

QUADERNS  
BIENNALE,  
2023:  
Following  
the Fish



La Biennale di Venezia

18. Mostra  
Internazionale  
di Architettura  
Eventi Collaterali



I am pleased to present the second edition of *Quaderns Biennale*. This special issue of our magazine is devoted to setting out the conceptual framework of the Catalan proposal—organised once again by the Institut Ramon Llull—that will be presented at La Biennale di Venezia.

*Following the Fish* is the title of a daring and boundary-pushing proposal, a project that challenges the visitor, the reader, by tracing the movements of Barcelona's *manterers* (street vendors), studying their circumstances and activity, and seeing how it affects the city. Tired of being ignored—for years they have been demanding citizenship documents for everyone—, they have joined forces and are making a concerted effort to achieve their goal, which is none other than to survive in an inhospitable urban environment that stubbornly opposes them. They occupy a space, inhabit a space, impact a space. An undocumented person is a body, inhabiting an environment, without rights. There they are, increasingly well organised, holding their large, white, square sheets with cords knotted at the corners, ready to open them out on the pavement and start selling their wares, and just as ready to gather them up in a flash to evade the authority that persecutes them. And they are an element of both conflict and coexistence, which leads to conversations about legality and solidarity. All in all, they force us to consider the future, where migration will play an all-important role. This is a necessary discussion about a hugely consequential issue, on which we must take the long view rather than focusing on its most immediate and superficial aspects.

Lesley Lokko proposes Africa as the main axis of the debate, as *The Laboratory of the Future*. Africa demands our attention. It is the continent with the greatest potential for future impact in several spheres: economics, demographics, migration, culture... It will play a pivotal role in shaping the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is also a good time to reappraise our colonial past and our exploitation of both raw materials and human labour from Africa. As such, *Quaderns Biennale* serves as a manifesto, the result of an in-depth analysis of the *manterer's* predicament understood as a symptom of a skewed society that must strive to address its challenges. This is where the Sindicat de Manters (People's Union of Street Vendors) and the Leve production company come in, creating an extraordinary project, involving a whole series of actions and debates, in which architecture, urban planning, the city and its public space are proposed as part of the solution.

Mention must also be made of the excellent editing work by the editorial team, and the photo essay by Eva Serrats, which trace the actions and landscapes of our protagonists.

Guim Costa i Calsamiglia  
Dean of the Architects' Association of Catalonia (COAC)

The Institut Ramon Llull will be taking part in the Biennale Architettura 2023, where the focus will be on Africa as the laboratory of the future. It will be presenting *Following the Fish*, a project that invites architecture to address the challenges of the current social and political climate.

The evolution of our cities and their urban landscape, as well as the design of public spaces or the places where we live, are the result of social processes and the fluctuations of history. Architecture and urban planning often embody the powerful worldview of the ruling classes and their interests, but they are also a consequence of social tensions and the struggles of the subordinate classes in their fight to win new rights and to conquer new areas of freedom and progress. Over the last three centuries, cities have become both magnets for revolutionary policies and the nerve centres of capitalist accumulation and access to urban resources, as David Harvey argues. Architecture, therefore, has a clear political dimension since it always expresses a set of values and responds to a scale of priorities. This results in an urban planning system that conditions us both socially and politically through the situations and activities it encourages, as well as through the ones it prohibits or represses.

The joint proposal by the Leve studio and Top Manta to reflect on architecture and urban dynamics from the experience and perspective of this Barcelona-based Senegalese community upends the logic and expectations of the status quo. The dedication and experience of this street-vending collective in finding ways around the legal obstacles and punitive measures of Fortress Europe, along with its ingenuity and creativity in setting up a cooperative as a successful economic project, make its expertise a useful and valuable learning tool for the times we are living in. Its accumulated experience and knowledge, full of symbolic value, challenge and invite us to rethink the city and the ways in which its inhabitants coexist. Nevertheless, architecture has the potential to address complex issues, start debates and propose scenarios, suggesting solutions or alternatives to latent conflicts or pressing issues.

As Foucault argues, it is often in the margins and the interconnections between groups on the periphery—the most vulnerable and the excluded—where we find overlooked discourses and knowledge; that is, worldviews that may offer some of the plausible alternatives required in order to transform the structures of the status quo, break the dynamics of inequalities, or even bring an end to unsustainable ways of life.

In Europe and many other parts of the world, migrant collectives are still not expected to speak out assertively, on their own terms; or rather, attempts are still made to hide and silence their voices, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” However, through self-organisation, determination and solidarity, this street-vending

collective has found ways to turn the issue of exclusion on its head and to make its voice heard, laying bare the shame of an unjust, dehumanised system.

In a context of changing paradigms, structural failures and dystopian transitions, the bundle unfolded on the street as a *sër* (blanket) is an agile and effective device which, as Leve explains, turns the public space into a street market. Its deployment is a symbolic but brave and daring gesture that fosters dialogue and exchange, while at the same time straining legal frameworks, mocking the borders of privilege and denouncing the North’s plundering of the South and its diaspora. It is a gesture that also unfolds a part of Africa, explaining its imaginaries or traditions and, above all, its melting pot of ideas full of futures.

If the main purpose of architecture is to provide shelter, the presentation of *Following the Fish* at the Biennale Architettura 2023 responds to the desire of Catalan and Balearic culture to welcome and shelter the story of the struggle of the *manters* community as a laboratory for the social transformation of day-to-day life in cities and as a space for reflecting on necessary global changes.

Pere Almeda  
Director of the Institut Ramon Llull

The theme of the 18<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is *The Laboratory of the Future*, a title chosen by its artistic director, Lesley Lokko. Africa is the protagonist in this year’s La Biennale di Venezia: “There is a place on this planet where all these concepts of equality, race, hope and fear converge and come together: Africa. Anthropologically, we are all Africans. What happens in Africa happens to all of us.” The Ghanaian-Scottish architect, academic and novelist also stated that “the vision of a modern, diverse and inclusive society is seductive and persuasive, but as long as it remains an image, it is a mirage. Something more than representation is needed, and architects historically are key players in translating images into reality.”

Faced with this challenge, the selection process committee of experts convened by the Institut Ramon Llull unanimously chose the project *Following the Fish* to represent Catalonia and the Balearic Islands in the Collateral Events of the Biennale Architettura 2023. A proposal by Leve and the Union of Barcelona Street Vendors, a joint project between anti-racist activism and architecture, in search of solutions for the future of our cities. And we chose it not only for its conception of architecture as a project of social production on an exhibition level, but also as a project of transformation and vindication of every person’s right to the city. An initiative that wanted to put forward methodologies, shared knowledge and mutual eco-social struggles. As the jury we valued the proposal’s courage, strength and quality, which embraced certain necessary practices that are a laboratory of the future for a present-day in crisis.

This catalog reflects on this coming together of migrant communities and architecture, through the curatorial text that follows, the largely African or Afro-descendant guest speakers that precede it and the photographs that are interspersed.

#### President of the committee of experts

Eva Franch i Gilabert, architect and artistic director of Model. Barcelona Architecture Festival

#### Members

Guim Costa i Calsamiglia, Dean of the Architects’ Association of Catalonia (COAC), Inés de Rivera Marinello, member of Research, Education and Universities at the COAC, Elvira Dyangani Ose, Director of MACBA Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Jaume Mayol, architect and co-director of TEd’A Arquitectes, Olga Subirós, architect and curator of the Catalan exhibition at Biennale Architettura 2021 (*Air|Aria|Aire*), Maria Lladó, Director of the Arts Department at Institut Ramon Llull

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“The Laboratory of the Future” is the title and theme of Biennale Architettura 2023. Proposed by the exhibition’s curator, Lesley Lokko, it stems from a desire to establish an African perspective as a platform for discussing common global challenges. Rather than adopting the European approach to thinking—that is, thinking about the world from one’s own perspective—it aims to generate new imaginaries through which to project ourselves and, accordingly, raise the social venture concept to another level. The *Following the Fish* project aims to be a part of this utopia and, in order to meet the challenge set by Biennale Architettura 2023 to identify the places where these new practices are taking place and these new discourses are being articulated, and with a shared desire to put the spotlight on possible spaces of African realities in Europe, it has joined forces with Top Manta,<sup>1</sup> a Senegalese community based in Barcelona: an Africa made from afar, from the diaspora.

From the outset, in the early conversations held with Top Manta to formulate this proposal, it became clear that this collective project for ‘manters’ (the street vendors who sell their wares on a blanket, or “manta”) contained the future laboratory potential that is championed by Lokko in her text for Biennale Architettura 2023. Moreover, in the initial work sessions, devoted to creating a script of content for an exhibition on architecture and the city, the questions posed by the Top Manta organisation were the same ones we came across in architecture schools, specialised magazines or in the Biennale itself. Although the formulation of the question might vary, as might the possible answers, right from the start the topics we discussed with the members of Top Manta were migration, public space and participation, decolonisation and feminisms, gastronomy and food sustainability, current living models, collaboration networks, the ageing city, and the role of design in addressing social and urban challenges, or education.

Reading the city from a ‘manger’s’ perspective reveals the prejudice-filled gazes and the perverse normative logic to which the most vulnerable are subjected. This does not only apply to street vendors but also to scrap collectors or homeless people. In this hostile urban environment, problems are dispersed and displaced, their cause left unaddressed. Public space has undergone a process of aestheticization that refuses to acknowledge conflict; instead, a false, frictionless image of the city is promoted.<sup>2</sup> Power mechanisms are organised through the hierarchical principle of exclusion, turning victims into the enemies of cities, turning the most vulnerable into a problem. As one of the founders of Top Manta explains, public space is treated as private space. But within this scenario, and despite their perilous situation, these ‘manters’ have proved capable of turning their insta-

bility into a purposeful approach to the street. Ultimately, street vending was their only option for survival in Barcelona. It forced them to deploy multiple tactics of urban transgression, to take advantage of the city’s infrastructure in order to carry out an activity that people resort to so often as a means to meet the most basic subsistence needs. However, the founding of the Union of Barcelona Street Vendors also demonstrated a great capacity to activate mechanisms of political representation.<sup>3</sup> This initiative not only highlighted the neoliberal mechanisms that act on cities, but also it embodied the struggle for the right to the city, championing a democratic and egalitarian urban planning model.<sup>4</sup> The ‘manters’ succeeded in overcoming the stigma associated with their activity, regaining self-esteem and rebuilding their own psychic structures. Unapologetically, they demanded respect, not only by organising as a union but also by asserting their creativity, entering the world of fashion design with the creation of the Top Manta brand. On the basis of a project culture, they managed to build a counter-hegemonic vision of migrant identity. Ever since then, and through the cooperative, they have been implementing a project built on economics, social justice, non-exploitation and freedom of movement. This culture, developed in a particular framework, in dialogue with a specific social and political environment, has enabled them to create a form of life with values and knowledge—of shared struggles—which we believe can be extrapolated to architecture, offering ideas for more sustainable futures that challenge us to think about the city in different ways. *Following the Fish* is a rehearsal, a means of putting to the test this alliance between the world of the ‘manters’ vending and design.

When in 1992 Ngugi wa Thiong’o<sup>5</sup> proposed moving the centre, shifting the focus of particularity to a plurality of cultures, he referred to an African proverb: “Wisdom comes from an ant heap.” His argument was that our humanity does not manifest itself in abstractions but rather in the particularities of our lives. These particularities are both the starting point and testing ground of our conceptualisation of the world. The process of learning begins when we pay attention to the particular, in this case the Top Manta organisation, as an example of the many other Africas that are being built by diaspora Africans in the cities and rural areas of Europe. Our focus is on ‘manters’, but it could just as easily be on the hundreds of Africans who, faced with the progressive disappearance of the farming population, are now the people who take care of forests and crop fields in places such as Catalonia or the Balearic Islands. These are Africas made from afar, “cuttings planted in other lands and fed by other juices”.<sup>6</sup> In this search for new African realities proposed by Biennale Architettura 2023, we believe that on the basis of its particularity, the Top Manta organisation represents one of the possible spaces.

