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Front cover photo: Garden School, Museum of Solidarity, 2019 (photo: Lorna Remmele). Our publications are available through ProQM, Berlin / With gratitude and respect to: University of Chicago archive unit, Museum of Solidarity Santiago de Chile, the Jackson Cooperation community, Making Futures School / Free Berlin is free. Pass it on.

# F R E E #8

*the open city, caring states, solidarity economies, loneliness, staying together, border academy, the postponed, the national service army, paradigm of common life, crafting intersectional solidarities, neighborhood initiatives, parliament of the public bench, strategies of repair, by way of poor pedagogies – the labyrinth of invention, spill, roses \*\*\* freedom is a constant act, friendship, following the footsteps of a rag doll dance, listening, lis-*



# B E R L I N

The Care Collective

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# The Care Manifesto

Ideas from *The Care Manifesto*, by the Care Collective,  
forthcoming with Verso.

We are in a global crisis: a new historical moment. The days pass, the virus expands its reach, fatalities rise and the world goes into unprecedented lockdown. Yet the current crisis is not only the result of a new pathogen circulating around the world. It is also a crisis of care, the result of decades of neoliberal policies prioritizing profit over people. Years of austerity measures, deregulation and privatisation, alongside the devaluing of care work has meant that neoliberal nation states—particularly countries like the US, the UK and Brazil—are unable to cope with the spread of coronavirus. Governments, which have for too long based their policies on the needs of the few and ‘economic growth’, are scrambling to find solutions.

Yet this global calamity is also a moment of profound rupture where many of the old rules no longer apply—and where governments can change our reality in a blink of an eye. As with all moments of rupture where norms crumble, the current one also provides us with a critical opportunity: an opportunity to imagine and create a different world—not just in the immediate but also in the long term. And if the pandemic has taught us anything so far, it is that we are in urgent need of a politics that puts care front and centre of life.

In the midst of this global crisis we have all been reminded of how vital robust care services are. Care is not *only* the ‘hands-on’ care people do when directly looking after the physical and emotional needs of others. ‘Care’ is also an enduring social capacity and practice involving the nurturing of all that is necessary for the welfare and flourishing of human and non-human life.

What, then, would happen if we were indeed to begin to place care at the very centre of life, not just for short term crisis, but the longer term?

### Interdependence

To imagine a world organised around care, we must first begin by recognising the myriad ways in which our survival is always contingent on others. A caring politics must first and foremost acknowledge our *interdependence* alongside the ambivalence and anxiety these connections routinely generate. Recognising our needs both to give and receive care not only provides us with a sense of our common humanity, but also enables us to confront our shared fears of human frailty rather than project them onto others. Acknowledging the complexity of shared human dependencies enhances our ability to reimagine and participate more fully in democratic processes on all levels

of society, because working with and through contradictory emotions are key to building democratic communities everywhere. Although we can never eliminate care’s difficulties, we can certainly mitigate them through building more caring kinships, communities, economies, states and worlds.

### Caring Kinships

The traditional nuclear family with the mother at its centre still provides the dominant prototype for care and kinship. This is true even as same-sex couples have been increasingly incorporated into the traditional nuclear family model. Our circles of care have not broadened out in recent decades but actually remain painfully narrow.

Yet it is only by proliferating our circles of care—in the first instance by expanding our notion of kinship—that we can achieve the psychic infrastructures necessary for building a caring society that has universal care as its foundation. Diverse forms of care between all human and non-human creatures need to be recognised and valued. This is what we call ‘an ethics of promiscuous care’.

Promiscuous care means caring *more* and in ways that remain experimental and extensive by current standards. It means multiplying who we care for and how. Building on historical formations of ‘alternative’ care giving practices, we need to create the capacity for a more capacious notion of care. This is challenging because neoliberal capitalism’s underfunding and undermining of care have often led to paranoid and chauvinist caring imaginaries—looking after only ‘our own’. With adequate resources, time and labour people can feel secure enough to care for, about and with strangers as if they were kin. Such capacities are flourishing at the moment via the Covid-19 Mutual Aid groups, sprouting up in local areas during the pandemic, just as they did with AIDs support networks in the 1980s.[i]

Promiscuous care recognises that we *all* have the capacity to care—not just mothers, and not just women—and that all our lives are improved when we care and are cared for, and when we care together. To encourage promiscuous care means building institutions that are both capacious and agile enough to recognise and resource wider forms of care at the level of kinship. It means ending financial discrimination against single mothers,[ii] teaching boys emotional literacy and housework, and expanding care across communities.

## Caring Communities

Questions of care are not just bound up with the intimacy of very close relationships. They are also shaped in the localities we inhabit and move through: in local communities, neighbourhoods, libraries, schools and parks, in our social networks, and our group belongings. But the deliberate rolling back of public welfare provision, replaced by global corporate commodity chains, have generated profoundly unhealthy community contexts for care. We see this in the UK in the decimation of the social care system and local hospitals cutting 17,000 beds over the past decade alone.

Communities that care stop the hoarding of resources by the few. Instead, caring communities need to prioritise *the commons*. Communities based on care ensure the creation of collective *public spaces* as well as objects: they encourage a sharing infrastructure. This means reversing neoliberalism's compulsion to privatize everything.

Corporate control over increasingly atomised, impoverished and divided communities produces organised loneliness. Instead, the local spaces we traverse need to be built upon the desire for mutual thriving. This means cheap or free public transport and public lending facilities—local libraries of tools and equipment in addition to books. It means ending the costly and damaging outsourcing of care and other services by bringing them back into the public sector, or 'insourcing'. In many countries this is process is happening on a temporary basis right now. These caring infrastructures need to become the new normal, supported by the state—not simply a product of crisis to be abandoned afterwards.

Instead of rewarding large corporations at a time of crisis, we need to deepen democratic participation and create co-operative communities: communities that enable us to connect, to support each other in our complex needs and mutual dependency. This means using progressive forms of municipalism to expand public space, support co-operatives and shared resources; and it means being supported by caring states.

## Caring States

A state can be caring if notions of belonging are based on recognition of mutual interdependencies rather than on ethno-cultural identity and racialised borders. A caring state is one in which the provision for all of our basic needs and a sharing infrastructure are ensured while, at the

same time, participatory democracy, rather than authoritarianism, is deepened at every level, and the health of the environment is prioritised. This, of course, means turning the current priorities of the state on their head as well as renewing models of welfare and social provision, which even the most neoliberalised states are revamping to deal with the current pandemic. The UK, for instance, has now introduced sweeping, yet temporary, forms of welfare provision to "save the liberal free market"[iii].

The caring state, however, refuses the post-war Welfare state's rigid hierarchies and sexual and ethnic division of labour, as well as all racialised policies. Caring states need to rebuild and safeguard affordable housing, along with high-quality public schooling, university education, vocational training and health care. Public provision in the caring state does not revolve around cultivating dependences but what disability activists call 'strategic autonomy and independence', premised upon everyone receiving what they need both to thrive, with some sense of agency in the world. In other words, the state, while necessary to ensure the smooth provision of services and resources, must also be responsible for facilitating *greater* democratic engagement among communities.

By prioritising a care-based infrastructure based upon recognition of our interdependencies and vulnerabilities, while ensuring all the necessary conditions for the mutual thriving of all, a caring state undermines the conditions that produce economic and environmental refugees and migrants. While no state can ever completely eliminate human aggression, relations of domination, or natural and human-made disasters, only a caring state provides the necessary conditions for the vast majority to flourish.

## Caring Economies

We need caring exchange arrangements that focus on cooperative networks of mutual support and which redistribute social and material wealth according to everyone's needs—what we call a "universal care" model—at the local, national and, ultimately, international levels; and in which essential goods are collectivised. Markets should be regulated, democratically governed, and as egalitarian, participatory, environmentally sustainable, and caring, as possible. Wherever possible they also need to be locally embedded, since local markets are better suited for cultivating relationships among producers, traders and consumers, promoting green processes and stimulating community-making.



More democratic and egalitarian modes of ownership and governance are crucial, then, as is the collectivisation and nationalisation of key industries as well as the protection of our vital care infrastructures from the forces of marketisation and financialization. Caring markets can only be imagined as part of economies that prioritise people and other living creatures over profit. In the current pandemic, this need to put people first has become crystal clear, and even reluctant governments have now been forced to call upon manufacturers and those with relevant expertise to help make ventilators as part of a national effort.

### Care for the World

A caring world can only be built from the understanding that we are all dependent upon the systems and networks, animate and inanimate, that sustain life across the planet. Creating such a world entails broadening out from rebuilding and democratising social infrastructures and shared spaces at local, community and national levels into expanding alliances with progressive movements and institutions everywhere.

This means first and foremost rolling out a Green New Deal on a transnational level, while working toward the creation and democratisation of transnational institutions and networks whose goals are centred upon ensuring that the world's population and the world itself are cared for.

Despite Trump's pronouncements, the pandemic highlights the permeability of all borders. While caring states would provide all their inhabitants with a sense of safety, their borders need to be co-ordinated to ensure that, for instance, the current inevitability of migration does not drain certain parts of the world of needed population whilst overcrowding others. This will only be possible if care informs all other dimensions of our lives, diminishing the conditions that propels people to flee their homes out of economic necessity, war or climate emergency.

Caring states with sustainable economies and porous borders are the best possible route to global care and to transnational conviviality and cosmopolitanism, which sees through the hollow certainties of nationalism and cultivates a transnational orientation of care towards the stranger. Our caring imaginaries must move beyond the nation state and to the furthest reaches of the 'strangest' parts of the planet.

This brings us full circle. In the end, it is only by valorising rather than disavowing our *global* interdependencies

that we can create any kind of caring world. Powerful corporations have often been the first to profit from the disasters their careless ways have helped to produce and exacerbate. But historically the opposite has also been true. Ruptures have paved the way for radical progressive change, as happened in the wake of WWII with the growth of welfare in many Western states and with successful independence struggles in former European colonies.

The challenge today is to build upon both those earlier moments of radical change and the current optic of what might, in fact, be possible in order to wrest back control from the power-grabbing 1% and their tyranny of social carelessness. For once, care for the vulnerable is being taken seriously, but this will disappear overnight—till the next crisis—unless we start to build more enduring and participatory infrastructures of and for care at every scale of life.

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The text first appeared on the Verso Blog site on March 26, 2020. <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs>

Notes:

- i] See also Pirate Care syllabus: [https://syllabus.pirate.care/topic/coronanotes/?fbclid=IwAR2INAsfGpdwg9t\\_60\\_Myn1ZFJ\\_OWZQ140p6gGVM\\_liv1yDvPG0XEtKrH9M](https://syllabus.pirate.care/topic/coronanotes/?fbclid=IwAR2INAsfGpdwg9t_60_Myn1ZFJ_OWZQ140p6gGVM_liv1yDvPG0XEtKrH9M)
- [ii] <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FINAL-Covid-19-briefing.pdf>
- [iii] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/03/20/boris-must-become-socialist-face-nationalising-entire-economy/>

# IMAGINATION TAKING POWER:

KALI AKUNO ON IMAGINATION  
& “THE WAYS WE CAN & MUST  
RESIST” /

with Rob Hopkins



As one of the co-founders and now Executive Director of the non-profit division of Cooperation Jackson, Kali Akuno is working to transform the city into 'a beacon of radical politics'. For the uninitiated, Jackson is the capital city of Mississippi, with a population of around 200,000 people, its 80% black population making it one of the blackest cities in the US, and with 60% of people living below the poverty line. Cooperation Jackson is working, in a context of colonialism, white supremacy and patriarchy, to upend these dynamics through the building of a solidarity economy, to, as he puts it, "transform the material circumstances of the people living in Jackson". This work has been aided by the election, in Jackson, of a number of radical and progressive politicians, including Mayor Chokwe Lumumba, who died in 2014, and more recently his son, Chokwe Antar Lumumba. What's happening in Jackson is a story that has spread around the world and inspired many others to follow suit. It is work that is firmly rooted in the asking of 'What If?' questions, and the creation of new models which reimagine what an economy can be. It was a huge honour then to recently be able to speak to Kali. Much of the work is rooted in what Kali refers to as "the infamous Jackson-Kush Plan", the founding vision document that underpins much of what is happening in the city today. I started by asking him to tell me more about it:

Kali: I was the principal author of the plan as it came to the public, but it was something that was put together first as a study group within the New Afrikan People's Organization, and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. Really shortly after September 11 was when the study group first started to come together to try to adjust to the new political reality that we saw evolving within the United States. One of our main concerns was that many of the practices and acts that were technically illegal in the 50s, 60s and 70s, under the guise of the counter-intelligence programme, or COINTELPRO being operated by the FBI, the Patriot Act, and things like it, the Executive Orders that George Bush signed in secret in the summer we made public, but they were going to make all of the most egregious acts of spying and espionage, both internationally and domestically, it was going to make them legal, and that came to pass.

