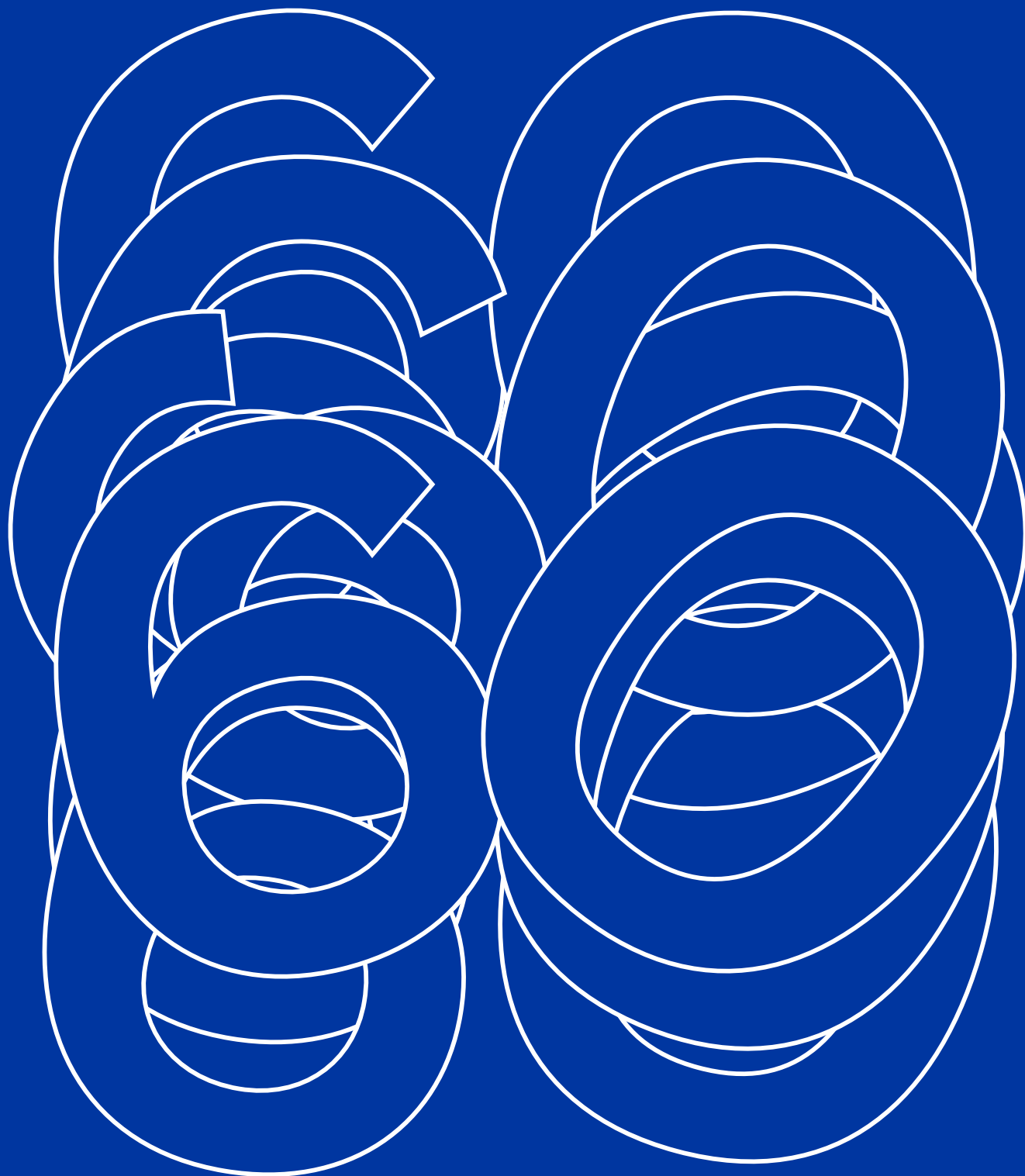


CIMAM 2022

THE ATTENTIVE MUSEUM

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 11-13

*PERMEABLE PRACTICES
FOR A COMMON GROUND*



1962-2022
60 YEARS OF CIMAM

ES BALUARD MUSEU D'ART
CONTEMPORANÌ DE PALMA

Day 1
Friday
November 11

Page 4 Day 2
Saturday
November 12

Page 26

Changing from the Inside: How should we Govern Ourselves?

Unlocking History and New Narratives

Introduction

Page 5

Bart De Baere, General and Artistic Director, M HKA Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp, and CIMAM Board Member, Antwerp, Belgium

Perspective 1

Page 11

Negotiating Conflicts and Connecting Lines. Some thoughts on the relationships between German (speaking) media, German politicians, and documenta fifteen

Iris Dressler, Codirector, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany.

Perspective 2

Page 17

Enhancing Governance in the Cultural Sector: The IVAM Perspective

Nuria Enguita, Director, Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, Spain.

Keynote 1

Page 27

Reading Refusal as an Aesthetic Form

Denise Ferreira da Silva, Prof. Dr., University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Perspective 3

Page 35

The Museum of Remediation

Clémentine Deliss, Associate Curator, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany.

Perspective 4

Page 41

Uncomfortable Museum

Sandra Gamarra Heshiki, Visual Artist, Independent, Lima, Peru/Madrid, Spain.

Perspective 5

Page 48

The Seed is a Memory of the Fruit

Sethembile Msezane, Visual Artist, Msezane Studios, Cape Town, South Africa.

Day 3
Sunday
November 13

Page 53

Learning from the Community: Collective Actions in the Face of Emergency

Keynote 2

Page 54

Our Street in the Middle of Our House. Transversal Methodologies and Decolonial Practices at Dar Jacir

Emily Jacir, Founder/Director, Dar Jacir for Art and Research, Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories.

Perspective 6

Page 62

Did You Hear That?

Philip Rizk, film-maker/artist, Mosireen video collective, Cairo, Egypt.

Perspective 7

Page 65

Not Waiting for the Emergency. Collective Practice in Ukraine that Requires Museums
Lada Nakonechna

Lada Nakonechna, artist, Method Fund, Kyiv, Ukraine

Perspective 8

Page 71

Specters of Picasso

Kike España, Dr. Architect, Urban researcher, La Casa Invisible, Malaga, Spain.

Perspective 9

Page 75

The Symbol & the Substance: The Ethics of Care in an Embattled World

Meenakshi Gopinath, Founder-Director Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), New Delhi, India.

Day 1, Friday
November 11

*Changing from the
Inside: How should we
Govern Ourselves?*

Introduction

Bart De Baere

General and Artistic Director, M HKA Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp, and CIMAM Board Member, Antwerp, Belgium.

Biography

Bart De Baere is the director of M HKA, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp, and Board Member of the Museum Watch Committee of CIMAM.

With a background in archeology and art history, De Baere's experience is broad. He served as a chairman of the Flemish Council for Culture, which advises the government on cultural policy, and he was advisor for cultural heritage and contemporary art to the Flemish Minister of Culture. From 1986 to 2001, he was curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent (now S.M.A.K.). He organized and curated events for several venues abroad including Documenta IX in Kassel where he was member of the curatorial team.

Bart De Baere's writing, theoretical texts, and interviews have been featured in a variety of publications, including "Eurasia and Transnational Thinking," in Jimmie Durham: *Festschrift* (edited by Maria Thereza Alves), Nero, 2020, pp. 80–87.





The mounting of *Worth Fighting For*, second iteration of *When Faith Moves Mountains* in Cologne, 11.14–12.14.2022 (photo: Alesia Bolot), in the image the logo of *Imagine Ukraine* by Nikolay Karabinovych, Adrien Titriaux (on the wall), Babi Badalov, Otobong Nkanga and Allan Sekula (still on the floor)

Introduction

There were two things I was asked by the Content Committee of this conference to do today in this first speech: to speak about governance in general and to give a personal perspective.

Governance. Initially I declined to have images, but then I decided it might be nice to include the visual report I received last evening about the exhibition we're mounting at this moment in Cologne, Germany. They may provide some visual distraction in these twenty minutes, but they're also an antidote to the topic and they represent the focus with which I want to end this talk. While we're discussing governance here, we're also acting there. That's a tension we're all somehow in.

To start with, I'll dwell briefly upon the collective effort we've been undertaking with the Museum Watch Committee around governance. After that, I'll mention some problems of the broader mindset within our society, of which I feel the notion to be a part. And the last five minutes I'll spend on a flight line to complement governance and with which possibly to refocus it.

The exhibition you see, by the way, is the second version, as requested by Germany, of the exhibition

that reopened the PinchukArtCenter, which we made this summer in Kyiv. It features a dialogue between works from the M HKA collection and recent works by Ukrainian artists, images of art working in the world, dealing with the world, as an antidote to the topic I'm here to discuss. After the Cologne images, you'll see images from Kyiv.

Why an antidote? It feels a bit gloomy to have address this topic here. We used to be able to commit to contemporary art and its museums without that notion. Now we do have to deal with it, not only because it pervaded and structures our work, also because it is a danger zone. As contemporary art museums, we're first and foremost about art, but in real terms we're increasingly about organizational complications.

When discussing situations of crisis during the biweekly meetings of the Museum Watch Committee of CIMAM, with Calin Dan, Sarah Glennie, Malgorzata Ludwisiak, Victoria Noorthoorn, Eugene Tan, and Inés Jover, we noticed that governance questions were often at the heart of a crisis. The most obvious recent case is that of the museum Sztuki in Lodz, and our colleague Jaroslaw Suchan, a five-star museum with a five-star director being cancelled by a politics that prefers local mediocrity to international

excellence. This sad case is reaching its sad finale as we speak. This is not a new phenomenon. I remember the IVAM in Valencia being a leading institution in Europe until it suddenly dropped out of relevance when the hairdresser of the politicians responsible for it became an important advisor, so to speak, when the vox populi started to rule. I'm therefore very happy that the last speaker today will be Nuria Enguita, to remind us that even what is withdrawn can be resurrected. Spain did succeed in taking institutional governance of contemporary art institutions seriously.

Let us not despair, therefore, even if we sometimes have to deal with bluntness, disinterest, and bad will. To start with, I want to report on the basic collective effort of CİMAM over the past years. One of our strategic points of focus was to re-establish our relation with ICOM. With Museum Watch, we contacted two of its standing committees, INTERCOM, its management committee, and ETHCOM, responsible for the ethical code of museums, to see whether we could tackle this governance question jointly.

We started a research program with INTERCOM that has led to a joint proposal to ETHCOM about why and how to include the question in the next iteration of the ethical code. We felt that the text to this might be of help to colleagues in its own right, and so published it last week on the CİMAM website.

- We distinguish three major actors in the setup of a museum: the founders (often public authorities); the directors and staff; and, in between those, often a governing body (or board).
- We set out simple, basic recommendations for a good governance framework:
- Shared clarity on the purpose of the museum (Government Act, bylaws...).
- A specified structure of governance with a clear outline of how this is put in place.
- Constant reviewing.
- A clear set of policies on how to address issues or disagreements.
- The role of the governing body being to support the museum in fulfilling its core purpose.
- Directors being appointed in a transparent way, ensuring that candidates have the expertise needed.

- In line with the new ICOM museum definition, the museum should think about participatory governance.

Simple basics, yes, hard to deny, but all the same that is exactly what we see happen all too often. In such cases these clauses won't help except as a reference in the analysis of what went wrong. They might be of more help for all of us who are in a less clearly shared situation than we ought to be, to open up a conversation. They might then help us to clarify the conditions in which we have to operate, jointly with our governing body. That might strengthen our position when we touch a neuralgic point later on.

So, this is where we are now. With CİMAM, we initiated joint research — thank you also, colleagues from central and south eastern Europe who joined the focus groups — and we developed an instrument that might be of help. Does that help? Only to a limited extent. I think we ought to be well aware of the limits and might more proactively thematize them in the years to come, more than we did in the recent past. What is the underlying tension? What is the broader mindset within the society of which it is part?

We have believed in professionalization, but in the end have been largely caught by it. In present professional management you certainly do have a mission, but that is quasi-forgotten as soon as it has been decided. It is replaced by strategic objectives that are translated into operational goals and output indicators. After that, the real question becomes one of business as usual; how to let an organization continue without risk for the board, which, therefore, chiefly controls management, and in practice often also interferes in incidental single points.

I am aware that in many places the decision-making lines are still traditional and bureaucratic, and — looking forward to listening to Meskerem — that there are also many important situations that are still in a foundational phase, with often informal decision making shared by committed people. Having come from such a situation in the distant past, I have recently been wondering whether this is not a more effective precariousness than the one now subliminally created by the managerialism that pretends to abolish all precariousness.

Indeed, a lot of us experience that governance is rhetorically taking the lead, in real terms harassing museum operations. It seems important to me to focus on this continuous, banal reality, rather than on the spectacular moments of crisis. Why so?

To start with, the crises are merely an effect of that banality, the disease was there before the fever appeared, the source was there before the crime

happened. Also, particularizing catastrophes lessens our capacity to be reflective and to tweak our own situation, and it also limits our possibility to share and be inclusive as a field.

Obviously, such a broadened reflection then goes together with differentiation. One might compare this to electric current. Situations of crisis, such as the recent Polish cases, one might then see as high-voltage events, but they would be the outcome of what elsewhere appear as mains-voltage challenges that can be managed or as low-voltage effects upon which we can comment. Victims of high-voltage catastrophes are obviously entitled to all of our attention and care, but the accident that happened to them is then not just one more incident: it is an experience we share and which we take along in a collective quest.

In other words, it may be good to take a more holistic and proactive stance to this.

The Vladimir Putin mindset is everywhere, so to speak, and perhaps even he is only a variation on a wider theme, the Wolf of Wall Street epoch, with its deep cynicism that holds that simply getting the result you want is valid, not one's behavior at large. Walk over and don't look back. You see, it's not only gloomy, it gets pitch dark, but this is actually what is happening when politicians nominate a nitwit as a director of a major museum or if they limit the public money assigned overnight without warning or excuse. They care only about their own friends and about their own Excel sheet.

It is clear by now that the global mindset is not only about disruption — of neoliberal origin or caused by other power-oriented systems that indulge in an endless hybrid warfare — but also about Excel sheets, about the systematization of our societies that allows for decision making. In other words, for the execution of power to happen on an ever grander scale, both in economy and in the management of democratic policies, or in illiberal and autocratic regimes. To some extent these different modes of upscaling all share a disinterest in what is happening for real on the micro-level of the experiences of each of us. Upscaling comes with degrees of losing contact with the grass roots; that is unavoidable.

We are aware of the fact that any system implies this duality to some extent. Even within our own institutions there is a tendency to be self-referential, rather than open to the world. Even small systems such as museums tend to prioritize their own survival and security over commitment to real urgencies with precarious outcomes. Any system has this ambivalence built in, and the more so systems with top-down control mechanisms as we see them today.

Now it may seem that contemporary art museums are merely variations on the same kind of systemic problems that arise everywhere today, in the economy, in enterprises, in education and health services, in hospitals and schools. This would mean that we could only tackle governance questions in the way we have been doing with CIMAM and Intercom, by clarifying the conditions in order to negotiate improvements within the system, keeping it effective, at best finding new structural solutions, negotiating the optimization of a superstructure that is essentially unavoidable. That's important to do, but I do think contemporary art museums — and here comes the flight line to end with — may take a more particular stance, one that may allow them to be radically and continuously critical of the systems that tend to overpower them.

Contemporary art museums are museums. Yes. No. Contemporary art museums are not museums but art organizations. They came into existence when the fine art museums proved to be utterly incapable of dealing with contemporary art as it was then happening. The modern art museums that were their prefiguration still negotiated their institutional paradigm with that of the fine art museum. The contemporary art museums were a wild bunch at their onset. It is quite natural that CIMAM remained an affiliate organization to ICOM, rather than becoming a chapter of it. Their defining moments were transgressive, to start with to the established notion of art. They went with the performative, the ephemeral, the impossible to recuperate. They were reaching out radically to society and to wider audiences, at times educational. And they were always inclusive of a great number of diverse activities.

Up until today, this is the destiny of contemporary art museums. They work with living artists, by whom they are continuously surprised, challenged, and reoriented. They crave for input from society because their art is part of that society. And being part of an art scene rather than a museum scene, they are wired differently from traditional museums, they are often quick to respond to opportunities and challenges within shifting situations.

And, yes, they are also museums that aspire toward a longevity of engagements, but within an epoch in which visual art can take literally any form, so in any case they have to tweak their system to the point where it ceases to be systemic. To the point where it is about art.

Contemporary art institutions are bipolar institutions, they combine the eternal challenge coming from art with a museum's sense of sustainability.



When Faith Moves Mountains, reopening exhibition of Pinchuk Art Center, Kyiv, 7.17 – 10.9.2022 (photo BDB), the exhibition titled after the work of Francis Alÿs that was part of the project.

Combining those two requires a committed staff that can only excel in balancing the museum dimension with art if profoundly backed by its boards and founders. Let us therefore share more with those than the governance clauses, let us share also art, let them underwrite this dual approach. If our governing bodies merely want to control and normalize our operations, we can never live up to the challenges and the joy of the unforeseeable that is art. We have to go one step further than merely aiming for a well-structured governance: we have to let our governance embrace the unpredictability and precariousness that comes with new art and new positions, and also to enroll it in the question of how to dance with the unruly. We have to deregulate our institutions to a substantial extent by insisting on this. Let us not be the wolf because this is not Wall Street and art is not hierarchical.

Is this preaching revolution? Not at all, and neither is it an attempt to return to the freedom of the 1960s. It is about a mindset that ought to be shared by all the parties that make up a museum: its staff,

but also its founders and its board. Let us make a second set of clauses, about the intrinsic precariousness of art, about the rule of the unruly in contemporary art museums, unruly in terms of topics, about modes and about moods. Let us share not only governance ethics, but also our artistic challenge and aspirations within society.

We'll never succeed entirely, but we may succeed a bit. This is not about contracts but about culture. It's about governance as an ongoing social activity, about the refusal to formulate the core task of our museums in the form of a five-line mission. I think we may learn here from all of our colleagues who so courageously and precisely negotiate space in deeply limited situations, colleagues like Suhanya who steers M in Hong Kong in a quasi-impossible situation. We may learn here from small and humble gestures rather than from grand statements.

Only then can we turn the tables, if we perform our mission on a daily basis and also in daily practices of communication within our governance. We can only

turn the tables if we succeed in letting our governing bodies look from our perspective, look at art. It's hard to do this alone, but it's a focus we may formulate together, to insist on precarious dynamics and to let our whole governance structure desire that.

Perspective 1

Negotiating Conflicts and Connecting Lines

Iris Dressler

Codirector, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart,
Stuttgart, Germany

Biography

Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ have been Codirectors of the Württembergischer Kunstverein (WKV), Stuttgart, since 2005, with a particular focus on the exploration of collaborative, transcultural, and transdisciplinary practices of curating. In 2019, they were the artistic directors of the Bergen Assembly, and in 1996 they founded the Hartware Medienkunstverein, which they directed until 2004.

Under their direction, the Kunstverein has presented solo exhibitions of artists such as Carrie Mae Weems (2022), Lorenza Böttner (2019, curated by Paul B. Preciado), Imogen Stidworthy (2018), Alexander Kluge (2017 and 2020), Ines Doujak (2016), Teresa Burga (2011, curated by Miguel Lopez and Emilio Tarazona), Michaël Borremans (2011), Daniel G. Andújar (2008), Anna Oppermann (2007, curated by Ute Vorkoeper), and Stan Douglas (2007). Recent group exhibitions include the four-part project *Actually, the Dead Are Not Dead* (2019–22 in Bergen and Stuttgart with various constellations of co-curators) and *50 Years after 50 Years of the Bauhaus* (2018). She teaches regularly at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart, and elsewhere, and has published largely on contemporary art and its political and theoretical contexts.



Negotiating Conflicts and Connecting Lines

Some thoughts on the relationships between German (speaking) media, German politicians, and documenta fifteen

Before I will talk about some backgrounds of the conflicts around documenta fifteen and beyond, let me introduce my institutional work. Since 2005, Hans D. Christ and I direct the Württembergischer Kunstverein¹ in Stuttgart: a publicly funded private art association founded back in 1827 by the local civic society. Today, its general task is the presentation and mediation of contemporary art, and we basically understand it as a place of open and controversial engagement with the diverse methods and practices of contemporary art and with its far-reaching sociopolitical fields of reference.

The Kunstverein has no collection, it is structurally based on around 2,500 members and rather independent from the local and regional authorities. Located in the very center of the city, it has an exhibition space of about 1,300 square meters and a multifunctional space of about 250 square meters. The latter serves as our foyer and space for the public program; and we established it in the last ten years — on a very broad level — also as a permeable shared space for quite diverse local groups and individuals, reaching from artists to activist groups of various backgrounds, to a chorus that uses the space for its semi-public rehearsals, and so forth. All of them can use the space for both, public and non-public activities — or just to rest — without paying any rent or being forced to consume. We neither curate this shared space, nor do we intervene in any of the more than 100 activities taking place in this context every year.

One of our main curatorial agendas at the Kunstverein since 2005 has been to explore open forms of collaborative and decentral practices of curating — basically to activate a certain multivocality that we don't understand as a mere accumulation of voices, but as a matrix for the unexpected, for disagreement and contradictions, for learning and unlearning, for breaking with certain existing structures and for building up new alliances and narratives. These ways of working are time consuming, from

a certain perspective maybe even inefficient, and surely risky. But in our view, they are a crucial precondition to deconstruct the Western, Eurocentric, white, ableist, and binary understanding and evaluation of art.

Recently we are programming — in collaboration with many different institutional partners that I can't name here — a series of solo exhibitions dedicated to feminist positions in the arts with a strong intersectional approach: including for example post- and decolonial positions or queer, transgender, and other non-normative dissident body politics. Among these projects, that always focus on the emancipatory and poetic power of the arts, are the exhibitions of the food-and-mouth painter Lorenza Böttner (curated by Paul B. Preciado),² of Carrie Mae Weems,³ and currently Trinh T. Minha,⁴ and in 2023 of Delphine Seyrig (curated by Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez and Giovanna Zapperi)⁵ and of Adina Pintilie,⁶ who's installation was presented in 2022 at the Romanian Pavilion in Venice, curated by Cosmin Costina and Viktor Neumann.

In the context of all these projects, we ask ourselves what kind of responsibilities and consequences these artists and their works demand from us: as a structurally still quite-white and ableist institution. We cannot just show the works of for example Carrie Mae Weems that — among many other things — revolve around the histories of violence against and the histories of resistance by African-Americans — and then go back to normal. We need to ask ourselves, what structures of hierarchy, exclusion, and discrimination we are reproducing and how we can undo them — and we especially need to learn to listen to and deal with the criticism, mistrust and rejection of our institutions articulated by those marginalized groups that we seek to include. I think we need to think and develop our institutions not only as open, shared, and safe spaces, but also as trustful environments to deal with conflicts.

If we want to change the structures and narratives of our institutions — and there are many reasons for doing so — we must, in my opinion, also begin to question the success stories of our institutions by critically exploring their missions, fractures, contradictions, and what they conceal. In this context we published some days ago the book of our long-term project *50 Years after 50 Years of the Bauhaus*,⁷

1 See: <https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de> ↗

2 See: https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/uploads/media/Lorenza_Boettner_Booklet_final_kl_O1.pdf ↗

3 See: https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/uploads/media/booklet_verla_ngert_O1.pdf ↗

4 See: https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/uploads/media/TrinhTMinha_TheOceanInADrop_Booklet.pdf ↗

5 See: <https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/program/2023/exhibitions/defiant-muses> ↗

6 See: <https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/program/2023/exhibitions/adina-pintilie/#c13011> ↗

7 See: <https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/publications/2022> ↗

which undertook a critical rereading of the Kunstverein's most influential exhibition, *50 Years of the Bauhaus*, that took place in 1968 and that had a major and lasting impact on the mythologization of this school and its political appropriation — which at that time was very close to the political agenda imposed on documenta. After the second world war and the German Nazi-Regime, both documenta and Bauhaus were politically established, respectively reinvented, to prove that Germany, despite all, can re/connect to both; an own modern and democratic past and future. The Bauhaus-style of the graphical corporate identities of the first editions of documenta are very telling in this regard. This political history and historical agenda of documenta — to heal and cover the wounds left by the barbaric excesses of the German past — might have played a role in this year's bizarre relationships of German-speaking media and German politicians regarding documenta fifteen. In the following, I would like to outline these relationships — as far as this is possible in the given short time frame.