1  
This text presents the history of Top Manta and its relationship with the city of Barcelona. Nevertheless, it is worth explaining at this juncture that Top Manta is a group of street vendors, most of whom are Senegalese, who in 2015 joined forces as the Union of Barcelona Street Vendors in order to have a voice of their own, to defend their rights, to denounce social injustice and to call for dialogue with the public authorities. In 2017, they created the Top Manta fashion brand, based on ethical and sustainable criteria, aimed at ensuring the future of local communities instead of forcing them to migrate. The project has been turned into a cooperative enterprise, adopting a horizontal organisational model rooted in the social and solidarity economy. The Top Manta organisation decided to adopt as its name the expression that is used to describe its activity: *top manta* is a type of street vending that involves displaying wares on a blanket (*manta*), which is unfurled on the street.

2  
Marta Contijoch, Marta Espinosa (2019). *Manters. Morabitisme i comerç informal als carrers de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Bellaterra, p. 101.

3  
Horacio Espinosa (2017). “El mercadillo rebelde de Barcelona. Prácticas antidisdisciplinarias en la ciudad mercancia”, *Quaderns-e de l’Institut Català d’Antropologia* (22) 1, p. 66, 84.

4  
Yvan Molinero, Gennaro Avallone (2020). “El trabajo ambulante: entre derecho a la ciudad y represión. El caso de la resistencia de los trabajadores senegaleses en la ciudad de Salerno”, *Migraciones* 48, p. 22, 47.

5  
Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1993). *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*. Melton: James Currey publishers.

6  
Felwine Sarr (2016). *Afrotopia*. Paris: Philippe Rey.

“Following the fish” is a figurative expression that evokes the story on which our exhibition proposal is based. As in an African tale, the fish becomes the narrator of life, of the life journey of the people who founded Top Manta. In the first instance, it symbolises the plundering that is strangling the African economy. Our story is about fish, but it could be about cobalt, coffee, coltan, copper, cotton, diamonds, gold, magnesium, oil, platinum, steel, tea, uranium or the strength of young Africans themselves. As we follow the fish, we ride the currents of the diaspora generated by this plundering, and by following it through the streets of Barcelona we reveal the institutional and social racism suffered by those who are trying to survive after being forced from their homes. Our journey through the processes of struggle of Barcelona’s ‘manters’ brings us to the founding of the Union of Barcelona Street Vendors. And at a certain point in this journey, stimulated by the prospect of bringing the ideas of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands to the Venice Biennale, we join the fish on its journey, accompanied by architecture and design students from all over the world. Together, we are beginning to shape new projects, ideas which the Top Manta organisation dreams of bringing to fruition, such as an anti-racist restaurant or a welcoming space for migrants, not to mention the idea of multipurpose small-scale facilities located at street level. These projects offer us a glimpse of possible future cities enriched by all their individuals and with meaning for all those who inhabit them. They form the chapters of this story.

### *On a Beach in Senegal*

On a beach in Senegal, young fishermen watch on as fishing trawlers from Europe catch the fish that until now had fed the local economy, as described by Fatou Diome in her novel *Celles qui attendent* (Women Who Wait): “At the time, the sea was full of fish, artisanal fishing flourished and those who braved the waves, while not rich, knew nothing of true poverty. It is said that the poor still have gifts of nature. But the Atlantic was so generous that the islanders felt blessed by the gods.”<sup>7</sup> That all came to an end when Western trawlers began to plunder the local fish stock. Indeed, the industrial-scale fishing that is taking place off the coasts of Senegal, Mauritania and The Gambia, is serving to supply raw material for the manufacture of fishmeal and fish oil (FMFO) for fish farms. Greenpeace Africa and the Changing Markets Foundation published a damning report on this issue in 2021, entitled *Feeding a Monster*. It states that half a million tonnes of fresh fish are being diverted every year from these coasts to be processed by industries that are also extremely polluting. Considering

that the average consumption of fish per person/per year in this part of the world is 15 kilos, 33 million people could be fed with the fish extracted by the FMFO industry, which is more than the combined populations of these countries. Fish is the main source of protein in Senegal, which means that the plundering of its stock has generated severe food insecurity. Fish is no longer reaching homes. People are going hungry. In Mauritania, where a large number of FMFO processing factories are located, chronic diseases and asthma have been detected, not to mention the grave environmental impact that has occurred in the areas surrounding these factories.<sup>8</sup> Artisanal fishermen can no longer make a living from fishing, but neither can the women who sell the fish after processing it using traditional methods.

This state of affairs can be traced back to the Structural Adjustment Programmes introduced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s. These neoliberal measures proved highly beneficial to large multinationals but had disastrous consequences for African agriculture and fishing. Yet just as the West was forcing Africans to leave their lands in search of better living conditions elsewhere, Europe—busy establishing the Schengen Area in the mid-1990s—was strengthening measures to combat the very migration that its own extractive policies in Africa were generating.<sup>9</sup> On top of this, we must add that Senegal, despite not being a major contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Forecasts indicate that sea levels will rise in West Africa at a faster rate than the global average, while extreme drought is already affecting the farming sector, which employs more than 70 % of the country’s working population. All of this is leading to new population displacements.<sup>10</sup>

In the face of such adverse circumstances, the young fishermen of Senegal reached the conclusion that if they could no longer use their canoes to fish, they would use them to sail to where the fish was being taken.

### *Crossing the Ocean*

They have no choice; the bureaucratic machine has been designed perfectly to make it impossible for these young people to travel to Europe legally. Boats that have been left idle due to a lack of fish are fitted with an engine in order to navigate the high seas. They are also filled with drums of gasoline, water and food. They then set sail for the Canary Islands, in the European Union.<sup>11</sup> The greed of certain individuals means that some canoes are in a poor state of repair, or are overloaded with passengers and may lack water and food. In such circumstances, an unfavourable wind that slows them down or rough seas can have fatal consequences. A report published by the human rights group Caminando Fronteras (Frontline

7  
Translation from the French: “À l’époque, la mer était poissonneuse, la pêche artisanale florissante et ceux qui affrontaient les vagues, s’ils n’étaient pas riches, ignoraient tout de la vraie pauvreté. On dit qu’aux pauvres il reste des cadeaux de la nature. Or l’Atlantique était si généreux que les insulaires se sentaient bénis des dieux.” Chapter 2 in Fatou Diome (2010). *Celles qui attendent*. Paris: Flammarion.

8  
Cridem, 2017, p. 8 note 18.

9  
Papa Sow (2004). “Prácticas comerciales transnacionales y espacios de acción de los senegaleses en España”. In Ángeles Escrivá and Natalia Ribas (coord.). *Migración y desarrollo. Estudios sobre remesas y otras prácticas transnacionales*. Córdoba: CSIC, p. 235.

10  
Maddalena Grechi, Alfredo Agustoni (2019). “Migration and climate change in Senegal. The Matam region, an emblematic case study”. *International Review of Sociology* (29) 2, p. 215–237.

11  
Linguère Mously Mbaye (2014). “Barcelona or die: Understanding illegal migration from Senegal”. *Journal of Migration* (3) 21 [online].

Defenders) estimates that 7,692 people lost their lives on the Canary Route (also called the Atlantic Route) between 2018 and 2022, victims of the necropolitics applied to the Western Euro-African border.

Those who make it to the coasts of the European Union will sooner or later be intercepted and locked up in a migrant detention centre. Of the 280 centres that currently operate in Europe, seven are located in Spain, including one in Barcelona. Human rights defenders are denied access to these places where foreigners who have not committed any crime are detained, where a lack of healthcare provisions have led to the death of detainees (a situation that has been denounced repeatedly), and where assaults by police officers are frequent.<sup>12</sup> These buildings represent ground zero of the relationship void and the denial of the very idea of humanity. They are spaces designed to house the “surplus population”<sup>13</sup>, where people are waiting to be turned into deportable subjects. Fortress Europe forbids those fleeing extreme poverty to save themselves from drowning, but also from seeking refuge. This “borderisation” process contemplates free movement as an exclusive right of Europeans, inspiring the slogan of one of the T-shirts designed by Top Manta: “Legal clothing, illegal people”. The T-shirt can travel freely around the world, unlike the person who has manufactured it. The grandchildren of the slaves who toiled to pay for a significant number of Barcelona’s Art Nouveau buildings, so widely visited by tourists, now find themselves locked up in a prison without having committed any crime. The racism that was once inscribed on the bodies of slaves is now imprinted on those of migrants or precarious workers.<sup>14</sup>

### *In the Streets of Barcelona*

For the migrants who finally manage to get out of this prison, the same bureaucratic machine that decides who is allowed to move around—and who is not—ensures that they are treated with suspicion. What awaits them is a city full of traps and legal impediments.<sup>15</sup> The immigration law obliges migrants to remain in the country uninterrupted for at least three years in order to regulate their situation. Deprived of the possibility of having an employment contract, the law leaves them between a rock and a hard place, having to choose between exploitation or the informal economy. When a migrant who has just managed to get out of a detention centre sees a ‘manter’ for the first time, they think that they will never end up doing that job, but in the end, it becomes their only alternative for survival.<sup>16</sup> As another Top Manta T-shirt slogans reads: *El meu somni no era ser un manter*. (“I didn’t dream of becoming a ‘manter’”). But that migrant has no choice. Out of a sense of camaraderie, fellow Senegalese migrants offer the newcomer the blanket that will enable them to start work. This

12  
Marta Bolinches, Jordi de Sanespleda, Andrés García, Anaïs Franquesa (2021). *Vulneracions de drets humans al Centre d'Internament d'Estrangers de Barcelona*. Barcelona: Iridia.

13  
Achille Mbembe (2020). *Brutalisme*. Perpignan: La Découverte.

14  
Ibid.

15  
Organic Law 4/2000, on the rights and freedoms of the foreigners in Spain and their social integration, Official State Gazette no. 10 § 12. 11 January 2000 (informally known as the immigration law).

Organic Law 4/2015, on the protection of citizen security, Official State Gazette no. 77 § 27216. 30 March 2015 (informally known as the gag law).

Organic Law 1/2015, amending Organic Law 10/1995, of 23 November, on the Criminal Code, Official State Gazette no. 24. 30 March 2015.

By-law on measures to promote and safeguard citizen coexistence in the public space of Barcelona, Barcelona City Council 2005 (informally known as the municipal by-law on civic behaviour).

16  
In 2015, up to 98 people from the street vending collective were detected, 95% of who came from Senegal. Most of them stated that they were in an irregular administrative situation (66%) and that they were settled in the city (84% resided in the city, 47% had been in the city for more than five years) – *Diagnosi social sobre el fenomen de la venda ambulants a la ciutat de Barcelona*. Ajuntament de Barcelona, Comissió de Drets Socials, Cultura i Esports (Social diagnosis on the phenomenon of street vending in the city of Barcelona. Barcelona City Council, Commission on Social Rights, Culture and Sports), Barcelona, 16 September 2015: 11.

deep-rooted Senegalese solidarity is characterised by a common ideal and a conviction of belonging to a community.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the fieldwork carried out by Contijoch and Espinosa with Barcelona’s ‘manter’ community of highlights the central role of the so-called *dahira* or *daaira* (an institution through which members of a Sufi brotherhood meet for prayer and socialisation) in welcoming the newcomer and helping them get established, acting as a buffer and support in dealing with precariousness.

However, the passing of the gag law in 2015 (see note 3) deliberately made informal street vending a crime. Although the activity does not directly harm people, goods or infrastructure, through this law the selling of goods displayed on a blanket was no longer classified as an administrative misdemeanour but rather as a crime that incurs a prison sentence, which means having a criminal record for life. Having a criminal record makes obtaining a residence permit—and consequently a work permit—even more difficult. This legal vicious circle is compounded further by the municipal by-law on civic behaviour (see note 3), which imposes fines on informal street vendors. This rule entails both the physical suffering (at the hands of abusive police officers) and the psychosocial suffering of individuals in situations of poverty and exclusion.<sup>18</sup>

They navigate the city as if they were hackers (not crackers), transgressing certain urban norms to ply their trade on the streets with agility. The *Móodu-Móodu* (Wolof word for “migrants”) have learned to be street-wise, applying the knowledge they have gained of the bustling city, ready to set up their pop-up street market at the drop of a hat:<sup>19</sup> each of them holds their heavy *ëmb* (Wolof for “bundle”), waiting for the right moment to unfurl it on the street as a *sër* (Wolof for “blanket”). But as soon as the police appear, they must quickly turn it back into an *ëmb*, by means of a drawstring, and load it onto their back. The street vendors say that they have learned to run faster than a police officer. As the study referred to above points out, this climate of imposed criminalisation has severe psychological repercussions. In fact, the ‘manters’ do not even need to be plying their trade in order to run into problems; just walking down the street can be reason enough to be questioned by the police, solely on the basis of their appearance. European migration policies turn street vendors into border subjects wherever they go. They are surrounded by borders: the opacity of laws, the bureaucratic machine or a police car. Within the territorial limits of the state, the border springs up all over the city.<sup>20</sup> This situation reveals the ideological and exclusive nature of public space. The ‘manters’ are allowed to coexist in our community but they are extremely tightly controlled. Discredited, they become victims of social rejection. This leaves them with no other option than to use non-legitimate channels, which in turn increases their social marginalisation.