We try to think that since our organisation and other organisations have been targeted by these programmes in the past, we needed to use some foresight and try to do some repositioning of ourselves, to be able to both execute our own vision and notion of social liberation and how to do it under new circumstances. After some trial and experiment, over about a five year period, it was really after Hurricane Katrina, and its overall political and social impact, that the Jackson-Kush Plan came into focus. One of the things that was very clear was that the displacement of the internally displaced persons from New Orleans and throughout southern Mississippi and Louisiana, it changed the political calculus. It enabled more ultra-conservative members to be elected in Congress in both states, because those communities had basically been moved out and it set up some new voting districts and voting dynamics. We looked at that and said, "Okay, how can we change this situation?"

Recognising where we had our strength and what we needed to build upon we came up with the basis of where our organisation would try to concentrate its energy and concentrate its forces. After about a year of going through our internal analysis, everything just kept looking at Jackson Mississippi. So in 2006 we really started to concentrate on building on the historical legacy – of the New Afrikan Independence movement, which our organisation came out in its work in Mississippi, in Jackson in particular, the organisational base that existed here that the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement had been diligently working on since the late 1980s – and we thought this represented the best place for us to really try to work on implementing a new vision.

One that focused on trying to deal with the climate crisis in a real way, because that was also a big thing that we took away from Hurricane Katrina, was recognising that climate change was here. Not something that was coming in the future. That it was present and it was going to have an impact, particularly in the deep south, and particularly upon black people who are heavily concentrated in the deep south and that we need to be proactive in trying to take it on.

For us that meant both exercising political power to be in a position to shape some of the policies

that would curb all the practices of extraction and utilisation of fossil fuels that leads to the climate crisis, but also how do we meet the basic needs of our community to address the inequities that we have long faced. We started thinking, what are the best practices out there? What are the best tools out there from around the globe? And just within the United States that we can draw upon? And find a way to practice and put the utilisation in our local context, that would shift some of those relations and come up with new ways of producing for our community that were as carbon neutral as possible and had the least amount of impact on the environment as possible.

These are the things that were kind of the background, if you would, to the public release of that document first in 2008. That became the Jackson-Kush Plan. And then moved into practice on a higher level in 2009 when Chokwe Lumumba was elected first to the city council. There are three basic things that we're trying to implement within this plan in a co-ordinated way. One is independent electoral politics.

The other one is what we call the deepening of democracy by creating dual democratic institutions that run parallel to the state that both keep it in check, hold it accountable, hold our elected officials accountable, but also organise to develop a programme of autonomous development and implementation. Things that we do for ourselves that the government cannot do, does not have the resources to do. That is best expressed through the development of the People's Assemblies that we've been working on building really over the past 20 something years plus.

Then there's building and developing the solidarity economy. That particular piece is the challenge that Cooperation Jackson took and is working on trying to fulfil. Those are the three basic elements of the Jackson-Kush Plan that we're trying to get to work to some harmony towards implementing a vision that will create broad equity, restorative justice in our community, and regenerate a cleaner safer healthier environment and economy.

RH: One of the things that I've been exploring is the idea of 'what if' questions. For example, in Liege in Belgium they're completing reimagining the food system of the city. They started with a 'what if' question, which was, "What if in a generation's time, the majority of food eaten in the city were grown in the land immediately around the city?" By opening up that what if question, and inviting people in, all sorts of possibilities start to open up. Going back to 2008, if you could distil what you were trying to do there into a 'what if' question, what would it have been?

Kali: We did a bunch of 'what ifs'. We framed it as, "What if we could make the city fully sovereign by 2025?" was the way we actually put that question. "What if we could reorient the economy to work on all co-operative lines? What if we could create a human rights charter for restorative justice in the community?" These were the 'what if' questions that were interlocking, intersecting and for each one of those we came up with corresponding programmatic demands.

So the Human Rights Charter, the Human Rights Commission, creating a co-operative vehicle, and then setting aside certain goals. We had about 10 'what if' questions I would say that were really the centre and anchor of our project. Another one was, "How do we ensure workers' rights?" We asked a big question of, "What if we could have a broad participatory democracy? What would it look like? What voices would it lift up? What voices would it ask to play a different role?" What we call step up, step back?

And to challenge both the formal and informal exercise of power that different groups have within our overall system, the order patriarchy that men have over women. In our case the historic inequity around race that plays out in economic terms. In a general sense whites over black. These were the 'what if' questions that we asked.

A deeper one, I think the ultimate one, that we're still working on is, "What if we could create a truly equitable Mississippi?", that was one of the bigger ones, right? What it concretely transformed is, could we make Mississippi – not just Jackson, but Mississippi – a beacon of radical politics? Our answer to that question has been, and is, yes. What it has really focused on is, "What if we could organise large



sectors of the white working class in Mississippi”, which has been important to this, and which, outside of a brief period in certain counties, particularly in the south east portion of the state, has never really been done.

But we looked at that ‘what if’ and say there’s a generation that was coming of age basically since Barack Obama was President that has a very different worldview than many of the previous generations of white people in the state that we could work with and ally with, but we have to figure out – and been working and struggling to figure out – how do we stay in consistent dialogue in relation with each other? How do we create as many opportunities of collaboration as possible?

These are the ‘what if’ questions that really structured our project and it’s not like these questions ever stop. Even when you accomplish one, it just really opens up in many respects more questions that need to be tackled and solved. But that’s a good thing, and I know one of the things that you’re investigating is the imagination. Why I like it is that if you don’t ask yourself that question, then it keeps you in a static view of the world, “I’m going to play by the rules as they exist and I’m going to just try to deal with the terms and the alliances that presently are”, which is very limiting from a political space.

To be able to think about, “what is it that we might actually be able to do to move a particular force?” Just to see things differently. That would speak to both, you know, its interest but also its aspirations. We think both of those things are possible. Just organising along self-interest we find to be very limiting. This is a lesson that many black organisers have found. If we look real deep in trying to build multi-racial alliances in the United States, you know, that the way the narrative is often constructed and lived, you would think that black workers and white workers have a lot in common, but there are clearly a bunch of cultural constructs and edifices that are put in place which gives us to see our interests quite differently.

We say we also have to work towards people’s aspirations, not just self-interest, because in our case, historically, that can lead to some very reactionary destructive things directed towards the black community. It’s that aspiration piece that speaks to the imagination question you have. How we tap into people’s dreams and aspirations is a critical thing that we at least speak to as part of an aim and objective that we are pursuing and have to then plan our strategies, actions and how we engage, how we factor all those different things in so it’s not just one-dimensional work.

RH: One of the places I get the most inspiration is around people and movements who’ve managed to keep really big bold ‘what if’ questions alive. Like the prison abolition movement in America. “What if there were no prisons? What if there were no police? What if the justice system worked in a completely different way?” They’re keeping a huge ‘what if’ question alive for a long period of time. Are there any tips or lessons or suggestions that people in the rest of the world can learn from those movements? About how you keep a big ‘what if’ question alive over time?

Kali: That’s a good question! I’m going to think about that. The first thing is being grounded in history. I don’t think it’s an accident that the Prisons Abolition Movement has chosen that name. I know there was a debate around when Critical Resistance was first starting to use that after the conference it had in 1988, which I would credit as being the critical catalyst for that movement. It’s no accident that that came from organisers who were very steeped in the black radical organising tradition and the black radical imagination.

The critical thing, what I’d point to there is if you look at our history, you have to see a long arc within in it in order to stay grounded, not just feel overwhelmed and depressed. One of the things that for me, I guess, to make it subjective, when I run into some challenging times, I remember my grandmother often saying, “If you think it’s rough, think of how rough it was during slavery.” For me that would always be recentering. Like, “Oh, okay, right, right, right.” I have far more agency, far more opportunity, far more things at my disposal than my ancestors had, that I could use to come up with some solution.



So it's regrounding, and being grounded in the abolitionist movement, the prison abolitionist movement being grounded in that history and that narrative points towards, "Hey, you're going to have to stick with this in the long-term and not just be deluded by the kind of reforms that come here and there, that may be a step on the path towards abolition." Right?

No police, no prisons, but could also be a stop-gap measure to keep the status quo in place. It raises a question like, well, if we would accept it, like some new terms under slavery or some of the things that people historically would be offered by the south as a concession to the north to be like, we can make it easier, but if it wasn't for the abolitionists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saying, "No, there's no way that would make being chattel easier. You're still chattel. Altering the condition of being at your owner's disposal doesn't change and we have to end that relationship".

Having a vision and staying on course with that vision is very key to a long-term organising and a long-term trajectory, and keeping the morale of the different social forces that you're engaging up, so that people understand it's going to take a while for us to get to where we're going, and that there can be and there should be and there must be, reforms along the way, but we have to always stay consistently orientated towards the north star to know clearly the end goal maybe far away and may seem like a moving target, but let's not be distracted and just prop up the existing system or change little things here and there, when ultimately we're trying to change relationships and hierarchy and exploitation and how do we stay focused on that.

Being grounded in economic history and then choosing a narrative is very important. Because you can then look at and draw both inspiration, courage and a grounding from how folks under far worse conditions chipped away at the elephant that they were fighting and they brought about some fundamental change. We still have a long way to go, but to me that would be the biggest lesson. What we would call, from a black radical position, just being grounded in the history and the perspective of that and where you're going to. To just keep sight and keep faith really.

RH: One of the things I've been doing a lot of research about and talking to neuroscientists about is about how anxiety and trauma and fear and stress lead to the parts of our brain that are most vital to the imagination shrinking and contracting and our ability to think about the future in positive and hopeful ways shrinks and disappears. I wonder how you've seen in your community that phenomena occurring? And also, more particularly, how you've seen the work that you've done, and the new story that you've brought, and the new possibilities of that, how you've seen that shift that, or change that, or start to open up the future in a way that wasn't there before?

Kali: Another good question. The trauma is real. I don't think anybody should doubt trauma and its impact. Because it can be, and is, at least in our community, very stifling and disabling. And the thing that we have really stressed upon, and has been of benefit to the work here in Jackson, is consistency. I can't really stress that enough.

One of the things that we always tell people is that what you're witnessing over the past ten years in Jackson really is the accumulation of decades of groundwork that was laid, that took persistence, determination and perseverance, chipping away. Even when certain ideas weren't popular. Even when certain oppositions were not popular. People sticking with it. Staying true. Staying committed.

Being in the community in various ways. Organising political campaigns. Organising youth around arts and sports. These are all things that the organisation just remained grounded in since the early 1970s. That built up a floor of good will and a solid faith. What we found, particularly from doing the first election campaign as a measure – we didn't expect initially in 2008-9 when we ran Chokwe for Mayor, we thought we were in a good place, but we weren't quite sure that we would win.

We thought this would be a good way to get some of the message out and broaden some of the ideas, because in large part, the initial objective I had – I was one of the people who suggested that we run

one of the two key people – the initial thought that I had was to really try to gain a deeper understanding of how many people in our community were impacted by our work over the years and how many people believed in the ideas that we believed in. And then we were going to come up with a plan to really consolidate that base.

We were shocked to the degree that there was already a broad base from there, and then asking how did people know about our work? Some of the things that were most interesting were people would remember the basketball programmes that we did, and the art programmes that the organisation had engaged in. That would be of equal weight to, you know, “these guys led this campaign against the Klan”. We had several Klan members who were on the police force in the 1980s. You have those things speak to equal measure in so many people’s minds.

It really demonstrated to us that it was the consistency, over a long period of time that just enabled people to be like, “We trust you all. We know you’ll fight for social justice. You won’t back down under certain circumstances if there’s a problem, particularly dealing with racial economic issues, you guys are there speaking up, coming up with proposals, coming up with demands, that you were there, and that was a consistent force.” That was a major point of entry for us.

