fiteiro Cultural a été installé tout autour du globe: Brésil, Grèce, Suisse, Arménie, Etats-Unis, Cuba, Portugal, France, Italie, Palestine et Allemagne. Chaque nouveau Fiteiro Cultural a ainsi été la rencontre de l'artiste avec un nouveau lieu, de nouvelles institutions et de nouvelles cultures, à des modes de construction du kiosque différents, et surtout, à de nouveaux types de collaboration avec les artistes qui proposaient des stratégies et des manières inédites d'interpréter l'œuvre. Fiteiro Cultural est donc une pièce en constant changement, sans début ni fin, sans évolution ni forme idéale. La découverte de l'autre faisant partie intégrante de l'œuvre, l'artiste l'appréhende en tant que « sculpture sociale ». Le Fiteiro est un « non-lieu » qui, pour exister, dépend de la communauté dans laquelle il est installé. A chaque nouvelle construction, il positionne ainsi l'artiste en tant que spectatrice de sa propre œuvre.



Fiteiro Cultural, João Pessoa. Exposition *Laboratoire*, 1998.  
Photo : Roberto Coura

Depuis que le premier Fiteiro Cultural a été installé à João Pessoa en 1998, le monde a subi un nombre de changements politiques, économiques, culturels et technologiques qui ont eu un impact irréversible sur les dynamiques des sociétés contemporaines. Même si des progrès ont été effectués dans de nombreux domaines, on ne peut ignorer le contexte de crise pluridimensionnelle à laquelle le monde est actuellement confronté.

« Je pense qu'il est impossible en tant qu'artiste, surtout en tant qu'auteure d'un travail orienté vers l'art public, de rester indifférente à la globalisation des conflits, à la crise de la démocratie, à la démission de l'Etat quant aux questions de *bien-être social*. Il est devenu impossible pour moi d'occuper avec impunité l'espace public avec une œuvre d'art, quand la priorité est de survivre à un processus de déshumanisation extrême. »

Dans ce contexte d'incertitudes, l'artiste explique penser qu'il y a de moins en moins de possibilités pour des projets comme celui de Fiteiro Cultural. Symboliquement, le projet a terminé son parcours physique en Palestine, à Jérusalem, point décisif dans le travail de Fabiana de Barros, constatant alors une évidence: les changements se produisant dans le monde ainsi que leurs urgences, ne sont plus les mêmes qu'au commencement du projet.



Fiteiro Cultural, Festival, *Eternal Tour* 2010.  
Université Al-Quds, Jérusalem, Palestine, 2010.  
Photo: Dominique Fleury

« Dans la sphère des politiques culturelles, nous vivons dans un moment de peu de motivations et de beaucoup de détérioration des espaces destinés à l'art. On ajoute à cela le problème complexe de la frontière éthique entre ceux qui financent l'art et ceux qui défendent l'Art Public. Détournée de ses buts initiaux, une œuvre d'art peut devenir un instrument de manipulation et de propagande, servant des intérêts politiques et idéologiques avec lesquels on est en désaccord. »

Paradoxalement, ce n'est pas dans les rues, ni sur les trottoirs, ni dans les parcs ou jardins que les artistes se sentent les plus libres, mais dans les galeries ou les musées, non seulement du fait de leur caractère privé, mais également du fait de leur public averti. Dans ces environnements, hermétiquement construits pour l'art, les artistes peuvent créer sans entraves; dans l'espace public en revanche, la liberté est sans-cesse renégociée. Or, savoir jusqu'où l'art peut aller est précisément ce qui intéresse l'Art Public; l'œuvre naît de cette tension. L'analyse d'une ville et de sa structure, tout comme de ses limites physiques et administratives, fait partie intégrante du processus qui n'est ainsi pas sans conflits. Il n'y a

pas de travail public sans affrontements. En revanche, aujourd'hui, les espaces sont restreints et le processus est rigide, ce qui devient de plus en plus difficilement praticable.

Incapable de continuer à occuper cet espace public, Fiteiro Cultural a alors pris une nouvelle forme lui permettant de se réinventer et d'acquérir de nouvelles significations. En investissant le web, sphère publique par excellence, Fiteiro Cultural a trouvé de nouvelles possibilités d'existence. Après plus de quarante installations, c'est depuis 2007 en tant que travail tridimensionnel dans l'espace virtuel *Second Life*, l'un des derniers à l'avoir hébergé, que Fiteiro Cultural existe durablement. En occupant un tel médium, il assume encore plus frontalement sa nature publique, préservée par les outils disponibles dans l'univers virtuel. Là, il est transformé en une île, dans laquelle des milliers de personnes circulent chaque jour et où l'on peut apercevoir l'utopie d'un monde interactif et sans frontières.

Tout au long de son développement physique, Fiteiro Cultural s'est ainsi détaché de l'artiste qui l'a conçu pour devenir plus autonome, tel un objet archétypal qui serait défini par ses usages et contiendrait toutes ses variations. De son côté, en explorant les caractéristiques constructives de son œuvre, du virtuel au modèle physique, Fabiana de Barros a pu se réapproprier ses formes, sa géométrie et son volume, réactivant de la sorte une pratique plus intime, écho aux prémices de son œuvre lorsqu'elle n'avait pas encore de fonction publique.



Exposition Fabiana de Barros *Mais é igual a menos (+ = -) 18 ans du Fiteiro*  
SESC Pompeia, São Paulo, 2017  
Photo : Michel Favre

Julie Marmet, sur *Fiteiro Cultural* de Fabiana de Barros



## MUSEUM OF PUBLIC CONCERNS (MUSEUM FÜR ÖFFENTLICHE ANLIEGEN)

MABE BETHÔNICO

In den vergangenen Jahren habe ich mich intensiv mit dem Thema Bergbau befasst, vor allem in Minas Gerais, wo ich die kulturellen und sozialen, aber auch geologischen und physischen Konsequenzen der regionalen Bergbauwirtschaft untersuchen konnte. Der Abbau von mineralischen Rohstoffen ist ein weltweites Geschäft, das von einer Handvoll multinationaler Unternehmen kontrolliert wird. Andererseits finden die Auswirkungen ihrer Aktivität auf Landschaften und umliegende Gemeinschaften in lokalen und nationalen öffentlichen Debatten kaum Erwähnung. Um die öffentliche Aufmerksamkeit auf dieses Problem zu lenken und eine Debatte anzustoßen, habe ich öffentliche und private Dokumente und Fotografien aus historischen Archiven und der Presse sowie vor Ort gesammelte Materialien zusammengetragen.

Für den landesweit größten Museumskomplex der jüngeren Zeit, das Museum für Bergbau und Metall in Belo Horizonte, der Landeshauptstadt von Minas Gerais, wurden Gebäude der öffentlichen Hand in private Kulturzentren umfunktioniert. Das Museum wurde von einem Bergbauunternehmen errichtet, während das größte multinationale Bergbauunternehmen der Region in einem weiteren Gebäude die Geschichte des Bundesstaats erzählen darf. Kollektive Geschichte und kulturelle Produktion werden hier vom privaten Sektor diktiert. An diesen Orten werden wichtige Fragen zu Nachwirkungen des Bergbaus ausgeklammert, Kritik ist nicht erwünscht. Derweil fristen die unterfinanzierten öffentlichen Einrichtungen ein tristes Dasein.

Das Museum of Public Concerns (Museum für öffentliche Anliegen) versteht sich als Antwort auf diese Geschichtsfälschung, die mit Desinformation beziehungsweise Mangel an Informationen operiert. Ziel ist es, anhand eines mobilen digitalfotografischen Archivs, das durch Belo Horizonte und durch Minas Gerais touren und verschiedene Präsentationsformen annehmen wird, eine Debatte über die Bergbauwirtschaft anzustoßen. Das Museum of Public Concerns versteht sich als Diskussionsforum für Akademiker aus unterschiedlichen Wissensbereichen. Die modulare, leicht zugängliche Plattform soll ferner eine öffentliche Anlaufstelle für Beratung und sozialpolitisches Engagement sein. Während seiner Reisen wird es weiteres Bildmaterial sammeln und so das Archiv auf kollaborative Art und Weise erweitern.

Ausgangspunkt des Museum of Public Concerns sind verschiedene fotografische Sammlungen: Fotos von Inspektoren der für die Regulierung des Bergbausektors verantwortlichen staatlichen Agentur (Abteilung

## MUSEUM OF PUBLIC CONCERNS

MABE BETHÔNICO

Over the years I have been working on the issue of mining, especially in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, by studying the cultural and social implications of its mining economy while also observing the geological and physical effects of its presence. Mineral extraction is a huge global business dominated by a few multinational companies, while the damage done to the local landscape and surrounding community is conspicuously absent from local and national public debate. In an effort to raise critical awareness and foster debate, I have compiled documentary and photographic material from historical archives, the field and media outlets, and from both public and private sources.

For the largest museum complex implemented in Brazil in recent years, the Museum of Mines and Metals in Belo Horizonte, the state capital of Minas Gerais, state-owned buildings were transformed into corporate cultural centres. The museum was built by a mining group, and the largest multinational mining company was allowed to tell the history of the state in another building. The collective historical and cultural production is being dictated by the private sector. In these places relevant questions are ignored, and implications and criticism are absent. Meanwhile public institutions deteriorate for lack of public funding.

The Museum of Public Concerns is a response to the corporate rewriting of history, characterised by disinformation and/or lack of information on mining. The aim is to foster debate using a mobile digital photographic archive that will travel through the city of Belo Horizonte and the interior of Minas Gerais and be viewable in various formats. It will serve as a forum for discussion by academics from various fields of knowledge. An accessible modular platform, it will also provide a public forum for consultation and engagement. While on the road, it will incorporate further images from the public, allowing the archive to grow in a collaborative manner.

The Museum of Public Concerns takes as its starting point various photo collections: photos by inspectors from the government agency responsible for regulating the mining sector (Department of Occupational Health and Safety of the State Ministry of Labour and Employment); daily life recorded continuously by Maxacali Indians, an indigenous group historically affected by land disputes and the economics of agriculture and mining; a private diary on the establishment of the first mining companies

für Gesundheit und Sicherheit am Arbeitsplatz des Staatsministeriums für Arbeit und Beschäftigung); Aufnahmen des täglichen Lebens von Maxacali-Indianern, einer indigenen Bevölkerungsgruppe, deren Geschichte von Landkonflikten im Zuge von Landwirtschafts- und Bergbauprojekten geprägt ist; ein privates Tagebuch über die Gründung der ersten Bergbauunternehmen in Minas Gerais; das Fotoarchiv einer NGO über ihren Kampf gegen die bevorstehende Zerstörung von Wasserquellen im Zuge neuer Eingriffe der Bergbauindustrie usw. Das Museum wird Aspekte beleuchten, die nicht erst seit heute ignoriert werden, um langfristig eine Gegengeschichte zu schreiben.

Wie wir wissen, ist der Neoliberalismus das Zeitalter der Privatisierung: Privatisierung der Krankenhäuser und Wasserversorgung, des Wissens und des Transportwesens, des menschlichen Genoms und des öffentlichen Raums. Die öffentliche Hand zieht sich zurück, private Unternehmen springen in die Bresche und nehmen ihren Platz ein. In Italien beispielsweise ließe sich heute kein öffentliches Monument mehr ohne riesige Fassadenwerbung für einen Sponsor restaurieren.

Genauso werden Gedächtnis und Wahrnehmung privatisiert: Die Art und Weise, wie Vergangenheit und Gegenwart unserer Welt dargestellt werden, bleiben zunehmend privaten Interessenvertretern – oder, grob gesagt, großen Unternehmen – überlassen. Es sind dies in der Regel die gleichen Unternehmen, deren Arbeit unabhängig begutachtet werden soll, sprich von Menschen, die kein persönliches Interesse daran haben, sie zu verteidigen.

Wir haben es hier mit einer Art mentalem Kolonialismus zu tun. Die, die dafür verantwortlich sind, dass die Welt so ist, wie sie ist, möchten gleichzeitig festlegen, was wir über ihre Handlungen denken. Würde die Kirche heute ein Museum der Inquisition eröffnen oder ein Verband von Zuckerrohrerzeugern eine Ausstellung über Sklaverei organisieren wollen, würde dies zweifellos einen Skandal auslösen. Aber ist es nicht das Gleiche, wenn ein Bergbauunternehmen in Brasilien private Museen zum Thema Bergbau mit öffentlichen Geldern eröffnet? Hier wie auch andernorts hat der sanfte Totalitarismus des Markts den unverhohlenen Totalitarismus der Politik abgelöst. Alle modernen totalitären Systeme wollen die Geschichte neu schreiben und sich das Monopol ihrer Darstellung sichern; Stalinismus und Maoismus trieben dies auf die Spitze.

Diese Situation ist zwar ein globales Phänomen, doch nirgendwo so offensichtlich als in Brasilien. Hier ist der öffentliche Raum schon immer sehr eingegrenzt gewesen – nicht nur weil der Staat im Vergleich zu den vermögenden Klassen historisch schwach ist (was sich heute beispielsweise in dem Umstand zeigt, dass der

in Minas Gerais; a photo archive of an NGO's fight against the imminent destruction of water sources as the result of encroachments by the mining industry, etc. The Museum will spotlight aspects ignored today and in the recent past and produce a counter-history.

Neoliberalism, as we know, is the epoch of privatisation: privatisation of hospitals and water supplies, knowledge and transport, the human genome and public space. Public powers are in retreat and corporations are invading, taking their place. In Italy, for instance, historical monuments can no longer be restored without a company sponsor covering the facade with a gigantic advertisement. Equally, *memory* and *perception* are being privatised: the choice of how to speak about the past and the present of our world is increasingly left to private parties – or, to be more blunt, to big companies. Companies which in general are those whose work needs to be examined impartially by people who have no personal interest in defending them.

It is a kind of mental colonialism: those responsible for making the world the way it is also want to define what we think about their actions. If today the Church were to create a museum about the Inquisition, or if an association of sugarcane growers were to hold an exhibition on slavery, there would no doubt be a scandal. But when extraction companies in Brazil organise museums about mining, with public funds but in a private setting, is this not the same thing? Here, as elsewhere, the soft totalitarianism of the market has replaced open political totalitarianism. All modern totalitarian powers want to rewrite the past and have complete monopoly of perception: Stalinism and Maoism attempted to take this to extremes.

If this is true the world over, it is even more so for a country like Brazil. Here, public space has always been very limited. Not only in the sense that the state has been historically weak in comparison with the propertied classes (which is expressed today in the fact that, for instance, the tax rate for the rich and big businesses is very low, while there are huge fortunes that can afford any investment in the field of culture). But the public space is reduced even in the primary sense that the street is generally abandoned to the poor and the “dangerous classes”; those who can avoid it never set foot there, going from one protected space to another by car.

The official discourse in this “emerging country” is an unbridled enthusiasm for a future supposed to be bright; people are supposed to forget the often shameful foundations of “economic development”. Of course, some important events – slavery, military dictatorship – are periodically evoked, but it is always stressed that this was in the past .... But where does this leave the innumerable daily sufferings and injustices that may remain forever hidden?

Steuersatz für Reiche und große Unternehmen äußerst niedrig ist, während sich gleichzeitig riesige Vermögen angesammelt haben, die sich jede Investition im Bereich der Kultur leisten können). Doch der öffentliche Raum Brasiliens ist auch buchstäblich eingeschränkt, insofern die Straßen in der Regel den Armen und „gefährlichen Klassen“ überlassen werden; jeder, der es sich leisten kann, macht einen Bogen um sie herum und fährt mit dem Wagen von einer geschützten Zone in die nächste.

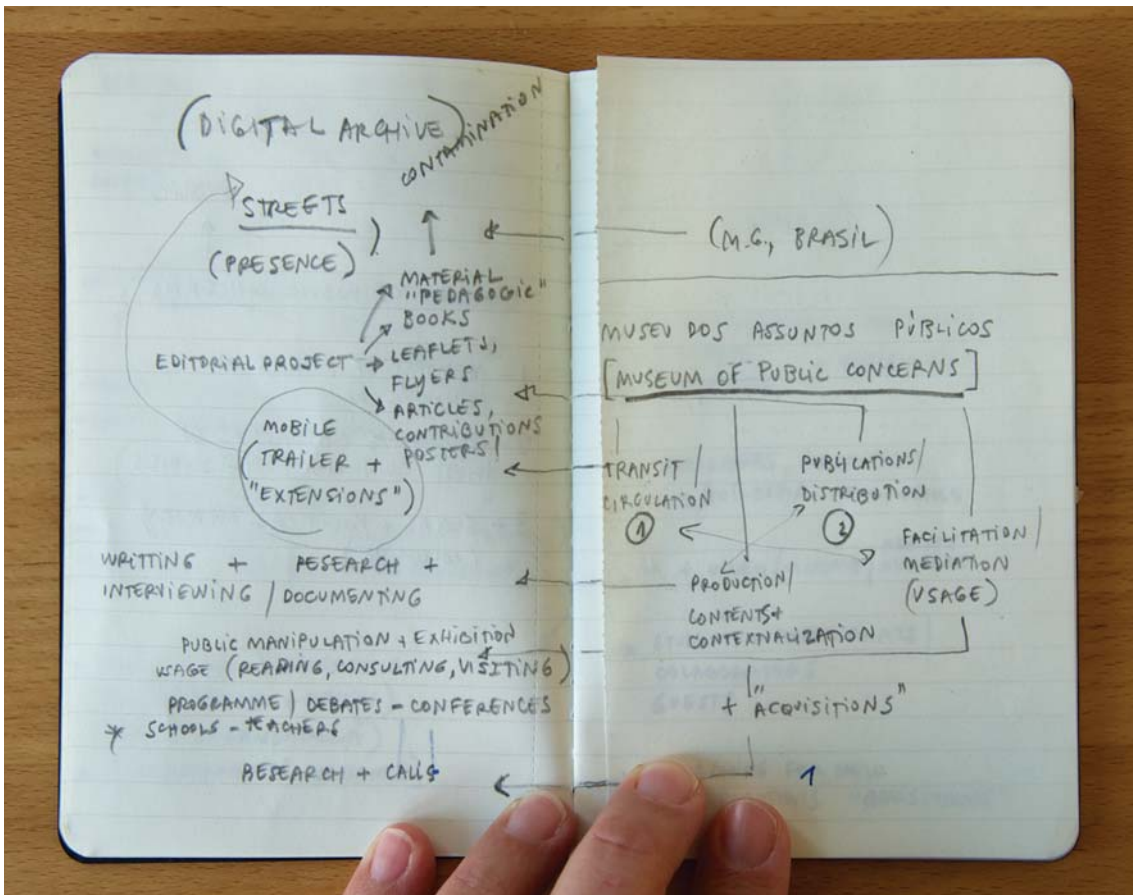
Im offiziellen Diskurs dieses „aufstrebenden Lands“ herrscht die Begeisterung für eine vermeintlich strahlende Zukunft vor; dementsprechend wird erwartet, dass seine Einwohner die oftmals beschämenden Ursprünge der „wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung“ vergessen. Natürlich finden wichtige Ereignisse wie Sklaverei und Militärdiktatur regelmäßige Erwähnung (wobei aber immer wieder betont wird, dass sie der Vergangenheit angehören). Doch was ist mit den unzähligen täglichen Leidensgeschichten und Ungerechtigkeiten, die für immer verborgen bleiben?