Assuming that the “documenta fifteen conflict” is still present for you, I will not repeat its entire genesis that started in January 2022 with a defamatory campaign launched by the highly questionable so called “Kassel Alliance against anti-Semitism.” In an article⁸ based on many inaccurate, distorted, and false information this “alliance”⁹ accuses ruangrupa and many others involved in documenta fifteen (reaching from the artists to members of the artistic team and of the finding commission) of representing, fighting for and/or sympathizing with deep anti-Semitic positions: because they were claimed to be supporters of BDS — the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement — or of the German GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative,¹⁰ because they were “post-modern” leftists, stand-ins for postcolonial thinking, because they solidarized with Palestinians, and/or were part of the “postmodern” art world. “As is well

known,” the article reads, “an important mainstay of the postmodern art establishment is ‘criticism of Israel,’ anti-Zionism, at times open anti-Semitism, and attachment to the Palestinian cause [...] The outward appearance, habitus, jargon, and presentation of documenta fifteen on the Internet and in its relevant publications alone make clear the attachment of the political artisans [here meaning ruangrupa and others involved in document fifteen] to the postmodern ideology of the identitarian-turned left and, in particular, to post-colonialism ...”¹¹ Furthermore, it is claimed, that ruangrupa's lumbung-principle would correspond to a “postcolonial romantic transfiguration of blood and soil”, and that the tradition of lumbung itself “belongs to the village culture of Java like the lynching of the Chinese grocer.”

Despite the openly tendentious language of this article much of the German-speaking media immediately started to adopt and repeat its claims without any verification of the facts. German politicians of all parties were alarmed, as well as organs such as the Central Council of Jews in Germany. On the part of Jewish associations, journals, and intellectuals quite diverse positions regarding documenta fifteen had been articulated throughout the entire course of its events. Though, the majority of the discourses spread by the German-speaking media and German politicians neglected this variety from the very beginning of the conflict.

With the installation of Taring Padi's huge outdoor painting People's Justice at the end of the preview days of documenta fifteen, the situation changed radically: from — in my view — debatable as well as untenable accusations of anti-Semitism¹² to the appearance of a very clear and painful anti-Semitic imagery. The banner was rightly dismantled, whereas the whole communication from the part of the documenta fifteen management about this incident was quite inadequate, if not altogether missing. From this very moment a

8 Bündnis gegen Antisemitismus, Kassel, “Documenta fifteen: Antizionismus und Antisemitismus im lumbung,” <https://bit.ly/3jEqNVz> ↗. See among other things the comments in: Alex Greenberger, “Documenta Responds to Allegations of ‘Anti-Semitic’ Connections to BDS Movement”, in: *ARTnews*, 1.14.2022, <https://bit.ly/3l9Ts56> ↗; Matthias Lohr, “Nach Kritik an documenta: So umstritten ist das Bündnis gegen Antisemitismus”, *Hessische Niedersächsische Allgemeine*, 1.23.2022, <https://www.hna.de/kultur/documenta/umstrittene-kritiker-91253810.html> ↗; Hanno Hauenstein, “Warum der Antisemitismus-Eklat der Documenta die Krise der Kunstkritik freilegt”, *Berliner Zeitung*, 5.19.2022, <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur-vergnuegen/warum-der-antisemitismus-eklat-der-documenta-die-krise-der-kunstkritik-freilegt-li.226105> ↗

9 The alliance consists basically in one person, Jonas Dörge. It/he belongs to a certain part of the so called “anti-German” spectrum that is characterized among other things by an over-identification with Israel, by largely anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian positions denouncing any criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic and playing on the edges between extreme left and extreme right discourses.

10 See: <https://www.gg53weltoffenheit.org/en> ↗

11 Original: „Ein wichtiges Standbein des postmodernen Kunstbetriebes ist bekanntlich die „Israelkritik“, der Antizionismus, bisweilen auch der offene Antisemitismus und die Verbundenheit mit der palästinensischen Sache ... Alleine schon das äußerliche Erscheinungsbild, der Habitus, der Jargon und die Präsentation der documenta fifteen im Internet und in ihren einschlägigen Veröffentlichungen machen die Verbundenheit der Politikundhandwerker mit der postmodernen Ideologie der identitär gewendeten Linken und insbesondere dem dieser Ideologie zuzuordnenden Post-Kolonialismus deutlich,“ see: note 8

12 Again and again, it is claimed for example that ruangrupa had actively inhibited the participation of Jewish and/or Jewish-Israeli contributors. The uncontrollable principle of invitations of documenta fifteen alone contradicts this thesis.

differentiated discussion was not possible anymore. Those voices that had condemned documenta fifteen long before its opening triumphed and the project as a whole—including all of the more than 1,500 contributors—was again and again denounced as anti-Semitic, often in an uninhibited language that did not shy away from distortion, disinformation, defamation and/or discrimination. That documenta fifteen has been heavily attacked for the installation of People's Justice is more than justified. But within this media storm, which even declared the entire project “anti-semita fifteen¹³,” also a wave of anti-postcolonial, anti-global-south, anti-leftist, anti-Muslim, and anti-Palestinian resentments came to light undisguised, as well as a certain insistence on the alleged superiority of the Western concept of art and canon of values: not only from reactionary newspapers and platforms such as *Die Welt*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ), or *Ruhrbarone*, but also from moderate organs, such as the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), the liberal *Die Zeit*, the center-left *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) and *Der Spiegel*, or the left-wing *Tageszeitung* (Taz).¹⁴ In these media, documenta fifteen was equated, among other things, with the Human Zoos (*Der Spiegel*), a völkisch-Arabic position (Taz) was attributed to it, and its collective model was said to be based on despotic clan structures as they would be typical for the so called global south (NZZ).

Next to People's Justice some other works presented at documenta fifteen were swept up in this storm. Although these were only a few, and are works, which are discussed very differently in terms of anti-Semitism¹⁵, they were incorporated into the narrative that documenta fifteen had an overall anti-Zionist, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment. Within the media coverage, there were also quite a number of divergent perspectives and differentiated contributions, but these remained the exceptions in the overall context. The fact, that already in May the exhibition venue that hosted among other things The Question

of Funding was attacked and vandalized with far-right codes such as “187 Prelata” was widely neglected in this narrative.

When in July 2022 the “documenta fifteen case” was discussed at the Committee on Culture and Media of the German Bundestag, Claudia Roth, the German minister for culture and member of the Green party, said: “Anti-Semitism is not a German invention, but a global reality. [Its narratives]... also exist... in discourses that we have until now perhaps seen too much through the lens of the critique of capitalism or anti-colonialism. The Holocaust, the Holocaust is a German invention—and from here results a responsibility for our country and for all of us. Thus, if we take it seriously, we have to fight the global reality of anti-Semitism, especially as Germans, also in a global context.”¹⁶ This statement sums up very clearly some of the basic motives and backgrounds of the German discourse against documenta fifteen, as it was fueled by the majority of media and politicians: especially to suspect and prove anti-Semitism within leftist and postcolonial critical thinking and to maintain a certain self-imposed German mission to define and combat anti-Semitism worldwide.

In the same meeting, Ade Darmawan from ruangrupa tried in vain to explain to German politicians the specificities of collective and decentralized ways of acting and working—ways, that the Indonesian collective offered to documenta—and what this meant and means to decision making processes, to the role of trust—instead of control—and to responsibility.¹⁷ The answer of the German Bundestag was an irreconcilable cry for punishment and discipline.

By July, Taring Padi's collective painting People's Justice had long since been dismantled, while they and ruangrupa had already repeatedly apologized—but it was never enough. As the writer Eva Menasse wrote: “The only demand that was still missing was to burn down all of Kassel so that adequate penance could be done.”¹⁸

13 Sascha Lobo, “Willkommen auf der Antisemita 15”, *Der Spiegel*, 6.22.2022, <https://bit.ly/3DZ8zoJ> ↗

14 “This documenta wanted to be a postcolonialist project of learning and to pursue a politics of ideas with pastoral games. In addition, it was a practiced boycott of Jewish artists from Israel ... [A]n appendix of program coordinators, advisors, and publicists had hijacked the program of the show from the beginning. They were also concerned with declaring a Palestinian view of the Israeli conflict situations to be obligatory in the overall concept ... Kassel was ... just the meadow on which the postcolonial interpretations were to bloom and spread.” See: Thomas E. Schmidt, “Die Gesellschaft hat geantwortet”, *Die Zeit*, 7.21.2022. See exemplary also: Andreas Fanizadeh, “Größenwahn und Niedertracht”, *Taz*, 6.25.2022, <https://bit.ly/3YsSfSf> ↗; idem, “Das kollektive Versagen”, *Taz*, 9.25.2022, <https://bit.ly/3XmvKA3> ↗; Bazon Brock, “Der Fluch der guten Tat” and “Frau Schormann, bleiben Sie stark!”, *SZ*, 7.1.2022; Jakob Hayner, “Der Dialog ist gescheitert—und das ist gut so”, *Die Welt*, 9.23.2022, <https://bit.ly/3RNxqBA> ↗; Nils Minkmar, “Ein schrecklicher Abend”, *SZ*, 7.1.2022; Dietmar Pieper, “Die Kasseler Völkerschau”, *Der Spiegel*, <https://bit.ly/40MwF4A> ↗; Alan Posener, “Die seltsame Sippen-Romantik der Documenta”, *Die Welt*, 7.21.2022, <https://bit.ly/3Z0vW9B> ↗; Michael Wolffsohn, “Politik statt Kunst—wie judenfeindlich soll der deutsche Kulturbetrieb noch werden?”, *NZZ*, 6.16.2022.

15 These are Mohammed al Hawajris' cycle *Guernica Gaza*, some motifs from the Archives des luttes des femmes en Algérie and the so-called *Tokyo Reels*.

16 See the video record of the debate of the Committee on Culture and Media, German Bundestag, July 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3jbHxmP> ↗

17 Read the English translation of his speech at: <https://bit.ly/3Xf19xM> ↗

18 Eva Menasse, “Meint ihr das wirklich ernst?”, in: *Der Spiegel*, 27/2022, see: <https://bit.ly/3Dj4OFm> ↗

Darmawan also explained at the German Bundestag meeting, that the disturbing anti-Semitic imaginary of People's Justice was brought to Indonesia by Dutch officers in order to discriminate the Chinese minority. To be very clear: the work People's Justice that was realized in 2002 in Indonesia as a critique of the Suharto-regime and its Western accomplices, contains unacceptable anti-Semitic imagery that is deeply rooted not only in the long tradition of Europe's anti-Semitic history but especially in the rhetoric of Nazi-Germany to legitimize the Holocaust. Apart from all the serious and painful mistakes around its installation in Kassel, it is a loss, in that these mistakes could not pave the way for a broader investigation of the migration of this European and German anti-Semitic image-repertoire. Wasn't the migration of form a main agenda of Ruth Noak and Roger M. Bürgel's documenta twelve?

Another speaker in the debate at the Bundestag was Daniel Botmann, a representative of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. In his view, the installation of Taring Padi's People's Justice was rather an accident that no one ever had imagined to be possible in Germany. His major concern was not this work, but the structural dimension of anti-Semitism in Germany, for which he especially considers the founders of the GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative responsible. This initiative was founded in the fall of 2020 by twenty directors of major German cultural institutions to start a critical debate around the so called BDS-resolution of the German Bundestag that was installed in 2019 to instruct publicly funded institutions in Germany to not invite, support or collaborate with any person that could be in any thinkable way related to BDS. A call for boycott against a call for boycott, as it were.

This BDS-resolution is not a law, it only has the status of an advice. A paper of the German Bundestag that was published after the proclamation of this resolution made it very clear that it could never be turned into a law, as it violates the freedom of speech and therefore the German constitution.¹⁹ Nevertheless this resolution had from the very beginning deep

impacts on German cultural politics. Intellectuals like Achille Mbembe²⁰, Walid Raad²¹ and others were increasingly defamed of representing Anti-Semitic positions. Institutions who invited them were heavily put under pressure by media and politicians.

The foundation of the GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative and the dissemination of its first statement in 2020²² — that was also signed by us — caused a storm of accusations and allegations by German media and politicians that is comparable to the one that would later reach documenta fifteen. The accusations are related among other things to the combat between two definitions of anti-Semitism: the non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the Jerusalem Declaration. The GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative has distanced itself very clearly from BDS — but it sees in the BDS resolution of the German Bundestag the danger of a misuse of anti-Semitism against other critical and intersectional positions; the danger of self-censorship of institutions and individuals that fear the pressure of media and politicians; and the concrete limitation of the freedom of research and speech. Meanwhile individuals in Germany are not only accused of being anti-Semitic when they are supposedly too close to BDS, but also when they are connected to the GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative, or responsible for conferences, such as Hijacking Memory that took place shortly before the opening of documenta fifteen at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin.²³

The GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative, in fact, is of great importance, especially since — like in the context of documenta fifteen — anti-Semitism accusations in the German speaking media and by German politics seem to be more and more abused and instrumentalized in order to silence feminist and postcolonial voices — as in the cases of Caryl Churchill, whose award was cancelled in 2022 by the Stuttgart State theater after an article by the highly questionable news platform Ruhrbarone,²⁴ Annie Ernaux, whose

19 BDS-Beschluss des Deutschen Bundestages (Drucksache 19/10191), see: <https://bit.ly/3HiwbWi> ↗

20 See, for example: Sabine Peschel, "Why Achille Mbembe was accused of anti-Semitism", in: *Deutsche Welle*, <https://bit.ly/3kJMELI> ↗; Dr. Rachel O'Sullivan, "We Have Come Much Further: The Dispute over Achille Mbembe Ignores a Longstanding Debate About the Comparability of the Holocaust," <https://bit.ly/3wCNen2>

21 See: Alex Greenberger, "German City Withdraws Art Prize for Walid Raad Over Artist's Alleged Support of BDS Movement", in: *Artnews*, October 1, 2019; <https://bit.ly/3wzBono> ↗; "Trotz Rückzug der Stadt Aachen: Walid Raad bekommt Kunstpreis", in: *Monopol*, October 4, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3WHYIQ6> ↗

22 <https://www.gg53weltoffenheit.org/en/statement> ↗

23 see: <https://bit.ly/3x7JVOY> ↗

24 The connection between media and politics is striking in this case: A singular article at this problematic platform was seemingly enough to put into action two politicians of the Green party, Volker Beck (President of the German-Israeli Parliamentary Friendship Group of the German Bundestag) and Winfried Kretschmann (Minister President of Baden-Württemberg), to force the Jury to deny the award. See for example: Tim Schleider, "Volker Beck übt scharfe Kritik an Staatstheater-Dramatikerpreis," in: *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 11.1.2022, <https://bit.ly/3R7wjMF> ↗; Christine Dössel, "Rückzieher einer Jury," in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, November 2, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3DihDof> ↗

nobel prize is questioned in Germany,²⁵ or Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, whose directorship of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, an institution of the German state, has been discredited even before he started it.²⁶ Institutions in Germany scan the biographies and social media accounts of artists, speakers, and even employees before engaging them — to check if any public position regarding the BDS or the GG 5.3 Weltoffenheit Initiative is to be found. But also in the UK, Alistair Hudson had to step down as director of the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester because he showed Forensic Architecture.²⁷ Is it too far-fetched to read all this as part of the ongoing agony of the “old white man” combatting against the specters of post-capitalism and post-colonialism, of feminism and transfeminism, of dissident bodies, etc. — understanding with “old white man” not a biological entity, but to a position of speech and power?

To be again very clear: We have urgently to deal with and fight against anti-Semitism, which is in fact present in Germany and other countries and regions across all political camps, and against its effects, reaching from subtle forms of discrimination to murder — as we have to deal with and fight against all other forms of discrimination and its intersectional implications. We have to listen to and learn from critique and cannot simply reject it. At the same time, we must be attentive to and analyze the various ways in which anti-anti-Semitism is instrumentalized against other emancipatory positions and as part of a broader reactionary backlash that goes far beyond Germany.

25 “In France, hatred of Jews is shifting from the far-right spectrum to the left. Annie Ernaux is symptomatic of this ...”, Martina Meister, “Das Antisemitismus-Problem der französischen Linken”, in: *Die Welt*, 12.10.2022, <https://bit.ly/3RLjNCT> ↗; “Antisemitismusvorwürfe gegen Annie Ernaux,” in: *Der Spiegel*, 8.10.2022, <https://bit.ly/3HJNhff> ↗

26 See for example: Boris Pofalla, „Das minimale Eingeständnis des Bonaventure Ndikung“, in *Die Welt*, 11.10.2022, <https://bit.ly/3XkxREq> ↗; Oskar Luis Bender, „Warum finanziert Roth diesen Israel-Hasser?“ in: *Berliner Zeitung*, 11.3.2022, <https://bit.ly/3YcljQO> ↗; „HKW-Intendant wehrt sich gegen BDS-Vorwurf“, in: *Die Zeit*, October 25, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3YAa6Jz> ↗

27 He is the designated follower of Peter Weibel at ZKM in Karlsruhe.

Perspective 2

Enhancing Governance in the Cultural Sector: The ÌVAM Perspective

Nuria Enguita

Director, Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno,
Valencia, Spain

Biography

Graduate in History and Theory of Art from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She is currently director of ÌVAM, Valencia. Between 2015 and 2020 she was director of Bombas Gens Centre d'Art, Valencia, and between 1998 and 2008 artistic director of Fundació Antoni Tàpies. Between 2000 and 2014 member of the management team of the artepensamiento program of the International University of Andalusia- UNIA and co-editor of *Afterall* between 2007 and 2014.

Between 1991 and 1998 she was curator at ÌVAM- Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia. She has been co-curator of the 31st São Paulo Biennial, 2014; of Manifesta 4 in Frankfurt in 2002 and of the International Meeting of Medellín in 2011. She has lectured on art theory and art management in numerous centers and universities and has published numerous texts in catalogs and contemporary art magazines such as *Parkett*, *Afterall*, and *Concreta*.





IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Enhancing Governance in the Cultural Sector: The IVAM Perspective

IVAM IN CONTEXT 1989–2020

Founded in 1986 and opened in 1989, it started assembling a collection that would constitute the core of the new museum.

According to the new law about IVAM that was passed in 2018, “the task of the museum is to develop the cultural policy of Generalitat Valenciana in what relates to the knowledge, stewardship, fostering, and dissemination of modern and contemporary art and all the related activities such as: assembling and guarding a set of collections that represent the development of modern and contemporary art; organizing and presenting exhibitions of modern and contemporary art, as well as undertaking other cultural activities; establishing collaborations with similar institutions; and promoting the knowledge and dissemination of the works and the identity of the historical patrimony associated to the museum.”

IVAM was a pioneering institution in the reconstruction of the cultural scene in Valencia after the dictatorship, and a milestone in what was at that

moment the upcoming map of the autonomous regions. The combination of donation and acquisition of key works by Julio González secured for the museum a relevance from the outset. The building, inaugurated in 1989, perfectly suited its purpose as a white-cube-oriented art museum. It was also designed to contribute to the regeneration of the city center, from its location right at the historical center, accompanied by a secondary location dedicated to contemporary art, the Convent del Carme.

After four decades of dictatorship, in the 1980s a decentralization process led to a new state model; the state of the autonomous regions. It is at that moment, when, at the service of democratic regeneration and the reconstruction of the state, numerous museums are inaugurated, together with other cultural infrastructures: the National Exhibition Centre in Madrid (1988), the embryo of the future MNCARS, the IVAM in Valencia (1989), and the CAAM in Las Palmas de Gran Canarias (1989). The 1990s saw the inauguration of CGAC in Santiago de Compostela (1993), MACBA in Barcelona (1995), CAAC in Seville (1998), MEIAC in Badajoz (1995), and the Guggenheim in Bilbao (1997). Finally, in the 2000s, the Patio Herreriano Museum was inaugurated in

Valladolid (2002), ARTIUM in Vitoria (2002), MUSAC in León (2004), Es Baluard (2004), and Laboral, Center for Art and Industrial Creation in Gijón (2007).

Each institution is part of a specific space-time reality and in a specific socio-economic environment, in some cases supporting heritage recovery processes (La Cartuja de Sevilla, the bastion of Sant Pere and old city walls of Palma, Es Baluard, the old prison of Badajoz, and the Monastery of San Benito in Valladolid), of urban renewal and/or expansion (ARTIUM, Vitoria; IVAM, in Valencia, MACBA in Barcelona, the Guggenheim in Bilbao, and MUSAC in León), or transformations in the local productive sectors (the case of Asturias as a result of the closure of the mines and the location in the area of high-tech enterprises).

Since the end of the 1980s, the contemporary art museum has spread like an oil stain throughout the whole State. This evolution has had unequal objectives and developments, which we are not going to assess here and would be the subject of another conference. Almost of all them are supported by regional and/or national governments.

1989–2003

Like many other museums in the Western context, IVAM is a modern art museum anchored in the contemporary, and its program must operate in between the modern and contemporary vectors. During its first decade, IVAM offered an exhibition program of the highest quality, and assembled a collection that was almost unimaginable for a museum in the “periphery,” including key works from the twentieth-century artistic avant-gardes. It also began a collection of contemporary art lined up with the international tendencies of the 1990s. In a short time, it became a reference for Spain and beyond, thanks to its rigorous project; exhibitions organized with some of the most reputed specialists in the field, along with shared exhibition projects, developed with renowned directors, curators, and museums in Spain, Europe and the Americas mainly. With all these actions, IVAM succeeded in creating a public for art in the city and country, and in establishing ongoing collaborations with other institutions.



Permanent Collection: *Júlio González and the Avant-gardes*

2003–14

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a period of decadence began for the museum, lasting for the first decade and part of the second.

In the early 2000s, at a quite important time for development and consolidation of the museum institution, IVAM enters a spiral of partisan political swings that lasts until 2014, generating a gradual downgrading of its proposal.

Since 2004, the management of IVAM buried the legacy of a prestigious institution due to its opaque practices in terms of internal structure and activity; in the development of exhibition proposals far removed from any historical rigor and quality requirement, and literally making the activity developed between 1989 and 1998 disappear from its website.

During this period, an expansion of IVAM was proposed, to be designed by the architect Kazuyo Sejima and budgeted at 60 million euros. This was at the time of maximum irresponsibility and corruption on the part of the Valencian political class dedicated to a government spending orgy realized through a Big Urban Projects office, which took culture as the basis of their show, later replacing it by sport, namely Formula 1 and the America's Cup. As a result of the IVAM expansion project, many homes were expropriated and 43 families were evicted, leaving a plot that appears as a fracture in the historic center for a project that may never be realized. This fact, added to the reality of a museum that had turned its back on the community and citizens, did the rest.

Problems can be summarized as follow:

- Political intervention in the artistic criteria of the museum program and lack of governance.
- Corruption practices and misgovernment linked to IVAM by public opinion.
- Social dispute with the neighborhood due to the failed expansion project.
- From being the Generalitat's *best face* in the 90s, IVAM started to be perceived as a clientelist institution in conflict with its neighbors and its city.

Since 2014, a new direction and a favorable political climate inaugurated a time of transition in which the museum recovered some of its presence in the city. And since 2019, a new regulatory framework was implemented with several improvements: reinforcing

the director's independence, improving governance and risk control systems, and introducing the figure of a managing director.

The main goal since 2020 is to make IVAM a place of reference for modern and contemporary art, lived and livable, engaged with society, articulated around a program based on the collection and exhibitions associated to it, and on artistic research as well as educational, social, and community mediation. A program developed through strategies and alliances for territorial and international placement, so that one may strengthen the other, understanding the field of art as an active crossing of interconnected heterogeneous relations.

Each museum represents a particular position that needs to negotiate its role in response to its definition, nature, mission, objectives, and contexts. IVAM must be part and contribute to the construction of a sustainable ecosystem on every level. Therefore, it must strengthen its connections with its environment and collaborate with institutions of a similar and different nature, as well as with the city as a whole.