In our work what we see is like, how you overcome some of that trauma, some of that disillusion and disaffection is being consistent in your practice. More so than even being consistent in what you preach per se. But being consistent in your practice I think is real critical. Because one of the deep things we hear, particularly around the politics, is within our system “it’s going to be the same thing regardless of who gets in office”. It’s like the imagination is already closed.

For us, we’ve been trying to demonstrate in practice, “Hey, these are ideas that we had. These are the proposals that we put out and say we’re going to make some change” and we’ve been consistent in pursuing, building towards and been trying to advance them, and you can see it’s not just the same old, same old. From our experience I would say and to generalise it, that is very important towards both dealing with trauma but also getting people to be able to think beyond the immediate circumstance and see that some alternatives are possible, right? And that there’s some way for people to engage. But it’s a constant struggle. It’s a constant struggle.

Sometimes like two steps forward, two steps back that we’ve seen with a lot of our members over the years of ups and downs. But being consistent in the practice is still what’s enabled all of us to keep our minds open and being open to new ideas and being receptive to new ideas, because there’s a grounding that’s there that offers and points to a new way forward as opposed to, “We ran to a challenge, you folded under challenge, why should I have faith, why should I believe?”

When you face a challenge, stand up to it. You may not advance, but you’re not going to lose your positioning. Without that there is no bedrock really to be able to think of something new and have confidence that not only can I think of it, but I can work towards accomplishing it, because I’ve seen it happen under these circumstances and conditions. It’s something I would definitely like to impart upon anybody who’s listening to this to understand the history and trajectory of the work here in Jackson.

RH: One of the questions I’ve asked everyone I’ve interviewed is, if it had been you who had been elected as the President of the US in November 2016 and you had run on a platform of ‘Make America Imaginative Again’ – so you felt, actually, that there needed to be a huge focus rather than on innovation and growth and all that, but actually what we needed was to really boost the collective imagination, whether in education, in public life, in politics, in commerce, so across the board, we needed a moon-shot race or programme to really re-fire the imagination –what might you do in your first 100 days in the Oval Office?

Kali: The first major thing that I would have done would have been to really shut down most of the military operations of the United States. That would have been the first thing on my agenda. I would have stated it as we need to take responsibility for our overall emissions on the planet, and that we are – and this



institution in particular – is the major contributor to carbon emissions on the planet. How do we address that, how do we take concrete action, demonstrate to the world our seriousness on many different levels? That would have been the first major piece.

I would have supported that with a domestic programme of saying we are going to make sure that every government facility within the United States operates off of clean energy, and we're going to do that within a five year period. That would have been the two major things that would have gotten me in a world of trouble immediately, but would have kicked off my Presidency, in this case, in this imaginary case.

It really would have just opened the field up around how are you going to make those changes given the post-WWII world the United States was basically largely responsible for structuring. That would have called for a profoundly different restructuring than what Donald Trump is trying to force upon the world right now, and it would have been one that you could have easily – especially coming off the Paris Agreement, despite my many criticisms of that – but it would have been a sure fire way of saying we are serious, we mean business, and we expect the rest of the world to get on board with this, and we're opening up some new opportunities for everybody to engage in moving towards a carbon neutral direction.

If someone would do that, or just even a portion of that, just 20% of the US military stuff is shutting down and we're going to convert all this to solar, which itself would be a major thing, just that would profoundly change the conversation, and the economy itself on a global scale.

RH: You talked about the participatory democracy, that you have Transition Assemblies, and Citizens Assemblies? I went to Barcelona where they have neighbourhood assemblies and the neighbourhood assemblies feed in their suggestions which help to shape policy. Could you give us a sense of what that looks like in Jackson?

Kali: I've been to Barcelona. I'm big fan. I've learned a lot from them. Even before then, I think a lot of the things that we try to emulate came from similar things that myself and many others within the Malcolm X Grassroots experienced and witnessed and participated in, both within the US and elsewhere.

Ours always had a balance and it's always a constant struggle here a) to keep them consistent at different points of time, but b) to make them more than expert talk shops. Typically there's a question that's being posed – how it's been experienced in Jackson really – there's a question that gets posed by a large number of people in the community, which requires a certain level of those who are doing the proposing, they've already done a level of organising, and a level of mobilisation to say, "We need to talk about this." Be it potholes in the street, or some new law that's good that's being proposed, or something that these people want to pass or oppose, we just talk about it in a broad audience.

Typically people have done their homework to mobilise in raising a question, then they say, "We want to tackle this question." Then the first component of that typically is – and this is why balance is a constant struggle – is a proposition piece. They put an idea forward and then having people the most knowledge and experience with that subject speak up and offer their perspective, insight.

Typically there's two or three people who do that, normally, who don't share the same views. And it's not something that we have traditionally got to plan that way, normally it's organic, it kind of happens that way. Then there's the period of debate, and proposals sometimes they take place within the same meeting, sometimes it takes place sometime later after folks have been educated and informed.

Then the last part is, "Hey, what are we going to do about it?" in open discussion, in debate, towards crafting some kind of action plans and policies and proposals and usually a little bit of both. What are the things that we're going to do? What is our action plan to make this collective decision happen? Then if there's something that needs happening, to put pressure and give direction to the city government. How that's going to be proposed. Typically there's a fair number of our city council people who attend any assembly, anything that's called.



Now they're not allowed to make any formal decisions there because you know the sunshine laws and things that we have here in the United States, where they can't be doing business without public notice, etc. That kind of piece happens and typically if something is directed towards government because its municipal government, folks will then take that to City Hall and raise it as a demand, raise it as a proposal. That's general life of how they work here.

There's cultural differences between expressions of what I've seen here and Barcelona and other places I've engaged. But that basic proposition, education, debate and then proposal, that kind of four stage process I think is fairly universal I think to almost any assembly I've ever participated in or witnessed and ours is fundamentally no different in that regard here in Jackson.

RH: I spoke to Henry Giroux, do you know the activist guy, he used the term the 'Trump Disimagination Machine', which I really liked.

Kali: That's a good term, yeah.

RH: I just wondered what your reflections might be on that? What that feels like? In what way does the current administration feel like an assault on people's imagination?

Kali: Well you know there's a little running joke that's here in Mississippi, that we kind of helped construct, but it's a running joke since Trump got elected that we tell people all the time. I didn't make it up, I heard it first.... We always dealt with people, "Welcome to Mississippi, now you know what we've been living through the last hundred years since reconstruction."

"Welcome to our world, now you know what we feel like". This is what we've been going through for quite some time. The lesson from Mississippi is that keeping your own orientation, your own principles, practice, and dare I say faith, is necessary to overcome just the narrowness and utter reaction of forces like Trump. They've always been here. In some places given more expression than in others, like in Mississippi, they've basically been in power since reconstruction.

To not lose sight of that and to think that all is lost in this moment, and that there are ways in which we can and must resist. There are a lot of lessons that people can gain from the black liberation movement as this worked and operated here in Mississippi over that course of time. That doesn't mean it's not a scary time. I don't want to give people that impression.

Trump is very dangerous. I think becoming more dangerous by the day. Some of it just out of fear for the Mueller investigation and where that may lead and conclude to, but I also think as we experienced it here in Mississippi, those forces, the right forces, they have a very clear and articulated worldview, and they are willing to go to extreme lengths to fulfil their vision. We should not underestimate that at all as that's played out in Europe during the first and second world wars. The second one in particular.

We need to be on our p's and q's. The lesson of Mississippi is when times are rough, there's still agency that can and must be exercised. Wallowing in a defeatist attitude is a sure way to be defeated. Stay grounded and utilise what opportunities and strength you have. That's a key lesson that I would say should be drawn from Mississippi. We are never completely out of it unless we surrender.

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# Towards the Biomuseum: Interview with Soledad García Saavedra



International Women's Day demonstration, March 8th, 2019. Street protest with tapestry dedicated to the memory of Margarita Ancacoy, woman assassinated in June 2018 in the República Neighborhood.

Soledad García Saavedra is curator of Public Programs at Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago, Chile.

All photos by: Lorna Remmele and Courtesy of MSSA.



Brandon LaBelle: As a curator at the Museum of Solidarity, you've been working on developing greater interaction with the local residents in the neighborhood. Can you tell us more about this? What approaches has the Museum undertaken, and what kinds of experiences or reactions have emerged?

Soledad García Saavedra: Three years ago, we started to create a more engaged relation with neighbors of the Museum. This was part of reassessing the mission and principles of the Museum. Under the direction of Claudia Zaldívar, the Museum began a reconstruction of the international solidarity relations in the past and the present, recovering "lost" artworks and stories related to the collection. Along with the solidarity relations, one of the core principles of the Museum's foundation in 1972 was the aim to be at "the service of the people". One of the questions that the Public Programs team dwells upon is: "how to achieve and update that principle?"

During the socialist *Unidad Popular* government of Salvador Allende, the people were the main focus of a social policy to eradicate cultural inferiority of workers, peasants, children, women and youth. Along with this motivation, the Museum had the directive to give the people access to modern and contemporary art through its collection. After the coup in 1973, the Museum and its plan were dissolved. And to reconsider "the people" after 45 years of aggressive neoliberal economy where everyone was transformed into a client, the Museum faced challenges not only on how and who defines the people today, but also on the behavior we all assimilate, more or less, as consumers. These issues are in continual interrogation, and more over, after the social revolt that sparked on October 18, 2019, the rage of the people in the streets faced with long economic abuse, intensifies questions about the way we are living, and to whom are institutions devoted and how they may take a more engaged role when living in states of crisis.

To approach the neighbors of the Barrio República, where the Museum is located, was the standpoint to answer those questions about the openness of an institution, and how to connect the museum, its collection and shows to the life of the people. The beginning of the research project that I was participating in, along with an interdisciplinary team, was called *Mirada de Barrio/ Neighbourhood gaze*, and the aim was to make a collective exhibition in collaboration with the neighbors including a selection of artworks from the collection. Looking backwards, the goal was a very museum-centric point of view, even in its criticality over hierarchies and with good intentions to open the curatorial authorship to people unused to art and to create a bridge through the collection. After a year of listening to the neighbors in different encounters inside and outside the museum during 2017, we realized that their enthusiasm was about the life and stories of the neighborhood itself, not about a collection of art that, for us, is the main fascination. The shift then was to co-create with the neighbors, along

with the team of the Museum, an exhibition about the neighborhood. This became a mutual mirror in which both, the neighbors and the Museum, could be seen and reflected, and which could be used as an opportunity to build an unprecedented community. Another nodal point we wanted to explore by conceiving the exhibition and its collaborative process was the experimental background of the Museum as a para-laboratory. Mário Pedrosa, one of the main founders of the Museum of Solidarity, coined that term in the beginning of 1960s to outline the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo (MAM-SP) as a "house of experiments". So we intentionally combined an uncertain sense of experimentation within the long-term workshops hosted at the Museum in producing the exhibition. The workshops (Photography Intervention, Community Textile, Creative Writing, Self-publishing and Mail Art for children) were defined by the common interests, trades and artistic practices rooted/grounded in the neighborhood, and facilitated by artists and mediators who expanded the potentialities of individual and collective creations. One of the most complex pieces produced was the collective and large hand-made tapestry done by more than twenty people and which represents a map of the neighborhood in three temporalities: past, present and future. The piece, which is currently part of the collection of the Museum, entailed a demanding process when taking collective decisions, negotiating conflicts or in finishing it through a sewing marathon until late hours of the night. There are many lessons to be had following those meetings and disagreements, but one thing I would like to highlight is that those heavy clashes and tensions were to transform later not only in laughs, but more, in the making of community. I don't want to say that the relation with the neighbors became a paradise, but we learn and we constantly have to be aware of how we practice trust and tolerate each other. These are some of the intense experiences we have had and the reactions were manifold, from skepticism to active participation and high requests from the neighbors towards the Museum.

BL: I'm curious how the Museum has developed in recent years, in terms of understanding its place within Chilean society?