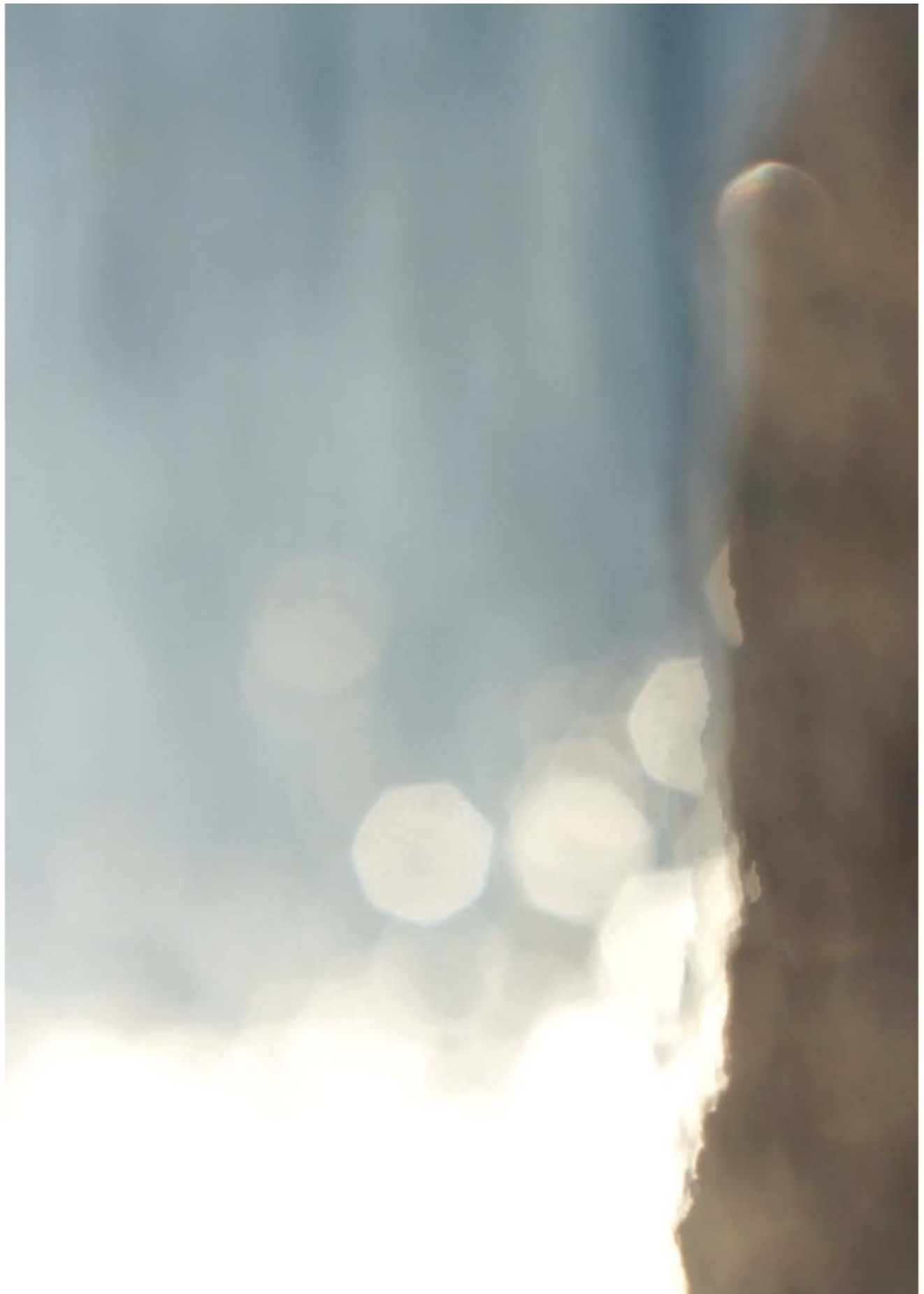
Genau dies macht das besondere Interesse von Mabe Bethônicos Projekt aus. Es ist ein Museum, das sich keinem (egal wie wichtigen) Thema widmet, sondern dem Prinzip der öffentlichen Debatte an sich. Es ist ein Ort, an dem alles gesagt werden kann. Hier bedeutet „öffentlich“ nicht „staatlich“, denn auch der Staat hat Dinge zu verbergen, weshalb man ihm keinesfalls das Monopol auf Darstellungen überlassen sollte. (In diesem Zusammenhang ließen sich zwei Beispiele aus Minas Gerais anführen, dem brasilianischen Bundesstaat, in dem Bethônicos Projekt stattfindet: das Massaker von Arbeitern durch die Polizei in Ipatinga 1963 und das „Konzentrationslager“ der psychiatrischen Klinik in Barbacena – beides Ereignisse, die in eine ferne Vergangenheit verbannt und nie wirklich aufgearbeitet worden sind.) Bethônicos Projekt bietet Raum für einen anderen Diskurs, eine Gegengeschichte. Ähnlich wie das „Buchmobil“ dies seit den 1920er Jahren tut, wird ein Bus Bethônicos Museum zu jenen bringen, die ansonsten nie ein Museum besuchen. Der schamlosen Selbstverherrlichung der Gewalt setzt es nicht nur eine andere, von vermeintlich unabhängigen Journalisten, alternativen Historikern und Wissenschaftlern geschriebene Geschichte entgegen, sondern die Möglichkeit, dass die Stimmen derer, die im Dunkeln bleiben – Arbeiter, Indios, Frauen, Arme, auch die Natur – auf offene Ohren stoßen und sie ihre eigene Geschichte erkennen.

Anselm Jappe

This is what is particularly interesting about Mabe Bethônico's project: it is not a museum specifically devoted to one subject or another, important as that would be, but to the principle of public discussion itself. A place where everything can be said. Here, 'public' does not mean 'State': the State also has things to hide and it should not have the monopoly of representation. Take for instance the Brazilian federal state of Minas Gerais, where Bethônico's project is taking place: we should remember the massacre of workers by police in Ipatinga in 1963 and the "concentration camp" of Barbacena's psychiatric hospital, both kept in a distant past and never really accessed. Bethônico's project creates a space for the emergence of another discourse, a counter-history. Similarly to what the Bookmobile has been doing since the 1920s with books, Bethônico's bus will bring the museum to those who do not otherwise go to museums of their own accord. What it offers in contrast to the shameless self-celebration of power is not simply a different history, already written by supposedly independent journalists or alternative historians and scientists, but the possibility that the very voices of those who remain in the shadows – workers, indios, women, the poor, and also nature – find ears ready to listen and to recognise their own history.

Anselm Jappe







# COYOTE

TODA VIDA BUSCA A VIDA. PELAS FRESTAS, PELOS BURACOS PEQUENOS, PARA CIMA, ESPARRAMA-SE EM GALHOS QUE SE ESFORÇAM PARA TOCAR SEU PRÓPRIO MISTÉRIO.

É UMA FORÇA INDIGENTE QUE ESPECULA E SE ALIMENTA SEM ESCRÚPULOS DAS ÁGUAS.

UMA ERVA INDOLENTE, QUE POLINIZA DE MODO DESLEAL O VENTO.

É UM ANDAR PERPÉTUO E COMPULSÓRIO. É UM DIREITO.

E EU ODEIO TODO COMPULSÓRIO.

OUÇO ESSE ZUMBIDO MENDICANTE QUE ECOA DE UM LADO PARA O OUTRO, ESSE ESTADO INTERMEDIÁRIO...

HADES ERA UMA DIVINDADE CIRCULAR. EU ATENHO-ME AO CHÃO, AOS PÉS, AOS PÊLOS QUE COMIGO EMBARCAM. SINTO O CHEIRO DA PELE QUE QUEIMA E DESIDRATA SOB O SOL, E O ODOR SECO DA BORRACHA NEGRA FLUTUANTE DE PETRÓLEO.

O BOTE.



**EU SEI COMO APRISIONAR O VAPOR.**

**VEJO POÇAS DE ÓLEO MULTICOLORIDAS, E MÃOS COLADAS A ANTEBRAÇOS QUE DALI APONTAM, CHOCANDO-SE TRÉPIDOS A OUTRAS MÃOS E ANTEBRAÇOS EM LIAMES INÚTEIS. VEJO HOMENS SUBMERGIREM E PERDEREM SUA OPACIDADE EM GRAUS DE AZUL, NUM AFUNDAR ÉPICO, HIDROMEDUSAS QUASE LUZ DE CORPOS LÂNGUIDOS, DISSOLVENDO NA TINTA SATURADA DE MAR.**

**SOU UMA PESSOA CURIOSA DO ABISMO.  
MINHA VIRTUDE É, POR ASSIM DIZER, NEGATIVA.  
EU VOLUNTARIAMENTE DESCONHEÇO, NÃO ME INTERESSO, NÃO SEI.**

**MAS DA MÉTRICA INVERSA DO TEMPO, SIM.  
O TEMPO, ESSE SIM É O MEU PRIVILÉGIO, PODER TRANSITAR LIVRE PELO PÊNDULO DOS FATOS, NUM NÃO LUGAR, O MEU, O NOSSO LUGAR ONDE TODA VERDADE, SEMPRE CÍNICA E MODESTA, É PROPORCIONAL A MIM.  
EU PASSO PELAS BORDAS.**

**POR ISSO NÃO PERGUNTE MEU NOME OU DE ONDE VENHO. PERGUNTE APENAS PARA ONDE IREI.  
E ESPERE POR MIM EM PORTOS, NOS CAIS, OU EM BREJOS LAMACENTOS. ATRAVESSE COMIGO.**

First I want to tell about a new book by Iain Chambers: POSTCOLONIAL INTERRUPTIONS, UNAUTHORISED MODERNITIES. It is published in London by Rowman and Littlefield.

Chambers speaks about culture as no longer the property of the rich northern world with everyone else trying to keep up, with an erudition that is specific and always for the purpose of clarification. One wants to quote from every page, and I would like to send a copy of the book to every museum worker and curator.

But the subject I write about is an artwork I have seen only in photograph, and even that, many years ago. Maria Thereza Alves and I saw the image together and still speak of it often. It serves as a kind of standard of excellence for me. It also refreshes my soul and my mind whenever I ponder it again. It is a sculptural work that I remember when trying to make good sculpture. It was titled in the book we had, A MASK OF THE SPIRIT OF A BUBBLE OF SEA FOAM, which seems also a title to carry us away from normal concerns. The piece is not representational of anything yet seems to actually BE, as itself. It is so complexly asymmetrical that it vibrates even on a book page. It makes no sense. It forces me away from sense, like a tune often does. One thing, element, material, or shape does not lead to another. The whole is not only greater than the sum of its parts, it seems greater than itself.

The piece makes symmetry look like a cheap trick of simple-minded thinking. There is great presence in the work, with no thoughts of representation nor abstraction. It has much colour and much starkness.

Friends have helped look for images that could be included in this writing, but find none.

It might be helpful when looking at art to know a bit of the background of the artist's culture and times. I would like to know more, for example, of the cultural factors involved in the production of an artwork such as the oil-and-pigment painting called, THE SCREAM (which I have also seen only as photograph in books.)

It would be helpful to know the general diet and methods of subsistence of the Norwegian people, and how they possibly came to prize what they term representational in art. If I could get some better sense of how they experience, perceive their flat oil paintings...

To make special museums that show only Norwegian, or Scandinavian, or European artworks, all with explanation of religious and dietary habits, might be too much, however. Maybe a simple line or two about the politico/economic traits would be enough. Anyway, why should those works not be included in any museum of art, instead of museums which seem to show only European (or 'white') art?

Jimmie Durham 2017

## Manifesto for Self-Organization as an Institutional Principle

This manifesto questions what a decolonized institution should offer and who is ordering this institutional space. It puts forward the idea of self-organization as a perspective for decolonized art institutions. Self-organizing means to create its own stability and logic. A logic that is at its base flexible, polyphone, and a practice of mutual recognition.

### It's the practice!

The start of self-organized initiatives encompasses many different motivations. These initiatives can be an artistic strive for innovation, a social pleasure, or a strategic and biographic vision. In the end they form a single practice, composed of a spatial implementation, a social embodiment, and a routine. This defines, shapes, and differentiates what an initiative is. Self-organization can therefore be described as an immediate and constitutive practice, creating its own horizon, perspectives, and values through its actions. Therefore, self-organization is based on practical enactments.

### It's the flexibility!

Still, this practice is alterable, flexible, and subject to change or as an artist said: "Our exhibition space could also be a table." Self-organizational contexts can be seen as paradigmatic when it comes to negotiation, integrating, and contesting certain forms of cohesion. Initiatives can be like an umbrella, a label for very heterogeneous strategies, or social relations that adapt, reform, and move from place to place. The flexibility offers the freedom to react and embrace inputs. It's an assembly of people whose order is not fixed in absolute terms. Not only are they personal constellations, but they are also the responsibility and decision making processes that need to be negotiated.

### It's the reference!

Self-organized initiatives have a high sensitivity of contexts which they work in. They respond, relate, assemble, distinguish, and fight. They fill empty spots, amplify existing modes, or circumvent existing formats and protocols. The logic of self-organization is highly cautious to its surroundings.

### It's the polyphony!

Self-organized initiatives serve as a vessel for multiple voices, not only as an internal high resonance field for an individual's necessities, but also as terms of low resistance against collaborations and formats of intertwining external interests. Different roles, whether as a curator, artist, organizer, or complice, can be shifted from engagement to engagement. Self-organization as an institutional principle also means to annex skills and to define, refine, and remix existing roles, processes, and visibilities. In the end it's about art, giving different answers on what art can be and what it means to handle art in an organized manner.

### It's the criticality!

Addressing each other happens in a matter of mutual respect, in terms of recognition of different subjectivities, bodies, and epistemological stances. Also temporalities of production, observation, and receiving are not turned against each other. It's a differentiating form of existence.

### It's the metaphor!

The usage of metaphors is a way to immunize the initiative's actionability, to keep them mobile and as positively invasive ideas.

### It is not about efficiency!

### It is about us!

A contribution by Gabriel Flückiger and Vera Leisibach, on behalf of the research project *Off OffOff Of? Schweizer Kulturpolitik und Selbstorganisation in der Schweiz seit 1980*, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Art, Competence Center, Art, Design & Public Spheres.

## The Educational System of an Empire

Hikaru Fujii [artist / film director]

The political commitments in art occur not by dealing with current political issues as the subject of the work, but by examining the history and the space within which my work is placed. It appears as the form of the work, the environment of its production, the system of reception, and the critical succession to art history, to which I belong. I have been therefore constantly producing works that raise questions about domestic political affairs in the modernization in Japan and the educational and social systems constructed in Asia. Politics in the arts—namely art education, museums, and cultural policies, which are internalized in my artistic practices—should be questioned.



*The Educational System of an Empire* was initially a single video work, and it has a certain spatial structure in the exhibition; at the entrance, the visitor first faces a photograph taken in the beginning of the 20th century. The photograph depicted the class at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, which was the first institution in Japan to train art teachers and artists. The art students were imitating a plaster replica of an ancient Greek statue. The visitor may see the trace of the *Hellenic Ideal*, in the words



of admiration and adoration for ancient Greece that was revived in Europe in the 18th century. The realistic techniques of Classicism, which were later admired by the Nazi regime, eventually traversed the ocean and institutionalized in the Empire of Japan, together with the Enlightenment with which art reformed society following *a right reason and strict moral*. On one hand, this form substantiated Japan as an *emancipator* from the European colonization in Asia, on the other hand, it reified the authority of an *oppressor*, in the place of Westerners, to rule Asian countries.



*The Educational System of an Empire* objectifies the composition of exploitations that arise within the creation of art as its reflected image of a colonial and geopolitical sphere. I, an artist who descends from the history of the oppressor, gathered 23 young South Koreans in the studio. Firstly, I ordered them to select several members among themselves and to watch the documentary videos about the Japanese colonial period. I then directed them to imitate and act out the past events shown in the videos, and to realistically show the rest of the group who hadn't watched the videos. Their bodily expressions, with some hesitation and yet earnestly trying to follow my orders, imply in a fragmentary way that those videos show the scenes of tortures and massacres. The logic of an Empire, the one that conquers its Lebensraum as the supplier of resources in Asia, recurs here by acting—a collective act that includes self-subordination, in which it is unclear who has the power to carry it out and how.

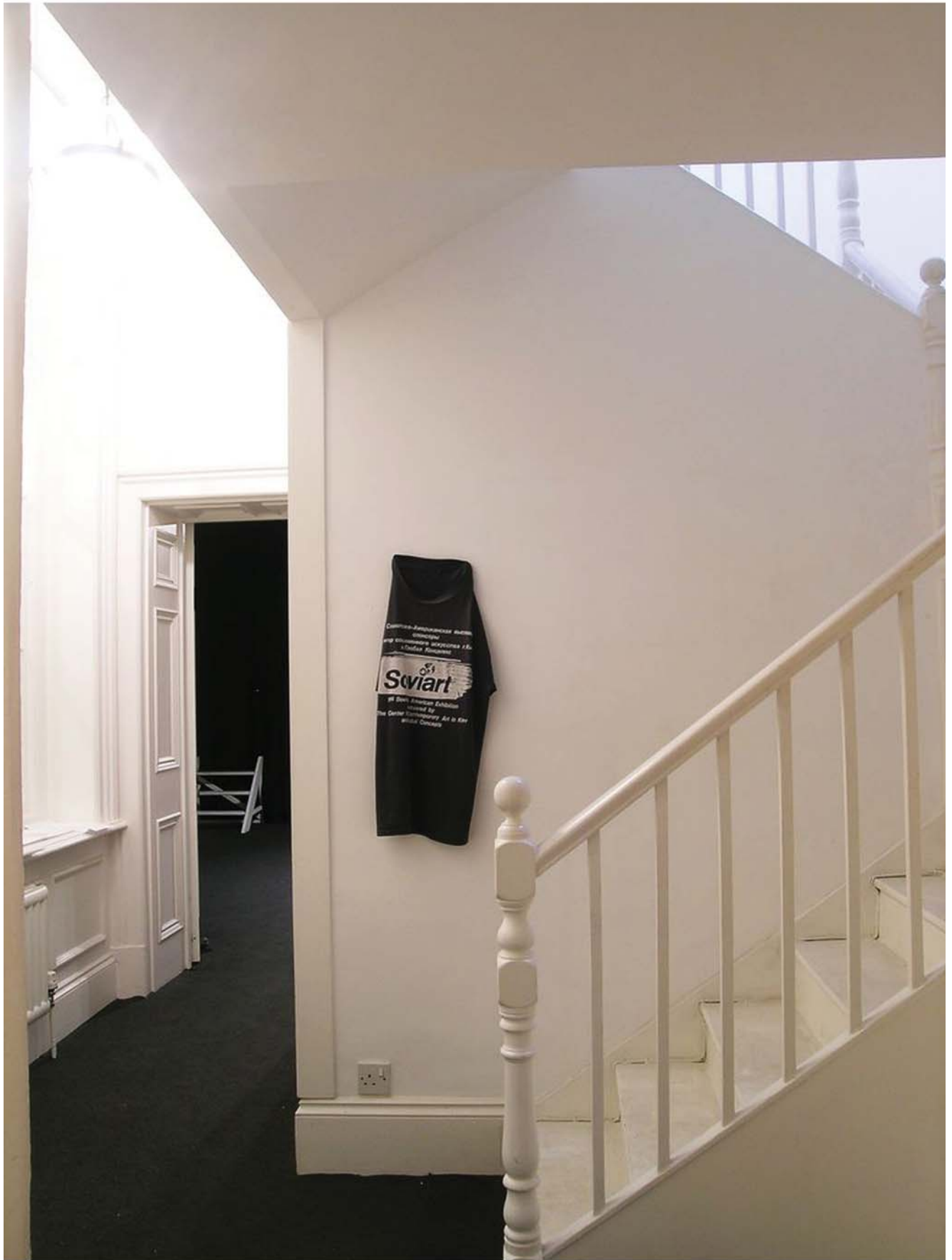


Furthermore, the classified video produced by the U.S. Army during World War II is inserted, merging with the images of young South Koreans. Analyzing the education system in Japan at the time, the military video shows and relates through the narration Japanese children who sacrifice themselves for a country. The educational system adopted from Western societies is applied as a means of strengthening the dictatorial authority and controlling the bodies of the children. What are the differences and the similarities between the bodies of those Japanese children and those of the South Koreans, which are *here at the moment* being filled with feelings of embarrassment and incoherence? At the end of the work, South Korean youths reenact the parade celebrating the

country's independence from Japan. Having a sense of unity, they finally become exalted. They encompass the ambivalence of youth which implies a hope; individuals are now unified as members of a nation-state, at the same time they think and act for themselves. Yet, it isn't certain whether their actions follow in each instance an independent decision or not.