17  
Sarr, *op. cit.*

18  
Cristina Fernández Bessa, Andrés Di Masso Tarditti (2018). “Deu anys de civisme ‘a toc d’ordenança’: estudi sobre l’aplicació de l’ordenança de convivència a l’espai”. *Barcelona Societat. Revista de coneixement i anàlisi social*, 22 (setembre), p. 45–48; Lorena Antón (2016). “Reflexió: Criminalització del top manta”. *Invisibles. L’estat del racisme a Catalunya*. Barcelona: Sos Racisme, Pol’len edicions, p. 25–27.

19  
Espinosa, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

20  
Gloria Anzaldúa (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, p. 25.

In 2019, a ruling by section 6 of the Provincial Court of Barcelona offered a rebuttal to the smears that had been repeatedly made against the ‘manters’. The ruling categorically rejected the argument that their activity caused serious harm to brands. It stated that the buyers of the products sold by these ‘manters’ were not even remotely the same as those who could purchase original brand products; in other words, high-end customers do not stroll along a promenade in order to purchase goods from street vendors. The same ruling also rejected the claim that street vending activities were run by a mafia. *S’agafa abans a un mentider que a un manter* (“A liar is caught sooner than a ‘manter’”—a play on words of the Spanish saying: a liar is caught sooner than a cripple), wrote anthropologist José Mansilla in an article published in *Público* on 20 January 2019. This ruling contradicted all the false reports and spurious news items that had been published about ‘manters’ in the preceding years.

The ruling came after an extremely tough period of persecution and abuse. In 2012 Idrissa Diallo had died at the migrant detention centre located in the Zona Franca district of Barcelona due to lack of medical attention. That same year, the ruling People’s Party (PP) approved a system of health apartheid in Spain that removed the right of part of the migrant population to universal health care. This injustice sparked a series of citizen activism initiatives, including the creation in Barcelona’s Raval district of the Migrant Space. Known as the *hospitalucho* (makeshift hospital), it provided healthcare, legal and psychological services for those excluded from the public system. It was the initiative of a group of local residents committed to the migrant struggle, people like César, Estefania, Julian, Rosa and Vicky. This was where the ‘manters’ felt welcomed and where they happened to come into contact with Zapatista activism, through César Zúñiga. And it was where they realised that the cooperative symbolic systems learned at home<sup>21</sup> had the potential to further their struggle, offering a collective strategy through which to organise and help each other out quickly and effectively: community strategies learned from their grandparents that functioned as a great network of solidarity; knowledge which, following the fish, they had deployed in Barcelona. At a certain point during their training in Zapatista tactics, Zúñiga felt that the activist power of these young Senegalese people, full of the wisdom learned from their grandparents, had surpassed everyone. In a clear example of the power of connection and collaboration between struggles, years later, in 2017, the Top Manta organisation established contact with the Black Panther Party through Bob Brown, who stated that the ‘manter’ collective was doing something different that needed to be disseminated and rolled out. But

first we have to go back to 2015, a key year for understanding the foundation of the trade union.

### *The Building of a Trade Union Network*

In 2015, coinciding with the coming to power of a left-wing municipal government led by Ada Colau, right-wing politicians and media outlets instigated an extremely tough, mendacious campaign against ‘manters’, portraying them as being the city’s main problem. Months later, that media campaign bore fruit and influenced municipal security policies. A municipal government that had initially argued that ‘manters’ were not a police matter, gave in and implemented a tough policy that ushered in the persecution of the group by the police.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, a fateful incident occurred in the town of Salou (Tarragona): during a police operation, Mor Sylla fell from a balcony and lost his life. However, far from being frightened by all this violence and all these lies, the ‘manters’ used the tools of resistance and collective struggle that they had acquired in order to turn the situation around. With the support of local activist groups such as *Tras la Manta* (Behind the Blanket), 2015 marked the beginning of a revolution that culminated in the creation that same year of the Union of Barcelona Street Vendors. It was unveiled, to everyone’s surprise, as a political subject; not as a collective with the right to assistance but rather as a group of workers with rights.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike a traditional trade union, the organisation did not focus exclusively on demands related to employment rights but rather its scope embraced the universal struggles of racism and classism, along with issues such as migration policy, interculturality or the right to the city.<sup>24</sup> Singled out and discredited, denied their legitimate rights, the trade union gave the ‘manters’ a powerful platform to articulate discourses of resistance to the dominant racist narratives pushed by the political authorities, security forces and media outlets. They felt it was important to explain that street vending was an ethical option, given the impossibility of working legally; the T-shirt slogan referred to above comes to mind once again (“I didn’t dream of becoming a ‘manter’”). Their ability to construct their own discourse and adopt an inclusive negotiation approach quickly earned them the respect of the local population sensitive to social issues, and they soon built a large network of solidarity within Barcelona’s ethnic-cultural majority. They wished to make common cause with all of the city’s marginalised street communities.<sup>25</sup> In response to the findings of a report published in 2016 by the president of the “City Table for addressing the issue of illegal street vending”, the union issued the following statement: “If we allow them to defeat us, they will then start persecuting other vulnerable groups

<sup>21</sup> Sow, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>22</sup> Espinosa, *op. cit.* p. 68; Yeray S. Iborra (2019). *Vida mantera. Retrat circular de la venda ambulante (Dakar-Barcelona)*. Barcelona: Octaedro Editorial, p. 81–103.

<sup>23</sup> Espinosa, *op. cit.* p. 66–68; Contijoch, Espinosa, *op. cit.* p. 92–104; Iborra, *op. cit.* p. 81–109.

<sup>24</sup> Espinosa, *op. cit.* p. 82; Ester Gil Toscano, Daniel Balinhas (2021). “Hacer frente a la exclusión social. Estrategias discursivas de resistencia del colectivo mantero en Barcelona”. *Estudios del discurso* 7 (2), p. 66.

<sup>25</sup> Gil, Balinhas, *op. cit.*; José Mansilla (2018). “Ni violentos ni rateros, somos manteros”. In: Jofre Padullés, Joan Uribe (ed). *La danza de los nadie. Pasos hacia una antropología de las manifestaciones*. Barcelona: Bellaterra, p. 229–235.

who ‘tarnish’ the city.” The union’s founding strategy was to join forces to protect those who were even more vulnerable: to erect a barrier, a huge wall that said: “You shall not pass”.

But the repression continued. The arrest of a ‘manter’ Sidil Moctar, in 2016 was interpreted by the trade union as a blatant case of police manipulation. The incident triggered a wave of demonstrations and protest actions, such as the so-called “rebel markets”, a peaceful act of appropriation of the street whereby, shielded by collectives such as the *yayoflautas* (a group of pensioner activists), the ‘manters’ set out their blankets on La Rambla. Narrowing the pedestrian thoroughfare, the action slowed down the throng of passing tourists, activating a kind of improvised urban planning strategy that linked together the informal street market, the urban infrastructure and political demands.<sup>26</sup> A manifesto was published in the aftermath of Moctar’s arrest, stating that, “This city—this country—is also black, it also belongs to migrants and to the poor, so we must organise and fight.”

### *Design and Social Transformation*

Two years after the creation of the trade union, and having strengthened its capacity, vision and public profile, the ‘manters’ decided to take things a step further by establishing a cooperative business structure, in which the same importance was attached to human and emotional management as to financial targets. In their hands fashion, said to be capitalism’s favourite child, became a tool for raising awareness, for protest and for transformation. By creating the Top Manta brand, they turned the term that had been used to stigmatise them into a brand name. This strategy of resignification smashed the identities imposed on them by the dominant groups who presented them as a threat to local commerce or directly accused them of being uncreative people who sold knock-off merchandise. They turned the blanket and their status as black people into a source of pride, into a protest symbol. They had no media platform to counter what media outlets were saying about them, so what better than a T-Shirt to get their message across: an item of clothing that would take their message wherever the wearer went.

The creation of the Ande Dem range of trainers—the result of a collaboration with a group of Barcelona-based activist designers who had joined the cause—was a big step forward. *Ande dem* means “walking together” in Wolof, which forms the basis of the struggle of both Zapatistas and these ‘manters’. The trainers are designed in Barcelona and manufactured in small, traditional ateliers, guaranteeing the traceability of all their components. Faced with the accusation—often launched by highly polluting and

exploitative offshored brands—of threatening local trade, Top Manta reactivated local production systems. With its trainers and T-shirts, the brand showed its commitment to both environmental and social sustainability. Those who had experienced exploitation in their own skin subverted the capitalist brand strategy to further a struggle with a collective purpose. In the face of productivism, hierarchy, competitiveness, expansion, individuality—traits of capitalism and the patriarchy—, they undertook to foster relationships based on equality, care, cooperation, solidarity and a sense of community. Transparent and responsible, this was a cooperative project in which social success took priority over economic profit. They turned this initiative into an opportunity to improve the living conditions of the collective, to regularise their legal status through employment contracts.

A hitherto stigmatised group highlighted the creativity of migrant culture through an initiative based on project culture, involving around 30 people of Senegalese origin in Barcelona, using specific knowledge and with scalability in mind: from the small scale of a store in Barcelona’s Raval district, or from a sewing atelier in the Sants district of the same city, they propose more sustainable ways of life. What they have established is a laboratory of the future.

3

### *Sewing Atelier*

*Reparation Atelier*

The Top Manta store is located on Carrer d’en Roig, while the T-shirt atelier is housed at the Can Batlló factory complex. The store and atelier are not only used for sewing garments but also for providing care services and dreaming up new projects. With regard to care services, the organisation’s assistance network for the most vulnerable has been up and running for a few years now, acting swiftly and organically where the highly bureaucratic and overburdened social services fall short. The Top Manta backroom is also used for the emotional decompression of colleagues who are suffering the consequences of post-migratory stress. Furthermore, during the first few months of the COVID-19 lockdown, Top Manta quickly sought out suitable textiles to manufacture medical masks, gowns and caps, becoming one of the first suppliers to the city’s hospitals. The organisation carried out this activity, and continues to do so, in its work spaces: improvised architectures which, precisely because they are the result of seemingly inconsequential everyday life, are highly significant. These are intensively used community spaces. In the backroom of the Raval store, for example, trade union issues are discussed, new proposals are put forward, people eat and rest, postal packages are prepared for the online sale of T-shirts, mobile phones are charged, homework is done and prayer sessions are held. In

the Sants atelier, company business is managed, work is done on projects and manufacturing activity is carried out. Every day, delicious meals are cooked and shared. When there is no school, children play on the streets of the factory complex. These are spaces whose design has evolved on the basis of their uses. The backroom in the Raval district and the textile atelier in Sants propose ideas for the future that are not dislocated in time (that is, ideas that may come to fruition one day), but rather ones that are firmly rooted in the present context of struggle. These ideas, which come from a place of marginalisation, informed by a shared experience and the struggle to build a life of dignity, provide us with valuable insight into how we might restructure our cultural, social, economic or political systems, into how we might create new spaces of signification in cities. They are key symbolic capital for thinking about new social approaches.

### *Atelier With Young Architects*

As we have said, new projects are also formulated in these workspaces. Although they are small-scale actions, they are conceived with the aim of causing immediate transformations in our cities. In fact, in the many work sessions that have been held in the backroom and the atelier, ideas for projects with great potential have been proposed, such as the anti-racist restaurant, a space for welcoming and training migrants, or multipurpose small-scale social facilities at street level. In line with the maxim on design coined by founder of the Bauhaus School—“From a teaspoon to a city”—, the goal is to apply the strategy used for the manufacture of T-shirts or Top Manta trainers to the entire city. With this idea in mind, the *Following the Fish* project decided to call on international architecture students to start working with Top Manta on these proposals.