The idea of the museum as a public sphere and a site for critical education has led to its most radical transformation in the last fifty years. The paradigm of activation that began at the end of the 1960s, and that brought it to its first serious crisis, has intensified exponentially during the twenty-first century, its dynamics transformed due to the tensions and changes of our time. Such rupture has contributed to the undoing of hierarchical, patriarchal and exclusionary structures, through discourses and actions that bring forth new imaginaries, from post-identitarian feminist investigations to the respect for minorities and subaltern majorities, and the valorization of popular culture. Against fixed and universal identities, identification processes based on subjective experiences have emerged. Against analytical reason, knowledge through the body, sensuality, and memory gets a central position.

Working to give form to collective and critical experiences that may provide us with frames and ways to act in a heterogeneous society will make the museum a more ethical, freer, and more solidary institution. Study, research, and physical and virtual mediation are a priority, in a double movement, from publics present in the museum to online audiences.

Artistic, educational, social and community mediation are fundamental as we are working with objects, spaces, experiences, and processes, and all of them exist within the context of the museum: with a structure, a history, an inside and an outside. All this is the subject and the object of mediation, a mode of

“being together.” We understand IVAM as an active museum, situated and networked, and conceives mediation as an opportunity for learning about oneself and construct collectively, with experiences and personal potentials coming together. One of our first tasks would be to encourage the public to engage, to be part of the museum, by developing practices based on careful listening and experimentation, in presence or online. It is urgent for the museum to develop educational and territorial strategies to approach collectives and publics that are not usually interested in the museum, to turn it into a hospitable place, with possibilities for all.

And this has to done from a methodology that adopts an ethics of care: relational, inclusive, and collaborative, and with awareness of all of those who have not taken part in the definition of the modern museum because of their class, ethnic origin, gender, or sexual orientation. To work “with care” means to work from a varied range of ways of doing and knowledges, with a goal to create and sustain life, and to protect its diversity. This implies “thinking with,” understanding the world is inhabited by a plurality of singular and interdependent beings who establish dynamic relationships. “To think with” is to accept a relational mode of thinking, adding layers of meaning rather than deconstructing older categories.

In 2020, we started to work from some general principles and assumptions:

1. Greater transparency and stakeholder involvement enhances trust, acceptance, and local ownership, which could be essential to restore IVAM’s success and ensure a promising future.
2. Capturing the perspectives and perceptions of those who may be impacted or interested in IVAM should not be a threat, but an opportunity to improve our institutional response.
3. The importance of the social dimension increases quickly for any intervention, in any institution, as a means of mitigating risks and creating added value.
4. Sense of community: humanity is a matter of co-operation, solidarity, and confidence. We need it in our daily, cross-functional operations.
5. Failure is common in public institutions, so a more professional approach to cultural public policies is necessary.

6. Cultural institutions are expected to be more closely linked to major contemporary programs such as eco-feminism and sustainability.

Following that, we mapped out our stakeholders and interest groups:

- To minimize fundamental misunderstandings about the local context and promote the sustainability of our actions.
- To downplay the reputational risk by efficient stakeholder analysis.
- To give a voice to those who are traditionally not organized or have been muted in the public arena.

Through a process of active listening, we did more than 40 interviews with educational (regulated and non-regulated), cultural, social, and economic agents in the community. More than 150 questionnaires were made. We met for the first time with neighbors and neighborhood associations, and initiated working groups with young and older people, women’s associations, domestic workers, migrant, refugee, and gypsy communities. Likewise, interviews were conducted with museum workers, suppliers, and collaborators. We explain our project to the artistic community and to the local community, as well as to our internal and external governing bodies, and we have begun a process of improvements at all levels; from the building, the team, the relations with the community, and issues related to equity and sustainability.

Finally, a framework was needed: the IVAM Sustainability Plan (2012–23)

The Plan aims to improve and heal ties with key actors, especially from our neighborhood; honestly identifies our strengths and weaknesses, in each area of intervention; and incorporates new ways of making and influencing our decision-making processes.

Through the Sustainability Plan, we confirmed our intention to become an organization that generates sustainable value, rooted in the neighborhood and with international projection.

The Plan contemplates 6 general objectives, 20 specific objectives and 48 concrete actions.

1. Improve governance systems.
2. Improve the working environment.

3. Strengthen the approach to local community.
4. Improve service excellence.
5. Improve environmental sustainability.
6. To have more socially oriented public tendering systems.

Concrete actions achieved

1. Improved governance systems
 - New regulatory framework through a new IVAM law that reinforces control mechanisms and artistic independence.
 - New independent experts to create a committee to ensure quality in IVAM's program development and artwork acquisitions.
 - A plural composition of IVAM's governing council: greater weight of representatives of civil society and universities.
 - Dialog with stakeholders and interest groups in decision-making processes.
 - Compliance procedures and corruption mitigation risks strategy developed.
2. Improved working environment
 - Equality plan.
 - Workplace harassment prevention plan.
 - Sexual harassment prevention plan.
 - Psychosocial risk mitigation plan.
 - Enhanced negotiation strategy with the unions.
 - Plan to reduce job insecurity (50% before the end of 2023).
3. Strengthened local community approach
 - Public programs focused on strengthening links with *Carme Barrio*.
 - Dialogue processes with neighborhood incorporated to strategic decision-making processes: i.e., investment plan and architecture projects in IVAM's main building.
 - Territorial agenda developed throughout the Valencian Community, especially in rural areas with young and emerging artists.
 - Promotion of local suppliers in procurement policy.
 - Availability of museum spaces for citizens' use.



Public Programmes / In the framework of *Anni and Josef Albers* (2022)



Inventario. Políglotia. IVAM Ciutat (2022)

4. Improved excellence in service

- Implementation of user feedback and satisfaction mechanisms.
- Deployment of new services and new spaces to improve the visitor experience: shop, cafeteria, and future terraces open to the public.
- Improvement of the physical and cognitive accessibility of the museum, through in-room mediators, easy-to-read texts, and web resources.

5. Improved environmental sustainability

- Audit and energy saving plan.
- Climate facilities renovation.
- Zero plastic and no waste generation policy.

6. More social-oriented public procurement systems

- Adjustment of the procurement criteria for promoting local suppliers and companies committed to SDO and social responsibility principles.

Programs developed by IVAM in order to strengthen the local community approach:

ARTICULATIONS. As an international program, although anchored to a territory, it aims to generate a learning context from which to face the urgencies and uncertainties of a wounded global present, which requires new working methods and ways of being in the world. The program gives importance to collaborative work. Post-identity feminisms, popular and decolonial practices, globalization and virtuality processes, speculative and collective narratives, and care for the planet are the frameworks that define the structure of the program. In collaboration with Valencian public universities.

IVAM Programa d'Art i Context is a biannual project for young artists that is made up of workshops, talks, conversations, and new formats of research and production of artistic practice. Curated by a team invited by the institution, the Program is conceived as a process of exchange between institutional resources (collection, exhibitions, departments,



Confluences. Intervencions artístiques en el medi rural (Confluències. Artistic interventions in the rural milieu) (2021-23). ÌVAM al territori



Tape Park. Families. ÌVAM Ciutat (2022)

knowledge), invited voices (artists, critics, curators, craftswomen, pedagogues), and intervention spaces (museum, web, catalogue).

POLÍGLOTÍA is proposed as a multidisciplinary creative process based on the various languages and cultural practices present in the city of Valencia. The program is also conceived as a meeting space, in the museum, from a hybrid and intercultural perspective. It is committed to the generation of content through the exchange of experiences and knowledge of the participating individuals and groups.

CONFLUENCES is a project of *Artistic interventions in rural places*. The program takes place in areas far from the usual circuits of contemporary art, with the aim of sharing uses, tools, and logics beyond the museum, connected to other contexts.

IVAM SENIORS aims to form a stable group of visitors over 55 years of age interested in expanding their knowledge of the history of contemporary art, artistic creation, and museums with the desire to continue growing and sharing their own knowledge.

We deeply believe that a strong governance in institutions, based on a program defined by rigorous historical, social, and cultural criteria along with a public and transparent management, adjusted to its context to establish a dialogic framework with its publics, is essential to develop citizen public spheres. Therefore, the museum may become a true place of experimentation and critical exchange ready to involve antagonistic practices. Because the museum is also a memory machine, a mechanism for the present to work towards the past and project itself into the future, a living archive affected by a changing and diverse context. For that reason, it must be a mirror and reflection of a practice extended over time and inscribed in a meaningful space.

In Conclusion

- We have been working the social dimension in our institutional procedures as a way of mitigating risks and creating added value.
- We learned that good consultation and stakeholder engagement represents an investment and ensures the feasibility of our interventions.
- Besides a clear regulatory framework, improved transparency and active listening mechanisms

are necessary to ensure that cultural institutions fulfil their mission.

- Sustainability policies, from a governance point of view, can represent an opportunity to provide a concrete framework of work and transparent and accountable objectives.

Day 2, Saturday
November 12

*Unlocking History and
New Narratives*

Keynote 1

Reading Refusal as an Aesthetic Form

Denise Ferreira
da Silva

Prof. Dr., University of British Columbia,
Vancouver, Canada

Biography

Director of the Social Justice Institute at the University of British Columbia, she is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), *A Dívida Impagavel* (Oficina da Imaginação Política and Living Commons, 2019) and co-editor (with Paula Chakravartty) of *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). She has had several articles published in leading interdisciplinary journals, such as *Social Text*, *Theory, Culture & Society*; *PhiloSOPHIA*; *Griffith Law Review*; *Theory & Event*; *The Black Scholar*. Her artistic works include the films *Serpent Rain* (2016), *4Waters-Deep Implicancy* (2018), *Soot Breath/Corpus Infinitum 2020* (in collaboration with Arjuna Neuman), and the relational art practices *Poethical Readings and Sensing Salon*, in collaboration with Valentina Desideri. She lives and works on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the həŋdəmihəŋ-speaking Musqueam people.



*Reading Refusal
as an Aesthetic Form*

There is not a single central message. This uses language as a means among many, but its meaning cannot be compressed into language or exhausted by language. You have to go in, walk around, look, listen, read, and smell. If you are patient, willing to receive in various channels, and keep thinking about it later, eventually everything will come together.

—Adrien Piper¹

What if, instead of approaching the work in search of its unique or deeper meaning, what if the public came to it the way Adrien Piper instructs? What if the visitor or the viewer approached the work of art as something that exists, something to be heard, looked at, read, and smelled? And instead of trying to apprehend, understand, or explain it, after taking it in, one just gave in and waited for/with it, waited for its meaning to arrive or not, eventually? What if ...

Whatever it is called, if a name is needed, the approach I share with you this morning does not fit very well into conventional descriptions of (art) criticism and (theoretical) critique; it does not immediately mobilize or easily recall or even fit with/in common and relevant uses of the term critical, such as critical theory. For if the critical — critique or criticism — refers to the task of identifying and exposing the foundations, the rational principle guiding a particular apparatus and deployment of knowledge, and if criticism is the task of evaluating creative works according to a rational principle, combining the two becomes a simple exercise, if one ignores that both are based on the assumption that the terms “rational,” as used in both, means or refers to the same procedure. Put differently, the proposal I share with you is relevant to critique, art criticism, and critical social theory.

The proposal, or rather, the manner of approaching the artwork (as well as the work of art) departs from these other senses of the task precisely because it challenges what holds them together, which is the mental gesture said proper to aesthetical, analytical, and theoretical statements. This mental

gesture, evaluation or judgment, both presumes and institutes meaning, as well as a context and something like its production and tools for its presentation, apprehension, and understanding. More explicitly, this gesture — which constitutes the context, target, and material for the works that inspire this proposition — presupposes the figure of the I think — which I call the *transparent I* (in its many guises, as human, humanity, subject, and subjectivity).² That is, the mold of the subject of aesthetic, scientific (analytical or theoretical), or ethical (moral) judgment, which governs the onto-epistemological regime that has prevailed over the last two-hundred years or so. This is so because this mold, the transparent I, also hosts the position of the appreciator, the one which defines the modern artistic scene.

As such, because it joins in the task, what I am presenting to you is both commentary on and a method for reading the operations of colonial, racial, cis-heteropatriarchal matrix of power in the contemporary art scene. It does not, however, focus on issues, events, or statements that would be immediately identified as mechanisms of exclusion on the bases of or existing racial, gender, sexual hierarchies. The starting point is that colonial, racial, cis-heteropatriarchal matrix sustains the figure guiding the very idea of the aesthetic, that of the appreciator, whose original form is the white/European/cis-heteropatriarchal male/Man, to recall Sylvia Wynter.³ More importantly, as it follows Adrien Piper’s instructions, but only partially, in this way of thinking with artists and their works, that is, consists in kind of a reflection that, rather than return to a real or presumed appreciator, stays with what artworks offer as their intervention. An intervention that, because the works deal directly with colonial, racial, and cis-heteropatriarchal subjugation, locates the critical task and creative practice in the center of the scene of confrontation, in the movement of refusal, which is how, as Fred Moten teaches us, the object (as other and as commodity) exists as/in resistance.

Why introduce this mode of reading with Adrien Piper’s invitation to her public to forgo meaning — the quote with which I open Piper’s response to a commentary from the viewers of one of her works? Very simple, the works I am thinking with also refuse the demand for compliance, the artists’ apparent lack of concern with the possibility of the public obtaining

1 This is said in an interview, as a comment on the exhibition related to Adrian Piper’s award of the Kathe Kollwitz Prize in 2018 <https://contemporaryand.com/exhibition/adrian-piper-kathe-kollwitz-prize-2018/>. <https://www.frieze.com/article/i-still-do-believe-they-want-me-dead-interview-adrian-piper> ↗

2 For an elaboration of this argument regarding the post-Enlightenment figuring of the modern subject see general Denise Ferreira da Silva. *Unpayable debt*, Berlin: Sternberg, 2022.

3 Here I have in mind, particularly, her presentation of the argument regarding different figurings of the modern subject in Sylvia Wynter. “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--An Argument.” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3 (2004): 257–337.

the meaning or not, or “fundamental meanings.” An absence of concern with the appreciator that to me suggest several things, including the possibility that the theme of the work is already known, that everything has already been said, or even a rejection of anything that gave the public (or the public) any indication that they grasped its meaning. For it is precisely because coloniality and raciality consolidate the position of *the* aesthetic subject, the position of enunciation available to the artist, curator, appreciator, critic, aggregates a categorial and historical reservoir (terms, formulations, meanings — as well as images and sounds) of racial meanings that enter into the composition of the aesthetic text, in the twentieth century. A complex and complicated position because, in addition to the Kantian subject of aesthetic judgment, which has the same basis as the scientific subject of experience, it also houses the subject of social critique, who may or may not be Marxist, and who may or may not be literate in the critical social text, that is to say the critical arsenal that targets coloniality, raciality, and the cis-heteropatriarchal matrix. Much complexity and many complications result from this co-inhabitation. For example, the subject of criticality can — and I’m pretty sure — does present itself as a non-Kantian or even anti-Kantian appreciator. However, at the same time, his/her inclusive/ decolonial/diversity-wise statements about works or artists bears a Kantian orientation, even when not as explicitly as when she rests her claims on his notion of cosmopolitanism. That is, both the position and the related orientation are relevant here. Such orientation, as we know, can manifest in several ways, as unreflective display of white/European or North American economic privilege, as claims to universalism, as a savior disposition, etc. Regardless of its manifestation, this presentation indicates one of the ways in which raciality operates in the infrastructure of subjectivity, which is on the one hand, the writing of the *transparent* subject of reflection which cannot objectify itself because it engage the world as its own and of *affectable* subjects to which reflection is always already pre-occupied by a *world* that is constituted by representations built according to the tools of racial knowledge and the workings and configuration of political architecture they helped to build. Precisely this position (of the subject) and orientation (of its appreciator) I find refused in the works, as they confront precisely

that which must remain foreclosed (in the sense given by Spivak in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*) if the critical task is to hold any meaning.⁴

What happens in the scene? How does it unfold? Well, “if you are patient,” invites the artist, attentive and receptive, the work will present her with something that will last far beyond the first meeting. What is she asking or what is she inviting us to do? I read in Piper’s work, an excuse for trying something else, for relinquishing that positioning before the work which presumes, pretends, or promises to know. How to do that? How to inhabit this space, walk through the corridors of the exhibition without immediately finding yourself in the position of appreciator or the connoisseur? However, when this position is exposed, when its reservoir of meanings, its grammar, lexicon, and signifiers are evident, something else occurs, a dis/orientation, which resonates, reverberates, the artist’s intervention because it halts any immediate grasping of the meanings of the work; resolution in/as representation.

What am I talking about? Well, this is pretty much all I have to say about the matter of this talk. I will use the rest of my time sharing with you some images and sounds that illustrate the kind of works I have been thinking with. And I will spend more time with two contemporary artists, the British performer and filmmaker Zinzi Minott and the Brazilian performer and filmmaker Paulo Nazareth.

What kind of Slave would I be?

—Zinzi Minott

Ancestral interference is the feeling of rage or anger bigger than your own rage, pain bigger than your own pain, it is the feeling of being tired of a fight you have only just begun. It is the feeling of being on the march forever, of screaming from a place deep inside that does not belong to you. It is the feeling of being frightened for your life, fighting for your life. It is standing on the edge of the sea and hearing screams, it is being begged by them not to give up. It is being on your portion of a walk that has been ablaze for centuries, and feeling the weight of every foot that has walked. It is being strengthened by the ability for your ancestors to lose everything, and build something, again, and again, and again.⁵

4 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Harvard University Press, 1999.

5 Quoted from the description of the work available at Spike Island website at <https://www.spikeisland.org.uk/programme/digital-commission/zinzi-minott/>. Last accessed on January 31, 2023.

When tracking refusal in these artworks I have found something speculative, a creative opening that, sometimes explicitly but most time only implicitly, suggests a what-if question that directly confronts modern representation. Instead of merely talking about it, let me describe it. For instance, when Zinzi Minot asks, “What kind of slave would I be?”, blackness (in its categorial and historial modes) validates the question and sustains the speculative exercise, in spite of presumed the unreality of time reversal. In a conversation we had last fall, she highlighted how that im/possibility, however, is available to the artist for speculation, because of blackness is a historial referent. As Saidiya Hartman has noted, the person to whom blackness refers historically, that is the slave, is a mode of existing as human that is not contemplable as subjectivity.⁶ The “I” in Minott’s question is in the archives and it is always already occupied because pre-positioned by (the actuality and threat of) total violence. Historically, the Slave, in so far as she is a Negro, a commodity, is an economic entity; as chattel (property), she is a juridic thing; it is as such that she is present in the records — newspapers, title documents, wills. That, of course, extends

to the poems and novels, memoirs and essays, as well, because whether authored by an enslaved or a freed writer these texts do document the conditions under which they were written. For this reason, subjectivity, as Hartman notes, is not to be demanded from or imposed on them. Nor is its unavailability, it is important to add, to be lamented, which is something Minott’s speculation gifts us. Had I been a slave, as a speculative exercise, does not differ from not had I not had been one, both indicate what has not happened, in one case because the *I* is positioned ahead in the line of time and in the second case because the *I* is positioned without the condition of enslavement.

When we were talking about “What kind of Slave would I be?”, Zinzi Minott highlighted precisely a connection between these two possibilities as she refers to her wonderings about those she called “jumpers” — the captured persons who managed to jump off the slave ships and died in the Atlantic Ocean, whose remains (as particles) Christina Sharpe recalls are part of the living underwater environment.⁷ What happens when the jumpers are claimed by those of us who are descended from those who completed the crossing, and were enslaved? What becomes



Musa Michelle Mattiuzzi. *Experiment in Flood*, 2019

6 Saidiya V Hartman. *Scenes of Subjection : Terror Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford University Press 1997.

7 Christina Elizabeth Sharpe. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press 2016.



Jota Mombaça. *Soterramento [Burial]*, Belgrade, 2015

thinkable when blackness recalls the captive as dead;⁸ as ghost and as particle? Whatever else becomes thinkable will certainly exceed what is made available by the archive of violence, in which silence is the only answer to Zinzi Minott's question, that is, when the questions hails a person who would reply from the position of enunciation the artist occupies, as a black first person singular. Fortunately, as Minott's artworks offer, the artist is not held by what the archive hosts. To the opposite, as Hartman's critical fabulation also testifies to, the archive and its records are also but raw materials available for re/de/compositional intervention.

When commenting on *Fi Dem*, *Fi Dem II*, and *Fi Dem III*, as well as the images and texts that compose these works, Zinzi gives a sense of the kind of re/orientation being invited, of what is the core of this mental (ethical and intellectual) shift. A material movement, I find, in which instead of a referent of sequential, linear time, ancestry comes under the guise of reversibility. If as an historical referent, blackness cannot yield that which is the condition of possibility for the aesthetic experience, subjectivity, precisely because of how it presents the Slave who, as a first person singular is pre-positioned, juridically and economically, as a material referent of that

particular juridic-economic entity, blackness as an attribute of a body, of a solid organic composite, recalls the long dead, the ancestors, both the ones who would never become, who could not have been (Minott's jumpers) and those who would and did (Minott's ghosts). Foregrounding pre-position, in particular, because subjectivity can only emerge if protected with/in the arche-form (that is, the figure of the patriarch, as the husband, father, owner, settler) of the subject is the juridic and economic, blackness in Zinzi Minott's artwork is deployed to reclaim memory and history, as the body itself/her body as raw material does this work, as a still or moving image that distorts the historical record.

Always under the risk of being resolved back into something properly artistic, expectedly black, or white, or Asian, undeniably cis-hetero or queer female, or black gender non-conforming, the body has consistently figured as the center piece in this of state capital. When taking on this risk, I find Zinzi Minott in company in the work of the Brazilian artists, such as Musa Michelle Mattiuzzi, Jota Mombaça — whose performances we watched earlier — as well as Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro and Paulo Nazareth, among many others. Let me continue in the company of Paulo Nazareth's work.

8 Here her work draws from and reconfigures some crucial themes of Caribbean philosophy, but in particular the work of Édouard Glissant.

*"All immigrants are political exiles"*⁹

When Paulo Nazareth said that, in a 2014 interview to *KeepOn Magazine*,¹⁰ he was addressing directly what was then, before, and remains unquestionably one of the most significant global issues of our times. This displacement of populations — black and brown people — from their homes in the former colonies of Europe, in Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the island-countries of the Pacific and the Caribbean. And he recalls its juridic-economic — and not simply ethical, humanitarian — significance when he says that "if these countries [the USA and Europe] do not want to let in illegal immigrants and refugees, please do not promote political instability and oppressive economic policies in the peripheral countries." Straightforward, and yet far from simple, however, is how Nazareth's artwork on the US-Mexican border comments on

this (including today's refugee crisis, while at the same time recalling its historical precedents and global reverberations).

His intervention highlights another significant aspect of our times, which, due to the work raciality does in ensuring the success of the very articulation of the discourse on "crisis," which is the relationship between art and the political. More particularly, I am interested in the work's direct confrontation with a sensibility held by cultural difference (a tool of raciality) — that of the *transparent I* —, the prevailing one, the one that cannot accommodate anti-colonial and anti-racist expressions as properly aesthetic, that is, which consistently reads them as ethnographic specimen. His mode of presentation, compositional strategy comments on these currently political circumstances by confronting and undermining attempts at reading both his work and its intention as just another



Paulo Nazareth. *Serie Noticias de America*, 2012

9 This is a shorter version of this section that was published in *PAULO NAZARETH. MELEE*. Eds. Alex Gartenfeld, Gean. Moreno. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021.

10 "Interview with Paulo Nazareth: To Represent and To Serve available." *KeepOn Magazine* (2014) online <http://attention.keenonmag.com/paulonazareth/>, accessed May 19, 2019

operation of cultural difference. Through repetition, humor, and healthy dosages of weirdness and urgency, Paulo Nazareth's performances, photographs, sculptures, and installations request a sensibility that presumes and anticipates what lies beyond all that has been said and done about colonial and racial violence and the works they perform for global capital.