*The Educational System of an Empire* questions anew the tension that occurs when a nation writes history. In Japan, one merely realizes the idea that contemporary art deterritorialized the ideology of a nation-state, being integrated with the speculative market world of the post-Fordism. After all, the creation of art and the mechanism of its acceptance, even the work presented in global circulation, has been regulated within the framework of a nation-state. The issues surrounding the recognition of the history of Asia is especially subject to strict regulation as the political agenda in the first degree. Among the geopolitical fluctuations after the Cold War, the post-colonial expressions and practices did passingly recollect the oppressed memories in the occupied territory. Society today, however, has chosen the future of the post-democracy in which parliament freezes the arguments around memories to eliminate the political situation that can reveal its dissensions. Art institutions in Japan are integrated with its government, whose mission is simply a stable administration of the social system. Is it possible to restore memories of those who were eliminated from the public sphere within artistic creation through such an art institution? What and how can it be?











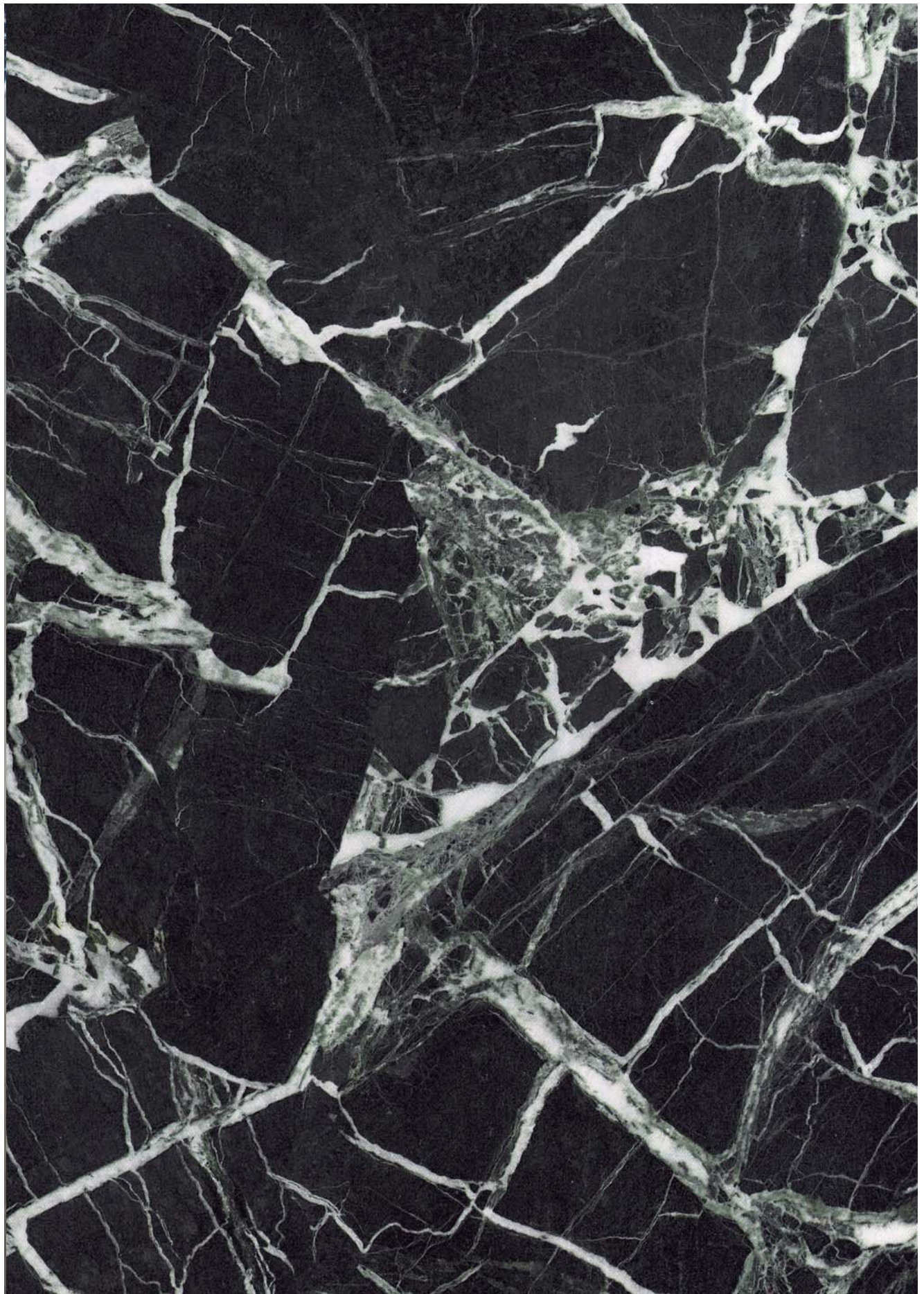
Redressed Architectures for the City of Santiago (Costanera Center), 2013  
Collage, black and white photograph, contact paper, 160 x 110 cm





False wall, 2008  
Offset print, variable dimensions





### **Introduction**

It's fair to say that the loudest discourse embedded within Documenta14 concerns the power dynamic between North and South, with the primary emphasis on the relationship between a northern European cultural power implanted in a fetishized European south. Documenta 14's approach was *to look at itself, looking at the south*.

Rather than making blanket statements commenting upon Kassel in Athens (Documenta 14 as a the theatre of European power play), we wanted to discuss Documenta's approach to *global* southness from the POV (point of view) of two Australian artists temporarily living in Europe, as a focal point to more generalized observations on how European Institutions represent art and peoples from the global south, specifically Oceania. This written dialogue is a follow on to an actual conversation between the two of us that took place in Athens, during the opening week of Documenta 14. Our concerns revolved around a particular wing of the EMST, about how specific works/objects presented themselves and also the manner in which they were contextualized.

**Taloi Havini:** *Let's talk about that problematic corner of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST). I won't mention all of the works, but we're concerned about that corner representing Indigenous societies. On the walls there were the 1895 B&W photographs of German anthropologist Franz Boas posing for a creation of a diorama meant to represent a Hamat'sa ceremony of the Kwakwaka'wakw society in Canada. I do get that this is a section of the Documenta exhibition where we see how European history had this fascination on the "other". It got problematic when I saw the film 'Why are you angry' made by Nashashibi and Skaer, two British female artists who filmed Tahitian women based on representations made by Paul Gauguin's paintings. I immediately felt oppressed.*

### **Gabriella Hirst:**

In context of these works I think that immediate responses are really significant, especially because the curatorial framework surrounding the film eluded any progressive or complicated approach towards the historical material that was being referenced. Nearby Nashashibi's film, and the aforementioned Franz Boas photographs, archival images lifted from the Australian Museum (taken in the early 20thC by Thomas Dick) were pinned haphazardly to the wall. There was little accompanying text that might have clarified the critical position taken, and as a result everything was left to float in this state of ambiguity.

**Taloi:** *Yeah. Without a critique or critical context it's really just reiterating the exoticism that underpins Euro-centric views that western art history framed non-European societies. Even if it's intended otherwise, speaking as an Indigenous contemporary female artist from Oceania, it was disempowering to see new work that is returning to late 19thC European Romantic views on brown women in the Pacific.*

### **Gabriella:**

I get what you mean; the effect remains the same. I'm wondering about the intentions here, which were surely nuanced, but perhaps nuanced beyond recognition, when the resulting effect is a perpetuation of straight-up exoticization of the South by a



powerful European Cultural Institution. My follow-up impression was that perhaps Documenta 14's approach was simply *to look at itself, looking at the south*- a type of self-observation could have the potential to be productively critical, if it were not so inherently narcissistic, keeping the power of looking firmly in the hands of the European institution. It's an approach that I think underscored a lot of what was happening at Documenta in Athens (down to the tagline 'Learning from Athens'), and that was starkly visible in that particular corner of the EMST. It's colonizing, but from a different angle, or colonizing with a self-awareness... and I think that is something we should be careful of.

**Taloi:** *The exploration on 'the gaze' itself could be interesting. Taken originally from the white male gaze and now perhaps through a female artists or curatorial gaze. The fact is that in reflecting on that western gaze, focussing on itself, is still as you say, narcissistic and holding on to that power and control of representation when it comes to Indigenous societies.*

*This is also a responsibility of the overall curatorial framework and how there is danger in continuing a legacy of colonisation.*

**Gabriella:** Totally, which is something that Documenta 14 has attempted to tackle, but there is something uncomfortable in the language used. For example, in the introductory essay of the Documenta Reader there is this passage:

*"...it seemed most pertinent to work and act from Athens, where we might begin to learn to see the world again in an unprejudiced way, unlearning and abandoning the predominant cultural conditioning that, silently or explicitly, presupposes the supremacy of the West, its institutions and culture, over the 'barbarian' and supposedly untrustworthy, unable, unenlightened, ever to be subjugated 'rest'. By bringing Indigenous practises and techniques of knowledge from all over the world, via Athens, to Kassel and elsewhere, we aim to question this very supremacist, white and male, nationalist, colonialist way of being and thinking that continues to construct and dominate the world order."*

I'm left wondering who comprises this 'we', the 'we' talking about the else who is to be reconceptualised.

**Taloi:** *The "we" assumes we are homogenous. The act of simply arriving at a place assumes that we will "learn from" this place.*

**Gabriella:** Following on from this, when we spoke last time you mentioned your experiences so far in Europe in regards to language and othering.

**Taloi:** *The year of 2017 is my first time in Europe and after a four-month residency in Paris I have found that the general perceptions on where I come from (Bougainville/ Papua New Guinea) is through that 'primitive' and 'savage' eurocentric lens. For instance, I asked someone (who was writing in reference to a work of mine) to remove the word 'primitive' when describing an aspect of my work. Instead I asked them to use the word 'ancient'. Language is important isn't it?*

**G:** Absolutely, especially when it perpetuates fetishizing.

**Taloi:** *I was looking forward to seeing the contemporary art discourses come out in Athens. There was so much hype around it that began in Australia months ago. For*

*me it was going to be a reprieve from the kind of exhibition that claims Picasso as a hero of 'Primitif' art which I did see at the musée du quai Branly in Paris. I thought these would be two completely different views. Yet clearly, in speaking with you, a contemporary Australian artist who being non-Indigenous but like me being from the real 'south' with roots in Australia, were able to recognise together the patronising representations experienced in that section of EMST.*

**G:** There is a line in the introductory essay of the Reader about how Documenta has this history of laying down the paradigm of contemporary art discourse for years to come, and I do think that that is the way I had thought of it. It seems that there are still deep rooted reverberations in Australia of the old view of Europe as being the epicentre of art and culture. So it has been surprising to see these back-reaching displays in Athens in comparison with how an institution such as GOMA in Brisbane addresses a non Eurocentric view of cross-cultural presentation in the Asia Pacific Triennial. It's an institutional dynamic, but also one that occurs at a conversational level between practising artists. I was talking the other day with a UK-based Australian curator who on a recent trip to Sydney had noted something when visiting artists studios; a particular self-awareness of a certain identity politics of home and post-colonialism that is a central feature of contemporary Australian art discourse. Which I think is really valuable. Needless to say, I am endlessly ashamed and revolted by Australian policy and ideas of nationhood that oppress and exclude, so it is an unfamiliar experience to find myself discussing the value of these conversations and dialogues that are happening in the arts scene, that go beyond the othering perspective that we have seen are still being recycled in some European institutions.

**Taloi:** *I think she's right. Our age group of Australian's (but more the kind of Australian's you and I would hang out with) are far more self-aware of the impacts of colonisation. There are more non-Indigenous people supporting days like 'Invasion Day', the same day where White Australians celebrate Captain Cook's landing. That's why I saw this conversation with you as an important one to share and possibly to build on as contemporary artists who have a long and dedicated practise - we both want to show and be shown in places that are not oppressive to race or our imaginations.*

Part of the series *Sources of resistance*, 2016 © Ana Hupe



## ANNA DE BARROS

IN HER OWN PLANET, ANNA WEAVES RAGS OUT OF IDEAS: IF THERE ARE HUNGRY PEOPLE, SHE GIVES THEM TO EAT. SHE EXPERIENCED ACCEPTANCE ON THE DANCE FLOOR, EXCHANGING NEW DANCE MOVES, DID NOT LEARN HER MOTHER TONGUE - WHAT FOR? - AND REGRETS IT NOW. TODAY, SHE WANDERS WITH THE VOID OF BELONGING SIMULTANEOUSLY TO TWO WORLDS AND TO NONE AT ALL.

DURING THE 70S, THERE WERE ONLY THREE AFRICAN FAMILIES IN HER CITY. NOW, SHE HAS LOST COUNT OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, SO MUCH SO THAT THE SUPERMARKET GIRL ADDRESSES TO HER IN ENGLISH. ANNA TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND WISHES A FULL-WORLD CITIZENSHIP.

ON THE OUTSIDE, SHE OVER PERFECTS HER GERMAN, HER BERLIN GESTURES, AS THOUGH THAT CITY WAS BORN FROM HER, TO THE EXTENT THAT SHE GETS SURPRISED BY SUCH A FAMILIARITY, HER ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF THE TERRITORY, ALLOWING HER TO TAKE SHORTCUTS VIA BRIDGES THAT DON'T ACTUALLY EXIST.



Part of the series *Sources of resistance*, 2016 © Ana Hupe



## ELIANA DE YEMONJÁ

OLORUM DETERMINED THAT OUR MOST IMPORTANT MISSION IS WHEN WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO A CAUSE. ELIANA GAVE HERSELF TO THE HEALTH OF THE BODY, WHICH ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THAT OF THE SOUL. PEOPLE ASK HER FOR HELP AND, IN TURN, THEY ALSO TRANSMIT LOTS OF AFFECTION. THIS FILLS HER WITH ENERGY.

SHE LIKES TO BE IN LOVE AND, JUST LIKE HER ANCESTORS, CROSSED THE ATLANTIC BECAUSE OF LOVE, HER PARTNER FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS NOW. IN ORDER TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE AND BLEND IN, SHE TOOK CARE OF OLD LADIES. EVEN FROM FAR AWAY, ELIANA TAKES CARE OF THOSE WHO REMAINED IN HER HOME LAND.

SHE LET HER HAIR OUT WHEN SHE CROSSED THE OCEAN, IT WAS PART OF THE LIBERATING PROCESS; SHE WAS SO RADIANT THAT SHE AMASSED COMPLIMENTS. NEVER AGAIN DID SHE TIE IT UP ANYMORE. ELIANA PRACTICES INTERIOR BALANCE ON A DAILY BASIS AND TEACHES WHITE MOTHERS OF AFRO CHILDREN THAT HARMONY IS ALL ABOUT GATHERING, NOT SEPARATING.