SGS: Considering the big picture, if we acknowledge that Chilean society has been based on a capitalist economic drive that was imposed and ensured with a Constitution since the military dictatorship until today, dominated by the privatization of basic needs from water to health, social security to education, and that exacerbates social inequalities and a systematic erasure of historical violence and human rights, the place of the Museum is not a comfortable one. It goes against this dominant ideology. It was refounded in the beginning of the 90s in a reality absolutely opposed to the past socialist project which wanted to construct a common world. The Museum itself is a survivor of what was supposed to be destroyed during the dictatorship. Thanks to the conviction and work of many people, it is the only Solidarity Museum dedicated to art in the world. And it is

located in a country that was the first laboratory for neoliberal experimentation through a forced authoritarian coup. The consolidation of the economic model affects the way we live, for example, the forms to inhabit and coexist in the cities. During the dictatorship, community formation and self-organization in social and cultural milieus were suppressed and broken up, and it's just very recent that people are recuperating collective practices. Territorial segregation was reinforced, weakening social cohesion as well. That is why it is so important that the role of the Museum includes immersing itself in its own territory. To offer a platform for the neighborhood, which can speak to the intensities affecting our neighbors and everyone who is looking for other forms of social engagement. To grow roots like a tree in a heterogenic land, connecting people through art and other disciplines and trades, allowing space for conversation, for debates, for creation and experimentation, for learning from multiple voices and backgrounds: from kids to indigenous, exiled, intellectual, feminist, artistic, academic, ecological, scientific people. We try to produce intergenerational and interdisciplinary encounters, inside and outside the Museum. More recently, following the revolts and subsequent demand emerging on the streets we invited lawyers to talk about alternatives for a new Constitution.

The Museum then starts to play different roles depending on the context and situation. Before the revolt sparked on October 18, the aim was to transform the dissociation between the Museum and the neighbors, to gradually demolish barriers of separation and communication, and to co-create very slowly trust and alternatives to inhabit, resist, create and share thoughts about the everyday reality. The pursuit was aimed at reconstructing the social fabric. After the end of October, everything changed fast. Companies, stores, subways, electric lights were on fire. Suddenly, the President ruled a State of Emergency, announced curfew, military forces were on the streets with tanks, and everything became irrational, scary, confusing, furious and sad. It turned painfully into a state of war. In response we closed the normal function of the Museum as the authoritarian imposition of the government was unacceptable, and we, as workers, collectively decided to open the space of the Museum only for the needs of gathering and to share in a process of reflection with the neighbors. We needed to give renewed sense to the Museum's name! The Museum was transformed into a containment space for self-organized assemblies. The ones organized by the neighbors addressed the desires to think and act for a new society, or to learn about the Constituent process. Other assemblies we hosted were about public education, indigenous people, feminist motherhood, social environment with students and textile workers. For many people the Museum was transformed, physically and emotionally, into a space of refuge or shelter; it was a space of protection, a room or a garden to breathe in the middle of a distressing time. After the social outbreak, and the state of urgency we lived, the classic role of a

Museum focused on the caring of objects exceeded into the caring and healing of people within a shared environment. Perhaps that's how we embody solidarity...

BL: Is there a new sense of urgency around questions of "solidarity" and how art institutions can contribute to social questions?

SGS: That's is a big question! Yes, I think there is an urgency because the value of solidarity was and still is lost in everyday life and moreover, in wealthy communities where the arts are featured more. At least in Santiago there is a culture of solidarity for those lacking legal land and housing, and who use a collective territory to self-sustain, self-organize with common cooking pots (ollas communes) or popular libraries like in población La Victoria. Solidarity then arises from a basic need for survival, but solidarity or social approaches from the perspective of art institutions becomes a huge challenge to sustain or even to open a contribution for, due to the business stream or ideology which shapes the way the system functions (funding, marketing, art market, collection prestige, etc.). Paul Preciado sharply refers to the current effects of this financial improvement as a Necromuseum, where "art, public space and the public as critical agent have died." Art critics, such as Aldo Pellegrini, who was engaged with the foundation of the Museum of Solidarity and who was already aware of that threat in the 1960s: the destruction of free creation and thought, and the need for a commitment with the everyday life. Pellegrini's dedication to free thought was part of a radical revolutionary time, but perhaps this deceased form of criticality resides inside institutions and mostly, in their function itself. To whom are institutions committed? Of course, the question is not only posed for the concern of art institutions, but for education at large. The social approach that has been undertaken now at the Museum of Solidarity could not be possible without the convictions and actions of past thinkers, for instance those who were disobedient, thought different, and looked for deviant/alternative/transformational model of the museum. Those are the seeds that I believe must be cultivated so to bring up a sort of Biomuseum that could resist the necroparadigm, and to contribute as far as we can, to nurture them toward unprecedented directions for the future. That means not only a contribution to keep critical reflection about the arts, but to also open social bridges of persistent listening, to hear what people and "visitors" want to do through their bodies in the Museum and to include actions over the care of urban gardening, plants and vegetables as well. The first task is more common, whilst the second means a clash with the structures of an authority and its image, the control of efficient knowledge, the acceptable norms of formal aesthetics, exhibiting, and behavior, etc. Those are part of the tensions we are dealing with as a team at the Museum. And removing these forces involve a change of the Museum's function in collaboration with its context.





Process of the Community textile workshop in the MSSA, 2018.



Opening of a new cycle of shows at MSSA in the República street, March, 2019.

Overall, I have the feeling that art institutions usually display social questions and representations on walls as a self-contained entity. It is uncommon to find an engagement with those questions as a member of the problems; not only as an observer, but foremost as an agent that takes action as to what happens. That involvement means taking a position beyond its own navel view, and to participate for an active integration of life as an institution itself.

BL: You've been deeply involved in researching histories of art in Chile, from the period during the Pinochet dictatorship to more recently in relation to Chilean "Pop" prior to the 1970s, as well as encouraging a larger debate within the local art community. What are some of the insights that have emerged through this work? And how have the historical debates or viewpoints shifted in recent years?

SGS: I worked for seven years in an art archive, the Centro de Documentación de las Artes Visuales (CeDoc), which was located at the Centro Cultural La Moneda (CCLM). When I started to work at that institution in 2010, I was just returning to Chile after three years living in London, where I completed a master degree in Curating at Goldsmiths, a program and a city that encourages independent thinking. The experience in London opened up for me many conversations with artists, researchers and institutions, and alternative modes for working with archives and writing. With that background, one of my first actions at CeDoc was an open call for researchers to propose essays on *Art practices and discourses during the 70s and 80s in Chile*. The call, organized with a Latin-American jury, became an annual event and its outcome was a publication each year based on a selection of four essays. The last two calls deal with the issue of the Transition in the visual arts of the 90s. It was an obstinate insistence to dig into the internal debates within the visual arts produced during and after the dictatorship, and the transition to "democracy". Researchers, who responded to the calls, were young people who were born during the same period the subject matter was already taking place. A period that was defined by artist Cecilia Vicuña as an astringent attack on the collective body; a body that was transformed into "an oyster with lemon," as she said. There was a big generational gap and a lacuna of communication. For a long time, everyone was suspicious of each other. So when we started to open the records and pages of that time, this entailed a new trust with the implicated actors, and to exhume lost, painful and radical stories. The call brought gradually forward, and with some difficulties, a dialogue between the old generation of artists and art critics with the young artists, art historians, sociologists, and theorists. It delivered a possibility to build up a collective formation through seminars and readings inside CeDoC, and to share materials, as it has the most comprehensive archive of Chilean contemporary art. It is one of the public archives with primary sources that contributes to solving the

lack of materials in libraries and archives in Arts Faculties and public Museums. I have to be honest that I never expected to be involved so deeply with the arts created during the dictatorship. This is something that, unexpectedly arrived to me, as well as working in an institution. I was supposed to be an independent curator! Despite that feeling, it was a privilege to work there and I am very thankful for all that I learnt, the people and new friends I met.

In 2010, through the first version of the essay call, I understood that the art scene of the military period was full of secrets, myths, silenced, overshadowed and regulated stories as well. The only narrative that was validated in art historical discourses was the *Escena de avanzada*. That's what I learned about Chilean art doing my bachelor of art history at the Universidad de Chile, with many photocopies that were copies of badly typewritten texts full of erased and cryptic words. In my twenties, I felt that having access to those photocopies was a kind of relic and powerful possession. We learnt that the most encoded form of art writing was the most important, and that we were eminent minds capable of its decoding. As a consequence, we ended with headaches and a deformation of writing mostly in a theoretical or philosophical way. It was seen as bad to approach sources from a historical perspective. Afterwards, I understood that "History" for the generation that lived during the dictatorship meant a resistance of existence, of being visible, a way to subvert the military surveillance, a defiance against getting trapped in colonial identification, a rejection of the clear language utilized by a Western logic of writing and reading. It was better to write and read in a French way, to invent neologisms or sign-images, to breakdown linearity or words, to obscure meaning. It was secure to be protected or sealed like oysters do.

Considering that hermetic legacy, the processes of the open call had its difficulties. One thing is to keep safe and gather documents in an archive; another is when those documents reveal or expose publicly, through written pieces, hidden or underestimated subjects. And moreover, when new writings started to analyze categories, and confront with critical questions the way art critics during the 70s, 80s and 90s grasped media language (graphics, performance, video art, self-editions, etc.), gender issues, queer politics, institutional critique, and human rights, among others. The books in which I was involved opened up polemic discussions about the *Escena de avanzada*, for instance by Carla Macchiavello or Mara Polgovsky, initial readings about queer and overshadowed collectives like *Yeguas del Apocalipsis* by Fernanda Carvajal, about pedagogical practices in graphics like artist Eduardo Vilches by María José Delpiano or like *Taller de Artes Visuales* by Felipe Baeza and José Parra, about poetical writing in self-published books by Francisco Godoy, Claudio Galeno and Paz López. And there are much more.

After publishing and working with different authors, and also curating some shows (for instance, Magic Block), I realized that there were materials and stories from the 60s impossible to access, with little attention and even discredited. Our recent history in the country is divided by what happened before and after 1973. That is a strong landmark that brought a violent rupture between a time of “serious” and reliable democracy, and a time of repression and an authoritarian democracy. This political and social divider reverberates also in art institutions. Few papers and artworks were kept in storages after the coup. Many artists left the country, lost their artworks and their private archives. The military forces burned some artworks and books. The stories are easier to reconstruct by acceding to materials where exiled artists or intellectuals lived or cooperated like in the United States, Cuba, France or Sweden. For the ones who stay in Chile, the only way is by talking with them or their families. So, on the one side, there is a huge problem of access. On the other, there has been fifty years of ignoring, in the arts, narratives of what happened during the 60s. Particularly, art practices that were socially engaged, critical and committed with revolution and popular education, and denounced injustices, such as pop and popular art. Why had these practices been eclipsed and not seen? Partly because of some stylistic canons combined with politics: there has been much attention to conceptual art whilst, on the contrary, the popular in its direct language has been understood to be too illustrative of a political ideology of the left. Then there is kind of stigmatization based on a supposition that the production during the 60s was mainly political propaganda.

My interest to start to research the 60s began with this premise: the annulment of artworks, shows and books produced in an agitated time. My fascination began by gathering press materials during the preparation of two shows on pop art, one with the international collection of the Museum of Solidarity, and the other with Chilean artists. Amazing works from Cecilia Vicuña or Virginia Errázuriz were literally exhibited after being kept in their houses/trunks for fifty years. And all the works of the exhibition, in general, were very powerful and radical in their singularity, with the political and social context in which each one was living. Personally, it was great to see for the first time artworks that for a long time nobody thought existed, and with so much color! After the coup, many artworks turned grey and black. These artworks reaffirmed that there was a vibrant atmosphere and effervescent energy that was moved by the search for alternatives in life: artists could be an educator, a guerrillero/a, a poet, a bourgeois, an artisan, a muralist, or a worker. The discussions of the role of the artists included how art could be integrated into the social milieu, how it could embody that milieu, to include the arts to the people, and to question how to work collectively, how institutions could be engaged in the reality, etc., these are questions that took radical positions ... from artists leaving painting, struggling in paramilitary fronts

following the spirit of Che Guevara, experiments with drugs in a hippie style, doing murals in shanty towns or in the streets, etc.

Many of the inputs that I read or talk through with artists that lived in their twenties during the 60s, are the ones that reflect on the questions that we are dealing with in the Museum, and more over now with the social outbreak. It is necessary to learn from their experiences, to hold onto that spirit, and to be aware of not repeating the story again.