Each one of his artworks is a composition of elements that registered total and symbolic violence against black and indigenous populations *and* their strategies of refusal and survivance. Through pieces collected (in international and trans-continental walks) or created (sculptures, videos, or drawings), Nazareth's performances and installations collapse the distinction between the ephemeral/casual and the monumental/formal, in a way that renders the use of explicit elements of critical racial, anti-colonial, or anti-capitalist discourse unnecessary and, even, I dare say, unhelpful. It does so, I find, because, in his work, both his body (in the films and performances) and objects (collected and created) do not stand for anything other than themselves, that is, none of the usual descriptors for the artwork's mode of signifying, metaphor nor metonymy captures how his material (his body and objects) refigure colonial and racial subjugation and possible tools, methods, and strategies for its destruction. Literality, I find, is a more suitable descriptor for a mode of figuring that is self-referential, that is, one that does not recall something else in form (metaphor) or as content (metonymy).

An exemplary work is his piece for the Latin American pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, *Indigenous Voices*, led by the curator Alfons Hug. With a focus on the regions' endangered indigenous languages, the exhibition displayed the work of artists from sixteen countries, including Nazareth's sound installation, in which he and Guarani-Kaiowá children repeat words in Portuguese and Kaiwá.¹¹ Reading Nazareth's description of this particular piece in the context of his comments on his artwork in general, I wondered how the critics and audience at the biennale responded to these apparently straightforward but apparently disconnected pieces, both in form and content: On the one hand, the sound piece, in which one hears his and other voices repeating words in two different languages, without any commentary or indication of how it relates to the larger theme of the pavilion. Mere presentation,

juxtaposition, without any maker of a hierarchy or dominance between the two languages, the indigenous children and Nazareth speak in both languages. On the other hand, the description retells recent, past, ongoing colonial (total) violence against indigenous persons and populations.

Pure denunciation without any analytical or interpretive device, Nazareth writes about the ongoing attempt at obliteration of indigenous peoples, of his people, throughout the continent. There is no reason to think that the audience did not connect the dots. However, I am not sure if it did more than to read in it a culturally (Latin American, Brazilian, indigenous, black) determined mode of expression. That the very mode of presentation of the Venice Biennale, with its national pavilions, invites such reading is and is not besides my point here, incidentally. What I find in this work (and also others) by Nazareth is precisely a response to such likely (because overdetermined by the form of the Venice biennale itself) reading. Juxtaposing two languages, an image of the children posing like the members of the Bro MC, a popular indigenous rap group,¹² and the recounting of the ongoing total violence against indigenous populations and person in the Americas, without analytical or interpretive operators to signal a critical stance, the parts of Nazareth's sound piece stand for what they are, each presenting an aspect of indigenous existence, of survivance in the face of ongoing colonial violence: languages (Kaiwá and Portuguese), musical forms (hip hop), and state (perpetrated or authorized) violence. In this piece, I read a refusal to deploy the available signifiers of the ruling racial discourse in the presentation of colonial and racial violence. How it is rendered, how the work tries and resists the comprehension of the artist's intention as an expression of his/her cultural difference? Literality, in my usage here, consists in a compositional strategy — and as such a highly formal procedure — that creates a lapse in the movement of signification (the refusal to mean beyond what it is said because it, the said, is already the meaning) through which the artwork is released from the demands of any specimen of the modern discourse. This occurs because literality (counter-intuitively, I must add) allows Nazareth to present anti-colonial and anti-racist statements that escape the grips of representation precisely because they do not rely on its modalities of figuration (namely,

11 See documentation of Nazareth's work on *Universe in Universes* at <https://universes.art/en/venice-biennale/2015/tour/latin-america/paulo-nazareth-text> ↗. Last accessed in September 13, 2018.

12 A commentary on Bro MC can be found at <http://stocktown.com/brazilian-indigenous-bro-mcs-use-rap-as-a-tool-to-break-issues/> ↗. Last accessed on September 12, 2018.

metonymy and metaphor) or deploy analytical or interpretive devices or terms that appeal to (and please) the audience for its critical literacy. Literality works, I find, because the artwork takes the form of a *fractal* assemblage that indexes the simultaneous operation of colonial and racial violence as well of survivance at the many scales: language, juridical violence, the person's body, and, in this case of this particular piece, including collective modes of expression shared with other (black) populations subjected to total violence, such as rap music.

Black Light

What the works make evident, however, is how the Kantian program is constitutive of the artistic context of creation, curatorship, appreciation, and critical commentary. For this reason, while the approach proposed here still aims at the *transparent* I, as it figures in the notions of aesthetics (such as in the notion of subjectivity) and in the analytical judgment (as an object of critical theory), the focus is on the moments of the infrastructure that sustains it, that is, position, orientation, intention and interpretation. In particular, I point out how a specific work — installation, exhibition, film, or performance — puts us in confrontation, that is, prepositions (in anticipation) in relation to one or more of these moments. In doing so, however, what is anticipated — what can be seen in the work (in presentation) or articulated by the artist (as his intention) — are the operations of coloniality and/or raciality presented under the guise of the public, whether as the conventional or critical position of the critical connoisseur, orientation, intention, or interpretation. This presentation can manifest itself in various ways, such as a position of white economic privilege, as demands for universalism, as a saving orientation, etc. Regardless of its manifestation, this presentation indicates one of the ways in which raciality operates in the infrastructure of subjectivity, which, on the one hand, the scripture of the *transparent* subject of reflection that cannot object because it has engaged the world as its own and of subjects *that affect* it to whom reflection is already preoccupied by a world that is constituted by representations constructed according to the tools of racial knowledge and the functioning and configuration of political architecture that they helped to build.

If the target of confrontation is a position and an orientation to the work pre-formed by raciality, and it takes the gesture of refusal to be contained by and to contain its meanings forces an appreciation (when

including determination) of raciality's operation, that is, instituting a subjectivity that can never become, and that cannot fail to be objectified. In confronting, responding to objectification, these works do both, they create crucial elements for a racial critique (analysis) of aesthetics, as well as engage in a creative practice, which has much to contribute, as a source of inspiration and as examples of an ethical-political practice that does not restore the *transparent* I and its records, and does so precisely by refusing to separate aesthetics and politics. This mode of radical engagement exposes the political (juridic, economic, ethic, and symbolic) infrastructure of the position of enunciation that figures the transparent I, the I think, in all its post-Enlightenment presentations (individuality, humanity, the Human and subjectivity) and its registers (aesthetic and political). This confrontation, although it works throughout the aesthetic infrastructure, causes a dis/orientation, when it mobilizes raciality and exposes its functioning, in the way artworks can: it is refractory. But the intensity of the (racial and colonial) violence it comments on cannot but fracture transparency. In doing so it allows precisely the observation of how the intensity of colonial/racial and cis-heteropatriarchal violations expressed in the highest, but still noticeable, frequency. Like black light, these expose their fissures and allow the possibility of a contemplation in which existence is not limited by what is presumed and reiterated by notions such as taste, as well as the beautiful, and the sublime.

Perspective 3

The Museum of Remediation

Clémentine Deliss

Associate Curator, KW Institute for Contemporary Art,
Berlin, Germany

Global Humanities Professor in History of Art,
University of Cambridge

Biography

Dr. Clémentine Deliss works across the borders of contemporary art, curatorial practice, independent publishing, and critical anthropology. She is currently Global Humanities Professor of History of Art, University of Cambridge, and Associate Curator of KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, where she is developing the Metabolic Museum-University. Between 2010–15, she was the director of Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt, where she instituted a new research lab for post-ethnographic research and developed several exhibitions including *Object Atlas – Fieldwork in the Museum* (2011); *Foreign Exchange (or the stories you wouldn't tell a stranger)* (2014); and *El Hadji Sy – Painting, Performance, Politics* (2015). In 2016, she directed Dilijan Arts Observatory in Armenia for the exhibition *Hello World. Revising a Collection*, National Galerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. In the same year, she was

Visiting Professor at the Ecole nationale supérieure d'arts Paris-Cergy and held an International Chair at the Laboratoire d'excellence des arts et médiations humaines, Université Paris 8 and Centre Georges Pompidou. In 2018–19, she was Interim Professor of Curatorial Theory and Dramaturgical Practice at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. Between 2019–20, she taught at the University of Fine Arts, Hamburg. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Study, Berlin, and mentor of the Berlin Program for Artists and Faculty at Large of SVA Curatorial Practice. Her book *The Metabolic Museum* (2020, Hatje Cantz) came out in Russian translation in 2021, published by Garage Museum, Moscow.



The Museum of Remediation

During the lockdowns in 2020–21, museums and art venues in Europe were largely closed. As the pandemic waned, entry was restricted to the vaccinated, and precautionary measures prevented both the production and consumption of exhibitions. In London, artist Abbas Zahedi outmaneuvered British law by converting a former postal sorting office in Chelsea into an artwork conceived as a space of repose, an exhibition solely accessible to front line health workers. However, the majority of museums and art venues in 2020 deferred planned exhibition openings and closed their doors, all the while keeping their running costs going. Gagged by health and safety regulations, it was difficult to envisage the nature of alternative activities within the museum space, even though we all felt the need to do something. At the Castello di Rivoli, Carolyn Christov-Barkagiev installed a vaccination center, but somehow this initiative proved to be an isolated incident. It was at this point, that I wrote the following text, both apocalyptic and utopian:

The museum is empty of walking, consuming human beings. It has become a lazaret for vulnerable bodies. With frescoes on the ceiling, the afflicted lie prostrate, watching the pursuits of angels in their embrace of flesh and cloud. Paintings are hung lower than usual to match the bedridden gaze. Spotlights, like torches, complement the microfocus of each sufferer. No longer controlled by norms of visitation, curators tend to patients not publics offering solace and distraction. Performing subtle operations like whispering or awakening, they re-energize the metabolic flow. Curators are nurses. Through their agency, they transport the patient and immobile person out of their solitary imagination. All artworks become returns, points of reflection, and potential objects of virtue, drawn per force into a common condition. (April 2020)

The museum as *lazaret* could mean a rehab for Covid 19 patients, or a refuge for the stateless. But when it knows no immediate crisis, the museum still throws up the urgency of remediating colonial collections. For with the trailing effects of the pandemic, ten months of war in Ukraine, and mounting global, ecological urgency, it seems important, even essential, to occasion a rethink of the museum in terms of its spatial logic, the deployment of collections, and the regime of exhibition programming. Does the grid of permanent

and temporary shows mean anything today, is it sustainable, economically wise, and relevant to the public? What alternative rhythms of activity could revitalize the museum and the interpretation of its collections, setting this institution apart from the speed of the digital or the druglike pull of a department store's aesthetic? The disjunct between artworks in museums and the lived experience of vast swathes of Europe's population is dramatic. Why maim yourself by gluing your body parts to an artwork or exhibition railing? For the editors of *Art-agenda*, this is a sign that "we are living through a crisis of faith in the ways that our societies attribute value to ideas and objects, works of art included." (EDITORS' LETTER: "But for whom?", November 3, 2022). Meanwhile, much is discussed today around the curatorial concept of care, of rethinking the responsibilities of a museum for the well-being of its visitors.

Circling around these questions of art and culture, are the growing humanitarian needs of asylum seekers who are not on the other side of the world at all, but right here, in Spain, in Germany, in the UK — in short in Europe. The asylum backlog of former colonial governments means that people from all walks of life are being placed in camps under inexcusable conditions, provided with minimal sanitation, poor nourishment, and insufficient medical attention. The option of educating the stateless in the museum, itself a civic institution for which you need no exam, and which abounds in visual languages, sounds crazy perhaps, and yet we know at the back of our minds, that if political conditions escalate, we will be doing this per force.

The museum of remediation proposes a model — understood as a set of exercises for curators and visitors alike. Artists are part of this dialogue — for they too have suffered from the unhealthy polarization of institutionally driven art on the one hand, and market driven production on the other. I think back to 2020, when artists could have worked in the sealed off museums, transforming exhibition galleries into temporary studios, and melting the frozen format of a show into what Philippe Pareno prefers to call a "situation of relative intensity." Indeed, next to Abbas Zahedi, over the last year, KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin has put on two such situations of relative intensity, or *Pauses* as they call them, stopgaps between exhibitions, or as I would name them ultra-temporary exhibitions. The first was with Swiss painter Tobias Spichtig and more recently with Lydia Ourrahmane. Both artists questioned the body in the exhibition space. Spichtig, with a sea of second-hand mattresses to lie down on, and from which to

listen to readings by Berlin-based novelists and poets, and Ourrahmane whose set-up in KW transmitted nothing but the poignant heartbeats of each visitor, non-stop for 24 hours. Her exhibition was a one-day exercise in public auscultation, whereas Spichtig's work drew out complex political connotations of homelessness and Sadean interpenetration.

KW has no collection, but what about the many museums represented here today that have reservoirs full to the brim with artefacts, artworks, archives, documents, books — and more, that are rarely brought into dialog with one another, unless uniquely selected for a forthcoming show or for the purposes of conservation, provenance study, and occasionally, repatriation. While restitution takes its course, the looted cultural heritage of the Global South is still held in serial quantity in European museums. The so-called ethnographic or world cultures museum is the tipping point of the museum as social institution. These expansive collections represent, in their multiplicity, the entire life cycles and habitus of formerly colonized peoples, their worlds of design, engineering, architecture, not to mention metaphysical imaginaries, spirituality, gender, art, music, style, rhetoric, and much more. How can these artefacts, many which have ecological significance in the twenty-first century, remain inaccessible to students and citizens of the multiple diasporas inhabiting the Global North? Is it even possible to perform the decolonial without providing access to these convolutes of historical source material, still classified, and defined, even in 2022, as belonging to the colonial discipline of ethnology? While they remain inaccessible, they constitute the elephant in the room. For there is a violent irony to the politics of restitution and their sister, provenance studies. By becoming the key focus of the rehabilitation of the ethnographic collections in Europe, restitution obfuscates the scale, relevance, and urgency of providing space and time in museums for decolonial education with these collections, here and now.

This is a process of “aesthesis” that may begin to defuse and heal the colonial wound (Rolando Vazquez). This is remediation understood not as the retrograde reconstruction of acquisition, (for provenance can be falsified too), but as a process of

opening up material physically as well as digitally to multiple interpretations beyond region, ethnicity, function, and masterpiece value.

In 2021, Bruno Latour, interviewed on *Arte*, said,¹

“I invented not schools but several educational devices (*dispositifs*). ...Why? Because you cannot address these ecological issues without the arts. If you don't have the means to metabolize the ecological situation, then you're done for because it's far too heavy. You just have anxiety in your stomach, and you can't do the work. We have to find associations between other methods. The university has to learn not to be a Humboldt-style university, invented in the nineteenth century. (There are very few working on this question.) It's about reversing the direction of the university, so that it ceases to be the avant-garde of fundamental research, which is important — we have to do fundamental research — but we have to turn it in the service of those who are affected. (Service does not mean, 'I'm teaching you something that you didn't know.')

We don't know what the situation is of being on this new Earth, in which we have been plunged, because of the modern history from which we are emerging, so we must do everything to find ways of exploring this new situation).”

Latour's statement in relation to the university applies equally to the museum. Change management is part of this, and the different ways of thinking and enacting a malleable infrastructure within a heritage-heavy institution.

This brings me to the Museum-University, which I have been working on both as a concept and a set of exercises since 2015.

What do I mean by museum-university? First of all, it parallels with its inverted homonym: the university-museum, or university gallery. In the past, this form of museum inside the university served the research institute associated with its collections. For example, the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, which was founded in 1919 with money from J.D. Rockefeller Jr., was originally a research

¹ Interview with Bruno Latour, *Building Collectives*, 6/12/2021, directed by Camille de Cheney and Nicolas Truong. <https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/106738-006-A/interview-with-bruno-latour> ↗

laboratory for the study of Near Eastern civilizations. Most of its collections came from expeditions undertaken by U.S. scholars to the Middle East between the 1920s and 40s. It opened to the public in 1933. If you look at its website today, you'll find that it is in the process of reassessing its name, but also its function. This decolonial procedure could be even more effective if the nature of public engagement enabled non-paying forms of education on university level for communities beyond formal students.

The museum-university is defined precisely because it needs no exam, no proof of education, or entry requirement. It is open to all visitors, whatever their age, social class, economic condition, or level of literacy. This model is not planned as a major transformation for all museums, that would be madness! But it could apply to larger institutions with collections that might be ready to dedicate one wing, or one floor to such a *dispositive* for the democratic intellect. In this wing, furniture is provided to enable members of the public to sit down for several hours and study. Mobile vitrines and tables are filled on a regular basis with items from the collection. Every two-to-three weeks, new material is received, overlapping with another set of artefacts or artworks in a variety of media. The museum-university draws its visitors in because it advertises the arrival of new collections. Suddenly, these collections that stem in large part from colonial expeditions or represent the B-grade of art history's canons, can be configured variably into assemblages for analysis and interpretation. Yes, the museum has to let go of a small quantity of its duplicate artefacts for study purposes, and yes, this may affect the conservation of such items for a foreseeable eternity. But this is part of the decolonial procedure and conservation is not a universal norm but an ideological discourse engrained in the museum that today needs to account for inclusivity, community participation, and sustainability. Seminars, that would otherwise be inaccessible to many members of communities, are held inside the museum-university. This is not a one-to-one explanatory lecture necessarily related to the objects on display. It can be, of course, but it is enough for this higher educational moment to take place whatever the subject matter. The environment is a safe space, in which both art and erudition meet, beyond the pre-packaged menu of the exhibition as we know it today. Here you can go to listen to a wide range of presentations, held within the visually rich environment of a museum, and adjacent to collections not seen until now. Allow me to briefly illustrate some of these proposals through the following exercises of the Metabolic

Museum-University or MM-U, which draw upon and extend the laboratory I ran at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt between 2010 and 2015.

The first exercise performed by the MM-U took place in 2015, right after I left Frankfurt. It was held in Kyiv, at the Museum of History of Ukraine, and involved a group of self-elected participants. Following a lecture that I gave at the museum, several, predominantly young students from different fields, chose to accompany me to Kyiv's flea-market in search of artefacts that were humble in cost, but generative of controversy. Back at the Museum of History, we found a table in the cellar, and several bentwood chairs, and installed them in the entrance to the museum. We laid them out and began unpacking some of the ambivalent meanings they evoked, trying to understand their connotations through the effects of the assemblage that pushed everything into a relationship of multiplicity. Visitors to the museum could not help but notice the seminar and were invited to take part, which they did.

The next model of the MM-U was developed with my students in curatorial theory and dramaturgical practice at the University of Art and Design in Karlsruhe in 2018/19. The students designed Metabolic Chairs with tongue-shaped tables, reading lights,



Spamming the Hang. Photo by Clémentine Deliss.



plugs, and small projectors so that visitors could “spam the hang,” beaming their own images onto the white gaps in between the paintings. We were invited to the 33rd Biennial of Graphic Art in Ljubljana curated by Slavs and Tatars. There we changed the days of the week into Brainday, Lungday, Eyeday, Skinday, Liverday, and Heartday, and post-docs and professors from the fields of media history, neurosciences, and literature held instruction inside the existing exhibitions of the biennale, and in several museums in Ljubljana. Each visitor could sit down on a metabolic chair and listen.

In 2020, the Metabolic Museum-University moved to KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin. Here I gathered together a faculty to debate constellations of artefacts and artworks assembled from the city’s collections. I hoped this would lead to a methodology activated through the transgressive adjacency of artefacts from different collections and classificatory systems, devolving disciplinary boundaries into what I have called elsewhere “academic iconoclasm.” But very quickly the pandemic prevented any meetings or further research. The “faculty” resorted to a regular online Bureau d’Esprit, or office of the active mind to exchange research collections and the complexities they brought with them. In one of the online sessions, Tarek Atoui describes sound-recordings that he made in Beirut’s harbor the day before the explosions, and the difficult choices he now faces around their transmission. In another, Henrike Naumann opened up her archive to show us a Nazi dollhouse and asks us for our response. Could she show this? Why did she feel so repulsed? Should the Nuremberg Museum of Germanic history collect it?

When the pandemic waned, we held our first Debating Chamber at KW. Configured around a set of prototype objects, the session had no breakdown of themes, list of speakers, or titles of papers, as we have at this conference. Inevitably, it discouraged



image works by Eva Stenram based on the *Debating Chamber Prototypes and Ominous Objects* held by the *Metabolic Museum*. University at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, November 2021.

consensus, yet it was not meant to compete with an exhibition, but act as a performative bypass, activating “motion in thought,” and pushing against disciplinary taxonomies. The results of the Debating Chamber are relayed through an alternate version of our inquiry. Here, works by Eva Stenram translate the Debating Chamber into a set of photographic images for future discussion, offering the reader a prototype of visual thinking around collections and assemblages.

I would suggest that the here and now of CIMAM, and its “attentive museum,” is asking us to think together perhaps more courageously and with greater vulnerability about how museums as civic institutions might go further with their visitors, especially those held in a liminal state between trauma and recovery. This might not apply to all museums, but could be considered for wings of museums with permanent displays that do not change. Likewise, such functions could be adapted to exhibition rooms turning them into study spaces based on the reassessment of dormant collections. The museum acquires a renewed institutional character and can be talked about beyond its last exhibition, its last event, or its last budget cut. The decolonial imperative is enacted through collections in the museum of remediation, a metabolic, and cathartic moment of meaning-making capable of going beyond the strict understanding of the fundamentals of nineteenth-century museums and their collections. The potential for developing new designs for living and survival out of transdisciplinary observation and research provides contemporary challenges to laws on appropriation and authorship. The public shifts from consumer to student, and exhibits become channels of healing and transdisciplinary innovation. To enter a museum, no exam is necessary.

Perspective 4

Uncomfortable Museum

Sandra Gamarra Heshiki

Visual Artist, Independent, Lima, Peru/Madrid, Spain

Biography

Sandra Gamarra Heshiki (1972) was born in Lima, Gamarra, and studied Fine Arts at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. In 2003, she moved to Madrid to complete her art studies, where she developed her work until 2019. She utilizes painting in a figurative way to conceptually cross-examine art and its mechanisms. Based on appropriations, her work acts as a mirror that displaces exhibition formats, alters the circulation of images, and subverts the ownership of culture, as well as the narrative between art and its viewer. Within this field of investigation, her Peruvian background adds a syncretic gaze where pre-Columbian, colonial, and Western cultures collide. Some of her recent exhibitions recontextualize art genres such as the landscape, self-portrait, and still life. In 2002, in response to the absence of a contemporary art institution in Lima, she created LiMac, a fictitious museum that first established itself with its logo on merchandise (pencils, erasers, mugs, and bags). Since then, LiMac has produced collections, exhibitions, publications, an architectural project, and a website (www.li-mac.org). She lives and works in Lima.





Mestizo, Nikkei, producen Aínoko o Mestizo, 2012. Oil on canvas. 93×120cm. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrugarra.

Uncomfortable Museum

My name is Sandra Gamarra Heshiki. I was born in Lima, where I grew up and obtained my bachelor's degree in painting at the Catholic University. I was raised in a family between two cultures. My Peruvian father comes from an Andean background and my mother comes from the Japanese colony that emigrated to Peru.

When I started my career as a young painter in the mid-1990s, I recognized myself as a Western artist. In fact, my appropriations were a form of projection of that tradition. A distorted echo perhaps, but understood nonetheless as part of a common process.

Later, when I arrived in Spain in 2002, I began to visit museums. During my academic training in Peru, museum-going was almost an absent element, given the weak cultural infrastructure in Peru. This was the first time I saw works (and buildings) that I had only seen on paper. I visited art museums, as well as the Natural History, Archaeology, Decorative Arts

museums... I had a special interest in the National Museum of Anthropology. I wanted to see *los cuadros de castas*, the miscegenation pictorial series that was commissioned by Viceroy Amat. They are the only *cuadros de castas* made in Peru. This colonial painting genre that originated in Mexico during the eighteenth century showed and categorized the different "products" resulting from the mixture of the three ethnic groups that coexisted in the Viceroyalties. To my surprise, the series was not shown in the permanent collection.

I only found one painting from a Mexican group, isolated from the whole. Because of this, almost unrecognizable, to the point that it seemed to tell another story.

The surprise continued when, after seeing the floors dedicated to each continent, I did not find the one for Europe. I asked one of the guides about this. He was surprised by my question. I was told to go to other museums. That, he said, was history, and history is not here.