Part of the series *Sources of resistance*, 2016 © Ana Hupe



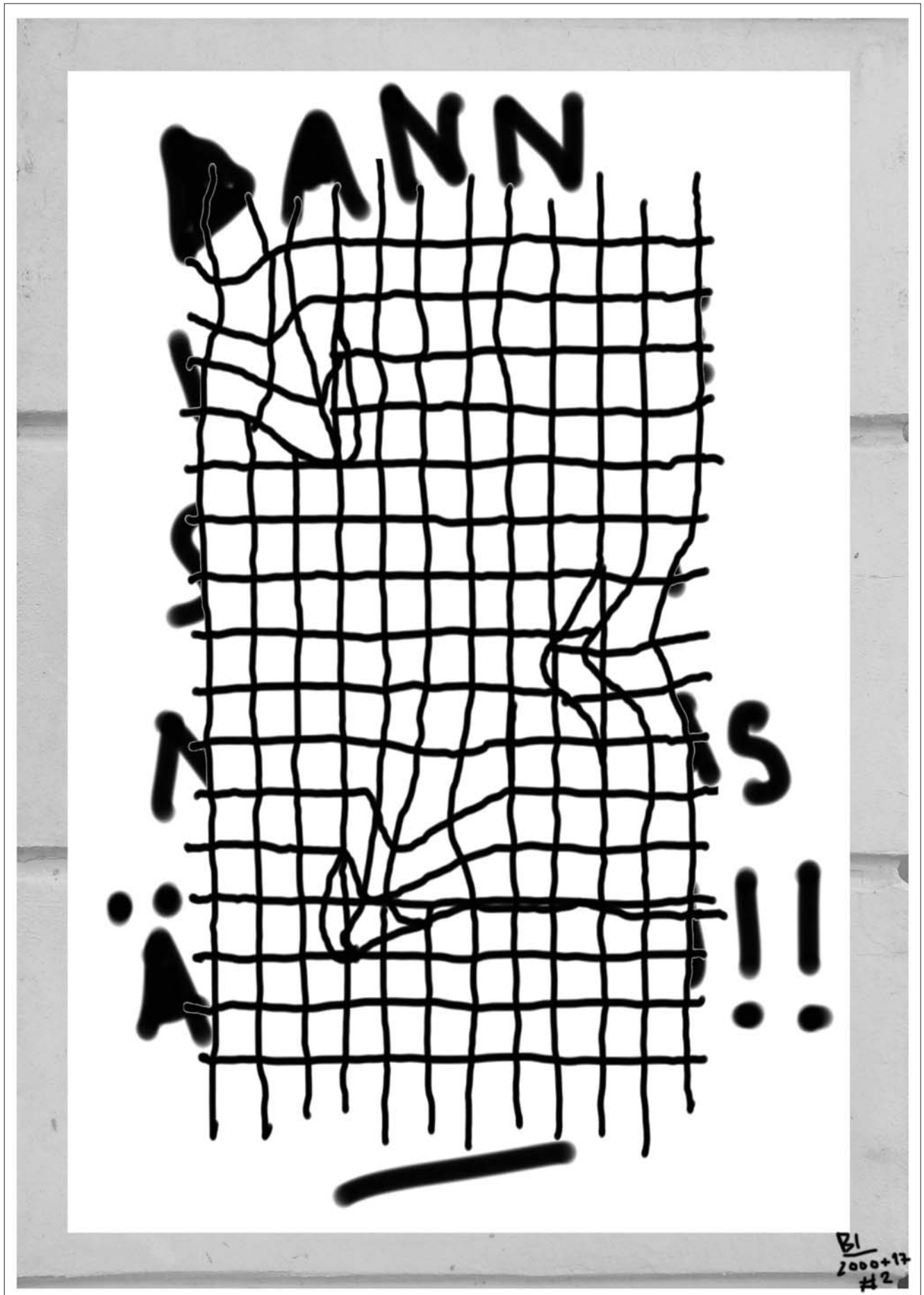
## MARILENA VICÊNCIO

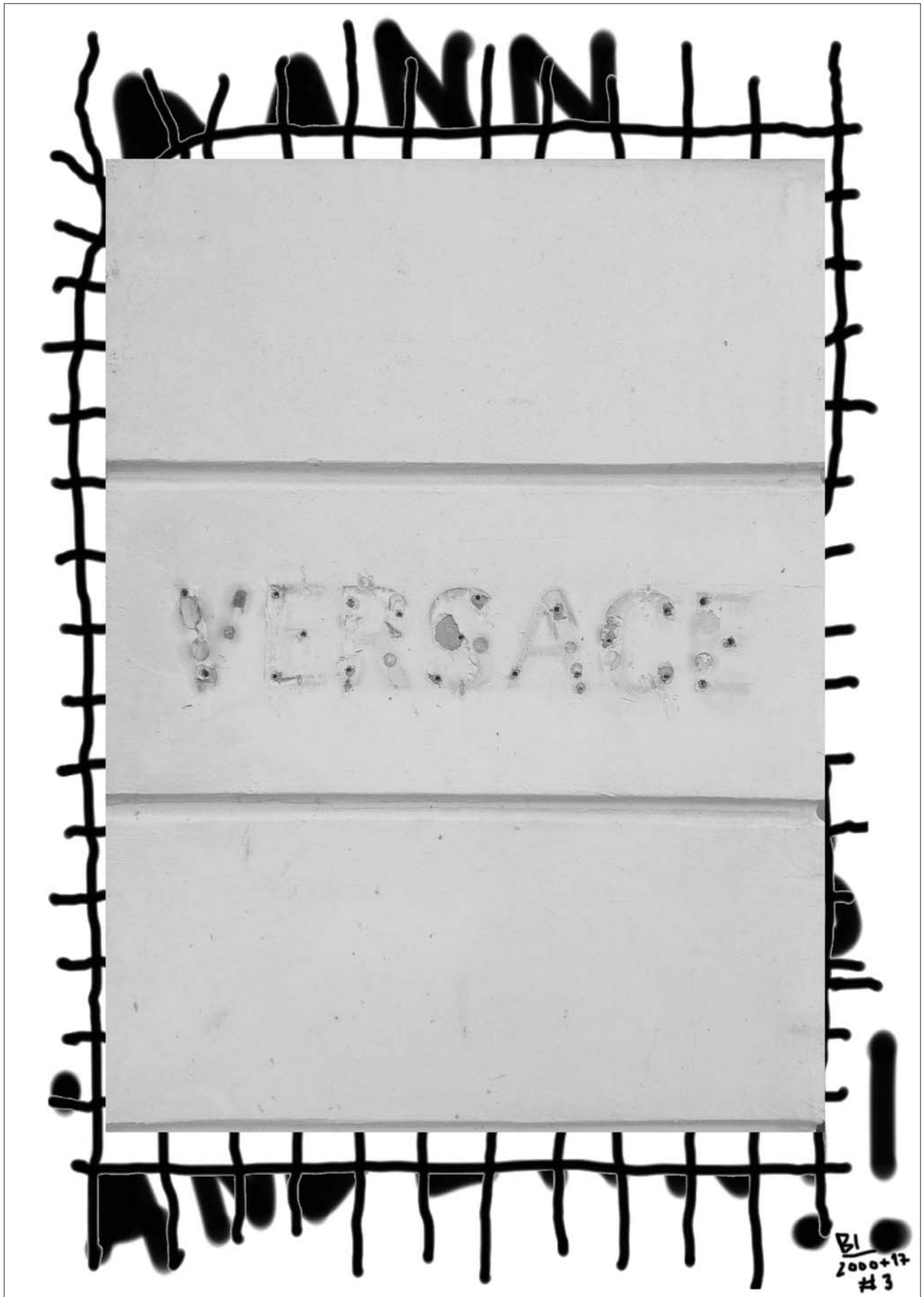
MARILENA ALLOWS HERSELF TO LEARN ON AN ONGOING BASIS, SHE RE-THINKS HERSELF THROUGH DIFFERENT WAYS, FASHIONS AND EXPERIENCES, MASTERING HANG GLIDING. SHE BROUGHT ALONG THE BELIEF AS A GOOD AND AS SOON AS SHE CAME INTO THE NEW PLANET, SHE FOUND OUT WHAT WOULD CHANGE HER LIFE FOREVER: INTERNET, UNIFORM AND FREE BUS TICKETS.

SHE LICKED RAPADURA INSTEAD OF SUCKING IT, SO AS TO EXTEND THE TIME IT TOOK TO GO TO THE SCHOOL. EVEN WITHOUT WEARING HER NAGÔ BRAIDS, SHE HEARD A DOOR SLAM BEHIND HER. SHE RAISED HER CHIN AND STARTED TO SPIN ON THE FAN COVER, ADAPTING THE PART TO HER FEET, HARDENED BY THE ANGOLAN STREETS, WHERE SHE WALKED LIKE A GRASSHOPPER. SHE COULD NOT GIVE UP, IT WAS A MUST THAT THE ENCOUNTERS HAPPENED, ALTHOUGH SACI PERERÊ WAS NOT QUITE ARÔNI...











FIRE AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, 1978





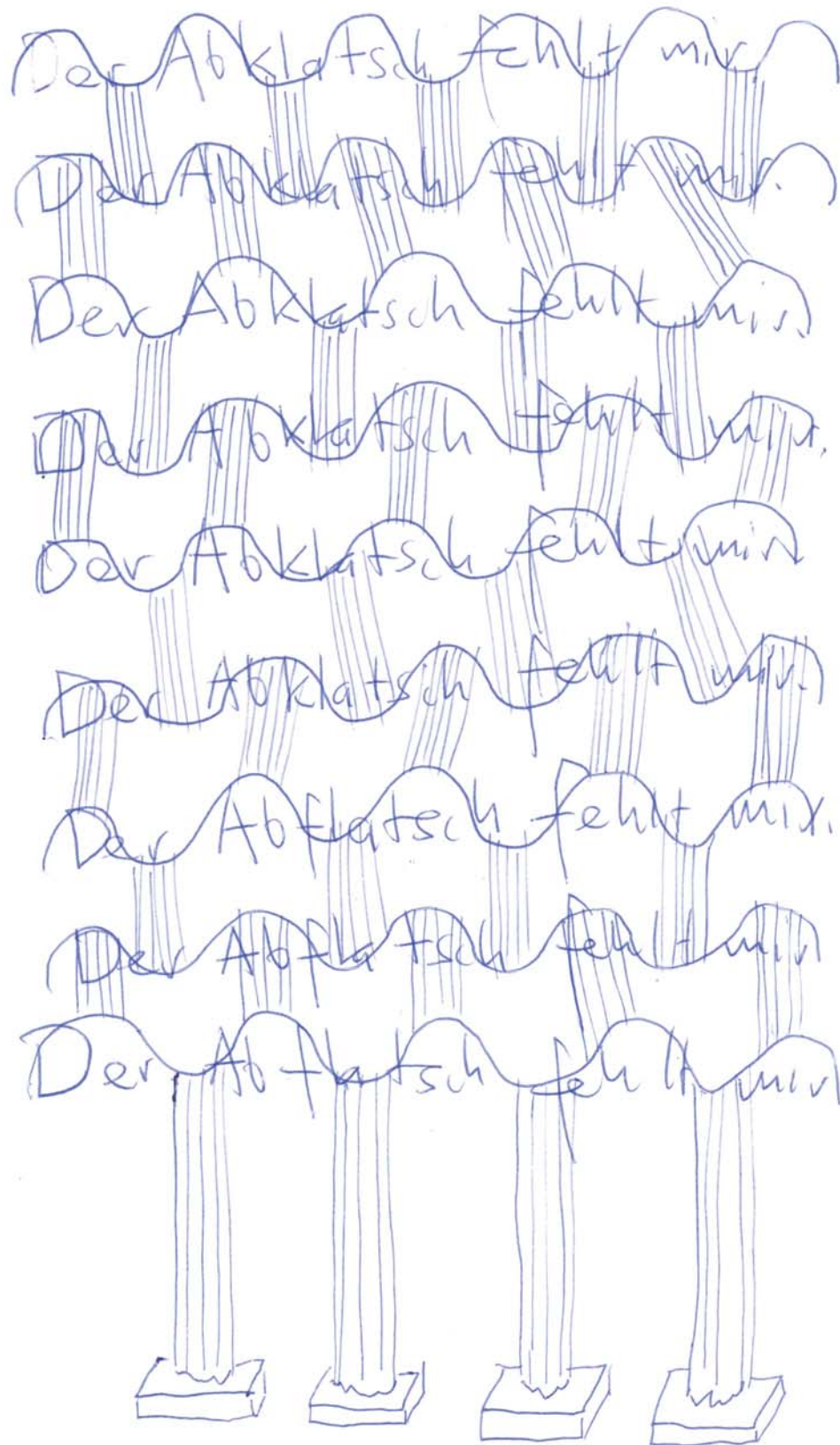
ALMOST A THOUSAND ARTWORKS DESTROYED

## MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

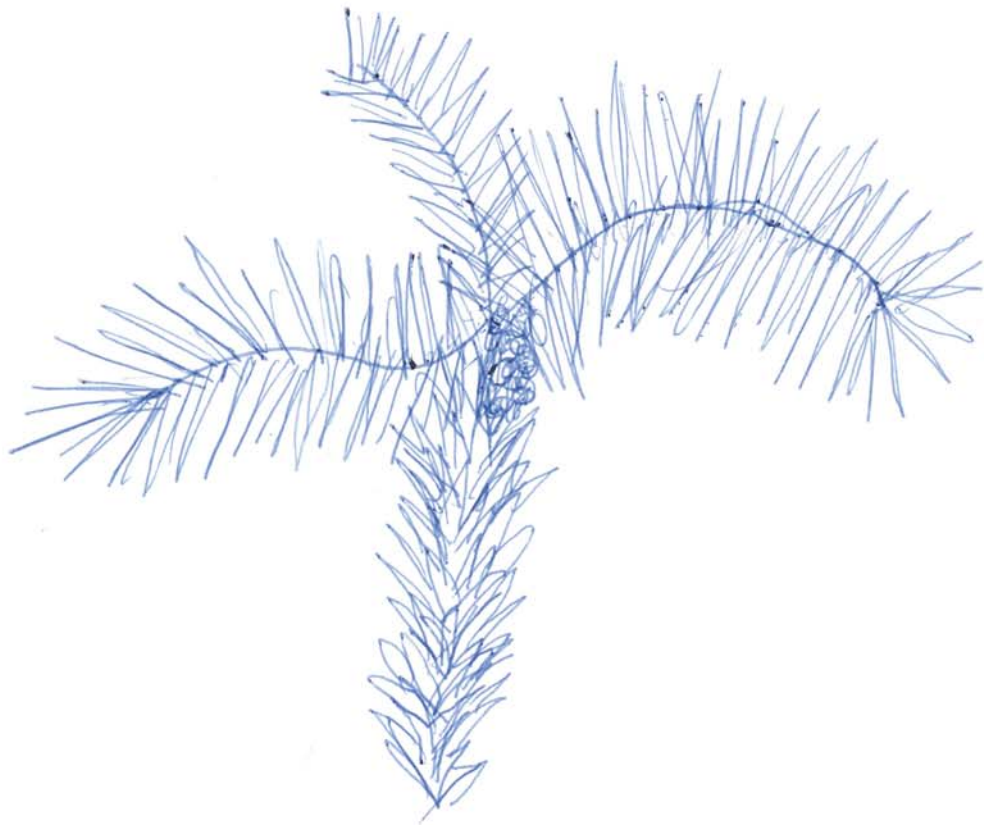
**I**A Romanesque crucifix was not regarded by its contemporaries as a work of sculpture; nor Cimabue's *Madonna* as a picture. Even Pheidias' *Pallas Athene* was not, primarily, a statue.

So vital is the part played by the art museum in our approach to works of art to-day that we find it difficult to realize that no museums exist, none has ever existed, in lands where the civilization of modern Europe is, or was, unknown; and that, even amongst us, they have existed for barely two hundred years. They bulked so large in the nineteenth century and are so much part of our lives to-day that we forget they





Give me  
a reason  
please



### Quartier Flottant

decolonizing mind and body

*This text is conceived as a sketchlike description of an artistic practice and was created as a response to an invitation by the On-Curating Project Space in Zurich to submit concepts on “decolonizing art institutions.”*

In my artistic practice, for more than ten years now, I have taken a question- and learning-based approach to dealing with relations between the Western and non-Western world, or, in a metaphorical sense, the Global North and South.

In 2005, an invitation from a self-organized cultural center in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, confronted me with realities that made the ideology of Euro-centrism and its ghosts directly experienceable for me. Resistance against the racist colonial narrative of white supremacy, along with its violent traces and ramifications as a system of exploitation, slavery and oppression, was unequivocally clear.

Personal experience and the consciousness of bodily and intellectual inscriptions of Western hegemonic thought and research, of the Western archive and its institutions, its power structures, its ways of conveying knowledge, the limitations, exclusions, and commercialization of this knowledge production have led me to call it all into question.

It would have pleased me to simply abandon this powerful framing, but we are part of a world without an exterior. The understanding that diverse kinds of knowledge and epistemic traditions exist, are equal and yet different, demands that we engage in a long, radical, emancipatory process of decolonizing one's own mind and body, as well as the knowledge systems, so that alternative capacities to think and act may arise and have their influence on changing the “Westernized” institution.

My movement of seeking, questioning, and learning therefore points toward the provocation and the mutual experiencing of situations that are situated beyond the institution as a hard and soft place and beyond its dualistic division between the known and the knower, mind and body, nature and culture. Through displacement into other, unfamiliar contexts, sites, and polylingual spaces, through an encounter with others and the experience of the simultaneity of different contexts

and multiple temporalities, it becomes possible to communicate, transmit, or foster another kind of knowledge, potentially leading in the long term to “shared agency” (A. Mbembe).

In describing the process of my own “creolization” (Stuart Hall) in this quest, that of an identity in flux, I (as a female white artist) question the meaning of a privileged West German, European background with view to fluent, circulating identities. In these open research endeavors, I am seeking cultural producers of various backgrounds and disciplines, at both imaginary and real places in the world, and invite them to join me in a performative process of negotiation. The situations of learning, the experience of displacement and of encounter, the concomitant surprises, coincidences, misunderstandings, and conflicts serve to help orient us in the current transformation of the world and to create new spaces of agency through mutual reflection.

In 2012, the transnational format **Quartier Flottant** arose from this artistic, research-based practice—a format that describes a production context and the relationships with others and can represent its designation for this kind of artistic work. The **Quartier Flottant** welcomes guests and denotes a momentary neighborhood and affinity. As a site or place, it remains unanchored, instead floating in space. The activities found inside move, design, and transform it. The quartier cannot be described by a central perspective. Taking place there with temporary guests are transdisciplinary encounters, dialogues, negotiations, artistic explorations and productions. As a format beyond the institution, **Quartier Flottant** is meant to refuse to submit to a notion of the hegemony of Western knowledge, its archives, methods, classifications, and economies, and instead to communicate, develop, and learn from other diverse pluriversal histories and systems of knowledge and thought.

Astrid S. Klein, 05/2017

English by Dawn Michelle d'Atri

In the project **crossing-boundaries-of-doubt.net**, you will find an example of artistic productions produced by Quartier Flottant in collaboration with temporary partners.

<http://crossing-boundaries-of-doubt.net/>  
[info@crossing-boundaries-of-doubt.net](mailto:info@crossing-boundaries-of-doubt.net)



Bilingual reading of Sylvie Arnaud's text *THE GREEN, THE GREY, THE RED WHITE BLUE*, with Sylvie Arnaud (r) and Lieko Schulze (l), Quartier Flottant at Crossing Boundaries of Doubt, WKV Stuttgart 2014, Videostill



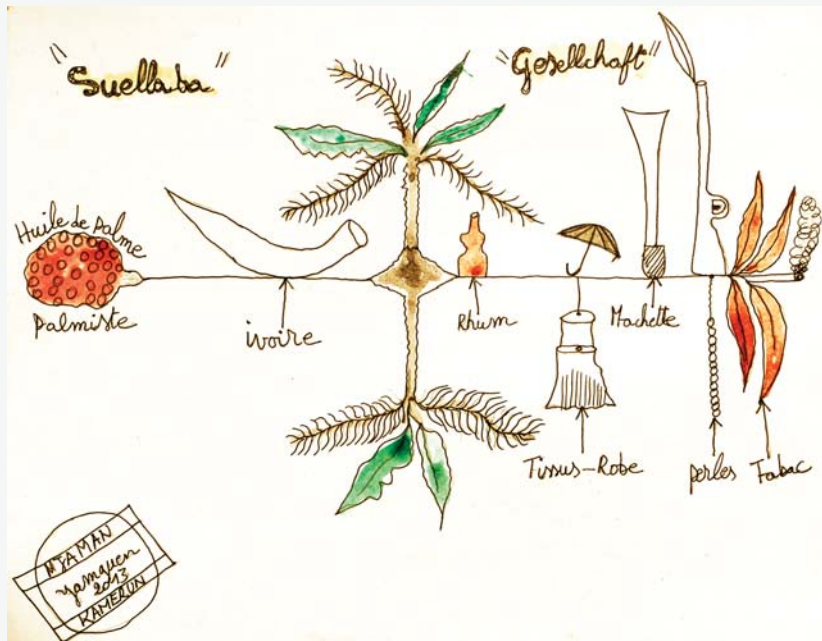
Kola Plant, diasporic guest in the *Quartier Flottant*, travelling from Botanischer Garten Berlin Dahlem to *Disparaître dans la nature*, to decamp, to desert, to evaporate, das Weite suchen, verduften; Kunstverein Heidelberg 2015, Photo: Astrid S. Klein