## The Hobo Sermon

In 1924 Irwin St John Tucker, the socialist priest working in Chicago, stands up and says:

"Across this land all I see are the bands of wandering young men and women desperate for work, hard up for a job, hungry and digging in the dirt for scraps, hopping on and off the rails and falling by the way, their bodies like shadows on the roadside, living in the squalid urban jungles and the vacant lots, tugging on their threadbare coats for a last thread of hope. And the engines of the factories and the industrial capitalists driving on, as if nothing else mattered, and the banks and the congressmen, and the brokers and the cops, they enclose every parcel of forest and meadow leaving in their wake the wasted rivers and blood-soaked coal pits, and the money flows like a golden flood through the houses of the rich – and still, the bands of wandering young men and women push on, hounded by the vagrancy laws, the draft boards, the employment agencies, the Pinkerton gangs, and the hungry families back home, and still, they search and they search, and I tell you ladies and gentlemen gathered here today, the question remains: How might we care for the lost and the expelled, the evicted and the desperate, those that toil the land and feed the furnaces, those that slaughter the animals and live on the left overs? These are the questions that keep me awake at night, and that I share with you today, in the hopes that within the black soot of these black days we might find hope not in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which only feeds the banks and those that profit from the panic, not in the munitions factories that already steer us toward war, but in the living hearts of those men and women that must persevere, that find strength in their own weakness, and that know what it means to sweat and slave against the odds – are these not the kind of persons we should hold out our hands to and offer every last morsel of good will? The downtrodden and the trodden upon, and the hobo armies that speak of the existential root: the homes of families and of the brothers that work tirelessly through the hours of each day and night, and the homes of the charitable that open their doors to all in need – these may sound like Christian words ladies and gentlemen, and being a man of faith I offer them to you, so you may take them as you will, and give reflection onto your own wants and needs, your own





privileges and dreams, for what I announce today is no less than the establishment of a new type of order, a new initiative that is only a drop in a vast ocean of misery, but which I believe can assist in remaking not only the lives of the misfortunate, the itinerant and the vagrant, the unemployed and the hungry, but the nation as well. My proposal to you is to make good on this nation's founding narrative by establishing the National Service Army.

This would include four steps:

1. Organize the young men and women known as the Hobo Army into a National Service Army.
2. Take possession of the national domain for the benefit of the nation (infrastructure works, irrigation of dry lands, cultivation of waste areas: conservation and improvement of all national resources for the benefit of all the people).
3. Set the National Service Army to work to redeem and reclaim the national domain, with a home and garden for each member as the reward for a term of service (of four years).
4. Use the existing agencies and offices of the United States to organize and direct the National Service Army as an army in the service of this republic, this Hobo Nation.

All this must be approached by steps. But the steps are much less violent and much more obvious than the amazing imperialism of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The only effect of the RFC seems to be to give the banks money with which to buy up all stock of every corporation at bottom prices, thus making the bankers the lords of all industry.

Instead, what I propose to you is to create a system in which the land, the nation and those that populate it with their citizenry may have the right to grow together, to nurture and sustain the material fruits of labor, to educate and support one another, to take the profits of our great industries, not for the benefit of the rich, but for the benefit of all society, to pay tax on a future commonwealth."



## **Indicted, Unashamed and Unafraid**

by Eugene V. Debs (founding member and presidential candidate, Socialist Party of America)

Published in *The Eye Opener* (Chicago), March 16, 1918.

Sunday morning, March 10 [1918], the press dispatches in the daily papers announced the indictment the day before in the federal court at Chicago of Adolph Germer, National Secretary; Victor L. Berger, member of the National Executive Committee; J. Louis Engdahl, editor of *The Eye Opener*; William F. Kruse, Secretary of the Young People's Socialist League; and Irwin St. John Tucker, writer and lecturer, all of the Socialist Party.† The charge against them is seditious utterance and interference with the prosecution of the war.

The indictments were found Feb. 2 [1918], we are told, but secrecy was preserved regarding the proceeding until the administration at Washington could be consulted and its sanction secured before entering the prosecution. It is thus made clear that this indictment, while ostensibly directed against certain individuals, is in fact the indictment of the Socialist Party by the national administration at Washington.

If Germer, Berger, Engdahl, Kruse, and Tucker are guilty, so are we all. They have but spoken and written what the Socialist Party stands for, and if Socialism, the thing we stand for and shall continue to stand for, is criminal and subject to indictment and prosecution, then the administration, to be logical and consistent, should indict, prosecute, and imprison not only the spokesmen of the party but its entire membership of more than 100,000 social rebels, who in opposing the damnable profiteering system which has precipitated this bloody deluge upon humanity are alike guilty of sedition and disloyalty in the bleared eyes of the autocratic rulers of this country.

The indictment of our comrades, therefore, charging them with disloyalty, disloyalty to the profiteering, plundering, war-waging master class, is the highest proof of their loyalty, loyalty to the victimized, oppressed, robbed, and ravished masses of the people.

I confess to feeling half-ashamed not to have been included in this indictment. I have said and done all the things my comrades are charged with and the administration knows it and has the proof of it, as I happen to know, and yet I am slighted and no call is made upon me by a federal grand jury to defend myself against the charge of disloyalty to the plutocracy of the United States.

The fact that certain editorials of mine, a considerable number of them, posted to the Social Revolution and never reaching it, were systematically "lifted" from the mails, doubtless by the agents of our democratic (!) censorship, may have some significance and perhaps give promise of recognition by some grand jury in the future.

We must understand that the Espionage Act under which our comrades have been indicted is in its essence and intent pure despotism and dictatorship. Under its ample provisions anybody can be indicted and convicted for anything, and for nothing at all. Any criticism of the administration may be construed as treason and punished accordingly. Anyone in the least objectionable to the warlords may be imprisoned at will. He may be absolutely void of offense but it is an easy matter to put words into his mouth by one of the convenient tools employed for that purpose, as in the case of Kate O'Hare, and sentence him to the penitentiary.

Free speech, free assemblage, and a free press, three foundation stones of democracy and self-government, are but a mockery under the espionage law administered and construed by the official representatives of the ruling class. I do not sympathize with our indicted comrades, I congratulate them. In fact I almost envy them. I am surprised only by the blind folly of the ruling masters. Their sublime stupidity has surpassed itself. They have aimed a blow at the Socialist Party that will give the party greater impetus and more vital force than could be imparted to it by a thousand of its most effective agitators. The party indicted is brought in a flash completely to its senses. All its passive spirit is aroused and all its latent power developed. It accepts at once plutocracy's insolent challenge and becomes militant, aggressive, and resolute in its purpose to maintain its position and fight for its principles.

Comrades of America, in the indictment of our leaders we are all indicted! We are indicted for being socialists, for opposing capitalism and its profiteering, plundering plutocracy upon the one hand and its brutal and debauching wage-slavery on the other hand. The trumpet-blast of the Revolution now sounds the call to duty and as true socialists we must all unite as one, face the enemy without flinching, stand our ground without fear, and fight with all our might for the triumph of democracy and freedom throughout the world.

†Louis Engdahl was targeted for having previously served as editor of *The American Socialist*, the official organ of the Socialist Party, which ceased publication in 1917 due to its banning. Irwin St. John Tucker was targeted for having briefly served as the head of the SPA's Literature Department.



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Volume 10, Number 3.  
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## "LET THE HUNGRY BE FED"



**"THEY HARVEST THE WHEAT  
THAT THE WORLD MAY EAT  
AND GO HUNGRY MOST OF THE TIME"**



# Listening in Common in Uncommon Times

Ella Finer

I.

Are we flying with the planet or against it?

I am flying back to London on 14th March 2020. The world has already changed forever and will keep changing.

I am going home.

...the production of commons requires first a profound transformation in our everyday life, in order to recombine what the social division of labor in capitalism has separated. For the distancing of production from reproduction and consumption leads us to ignore the conditions under which what we eat, wear, or work with have been produced, their social and environmental cost, and the fate of the population on whom the waste we produce is unloaded (Mies 1999). In other words, we need to overcome the state of irresponsibility concerning the consequences of our actions that results from the destructive ways in which the social division of labor is organized in capitalism; short of that, the production of our life inevitably becomes a production of death for others. As Mies points out, globalization has worsened this crisis, widening the distances between what is produced and what is consumed, thereby intensifying, despite the appearance of an increased global interconnectedness, our blindness to the blood in the food we eat, the petroleum we use, the clothes we wear, and the computers we communicate with. [1]

I am reading these words in my window seat like they are horror – the speaking-in-writing of prophetic blindness to the blood. The irresponsibly interconnected world as its undoing. I am living this – in-flight – this reckoning with distance and disaster.

*“Are we flying with the planet or against it?”*

A young games designer on his way from Athens to Delaware via London looks at the in-flight graphics showing a tiny white plane following a line to London. He is preoccupied with the flatness of the graphics for representing “a dome? – it doesn’t make sense”. I listen to him and imagine he will be one of the generation who transform how the world looks in a few years: turning jolting planes crossing pixel-maps into smooth spheres rotating in expert alignment with the globe.

How strange, I think – imagining tech kids changing the way we see the world when the world is changing by the moment because of what we cannot, and never will be able to, see.

He talks about a home he knows through story and speech – a folk story his grandmother told him from her home in Guinea, about a little boy and a full moon, and a mother tongue that “cannot be written”. He speaks in Malinke – a language with floating tones. “It can be written in French, but that is not Malinke” – its transcription always an approximation for, a simplification of, what is complex sonic matter.

I am writing myself back onto the plane because here – at the threshold of a new era, in the air – the complexities and vibrant differences and distances in the world and words we use in common take on new resonance. Flying against the planet, home.

*i would sing you the shape of the world between us.* These are Alexis Pauline Gumbs' words; I have been sending them out to friends; her words collapsing cold distance, beating histories sung by her grandmothers – songs as calls to dream the future as critical action:

i would sing you the shape of the world between us. turn my body into drum to let you know. slam my skin onto the surface of the ocean to tell you. i am here. wherever you are.

if it's dream you are listening for. i'll dream you. if it's poetry in the morning. whatever. the radio. just test me. there is nowhere i cannot be. there is no sound i cannot travel through. there is no you i don't surround.

you can look or not look. you can fill your days with running or the shoes of other people. you can suffocate the minutes. i have time. i do not leave you. you can muffle every moment with your fear. it doesn't matter. i'm still here. and i am here. and i am here. [2]

## II.

*whatever. the radio. just test me. there is nowhere I cannot be.*

...we are Radio Alhara from Palestine and Jordan now. I guess in these situations, Palestine is just like everywhere else. What we did was something more global and open to everyone. We directly received messages from people in South Africa, Canada, Japan, and from Europe and the Arab world. The internet kind of takes away from that locality; but at the same time, we are here. [3]

At home, I tune into three quarantine pirate radio stations broadcasting from Beirut, Palestine and Tunis. Artist Urok Shirhan – who is always listening to multiple time-zones – has told me about these stations transmitting into the acoustic world of her lock-down home-life. We keep speaking about how broadcast happens, how we need to attend to it as it disappears – make a date and tune in.

When I am listening to Alhara I see Urok's tiny face in the chat box alongside other listeners who are responding in real time. In the time I am there (with her?) she feels oddly present – communicating in brief, a correspondent across borders – her words in English and Arabic, and flames. This. Is. Fire.

We live in radio, listening to there from here, here from there, and *I am here* (Gumbs). *At the same time, we are here* (Khalili). I wonder what *being here* means right now for my friends across the globe, when here is actually-virtually located like never before.

For now, we meet here – in the web and waves – pulling bodies close, closer, and closing the distance between, in the so-called “airy nowhere” I have written about before.

Compelled and confounded by the distance between speaker and receiver in early telephonic communication, an anonymous reporter of the popular science magazine *Scientific American* called it ‘an airy nowhere, inhabited by voices and nothing else’... [going on] to describe with poetic clarity the strange conditions of speaking over the phone lines: ‘Between us two there is an airy nowhere, inhabited by voices and nothing else – Helloland I should call it’ (Engh 1994).

Helloland imagines a place of the vast space of nowhere: an invisible landscape contoured by travelling voices. To call this distance between speaker and listener ‘a land’ is to think in terms of defining a site, mapping somewhere within nowhere to play host to the event of voice. The land called ‘hello’ holds a specific purpose, too, as voices reach to fetch a receiver, so that routes can be drawn in the air between two bodies. [4]

I am never sure what I am calling, or writing, into in this time – in my communications I have been saying how that odd phrasing in which an email “finds” someone well is starting to take on new meaning. Finding someone in the airy nowhere or *the strange new nowhere* – as Laura Barton has named the move to online event space in the ether – comes at a cost. At home the internet is not so freely accessible as outside.