The anti-racist restaurant seeks to reproduce what happens each lunchtime at the Can Batlló atelier, when the cook appears with a healthy, hearty meal. The goal is to transfer this practice to an open, neighbourhood-style establishment that can be replicated, one that welcomes everyone, serving as a meeting point for the exchange of ideas, producing a rich cuisine based on local products. This proposal marks a return to the cultural, social and sustainable eating model that was common in the workplace until not so long ago, when it began to lose ground to daily menus in restaurants. Many restaurants offer a long list of dishes with ingredients that are often out of season and that are imported from distant places. The other popular option nowadays is for workers to bring in their own precooked meals or lunchboxes. These individualised lunches highlight the inefficiency and the lack of a sense of community in our habits. To address this issue, and using the experience of street vending activity, we aim to

explore the communal aspect of eating: communal kitchens perhaps managed by communities themselves, or soup kitchens that do not stigmatise, where diners who can cover the costs of their meal and those who cannot are able to simply eat together. In short, establishments where sharing becomes attractive again.

When it comes to the welcome housing project, conceived as a counter-model to migrant detention centres, the goal is to explore new temporary and collective residential formats for migrants that provide care and mentoring for those who have just arrived after a long journey, a high-quality facility where they can spend the time necessary to get their lives back together. However, the residential format of these spaces is contradicted by that of our homes, whose room distribution responds to a lifestyle based on compartmentalisation and, to a certain extent, individualism. The street vending community shows us that our housing arrangements make it impossible to have a life in common: housing facilities where it is not always possible to come and go as one pleases, facilities which lack spaces in which to offer companionship and a friendly ear to the elderly, or in which to welcome people. What the street vending community proposes instead is an open-plan living arrangement.

A passage in the book by Contijoch, Bucar and Sanmartí<sup>27</sup> gives us an idea of what is being proposed. It describes an old nightclub in Barcelona's Poble Nou district that was turned into a squat by the Senegalese Baye Fall community. They named the squat Afrika Roots. Although the space was dingy and poorly ventilated, it contained a large residential area where a set of functional and comfortable rooms were fashioned out of materials recovered from the street. These rooms were scattered throughout the space; some were even located on the roof of the building. It also contained a large room that was set up as a social centre. There was a fully soundproofed area at the far end of the building, in the old dancing area, which included a bar and a podium for the DJ. This is where the Baye Fall community gathered to pray every Thursday and where reggae parties were held every weekend. The community had managed to create its open living arrangement in the nightclub. Our goal as architects is to study whether this is the arrangement on which to base the cohousing models that have interested us so much. We are interested in examining lifestyles that can offer us ideas for new community-based residential models. As part of this initiative, we even aim to explore whether the rural arrangement of Senegalese homes can be transferred to an urban setting.

Other new ideas have emerged in our conversations at the atelier. One which makes a lot of sense within this laboratory of urban futures is the concept of a multipurpose facility, which takes its inspiration from the backroom of the Top Manta store in the Raval district. As we have

27  
Marta Contijoch, Marisol Bucar, Núria Sanmartí (2021). *Baye Fall. Expressions de l'islam senegalès a Barcelona*. Barcelona: Pol-len, p. 62.

explained above, this space not only meets the storage and logistics needs of the commercial premises, but also functions as a small social facility, thus ensuring the presence at street level of a place that is open to everyone and where people can come together. This undervalued model is almost non-existent in typical commercial areas. It forms part of an idea of community that improves our coexistence. Accordingly, with this idea of a multipurpose facility in mind, the transformation of ground-floor premises is proposed in order to turn them into catalysts for transformative social uses. The strategy is aimed at providing the neighbourhood with community backrooms without adding any new physical volumes to the street. It is a system designed to make the most of the neighbourhood network of premises, which could be used as recycling points or as storage facilities for tables, games or lighting equipment. However, they could also be used to meet the needs of a city keen to provide care services and shelter, including from adverse weather conditions. A place in which to cook, or where homeless people can spend the night. Small-scale, versatile, multipurpose facilities that take advantage of the endemic neglect of local commercial areas, encouraging the greening of streets, but with backrooms. Apart from providing a necessary commercial boost, equipping streets with community backrooms is likely to prove a catalyst for transformation, eventually leading to a necessary social revitalisation. Streets must no longer be seen solely as part of the so-called “urban U” (defined in the White Paper on the Streets of Barcelona as “the public space of the city contained between façades and the horizontal plane of the ground”), while building strategies must share responsibility for redefining the scope of public space. As such, we wish to explore the possibility of creating a scattered network of backrooms in our cities.

Those who visit the *Following the Fish* exhibition will be able to see the results that have emerged from this meeting between the schools of architecture and design of Barcelona, Lund, Milan or Reus and the ‘manter’ community, which in its determination to progress and to further its struggle, has already collaborated with graphic designers, fashion designers, communication experts, social rights professionals and legal experts. However, this is the first time that it has worked closely with architects or space designers, which has come as something of surprise, especially to those of us who admire its ability to create fair and egalitarian forms of community and coexistence. That is why this exhibition project takes the format of a laboratory. It is a reparation shop to fix what the system has mismanaged. In the face of the widespread depoliticization of the sense of the collective that is taking place in Western societies, in the face of the commodification of urban life that seeks to weaken that which is common, the ‘manter’ community has acquired a great capacity for network-

ing, with a great capacity to build relationships based on equality, care, cooperation and solidarity. In this laboratory we aim to imagine, visualise and champion shared futures based on these ways of negotiating and resolving conflicts. We are seeking out new approaches, new ways of mapping places, of incorporating proposals in our system in order to change it through possible strategies; small-scale changes, based on the particular. The goal is to try out alternative approaches that champion project culture as a form of knowledge, discussion and reflection, but also as an operational way of enabling things to happen, to be attempted and—why not?—to be built. Therefore, we want it to be a project that engages the migrant community and the architectural sector, but also public administration bodies. As such, we see these ateliers as an experiment placed at the service of the city and local institutions.

From the Sants atelier and the Raval backroom, the ‘manter’ community has managed to regain its self-esteem. Unapologetically, its members have demanded to be respected. They have asserted their identity, not based on a nostalgia for the past but forged through the creation of new realities. Their example chimes with the arguments put forward in the essay *Afrotopia*, which shows how the deep life philosophy of African systems of thought has continued to operate despite impositions. Europe must acknowledge these possible spaces. It is necessary to give each of these projects the opportunity to create new spaces of significance that help us to establish a new scale of values, to consider new approaches, to reflect on other social models. In fact, faced with a problem for which the system offers no solution, Top Manta has already started to develop projects even if no architect is taking part, demonstrating once again the transformative capacity of collective work. Architecture must be part of this transformation, and the best way to do this is by collaborating with those who are addressing these new social challenges, learning from them while providing the prefigurative capacity intrinsic to the discipline.

### *Manter Market*

By way of an excursus, we also wish to describe the way in which this project has been transferred to the language of exhibition design. Cantieri Navali, the venue chosen by the Institut Ramon Llull to present the project of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands as part of the Collateral Event of Biennale Architettura 2023, has been turned into a pop-up street market in constant flux. The elongated shape of the building allows this eminently urban scene to unfold. An interior layout extends towards Canale di San Pietro through an open passage that strongly evokes a promenade. Indeed, Lara Fluxà’s artistic installation *Llim*, shown at the Biennale Arte 2022,

recalled that this passageway had once been a waterway that connected to the riverbank.

A street market composed of unfurled blankets (*sër*) extends along the length of the building, exhibiting the contents of the journey made by following the fish. This market of ideas is quick and easy to install, just like unfurling blankets on the street: simple, economical and easily transportable, a lightweight installation that does not require any alteration of the existing space. It makes the most of the natural light that comes in through the large skylight, the multiple side windows and the large doorway, which always remains open. Just as swiftly as they are unfurled, the *sër* can be transformed back into bundles (*ëmb*), which is exactly what happens when the police arrive on the scene in everyday situations. As such, the venue can easily handle format changes in order to carry out programmed actions.

A blanket-filled landscape, a Venetian market, whose very layout constitutes the narrative of *Following the Fish*. The sequence begins with an introduction, continues with the presentation of the ‘manter’ collective and ends by revealing the figurations of new possible future scenarios. Each of the blankets focuses on a theme: Africa the origin of humanity, plundering, diaspora, Fortress Europe, assistance networks, processes of struggle, walking together and thinking about the world from an African perspective. Each blanket is an image that expresses one of these ideas; a powerful, instantly impactful image surrounded by sheets of paper on which different graphic elements are displayed. The sheets of paper are attached to transverse slats, fluttering over the blanket and amplifying its meanings. These graphic elements may be drawings, writing, phrases, images, graphics, bundles or small publications that can be consulted. They constitute a second narrative level, providing contributions, references and comments aimed at those who wish to find out more about the story; a second level of reading arising from the many conversations held with the ‘manter’ community. Open, multifaceted, controversial and hopeful. The hubbub of a market.

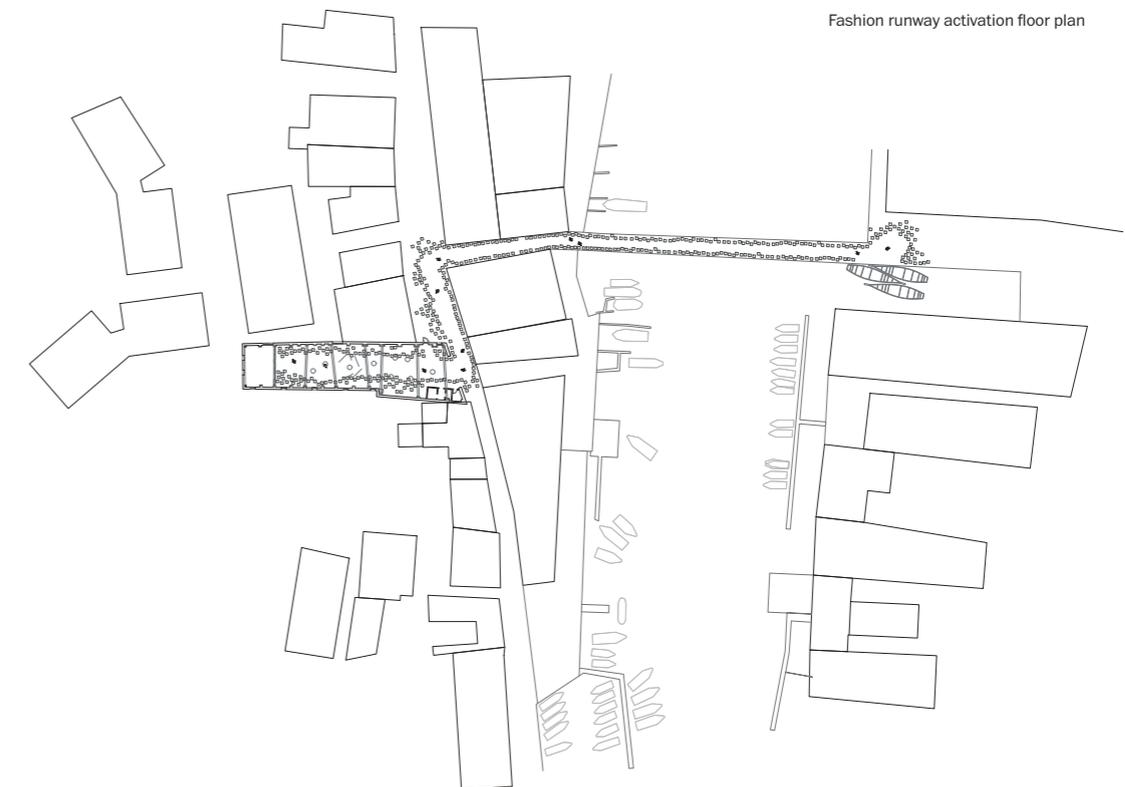
But as occurs in the ‘manter’ story itself, this exhibition system blurs the linearity of the route, interweaving the relations between the blankets in a rich, complex and—ultimately—more dependent and supportive way. Each blanket is arranged and linked to the others through the aforementioned slats, which turn the exhibition into a large mobile of ships stranded on a calm sea. A floating market suspended a few centimetres from the ground. As if expecting *acqua alta* (high tide flooding), it imbues the exhibition with a sensation of foreboding.