## CROSSING BOUNDARIES OF DOUBT PASSER LA FRONTIÈRE DES DOUTES ÜBER DIE GRENZE DER ZWEIFEL

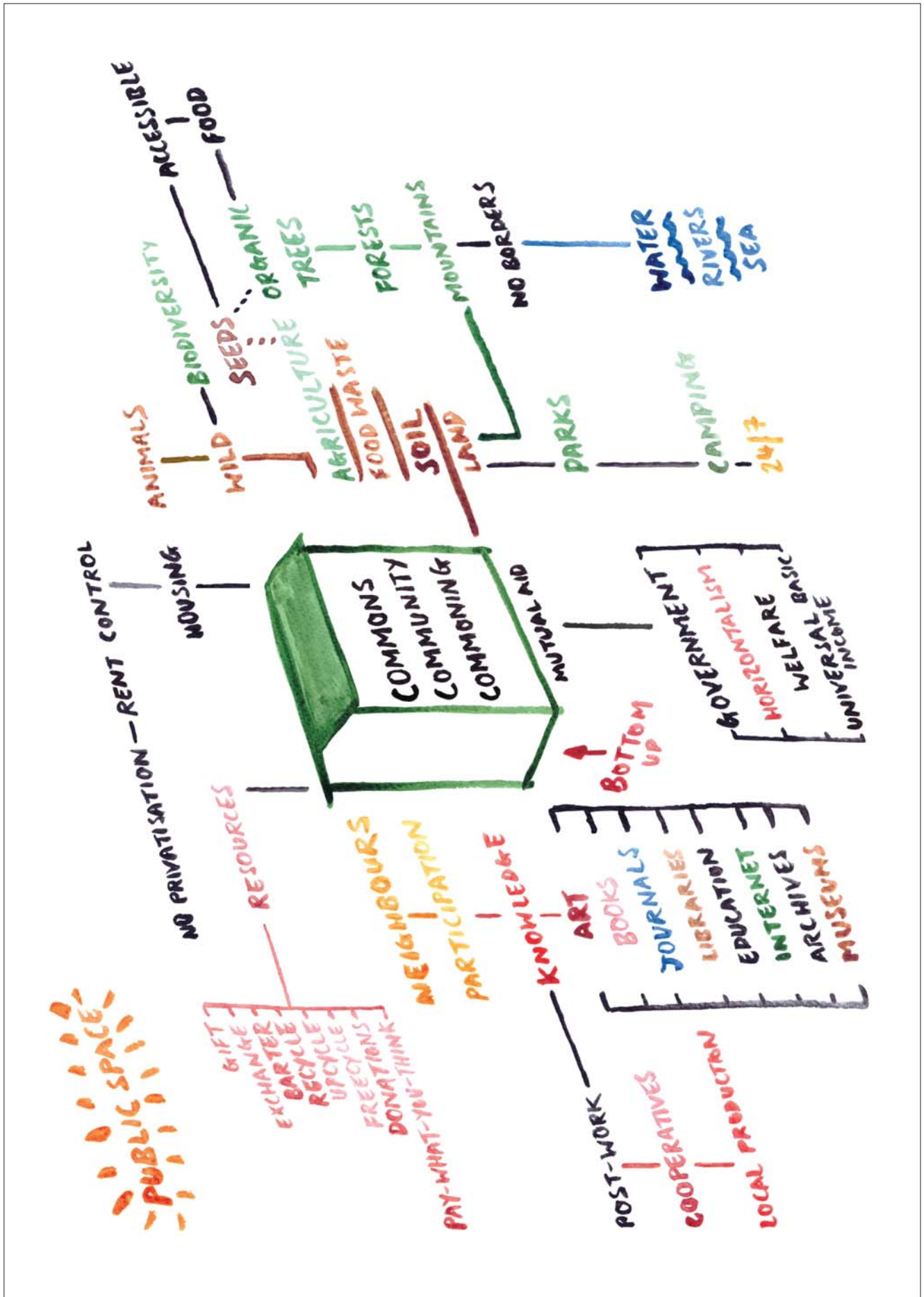
<http://crossing-boundaries-of-doubt.net>

Sylvie Arnaud, Gratien Atindogbe, Lady B Bantu, Jean-Godefroy Bidima, Vincent Ndoumbé D, Em'kal Eyongakpa, Justine Gaga, Simone Gilges, Peter Haury, Felix Kama, Astrid S. Klein, Elsa M'bala, François-Stéphane Alima Mbarga, Stone Karim Mohamad, Franklin Aleba Mokala, Serge Nguelou Ngouffo, Platino, SadraK, Vee, Hervé Yamguen, Yam, AdanGo Zulu, and future participants



Hervé Yamguen, drawing from the series *OBJETS DE COHABITATION*  
Project: *Crossing Boundaries of Doubt*, 2013







170408\_DE-Kassel Wilhelmshöhe.jpg



170408\_DE-Kassel\_Start.jpg



170409\_DE-Heiligenrode.jpg



170410\_DE-Witzenhausen\_Ela Kohler, Kunstlerin.JPG



170415\_DE-Heiligenstadt\_Klaus Nitzschke, Musiker.jpg



170415\_DE-Heiligenstadt\_Olaf Meinel, Bildhauer.jpg



170421\_DE-Leipzig\_Halle14 Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst.jpg



170422\_DE-Leipzig\_BSMT Kunstraum, Lea St., Kunstlerin.jpg



170430\_DE-Dresden\_Isabelle Krieg, Kunstlerin.jpg



170506\_CZ-Untenwegs Richtung Prag.jpg



170507\_CZ-Prag.jpg



170514\_CZ-Pelhrimov\_DUB Galerie.jpg



170516\_CZ-Trest, Petr Mircev, Künstler.jpg



170526\_OE-Wien\_Barbara Ungepliegt, Performance Künstlerin, Elisabeth Walhofer, Schriftstellerin...

Kunstpilgerreise 3, Performance von Marinka Limat, 2017 (Woche 1-7)  
Kassel-Athen zu Fuss, während der Documenta-14 (2500 km, 163 Tage, 8. April -17. September)  
Fotos: Marinka Limat, Wendy Pillonel, Ramon Königshausen

## Decolonisation<sup>1</sup> and the Scopic Regime

Achille Mbembe in *African Modes of Self Writing*<sup>2</sup> points out the sets of dogmas that seem to pass for African discourse in both its political and cultural dimensions, as lacking of historical criticism... and this lack reduces the discourse to three rituals:

the first ritual contradicts and refutes Western definitions of Africa and Africans by pointing out the falsehoods and bad faith they presuppose.

The second denounces what the West has done (and continues to do) to Africa in the name of these definitions. The third provides so-called proofs which, by disqualifying the West's fictional representations of Africa and refuting its claim to have a monopoly on the expression of the human in general, are supposed to open up a space in which Africans can finally narrate their own fables (self-definition) in a voice that cannot be imitated because it is authentically their own.

These rituals of discourse according to Mbembe reduce an extraordinary history to three tragic acts: slavery, colonization, and apartheid--to which globalization as a form of neo-colonisation<sup>3</sup> is being added.

Without falling into these traps in the quest towards engaging with the call towards decolonisation in South Africa's education institutions, how does one pose questions or develop responses that reflect on how have we taken ownership of the ideological space that creative production occupies in the popular imagination in the face of the complexities of and representing a new post colonial if not a decolonised reality. Especially in the context of an arts space that is within the embattled terrain of the university, and still produce genuine platforms for reflection and imagination, contingent of the political and moral positions of any reflection.

Through Decolonisation and the Scopic Regime the objective for me has been one of developing space that is relevant in this environment and brought together various people and their ideas that poses questions on aspects of the question at hand: the development of critical, self-reflexive, locally specific responses to knowledge production and dissemination in all its forms.

Decolonization as a political, epistemological and economic liberatory project has remained an unfinished business. Already in 2006 Mario Pissarra of ASAI noted several reasons for decolonization not featuring prominently in the South African discourse on transformation, and the absence of a mainstream debate on decolonization, for him this was because South Africa prioritized the path of Reconciliation.

Arguably there have been many debates and processes in post 1994 South Africa that could be viewed as classic elements of decolonization: the promotion of indige

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nous languages, changing of place names, regulation of customary law and land reform among them, overall these have been positioned within a discourse on transformation that is primarily centred on redressing apartheid, rather than addressing the colonial legacy<sup>4</sup>. However, blacks, women, and other historically marginalised groups have been expected to assimilate into the discomfiting institutional cultures of universities<sup>5</sup>.

The majority of people holding leadership positions in institutions are people who were in those institutions during apartheid and demonstrate a lack of willingness to embrace change in teaching and learning<sup>6</sup>, and by extension exhibiting and curating.

At this time it is painfully clear that the greater presence of blacks has not automatically translated into genuine respected for difference, appreciation of diversity, and meaningful social and educational inclusion, whether social, linguistic, cultural, or academic. Instead of dismantling and displacing previous institutional arrangements, norms and practices, assimilation politics have instead closed of the possibility for genuine inclusion and meaningful participation.

These are all very important points when considering how institutions have positioned art and art practices and still more the role of institutional conventions that have become edified or canonized modes of programming, curating and displaying art works etc.

It is all part of why this comprehensive project necessary at this time, perhaps it is a simplistic response to the hard questions that demanding less superficial reform...I am very self aware of my position, and do not want to produce projects that fall into existing and problematic tropes and want to rather work towards growing the offers of some kind of historical or present criticism.

#### Notes

1 if "Decolonisation is not a metaphor", Tuck and Wng 2012 contect, and its is not passive but an activity requiring praxis as Paulo Freire defined praxis as reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it... Ngugi wa Thiongo contents deloconisation must occur in the mind and so does the Tunisian activist Albert Memmi, the first step to decolonisation is to question the legitimacy of colonisation, only once we can recognise the truth of the injustice one can think about ways to resist and challenge colonial institutions and ideologies, but without falling into clichés.

2 Mbembe, A. 2001. African Modes of Self-Writing. Identity, Culture and Politics, Volume 2, Number 1, January 2001

3 Coloniality of power works as a crucial structuring process within global imperial designs, sustaining the superiority of the Global North and ensuring the perpetual sub-alternity of the Global South using colonial matrices of power (Mignolo 2007, 155-167). This is the same methods through which neo-colonialism maintains itself through globalisation...(Maldonado-Torres 2007, 240-270) refer to: Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2013. Coloniality of Power in Development Studies and the Impact of Global Imperial Designs on Africa. Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI) and Department

4 Pissarra, M. 2009. Decolonising art in Africa: some preliminary thoughts on the relevance of the discourse on decolonization for contemporary African art, with particular reference to post-apartheid South Africa.

5 Badat, S. 2016. Deciphering the Meanings, and Explaining the South African Higher Education Student Protests of 2015-16.

6 Badat, S. 2016. Deciphering the Meanings, and Explaining the South African Higher Education Student Protests of 2015-16.





## PADANIA CLASSICS, IDENTITY LOST



Landscape has always been the engine for the creation of personal and collective identity because as individuals we tend to mirror ourselves in the places where we grew up into, regardless of their objective beauty. Just think of the feeling of belonging to the great empires, which historically have always been defined by their architecture - in some cases even urban planning - but also the pride of belonging that exists at various levels in the outskirts of contemporary urban areas, where provenance is so exasperated that it also affect local music and trends.

As individuals we need to know who we are, which values we refer to, which is the common plan: no matter the truth, we need a coherent narrative of who we are. Politics was able to ride this need in each historical periods: the most obvious legacies are dictatorial architecture and propaganda; to build consensus it's necessary to affect the perception of reality and the most effective way is through actions on landscape. A similar process was called 'colonization of the imaginary' by historian Serge Gruzinski, how the perception of reality differ from reality itself and how this gap can serve power?



Landscape is a mirror of who we are, and vice versa, because it imposes cognitive parameters by which we learn to distinguish what is different from the familiar, but also, on the contrary, in the landscape we can see the results of our actions. Reading the landscape is therefore an indirect anthropological research that helps us talking about many topics starting from reality, perception of reality and therefore the identity which is built on perception itself. How the perception of reality differs from reality itself? Which role do emergencies play in this framework?

In the last 40 years landscape has changed in the whole world and the reasons are found in the development of many Nations, in free trade and massive urbanism. Planning processes completely indistinguishable and interchangeable started everywhere, and are even more evident in countries in which the architecture was very defined, as in most of European states; Francesc Munoz, Doctor in Geography and Professor of Urban Geography at the





Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, talks exhaustively about the issue and coined the term 'Urbanization' to describe the phenomenon of flattening a rich landscape to the point where not only the main streets of urban centers offer exactly the same products and services, but much of the architectural highlights are designed by the same archistars, where places of consumption and entertainment are so similar that they could be considered ubiquitous, and where housing is built with the same kind of (cheap) materials.

In this context where the most tangible aspect in the life of people has changed massively it's difficult to talk about identity as done so far, and in some extreme cases you can also speak of a 'lost identity'. What unites these testimonies is the transformation of the province - a place with a very precise identity - in the suburbs (of the world). The same feeling that you can experience in the widely portrayed highways or suburbias in the US, but without the exotic appeal.

'Padania Classics' is an archive of over 1000 photographs documenting the urban sprawl of the last 30 years in Northern Italy, which led to a quick disappearance of historic or recognizable elements of the landscape and therefore fostering a loss of identity. A political party managed to successfully exploit the situation to re-create a fictional identity and impose it through its narrative, leading to a struggle for the independence of the fictional Nation called Padania. Nothing was based on proven cultural, ethnic or historic differences. That party managed to stay in power (joint with other forces) for almost three decades and even though it's weaker than before it's now the oldest political party sitting in the Italian Parliament nowadays.



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### Museum Mission Statement

The MuKul, the fictitious Museum für fremde und vertraute Kulturen [Museum for Foreign and Familiar Cultures] is an institution without a home base. It makes guest appearances in various institutions and presents changing special exhibitions.

Considered spatially, the MuKul is almost always a museum in a museum or art institution and its mission statement is interpolated in different ways but almost always as a counterpoint to the pre-existing institutional framework.

The MuKul uses intensive mediation and accompanying programmes to convey content to wide and differentiated publics. Since it only has its own small collection to fall back on, maintaining and extending international contacts with museums and art institutions as the source of loans is an important substantive focus.

### Exhibition activities

Authentic objects and art works were the starting point for the first appearance of the MuKul in the Vienna Secession in 2014. Two special exhibitions were on display: *The Vanishing Middle Class* and *Wild Places*, the latter concerned with the works of Austrian artist Lisl Ponger. <https://www.secession.at/exhibition/lisl-ponger/>



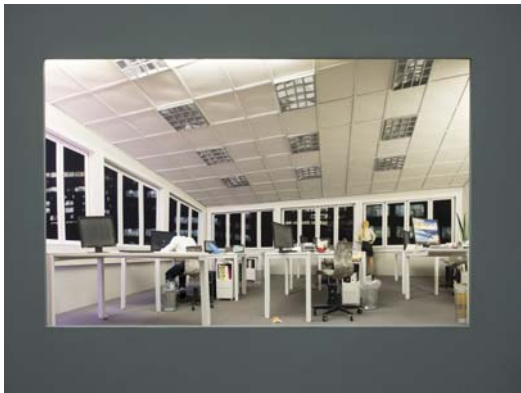
Facade



Room I, Details



Room II, Details



Room II, Dioramas



Room III, Details

The show *The Eldorado Task Force* followed in 2016 integrated into the structure of the exhibition *Erzähl mir Salzburg*, in the Salzburg Museum, is another museum in a museum. The point of departure here were gold objects from the Salzburg Museum collection that were used as the basis for a counter narrative about the Spanish Conquest of the Americas and the search for El Dorado. The exhibition will be on show till 30 April 2019. <http://www.salzburgmuseum.at/index.php?id=2054>



Exhibition view



Eldorado Task force, 2015

In October 2017 the Weltmuseum Wien, the former Vienna Museum of Ethnology, opened its doors after completion of a renovation and reorganisation. The MuKul is presenting an exhibition entitled *The Master Narrative* till autumn 2019.

[www.weltmuseum.at](http://www.weltmuseum.at)

While in the Vienna Secession, an art institution, it was an ethnological exhibition that was on show, the Weltmuseum, a museum of ethnology, is hosting an art exhibition. It consists of six large light boxes with staged photographs dealing with issues related to ethnology and art and an eight-hour 2-channel video installation with the title *The Master Narrative und Don Durito*. The latter deconstructs the master narratives contained in what, till recently, has been a ubiquitous part of everyday life: postage stamps and first day covers. These quotidian celebrations of nations, empires, famous people etc. have also formed the basis for innumerable collections for all kinds of people from school children to monarchs and also parallel the collecting activity of museums.



Indian Jones II, 2010



Participant Observer, 2016



A further exhibition of The Vanishing Middle Class is planned for the Kunsthaus Dresden (in spring 2019) and it will be accompanied with an international art exhibition concerned with issues relating to ethnology and the middle class.

Follow us on Instagram: #mukulmuseum



***Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada: A site specific art exploration***  
**A Canada 150+ Project, commemorating 150 years since Canadian Confederation**  
 Curator: Raghavendra Rao K.V.  
 With the South Asian Canadian Histories Association (SACHA)



*Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada* will present a series of public art events and exhibitions to explore experiences of trauma as neglected and yet foundational parts of the story of Canada. The project emerges out of recent commemorative events and reconciliation processes related to troubled aspects of the Canadian past, such as (a) residential schools, which forced indigenous children across Canada into boarding schools that did not allow them to speak their languages and practice their culture; (b) the Komagata Maru incident in 1914, when 350 British Indian subjects were denied entrance to Canada as a part of a broader effort to end immigration from Asia to Canada, which had also led to the imposition of a high Head-Tax on all Chinese immigrants, at a time when immigration from Europe was actively encouraged; and (c) Japanese Canadian internment during World War II, involving the disappropriation of property and forced removal of Canadians of Japanese descent from the West Coast of Canada. Recent efforts to come to terms with these histories have made clear the need to explore how the past shapes our present. The core of the project is an art exhibition, at multiple sites, featuring works by artists across Canada who engage with traumas that are a part, directly or indirectly, of the Canadian experience. This exhibition will be accompanied by a theatrical production that explores the intersections of the lives of Canadians coping with different kinds of trauma, distant and near.

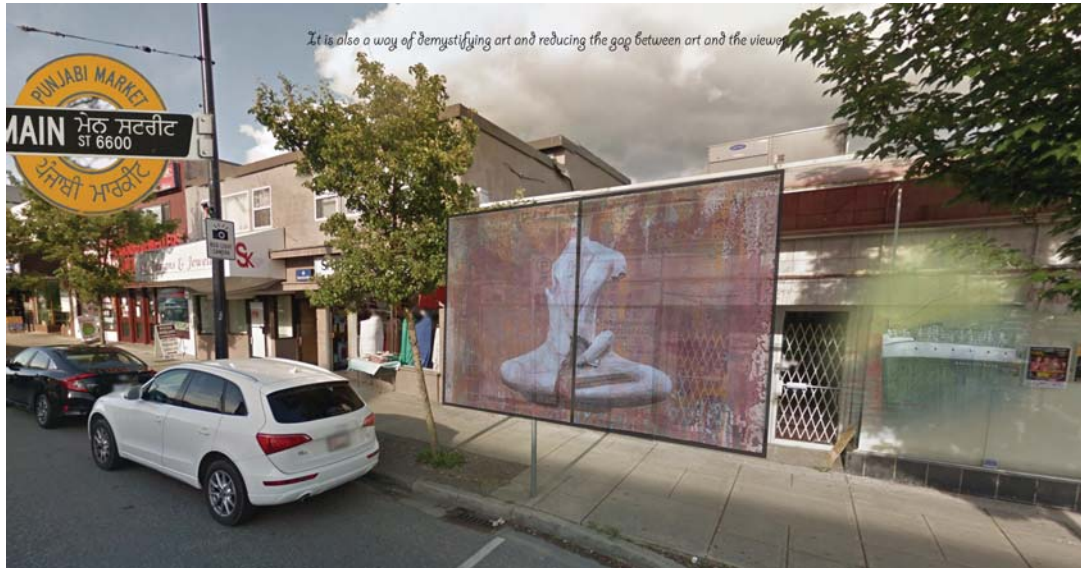


*This is a way of bringing art out of institutionalized spaces and plonking it in the middle of spaces that people don't expect to see.*

As a practicing visual artist, I am curating this project to engage public spaces as sites that express and are anchored within the histories of local communities and the theme that we are working on. The main exhibition will take place in the "Punjabi Market" area of South Vancouver, which has been the historic home of North America's oldest South Asian communities and which is undergoing a major transformation at this time, and/or a "Vancouver Special" home, a style of home associated with migration in the 1970s-80s, when many Asian communities began to come to Canada in larger numbers. The theatrical work will also be staged in the "Vancouver Special" home. Artists will choose from a series of exhibition spaces in "Punjabi Market," or at the University of British Columbia, to engage the story of Canada from the perspective of its traumatic aspects, on the sides of buildings, on fences, and within active businesses in the Market.