And this brings up another of my conflicted thoughts, oscillating and present in these times – of privilege and precarity. What can we say is in common? And where is our place of commoning? Where are the offline commons now? That not everyone can live on air, or online, and that there is a cost for keeping “connected” is becoming explicit in ways exposing broadband as luxury. Are web-based commons still commons if not everyone can access them from where they call home?

Home is where the heart is, goes the saying. If so, a large and growing number of people in many countries, including Britain, are feeling homeless, even if they have somewhere to live or sleep at any particular moment. The commons and the idea of home are intimately linked. A core claim of the Charter of the Forest was that everybody had a right to a home, and for many people the commons was where that right was ensured. Yet, the idea of home has a double meaning, implying both a place to live and a place to which one has a strong attachment and sustainable sense of belonging...Many feel that they are not ‘at home’ anywhere. [5]

Standing describes the denizen – ‘a term applied in the middle ages’ to the outsider who on entering a town for work was given partial rights – never at home, or never allowed to feel at home. Centuries later Sir William Blackstone describes the denizen in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1753) as perpetually ‘in a kind of middle state between an alien and natural-born subject’. Animals and plants are often described as denizens – denizens of the natural world, the in-betweeners of the wild or re-wilded.

The rewilding of theory proceeds from an understanding that first encounters with wildness are intimate and bewilder all sovereign expectations of autonomous selfhood. To be wild in this sense is to be beside oneself, to be internally incoherent, to be driven by forces seen and unseen, to hear in voices, and to speak in tongues. By abandoning the security of coherence, we enter a dark ecology, where, to quote Michel Foucault (1994:302) from *The Order of Things*, “nature can no longer be good.” But even as wildness is internal in a psychic sense, we also sense it as an extrahuman, suprahuman force, what Timothy Morton (2013) dubs a “hyperobject” and what might be received as a message from nature to humans reminding us that there could be and probably will be life without “us.” As Nina Simone reminds us, “wild is the wind,” and the wildness of the weather, internally and externally, implies a pathetic fallacy that tethers the undoing of the human to the rage of new storms blowing in across the Caribbean. Wildness is where the environment speaks back, where communication bows to intensity, where worlds collide, cultures clash, and things fall apart. [6]

Halberstam and Nyong’o’s observance that ‘we live in wild times’ just got wilder. In what ways are our communications bowing to the intensity of this time? How do we commune under pressure while *uncommonly at home*? In the absence of words can we stay silent and call out?

In correspondence with visual artist Vibeke Mascini about such forces seen and unseen, about vibrations reaching across distance, about unheard and ‘other’ frequencies, about forms of communication beyond human hearing – alongside listening to the ‘silent’ whale recording from the British Library Sound Archive, I wrote last week asking how we attune with/to unclear or uncommon sound, especially in unclear or uncommon times.

How do we cope with, deal with, let alone attend to, subjects we cannot hold in hand, we can neither see nor hear? Or subjects that appear as such? Subjects that shape-shift, change scale and frequency, medium and channel? [7]

By abandoning the security of coherence? – So as to find and invent new ways of being in the world together while apart, as the new in-betweeners, the new denizens? To meet at distance so we can be close again to our living, and our dead. As Alexis Pauline Gumbs writes so brilliantly, so radically, in relation to the collectivity of coral and its poetic importance for decolonisation, *is there such a thing as one person?*

I see coral as another narrating life-form, similar in some ways to the life-forms that tell themselves a story about being human, but with crucial revisions to that story. Coral, like us, build on a massive scale. Coral reefs become the size of cities in the ocean; they are the only other organisms that build on such a large scale. And their dead stay with them; they live atop the skeletons of their ancestors. Or their skeletons are their ancestors? And this is part of the poetic importance of coral, and their connection to the possibility of a new science of the word. Scientists can't seem to describe coral. The collectivity of coral (corals) exceeds the language. Is there such a thing as one coral? Aren't coral inherently collective? Would we think of them as multiple animals with one stomach? Or one animal with many many many mouths? And what about us, living on the same matter, with multiple hungers and resources that we pretend are not shared, so many of us making cities that we pretend are not always built on the dead—is there such a thing as one person? [8]

\*

An expanded version of this text is included in Ella Finer's forthcoming book *Acoustic Commons and the Wild Life of Sound* (Berlin: Errant Bodies).

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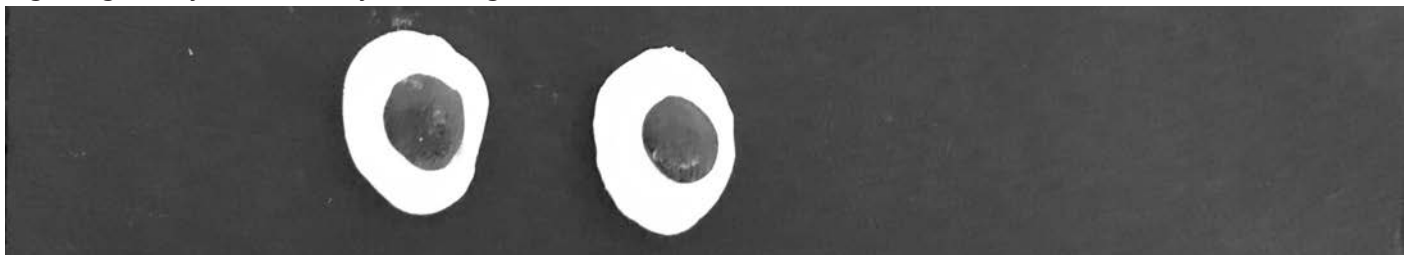


# Excerpts from **MORE HOLES**

Sara Gebran

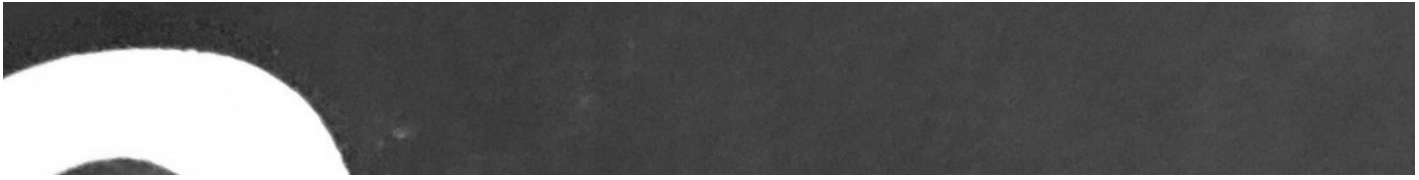
**EXCLUDING MOBILITY-2: COVID-19:** (16th March 2020, 3 days after the isolation began). I am writing as if today is the 16th of April 2020, on the day we exit our homes in the supposed end of quarantine, as it was announced. We are out on the street, walking freely. I am trying to remember how life was before, in order to walk differently today. I am trying to imagine how people met in the street after 4 years lockdown imposed in WWII. It's hard to imagine a 4-year-long isolation. Our small quarantine can't compare with that, I know, but how did people look at each other when it ended? How would we do that today? Did they stop to salute one another? Did their eyes become softer, as if the only way is to hug and caress one another through the eyes? Could we start the day without the panic of our differences? Start with a soft living by eyes-hugging first?

**EXCLUDING SPACE, APPEAR AS SUCH-1:** (Day 5) One thing is clear, people in the world are not traveling this days, not consuming much fossil energy, and not polluting as much. Movement produces pollution. Our bodies in motion, or in the spot, is moving, and so it must be polluting too. This is specially true as we are billions on earth. Dance as movement therefore pollutes, like my fast thinking as movement pollutes too. But should I stop thinking and dancing? Could it be that it is not about pollution but the speed of its production? One thing we could do: slow everything down, re-pair, re-do, re-think, re-visit history, check what we have done, to re-member it, to make a true promise: never do it again (Promises in the Arab world are unbreakable, which is a new exercise we should include in our new COVID-19 life) And why all of a sudden I am seeing images of you as a baby on instagram? Fuck me Jesus.....

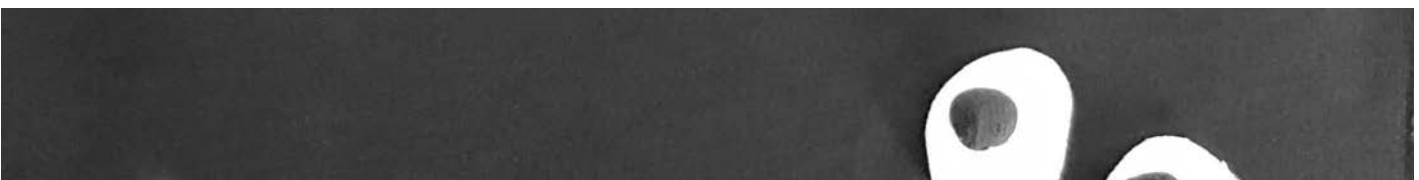


**EXCLUDING MOVEMENT & ANIMALS APPEAR:** Dolphins have been seen off the coast of Venice. I wish I could see that. **EXCLUDING FREAKING OUT ASS HOLES.** (Day 6) What could we people of the world say? I'm gonna watch another romance, my nerves are a float. Problem is, almost all tv series and films are built on a drama manipulating our nerves, so that we keep attention and focus. Meditation should be the way to calm down today. But I can't stay still this week, isolation is not like a self retreat for mediation. This is a freaky fucking time. I am freaking out big time. **EXCLUDING MOVEMENT, THE PRISON:** Why can't we stay still, think together how to re-pair this shit? Is fear the reason for why we can't see further? The fear of survival? Or the fear of not being seen by others and therefore, to not exist? I am terribly sad today. **EXCLUDING INCLUSION:** (Day 7) It is quite strange I am writing in a very important historical time, knowing it might be a part of a documentation of the history of our time, and my time in it, finally. I've always wondered what it would be like to have lived during WWII in Europe, write about it while living it? Today, it's a really delicate historical moment, even before the actual event has fully shown itself, and I am writing it, in Europe. Exciting and scary. I feel responsible, for the choice of the proper language, to capture some of the feelings and thoughts floating around, to represent it as close as possible to what it is, which has no representation whatsoever. Will this time lead us to a war? Or have we ever left that big war into other formats, other kinds of destructions, other more subtle human losses and poverty, a radical slow war moving from a digital coding to our bodies without mediators? **EXCLUDING ALL MOVEMENTS: YOUR IMGINARIES:** This is a betrayal. If I would have gone through what you went through, with everyone seeing and knowing all that, I will weather away to my death, I will figure out a way to build a time machine so I can go back in time, but not just our time, but my ancestors time, just wipe out my whole lineage, pssshhh done, gone, uff. **EXCLUDING ALL MOVEMENTS: THEIR IMGINARIES:** This lock up situation can't be safer than laying down on the bed. **EXCLUDING ALL MOVEMENTS: HIS IMGINARIES:** Oh kill me now God!!! That thing you did with your tongue, sliding it around the clit, was never on the right spot. I am out of you for good. **EXCLUDING HIS MOVEMENTS: STOCK IN THE WRONG SPOT:** The prevention to stay home, to not meet people, to keep