I realized that there were two stories, and that the idea of common history only existed on the other side of the world. Neither in the Prado Museum nor in any other museum did the people and cultures of the Western Hemisphere appear as an integral part of Spanish history. On the contrary, we were constituted in a void, as Esther Gabara illustrates in her article “The Bermuda Museum Triangle.”

We only began to exist in modern art, and especially in contemporary art, and then only as part of a general openness to other stories. So, there I was, outside, in an “uncommon” place.

I began to be suspicious of the notion of the “common,” whatever the project may be: historical, economic, racial, or cultural. Racial miscegenation, understood as a conciliatory project, even if we joyfully waved the flag of a shared culture, did not end in the “common.” Rather, it ended in the disappearance of 300 years of colonial history.

This whitening project had not been completed in the American continent, but here, in Spain it had been successful. You could go back to being “white people” or “people of Spanish origin,” understanding that one culture must be devoured by the other, understanding crossbreeding as a project of rewriting the past.

To think this common space that summons us, in a way that moves apart from the mestizo project that erases processes that do not relate to what we call “progress,” I propose bringing in another mestizo project: the one that José María Arguedas personified.

José María Arguedas was born in Andahuaylas, in the southern highlands of Peru in 1911. He became one of the most relevant thinkers as he promoted the preservation and dissemination of Andean culture. In 1965, he presented his novel *Todas Las Sangres* (All of the bloods). It was a time when there were heated debates about what would become of the “modern Peruvian,” confronting Western progress with Andean backwardness, Arguedas presented a third way; the mestizo.

Arguedas departs from the idea of “common race,” and enabled us to discover a multiple-layered mestizo, a being that coexists between both sensibilities, that is an active bridge between each culture, translating permanently, in tension between the two, interlacing languages. An identity whose existence is conflictive because it belongs nowhere, but yet inhabits both. One does not understand the existence of one without the other in a project that is not of progress but of life.

As an anthropologist, writer, translator, and collector, Arguedas cared about tracing and recovering the Andean, paradoxically, both in the Andes and in

Spain. He was not blinded with the ideal of purity. He understood that the development of the Andean culture includes the incorporation of foreign elements, in a process that reworks and resignifies these contributions.

Translation is a battlefield where he puts this reworking into practice, confronting its limits, making it a place of creation.

In this Peruvian cultural resignification, the museum is also altered. From it, a genealogy of museum projects arises. One that behaves in elusive, sporadic, informal, and precarious ways.

For instance:

MicroMuseo, by curator Gustavo Buntinx, a virtual platform that alludes to the small, but also to the mobile. The “micro” is the most popular informal public transport system in the cities of Peru. This Micromuseum carries with it information that collides with the lack of cultural structures.

Museo Travesti del Perú, by the artist Giuseppe Campusano, uses the imaginary of the history of Peru to create a story where the dissident sexualities that have been deleted from the official record appear in festive ways.

Neo Inka Museo, by artist Susana Torres, proposed an archeology of everyday objects that we have identified as Inca and that endures in our contemporaneity as a mark of differentiation.

Puno MoCa, a project by artist César Cornejo, that uses half-built spaces as exhibition rooms, and in return the museum ends its construction.

Museo Hawai, by artist Fernando Bryce, can be understood as a set of documents that will give rise to his practice until today.

Museo Itinerante de Arte por la Memoria, an independent and alternative museum that gathers interdisciplinary works made around the period of internal war in Peru (1980–2000) into a living and moving memory.

I included LiMac, in this genealogy of museums. It is a project I maintain with curator and artist Antoine Henry Jonqueres.

LiMac, Lima’s Museum of Contemporary Art, is a “museum” that began in the year 2002, when I returned from my first trip to Spain. It is a mimicry, a mirage, a distorted echo of the art museums that I visited. Among other things, it serves as a platform where the copy occupies an institutional vacuum and, in turn, creates collections.

LiMAC’s collection consists of appropriations/copies of the works of contemporary artists translated into painting. This exercise is part of a tradition that



Stand LiMac, 2012. Wooden structure, mixed objects, oil on canvas and computer. Dimensions variable. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrugarra

began with the first Andean copyists of religious images. In a way, this tradition evolved today in what is referred to as the *bamba* aesthetic. *Bamba* products are cheaper copies of imported branded products, but unlike the “pirate or fake” product, it makes clear that it is not the “original,” as it highlights differences.

For LiMac, the objectuality of the copy makes it possible to display it, it generates a dialog within the museum, collections, institutions, and artistic events. Such was the case of the 29th São Paulo Biennial, where LiMac loaned to the Biennial the series *October Catalogue*, given that the original paintings of Gerhard Richter’s *Oktober* series, which were promised and expected, didn’t make it. The works were copied from the catalogue of the series and are titled according to the page number where they appear.

As a generator of works that complete the collections of other museums, LiMac proposed to MALI (Museum of Art of Lima) the project *Producción/Reproducción*. It consisted in the production, exhibition, and subsequent donation of pictorial reproduction of the *cuadros de castas* commissioned by the Viceroy Amat in 1770. The original series is composed of twenty paintings, presumably made by Cristóbal Lozano and his workshop. It was a gift to King Charles III of Spain for the construction of his Cabinet of

Natural Science, which was initially conceived for the space occupied today by the Prado Museum.

The main message of the miscegenation series was to show that after five or six generations of consecutive mixing with Spanish blood, the resulting products were again considered “white people” or “clean of origin.”

The other results that did not follow the ideal agenda, gave rise to products labeled for their perceived otherness and named with terms such as: I don’t understand you, stay in the air, jump back, there you are, cholo (that probably comes from “dog”), and all the variants of their canine cousins (wolves, coyotes, foxes), or mulatto (from mule).

All of the “family portraits” displayed in the series, which surely would be the result of forced unions, rape, or abandonment, show groups of people that appear content, sensible, and happily suited to their place in a society that was economically and socially divided, most of the time, by the gradation that the skin color conferred.

For this joint project, LiMac commissioned copies of the series to a company of copyists in China, a country where the contemporary Western imaginary is massively produced today, as was also the Peruvian viceroyalty. South American vice-regal art has therefore been understood as craft or folklore, at best, or as irrelevant copies at worst, and therefore did not take part of the art collections of the Spanish museums.

These new paintings have been intervened with citations from feminist thinkers, where each text helps to analyze and unveil the patriarchal violence inherent in the caste system. Instead of solely focusing on the institutionalization of racism that the paintings clearly illustrate, a close look at the family construct shows that women are not considered as generators of the labor force and the production of capital. Indeed, economic value can only be achieved while women care for workers, before, during, and after their working life.

The physical absence of the original series in Peru did not mean that it was absent from the Peruvian collective imaginary. In fact, it gave rise to its reworking. The permanence of these categories maintained its relevance as a catalyst for a reality that seems unspeakable. For generations, in Peru we have talked about these works without actually seeing them, without having records of them. Paradoxically, the original paintings find themselves in a country where they do not exist in the collective imaginary.

The series of the miscegenation of Viceroy Amat is perhaps a sort of unwanted inheritance, a dissonant



October Catalogue, 2010 exhibition view. 29th São Paulo Biennial. Photo: Filipe Berndt



Production/Reproduction, 2021. Exhibition view. MALÍ. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrugarra



Production/Reproduction, 2021. Exhibition view. MALÍ. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrugarra

note within a given historical account that is silenced and hidden.

Production/Reproduction was conceived as a donation to MALÍ's collection. Since then, the museum has the possibility to establish a dialog with its collection, covering the visual creations of the Peruvian territory, from pre-Inca times to the present.

Restitutions, that go from the global north to the global south, should also be accompanied by restitutions from the global north to the global north itself. This would allow for us to seek in our own collections, in our own cities, that which we have stopped reflecting upon, what we have left untold, transforming our voids into part of that which is "common."

To present ourselves as "common" presupposes a previous work of "wholeness," a state where we are complete and from which we may complement each other.

Restitutions would promote an exchange between collections, complicating the linear readings of history, making them instead fragile and porous. They would make the museum a space that is modified with these contents, permeable enough to tell stories without reducing them. In this sense, their walls would not only hold works, but also make visible the bodies

and stories that have made them possible and that keep them standing.

The habitat where the Andean culture develops is a key character in the work of José María Arguedas. The Andean world is mostly agrarian and the land and its cycles govern it, both in terms of generosity and adversity.

It is precisely this adversity that has taught natives the importance of acclimatization in each geographical context. A given product will not be optimal or suitable in a different space. The results are always multiple and changing. In this process, the incorporation of new elements is possible and necessary as long as it promotes and preserves life.

Climate change will require us all to acclimatize to its demands. That is the most certain common space we will share. We share.



Production/Reproduction, 2021. No.3 One-quarter Chinese product. 100×96 cm. Oil on canvas. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrú



Production/Reproduction, 2021. No.9 Mestizo product. 100×96 cm. Oil on canvas. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrugarra



Production/Reproduction, 2021. No.17 Mulato product. 100×96 cm. Oil on canvas. Photo: Juan Pablo Murrugarra

Perspective 5

The Seed is a Memory of the Fruit

Sethembile Msezane

Visual Artist, Msezane Studios, Cape Town,
South Africa

Biography

Sethembile Msezane is an artist who uses performance, photography, film, sculpture, and drawing to create works that address spiritual and political symbolism, and African knowledge systems. Drawing on her dreams, she asks questions about ancestral memory and the processes by which mythmaking is used to construct history, highlighting the absence of the black female body in both the narratives and physical spaces of historical commemoration.

She recently participated in the 14th Dak'art Biennale (2022), and previously has been a UEA Global Talent Fellow hosted by the Sainsbury Research Unit and Sainsbury Centre (2021), a Mellon Artist Residency Fellow in partnership with the University of Stellenbosch (2020), and a OkayAfrica 100 women 2018 Honoree. She was a TEDGlobal Speaker in Ausha, Tanzania (2017), a TAF & Sylt Emerging Artist Residency Award winner (2016), and was the first recipient of the Rising Light award at the Mbokodo Awards (2016). Sethembile Msezane (b. 1991) lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.





Sethembile Msezane, *ISIMO*, 2020. Short Film

The Seed is a Memory of the Fruit

Somewhere in the world a grandchild is learning that they are part of network of roots that emanate from a seed that one day will become a valuable fruit. This child will probably learn this lesson from their grandmother, who in turn learned the same lesson from her grandmother. And so, the cycle continues that of origin, possibilities, and manifested dreams.

Good afternoon, my name is Sethembile Msezane and my practice as an artist engages with African knowledge systems as modalities of being. Here is a snippet of my short film *ISIMO* (2020), please take a look.

The late Credo Mutwa, a *sangoma* (diviner/healer) and author, expresses various concepts I'm interested in namely new animism and Matrilineal knowledge as institutions of knowledge. A worldview that acknowledges the connection between all living beings can solve a number of our issues within institutions. This disconnection that separates people from nature is the very tool that has created a lot of our problems within our societies. Thus, in thinking about our elders as living libraries, they sit in a unique position of reminding us of the ways of old in tackling some of the problems we perceive to be new.

Babalwa Magoqwana develops a theory of uMakhulu, the elder mother, as an institution from Njoki Wane, positioning elderly African women's bodies as institutions of indigenous knowledge,

dissemination, and storage in the pre-colonial and contemporary society.

UMakhulu would know the right time to plant her seeds, what kind of compost to use to facilitate growth, as well as when and how much land to harvest. On the other hand, colonialists and their descendants harvest, absorb, pillage, erase, and make permanent their image within our societies, which goes against the cycles that exist in nature.

So, we are here today to conceive exhibitions with new, as yet unheard voices as a critical part of the museum practice. I'd like to throw a spanner in the works and say we don't necessarily need new modalities; we need to revisit older ones and perhaps ones that have remained, not unheard, but ignored because they challenge the very permeance of museums.

As a fellow, I once engaged with a small yet meaningful part of my homeland in a British museum, a 1972 snuff spoon from KwaZulu Natal. There was a physical and spiritual distance in encountering it, having to wear latex gloves as my living body touched the living object. The museum staff, neither Zulu or emanating from my ethnic origin, closely watched the interactions between the spoon and myself. Indicative of what should have been a homecoming for me through a part of my heritage, this moment was tarnished by an othering of my body and of this relic. I wondered what it would be like to have uMakhulu amongst the academics and museum staff guiding me through the shared identity her and I possessed by way of this snuff spoon. A descendent and a memory keeper,

a seed and its fruit meeting outside of their common origin within the walls of a European museum, this familiarity could have made this experience far better.

While objects illegitimately acquired are in the hands of Western institutions amidst conversations around repatriation, we need to consider utilizing the living libraries of the communities that the object originate from as part of museum practice. We need to consider the essential role that uMakhulu as a living library could contribute to museum structures in connecting communities around history and the essence bound within these objects.

Magoqwana notes on October 1, 2017, the United Nations celebrated the “International Day of Older Persons.” Despite their rich survival wisdom, older persons are often neglected and invisibilized in our societies as “unproductive bodies.”

In introducing uMakhulu to these institutions, we would also need to be very sensitive to the historical lens in which the physical presence of black/indigenous bodies in museums has been used and portrayed. In order to best safeguard uMakhulu from being exploited from this historical, romanticized hypervisibility (I’m thinking of Sara Baartman here), she would need to have a voice in decision making and bring forth her advisors to support her. As uMakhulu, although she is the elder mother, seeking council to best remedy and bring about progress does not happen within a void within many cultures. It is not uncommon to have other elders or experts reminding each other of the functionalities around their society.

What is being proposed is that uMakhulu should not be isolated in the same way that the relics in the museum have been. She cannot be the only indigenous living library representing this relic, her community become part of the many books in that library that have knowledge around any one particular object.

When museums make merchandise, podcasts, and so forth, utilizing these objects along with uMakhulu and her community’s intellectual property, compensation that include royalties need to be part of the considerations made for their contributions. The colonial project of excavating and harvesting without benefitting its source cannot continue to exist.

If the museum is to remain relevant and truly archive our histories, ongoing connections to communities need to be established and maintained. In so doing, museum practice will not only benefit from the expertise of living libraries, but they will contribute to these elders remaining purposeful to younger generations in their communities, thereby investing in the crosspollination between generations in re-imagining the future.

I attended a symposium recently at Norval Foundation in South Africa, where Makhulu Bongzi Dhlomo reflected upon the unexpected invitation to participate in the exhibition and symposium. In rethinking uMakhulu as an institution, her expertise around not only historical events, but also sacred knowledges and her cultural proximity to the objects within these curated shows, would be valuable in prioritizing the spiritual transcendent qualities of objects and installations, something that in my experience is lacking and misunderstood in museums.

Bonventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung points out:

[...] what many Western museums and institutions wrongly and forcefully harbouring many so-called objects from the non-West do not understand [...] is that most of the so-called objects have never been and will never be objects. The objectification of these ritual and spiritual beings, historical carriers, cultural entities, orientations, and essences is in line with the dehumanization and objectification of humans from the non-West. Understanding these so-called objects as subjects necessitates a radical shift from Western understandings of subjecthood, personhood, and community, as well as a drastic shift from a Western understanding of art, authorship, and society, and subsequently a profound reconfiguration of what it means to be human.

What Ndikung is suggesting touches on ideas around New and Old Animism. Graham Harvey further reinforces this:

[...] the difference between the old and the new uses of ‘animism’. The old usage constructed animists as people who did not or could not distinguish correctly between objects and subjects, or between things and persons. The new animism names worldviews and lifeways in which people seek to know how they might respectfully and properly engage with other persons (2006: xiv).

He goes on to say: “...animism is not a theory that ‘everything lives,’ but is concerned with particular relationships.” This is important in not only considering the subjecthood of objects in ethnographic museums, but in considering the artworks of artists who work with what Gloria Anzaldúa terms “invoked art.” She highlights that in Indigenous cultures,



Sethembile Msezane, *Dwala Lam*, 2020. Video.



Sethembile Msezane, *Water Bodies — Isinqumo I*, 2020. Photograph.

art-making aligned aesthetics with spiritual, functional, and social contexts. [...] making art for art's sake, or for the purposes of mastery, as is common in Western cultures, leads to the objectification of art.

This is not to say that artists who make Contemporary Art that may be aligned with Invoked Art do not consider mastery or experimentation as part of their process. However, it is important to note that in the process of expelling the art from their consciousness into a physical form, part of the process is also conjuring the environment in which the work will be received by the audience. It is also important to note that the audience may not be museum goers but the ancestors of these individuals, as well as the spirits of the objects themselves. This is where the synergy between the subject (by way of artwork), space as both the material and spiritual realms, as well as the conduits of the artist or curator need to respectfully relate to each other in considering Animist thought as part of a curatorial strategy in appropriately presenting the work.

My Masters exhibition included a work titled *Signal Her Return I* (2015), a piece that consists of sound, lit candles, a long braid of hair, and an eighteenth-century bell that could have been a slave bell. Picture the experience of the goose pumps of walking into a dimly lit room that smells of wax, with the people immersed in it willed to sit and lay on the ground, speaking in hushed tones or simply meditating in front of the piece. Contrast that with how it was translated in a contemporary South African museum. The essence of the work was drowned out by clinically bright lights, a space with too many artworks, as well as health and safety protocols that limited the number of candles lit during exhibition hours. The burning wax smell, the smokey haze and heat from the ambered lights were stripped from the piece. The atmosphere was lost, prayers silenced, and transcendence subdued. This piece became a museum object and, in the process, lost its subjecthood: the spirit in the piece died.

If artworks and objects are to exist in the museum, does this mean that they are not allowed to be alive? That they cannot subscribe to Animist thought in what Alan Campbell describes the connotation of air, breath, and life, not distanced from us, but endowed with vigor and liveliness, just as we are?

If this is something that the museum cannot accept, does that mean in turn we are not allowed to be alive as we walk and work within the museum?

I believe that is impossible for both the objects and for us to not be alive within museums. That the sanitizing that occurs within these institutions creates the dis-ease and thus the problems that create the

illnesses we experience within these institutions as they go against the principles of life: to live, to breathe, to decay, and evolve. Preservation can occur without permanence. I stand here as a memory of the preservation of my ancestors and as such I am also the fruit, a historical fact. What if museums had to see themselves in the same way? Thus, if it is a genuine concern to be an attentive museum and not a pathologizing environment, whether ethnographic, modern, or contemporary, museums will have to listen and be attentive to living libraries, and by extension embrace the principles of nature to live, to breathe, to decay, and evolve or become extinct. The seed is memory of the fruit.

Day 3, Sunday
November 13

*Learning from the
Community: Collective
Actions in the Face
of Emergency*

Keynote 2

Our Street in the Middle of our House.

Emily Jacir

Founder/Director, Dar Jacir for Art and Research,
Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories

Biography

Emily Jacir is an artist, filmmaker, and educator who lives and works between Bethlehem and Rome. Her artistic practice spans a range of strategies including film, photography, sculpture, interventions, archiving, performance, video, writing, and sound. She investigates silenced histories, exchange, translation, transformation, resistance, and movement. Her works have been widely exhibited all over the world since 1994, and she has been honored for her achievements with several awards including a Golden Lion at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007); a Prince Claus Award (2007); the Hugo Boss Prize at the Guggenheim Museum (2008); the Alpert Award (2011) from the Herb Alpert Foundation; and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Rome Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Rome (2015); among others. She is the founder and Executive Director of Dar Yusuf Nasri Jacir for Art and Research in Bethlehem.



*Our Street in the Middle of our House.
Transversal Methodologies and Decolonial Practices
at Dar Jacir*

First, I just want to say thank you to CĪMAM for inviting me here. It's really, really, really a privilege. And the reason it's a privilege to be here — I don't know much about CĪMAM, I had never really heard of it until I was invited, and when I arrived, I was so surprised to see it's like a secret club of all my favorite curators. And when I say favorite curators — these are people that I have been in conversation with for literally decades. And to find so many of them here as part of this conversation is a really special thing. I heard somebody saying yesterday "Oh, CĪMAM is getting bigger and bigger." I don't know how people join this thing, but maybe you guys should protect this, because it's a really beautiful and special thing and it's really special to have relationships that are about conversation and about exchange with curators who all seem to be in this group. So, it's quite interesting and it's very special to be here.

I will be speaking about Dar Jacir, which is an artist-run space in the West Bank. But many people asked me in the last couple of days, "Why? How did an artist come to run such a space?" So, first and foremost, I am an artist. This is not an artist talk, but I will be offering up some signposts along the road of my path as an artist, as an offering to possible future conversations with you of how I came to be part of this space that we call Dar Jacir in Bethlehem.

Memorial to 418 Palestinian Villages Which Were Destroyed, Depopulated, and Occupied by Israel in 1948 — I want to begin by pointing to this work (INSERT IMAGE), and also to say that I come from a community that is the largest and longest-standing refugee population in the world. And we are still waiting in camps and elsewhere to return home. During these decades — it's now a transgenerational experience — we have welcomed refugees from other countries and watched them return back home, and we are still in this position. It's surprising to me that as a site of collective knowledge from a community that crosses generations — that we are not asked more — especially in these days with what happened in Ukraine by museums to come to speak about our experiences with Ukrainians and others, and to share what we have done to circumvent the destruction of our communities, of our centers, and of our spaces. So, I'm also very grateful to be here because Lada — whom I met, who will be the next speaker from Ukraine — and I had this possibility now to have this exchange together.

This piece was made over three months in which a community gathered to work and sew together in an extremely hostile and unwelcoming environment, in which our history is silenced. The memorial is unfinished and remains a work in progress.

Pietrapertosa (IMAGE) is a work that is a permanent installation in Basilicata, in Italy, whose main theme is hospitality. My work for the last two decades has been committed to reworking the spaces that constitute "Europe", the "Middle East" and the "Mediterranean", and oftentimes I do so by focusing on creating a seemingly out-of-place artifact and inserting it into the space. Pietrapertosa is a village built entirely out of bare rock in Basilicata and the work comes out of a period of intense research, in which, when I was researching, a woman invited me for tea, not knowing who I was, in the middle of the Arab quarter of the city. And when she first invited me, she said *Ahlan Wa Sahlan*. And I was so shocked to just hear this coming out of her mouth that I asked her, "What is this?" And she said, "Oh, you know, this is... we are Arab, this is part of our heritage, and hospitality is very important to us." I asked them then to translate it into Italian and this is how they translated *Sei venuta tra la nostra gente e la tua vita é sicura* — You've come amongst our people and your life is secure. So, I worked with them and chose the stone Gorgoglione, which only exists in Basilicata, to create the work, which is now in the village, in the main square on the garden.

Notes for a Cannon (IMAGE) is a site-specific work I made at the Irish Museum of Modern Art during the centenary year of the 1916 Easter Rising, when the Irish attempted to end British rule and establish an Irish Republic. The work explores the shared history of British colonial rule in both Palestine and Ireland, remnants of which still abound today. The work's main crux is time, and how time is experienced in public space, as well as the slippages of and standardization of time. A clock tower once stood at Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem. It was destroyed by the British in 1918 under the command of Ronald Storrs — the then British military governor of the occupied city. The removal of the clock tower served to match the British imaginary of what the Holy City and the land of the Bible should look like. Others thought it was just too ugly and it should be removed. They wanted Jerusalem to look as it should according to the Bible.

In October 1916, Dublin lost its time zone. It had always been measured 25 minutes and 21 seconds later than at Greenwich. It was officially defined as Dublin Mean Time up until that point. A signpost seeks to make the landscape legible to the occupying

military power. The British army had imposed martial law over Palestine after the capture of Jerusalem. The photo instead stands as an index of dislocation. What is Limerick Junction doing on a signpost in Palestine?

Ireland and Palestine are bound together by historical, actual, and analogical links. Both the land and the culture of Ireland and Palestine are marked by imperialism and settler colonialism, and an enduring resistance to them. Both are positioned at the edge of mercantile seas. And both were colonial projects mapped onto a religious conflict, so that it would appear as a religious war. We share a history of partition, occupation, resistance, and dispossession.