The effort is to bring art out of institutionalized spaces and place it in the middle of spaces that people don't expect to see. It is a way of demystifying art and reducing the gap between art and the viewer, and between the public and its own history. This is of course not original—this is not the first project to move out of the museum and gallery space—but it is something that needs to be done constantly, repeatedly, to break the barrier between art and the viewer, between the work and life.

Here another barrier that is broken is between past and present, through the eye of the artist, and through the haunting of the past in the space of the community, at the centre of its life.

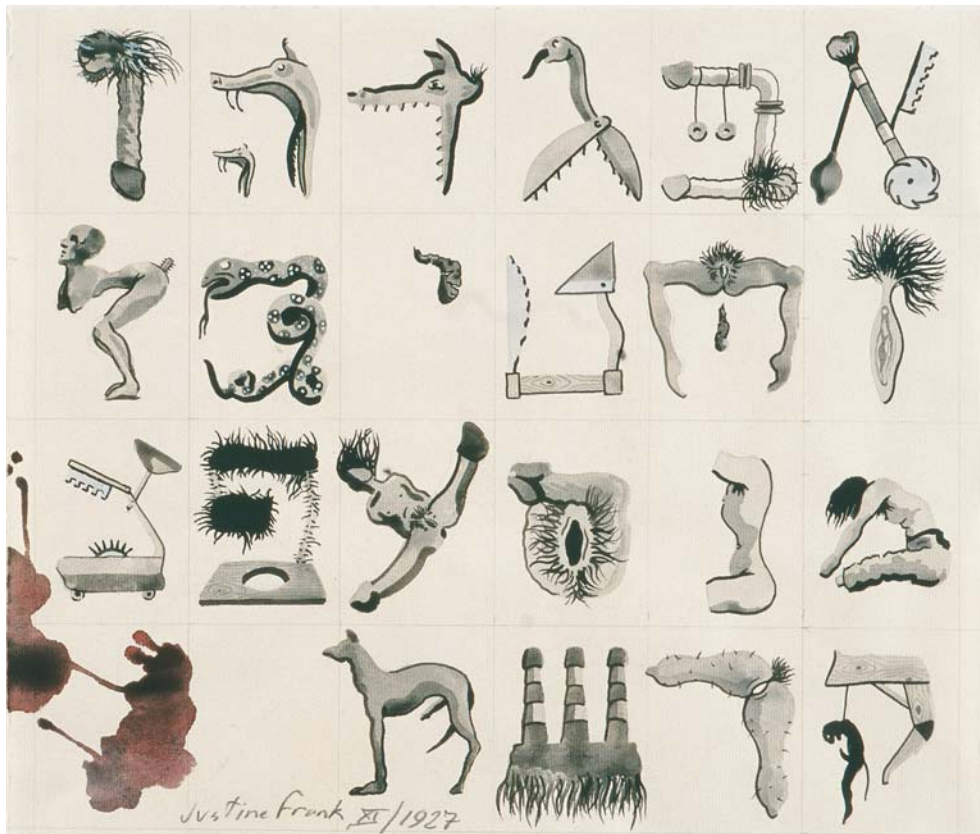


Trauma in this project can refer to colonization and migration, but is not necessarily something that happens *in* Canada, such as the partition of British India (which has its 70th anniversary in 2017), the expulsion of South Asians from Uganda in the 1970s, and the violence against Sikhs in India in the 1980s, all of which are events/experiences that have profoundly shaped the lives of South Asian Canadians.

As this list of events signals, this project is founded from a locally embedded South Asian Canadian perspective. It reaches out and through such experiences to connect with parallel processes of recognition, healing and recovery across communities, peoples, and languages. What we will explore are not isolated events that pertain to singular, homogenous communities, but instead opportunities for shared understanding. In calling attention to them, we invite the public to embrace the complexity of the Canadian story, its transnational dimensions, and the recovery and healing at its core.

Raghavendra Rao K.V.  
Curator  
*Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada* exhibition  
Founding Member, SACHA









### Justine Frank, 1900—1943

The art of Jewish Belgian painter Justine Frank has long been neglected, suppressed and forgotten. Frank first worked among the Parisian Surrealists and later in Zionist Palestine. Her work combined erotic motifs and Jewish imagery—a disturbing, hallucinatory combination, quite unlike anything else either in the Surrealist or the Zionist context. Following are museum wall text that accompanied the museum retrospectives of the artist.

#### *Utamaro et l'hystérique (Utamaro and the Hysteric)*

Gouache on Paper, 37X56 cm, 1936

The sexual encounter conjoins two figures from far-removed cultural fields. The urinating woman is based on an erotic print by the Eighteenth century Japanese artist Utamaro from his *Kiku no Tsuyu* (in the original, a man masturbates while peeping at the women who urinates in the open air). The figure of the hysteric is based on Paul Richer's illustrations, commissioned and compiled by the celebrated psychiatrist Charcot (This figure renders the second stage of the fit, the Clown Stage). The conversion and sex change of the hysteric—so common in Frank's work—have a special significance here, not only because Hysteria was perceived as a woman's disease, and not only because the Surrealists championed feminine hysteria as an incarnation of desirable feminine sexuality, but also because it underscores the Nineteenth century psychiatric perception of the Jewish man as effeminate and prone to Hysteria.

#### A page from *Le portfolio taché (The Stained Portfolio)*

Approximately 100 drawings and gouaches on paper, 33X38 cm each, 1927-1928

This drawing presents the entire obscene alphabet Frank designed, and many of its other sheets exploit the infinite lexicon of perverse postures bred by the various letter-combinations. Considered in the Surrealist context Frank's life-swarmed words are a visual realization of Belgian-Surrealist poet Camille Goemans' suggestion that "...words are not mere signs but, in a certain sense, organic bodies."

Executed two years before her emigration to Palestine, the Boards foretell Frank's antagonism towards the nationalistic implication of the revival of Hebrew as the language of the future Zionist State. Frank "revives" her Hebrew quite literally and obscenely.

#### *Untitled (Self-Portrait as A Black Woman)*

Oil on Canvas, 65X50 cm, 1938

The darkened complexion along with the skullcap and the side-locks, surprisingly connote a religious Jew of North African descent rather than a woman. Thus, this odd work shares some peculiarities with seminal attempts by early Zionist artists to forge authentic, indigenous "Hebraic" art. Typical of this early search, ensued with the first Hebrew art academy, Bezalel, were renditions of biblical characters and themes clad in orientalist garbs (numerous period photographs attest the pleasure early Zionist pioneers took in having their picture taken in Arab costumes—a fashion statement both exotic and local, real and fantasized). In this sense, the painting is intently outmoded, since in the late thirties, local artists were heading in a different, less simplistic, direction in their search for authentic local art.

And yet a Second glance at Frank's "black woman" reveals her to be even less "authentic" and indigenous, and here again, clothes are key: the dress is clearly modeled after those favored by Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun, the gifted court painter of Marie Antoinette (to whom Frank pays the rather dubious homage, in her novel, of naming a vagina after her). Thus the "Hebrew" fantasy of a black woman who is also a young Yemenite man turns out to be a hybrid rooted in pre-revolutionary feminine vision of the natural and empowered woman. And perhaps this portrait, revealed as a multitude of superimposed masks, is, in the end, the most realistic of Frank's self-portraits, given that she herself is a fictive persona.

# Let's get radical!

## Thoughts on de-colonizing European museum collections

*How can we imagine the ethnographic museums of the future? What might a de-colonized museum collection consist of?*

On a recent trip to London I visited the British Museum for the first time in over 10 years. Since my earlier visits as a young woman I have immersed myself in post and de-colonial theories so I approached the museum with a de-colonial lens. Despite this I was profoundly shocked at the immediate sense of sadness and pain I felt oozing out of pristine showcases stuffed with imperial booties; a showcase of the British Empire and all those that were subjected to their violent, colonial oppression. The entire building and the vast collection radiating with this violence. I was left with a heavy feeling of sorrow and despair - how can such a museum still exist that so proudly covets objects and human remains that were more often than not stolen or unethically traded? Can it still be valid to have such a museum so obviously grounded in deep colonial violence and inequality? Have we Europeans still not looked deeply enough in the mirror to confront our ugly brutal past? To acknowledge the utter violence and human tragedy that our colonial projects have wreaked on humanity, let alone to try and make reparations for the incredible damage to cultures not our own? I began thinking how I would feel being here in this museum if I was not a white Australian-German woman but rather a member of one of the peoples whose objects were so carelessly displayed here? I spoke about this with a good friend of mine, another white Australian, who told me a fascinating story revolving around this same thought - she had visited the Musee de Quai Branly, the French Empire equivalent to the British Museum, with a Papua New Guinean friend of hers and was deeply disturbed when on viewing one particular section of the museum her friend saw an object from her homeland that according to Papua New Guinean custom women were not allowed to see. A small but poignant example of the utter insensitivity involved in the handling and display of these vast colonially acquired ethnographic collections, which brings me to the main focus of this piece - how might we radically de-colonize ethnographic museums?

So, let's get radical! Let's empty the cases, let's stop displaying "others" as if they belonged to us, let's reflect rather on ourselves and the brutality of how and why these collections came to exist and in doing so reflect on the brutality of a colonial past that reverberates deeply into the (colonial) present - let's acknowledge our roles as the perpetrators of deep inhuman injustices and represent that self to the world, rather than

proudly displaying the violent imperial treasures that fill our European museums. *Let's de-colonize the museums!*

I would like to now outline some concrete proposals for how I would envisage such a radical de-colonialization of ethnographic museums happening within our immediate future:

### **1. Repatriate all human remains unconditionally**

Rather than going through lengthy complicated bureaucratic procedures, in which the peoples whose ancestors remains are held in collections need to apply individually to have their own people's remains returned, European museums with collections of human remains should actively seek to contact and repatriate all the human remains in their collections through consultation with the affected source communities. Instead of adding insult to colonial injury by requiring affected peoples to ask for their own remains to be returned, European museums should be pro-active in amending for the violence and unethical acquisition of such remains by taking the responsibility for repatriation upon themselves.

### **2. Active consultation with source communities about repatriation of objects**

Again European museums should take the impetus on themselves to establish relationships with source communities where their collections provenance from and to actively engage with these communities on whether or not they would like objects returned to them. If so desired by source communities, then this should be done unconditionally, if not desired, then the context in which these objects were acquired should be visibly reflected and contextualized to accompany any display of the objects themselves. Let's tell it how it is - how it was collected, why it was collected, who collected it and for what purposes.

### **3. Fund museums or "keeping places" in source communities**

An excuse often used by many European museums, who often understand themselves as the keepers of world cultural heritage, for not returning objects to source communities is that they are concerned it will not be properly conserved or looked after if given back and will therefore represent a loss to world culture. Aside from the obviously patronizing and insulting colonial belief embedded in this attitude it is not for European museums to impose their own knowledge systems or values on source communities, who may have different systems of knowledge and value-attribution. Once source communities have had objects repatriated to them, it is for them to determine what they do with it. With this in mind however European museums (and the state itself), when desired by source communities, could fund museums or "keeping places" for returned objects in the source communities themselves. To my mind this would act as a form of reparation for centuries of plundering and desecration of objects and remains.

### **4. Re-name museums to reflect their true nature**

There has been a vogue in both Europe and North America over the past 20 or so years to rename ethnographic museums in order to try and reflect both this notion of being keepers of the world's cultural heritage as well as to change the more awkward former names. For example in German speaking countries what were formerly "Völkerkunde"



(literally study of peoples) museums are often re-named as Museen der Kulturen or Museen der Welt Kulturen - Museum of Cultures or Museums of World Culture. Why don't we radically re-name them instead to reflect what a lot of these ethnographic museums really are? How about Museum of Colonial Ethnography? Museum of Colonial Sciences? Museum of the Colonial Other? Museum of our Colonial Pasts? This could be interesting here within Switzerland especially, as the commonly heard expression "But Switzerland had no colonies" would finally have to be reflected to represent the true nature of the provenance of the majority of the collections in ethnographic museums here - it might not have had colonies, but it was colonial!

### **5. Make founding stories of museums visible**

Let's get radically transparent, rather than in the token way in which many European museums try and reflect on their own history. Let's tell it how it really is. How these collections were acquired and under what sort of conditions. Who paid for the museum to be funded and how was that money acquired? Which people collected each object and how did they collect it? In what context were the objects collected and how was the museum involved in this context? Let's talk about how sadistically wrong colonial empires were and are, about the violence that accompanies a lot of the objects in museums collections as well as objects provenance from colonial empires or entanglements, let's tell the stories about the grave robberies, the plunderings, the contract killings and scientific racism attached to the collection of skulls and skeletons of non-Europeans, let's lay it all bare and confront the very existence of ethnographic museums.

### **6. Represent the self rather than the "Other"**

Ethnographic museums should stop collecting any new objects before they have dealt with the problematic provenances of those already in their collections. After actively creating relationships with source communities and repatriating unconditionally any desired human remains and objects to those communities I can imagine the vast warehouses and showcases might be a lot barer than they are now. This would provide a new opportunity to reflect exactly upon that emptiness and what has provoked it. Namely the unethical and violent acquisition of so many objects and human remains and their contemporary repatriation. Then perhaps we could turn the ethnographic museums of the future into places of real education again, one of their initial founding missions, by using these de-colonized museum collections to self-reflect and represent *ourselves*. We could reflect on the violent injustices of the European colonial project, on European scientific racism and its intertwining with the evolution of many natural sciences such as ethnography etc., the scientists/explorers/adventurers that collected and founded these museums. In doing so we can transform the ethnographic gaze back onto ourselves, rather than towards the Other that it has been focused on for far too long.

In the near future I would love to return to the British Museum and see empty cases with labels telling the stories of how objects were originally stolen or dubiously traded and how they were given back, to see cases full of the personal objects that belonged to colonial explorers, anthropologists, adventurers, traders, to see exhibitions that tell the story of imperial colonialism and how dreadfully wrong it was. Wouldn't that be radical....

**Sally Schonfeldt**



*Ghorba wla lout (Exile or death)\**

Printed Flag, installed at Kunstmuseum Mülheim/Ruhr in front of a water colour by August Macke that he made during his journey to Tunisia. Exhibition view "Weltenwanderer", March–July 2017

\* Ghorba wla lout (Exile or death) is a well known expression in Maghreb countries and in parts of Western Africa used by migrants who want to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

## BE CAREFUL WITH THE FIRE

by Túlio Tavares

Is a(r)tivism a joke?  
Is a(r)rivisme serious?

How many belly buttons make a collective?  
Belly(b)uttonism?



Art goes beyond the perception that we have of it in real time. In fact, what is seen isn't exactly art, but a kind of distorted reflection. Therefore it is easy to be blinded in the moment that we want to understand it.

It all began in the early 2000s. We were in a great series of transformations, trying to create survival tactics through the exchange of interests, content and affections. We produced outside the financial circuit, working collectively, creating collectives, taking part in other collectives, articulating with each other. I ended up in the middle of a hurricane, and a hurricane only happens if everything is ready for it to happen; a hurricane never comes out of nowhere, the elements were all there: the correct amount of humidity, the right amount of air, the change in temperature from here to there, wind x passes just below wind y and, boom!, a hurricane exploded. What I say is this: everything was in the air for this coming together to happen, a chaotic city and artists organised in collectives and social movements. All the logic that would cause this to happen was there, before even this hurricane, which happened freely, with no strings attached, without contracts. We knew the symbolic force that this urban network could have in the micro and macro political spheres.

We radically positioned ourselves against spectacular culture and spectacularisation in general, or rather, against the non-participation, alienation and passiveness of society. We proposed the participation of individuals in all fields of social life, especially in culture.

Even nowadays, many of these collectives produce actions that are practices of intervention in public spaces, combining art and activism which are spread through virtual and face to face networks. Using network communication back then, we ended up organising actions against icons of the neoliberal system.

Art produces images, sounds and memory. It reverberates in society and in people, who then reverberate with even more people. Biological metaphor and dissemination. Art speaks of social time, it changes the course of historic time and transforms society.

We live in war in the city of São Paulo. It starts here, with the hypothesis that the art collectives using public space as the field of action all had something in common. Collective artistic projects question the relationship between art, politics and issues of life in this city, which produces a strategically excluded space. They operate in a minefield, where it might not be possible to enter without putting themselves at risk.

Hence the search by grassroots movements, to go to the city, to the squats, to abandoned places, places that no one sees. We knew that new symbols could be produced, even if they were symbols that might fall out of the category of 'art'. Because these groups stopped being an art movement and became a movement of the city, environmental, political and social, bringing the field of art closer to that of political activism, as a result of interventions in non-institutionalised spaces and with an eminently critical character.

The art world didn't understand then what was happening: the reference to art is annihilated. We weren't better understood by theorists or even by ourselves. We ended up losing ourselves. There were symbolic barricades against the police; signs advertising real estate were stolen from the streets, repainted

with forms and designs by the EIA collective. Things were never in any form of order, far from anything recognisable. How do you create a symbolic artistic barrier which interrupts the actions of the police on a day of eviction? The police would have to remove artwork from their path, to invade the squat and take people out. Those barriers made from real estate signs were being repeated, until they were repainted by the Elefante collective and ended up with the word 'DIGNITY'. Now it was possible to understand a little better. Now it is no longer a work of art trying to block the arrival of the police, it is the word 'DIGNITY'. They were barriers because those signs had a physical size for this, and we imagined the riot police arriving and trying to take many things from inside. But now they would mainly have to remove the word 'DIGNITY'.



The artists that produced art at that time used to manipulate information, they would manipulate how a certain group of social housing would be seen by the media. Everything very plastic, everything very imagetic.

It wasn't easy, it wasn't simple. It was a moment of great tension. In the air was the danger of having to leave running in the middle of the night. We were there producing art, experimenting.