Unfurled in the shipyard, like boats ready to follow the fish, the blankets are held in place by a mass of boat rigging composed of sails, sail bat-

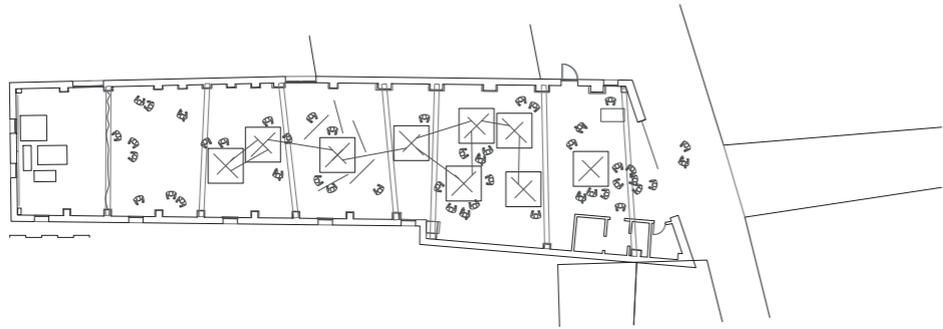
tens, ropes and pulleys that facilitate the folding up of the blankets while conferring the image of a system. The sail battens tighten, unfurling the blankets. An extended canvas supports the images while also serving as a light screen. The easy dismantling of the sail battens makes it possible to fold them away. The dismantling of the slats removes the graphic elements, thus releasing the assembly in order for it to be raised. By means of a simple pulley system, blankets, supported on trusses, can be selectively folded away and raised. The ropes are knotted in a top position that enables the blankets to form a false ceiling. The textile elements are located between the trusses in order to ensure that they can be fully raised. A set of exhibition windows is incorporated, formed by lintels and jambs attached to the walls of the building. Their purpose is to display the architectural rehearsals produced with the various schools of architecture.

Blankets are both the medium and image of the exhibition. Domestically-sized pieces of fabric, such as the sheet that the ‘manter’ offer to the newcomer. In her text, Maramé Gueye tells us that offering a blanket to a new coming ‘manter’ is a form of *teraanga* (Wolof for “hospitality”). An express sense of community that goes beyond welcoming someone and making them feel comfortable. It also represents the desire for mutual support, the idea of welcoming. All of this is expressed in a simple piece of domestic fabric.

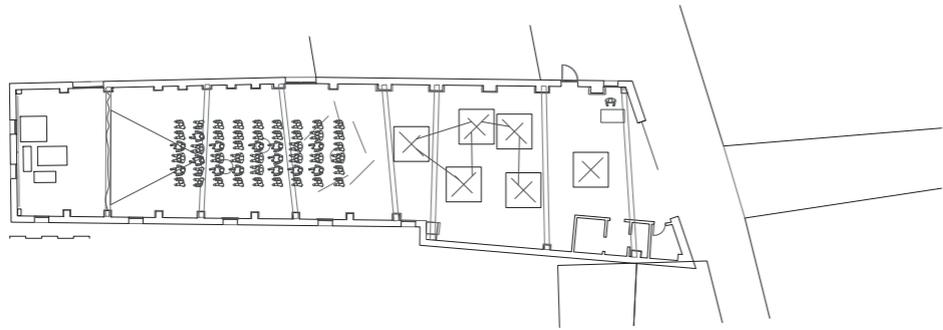
Note:  
In the following pages, the reader will find the Wolof translation of the text they just read, the predominant language in Senegal, but by no means the only one. Translating a text is always an opportunity to open oneself up to alternative thoughts, a linguistic transfer between peoples and cultures.



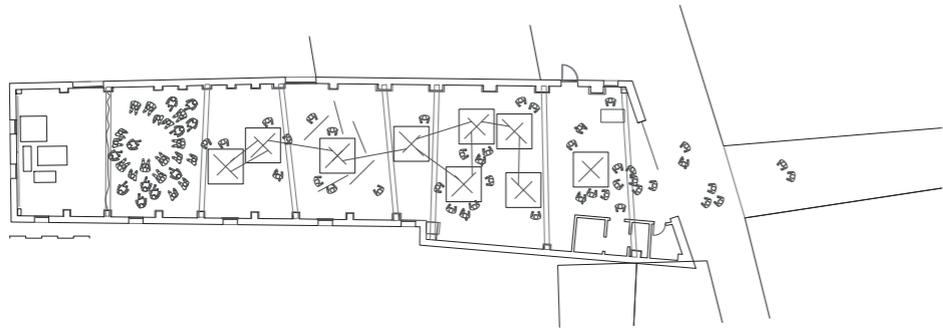
Exhibition



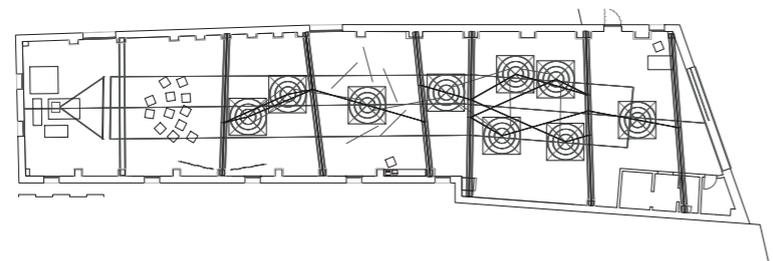
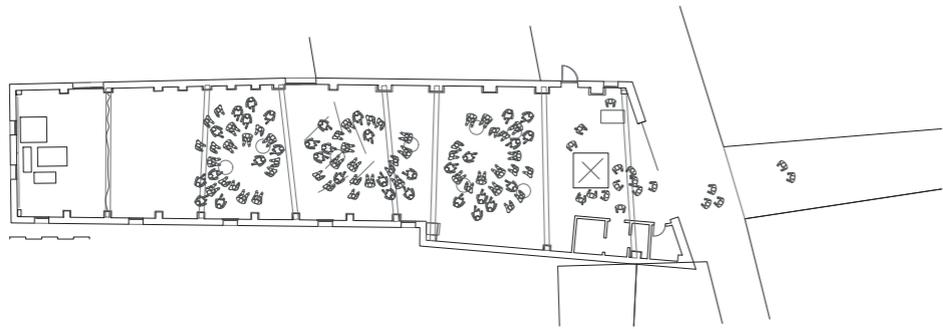
Cinema



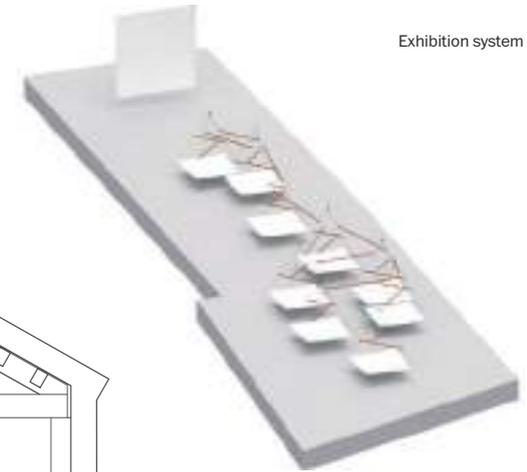
Meetings



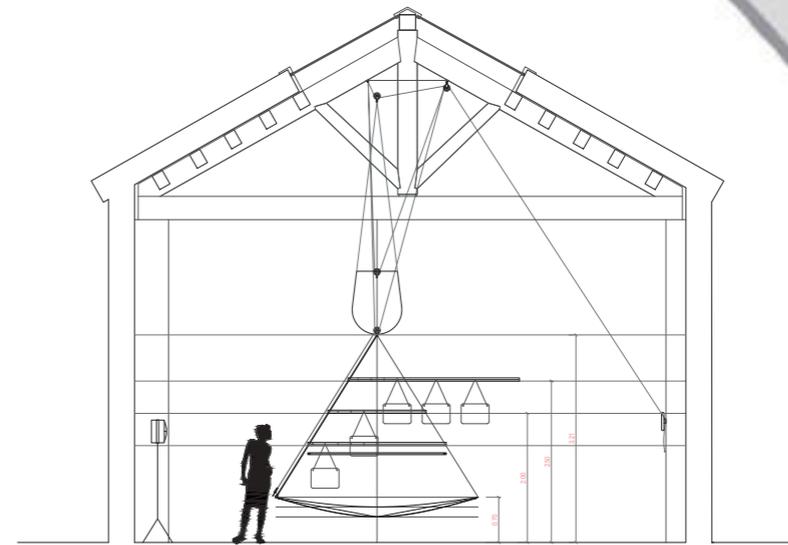
Workshops



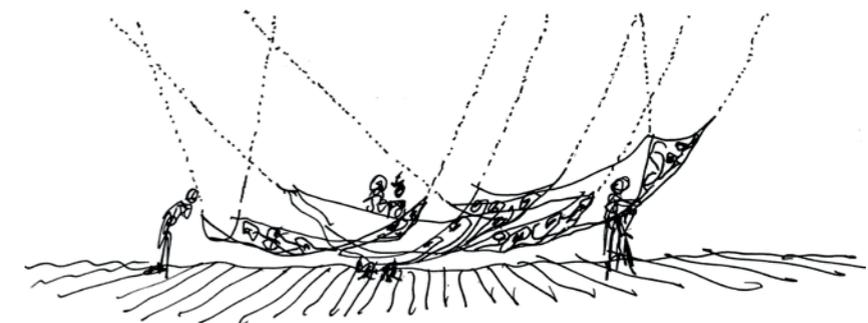
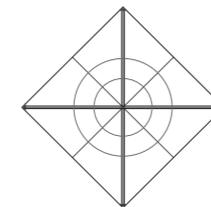
Part of the installation



Exhibition system



Section detail of the suspended blanket



Drawing of the set of blankets

“Càmbaruwaay ñeel èllëg” mooy tur di wëppaw Ndajem Kaajaru Venice 2023. Ki ko tànn nag mooy Lesley Lokko di ku xam-xamam màcc ci wàlum kaajar, te yéene ji doon amal barabu sottante xalaat ci li ñépp bokk di jànkoondeel fépp, boole ci nag dëppale njangat yi ak gis-gisu saa-afriq bi. Bañ a xalaate ni ab saa-tógal kepp, jàpp ni ni ngay gise rekk la, waaye fexee indi xalaatiin yu yees, ku nekk mën cee gis boppam, su ko defee ñu seetlu ni pexey sàkku naataange yi yéeg na ci tolluwaay yu gën a am solo. Jubluwaayu sémb woowii nu tuddee “Toppi Jën wi” mooy méngoo ak boobule xalaat ngir mën a dëppoo ak sumbi kaajar gi jëm ci ràññee barab yi nga xam ni doxaliin ak xalaat yu yees yooyu gisees na leen fa; ci noonu la lékkaloo ak kureel gu am moom itam yéene leeral yeneen dayo yu mbiri Afrig mën a am ci Tugal, muy mbootaayu Top Manta<sup>1</sup>, dajale ay saa-sene-gaal ci Barsalon: jëmmal afrig gu sori ci yeneen kambaar.

Ca njalbeen ga, ci jukkoo ga jiiitu ak waa Top Manta ngir tēnk mbind mii, la leer ni yéene ‘manter’ (jaaykat yiy lal ci mbedd mi seen i mbalaan ñu naan ko “manta”, teg ci seen njaay) yii ěmbaale na lay yuqu càmbaruwaayu èllëg googii Lokko di dooleel ci mbindam moomu ñeel ndaje mi. Rax ci dolli, ci sottante xalaat yi jiiitu ñeel nosteg kaajar gi jëm ci dëkkiin ak gox bi, laaji mbootaayu Top Manta kiif-kiif ak ya jibee ca lekkooli arsitektiir ya, téerey saabal yu fànnu yi ak kaajar gi ci boppam. Doonte laajiin yi mën nañoo wute, niki ni tontu yees cay séentu mën a wutee, ca ndoortel jotaay ba ak waa Top Manta wëppa yi nu doon waxtaane moo doon mbirum tukki, barabu njémmeer yi ak taxawaay yi ci aju, wàllu lekk ak jàppandalug dund, dundiin wi xew, xeex mbéefeer ak xeexal jigéen, nosteg jàppalante, yàggaayu dëkk bi, ak cërub feem jëm ci joyanti dëkkiin, nekkiin, ak njàng mi.