Tal al Zaatar was a work to salvage, digitize, and preserve a lost film archive in Rome, with the filmmaker Monica Maurer, and to safeguard those rushes as part of Palestinian memory. Two women, two artists undertook this work. What can be done when there are no institutions to save these kinds of rushes and the work actually does end up falling on the shoulders of artists? I also want to note here that the archive of the Palestine Film Unit disappeared in Beirut in 1982 and nobody knows where it went. In Rome, the rushes, which contained everything for the making of the film *Tal al Zaatar*, was discovered by Monica Maurer in 2010, along with the original soundtrack of the Arabic, which until that point had only existed in Italian. We also found a lot of material not related to the film. We completed our work in 2014, and we made the rushes available for viewing and research at the Institute of Palestine Studies, but also at AAMOD in Rome.

And just some background about this film. It was the only Palestinian and Italian co-production — a collaboration between the Palestinian Cinema Institution and Unitefilm, the Italian Communist Party's film unit. The subject is the August 12, 1976 massacre of Palestinians and Lebanese at Tal al Zaatar, a UN-administered refugee camp in Northeast Beirut.

Material for a film — a film as an installation where the viewer/participant constructs the narrative themselves through walking in the space and interacting with the material. I created an archive of sorts, collecting material but also making and taking photographs and writing and making documents, many of which were not in existence before I embarked on this project. Wael Zuaiter was the first victim in Europe in a series of assassinations committed by Israeli agents on Palestinian artists, intellectuals, and diplomats. It was already underway in the Arab world: Ghassan Kanafani and Kamal Nasser.

Zuaiter was gunned down with 12 bullets outside his apartment in Piazza Annibaliano in Rome

on October 16, 1972. On the night he was murdered, he carried in his pocket Volume II of *A Thousand and One Nights*. He had been reading it earlier and had planned to reference part of it for a new article he was going to write for the newspaper that evening. His partner, Janet, told me that one of the bullets had pierced through the book and that she had held on to that book for thirty years. When I went to meet her, she unwrapped the book and I used my camera to document each page and followed the bullet as it made its way through, until I couldn't see any trace of it.

ex Libris commemorates the thirty-thousand books from Palestinian homes, libraries, and institutions that were looted by Israeli authorities in 1948. Six thousand of these books are kept and catalogued at the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem under the designation AP — Abandoned Property.

This was a work that I produced for Documenta in 2013. I was interested in presenting this work at Documenta to raise the spectre of restitution, reparations, and the question who gets to be part of a discussion about restitution and reparation and who doesn't. The right of protection in cultural heritage and cultural property is guaranteed by the international human rights instruments, such as UNESCO World Heritage; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — none never implemented when it comes to the case of Palestinian objects, books, religious sites, or cemeteries.

Lastly, *Where We Come From*. Before Oslo was signed in '93, Palestinians could move freely within all of the territories in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel. Now the West Bank and Gaza have evolved into a collection of confined ghettos within one *de facto* Israeli sovereign space from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. These islands of populations are isolated and separated from one another.

Perhaps this is the most misunderstood of all my works, and I would like to acknowledge two writers who did understand what I was trying to do with this piece, both whom incidentally are Irish — Declan Long and David Lloyd. So, if you would like to read about this piece, I highly recommend their writing. It's a work that confronts the apparatus of spatial control over the entire territory. And in this work, I brought it into this discussion because I was thinking about ideas of protocols and governance, and what that could possibly mean in the situation we are in when the board members of Dar Jacir... some of whom we can't announce publicly because if we do, they would be denied entry to the country. When our team who work at Dar Jacir have West Bank IDs, American passports,

Chileno passports, Jerusalem IDs, Israeli passports, and what does that look like in terms of governance when we register as an NGO in a place like Belgium and they just can't make sense of it because it looks crazy to them that these people with all these passports are running a center in Bethlehem.

Then they want to have a proof of address and that becomes a whole other nightmare. We did register several years ago in Brussels by Royal Decree. We are officially a nonprofit, but we can't use it because absolutely no bank in Belgium will open an account, because of the new laws that came into effect a few years ago. As I understand it, many nonprofits who are operating in Belgium are now having their bank accounts shut down because it is just not worth it for the banks, even if they are government Royal Decree NGO. The other thing to point out in relation to this piece, too, is when you think of the way the European Union funds projects in Palestine, often that funding comes with very specific mandates, where they only want to give the funding to West Bankers, or the funding can only go to Gaza. So, if you look at our team... comprised of members who are Palestinians living in Jerusalem that have East Jerusalem IDs for example or has a *Chileno* passport. "No! We can't fund this!" In a way, they're complementing these apartheid structure and actually deepening these fissures that have been created to rupture the fabric of a community that should be together.

Another point to raise which is relevant to this work is this example: I was on the jury of a quite prestigious residency in Europe for around a decade, and at the end of every jury session they used to do this thing where they would tally up the citizenships. So, inevitably any Palestinians who had won the residency would only be counted by their citizenship, so they were automatically disappeared in the system. Later, with the Syrian crisis happened, the same erasure occurred: "Oh! But this one has German citizenship!" — They get counted as Germans. So, when we think about protocols and governments, you also have to think about communities that don't fit into these neat categories of European citizenship.

And then just to speak about two projects that are pivotal to me as an artist, that I do think informed Dar Jacir. I have taken on various roles in the arts and education in Palestine over the course of the last two decades, including working with existing infrastructure, as well as creating new initiatives. This project took place in the winter of 2002. And the strategy we used then was to present a video festival parasiting off the already existing cultural centers, as well as collaborating with local television stations. So, at that time,

which is not the case today, artists led, and we were listened to, and these cultural centers were excited that we came to them and presented this project. They wanted to support us. Today, it's actually the inverse of that. So, issues we explored in this festival were as varied as the US-Mexico border, revolutions and resistance from Ireland to South Africa to Chile, and many of these themes had come out of my own observation of the lack of any real exchange on the ground, because I felt that things seem to be one-directional, where internationals would come in and just wanted to focus on what was happening to us, which was then depleting us from understanding other contexts and other struggles, and what was happening in other countries.

It was also the very first time that works from the region were screened locally, like Walid Raad, Akram Zaatari, and Jayce Salloum. And because it was during a period where we were under curfew every night, we organized that the festival took place in people's living rooms, and people's homes became places to present thoughts, looking at archival material, screening films, presenting documents, and having discussions. So, these video tapes were in a constant rotation throughout the festival and after, actually, during curfew.

Simultaneously, there were workshops with a focus on indigenous artists Edgar Heap of Birds, Jimmy Durham, James Luna, Rebecca Belmore, Betsabé Romero, and others. This approach to a kind of cross-border collaboration across multiple institutions and cities throughout Palestine was an innovative ideology that came from artists and was artist-led, and one of the first instances when this kind of situation occurred and took place successfully. It was multi-layered. It was practical. It was experimental. This approach which was later adopted by Qalandiya International and now other institutions. A key point to mention was that it happened due largely to the generosity on the side of artists.

The other project I want to point to is the International Academy of Art, of which I was a founder and where I taught for the entire period that it was open. It's really important to me because it really allowed me to develop my teaching pedagogy. It was free for students and it was also a place where I really developed a collaborative process that took place with students, with no kind of strictures forced onto my pedagogical practice, so things like walking as a way of learning became an inherent part of my teaching amongst other approaches. I'm not going to go into too many details because of time.

It is also important to mention with the teaching that when I had my survey show at Darat al Funun in Amman in 2014, I asked them if I could bring the students I had at the Academy with me as part of the survey show and have workshops. I led a workshop on unpacking ideas of what “local” means, particularly in the context of Palestine, for reasons already discussed in my other projects.

The other survey show where taking my students with me was so important took place at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2016. The workshop I led there was a nod to Jean Fisher, who was a seminal thinker for me in my work and teaching practice. The students came for two weeks and went all over Ireland meeting artists, activists and professors, it was a mix of Irish and Palestinian students traveling around the country together.

A brief overview of Dar Jacir, it is in Bethlehem, in Palestine. We are not open to the public, and I feel like this is very important. It’s a space that we devote to educational, cultural, and agricultural exchanges. We see it as an interdisciplinary experimental learning hub, and a place where we facilitate artists and participants to ask questions, to lead, to encounter local and international thinkers and cultural leaders. At its heart, the project is an experimental pedagogical hub. We also see ourselves as guardians of an architectural heritage. Our building was built in the 1880s. We raised funds to restore the lower floor of the building, which had been abandoned for a hundred years and which hosted invaluable archival content and historical objects.

The house has stood through the Ottoman Empire, the British mandate, and is now currently standing in the face of Israeli occupation. Because it’s a home, the architecture of the space, is really important to us and informs our work both in how we work together in terms of intimacy and care, but also in terms of being able to work in a space in which our history is present in the very walls of the buildings, but also in the photographs and architecture, and also in the land itself. It’s the only artist-led space in the southern West Bank and another really important element is the cross-disciplinary nature of what happens in the space, and how we have for example farmers, filmmakers, cooks, children, and grandmothers all using the space and overlapping which allows for a kind of exchange that normally wouldn’t happen. Another aspect of the space that is very important is that it’s female-led. It’s a woman-led team.

The collection I was mentioning earlier contains records of some of Palestine’s most important and successful Ottoman-era merchants. It comes from

That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star

لا تستطيع أن تحرك زهرة
دون أن تزعج نجما

Che tu non puoi agitare un fiore
Senza disturbare una stella

Emily Jacir, Detail from “Material for a Film,” 2004. Photo © Emily Jacir 2004

a period which was the peak era of globalization in Bethlehem — the end of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth century. These Bethlehem merchants were traveling around the world. They were global and we see what we are doing a continuation of this global reach and exchange, particularly with Chile and Colombia, and the Palestinian communities that are currently now living there — half a million in Santiago alone, mostly all from Bethlehem. We also feel that this archival heritage is very special because it exists in a home, and it exists in the site in which it was made. And, for Palestinians, most of our archives have either been destroyed or robbed, or are inaccessible, so that makes this even all the more important.

We are working to digitize and restore this archive because we do believe that it will situate Bethlehem in the context of world history and challenge the current nationalist and elite narratives of the Mediterranean, as well as euro-centric ideas of global movements that currently exist. There’s also a photograph collection. Here just to mention that when British rule started, that was the first time the Bethlehemites in Chile were not allowed to return and they got stuck there because, previous to that, this kind of movement, which was very common all around the Mediterranean — if you look at the Italian community and the Greek community — this kind of movement back and forth to South America was just a normal fluid movement, and then all of a sudden — boom! — the wall came down and they got trapped.

It is important to note where the center lies, and I will show this using some of our archival photos. Bethlehem is seven kilometers to the center of Jerusalem. The house lies on the historic road, where movement has always been fluid and free between Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron. So, the house has always been at this intersection of movement and networks and exchange. Now, it is not. We are not living in a post-colonial reality. We are living under full

on colonial apartheid. The wall was built and cut this historic road in 2004 and our gate is 200 meters from this watchtower, which was placed not between the West Bank and Israel, but smack in the middle of our neighborhood, cutting us off from each other and our neighbors. Bethlehem today is now surrounded by 21 settlements with settlers, and they have completely encircled the city and confiscated all of our agricultural land, now no one can reach it. The wall, when you're in Bethlehem is kind of everywhere, so everything is controlled.

This is the infamous 300 Checkpoint, which is just down the road from Dar Jacir. These are workers trying to go to work very early in the morning. That's our gate, you can see on the left. We are also in the most tear-gassed location in the world, and actually in the two weeks before I came here, we had confrontations on a daily basis so probably I didn't have bronchitis — I had tear gas inhalation. And it's just kind of part of everyday life. We feel it's also really important to stay and protect the house and also the street, because right now for example the hotel next to us had to shut down and there was a museum in front of us — they shut down. So, the street becomes more and more abandoned and we are working to keep it active.

Dar Jacir is at the end of this street on the right and that truck is spraying this "skunk" — a putrid spray that if it gets on anything, the smell is unbearable and lasts for weeks. This is the view from inside the house when there are protests happening. Our residents both see and witness what is happening, and they contribute to the local community and education, and when they leave, they talk about what is happening. Many of them come from other communities also living through severe political trauma so we are able to share a lot.



Roma 16 ottobre 1972

Emily Jacir, Detail from "Material for a Film," 2004. Photo © Emily Jacir 2004

I don't want to start listing all the artist projects that we've done, but I do want to talk about a few because I see them as seminal projects that actually ended up informing how the space operates now. This was our very first workshop, which took place for the launch of Dar Jacir. It was conceived as a site-specific series of engagements with local organizations and individuals on our street. We only focused on our street, and worked with this group of participants. And basically, every day of the workshop we went into a different place on the street and met our neighbors and worked with them and spoke to them, and they became part of the workshop. This is Azza Camp, which is right across the street. We also went to the hotels and the businesses on the street and engaged with everyone, kind of announcing our presence on the street in its new form. It was especially meaningful in Azza Camp, because the elders of the camp were very excited to meet Bint Jacir when I came, and they said, "We have only been your neighbors for seventy years," and that sentence alone sort of encapsulates everything, and how we also work and see ourselves — when we are allowed to have our own narratives. I'll just go through these really quickly.

One of the important parts of this workshop was the focus on cooking and hospitality, where all the neighbors were invited and enlisted everyone's participation in preparing and consuming the meal. So, as I said earlier, the space really fosters and creates this kind of site of intersecting knowledge across disciplines, where we do bring together neighbors, which are the most important, and then friends, artists, and cultural practitioners and academics.

Another very crucial first project was by Vivian Sansour, our very first resident. Her project was important, and I actually would like to read her words here: "Stemming from the belief that architectural conservation cannot be complete without the botanical revival and preservation of the crops and plants that our ancestors developed, cultivated, and propagated for our survival, I propose to apply my work in seed conservation in the landscape, where I would create a demonstration site of heirloom varieties." So, she worked on this project that allowed visitors to learn about the relationship between architectural and biological conservation. "Green and deep red will be the colors that will cover the plot, while using stones that have fallen into the plot due to terrace breakage during army confrontations at the site. The young men who dismantled the terraces that preserve the soil of the land they are fighting for, using the stones against the army to demonstrate a loyalty to something they knowingly are destroying. The

contradiction is real as I work in an environment where we say we are willing to die for our land, and many of us have. Yet, we are taking this very same land for granted, not knowing that in the process we are losing its very essence.” Just to add here that one of the most interesting things of the site, too, for me, is that during confrontations, the site becomes a kind of... yes, we are not open to the public because it’s very important for us that we keep this kind of space of research, the ability to have conversations, and for artists to fail, which was one of our first missions that we always said, because so much of the funding that comes pouring into the West Bank has to have “deliverables”, has to have, I don’t know, all this NGO terminology that actually kills the creative spirit. But back to what I wanted to say which is when there are demonstrations, the site becomes a kind of commons — these demonstrators own the house and the land around the house in a way, and I am also interested in this juxtaposition with the way we are working.

Vivian again: “A few years ago, a young boy named Abed was coming home from school to have lunch with his mother in Aida refugee camp (which is right next to us) and the house (our house) was often the battleground for wounded young men who have no resort but to distress their anger through ripping apart the terraces that held together the very soil they are fighting for. Abed, like many other children, was deprived of the sense of safety that should be felt when one is coming home. When I interviewed his mother a couple of days after he was killed, she said he was hungry, and when we found his body, he had a bag of chips in his pocket. He was coming home for lunch.”

Just to summarize. I think the key points of this project are that we protect that it’s artistled, and that it’s a site where these kinds of interactions can happen without the intervention of structures that kind of just kill that way of working. This video that I am sharing with you now is part of a long-term project that is between southern Italy and Dar Jacir. We have several partners there focusing on the exchange and cultural heritage of music and farming between Palestine. The other thing that I always fight for is to claim that we are part of the Mediterranean, that we are part of this culture, and it’s important to resist, and to claim that, and to foster these kinds of exchanges.

Dar Jacir is a team of people working together. We’re all artists and we’re all leading different programs. One important program we have is led by Nicolás Jaar, and he turned our — it was originally a green storage space. Also, it is interesting to mention here that if artists are left as the guardians of an

archive and what does that mean, not an institution — and Nicolás turned this into a sound studio where we have sound workshops and a free recording studio that anyone can use. Our idea at Dar Jacir that we do feel like we are working in a living archive. The architecture of the building informs what we do, even if we just look at a picture or it’s just the way the wall is from the corner of our eye while we’re working.

Another project which is going on right now is called *Intimacy in the Apocalyptic Phase*, curated by Reem Shadid, Aline Khoury, and Kasia Wlaszczyk. It is a residency and public program. It involves six residents working together and doing public programs, but for the Palestinian artists in this project who are women — May Herbawe and Lama Altkruri — it was their very first time to have an opportunity to speak publicly in Palestine about their work. And so again, I want to just reflect on that — going back to this idea being women-led and what that means in our context. And I have much more to say, but I’m going to let you go and we will talk during the workshop. Thank you for listening!ww



Material for a film, 2004–07. Multimedia installation, 3 sound pieces, 1 video, texts, photos, archival material. Installation: *The Hugo Boss Prize 2008*: Emily Jacir. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photo: David Heald. ©The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. This work was devised in part with the support of the Venice Biennale. © Emily Jacir 2004

Perspective 6

Did You Hear That?

Philip Rizk

Filmmaker/artist, Mosireen video collective,
Cairo, Egypt

Biography

Philip Rizk is a filmmaker and writer from Cairo living in Berlin. In his films, he experiments with methods of “making the habitual strange.” In *Out on the Street* (2015), he uses performance. In his found footage films *Mapping Lessons* (2020) and *Terrible Sounds & Wonderful Things* (2022, work in progress), he experiments with the technique of montage. In a world that is breaking down, a question that runs throughout Rizk’s projects is: “How do we prepare ourselves for what is to come?” He is a member of the Mosireen video collective behind the archive 858.ma. His texts include the essay “2011 is not 1968: a letter to an onlooker,” and the co-authored book (with Jasmina Metwaly) *On Trials: A Manual on the Theatre of Law* (Archive Books, 2021). He occasionally teaches in classrooms and workshops. His work can be followed @ filfilm.com



Did You Hear That?

Audio excerpt #1. film “Cairo Intifada” by Jasmina Metwaly & Philip Rizk ↗

Did you hear that?

That was January 28, 2011. I was there on that Friday of Rage, the turning point in the Egyptian revolution, people in the street called for others to come down and join them, and chanted *الشعب يريد اسقاط النظام*, (the people desire the fall of the system). That day protestors attacked a quarter of police stations across Egypt: the face of the brutal military regime. Some of these they burned down. Officers fled in their underwear, scared to be caught in uniform. That day the regime turned off the Internet, while the police killed at least 68 protestors. Fifteen days later, the military sacrificed the ruler who had been president since before my birth, as a tactic to eventually maintain power. And the world cheered in resounding celebration.

“I rejoice with the people of Egypt, with the millions of people on the streets,” declared Angela Merkel, and Britain’s then Prime Minister said, “we should teach the Egyptian revolution at our schools.”

In the following period, museums clamored to fill their white halls with images and sounds of that revolt.

Back then, the Prime Minister of Norway said, “today we are all Egyptian,” but when the military carried out a coup two years later, and came back bigger and stronger, world leaders stopped being Egyptian, and the museums shifted their collections to other hot topics. Egyptian dissidents filled the new dictator’s prisons, where torture and death are an everyday occurrence. These days in particular there is an atmosphere of fear on streets across Egypt. At pop-up checkpoints police officers carry out forced searches on passersby, checking their phones for images or social media messages that express any form of critique of the regime. If the uniformed men have any suspicions they arrest the suspects, immediately guilty, and often disappearing in the legal labyrinth that is Egypt’s courts and prison system. Some we know are on pre-trial detention for three or four years.

Alaa Abdelfattah is one of these, one of tens of thousands. A protestor who that regime has come to see as a representative of the 2011 movement. He has been incarcerated for most of the past decade and is today being force fed by the regime as his over two-hundred-day hunger strike became life threatening. Force feeding is an internationally recognized form of torture.

Excerpt #2. film “Mapping Lessons” by Philip Rizk ↗

Did you hear that?

That was just one small example of Syrians creating radical examples of autonomy. More of these you can encounter in my film *Mapping Lessons*. After Syrians freed territories from the brutal Assad regime, and its allies Russia and Iran, beginning in 2012 their enemies targeted the basic infrastructure of life: wells, food markets, schools, power generators. And so these revolutionaries built alternatives. Unlike in Egypt in 2011, the world did not listen to their constant calls for support and solidarity, and so most of their struggle was quickly crushed. Today, Russia is doing it again in Ukraine, while the Iranian regime intensifies its brutal repression of its own people rising up once again.

Audio excerpt #3. film “MIMI” ↗

Did you hear that?

That was Mimi speaking at a migrant occupation in Berlin in 2014. Daily, as you know, there are boats with people coming from so many places. This year, so far, those arriving from Egypt where I am from, went up four-fold compared to the same period last year. Egyptians are the largest nationality of migrants that have reached Europe this year. They are fleeing Egypt’s fascist dictatorship.

Migrants are coming on foot, by boat, any way possible to enter this fortress no matter the cost, because their world continues to be obliterated. The walls are getting higher and the price ever steeper. But it won’t stop people who want to exist. Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados, a powerful spokesperson for the expropriated nations, reminded us recently ↗: “We know that by 2050, the world’s 21-million climate refugees today will become 1 billion.”

On the 500th anniversary of your ancestors’ arrival in the Americas, who sought the cannibalization of a continent and its people, a book appeared called *Almanac of the Dead*. In it, the author Leslie Marmon Silko imagined an army of people rising up against those who took their land, expelled and exploited nature and people. She told of thousands of people marching on the borders of the rich. One of the book’s many protagonists says it like this:

“We don’t believe in boundaries. Borders. Nothing like that. We are here thousands of years before the first whites. We are here before maps or quit claims. We know where we belong on this earth.

We have always moved freely. North-south. East-west. We pay no attention to what isn't real. Imaginary lines. Imaginary minutes and hours. Written law. We recognize none of that. And we carry a great many things back and forth. We don't see any border."

Silko foretold the rise of the Zapatistas, a liberation army that would help us believe that another world is possible. A community that dances to a different tune. "A project of life, not of progress," as Sandra Gamarra Heshiki put is so powerfully yesterday.

We are here in Palma, today, not far from where Columbus and his mercenaries departed. We sit and listen to the outcome of an upside-down world, where pillage, exploitation and injustice are the norm. A system holds in the halls of power that makes a good life for the few, and brings misery to the many.

Audio excerpt #4. "En Los Ultimos" ↗

Did you hear that?

In June of this year, 15,000 people marched on the southern border of the USA, only the largest of many recent marches of its kind. It included people from Haiti, Honduras, and El Salvador, but also Palestinians, Nigerians, Senegalese, Indians, and Ukrainians. Today, in the meantime, not far from here, at the climate summit again in Egypt, the world's powerful sit together and think of strategies to forever postpone paying for the crises the climate debtors have created.

You might be asking yourself, what is the equation for you?

You are the makers of art, its curators, its hosts, the sculptors of culture.

We need to speak out against the everyday ritual crimes, take risks. In the capitol of this country Columbus Day is a day of national pride! In Germany anti-Zionism is equated with antisemitism. While talking human rights, the EU that must also fund some of your work, funds dictators and their military businesses because by doing so they hire them to keep people from taking to the sea and invading fortress Europe. After her recent election victory, the Egyptian military dictator tweeted his congratulations to the new Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni. ↗ Two guardians of this sea. Fascists celebrating fascists. Today, we are surrounded by fascists. Most of them would rather not use the F word. We need to defend each other's spaces when they fall under fascist influence, even when it is not the popular struggle.

Finally, we must find ways to not only speak to

each other, but to make culture accessible to people who can't afford it or feel uninvited into our spaces. Did you hear that? "That is the sound of your world crumbling," the Zapatistas wrote after exploding onto the political stage in 1994. Theirs was a struggle that took years of preparation, years of organizing.

In closing, I want to refer to Frantz Fanon, psychiatrist, author, anti-colonial activist. Fanon wrote most of his final book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, on his deathbed. Though we might not like to admit it to ourselves, unless we make drastic changes in our behavior, as inhabitants on this planet we might not be in such a different place today. Much of Fanon's clarity came from an urgency precisely because he was writing with his impending death in sight. How can we enact such urgency today?