2 meters distance from one another in the street, is doing a weird thing to people's libido, unanimously, even after 3 days locked in. The sole and soul idea of not being able to have sex (normally one has sex rarely, if you



are not apping of course, like I am not unless you have a partner... releases more estrogens and testosterones in most of us, even my old mother. I can't begin to imagine in 2, 3, or 6 months locked in. How would it be? I was thinking to buy sex toy aids and even make a temporary business with live-stream sex, or use again those call-girls/boys as retro-style, make an App for it to earn some money out of this crisis. **EXCLUDING COWARDLY TOUCHING MY SPOT:** How to touch one another separated? Some pages above, before lock-down time, I wrote about using our eyes to stare at each other, eye-hug, eye-caress, ways of using our eyes, stare at each other for a long time, to soften the body revealing things to each other, talking eyes, inviting eyes... But that won't work live-streaming. Live-streaming makes 3D go 2D, unless, perhaps, eyes are combined with the voice, for a 7D depth, to include all senses, up to vibrations and extra-perception. **EXCLUDING NANO-LANGUAGE-MAKEUPSEX:** Besides, when we use our eyes and voice we confirm our presence in the world, to our own-self and to others, we become our witness and witness for others, even digitally (and even if the problem is not the medium analog/digital dilemma, but us, I still want the material stuff or the hologram of you by my side. **EXCLUDING MICRO SCI-FI SHITTY ECONOMY:** (Day 9) Panic is stronger today. Economical collapse is evident. What can we do, excluding me having to pay from my pocket? Force the rich!!!! **EXCLUDING 1 % FADER FUKA:** (Day 14) Among the new institutions we need in the future are ones that recuperate the money stolen and accumulated by the bad politicians, bankers and private multinational investors. These institutions will re-invest the money into public social care: hospitals, schools, homes, one basic salary for all the people in the world, and good green farming conditions so people get fed properly. Institutions will replace banks too, to make sure banks do not play and inflate the economic bubble into any crisis again, because I don't like balloons – banks as we know them will disappear. **EXCLUDING 1000nds: INSTITUTIONS:** these new institutions should be called INSTITUTION, and should not be managed by the private sector that always tries to make big surplus from us. I am not saying anything new, but since my writing will belong to a different archive, into a new history written by the none white center male part of the world, I have to re-write some great ideas people had that have been laying around or those ideas that haven't been around yet, because I / we haven't yet written them down until now, so I need to put them down. Rethinking things through, this money could be managed by the private sector too, but only if they are obliged to pay a lot more tax, and only if we find a new extra secure system, where they will never escape again this obligation, by any possible corruption in which politicians are an entangled part. **EXCLUDING STRETCH MY SADNESS AWAY:** My writing today is overly angry and sad. Sad sits in the ribcage, and anger by the sacrum. I am stretching them while I write, sitting on the floor with wide open straight legs. While writing, I am leaning the torso to the right leg then to the left leg, to stretch the sides of my ribcage, to stretch the hamstring muscles that reach to the pelvis and sacrum, and to finally stretch my sadness away. **EXCLUDING COLLECTING SOUNDS, DON'T ACT FIRST:** (Still day 14) My mum called me to talk about her funny experiences of the

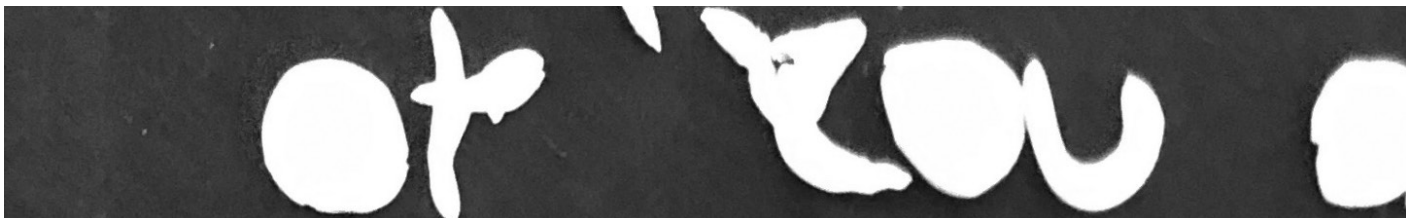


day (Thank you mum, I laughed a lot.) After not seeing any one for a week, not even one neighbor, she saw a dog in silence, it also didn't bother to bark at her. My roommate made a yummy dinner, while I told him of my feelings today, which were his feelings too. I re-phrased to him some lines of a text I read today: "What does doing do through language (that speaks)? And what is that we call doing?", basically about how language is an act and writing too, so my sadness finally went away, as I found myself acting here. **EXCLUDING MACHO WITNESS: UNITED AT LAST:** The lack of touch is like the lack of witness. It lacks reflection, presence, rec-

ognition of the one over there, or the ones closer even. These days everything seems impossible. Hands and eyes on our bodies don't work anymore. It hasn't worked for some lonely years already, but this quarantine exacerbates it. Since that break up, I thought of the many people who never receive a touch, the too weird, ugly, old, sick, fat, etc., no one looks at them, or if they do, it is to confirm that state. This incubation is uniting us in the lack. Equality at last. I hope this lockdown is extended enough so we start to create a transversal system of support, imagining other ways to relate to my neighbors, start eating less – considering that an excess of ingestion always implies a lack for many – buying less cloth, drinks, nights out, books, flights, VIP, exclusivity practices, app-dating consumption. Travel less: do holidays by googling map distances (virtual



moving), or electrical train, if they will ever open up again. Recycle everything, except bad macho boyfriends – they should not be used at all, nor tampons, their chemicals produce vagina allergy (go for the Diva-Cup). How do we want to touch one another when we meet again? Whom do we want to touch when we get out? If we think of the youngsters and the beautiful, begin to consider the ugly, the fat, the old, the dark, the different bodies. Think of what the migrants and prisoners are going through. What can we do for them (doing as an act), invite them for dinner once a week, take them to the park or the beach once every month, invite them home to sleep a few nights until they are settled in a new home (but don't use as an excuse that they are sleeping over to have sex with them, unless they want of course.). Make a house for them together with all the neighbors in your block. How do we want to include those others when this curfew is lifted in some months from now? **EXCLUDING DOGGING TAX: FUCKING THE FUCKERS:** (Still day 16) for many month I have been thinking how could we complot together to actually make the revolution functional: The people (The noun: people, excludes the fuckers evading tax) should never pay tax, while making the fuckers return all the years of tax evasion. Or at least COVID-19 should kill the fuckers first, and by the time COVID should start taking down the people, a cure will save the people, not the fuckers of course. Then, the money of the dead fuckers will be confiscated by Institution (that which I wrote about some chapters above) and redistributed among the people, as for ex. a planetary basic income to 100 % of the people (excl. fuckers) and the 3 days VIP fame day for all each 20 years. **EXCLUDING FUCK ME JESUS:** (Day 20) one of the things you could do with plasticine is: make a ball with one of your favorite colors, make a hole in it and stick his short penis deep in while rotating it around or screw it inside for about 7 minutes. PUFF, Voalá! Then stick your finger in it again and feel the warmth of his wet spectral cum caress your fingers with its sound. Mix the dough up again, so all liquid is absorbed into one smooth dough. If it stays wet, put some more flour in and mix again. The color would probably become lighter because of the cum, but who cares. **EXCLUDING SMALL TINY PERKS:** (Day 25) Wait, small pause to see that series, now finally he'll kiss her, I am so far from being kissed I get so excited knowing it's coming. My heart is pumping, memories of another life are back, with an extra-sensation all over the body, as if nostalgia is my permanent condition. **EXCLUDING THE SKY AS A LIMIT:** (Day 26 ) Writing is a trans act, a form of connection with invisible forces, with beings present in the absent, telling of the things we can't see, so that I'm able to write to you and myself, in case of forgetting, in case the future of NOTHING in it catches us off-guard. In case we end up in the nothingness without anything to refer to, unable to write about. Two years ago, I wrote in AH (my previous book, Another Hole): "The Arcon



and archives should be destroyed, so that history can be re-written", with the idea that we could write another history from the perspective of the excluded ones. Problem is, we won't be able to write any history in NOTHING. Is that why, am I rushing to write everything now? **EXCLUDING THE LIMITS OF THE FUTURE:** Online

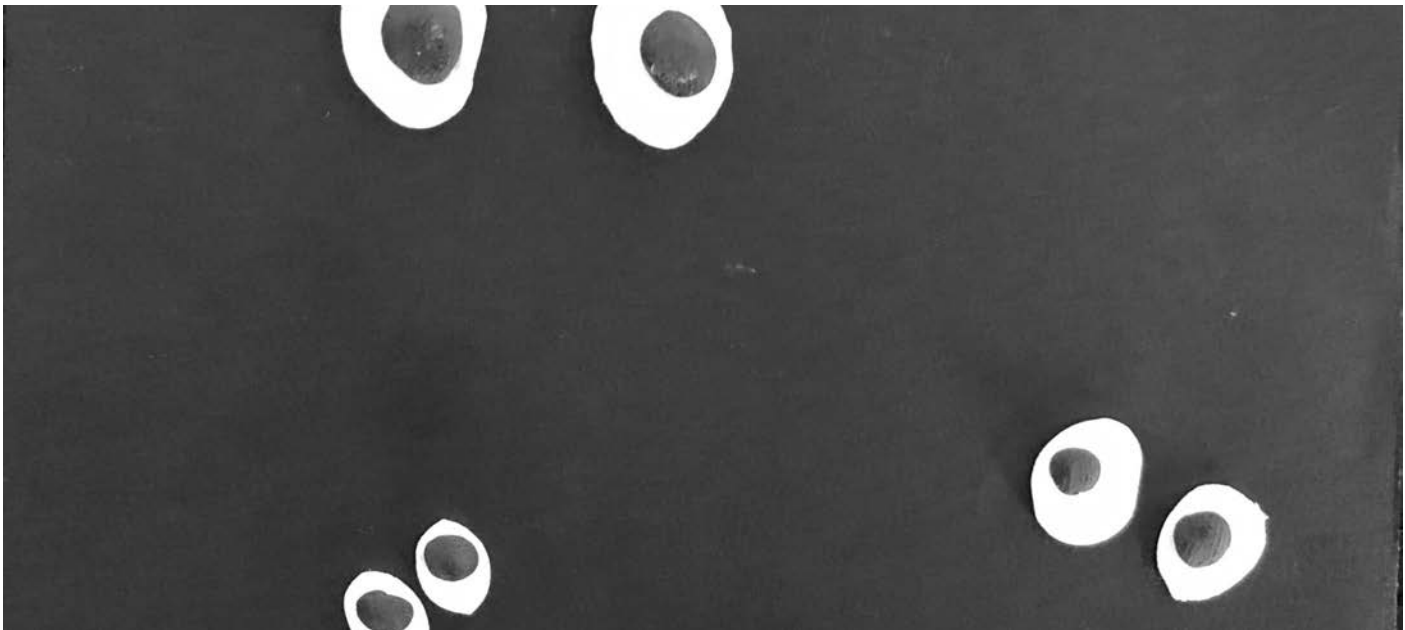


with Daniel and Ana, about the NOTHING, she thinks it would be good a future without representation. I was speculating what would it be without any reference to refer to. In the emptiness of language we would have to create new terms. We won't be able to represent love for example, or to ever touch one another. How would we represent intimacy, nostalgia, dreamy state, anger, empathy, pain, disappointment, if we won't encounter those feelings for lack of the other? Can we trust the memory stored in our bodily sensations? The nothing future is the dead of performance as we know it. The audience will have an assigned time to arrive to the theatre, with some minutes of nothing between people's passage into the building, to minimize the risk of proximity (I will make an app that clocks the minutes from leaving home to sitting down on the theatre seats, so no one crosses any one). People will be sitting 2 meters distance from each other. The performers too. In the end of the performance, each person will exit in the same retroactive timeline as they entered, without encountering one another. The audience is participating in a performance of entering and exiting the space, in almost the same prepared manner as the performers on stage. Everyone is performing a distancing behavior. **EXCLUDING THE FINAL DANCE:** (Day 32) This exercise will prevent you getting the virus, without distraction: @@when you see 2 to maximum 10 persons in the street, look at all of them at the same time, from the periphery of your eyes, while trying to keep 2 to more meters distance to all of them. @@You would have to move constantly, re-adjust your movements to maintain 2 meters distance. You can stop, walk, run, or even drop down to the floor, in any direction: to the side, backward, forward, in circles, and any speed:



slow, fast or normal. @@It's better you walk in areas where you can move around. @@PASS ON this exercise to all your network, so that you are not the only one looking like a crazy indecisive confusing person in the street. Besides this will keep us in good physical shape, lift up our humor, and might lead to making new acquaintances at a distance, which is a rare thing in up-tight Scandinavia. **EXCLUDING CHOREOGRAPHY IN NOTHING:** Stay in. Keep a distance, exclude this, exclude that, exclude it, exclude them, exclude us, exclude they, just exclude and exclude until there is nothing left. **EXCLUDING DIXIE HUMMINGBIRDS:** (Day 35) In my dream last night, the future of NOTHING had less than nothing. It was empty. It was very disturbing to be in it. No one knew what to do, how to start, what to say, or what to feel, it felt like empty, but that too was not recognizable. It was as if we needed a new language no one had, to construct some recognizing references. I couldn't make sense of it. My already dead dad was in it too. Was he lost in it like every one, as a representation of the dead of patriarchy, completely de-activated? In that case, I look forward to start from zero, so that we could re-build our relations outside that, outside misogyny and racism. **EXCLUDING THE EMPTY NOTHING:** I wanted to write today about the sadness and lostness that began when I woke up in that empty nothing. Even the bright day didn't help my mood. I almost bought an ice-cream to cheer myself up, but didn't, I don't want crumbs. I felt, that nothing will do anything, which is how it is supposed to be in the EMPTY NOTHING: nothing does nothing. And there is nothing to do but wait to understand how to fill this void, with better considerations than ever done before in this exhausted history of humans. My loneliness won't get a free pass into it either, that is too much for this new void. We really have to think what to bring into the empty nothing, to make a real difference. **EXCLUDING FAKE SEXY JUSTICE INTO THE SYSTEM:** why all tv series and films are about prison, mafia, revenge and shooting (sex is ok)? It leaves nothing for the imagination. These shouldn't go into the new NOTHING. **EXCLUDING TIRED, GREEN-PISS-OFF:** The getting piss-off all the time by the injustice of the segregating institutional system would also not go into the new NOTHING. **EXCLUDING ORACLE OF THE FUTURE:** In the future NOTHING, it would not be allowed to track people through their mobil phones or any electronic device, nor make the people pay the debt. Debt belongs to the rich 3% only: the self returns to itself. **EXCLUDING WWW SURVEILLANCE:** Also, the WWW should be a free sight, like it was in its start of it. Algorithms should read our mind to search for what we

really really want and not what they want us to do, by getting us stuck in a loop of no choices. **EXCLUDING ADS IN NOTHING:** Yes, ads would be forbidden, so our minds can empty out by real. I have to rest now. **EXCLUDING FORGIVENESS IN EMPTINESS:** Forgiveness will be necessary and so will pass through. In the new NOTHING, we will still be human, full of failures, so we need it. It is just that we won't know now what our new sins will be. **EXCLUDING POLYAMORY OR PROMISCUITY?:** Sorry guys, but, the actual popular polyamory also NO PASARAN. Adventurous sex with various bodies in parallel times in NOTHING, will not be a part of. It's just too easy and too complicated at the same time. And since we are 7.5 billion passing through to the BIG NOTHING, minus 3% who NO PASARAN, it makes 7.335 billion people, so we have to be very careful not to begin the egocentric privilege manners of the white center patriarchal world, repeating the same stories again, thinking they can have it all, besides the fear of spreading of course. **EXCLUDING COW CLUBBING:** I am wondering how to continue my clubbing habit in the empty rural? Perhaps, invite inhabitants to gather in a chosen open field, with color moving spotlight coming up from the ground, lighting the sky. The sound will come from a gigantic speaker, those used by NASA to send messages to Aliens in the universe. In this way we are also communicating with other beings in other planets sharing the best of us, happy dancing with great DJ sets, with some cows and reindeers as witnesses (since we can't disrupt

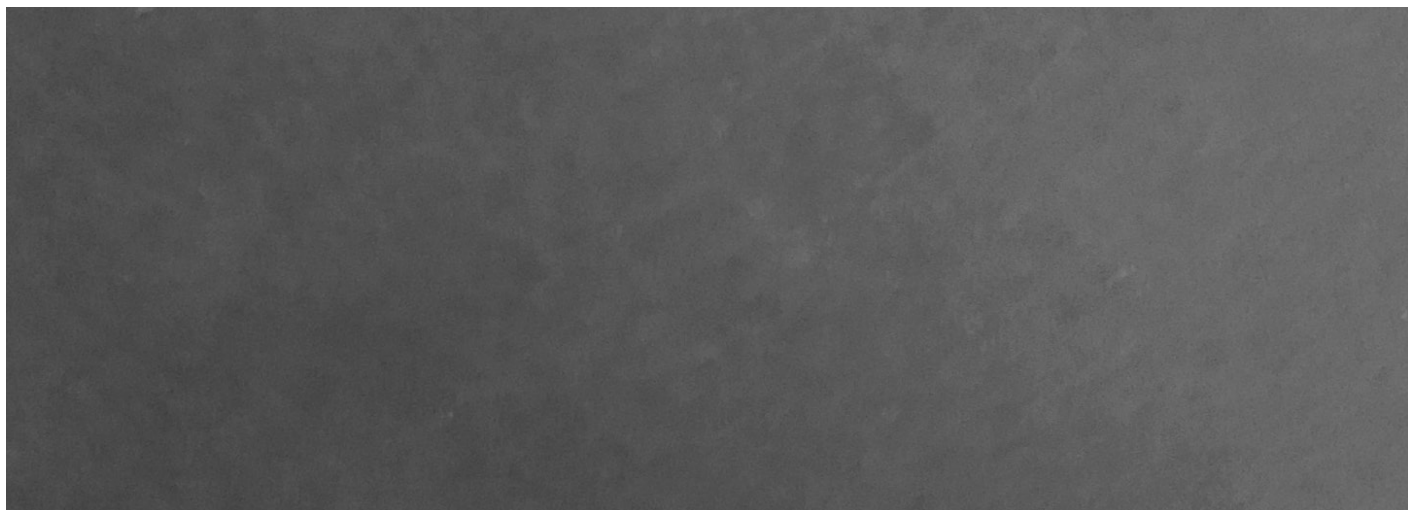


the sound of the universe, DJs will only remix the sound of the universe for our cow clubbing). **EXCLUDING FREEDOM:** (Day 44) How could we free ourselves from freedom? Because in the BIG NOTHING this will no go through. **EXCLUDING ALL COLORS:** (Day 51) The way to do it, is by not having colors. Every thing is emptied of color, pure white, a color that has no colors. Not even black, which was my first thought in an attempt to be more democratic with black, less racist, undoing history, but this attempt again is a bad cycle of representation of the last 600 awful years of colonization and slavery that started this collapse, and for that reason, it won't PASARAN into the NOTHING. **EXCLUDING MOBILITY IN COVID-19 "MADURO'S" SIPHILITIC ASS:** (Day 68) (18th May 2020, 2 months after the isolation started.) I am writing as if today is the 16th of March 2020, 3 days after lockdown, when I wrote as if that day was the 16th of April 2020, imagining how we would exit our homes in the supposed end of quarantine, imagining what kind of people we would have become. Today, bars, cafes and shops are open. We are out in the street, walking freely. We are back to what we were. The eyes of people are not softer as I thought it would be after 2 month isolation (here the isolation lasted 2 weeks really, people were not forbidden to go out.) Bodies still harden around other bodies, we are not saluting each other with soft eyes as if eye-hugging. I thought we would come out quieter, calmer, stop doing so much and only do what is absolutely necessary. Instead, every body is shopping for unnecessary things, filling fast the gaps, instead of letting gaps stay as new spaces for our collective imaginaries. Today, the excess of buying, egocentrism, greed, and freedom continues. Shame is re-enforced. **EXCLUDING MOBILITY IN COVID-PEOPLES ASS:** (18th May 2020, 2 month after the isolation started). I am writing as if today is the 16th of March 2020, 3 days after we got lockdown, when I wrote as if that day

was the 16th of April 2020, imagining how we would exit our homes in the supposed end of the quarantine, imagining what kind of people we would have become. Today, bars, cafes and shops are open. We are out



on the street, walking freely, but we are worst than what we were. Institutions are only thinking of how to safe guard their own interests, the salary of its staff and its future existence, instead of re-thinking how we work together, as a network of affection. When the boss of that festival tells me today, he won't co-produce my project this year, because he might get his next year's budget cut, then, to prevent his own collapse, he is moving half the money from this to next year. So he cancelled half the artists invited. We are stuck with debt, without compensation for this neither to move things for next year. But while Institutions get compensation support by Hjælp pakke (emergency cultural support for institutions in Denmark) we, the artists (also the people) aren't getting it. We fall and crash. Presenters-curators-programmers survive with a full year salary and security because we exist. What we don't understand, is that they are able to survive because the artists exist. If we say NO PASARAN, they will not be able to continue. What are we waiting for? I said 8 years ago, and also above: stop killing solidarity for your own visibility, because soon you won't even exist as artists, if we don't say this shit NO PASARAN. **EXCLUDING DEEP-THROAT SOLIDARITY: (DAY 69)** Deep throat in 69 is one of my favorite positions. I am trying to be less emotional, take things less personal, but I am truly failing. I am taking everything so seriously personal. **EXCLUDING DAY CLUBBING BY FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN RØDEPLATS:** I could try to risk my life in tomorrow's outdoor day clubbing, and get infected for solidarity to eliminate camps. But what about my 2 month real historic lockdown with paranoia of getting sick? The idea of a potential flirt (not even go as far as to wish for a blow job) surpass my paranoia. Hmm serious contradiction. If I were a man I would jerk off on a voodoo doll representing all curators-presenters-programmers, spread them with my sperm, until they dry petrified together in 1 body-mass – or mess, as



none have demonstrated a decent act of creative solidarity yet. All they are doing is passing everything to a shitty ONLINE live streaming. How poor is that? Creativity is also killed by coronavirus, together with desire. I better stay in my own shell, put online money support to the anti-camp campaign and stay home. Instead of 69, I will invent a position called Spectral-6-Sex that is: me myself and I, without the other.....

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Dear Friend,

We would like to invite you to participate in a poster campaign we are working on with artists and activists. We are dressing the facade of the Berlin Moabit Town Hall with large posters. At the moment we cannot know what the consequences of the big “shut down” will be, but what we do know for sure is that the borders must open again. Open borders for women! Our mothers, grandmothers and sisters must be able to cross the borders.

The women who are most affected by war, poverty, displacement and the nationalist politics of states have the least chance of moving across borders.

We know that borders are the origin of war. War is the fuel of prosperity. Women only benefit from this prosperity to a limited extent and only if they submit to the existing order.

We say: Instead of regressive narratives of division and polarization – a socio-political doctrine of love for diversity and a deep understanding of solidarity!

Let's start together!  
Marina and Joulia

## **THE ECONOMY OF BORDERS –** *we lost our soft soul,* *by crossing the borders*

Exhibition on the facade of the City hall of Tiergarten

The exhibition will be accompanied by a demonstration and an assembly  
June 9th, 2020, 5PM, Mathilde-Jacob-Platz 1, 10551 Berlin

Participating artists and activists: Raha Amiri (Moria), Evgenia Belorusets (Kyiv/Berlin), Uma Gadzieva (Berlin), Nazgol Golmuradi (Athens), Vanessa Gravenor (Berlin), The House of Women for Empowerment & Emancipation (Athens), Nadira Husain (Berlin/Paris), Clara Stella Hüneke (Berlin), Sarah Kwasnicki (Berlin), Victoria Lomasko (Moscow), Eleonore de Montesquiou (Berlin/Tallinn), Zoë Claire Miller (Berlin), Lada Nakonechna (Kyiv), Marina Naprushkina (Berlin), Click Ngwere (Athens), Batoul Sedawi (Berlin), Florine Schüscke (Berlin), Nicola Schüscke (Berlin), Olia Sosnovskaya (Minsk/Wien), Gabriele Stötzer (Erfurt), Greta Cazzola (Berlin), Antigoni Tsagaropoulou (Athens), Nicola Schüscke (Berlin), Joulia Strauss (Athens/Berlin), Antigone Theodorou (Athens), Vera Varlamova (Berlin), Eirini Vlavianou (Athens), WISH Women In Solidarity House (Lesbos), Liwaa Yazji (Berlin).

Organisation: Marina Naprushkina and Joulia Strauss

Duration of the exhibition: June 9th - July 10th, 2020

The exhibition will be accompanied by a four week long online marathon. The participants will be making daily contributions referring to their work, the socio-political situation and their political demands. Media partners: Avtonomi Akadimia (Athens), Neue Nachbarschaft/Moabit und Moabit Mountagn College (Berlin), The House of Women for Empowerment & Emancipation (Athens), Prostory (on literature, social criticism and modern art)







**WE WANT TO RAISE  
SAILS OF OUR FREEDOM  
WE NEED TO BE LISTENED  
POVERTY MAY NOT KILL US  
BUT, REPRESSION WILL!  
OPEN OUR WINGS,  
LET US FLY!  
WE LOST OUR SOFT  
SOUL, BY CROSSING THE  
BORDERS!**

- Paiwana Amíri  
refugee in Ritsona greek camp