Càmbare dëkk bi ci gis-gisub ‘manter’ dafay wane ni dafa am bēt bu aay bu ñu leen di xooole ak fu ñaaw fu ñu leen faf dëkkal, te ñuy ñu soxla ndimbal. Te loolu yamul ci ñiy lal seen njaay ci mbedd yi rekk, dafa jàll ba ci ñiy dajalaatu ay des ak ñi amul dëkkuwaay. Ci barab bu doo waar bu ni mel, jafe-jafe yi dañu ni fi xas te la leen sooke ñu ni ci cell. Kéew mi ñépp bokk te booba ak léegi ñu di ko taaral, sóoraalewuñu ci gállankoor yi mu feggool, ba noppi bëgg a wane ci ay tappale, ni dëkk bu mucc ayib a ngi nii (Contijoch Espinosa 2019: xēt 111). Tëralliin wi dees koo lootaabe ci ak boddi, jël ñi ciy loroo di leen xooole noonu dëkk bi, jël ñi gën a soxla ndimbal jàppe leen nattu dëkk bi. Ni ko kenn ci ñi taxawal mbootaayu Top Manta waxee, dañoo jël li ñépp bokk def ko mu mel ni barab bob dafa am ku ko moom. Waaye nekkiin woowu ak gállankoor yi teewul ‘manter’ yiy wane ag xereñte ba mën a jariñoo mbedd mi, matal seen yéene. Njaayum mbedd mooy doon fàww pexe mi fi sēs ngir ñu dund Barsalon. Loolu moo waral pexe mu nekk dinañu ko lal, doonte dafay jalgati yoon, su ko defee

ñu mën di yegg ci yenn barab yi di fa daane seen doole ci lu nit ña di soxla te muy doon lu ñu mēnul a ñakk. Taxawalug Mbootaay Jaaykati Mbedd yi dafay dëggal yeewu ci samp ndaw luy yor seen kàddu (Espinosa 2017: 66, 84). Boobule taxawaay nag dafay wane nosteg newolibelaarlismu giy dox ci dëkk bi, boole ci di màndargaal xeex ngir say yelleef ci dëkk bi ak itam di fésal demokaraasi ak yamale giy cēslaayu tëralinu dëkk bi (Moliner, Avallone 2020: xēt 22, 47). ‘Manter’ yi fexe nañu ba dēkku li ñu leen di dëkkal fu ñaaw boole ci nag di daan seen doole, xam seen bopp boole ci nammewaat ci seenum xel (loolu ci bunt bii ci topp lees ci gën a yaatal). Ci lu ajuwul ci genn par-parloo, doxe nañu nu waral ñu war leen a joxe cër ci xelu lootaabe mbootaay ak wane seen xereñte, xàll aw yoon ci indi seen ay ngallaju ak i feem ba amal seen yēfi bopp jaare ko ci Top Manta. Ci kaw sémb yu wute, fexe nañu ba soppi xar-kanamu doxandeem bi. Boobaak léegi, séqi nañu ay jéego ci sumb yu ñeel koom-koom, yoon ci mboolaay gi, xeex noteel ci wàllu liggéey, ak péexte ci dem ak dikk. Googu doxaliin wu tukkee ci anam yu settee, jaare ci naxante ci barab bu am tëraliin yu wute ak li ne feneen, may na leen ñu jëmmal geneen xeetu dundiin wu lal ci xel mu sell ak xam-xam, xàccandoo dóorandoo, di yu nu jàpp nun sunu jëmme bopp ni warees na leen yaatal ba ci tabax ak dëkkiin, ngir fagaru ci yu bari yoy ñi ngi ci sunu kanam ñeel dëkk bi. *Toppi Jën Wi* nag, ag feelu ‘manter’ yi la ci defi njàngat ngir dëppale seen dundiin ak seeni feem ñeel tabaxiin ak dëkkiin.

Bi Nguugi Wa Thiong’o naan fabu wuti njémmeer li, dafa doon junj ni bu mboolaay gi dee caq, warees naa joyal xalaat yi ci per yi bañ a yam ci diggal bi, def delluwaayam nag ab léebu Afrig wu naan: “Nekkiinu xorondom yi sax dees na ci jàngée”. Li mu jàpp moo di ngir xam doom-aadama jarul wiiri fu sori nde mu ngi ci dundiin yi keem nañu wute. Ci wute googu la nit ki di sukkandi it ba xam dëgg naka lay xooole àddina. Njàng maa ngi doore ci bayyi xel kute googu, ci nun nag misaal mee di mbootaayu Top Manta, di benn ci Afrig yi saa-afriq yi di jëmmal fu nekk ci àddina, ci dëkk yeek gox-goxaani Tógal yi. Naam danoo sukkandiku ci ‘manter’ yi, waaye noonu lanu mēnoon a jélee misaal ci yeneen doomi Afrig yii dajeeek jamono ji ñi daan bay di ko bàyyi, ñu doon nag ñoom ñi leen wuutu ci àll yi ak tool yi ci ci barab yu mel ni Catalonia ak Duni Baléares. Yii yépp kon di ay Afrig yees jëmmal fu sori “tuxale reen ci barab jëmbat ko feneen, suuxate ko meneen ndox” (Sarr 2019: xēt 14). Top Manta nag bokk na ci ñi nu man a sukkandiku ngir soppi xar-kanamu afrig jaare ko ci Ndajem Kaajaru Arsitektiir mii.

<sup>1</sup> Mbind mii dafay nettali jaar-jaari Top Manta ak seen digganteek dëkk bii di Barsalon. Muy mbootaayu ñiy lal seen njaay ci mbedd mi, ñi ci épp it di ay saa-sene-gaal yoy bi ñu demee ba ci atum 2015 dañoo lootaabewuwaat taxawal Kippaango Jaaykati Mbedd yi ngir gën a mën a xeex seen yelleef, naqarlu tolof-tolof yi ñu leen di teg, dox jéegoy diisoo ak kilifay dëkk bi. Ci atum 2017 nag lañu séqee ay jéego ci wàllu fent ak defari yēf yu feemu, jaare ko nag ci ag bennoo, jàppalante ngir am lu ñu suturloo ba dootuñu soxlaati doxandéemuji. Ci noonu lañu taxawale kippaangog lijjanti gog cēslaay la mooy and doon wenn say, di xàccandoo tey dóorandoo. Ñu daldj jël nag turu Top Manta wiy wund la ñuy yēngatoo muy lal sa mbalaan (manta) ci mbedd mi teg ci sam njaay.

“Toppi jën wi” ab junj la ñeel jaar-jaar bob ci lanu sukkandiku bind li nu doon gaare ndajem kaajar mi. Muy léebu Afrig wow jën wi mooy ajinetalli ji ñeel dund ak jaar-jaari ñi taxawal Top Manta. Lu jiitu, dafay màndargaal wuruj ak siif alali jàmbur gi jéng Afrig tabjeel suqalikoom. Ni nu silukkandikoo ci jën ci nettali bi, noonii lanu ko manoon a defee ci yeneen mbelli mbindare yi: iraañum, mañesiyum, soroj, wurus, jamãa, ba ci wëtteen, walla kafe, warga ak yeneen meñneef yi ba ci sax dooley ndawi Afrig yi ci seen bopp. Ni nuy toppe jën wi, la nuy gisee jeexitalu siif gi ñeneen ñi di def alali Afrig; noonu lanu koy toppe moom jën wi ba ci mbeddi Barsalon yi ngir wane ni ñuy boddee ci wàllu yoon ak ci mboolaay gi ña ñu yóbbe gàddaay seeni kër te ñuy nab-nabi ngir am lu ñu suturloo. Sunu tukki boobii ci kéewum jaayante ñeel ‘manter’ yu Barsalon yi moo nu xirtal ci taxawal Kippaango Jaaykati Mbedd yi. Am ci fof ba ñu fa tollee, xalaatu indi Catalonia ak Duni Baléares ci Ndajem Kaajaru Venice mi dafa noo jóo ci topp jën wi cib tukkeem, ànd ko ak njàngaani arsitektiir ak feem yu bawoo fu nekk ci àddina si. Nu àndandoo di lootaabe ay sémb ak di joyal ay xalaat yu Top Manta bëgg a sukkandiku ba matal yéeneem, niki ab restorang buy taxawe xeex xeetal walla benn barab bees di dalal doxandeem yi, ba ci ay barab yu ne ci mbedd mi te seeni njariñ ñeel fànn yu bari. Sumb yooyu yépp nag dañu nuy firndeel ni dëkk yi mën a bindoo ëllëg ci gànjar gu tukkee ci taxawaayu ñi ko dëkke ñépp. Wunt yi ci nettali bi ñeel na ñooñule.

### *Ci genn tefesu senegaal*

Ci genn tefesu Senegaal, ay mool yu ndaw janoo ak ngandam batob napp gu baw oo Tugal ngir raatale jën yi nga xam ni waa ngox bi ci la ñu mas di sukkandiku ngir dundal seen koom. Ni ko Faatu Jom di waxee ci Téereb Nettaleem boobu mu tuddee *Celles qui attendent* (Ñoom Jigéen Ñiy Xaar): “Booba géej gi dafa fees ak jën, nappiin gi ñu xamoon itam nu daan ci gis sunu bopp bu baax, te ñi daan sànjaafu duusi géej gi doonte yorunu woon lu ni gàññ it, ag ndóol kumpa la woon ci ñoom. Dañuy faral di wax naan way-ñàkk yi sax am nañu as lëf lu ñuy suturloo ci mbindare mi, waaye daal tabug mbàmbulaan gi taxoon ñuy yëg loxob Boroom bi ci ñoom.”<sup>2</sup> Loolu lépp nag dafa daldi dakk bi bato tubaab yi tàmbalee siif la fi doon fàgguteef ci jën. Te seen isin yu mag yu xandul waaxi Senegaal, Gàннаar mbaa Gàmbi, ñooy jox yeneen ndefar yi jën niki jumtuwaay yees mën a sopparñi defar ci yeneeni mbir. Loolii waa “Greenpeace Africa” ak kureelu “Changing Market Foundation” tasoon nañu ci xibaar bu dooy kéemaan ci atum 2021 tuddee ko *Leel ub Njógteef*”, xamale woon nañu ci ni xaaju milyongu

ton ci jën yu bees dina bawoo ci waaxi réew yooyule, jëm ci isin yoy dañuy tooke kéew mi bu baax. Te it boo seetloo, lees mën a takk ni lii la jëmm ju nekk war a mën a jëfandikoo ci jën at mu nekk ci barab yooyii mooy 15i cilo, kon 33 milyong ci ay nit mënees na leen dundale ci li ndefari FMFO yi di roñ ciw jën, te loolu moo ëpp liy yewoo ci réew yooyu yépp boo leen boole woon. Jën nag mooy li saa-senegaal yi di gën a faral di jëlee ferñeentu porotin, ba tax na fuqarñi la ñu am ci jën wóorul ci seen dund. Daanaka kenn lekkatul jën ci kër yi. Xiif giy yokku. Bu dee ca Gàннаar ga nga xam ni fa la isini FMFO yi ëppee, jàngoro yu dooy waar yi, niki asma, ràññees na leen fa, te itam isin yooyii dañuy tooke kéew mi, rawatina gox yi leen wër (Cridem, 2017, xët 8). Mool yi ak jaaykati jën yi du kenn ci ñoom moo gisati boppam ci yëf yi.

Lii lépp nag a ngi gongikoo ca sémbu yeesalug doxaliin gu waa Bànk Monjaal taxawaloon ànd ko ak waa Efemi ca 1980 yooyu. Dogal yooyu tukkee ciy doxaliinu newolibelaarlismu baax na lool ci boroom doole yi jóge ci yeneen réew, waaye ñi moom yëf yi dëgg di ay saa Afrig, jeexital yu safaanu la am ci seen napp ak mbay. Kon mënees naa jàpp ni saa-afriq yi dañu leen a jóo ci génn dem Tugal ngir wut lu ñu suturloo; jamono ji Tugal di lootaabe barabu Sengen bi ci 1990 yooyu, ténk ay dogal yoy dafa fay jafeel doxandeemu saa-afriq bi dugseem, te moone la tax ñu wuti Tugal seen loxoo ngi ci biir (Papa Sow 2004: xët 235). Leneen li ci amit mooy doonte Senegaal deesu ko limaale ci réew yiy gën a tooke déele bi, dëkk bu coppikug jawam gaaw la lool. Xamees na itam ci ay gëstu ni, géej gi dafay randusi ci anam yu gaaw lool sax ci Afrig Sowu-jant boo ko tēkkalee ak feneen fu mu mën a doon, boole ci nawet bi neexatul ba tax mbay mi dellu ginnaaw te 70 % ci ñiy daan seen doole ci lañu daan suturloo. Lii lépp nag dafa leen di jóo ci dem feneen.