One of the strengths of his writing stems from Fanon's close reading of matters: he watched and listened. Learning from the community requires the act of radical listening, it requires us to seek out struggles, to listen, and find genuine ways to support them, like the radical Syrian local councils, or the revolutionary women going to the streets across Iran. But we must be careful not to fall into the trap of celebrating spectacles. Let us assess infrastructure, to see where our investments lie, how do we as artists, cultural workers, and institutions relate to the centers of power. How dependent are we on fossil fuels? Are your institutions completely disinvested from them? And what are we doing to stop the expansion of their extraction? What do we tell our governments that keep investing in expansion and art? Why do we not consider sabotage, while we consider collective suicide, rational, progressive? Supporting struggles means on a daily basis opposing power that makes human life and the planet expendable.

We can no longer act like everything is okay.

As Frantz Fanon and so many others have taught us, there is an end coming to this world as we know it. We need to be a part of "putting an end to it," as keynote speaker Denise Fereirra da Silva has recently challenged us to do.

The question is, what are you doing now, to prepare for the next time, for the struggles ahead?

Did you hear that?

Perspective 7

Not Waiting for the Emergency. Collective Practice in Ukraine that Requires Museums

Lada Nakonechna

Artist, Method Fund, Kyiv, Ukraine

Biography

Lada Nakonechna is an artist and researcher based in Kyiv. In addition to her individual practice, she is involved in a number of group projects and collectives. Since 2005, she has been a member of the R.E.P. group; since 2008, part of the curatorial and activist union Hudrada; and since 2015, a cofounder of Method Fund, and, together with Kateryna Badianova, co-curator of its educational and research programs: Course of Art and CreatingRuine.net. In 2016, she joined the new editorial board of Prostory.net.ua, an online art, literature, and politics magazine. Her artworks, which often take the form of installations incorporating drawing, photography, and text, call attention to methods of recognition, revealing the internal aspects of visual and verbal structures. Her latest investigations are based on artistic and archival materials related to Socialist Realism — understood as a “method” and institutional and educational system. Her work has been exhibited widely in such venues as the National Art Museum of Ukraine; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig; Palais Populaire, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb; Kunsthalltrondheim, Norway; Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg; and Center for Contemporary Art at NaUKMA, Kyiv. In 2014, she received the Kazimir Malevich Art Award.



*Not Waiting for the Emergency.
Collective Practice in Ukraine that Requires Museums*

I intend to share some insights into Ukrainian art practices. They seem important for me, for us, but being site-specific, they are not widely visible. The fact is that representation of war, struggle, people's suffering, as well as bravery, is more required than these practices, because they draw much needed attention.

Now Ukraine has attracted a wide interest, and the state of emergency is framing it. What I am thinking about is about time.

Emergencies require reactions, and increasingly more people in Ukraine have learned how to react quickly, how to make decisions without delays. This embodied knowledge is enabled by the experience of self-organized groups and the Maidans¹ that have opposed all kinds of institutional lawlessness, injustice, and privatization of the public sphere.

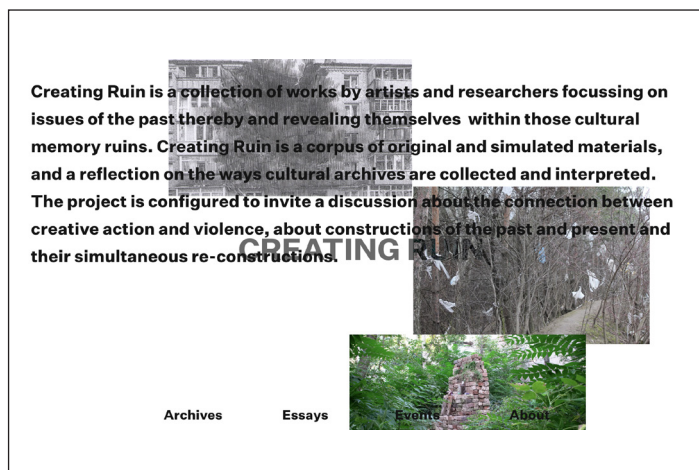
With the war, authorities of the cultural sphere generally did not react properly. It was the public organizations, museums themselves, and art practitioners that responded quickly. They were concerned about the safety of museum collections, how to organize packing and evacuation, and finding funding for this. They did it successfully, as far as they could. It is thanks to the embodied knowledge that the right decisions were made when there was no time to think. Because of this ability, Ukraine is strong enough now, while facing the brutality of Russian aggression.

What I am thinking about is about time. Such brutality has happened time and again throughout our history. The history of Ukraine is one of obstacles and destruction. Museums, however, preserve evidence. What museums do not have in their collections also becomes demonstrative. All art collections from Ukraine stolen by Russia are a testimony to crimes. The destroyers, devourers, invaders, and thieves of our heritage are comrades of the imperial war, the one we are facing now.

Since 2014, after the Maidan in Ukraine, — the people's uprising against Russian colonization — the processes in contemporary culture have intensified. Groups of artists and scholars turned to working with local histories and marginal places important for community issues. Eight years ago, the war had already begun.² We faced enormous violence and



Course of Art. Educational curatorial project of the Method Fund.



Creating Ruin. Online publication, Method Fund in collaboration with Reading International, 2018. www.creatingruin.net

1 Editor's note: Maidans is a reference to the protests that began on the night of November 21, 2013, with public protests in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kyiv and which were still ongoing by mid-February 2014.

2 Editor's note: In February and March 2014, Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. This event took place in the aftermath of the Revolution of Dignity and is part of the wider Russo-Ukrainian War.



Lada Nakonechna, *Obvious Connections*, Installation, artworks from the collection of NAMU — The National Art Museum of Ukraine, 2021.



Lada Nakonechna, *Teacher. Drawing the sculptural bust. V. Cassian by M. Lysenko (1958). With the participation of graduates of the National Academy of Fine Art and Architecture (Yehor Antsyhin, Ksenia Hnylytska, Lucy Ivanova, Nikita Kadan, Lesia Khomenko, Elmira Shemsedinova, Anna Shcherbyna). Socialist Realism. Seeming to Be Another*, Gallery of Postwar Art of the National Art Museum of Ukraine. Method Fund, 2017–18..



Denys Pankratov, *Control Work. Socialist Realism. Seeming to Be Another*, Gallery of Postwar Art of the National Art Museum of Ukraine. Method Fund, 2017–18.

devastation. The feeling was that we were in a total ruin, in the ruin of language, narratives, discourses, and institutions. But astoundingly (we shared this feeling with my colleagues during artistic seminars and discussions) such a ruined state helped us finally recognize the place where we were. We perceived the ruin of order in a positive way as it helped us rethink the institutional sphere and the discursive field, and to think of new attitudes that could form a ground for establishing responsive organizations.

Being a member of several groups and organizations since 2004, in 2015, together with my colleagues, art critics, architects, and educators, I co-founded Method Fund, an independent, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to create a platform for the development of and critical reflection on the theory and practice of contemporary art in Ukraine. I am mainly engaged in Method Fund's informal educational programs, run under the title *Course of Art*, initiating experimental study, research, and exhibition projects.

Alternative educational practices and critical and artistic approaches exist somewhere outside the formal educational and academic realms. Contemporary art in Ukraine in general is developing outside state institutions, primarily thanks to the work of collectives, groups, communities, and grassroots initiatives. They receive support mainly from the private sector or international funds that are interested in publicity. For a long time, private donors and artists have been distancing themselves from post-Soviet museums, which are seen as outmoded (no contemporary art museum exists in Ukraine), while at the same time being attracted by the museum's representative function. For artists, it was a tool to broaden their audience and normalize contemporary art practices.

A word about the PinchukArtCentre (PAC), which was mentioned previously in this conference. PAC is a private, oligarchic art space, the goals of which are driven by the political and economic interests of the owner. Structurally, it maintains and

reproduces the hierarchy, breeding mistrust, exceptions, and competition. What is good about PAC are the achievements of art practitioners who have managed to gain temporary autonomy. However, recently, all mediators were fired after they formed a union, resulting in a boycott by part of the community. As we are talking here about the attentive institution, PAC should not be advocated.

Eight years ago, many things changed. Artists began looking towards history — that's why all types of museums aroused a particular interest among art practitioners. Their collections and expositions as time capsules that represent a certain modernity and the background of today, their special form of representation that doesn't correspond to reality and people's aspirations came into focus.

Our museums' institutionality is the legacy of the Soviet Union. Museum galleries in Ukraine celebrate the chronological unfolding of the history of art, as well as the unyielding logic of the Soviet museum display. Their archives mainly consist of Soviet art and Realism, a tradition that was important for Soviet historiography.

What I am thinking about is about time. Representations of historical time are frozen in a post-Soviet museum. A Soviet and post-Soviet museum is a space of strict laws and norms aimed at supporting and reproducing one tradition of modernity. Such a space structures time as linear and single. Expositions form a vision of history through focusing on certain types of portraits of human beings, thematic paintings showing certain types of life practices, and landscapes depicting certain types of nature. All of them in a museum turned out to be outside real time and flattened to a mere representation.

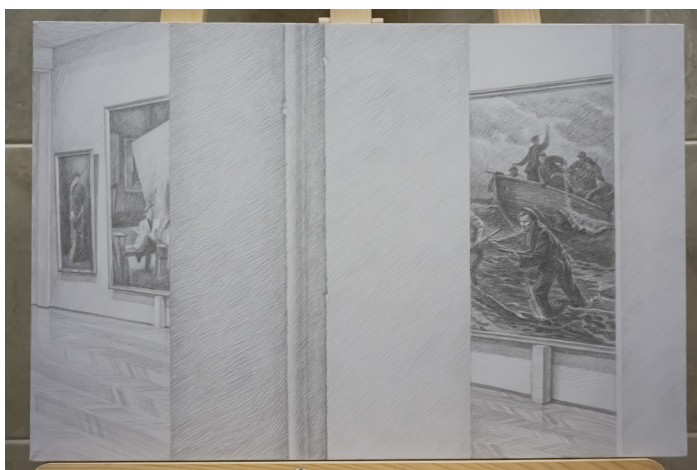
In this reality, the establishment of collective farms looks like Hrihoriy Svetlitsky's *Collective Farm in Bloom*, despite the artificial famine of 1933. After the Second World War, such a vision was anchored by masterpieces of Ukrainian production, such as Tetyana Yablonska's *Bread*. It is kept in the Moscow Tretyakov gallery's permanent display. A copy was made for a museum in Kyiv.

A diorama of this painting met our group in the village where Yablonska made sketches for the work. The seminar *Bread. Socialist Realism* at the Khmelnytsky Art Museum curated by Denis Pankratov was the first exploration of Soviet art by the Method Fund group of artists and researchers.

In Denis Pankratov's *Control Work*, realized during the next seminar at the National Art Museum in Kyiv, the simple artist's gesture of placing a school desks in the exhibition space contextualizes Socialist



Larion Lozovoy, *The Machine and The Garden*. Text in the video: "The abstract, unrecognizable, interchangeable space." *Socialist Realism. Seeming to Be Another*, Gallery of Postwar Art of the National Art Museum of Ukraine. Method Fund, 2017–18.



Anna Scherbyna, *View of Four Thematic Paintings from The Opposite Corner...* *Socialist Realism. Seeming to Be Another*, Gallery of Postwar Art of the National Art Museum of Ukraine. Method Fund, 2017–18.

Realist paintings on museum walls in their specific functionality as a didactic tool. The Socialist Realist picture not only affirmed the order of things, but was called upon to educate the viewer about certain feelings and attitudes. Paintings seem to be subjective



Lesia Khomenko, *The copy of the "Chernomorets" painting by Victor Pusyrkov (1947), Socialist Realism. Seeming to Be Another*, Gallery of Postwar Art of the National Art Museum of Ukraine. Method Fund, 2017–18.

in this constellation: they are pointing a viewer to a particular place at the desk. Or is it the characters hanging from canvases are checking whether we have forgotten our places? In any case, a normative museum doesn't expect viewers to provide their own answers.

As an artist, I am thinking about time in terms of space. The notion of distance is emerging in this regard. Distance is a necessary condition for a viewer. Are visitors to a museum actually free to choose the distance to see and analyze if the representational mode requires a certain attitude by positioning the spectator?

In the tradition of Socialist Realism and its institutionality, the viewer was given a place chosen by the artist, while artists were trained to be a part of the structure of representation.

My intervention into the same gallery of postwar art at the National Art Museum of Ukraine was titled *Studying the Sculptural Bust "V. Cassian" by M. Lysenko (1958)*. It is a construction made of easels encircling the bronze bust of Vasily Cassian, Soviet artist with numerous awards who was a professor at the Kyiv Art Institute.

The foundations of the contemporary art educational system in Ukraine were laid in the Soviet period. Illusions of the continuity of the inherited artistic tradition is supported and reproduced by modern state institutions. Art schools, colleges, and academies, without reflection, continue to advance the Soviet mindset: reproducing the positive typical features of an imaginary reality. This mindset stands ready to defend the exclusive truth of any ideology.

Today, people who were brought up according to examples of mutated Socialist Realism demonstrate an inability to see and think about things as they are in all their complexity and contradiction.

I believe that the method of Socialist Realism established a certain visual regime.

The paradox of the visual culture of the Soviet Union lies in the implicit violence of the affirmative: positive images that spring from general humanist values (emancipation, mutual respect, love for one's native land, etc.), they participate in the "construction" of a type of vision that hides real political interests. Artists, in their turn, played the role of keepers of the current power.

Socialist Realism as a method was about the future. Constructing and anticipating a specific future were enslaved in flattened images. Authorities were given full power for the sake of these representations. Artists supplied people with ready-made images of the future, depriving people of imagination and participation in politics.

I am also thinking about time in terms of space. The stolen time, past and future. The space of politics occupied by ready-made images.

Is a museum a space of politics? By refusing to stand in the designated place for viewing and copying, Anna Scherbyna chose the most inadequate position. As a naughty student, she stands in the corner of the hall. This position seems disadvantageous: the architectural element — the column — assumes central place in the image. But in this way, the view turns from the paintings on the walls towards the space in which it is shown and to the institutional background of represented images. Thus, the artist is restoring volume to flattened representations, removing them from the artificial time and bringing them back into the real one.

What I am thinking about is about time. Artworks in museums are located at a certain time, and this time is not real. To work with a museum is to be aware of its ability to give a deceptive feeling of time and reality. It entangles sensation because it represents eternity.

To interact with a museum, we tactically "intervene"

in its representative structures. We release the potential of different artists' methods, even those that served to enslave the gaze. We do this by returning the gaze to the present.

In the educational system, copying is used to develop the recognition of certain standards. It is an educational mechanism for structuring the perception of the body, its standardization at the level of feelings. But the practice of copying may release structural ties and expose apparent neutrality. As copying takes place in new conditions in real time, it pulls up new contexts.

In her intervention, Lesia Khomenko also refers to copying techniques and emphasizes the potentialities and dangers of distancing. To fully understand the event and the image, you have to be involved (with all your senses) and, at the same time, be able to reflect on your reactions.

She places the blinding red color of the flag between herself and the painting *Chornomortsi* by Viktor Puzyrkov. She strives to unlearn the normalized perception and cultural prescriptions. At the same time, she fixes the incomprehension of messages from the past. As a result, she captures formal signs, color and tonal spots; her painting is reminiscent of Abstract Expressionism. Her final image looks like it's from another modernity, from the other side of the Cold War. Such art was also an argument in politics, but in itself it was deprived from politics. Abstract images in an abstract space without time, one more story of making art non-political.

In her recent presentation, Lesia compared war images made by Soviet artists with contemporary propaganda images. We now evidence how Russia deliberately uses the perception dependence on stable connections of image and meaning to conceal real interests.

Were all those who did not recognize the intentions of Russia to occupy Ukraine not affected by such images? All those who believed in the discreditation of the Ukrainian protest movement by Russia? I know, there are a lot of such people, I have met them, I have read their texts.

There is an urgent need to cultivate the ability to detect the background, see hidden interests, read between the lines, the ability to think alone and recognize your reactions. Different artistic strategies were elaborated and practiced during our museum seminars, such as contextualization, copying as replaying a recurring situation in new conditions, problematization, and intervention that holds the tension of distancing and involvement in the process.

We need museums as collections of material evidence of people's life practices and values, history, and

the ways in which it is written. The form of research and artistic seminar in and with a museum is creating conditions for the development of our own knowledge in a laboratory mode in which we explore ourselves. In this way, we question our views and feelings, our visual and bodily perception formed by the representative and semantic norms of culture. It is work with the representational mechanism, but it's not aimed at representation. It requires engagement. Ultimately, it is slowness. It is an emancipatory practice.

Such practice requires time, and we did not have enough time. The war stopped us.

The examples of our work accompanying this paper were realized during the research and artistic seminar *Socialist Realism. Seeming to Be Another* at the National Art Museum of Ukraine in Kyiv, in 2017–18.

We chose the most controversial period to try our artistic methods.

For many people, there had still not been sufficient distance to talk about Socialist Realism. There are two opposite extremes among art professionals. Some search for justifying this style by pointing to artistic qualities such as mastery and professionalism or by seeing it as a valuable representation of "universal ideals." Others would rather lock the works of Socialist Realism in the storage basements of museums as pure propaganda. Representatives of fourteen regional art museums arrived in Kyiv for our seminar. Many of them were disappointed with the quantity of Socialist Realism in collections and did not have arguments other than those mentioned above.

There are complications in recognizing the entangled meanings behind Socialist Realism. It is evident that people paid little attention to the awareness of our long coexistence with this type of art and its institutionality, and did not learn how to identify the norms and standards that it created in our reactions and behavior.

Such practice requires time, and we did not have enough time.

The screen goes black for one minute of silence.

That was a minute without an image, without a representation.

It was only one minute of silence. A minute of respect for people who live and die, who fight in Ukraine and with Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention.

Perspective 8

Specters of Picasso

Kike España

Dr., Architect, Urban researcher, La Casa Invisible, Malaga, Spain

Biography

Kike España participates in the social and cultural center La Casa Invisible as activist and researcher, is one of the editors of the publishing house Subtextos, and is part of the collective bookshop Suburbia in Málaga. He trained as an architect and has a PhD in Urban Theory from the University of Seville. He collaborates in the Overtourist City research project of the School of Architecture of the University of Málaga. His more recent publications include the book *Die Sanfte Stadt* (2021, Transversal Texts), the articles “La ciudad contra el Estado” (2020, Scienze Del Territorio) and “Städte zu verkaufen: Prozesse der Enteignung und Praktiken der Wiederaneignung in Spanien” (2019, sub\urban) and the book chapter “The City of Attractions” (2019, MNCA Reina Sofía).



Specters of Picasso

As you know, Picasso was born in Málaga, and that was the only thing that he did in Málaga. I am not going to talk here about the work of Picasso, neither about the person of Picasso, but about what was done in the name of Picasso and some of the ghosts that surround him and us.

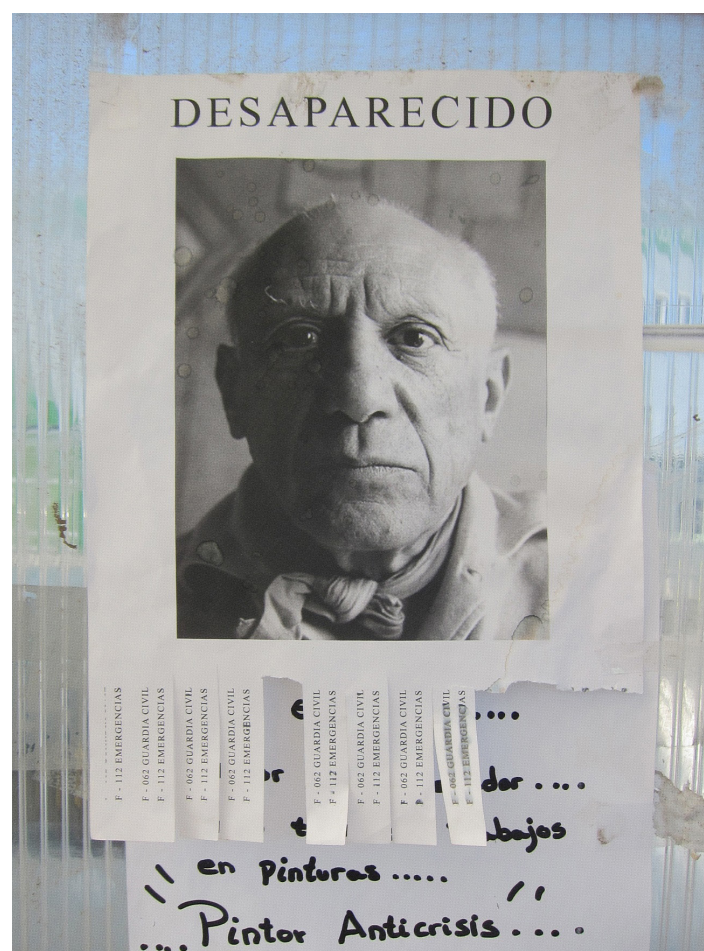
First, a quick reminder that many people forget: Picasso joined the French Communist Party and in this public article on October 24, 1944, in the journal *New Masses*, he explained the following: “during the oppression and the insurrection I felt that that was not enough, that I had to fight not only with my painting but with my whole being.”¹

It isn't really the paintings of Picasso that the city of Málaga has used, but his whole being in order to build a theme park through a spectacular appropriation of his figure, resulting in the museification of the city center of Málaga. The question of “fighting” was totally lost, and that is what I want to work with.

So why “Specters of Picasso”? Well, recalling Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, we can read: “A specter is haunting Europe — the specter of Communism.” Visiting Málaga today, we can say: a specter is haunting Málaga — the specter of Picasso.

And what does this mean? Specters and haunting, communism and Picasso. First, we can say that these concepts are useful to problematize the question that Jacques Derrida ask in the first pages of the book *Specters of Marx* about learning to live:

If “learning to live” remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death alone. What happens between two, and between all the “two's” one likes, such as between life and death, can only maintain itself with some ghost, can only talk with or about some ghost. So it would be necessary to learn spirits. Even and especially if this, the spectral, is not. Even and especially if this, which is neither substance, nor essence, nor existence, is never present as such. The time of the “learning to live,” [...] is leading us: to learn to live with ghosts [...] To live otherwise, and better. [...] And this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations.²



Rogelio López Cuenca (www.lopezcuenca.com/ciudad-picasso)

And this is why it is important to think the relation between Picasso and Málaga, but then, and far more important, about how we inhabit the city, and even further, how we learn to live with ghosts (that are also fantasies, new imaginaries about the city to come).

So, I will develop three ideas:

1. Spectacle and visiting;
2. Specter and haunting; and
3. Conjure

Picasso was always here. Spectacle-Visiting.

That is the touristic obsession of the genius essence of Málaga. The existential reason of the museum strategy to attract sun and beach tourists to the capital. Picasso is built as the essence of Málaga, that is why you should come to visit it. This is the spectacle of Picasso, where the only relation with him, with his absence, is the image, the brand, the money machine.

1 Pablo Ruiz Picasso, “Why I Became a Communist,” *New Masses*, October 24, 1944.

2 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, New York/London: Routledge, xvii.



Rogelio López Cuenca (<https://www.lopezcuena.com/proyectos/surviving-october/octubre1.html>)

And the mode of inhabiting of the spectacle is always the visit, a suspended and superficial relation of attraction where all that matters is the quick relation to the image, and not to the complexities around, behind, and beneath it.

When the City Hall relate to the ghost of Picasso, they do it to neutralize a potential force by silencing in it the revolt. Quoting Derrida: “the return is acceptable provided that the revolt, which initially inspired uprising, indignation, insurrection, revolutionary momentum, does not come back.”³ Only the obedient return is possible in the spectacle, never the revolt that was in the origin of the ghost, the one that created the fantasies and pushed the imagination further.

In 2003, the Picasso Museum was opened and the city started a process of Malagueñization of Picasso and Picassization of Málaga.⁴ Then the Museum Carmen Thyssen, the CAC Museum, the Russian Museum, and the Pompidou Museum were opened within 15 years. With huge canons to pay because they are mostly franchises.

Picasso was never here. Specter/haunting.

Between spectacle and specter there is a big difference, even when they come from the same etymological root: *spectare* (image or seeing), while in spectacle the image is a medium, a tool, in specter the image turns suspect, it becomes skeptical with the image itself. And this opens up a hole, a break, in the dichotomies between presence and absence, in to be or not to be.