I believe that the movement of these collectives will become famous when they no longer pose a threat, when it no longer smells like shit, when it becomes photos, films, books, master's degrees, PhDs, post-theses, to appear in large biennales and museums in order to say why that symbolic act was important. Right now, when the movement appears to be perfume is when the virus, implanted there at the back, right at the start, before the hurricane forms, will be eternally unbalancing, messing things up, disorganising and disrupting. New people there at the front, even with things neatly packaged, will be co-opted by this disorganising virus. They will think powerful, potent things and continue to disintegrate. That is bigger intention, that all this history is an eternal disintegrating element of absolute values. A viral process of collective agency of temporary autonomous zones, produced starting from incessant dissenting recompositions and not from a logic of consensus. They are facts that point to the limits between the power of subversions and the power of co-option within the system of art and life; a moment in which the art system and the political and economic system manage to take ownership of every critical movement of disruption.

They are 'becomings' of a historical construction, actions and absurd or surreal interferences in time and some place in the universe that is infinite.

Present in this text are the voices of Sebastião de Oliveira Neto, Ricardo Rosas, André Mesquita, Fabiane Borges, Flavia Sammarone, Milena Durante, Ricardo Basbaum, Plato.

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Artwork *Be careful with the fire*, 2003, Túlio Tavares

This work consisted of a collage of letters that formed the phrase "BE CAREFUL WITH THE FIRE", which was carried out on a wall on the terrace of the last floor of the Ocupação Prestes Maia squat, with a view to the city. It was a clear reference to the fire that happened in the building in September 2003, three months, therefore, before the exhibition *ACMSTC*, which resulted in the destruction of four storeys and the death of a four year old girl. The tension of the situation is clear here: If on one side there is a direct reference to the tragedy that occurred in the building, on the other it highlights the risk of that event-occurrence. "To catch fire" had as much to do with the fire as with the explosions and repercussions that an event like that could cause.

<https://tuliotavares.wordpress.com/>

<https://tuliotavares.wordpress.com/prestes-maia-acoes-culturais/>

<https://tuliotavares.wordpress.com/acmstc/>

<http://integracaoemposse.zip.net/>



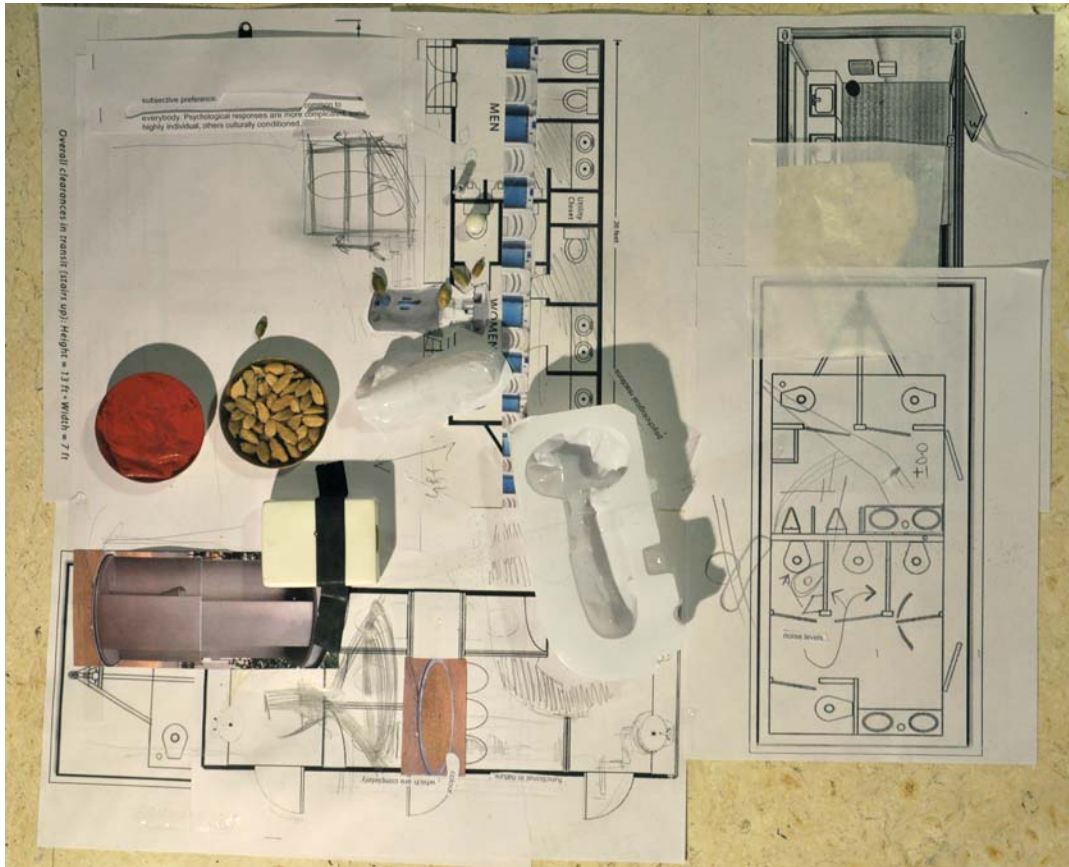


Artistas na Ocupação Prestes Maia, juntos ao Movimento Popular por Moradia.



fotos: Antônio Brasiliano





Layout Collective (M.Pravat, Susanta Mandal,  
Sayantan Maitra, Navid Tschopp)  
Sketch, 2014





Layout Collective (M.Pravat, Susanta Mandal,  
Sayantan Maitra, Navid Tschopp)  
*Toilets*, 2014

Colombo Art Biennale, Sri Lanka  
temporary intervention into the public toilet  
of Goethe-Institute Sri Lanka



Navid Tschopp  
*Third Space*, 2011  
skype conversation Switzerland–Iran on persian carpet

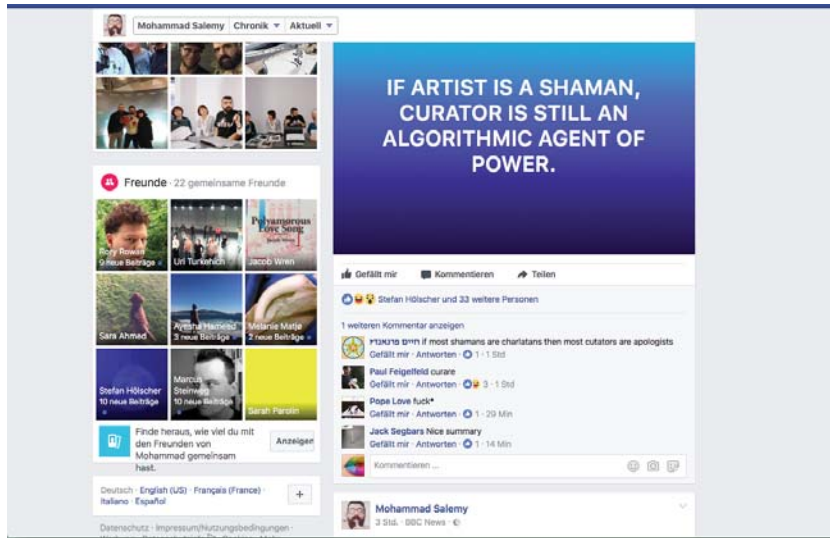


## TRASHORCI\$M

*Once upon a time, the appellation “queer” named an opposition to identity politics, a commitment to coalition, a vision of alternative worlds. Now it has become a weak umbrella term for a confederation of identitarian concerns. It is time to move on, to confuse the enemy, to become illegible, invisible, anonymous. In the words of José Muñoz, “we have never been queer.”* Says Jack and no, I don’t quote her surname right here, maybe later, because this is an invitation to an artists’ contribution. If I wanted to put out a contribution to philosophical format I would make the effort of and develop an **ARGUMENTATION** which comes with and through and by philosophical concepts - fuck arts’ **PSEUDOACADEMIA** - but here we go, what we have here is another genre. It’s too opinionated and too much angry polemics to be a conversation or a dialogue. It’s too tired for a manifesto. Maybe what this could be called is an after talk of a manifesto. Anonymous, obviously. Anonymous, but generous. Anonymous generosity.

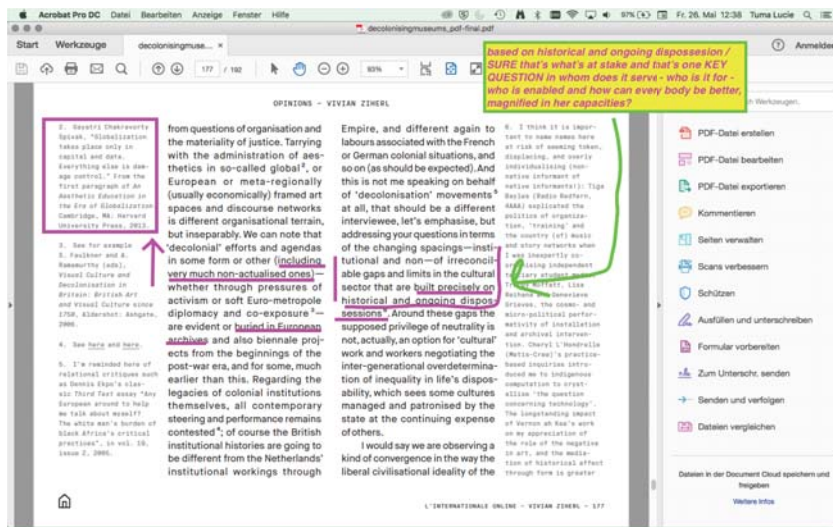
**I think what is also interesting and contradictory about the present moment is a certain schizoid two-hand over-identification and de-naturalisation of remaining colonial art institutional power and authority by ‘autonomous’ and independent practitioners for the purpose of the defense of infrastructures.**

It cannot continue with the quoted identity politics from above nor go towards we have never been modern, even though both would pave a nice entrance for the question at hand since THE INSTITUTION is a modern thing and looking BEFORE or OUTSIDE modernity takes us outside the west and into the rest, as Stuart named it, and right in. BUT hold on a moment, how do you get outside the thing that made us, aha - it makes us stay in relation to where we are speaking from - ok then and SO no, I will not take the science fiction part neither but dwell a little around with good old EXPENDITURE and yes, TECHNOLOGY. It may sound old school but we haven’t mastered to think about algorithms yet and while people chase magick and turn retro for some answers, many forget to look in front of them. Expenditure and technology, if anything then - AS MAGIC - and what is inherent yet not yet at work in dominant economies and their **ECOLOGIES OF ATTENTION**. Whaa-haat - for whom - and who does it serve - we do know our post-marxist feminist adage yet we have moved toward a somewhat more speculative terrain. YET stay with me, it’s getting real AND SPECIFIC toward **ANONYMOUS GENEROSITY**. It could be a cousin of General Intellect I think. What was it I read with Mohammad the other day, yes



so there is an OVERPRODUCTION taking place and in this overproduction the economical paradigm is not that of an expenditure - as one could hope for in the **ARTS**, thank you Georges - but one of classical *surplus value over use value* based on growth and some speculative bubbling on a coming prize or prices – I see – we all see all that and yet, keep overproducing and making stuff that will be characterized by standard evaluations, like, competition is an important factor, distinguishing between categories of stuff that is valued higher and better and stuff that's just a waste of time, the **TRASHBIN** of unsuccess - AHA and **CYNISCM IS NOT AN OPTION** – yet there has been an enormous interest in CURATING TIME oh dear what a bubble was that quote - OK then BRING IT ON - you speaking to a choreographer and sure, process has been and is being elevated, in an immaterial post-post-fordism. To a certain degree, **TIMING** is exactly my business. And to me, as a dance maker and choreographer, it could look as if times were great for the **EPHEMERAL AS AN OBJECT** – and they say YOU CAN'T TAME THE WILD and open CALL FOR magicks and shaman - they say - but pleaaase can somebody stop making dance a NATURAL WOMAN and the body its mystical vessel while YES indeed - there is something in the material you ontologically cannot grasp ever – AS IN LIKE, EVERY THANG - and that's not to be deconstructed neither, **GIVE ME SOME PHILOSOPHY AFTER KUNT** – ok me as a choreographer what do I have to say about this apart from NO forget about neologisms like **SO-CALLED DURATIONAL AESTHETICS** everything can be read through the filter of duration and yes I have engaged with practices of magic since before I could speak it's part of a given hypersensitivity or some call it **TALENT** it has a lot to do with a labour of **SUSTAINING** one self as a non-identity e/merging with worlds. It is not to be rationalized **STOP CURATING AND OVERPRODUCING BULLSHIT PARADIGMS** that serve not much else but your own position and AHA – whom does it serve and in what historical situation. There was something that had a great impact and was important but it already didn't work in the 60ies and 70ies: **HOW** would anybody with a last little bit of decency left make a claim on utopias that live off some proclaimed NEW NEW that would like, be some POST-INTERNET and reside in the **MEDIALITY** of ephemeral where duration as making experience would opt as resistance vs object AKA **PRODUCT consumerism** – UUUHM I DON'T THINK SO it already didn't work back then, sorry Marina - and do

not forget **IT'S OK TO BE ANGRY** but it's more important to get back to work and I mean **REALLY**, there is so much to do. **REALIZING REASON** maybe thank you Danielle. Ah ja genau, because it's efficient to bring forward performance in high times of **PERFORMANCE CAPITALISM**, says Boyan now thanks, in times where currency is identity rather and where ca\$h equals experience – now, it seems rather unsurprising that process can be capitalized and that is no news neither. I could prove helpful to look at the following > > > and btw stop doing workshops. Like, **NOW**.



ENDO-COLONIALISM IS A CONDITION «*in which an elite treats its own population as a resource to be exploited*» this is what I think about when I remember what Paul said about the moment when he came up with this term of **ENDO-COLONIALISM** apparently and if I remember right it was after reading a short story - *a great science-fiction short story, it's too bad I can't remember the name of its author, in which a camera has been invented which can be carried by flakes of snow. Cameras are inseminated into artificial snow which is dropped by planes, and when the snow falls, there are eyes everywhere. There is no blind spot left.*» **TRANSPARENCY AND CRITICALITY** were great earlier in their lives, then they somehow married each other without really deciding to do so, you know how it goes, they just got so used to each other and slipped right into it – btw looking back at it, it may have been institutional critique that supported their relationship greatly and fueled their passion. It didn't take too long until they all got bored with each other and knew what the other would say and do next, no surprises, but very efficient in their routine together. Also, they became toothless and tired over time and now, way into their marriage years, maybe all of them should take a vacation – separated or together, who cares - and more so, a serious long-term **BREAK**. I don't mind if I don't understand and actually, it's wonderful if something overwhelms and dissolves whatever had been known to me as me before – **ZZZDDSS\$H** the instant of **WONDER** inherent in aesthetic experience which annihilates itself, if one takes it serious, that's what I am talking about. **WILD**. Wonder is a primary affect, says René thanks, and aesthetic experience if taken epistemologically, is not experientable. It's something that isn't taking place in realms of what exists

*for us* – so even ontologically, it's a negative existence – BUT that doesn't mean it does not exist. SO, per se and forever and once and for all times, IT IS CRUCIAL to not forget that there is something inherent and at stake in aesthetic experience that is not colonizable **THAT IS UNTOUCHABLE** that beholds **WEIRDNESS** and it is by its nature and unconditionally not colonizable **YES** maybe a hidden dark side called by some, WE FIND THAT RATHER **TACKY**, though dark ecologies are nice to read and cheers Tim though I don't really agree. The unknown and always contingent can be very light, indeed it can be **TOO BRIGHT TO SEE** let's call it a **SOLAR ANUS** covering its face in allure and withdrawal or more so, it's **RIGHT IN YOUR FACE** but you not there with it, nope, not today. It will never be tamed. **SAILING THROUGH COLOR** thank you Michael. It stays wild because total subsumption is another anthropocentric **MEGALOMANIA** – you are just incapable to think or perceive, sense and intuit that which **CANNOT BE SUBSUMED** so and therefore, acts of **DECOLONIZING** consist in seeing what is already here and hold on to a set of unshakable values. How could it be better for every body and how to protect spaces in which capacities are magnified and further more, not so via others' capacities being diminished– yes. **MAGIC AS TECHNOLOGY OF A PARTICULAR ATTENTION** inherent in labour, for example, and that can be very everyday not exactly a sunday afternoon stroll but deeply entrenched in the sometimes quite frightening moments of subject-object dissolution and its unconditional openness towards YES, still - **ART** or also, resisting **CHRONOPHOBIA** thank you Michael again - and all of that is the **LABOUR OF LOVE** with a devotion to its **ONGOING** which is to give way to the **LABOUR OF MATERIALS** themselves. **YES TO COLORS**. They aren't secondary. Stop those distinctions **NOW** – colors are **HAPTIC**. And I guess, **TECHNOLOGY** wants to say hello here again, too. Take a step back and while doing so, watch every decision you make through the values of serving that which isn't yours – **STRATEGIC DISPOSSESSION OF SELVES** via that which you don't know yet – the unknown and obscure may be the obscene in some cases, what counts more is the notion of **POIESIS** and its force of **GENERATING** that which has not been before. Or that went unnoticed. The new **NEW** gives up chasing and puts a foot down and formulates and ja ja, the virtual in the actual, though we actually mean it and Gilles was right with that. Merci.



So the question about decolonisation 'here' is not whether 'European' institutions are or are not problematising a colonial (or Imperial) past and 'withdrawing' from such, which is somehow a fantastically cartesian conception of production and history (constantly somehow granting an entity some default 'prior' imperial neutrality until a better effort is prioritised soon?), but how, actually, do spaces and agents of art and culture socially perform, place-hold or redistribute internationalism and perform and enact some version of 'just' exchange, with political and aesthetic specificity, discriminatory value, while negotiating wide-scale agendas of privation and neocolonial or endo-colonial (Paul Virillio) dominations. This is an organisational question, not a merely discursive or propositional or presentationalist one.

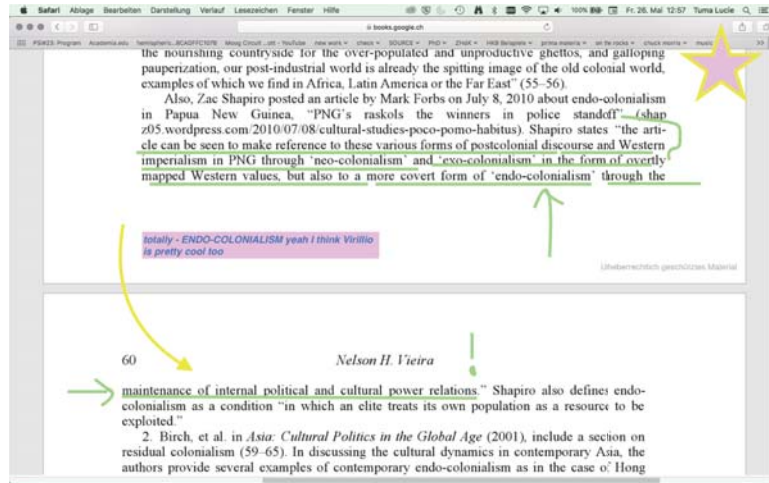
**ANONYMEOUS GENEROSITY** JA GENAU, where we got started. it is about how an artist does or does not colonize materials - and therefore possibly 'a people' via their taking part through and as aesthetic experience. Which becomes a technology - that is, the making of a particular attention - AND THIS makes way whether a position or a piece are more or less prone to the always more or less **ENDO-COLONIAL** mechanisms of an institution - any institution: be it marriage between people or marriage between disciplines, tendencies or trends, be it open relationships between curators and audience or be it flirtations or more profound connections between philosophical concepts, artistic propositions and materials, be it affairs or ONS with no consequences between working structures and material practices and/or **FORM** or a whole other set of serious engagements and commitment. Don't be afraid of form. If philosophy is statements of truth, arts are statements of form, thank you Marcus. But of course an **ARTIST** is not alone and if she is artist **FOR REAL** - and forget about putting quotation marks, times of irony are over there is a wind blowing of another kind - it hums and loudly sings **TALES OF EXTINCTION** - no fun to put THAT ONE in quotation marks - so FOR REAL means she will never be finished and therefore, something *she is* is some thing that she is becoming rather than identifying with, dividual obvi, thanks again Gills, and being-artist is nothing but a function towards and an operation for the work of art **COZ** we DO WANT to give autonomy to the art work by **CREATING BUFFER ZONES** thank you Kiguchi. Or let's just pause and stop answering open calls and head for an **OPENING VIA STRUCTURAL COUPLING** thank you Niklas, my first love ever.