### *Sànjafu yoonu géej gi*

Moo fi sës, lal na ñu ay pexe ba jafeel anam yi ñu waroon a mën a demee Tugal ci yoon. Boroom gaal ya gisatul jën yu ñu yab, ngir bañ leen a wéer ñoo mujj di yabi nit sànjaafu mbàmbulaan gi, yabaale lekk ak naan ak njafaan li koy dawal. Su ko defee ñu yoofeerlooji ca Duni Kanari ci xiif gu metti gu ñenn ñiy àndal ci biir gaalu njoogaan gu yabbi nit ba fees, te du lekk mbaa naan gu mate. Ci anam yooyu la leen ngelaw lu am doole mbaa géej gu yëngu mën a tàbbal ci musiba Mbàmba Kumba. Am na genn kayitu saabal gu kippaango àq ak yelleef guy wuyoo ci turu Cominando Froteras (Saytukati Dig yi), ñu wax ca ni ci xayma, 7692 doom-aadama ñàkke nañu seen bakkan ci Yoonu Kanari, diggante 2018 ak 2019.

Ñiy sànjaafu géej gi wuti tefesi Tugal yi yàgg yàgg dañu leen di teg loxo, ni leen ràpp ci barab. Ci 280 kaso yooyii ñuy téye ñiy jaar ci yoonu

<sup>2</sup> Tekki jële ci Farañse: “À l’époque, la mer était poissonneuse, la pêche artisanale florissante et ceux qui affrontaient les vagues, s’ils n’étaient pas riches, ignoraient tout de la vraie pauvreté. On dit qu’aux pauvres il reste des cadeaux de la nature. Or l’Atlantique était si généreux que les insulaires se sentaient bénis des dieux.” Chapter 2, *Celles qui attendent*, Fatou Diome (Flammarion, 2010).

géej gi ngir dem Tugal, juroom ñaar a ngi Espaañ, benn ci yooyi fare ca Barsalon. Ñiy xeex àq ak yelleefi doom-aadama kenn mayu leen ñu teg fa seen tánk, te kat ña ñu fa tëj defuñu genn njombe, waaye seen wér-gi-yaram sax kenn lijjantiwu ko, boole ci alkaati yi di leen bundxataal ba ñu ci bari dañu fay faatoo (Iridia 2021). Kaso yooyii dañuy wane ak ñàkk a sàmm kóllare ak ñàkk a wormaal doom-aadama. Du lenn lu dul barab yu ñuy jal “ñi èpp a dalal” (Mbembe 2022: xët 62–63), ñu nekk fa ni ay godaar yees nar a delloo fa ñu jóge woon. Càmmi Tugal yeet taxaw temm ci nasaxal mépp pexe muy tax ñooñii di daw ñàkk tey wutsi teraanga, ñu duggsi seeni dëkk. Googule tengal gu laluwul ci lu dul ag mbaadoola gu Tugal di suuxat, la menn mbind ci ab tiset bu waa Top Manta defar di wund: “Nangul yére, bañal nit”. Ndaxam yére bi mën naa tukki fu nekk wuteek nit ki ko defar. Ña ñu daan jàpp jaam ngir ñu liggéey lu fay lañu tabaxee barab yu mag yi turist yi di yéem ci Barsalon, seeni sët lañu naan ràpp tëj tay te defuñu dara. Na ñu daan màndargaale ag xeetal ci yarami jaam ña ca bu jëkk, nooni kepp lañu koy wéyale tay ci doxandeem yi ak ñiy fortaatu ci liggéey yu sew-sewaan (Mbembe 2016: xët 13).

### *Ci mbedd barsalon yi*

Ñiy fexe ba réece ci kaso yooyii, ña yor dogalub wax ku war a am péexte ak ku ko warul a am, ñooy fexewaat ba ñu ñaaw njort ci ñoom. Li leen di xaar mooy dëkk bu bari ay ndëgg-sërëx ak ay dogal yu leen mën a dugal. Ponku yoon bi ñeel doxandeem yi dafa tëral ni benn doxandeem manul a weesu ñetti at ci dëkk bi, muy diir bob nee na ñooy mën na cee ame teraangaam. Ni leen yoon tëjalee buntu liggéey, gállankoor bu diis la ba tax na duñu mën lu dul nangu ñu leen di jariñoo te duñu leen fay lu ko jar mbaa ñu yënguji ci liggéey yu ñu yoonalul. Bari na lu nit di fexee ba génn ci koso yooyule, bu yamee ci ab ‘manter’ soo deful ndànk la muy wax mooy du yàgg ba mu def yooyule liggéey, te moone, ñu ci bari ci lañuy mujje. Ni ko geneen kàddu ci am mbubbu Top Manta di junjee: El meu somni no era ser un manter, maanaam: “masumaa jort ni dinaa dooni manter”. Waaye ñàkk pexe! Boo dee ab wàcc-bees li ñu lay teeroo mooy sër booy lal sam njaay. Googu jàpple nag dafa di lu bokk ci seen ngëm-ngëm ci ni ñoo bokk ndey ak baay, amul xejj ak seen (Sarr 2019: xët 80–81). Ci njàngat yi Contijoch ak Espinosa (2019) def ci fànn woowu, wane nañu ci ni daayira yi lu am a am solo la ci teeru ak dalal wàcc-bees yi, tatagal leen, taxawu leen ba mbir yi woyof ci ñoom. Ci atum 2015 nag lañu faf woote beneen dogal bu def jaay ci mbedd mi mu di pékke. Doonte liggéey boobu jotewul dara ak nit ñi, jumtukaayui dëkk bi ak barab yi, dogal bi tax na lal di jaay ci mbedd mi moo raw njombe, waaye pékke la wu ñuy tëdde kaso, mu doon lu lay topp. Nde képp ku ñu jàpp ci loolu dootoo am kayit wu la may nga am dëkkuwaay, walla nga dawal mbaa

nga am ub liggéey, mbaa sax yeneen daan yu gën a diis yii. Ndeyi mbilli ñaawteef yooyu nag weesuul njiitu gox yi sukkandiku ci xeeti dogal yooyu nu doon junj ba tax ñu am sañ-sañu ga ay alamaan képp ku ñu jàpp ngay jaay ci mbedd mi. Tëralliin woowu dafa metti ndax ñaar, sa yaram du ko fekke ndax alkaati yi mën nañu laa jaay doole, nga boole ci nag ñàkk, jàq ak tumurànke (Fernández, Di Masso, 2018: 45–48).

Ñoom jaaykat yooyule, Dañuy wër dëkk bi di saamandaay ay defkat, di wut buntu lal seenum njaay, waaye ci ag ñaw nag. Móodu-móodu yi dem nañu ba peeg mbedd mi, di doxal xam-xam boobu ci raas i pexe ba mën am fu ñu lal seen um njaay (Espinosa 2017: xët 79): ku ci nekk a nga ak ub ëmbam di xaar bunt feñ ba mu ni ko ñareet. Waaye, buñ séenee alkaati bala muy yegsi fekk na ñu taxañaat seeni ëmb ci lu gaaw, ndax dañu ciy ñoor ay buum yoy bu ñu leen xéccee rekk lépp ëmbuwaat, ñu gálloo. Ñoom ci seen bopp sax dañuy faral di wax naan jàng nañu ba mokkal nooy dawee ba ab alkaati du la dab. Ni ko téere yooyu nu tudd ci kaw jàngate, nekkiin woowu tukkee ci ay dogal yu ñu leen ga àndul ak xel mu dal. Te moone du lal ci mbedd mi rekk a leen mën a dugal ci jafe-jafe, dañuy dox ci mbedd mi sax, alkaati yi mën leen a xool, ñaaw njort ci ñoom tàmbali leen a lànk-et. Pólis yi yor wàllu doxandeem yi, ci Tugal gépp, dañuy wër-ndomba jaaykati mbedd yi fépp. Gàll leen ay dogal yu diis, boole ci njiiti gox yi ak alkaati yi duñu leen may fu ñu noyee. Dig yi yamatul ci diggante réew ak réew rekk waaye dafa leen di topp ba ci biir dëkk bi (Gloria Anzaldua 1987: xët 25). Lii nag dafay wane ag boddi gu tukkee ci xalaatiin yuy xatal li ñépp war a bokk. ‘Manter’ yi nangul nañu leen ñu nekk ci dëkk bi, waaye amuñu péexte ndax ay luññtu. Sewal googu tax na ñu bari mujj di leen xool bëtü dëkkoo fi. Lii nag a tax ñuy dem ba gis ni jot ñu wut ci pexe, doonte muy pexe yoy kenn yoonalu leen, ñu faf gën a yokk xar mi karaw.

### *Jàpp ub fenkat a gën a gaaw jàpp ub manter*

Ci atum 2019, amoon na kayitu yoon wu waa gox 6 tàbbaloon ci tirbinaalu bu Barsaloon, doon ci sàkku ñu càmbaraat daan yu jaaduwul yi ñuy faral di teg ‘manter’ yi. Weddi nañu ci kayit woowii li ñu wax ni liggéeyu ‘manter’ yi dañuy yàq ub dëkk. Xamle nañu ca itam ni ñiy jëndee ci ‘manter’ yi xaajuñoo yam ak ña nga xam ni bu ñuy jënd lu bees tàq lay doon, ngir wane rekk ni boroom barke yi dëgg soxlawuñu wër ngir dajeek ub ‘manter’ bu ñu jëndee. Kayitu yoon woowu weddi nañu ci li ñu tuumaal jaaykati mbedd yi ni dañoo bootu cib maafiya. Benn boroom xam-xam bu ñu naan José Mansilla bindoon na ci am njàngat mu génne woon ci Público ci 20i fani Sāawiyee, ni: *S’agafa abans a un mentider que a un manter* il (“japp ub fenkat a gën a gaaw jàpp ub ‘manter’, ab léebub Espaañ: “jàpp ub fenkat moo gën a gaaw jàpp ub lafañ”, moom lañu wëlbat).

Kayitu yoon woowii nag dëxëñ i ñaxtu mu ngi dikkoon ginnaaw jamony xoqatal ak noggatu gu jéggi dayo. Ci atum 2012 Idiriisa Jàllo ñàkk na bakkan ca kaso doxandeem bu Zona Fanca ci Barsalon ndax ñàkk ag taxawu ci wàllum paj. Ca at mooma ña jiite woon réew mi di wuyoo ci turu Pàrtib Askan wi, dañoo nangu ñuy boddi ñenn ci ndoxandeem yi ci wàllu paj mi ñépp am wàll. Loolu sababoon na ag fippu, gu yegg ci taxawal ca Barsalon ab raglu ñàkk pexe, ñu naan ko *hospitalucho* muy loppitaal bu ñooñu ñu boddi ci paj mi mën a fajoo, ñu leen fay taxawoo ci wàllu dalal xel. Xalaat bu rafet boobu nag mu ngi ballee woon ci xelu ña fa dëkk te mankoo woon ngir jàppale doxandeem yi ci xeex bi, mel ni César, Estefania, Rosa ak Vicky. Ci noonu la ‘manter’ yi tàmbalee yëg teraanga, ci lañu xamee itam pexey fippuwiinu Zapatista, ci César Zúñiga. Ci lañu yeewoo itam ci dëggi solos àndu jàppalante ga ñu jàngé woon ca seen dëkk (Sow 2004: xët 240) xam ni yoon la wow mënees na cee jaare lootaabe ay pexe ñeel seen càkkuteef, jaare ko ci anam yu mucc ayib; lañu jàngé ca seeni maam ci doon wenn say di xàccandoo tey dóorandoo, xam-xam la bob bi ñuy topp jën wi ba Barsalon dañu koo daldi doxal. Bi ñuy tàggatu ci pexey Zapatista, Zúñiga gis na ni xel mu sellu doomi Senegaal yi mën naa ëlëm ku ne. Liy firndeel seen yeewute ak xereñte ci lëkkaloo ngir xeex ba am li ñu bëgg, at yu néew rekk a ci tegu, ci 2017, mbootaayu Top Manta fexe ba jokkoo ak waa Black Panthers ci ndimbalu Bob Brown ma xamle woon ni ‘manter’ yi ni ñu lootaabewoo mat naa càambar jële ci xam-xam bees mën a yaatal.