Creadorxs Invisibles

With Derrida again:

What is a ghost? What is the effectivity or the presence of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum? Is there there, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up?⁵

A specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because *it begins by coming back*.⁶

So, it is about the relation between the appearing, disappearing, and re-appearing.

Conjuring. The invisible

Coming back to the fighting. A revolution is what brings the specter out of its image, out of time, out of joint.

For that, there is this third concept, that is: conjuring

1. A conspiracy to struggle against a superior power.
2. Evoke or convoke a spirit.
3. The magical exorcism that tends to expulse the evil spirit.

La Invisible is this coming together of political/activist and cultural/artistic practices, where you don't know

3 Ídem, 38.

4 As we can see in the work *Ciudad Picasso, Surviving Picasso, and Casi de todo Picasso* by Rogelio López Cuenca and Elo Vega

5 Ídem, 10.

6 Ídem, 11.



Creadorxs Invisibles

any more where the limit between one thing and the other lies. It blurs in the concrete practices. Specters, where there are not individual bodies and where there are no invisible superheroines. It is a transversal and invisible force haunting the city. Because the democracy to come, the communism to come, is already here and now, fighting, haunting the city, inhabiting the invisible.

Last point. From this place I just want to remind you of the importance of supporting and defending institutionally and publicly self-managed spaces such as La Casa Invisible that are in great danger. Its importance lies not only in the fact that it is a space for cultural and social experimentation, but especially in its undisciplined and disobedient power. Because in these practices the democracy to come is already haunting the present, this should be the task; fighting to not fall into the spectacle, fighting to care for the specters and fighting to conspire with the ghosts. Only then we would be able to be attentive, when museums stop being tourist hosts and learn to live with ghosts.

Thank you very much and I leave you our last work with the artists Libia Castro and Olafur Olafson

in La Casa Invisible, that is a light sculpture on the façade of the building announcing the starting of the renovation, but of a renovation to come. It is urgent to fight the authoritarianism of understanding culture/art/museums as spectacular places to visit and not as the underground around that we inhabit.

“Specters are always there, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet.”⁷

7 Idem, 221.

Perspective 9

The Symbol & the Substance: The Ethics of Care in an Embattled World

Meenakshi Gopinath

Founder-Director, Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), New Delhi, India

Biography

Meenakshi Gopinath is currently Chair, Centre for Policy Research, and Founder-Director of Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), an initiative that promotes the leadership of South Asian women in the areas of peace, international affairs, and regional cooperation. She is also Principal Emerita of Lady Shri Ram College, a premier women's institution in India. A member of multi-track peace initiatives in South Asia, Meenakshi's work and several publications focus on Gender, Security, Peacebuilding, and Education. Her interests also include issues of human rights and gender, conflict transformation, Buddhist and Gandhian philosophy, and the performing Arts. She was the first woman to serve on the National Security Advisory Board of India. She serves on the boards of several civil society initiatives for peace and nonviolence as well as educational institutes.



In recognition of her contribution to the field of women's education and empowerment, she has received several national and international awards including the National Honour of Padma Shri. She also held the L.M. Singhvi fellowship at the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies (DDMI), University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Visiting MacArthur Senior Fellowship at Nanyang University, Singapore, was conferred the Honorary Doctorate Degree of Letters (Honoris Causa) for significant contribution to the education of women and commitment to global peace, La Trobe University, Australia. She was Distinguished Visiting Scholar, School of Social Sciences, Monash University (2015).



People on the run, people on the move

*The Symbol & the Substance:
The Ethics of Care in an Embattled World*

Chairperson, the iconic Manuel Borja Vilel, co-panellists and friends. It is an honor and pleasure for me to join this year's CÍMAM annual Conference. Thank you for the opportunity, specially to Imma and Inés for their faith and Hannah for her patient support during my periods of ambivalence and diffidence, and to the community of humanists, scholars, artists revolutionaries, the sponsor Azcuy Foundation, and to CÍMAM, for providing such a unique and fecund context in a unique space of civilizational and cultural confluence. I am much the poorer for not being there in person. But the rich cultural energy is palpable even from where I sit in faraway India.

My presentation on "Recovering an Ethics of Care," attempts to speak to the exhortation of this dialogic space. How do we sculpt permeable practices that nurture common ground? How do we transcend conventional borders and boundaries? How do we build on our commonalities while recognizing our differences? How do we transcend cartographic anxieties so that, when we build fences, we are sensitive to what we are "walling in and walling out," as Foster said.

We heard yesterday very compelling pleas calling out the fetishization and reifications of "Coloniality" — and the Orientalist gaze in the context of indigenous cultural traditions — divesting them of contextuality, as they stand sanitized in the modernist museum, exoticized without empathy. I am not, alas an artist,

but that was a jolting reminder of our current states of alienation; a forgetting of the spirit of *Ubuntu*, "I am because you are."

This is one among the several contradictions we live by today in a globalizing world — porous geographical borders — combined with cartographic anxieties. Crossings over fences and walls — people on the move, people on the run — the "nowhere" people, illegal migrants, stateless, stripped of identity and dignity, seeking succor, seeking humanity. This is papered over by the paradigms of neo-liberal hubris and promises of potential security.

The world today is, as Marx said, in a liminal space when all "that is solid melts into air," where the old is dying and the new is not yet born, as Marshal Berman says, where for many it is to live a life of paradox and contradiction — a fateful simultaneity of winter and spring, where everything seems pregnant with its contrary; where the unprecedented breakthroughs in science and technology coexist with symptoms of decay and despair.

In addition, the disruptions caused by Covid have completely reconfigured the world as we knew it — revealing the underbelly of the ethnocentric, anthropocentric, and androcentric paradigms of progress and its attendant pathologies: "the end of living — the beginning of survival," as the American Indian Chief Sealth had apocalyptically declared at the Treaty Commission in the 1850s when the lands of the indigenous people, the original inhabitants of America were being forcibly taken away from them.

Covid brought tectonic shifts in our ways of *seeing*, *being*, and *doing*. It brought to our frame — both the strengths and vulnerabilities of our *connections* in an increasingly fragile planet where “connectivity” is a buzz word. It showed up enormous acts of exclusion and violence by states armed with military arsenal. Yet the enormous acts of courage, fortitude, selfless service, and empathy by ordinary people reminded us that “hospitality” in a radical sense is possible even in the most hostile of situations. The community kitchens and makeshift medical facilities that ordinary citizens in India provided to the afflicted and vulnerable was a phenomenal anchor when the state itself had retreated.

Our lenses often blur out, the ubiquity of camps that dot our global landscape, and “fence” refugees with pervasive violence, and where what Giorgio Agamben calls the “State of Exception” becomes the norm of governance where the Rule of Law is thrown to the winds, whether with Rohingya, Ukrainians, Afghans, Syrians, Acehnese, Kashmiris in Jammu, across countries in Africa and Asia and Latin America, in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, East Timor, Sudan to name a few.

We are all familiar with the heart-rending picture of the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi, being washed ashore in Turkey while his parents were



The Spirit of “Langar”

fleeing Syria in 2015. Many such “border crossings” remind us of what Warsan Shire the British Somalian poet wrote in her poem HOME, giving voice to the experience of refugees:

“no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as
well.....
you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land
I want to go home,
but home is the mouth of a shark
home is the barrel of the gun
and no one would leave home
unless home chased you to the shore....”

Covid also exacerbated the vulnerabilities of a burgeoning new class of people The Precariat, especially in the Global South, and the growing disparities between the haves and have nots, with the two poles of wealth and dispossession swelling side-by-side. Now you have the Global South here in Europe — manifest and confusing — challenging the canvas of coexistence.

This image of a little street boy in India, staring through a glass wall into a restaurant, opulent with food, is strangely reminiscent of the story of “The Little Match Girl” by Hans Christian Anderson written in 1845 about a dying street-child’s dreams and hopes for a better life. A hundred and eighty years later, Europe had ostensibly put the tragedy of poverty and deprivation squarely behind it! And yet today there emerge new ghettos!

In my own country, India, which saw nearly five-million displacements on account of disasters in 2021, there were tragic stories of migrant workers who in their desperation to reach their villages, after suddenly losing their livelihoods in the urban centers, chose every possible mode of transport, walking hundreds of miles to sanctuary when the government relaxed lockdown rules. This was a mass exodus not witnessed since the partition of India in 1947 where two-million were killed and nearly twenty-million displaced.

In the face of official apathy, some succor was provided in terms of food and medicines by ordinary citizen initiatives opening *langars* or community kitchens in places of worship, and catering to people across fault lines of caste, class, religion, and gender. This was “Ubuntu” at work.

In India, we also saw these disparities, contradictions, and paradoxes enter the education spaces, where the digital divide played itself out in the online modes of instruction with a large number of students simply without access to the basic equipment and the technological, mental, and emotional skills, and indeed the resilience, to deal with the disruption and discontinuities that will most likely define this century.

The starkness of new exclusions brought out in the National Sample Survey 2018, where only 9% households have digital infrastructure (21% Urban, 4% rural), was symbolized by the poignant story of a boy on a hill trying to access his lessons online, who subsequently fell to his death. For many, school access during the Corona pandemic, especially in the rural areas, meant climbing trees to get connectivity.

The pandemic highlighted the need for teachers to be sensitive to intersectionalities — disparities of class, region, race/caste, gender ethnicity, and digital divides — and equip themselves with mentoring skills in order to infuse the classroom with the ethics of care and opportunities for healing, through new pedagogies of collaboration and coexistence. To also know that every learner may have a different need, a universe of possibilities and challenges unique to themselves, in the midst of the bewildering changes and unanticipated technologies they confront. Teachers across the world handled these challenges with sensitivity and empathetic connection. Capturing the spirit of the Museum of Redemption and the Metabolic university touched upon so eloquently yesterday, bridging what are seen as discrete spaces.

So, how have communities reconfigured care work and the ethics of care during the pandemic and in situations of conflict. Women have been in the forefront of this, developing a new grammar of engagement, finessing a new lexicon that both transgresses received paradigms and bricolages around opaque walls to pry open spaces hitherto untenanted.

They have done it as teachers, combating both situational and epistemic injustice; as Corona warriors and domestic workers on the frontlines pushing for recognizing “invisibilized” care work and labor; as sustainers and nourishers of families, countering misleading images of the “ethics of care” as confined purely within the private sphere; as environmental activists and protectors of biodiversity, foregrounding indigenous knowledge systems of sustainability, countering the rapacious corporatization of agriculture.

Most importantly, they have engaged as peace builders forging transversal solidarities across geographical borders and boundaries, countering cultures of militarism to build common cause against

weapons and nuclearization, foregrounding issues of human security, building on the several women’s movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that remain invisibilized, and drawing from the shared palimpsest of their foremothers in the Irish Peace process, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and the several Mothers’ movements the world over.

What then of the Attentive Museum — the Mindful Museum — stepping out into the heat and dust of subaltern aspirations? There have been several philosophical articulations on the Purpose of Art by great art historians, scholars, and artists. So, I shall not venture there.

But it would be interesting to shift our focus away from “depicting” the dispossessed towards developing frameworks on how the marginalized experience Art. What is the Art of their everyday lives, that breaks the hierarchies between “artist” and “artisans.” The epiphanies that lie hidden in the quotidian?

The Attentive Museum then encourages fluidity and porosity by “stepping into the shoes of the other”: an immersive meditative experience of spaces in the shadows? How does what we consider to be Art speak with them — not just of them or to them? What emotions does it trigger?

Do we see it as an alternative civic sphere, connecting to its larger ecosystem with non-proprietary creativity with new norms of engagement; a kind of artist’s bio-mimicry?

A related question is: how does Art not only speak but listen? What are the artistic protocols of active listening? The concept of the *Rasika* in Indian art and aesthetics is about being skilled in sharing the fluid essence of the savor of depiction or performance. The *Rasa* — the taste, the flavor of the performance — characterizes the connoisseur’s affective response to the “performance” as articulated in Bharata’s *Natyashastra* (a treatise on Dramaturgy) in the second-century BCE. The qualified appreciator or aesthete is not just a passive “consumer.” There is an effacement of distance, spatial or emotional, here. The *Rasika* has to become a worthy vessel, and invest in fine tuning her sensibilities. Immersion in the *Rasa* becomes a species of self-knowledge. a form of self-contemplation.

It involves a “tacit compact” between the “performance” and the appreciator, as a fluid work-in-progress. At root it draws in the element of empathy not just the cognitive experience/appreciation. It approximates what athletes often experience as “being in the zone.” Broadly, the nine *Rasas* signal



Afghan Girl: The Sharbat Gula Story. Photo: Steve McCurry for *The National Geographic Magazine*.

a spectrum of emotions — love, compassion, anger, fear, jealousy, disgust, wonder, courage, and peace — and the interstices between them. It anticipates the Stanislavskian principle of enriching the proximate by bringing in the flavor of what is not immediately seen, but yet impinges on it.

How can the Attentive Museum present the interplay between vulnerability and resilience, indifference and altruism, a chiaroscuro to capture the realities that surround us, made even more dramatic by our experience of Covid? It is necessary to build an archive around resilience and agency. The story of Sharbat Gula is a striking metaphor here. A photograph, titled *Afghan Girl*, appeared on the June 1985 cover of *National Geographic*. It was the image of Sharbat Gula. The image of her face, with a red scarf draped loosely over her head and her eyes staring directly into the camera, was named “the most recognized photograph” in the magazine’s history, and the cover is one of *National Geographic*’s best known.

Gula’s green eyes have been the subject of much commentary. Her photograph was taken by National Geographic Society photographer, Steve McCurry, and the image was described as an unusual combination of grittiness and glamor. To me the photo was of artistic prescience — a tragic anticipation of the challenges that awaited the subject/object, an unfolding destiny of displacement and erasure.

Sharbat Gula was one of the students in an informal school at the Nasir Bagh Afghan refugee camp in 1984 on the edge of Peshawar in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The camp was opened in 1980 following the outbreak of the Soviet-Afghan War and at one time had a population of 100,000 refugees. The camp was closed down by UNHCR in May 2002, with most refugees returning to Afghanistan (after the ousting of the Taliban) the remainder moving to other camps in the region

Steve McCurry made several unsuccessful attempts during the 1990s to find Gula. In January 2002, a *National Geographic* team traveled to Afghanistan to find her. Upon learning that the Nasir Bagh refugee camp was soon to close, McCurry inquired of its remaining residents and was able to send word to her hometown. Several women falsely identified themselves as the *Afghan Girl*. In addition, after being shown the 1984 photograph, several young men erroneously identified her as their wife.

The team found Gula, then around age 30, in a remote region of Afghanistan; she had returned to her native country from the refugee camp in 1992. Her identity was confirmed by John Daugman using iris recognition. She recalled being photographed. She had been photographed on only three occasions: in 1984 and during the search for her when a *National Geographic* producer took the identifying photographs that led to the reunion with McCurry. She herself had never seen *Afghan Girl* until it was shown to her in 2002: a typical example of objectification, denied voice, and in the shadows; not a subject of her own history.

On October 26, 2016, Pakistan’s Federal Investigation Agency arrested Gula for living in Pakistan with forged documents. She was sentenced to fifteen days in detention and deported to Afghanistan. With its takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban threatened or intimidated high-profile women. The *Afghan Girl* photograph had made Gula globally famous, and her prominence put her in danger. At her request, the Italian Government evacuated her to Italy in late November 2021. Her face ironically becoming the cause of her own erasure.

We need a new humanizing lexicon in the age of Anthropocene to humanize the overwhelming invasion of technology. We need to make despair unconvincing and hope practical in the contexts that overwhelm us today: violent conflicts, climate change, pandemic, and critical technologies. We need Art that is as sensitive to the pain on our planet as to the beauty of a bud unfolding.

We need the Attentive Museum to comfort the afflicted, but also afflict the complacently comfortable when needed. We need the language of Art to remind us of the pervasive interconnectedness of all sentient Beings.

We also need Art to transcend the narcissism of ascriptive identities, the “us vs them” paradigms, their particular inclusions and exclusions.

Ultimately, all Art is the ability to surrender the ego through the deeper knowledge of the cycle of impermanence. In India, traditionally, artists never signed their names on their works of art. This only

began during the country's colonial experience of "modernity." Their earlier traditions had taught them to aspire to be refined instruments through which a larger impulse and energy could find utterance.

This is best reflected in the meticulous care and mastery that goes into the making of the sacred sand Mandala by Buddhist monks and practitioners. The Mandala is an intricate and colored votive pattern that is swept away at the conclusion of the ritual or ceremony. It is at one level a meditation on nothingness or *Sunyata*, on impermanence, on the absence of inherent existence outside of our interconnectedness. It is a reminder that you never step into the same river twice, as Heraclitus observed. It invokes fluidity, not fixity, the questioning of certitudes and the understanding of light and shadow.

As Gandhi said:

In the midst of death, life persists
In the midst of untruth, truth persists
In the midst of darkness, light persists.

It is the consciousness that moves from the metaphor of the circle with one fixed center to the fluidity of the ellipsis, opening up greater spaces for the imagination; with an abiding space to keep intuition and presence awakened. It is tuned to the higher harmonic of synchronicity and serendipity imbued in the Japanese concept of *uketamo*.

Heidegger explains the essence of Art in terms of concepts of Being and Truth. It is not only a way of expressing the element of truth in a culture, but the means of creating it and providing a springboard from where "that which is" can be revealed. There is here a palpable sense of "abiding" in--with empathy, as an aspect of the creative process.

And, finally as T.S. Elliot reminds us, "we must not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we began, and know the place for the first time." A going inward, to revisit the source is the implicit message here. The Proustian wisdom is that the true voyage of discovery lies in not merely seeking new landscapes, but having new eyes. The Attentive Museum is truly about that journey!

I leave you with the image of the Cosmic Swan, the vehicle of the Goddess of wisdom and knowledge in Indian iconography. A denizen of three worlds — land, water, and ether — the consciousness that experiences all worlds with equanimity, adaptability, and resilience and yet transcends them all.



The Cosmic Swan

Colophon

The Attentive Museum. Permeable Practices for a Common Ground

Contributors

- Denise Ferreira da Silva
- Emily Jacir
- Bart de Baere
- Iris Dressler
- Nuria Enguita
- Clémentine Deliss
- Sandra Gamarra Heshiki
- Sethembile Msezane
- Lada Nakonechna
- Philip Rizk
- Kike España
- Meenakshi Gopinath

Online publication by

Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma
CÍMAM

With the generous support of

- Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma
- Byucksan Foundation, Seoul
- Mercedes Vilardell
- Office for Contemporary Art Norway

Copyedited by

- Keith Patrick

Coordinated by

- Susana Carnicero
- Inés Jover

Graphic Design and typography

- Studio Rogier Delfos

CÍMAM 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
November 11–13, Mallorca, Spain

Co-organized by

- Government of the Balearic Islands
- Consell de Mallorca
- Palma City Council
- Ministry of Culture and Sports

In-kind support by

- Institut Ramón Llull
- CaixaForum Palma
- Fundación ARCO
- Consell Insular d'Eivissa (Departament de Cultura, Educació i Patrimoni)
- MACE-Museu d'Art Contemporani d'Eivissa
- Hauser & Wirth Menorca
- Art Palma
- ADACE (Association of Directors of Contemporary Art in Spain)
- Mercedes Vilardell
- Cacao Sampaka

Visits

- Fundació Miró Mallorca
- Museu Fundación Juan March
- CaixaForum Palma
- MACE Museu d'Art Contemporani d'Eivissa (Eivissa-Ibiza)
- Museu Casa Broner (Eivissa-Ibiza)
- Catedral — Basílica de Santa Maria de Mallorca
- ALTTRA: Teresa Margolles
- Casa Planas
- Casal Solleric
- Fran Reus Gallery
- Hauser & Wirth (Menorca)
- Horrach Moya Gallery
- Kewenig Gallery
- L21 LAB
- Pelaires Gallery
- Xavier Fiol Gallery
- Pep Llabrés Art Contemporani
- Artist's studio: Alicia Framis (Menorca)
- Artist's studio: Ana Laura Aláez
- Artist's studio: Bernardí Roig
- Artist's studio: Gary Hill
- Artist's studio: Santiago Sierra (Menorca)
- Artist's studio: Susy Gomez

Travel Grant Program funded by

- The Getty Foundation, Los Angeles
- Byucksan Cultural Foundation, Seoul
- OCA — Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo
- Mercedes Vilardell, London/Mallorca
- SAHA — Supporting Contemporary Art from Turkey, İstanbul
- Beijing Public Art and Culture Foundation, Beijing
- Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), Madrid

Members of the CÍMAM 2022 Contents Committee

- Manuel Borja-Villel, CÍMAM Honorary Member, Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.
- Saskia Bos, CÍMAM Board Member, Independent Curator, and Critic, Amsterdam.
- Sarah Glennie, CÍMAM Board Member, Director, National College of Art and Design, Dublin.
- Mami Kataoka, CÍMAM President 2020–22, Director, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo.
- Malgorzata Ludwisiak, CÍMAM Board Member, Chief Curator, Department of Modern Art National Museum in Gdansk.
- Agustín Pérez Rubio, (Chair of Contents Committee), CÍMAM Board Member, Independent Curator, Madrid.
- Imma Prieto, Director, Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma, Palma, Mallorca.
- Berta Sureda, Independent Culture Researcher and Manager, Palma, Mallorca

CÍMAM 2020–22 Board Members

- Mami Kataoka, President of CÍMAM, Director, Mori Art Museum (Tokyo).
- Suzanne Cotter, Secretary-Treasurer of CÍMAM, Director, Mudam Luxembourg-Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Luxembourg).
- Bart de Baere, General and Artistic Director, M HKA—Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (Belgium).
- Saskia Bos, Independent Curator and Critic (Amsterdam).
- Calin Dan, General Director, MNAC Bucharest National Museum of Contemporary Art (Bucharest).
- Rhana Devenport, Director, Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide).
- Sarah Glennie, Director, National College of Art and Design (Ireland).
- Malgorzata Ludwisiak, Chief Curator, Department of Modern Art National Museum in Gdansk (Warsaw).
- Frances Morris, Director, Tate Modern (London).
- Victoria Noorthoorn, Director, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires).
- Ann-Sofi Noring, Vice-Chancellor/Chairman, Royal Academy/Swedish Arts Grants Committee (Sweden).
- Agustín Pérez-Rubio, Independent Curator (Madrid).
- Suhanya Raffel, Director, M+ (Hong Kong).
- Eugene Tan, Director, National Gallery Singapore and the Singapore Art Museum (Singapore).
- Ernestine White-Mifetu Ernestine White-Mifetu, Curator of African Art, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, (New York).

CÍMAM Major Patron

- Fundación Azcuay, Buenos Aires, Argentina

CÍMAM Founding Patrons

- Fundación “la Caixa”, Barcelona, Spain
- Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, Republic of Korea
- Fondation LVMH, Paris, France
- Marc and Josée Gensollen, Marseille, France
- Fukutake Foundation, Naoshima, Japan

CÍMAM Patrons

- Claudio Engel, Santiago, Chile
- Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

CÍMAM Supporters

- Fundación Botín, Santander, Spain
- Albert M.A. Groot, Sittard, Netherlands
- Sherman Centre for Culture and Ideas (SCCI), Paddington, Australia
- SAHA—Supporting Contemporary Art from Turkey, İstanbul, Turkey

CÍMAM e-card in-kind provider

- MuseumAnywhere, Washington, USA

CÍMAM International Committee of Museums and Collections of Modern Art is an Affiliated Organization of ICOM

- Emma Nardi, President
- Peter Keller, Director General

CÍMAM — International Committee of Museums and Collections of Modern Art

CÍMAM Executive Office

- MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona
Plaça dels Àngels, 1
08001 Barcelona
Spain
- Inés Jover
Director Executive Office
inesjover@cimam.org
- Susana Carnicero
Administration and Production
conference@cimam.org
- Mireia Azuara
Press and Communication
Barcelona, Spain
communication@cimam.org

© March 2023 CÍMAM International Committee of Museums and Collections of Modern Art and the authors.

CÍMAM's graphic identity & CÍMAM 2022 Conference graphic design by Studio Rogier Delfos.