## OPINIONS – VIVIAN ZIHERL

8. David Harvey, "The  
 'New' Imperialism:  
 Accumulation by  
 Dispossession", in  
*Socialist Register 40*:  
 63-87, 2004.

armature. The art institution is as good a site as any to interrogate the entrenchment of contemporary (neo)colonial styled vectors and forces impacting culture in these broadest senses—in so far as art's own changed, global, financialised, conditions are acknowledged, and intractably 'moving' problems of political and economic power discrepancies are all there.

IN THE END IT WILL BE SIMPLE: **PUT YOURSELF TO SERVICE** and forget about anything you already knew - forget what you identified with - forget about anything strategic or career **FOR SURE** and start to put yourself to **DELEARN**-ing and never stop insisting on changeability and **ON WONDER** yes that one – again - it's been called **CONTINGENCY** for the last 10 years or so, Niklas brought that up for me a long time ago though, and for now and more prominently - let's demystify that one too **WHILE KEEPING DISENCHANTMENT OUT OF THE HOUSE** when everything is under the logic of derivatives **THAT WHICH PUTS US AT AWE** is that which may or may not be already inherent **AND COULD BE COMPLETELY OTHERWISE** – the institution needs to take a step back and engage with the **BASICS** which is content content content via materials materials materials – there is **NO SPACE FOR YOU** there is no space for personal relating to something like 'YOUR WORK', it doesn't exist no more. There is only a negation of you and the negative space of identity which is **GENEROUS** because it doesn't take you too serious and in that sense, you can be or not, contingently, become what you may think or didn't think you were or weren't to be. And when in or with **THE INSTITUTION** – it **NEEDS TO LOOK TO WHERE IT HURTS** and to what it has been and what it is constantly excluding. For this, the institution needs you to be **FORMAL AND INHUMANE** in order to go beyond the identitarian **YOU** – the one that is called individual and will always be driven by a desire for more power and private interest – **AND THAT IS WHY** then, **THE INSTITUTION NEEDS** to understand that the materials don't need it and that **ART DON'T NEED IT** but that the institutions need art and that **ART** doesn't come from individuals - btw also not from some romantic and sentimental idea of collective - **BUT FROM THAT WHICH IS AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND CANNOT OTHERWISE** but stay **WILD**. Forget about Nature. OR about culture, so to speak. Nature same same. **ALGORITHMIC INTUITIONS**. In times of **SOUL EXPLOITATION** which goes via **IDENTITY PRODUCTION** and overwhelming sociability yes, ruled by technologies, **IDENTITY** lives off affect and proves to be the most fluid and efficient currency **YES** let's look at technologies of and for the **SOUL** not because we lack another word but because it's a good one – an inhumane and formally indifferent soul **THAT** could be a tool in this task – **DECOLONIZING THROUGH AN ENDO-COLONIZING FILTER** and producing **ANONYMOUS GENEROSITY**.



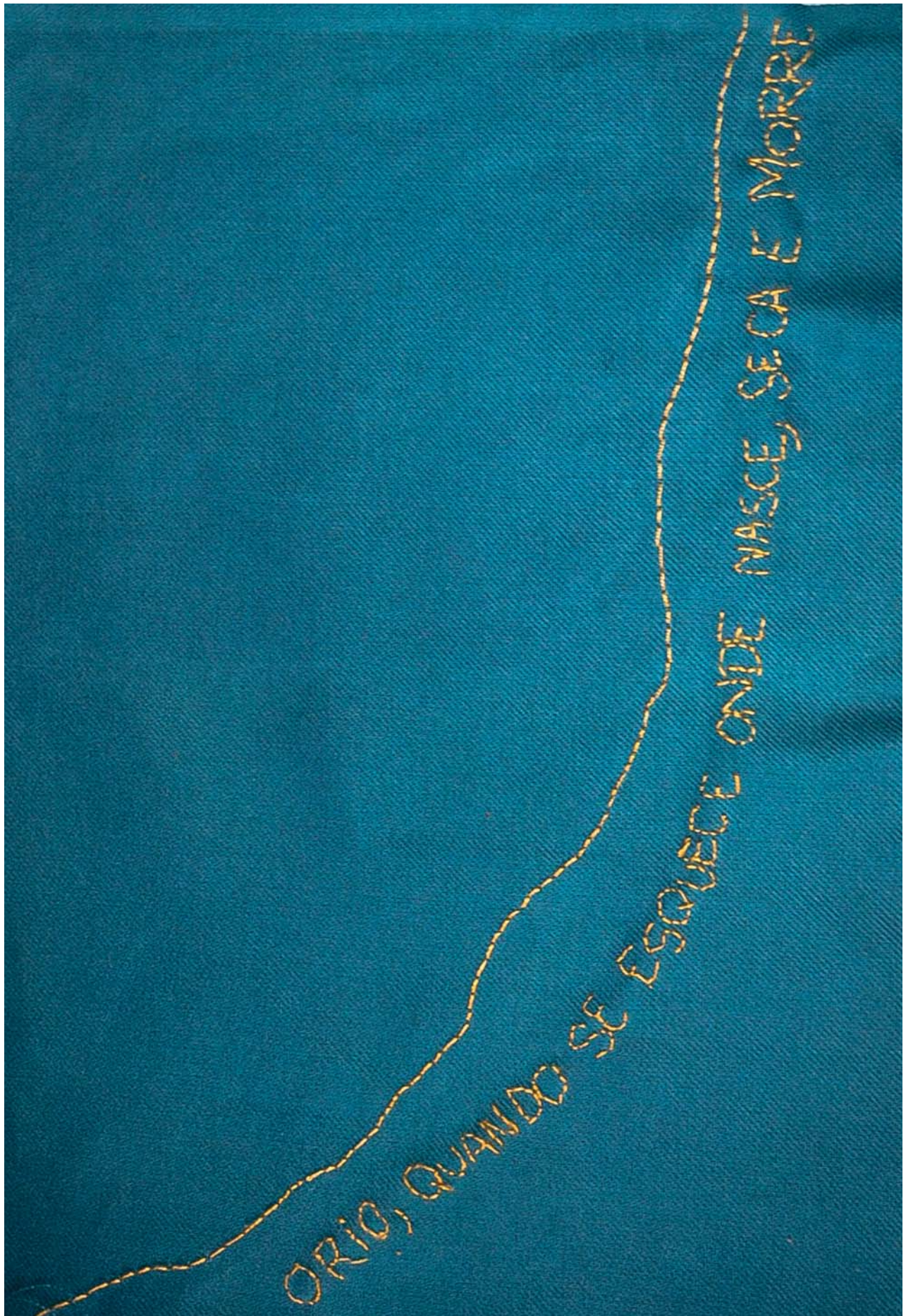
«The territorial body has been polluted by roads, elevators, etc. Similarly, our animal body starts being polluted. Ecology no longer deals with water, flora, wildlife and air only. It deals with the body itself as well. It is comparable with an invasion: technology is invading our body because of miniaturization.»

THE INSTITUTION NEEDS TO TAKE ITSELF LESS SERIOUS AND REMEMBER THAT IT IS OF SERVICE TO THE ARTS. WHICH IS MAKING A PARTICULAR ATTENTION. THAT IS ITS MAIN TECHNOLOGY. IT DEPENDS ON THE USERS WHAT A TECHNOLOGY DOES. THAT'S WHY. EVERY STEP COUNTS. THE SAME COUNTS FOR THE ARTISTS WHO NEEDS TO TAKE THEMSELVES LESS SERIOUS AND NEED TO REMEMBER THAT ART IS OF SERVICE TO THE SOUL.

Which is a somewhat impossible formulation for most post post any isms, but therefore even more so important. Fucking get over your what you think are your SELVES and start to GET REAL:

**SOUL WORKERS OF THE COSMOS, UNITE!**







## Question mark!

### Casa da Xiclet Gallery introduces itself to OnCurating.org



*“True democracy is not just an institution.  
It is also a spiritual exercise or askesis of forfeiture.”*

Leela Gandhi

*“There cannot be real democracy without a ‘mess’. If we want to be free – all of us free. I mean, not only some of us – we must not only tolerate but welcome lack of discipline, ‘laziness’, spontaneity, fantasy and improvisation.”*

Robert Filliou

*“Any hegemony is a dominant rather than a total system; one virtually ensuring – because of its selective definitions of reality – the coexistence of residual and emergent forms resistant to it.”*

Raymond Williams

We are certainly happy to be invited to express our views on a subject that we see as a crucial one in the field of cultural production: decolonizing art institutions. But we feel at the same time that our statute is ambiguous in regards to the topic. Because if we can really be considered an art institution, it is certainly not in the conventional sense of that word.

Our motivations, activities, and way of doing things are against the idea itself of what an institution is. We have always worked with disdain towards the institution idea and their subsequent consequences. We have not worked with a hateful disdain but with a critical one – critical to the hegemonic sameness – and with a humorous disdain. Informality was and is our *lingua franca*, our antidote or vaccine against institutionalization, a process that would quickly turn us into a cultural space like any other.

Who are we? Adriana Xiclet is the head of the project, the person that came up with the idea, the algorithm, the *modus operandi* of the house. She counts on many collaborators and friends (including the author of this text). Adriana's project is – to put it simply and straightforwardly (but putting it insufficiently...) – the mixture of someone's house and art gallery, the latter being a kind of anti-gallery (since it is democratic, non-restrictive and having a contaminated 'whitecubeness') and the former, a kind of non-house (since the private ends up turning into public...). A blend, thus, of house and gallery.

But... Why define it? Why explain the project like that? A project with so many layers! Maybe decolonizing an art institution begins when we abandon linear, rational, pretentiously totalizing explanations of what a given project is or might be. In our case, that makes sense: the European colonizer brought the specific linearity of its own mindset and society, foreign to the natives' spirituality. It is true: I am not an Indian. I am *mestiço*. I cannot, therefore, speak on behalf of the natives. I cannot claim that the logics of Casa da Xiclet is an Indian one. Casa da Xiclet's logic is *mestiça*, informal, anti-institutional. Decolonized? What does it mean, to function in a decolonized way? This text is an attempt. Casa da Xiclet is an attempt, for 15 years now. An open process, an experiment, an urge to say "I exist!". I exist in my own terms, I refuse to follow predictable, questionable, square-like, oppressive, top-down guidelines. Inhuman guidelines. There is many ways of being beyond the establishment and what it considers the legitimate ones. This is an important premise of decolonial thought, isn't it? Casa da Xiclet wants to exist in its own terms

and participate of the cultural programme of São Paulo. To participate in the production of discourse. To make contemporary art less of an elitist phenomenon, more open to the world. To question, to participate of the discussion, of the debate. Casa da Xiclet does participate of the cultural programme of the city and many times have revitalized it just by being there as an option, at times when the cultural programme was absolutely tedious. A common thing, still...

But Casa da Xiclet has no plan to save the world. It doesn't have this ambition. Casa da Xiclet simply exists and it's there. If Casa da Xiclet can contribute with the discussion of how can we decolonize institutions, is from the perspective of the following quote:

*“Once again today there is an effort to justify the arts politically, direct them, oppress them, make them serve a cause or a State policy. It is useless. Free art [...] will always resurface because its ultimate motivation lives in the depths of the playful soul.”*

Oswald de Andrade, *The Crisis of Messianic Philosophy* (1950)

Casa da Xiclet is this kind of phenomenon – this ‘free art’ that Oswald de Andrade is speaking of –, and it's a decolonized proposition in so far as it is uncompromising. It does not institutionalize itself in alien terms – where the playful soul would be compromised.

As we said earlier, to explain Xiclet's project is difficult... Maybe fallacious. Thus, we invite everyone to visit or come regularly to our space in Fradique Coutinho Street, no. 1855, at Vila Madalena neighbourhood in São Paulo.

LUCAS REHNMAN

Friend and regular collaborator of Casa da Xiclet Gallery



***"The violence, and potential of a sophisticated apology"***



***Distributing the task of representation #01 (duo-representation), Video Documentation of live performance, 2017***



***On the threshold of listening***

Spivak asks: "Can the Subaltern speak? ...Are those who act and struggle mute, as opposed to those who write and struggle?"

Lawrence Abu Hamdan asks: "If this is the neoliberal nightmare of the freedom of speech, then everyone is speaking. But, who is listening?"

I ask, if the Other is what I need to listen to, in order to transform, for exactly how long am I able to listen? What are the limits of my intuition, listening, and empathy? How can I transform in the face of others, without resulting in its annihilation?

***I much rather rehearse my appetite for pleasure, then practice enduring pain.***

In a world where, gratification is mistaken for joy, and sublime for ecstasy, contemporary art remains kidnapped by the concept of pain. Against all odds, enduring pain is seen to promise the sublime, that is the limit of transformation, and must be suffered alone. And yet, man banished into perfected solitude is an impossible image. If realized, it defeats the purpose of life, if there is one at all. Movement, the symptom of life on the other hand is motivated through our desire towards the Other. Rehearsing the enlargement of a capacity for pleasure enables transformation. It is only in the presence of others, that one finds the possibility to overcome the limit of that promise.

Instead of applauding solitude, now is the time to reconsider our strategies of being-with-others, instead of a being-towards-death. I explore strategies of listening in speech, writing, or the posturing of the body. This task must take priority.

***Distributing the task of representation #01 (Bryan McGovern Wilson and Zou Zhao)***

Considering the dual quality of representation: proxy-as-speaking-on-behalf of, and portraiture-as-image, participants distribute the workload of a written transcript, sometimes detaching voice and gestures.

***Distributing the task of representation #02 (Neo Jia Ling, Sarah Oh, Priscilla Low, Koh Hwee Ling, Zou Zhao)***

***The Apology Workshop/ The Apologize to Zou Zhao Workshop***

The Apology Workshop takes on an inquisitive method to analyze, and intervene into the rituals, habits, and body techniques of the day.

It is interested in the ways in which we express regret, and shame through the apology, as complex emotion are fertile grounds for collective transformation. Distinct from the neoliberal consensus, that works to remove of spaces of arguments and conversations, the apology thrives on acknowledging differences, and does not ask for unity. The crafting of an apology requires rigorous treatment of its content, and its effectiveness is directly evident in events of the everyday. It is an incredibly economical device to rehearse for improvements, and accessible for intervention.

The Apology workshop is a seminar that aims to dissect the structure of a well-crafted sample apology in order to shed light on the crisis that is the state of our apologies today. It is a classroom for the artist, where participants are invited to examine the proposed structure of an apology. It is a rehearsal room that invites for a collective edit of the script using the sample apology. It is a theatre, where the drama of final edits is performed for the public, and for each other within the gallery.

Through the invitation to alter the script of the sample apology, the workshop hopes to introduce debates- an element integral to the formation of social relations. The participants are encouraged to use the artist as the object for rehearsal (Apology to Zou Zhao).

How do we apologize to one another, and on what grounds do we apologize to each other? The attempt to write, and rehearse our collective apology will reveal ethos, and pathos of our time. The apology is in focus here. A well crafted apology exemplifies a hope for reconciliation, camaraderie, and a promise to listen. It requires the structure of representation, (for one could only apologise on behalf of another, even if a different version of the self), defense of an idea (motivation for the action to apologize for), emotional intelligence to read the feelings and attitude of others, and an effective mode of address...

***Structure of an Apology***

An apology should do three things at once. First, it should clarify the motivation of a previous action. It is in essential the defense of an action. Second, it must be able to address the public by paraphrasing the feelings of those it seeks to speak to. In doing so, it demonstrates the labour of listening, and resultant transformation. Third, it proposes an image for futural reconciliation.

A successful apology thus acknowledges the hurt, takes responsibility, and acknowledges its own position of privilege, while insisting upon asserting an image for reconciliation. In its own version of utopia, the addressee is interpellated into the narrative of a picture. In short, a good apology consists a good argument, is made in public, and is a reaches out for negotiation.

A well crafted apology exemplifies a hope for reconciliation, camaraderie, and a promise to listen. It requires the structure of representation, (for one could only apologise on behalf of another, even if a different version of the self), defense of an idea (motivation for the action to apologize for), emotional intelligence to read the feelings and attitude of others, and an effective mode of address...

**Sample Apology  
Invitation to edit:**

**The Translator's apology**

**\*\*原来,**

**So, and so, and so, and so....**

**\*\*姹紫**

**This is an outdated tune in Chinese popular music. No one sings it anymore.**

**\*\*嫣红开遍**

**Red and purple flowers bloomed.**

Here, a parody of the translator.

Translation is impossible.

Our relationship with 'present-ness', now depends on a song. The dilemma becomes more acute.  
TRUTH IS, WE ARE ALL STUCK IN A KIND OF A PERPETUAL PRESENT. WE ARE DEFINED OF A PAST,  
BUT BARRED OF A FUTURE.

A woman will later appear to us through a dead song. Modern language's attempt to decipher her  
nuances puts us on a spot.

**\*\*姹紫, 嫣红开遍, 似这般的付与断井颓垣。**

**Red and purple flowers bloomed. I am speculating on it alone. There are only cracks on the walls.**  
Now, my task is to capture the thought in one dead language, and the reality it claims to put before  
me, and then, express it in a way hoping that you will understand.

**\*\*姹紫, 嫣红开遍, 似这般的付与断井颓垣。**

**Red and purple flowers bloomed. I am speculating on it alone. There are only cracks on the walls.**  
The deeply problematic aspiration becomes the chief concern of our current conversation.  
My aim today is merely to provoke a feeling of agreeability, some sort of consensus between you  
and I, and nothing more. On that regard, I think we are doing alright.  
The rest can wait. The rest can wait!

So you will see I push on further here. But it is not without the unusual insistence that is the  
translator's conventional warning and apology.

And then, I take the liberty. I move on.

**\*\*良辰美景奈何天**

**Good hour, beautiful scenery.**

**How do I wait for time to come?**

**How do I share this with you?**

**\*\*姹紫, 嫣红开遍**

**Red, and Purple Flowers Bloomed. I wish you could see them.**

**FINALLY, I RECOMMEND CHINESE SOCIALISM AS REMEDY TO SAVE AMERICA FROM ITSELF!**

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