### *Taxawalug kippaango yelleefi yaxantukat*

Ci 2015, dajeeek pàrti biy dox ci ubbiku ak yamale faloo, Ada Colau mi bokk ci beneen pàrti bob ñoom gisewuñu noonu moo ànd ak taskati xibaar yu dëgguwul, ñuy wër di teg lu ñaaw ci deru ‘manter’ yi, ba yegg ci naan ñoom ñooy dëgg-dëggi nattu dëkk bi. Ci diir bu gàtt seen pexe yu ñaaw ya àntu, ndax yóbbaaale nañu ci ñi yor kaaraange dëkk bi. Njiit ya ni woon alkaati yi séquñu dara ak ‘manter’ yi, ñoo mujj dellu ginnaaw ci wax jooju, jël dogal yu teng ba tax alkaati yi tongal ‘manter’ yi (Espinosa 2017: xët 68; Iborra 2019: xët 81–103). Ci noonu ndogal amee ca ca Salou (Tarragona): Moor Silla moo daano ci taaxum kaw, jaare ca faatu. Waaye metital googu nag taxul benn yoon, dañoo feddali seen laxasaay gën a mànkoo di bañ lañu doon bañ ba coppiku am. Ci jàppaleg kureelu bañkat yu mel ni Tras la Manta, 2015 deesatu ko fàtte ndax ci la Kippaango Jaaykati Mbedd gu Barsalon taxawee. Mu leer ci boppu ñépp nag ni nekkul mbooloo muy sàkku ku leen taxawu cig ñeewatal kepp, waaye kippaango gu jóg taxaw temm ngir seeni àq ak i yelleef ci dogal yi.

Ni ñu ko tàmm a seetloo ci kippaango yu ni mel, mooy seen xeex dafay jëm ci àq ak yelleefi liggéeykat, waaye gii kippaango seen xeex dañu koo

joyal ci mbirum xeetal ak boddeek xeebeel, ba noppi ñàmbaas ci warteefi doxandeem, duggantey mbatit ak yelleef ci dëkk (Espinosa 2017: xët 82; Gil, Balinhas 2021: xët 66). Boddi ak ñàkkal solo googu nag moo doon lay wu am doole ci seen xeex, ñu jaarale ca yeneen yi leen metti niki kàddu yu ñaaw yi ñuy dëggee ci yenn kilifay polotig yi, ni leen alkaati yi di tongale boole kook taskati xibaar yi leen di duural. Ñu gis ni dafay am solo itam ñu xamale ni njaay mi ñuy def ci mbedd yi ci jom la tegu ndeem mënuñoo am liggéey bu jaar yoon; xel dellu kon ca kàddu ya woon ca tiset ba: “masumaa jort ni dinaa dooni ab manter”. Seen farlu ak xel mu sell ci wàllu diisoo tax na mujj gi ñenn ca waa dëkk ba, di ñu dëggu te maslaa ak laamisoo ñor, gën leen a jox cër, seen doole di gën a yokku ci biir Barsalon. Seen yéene doon nag taxawu képp ku nekk ci dëkk bi te ñu lay ñàkke kersa ci mbedd mi (Gil, Balinhas 2021). Ci 2016 am mbind mu njiital “Jataayu Waxtaan ñeel njaay mi ci mbeddi dëkk bi” génnee, kippaango jaaykat yooyule ña nga cay dogu naan: “bu ñu leen seetaanee ba ñu am ndam sunu kaw, dinañu jublu ci yeneen néew-doole yi ñu jàpp ni dañuy wàccee darajay dëkk bi.” Pexem mbootaay gi ca njalbeen ga moo doon kon lëkkaloo ak ñi ñu tane: doon kiiraay, di tata bob deesu ko bëtt, taxaw temm mel ni ku naan “wund du fi naane ñeex”.

Loolu teewul ñu wéy di leen sonal. Ni kippaango gi gisee jàppug Siidi Maxtaar (Sidil Moctar) ci 2016, mooy ag duural ak i sos tukkee ci alkaati yee ko sooke. Mu juroon coow lu bari ak ay doxaliinu ñaxtu ni ki aakimoo mbedd mi ci lu àndul ak wenn ay; yeneen mbootaayi bañkat niki *Yayoflautas* dooleel leen. Noonu, ‘manter’ yi lal seen sëri jaayukaay yi ci mbedd mi ba xatal yooni La Rambla yi, tax turist yi di am jafe-jafey yaale, ñu feeñalee ci loolu weneen xeexiin wow njaayum mbedd mi, barabi liggéeyukaay yi, ag càkkuteefi jot say yelleef lépp la ëmbaale (Espinosa 2017: xët 68). Ci wenn kayitu wu ñu ténk seen gis-gis, ak pas-pas bi tingoom seen yéene, te ñu genne woon ko ginnaaw bi ñu jàppee Siidi Maxtaar, ña nga ca naan: “dëkk bii, réew mii, xar-kanam gi am na wirgo wu ñuul, kon doxandeem yi ak ñi seen loxo jotul seen ginnaaw ñépp a war a ànd di xàccandoo ak a dóorandoo.”

### *Feem ak coppiteg mboolaay*

Ñaari at ginnaaw bi ñu tëralee seen kippaangog xeex yelleef, ‘manter’ yi dañoo nàmmaat seen pas-pas, yokk seeni jéego ñeel seen yitte, lépp ci kaw jàppoo ak jàppalante ba mën a am ug jàppandal. Ci seeni feem ak i peche dem nañu ba yee ñu bari ci wàllu farlu ci xeex ngir say warteef ak soppo. Ci ni ñu taxawalee Top Manta, fexe nañu ba soppo dëgginu tur wow dañu leen ko daan yéjje. Noonu ñu soppee maanaam seen tur wi, pexem teggi tuuma la ci yu ñaaw yi ñu daan teg seen kaw naan dañoo nar a yàq yaxantu ci

dëkk bi, mbaa di leen xase baadoola yu tekkiwul dara yoo xam ni manuñu lenn lu moy jaay i njoogaan. Doxandeem yi ñoom faf wēlbatiku jël seen sēri njaay yooyu di ko tiitēroo ak a damoo, boole ci di ko xoole ngànnaay ci seen xeex. Ndaxam gisuñu benn tasukaayu xibaar bu ñu mën a sukkandiku ba teggi tuuma, amul leneen lu gën a yell jëli tiset yoy ci lañuy jaarale li ñu bëgg a dégtal, mu mën a yegg fépp fu ki ko sol teg tànkam.

Campug kureelu lófoonkati Ànd Dem (Ande Dem) yiy tàggatee, ak seen lëkkaloog geneen kureelu ay saa-barsalon gu dajale ay bañkat yu seen xam-xam màcc ci wàllu feem, yóbbu na leen fu sori. Turu *ànd dem* woowu nag lëkkaloo Zapatistas ak ‘manter’ yi lay wund. Ñi leen di lófoon dees leen a tannée ci Barsalon, lootaabee ko noo xam ni ñi ko séq li ñuy nos ak a nocci lépp dara du ci lënt. Doonte ñu ngi jànkoonde ak i duural, lu ci bari di bawoo ci ñoñ seen liggéey deful lu dul tookeel kéew mi booleek di nax ñi leen di liggéeyal; doonte sax itam ñu ngi leen di jiiñ naan dañuy nasaxal wàllu yaxantu ci dëkk bi, Top Manta dafa dundalaat fànnu defaree ay jumtukaay ci biir dëkk bi. Ci ñi leen di tàggat ak tiset yi la ñu jaar ba dëggal seen bopp wane seen xereñte. Ñoom ñii daan jal seen doole ci liggéey yoy duñu ci gis seen bopp, fexe nañu ba dëggal seen bopp ci fof kàppitaalismu moo fa teg tànk; fa nga xam ni bopp sa bopp, gënalante, kujje, ëppalante alal ak yu ni mel te jeexitaloo ci kàppitaalismu lañu fay gis, ñoom ña nga fay wane njariñal ànd, jàppoo, jàppalante, bokk ndey bokk baay, ku tane sa moroom dimbali ko. Pas-pas boobii taawu seen doxaliin moo waral ñu jiital dayo doom-aadama ci alali àddina. Mu dem nag ba jóo leen ci xool nu ñu mën a def ba am ug jàppandal, jaare ko ci yoonal seen aw nekkiin ca réew ma ci kaw fexe ba ñu mën leen a jox kayitu liggéey.

Mbooloom 30i doxandeemi saa-senegaal yooyu nekk Barsalon, di dund ci xat-xat yu tukkee ci ag boddi, taxul ñu yuqat benn yo yoon, xanaa wéeru ci seen xam-xamu bopp ak xel mu sell rekk ba mujj a am ca goxub Raval palaas bu ñu mën a def seen yu sew-sewaan, ak beneen atalyée ñaw ca goxub Sants, lépp ci benn dëkk bi, muy lees mën a jàngée. Loolu fexe ba sottal kon càmbaruwaay la ñeel ëllëg.

*Càmbar ci ñaw*

Palaasu Top Manta yi mu ngi féete ci Carrer d'en Roig, waaye fa ñuy defaree tiset yi nag ci biir benn barabu liggéeyukaay la nekk. Ñaari barab yooyii nag du ci wàllu ñaw rekk lañuy yëngu, dees na fa taxawoo ak di fa càmbar yeneen i sémb. Bu dee ci wàllu taxawu doom-aadama nag ay at a ngii ñoo ngi ciy def seen keem kàttan boole ci farlu gu ànd ak xel mu sell, doonte loolii ñuy def ci dimbalaatee, am na ñu ko càmbar gi sas, te ñu am lu leen doy sëkk lu ñu war a doxal te matalewuñu ko. Seen barab yooyii dañu fay féexale seen xol di fa dalal xel yi, muy fàgguteef ci ñi jóge seen réew ñëw ag jaxasoo dikkal leen. Rax ci dolli, jamonoy cëtëng la ca Koronaa ba bokk nañu ci ñi jëkk a ñaw ay jumtukaay yu mel ni alikeñ yi loppitaal yi doon soxla. Waa Top Manta danoo wéy ci loolu, di ko yaatal ci seen liggéeyukaay yi: taxawaay boobii ci jamono joo xam ni dëkkiin wi ak nekkiin wi soppiku nañu, ñoom ñu fëll fu kenn xaarul woon, di lu am solo. Seen barab yi nag fa lañuy wéttalikontee, di nas ak a nocci, di fa waxtaane lépp lu ñeel seen kippango gi, di fa noppaloo, dinañu fa lekkee di fa naanee, di fa waajale tiset yi ñuy jaay, di fa jullee ak a saarsee seeni jollasu. Bis bu nekk ay ñam yu neex lañu fay toggee. Seen gone yi bu ñu jàngiwul di fo ci xàll yi ko wër. Seen barab yooyii dañu leen a defar ci feem yu leen dëppale ak li ñu soxla ñoom. Palaas ba ca Raval ak atalyée ba ca Sants feem yi ñu leen defaree xam-xam la bob ëllëg lañuy xam ub dayoom, nde doonul lees sukkandikoo ci jamono waaye ci soxla lees leen jëmale. Xalaat yii ak pexe yii lal ci jom ak ngor am njàngale la mu rëy ci naka lees war a joyantee dëkkuwaay yi, ak dëkkiin wi, jubbanti noste gi, wane itam nees la war a def ba amal ci dëkk ay barab yuy firndeel weg doom-aadama.

*Càmbar ak ndaw yu seen xam-xam màcc ci arsitektiir*

Ni nu ko waxee ci kaw rekk am na pexe yu ñuy togg ci barabi liggéeyukaay yooyule. Doonte yoragul yenn dayo yu kawee kawee yi, dees leen a amal ci yéney indi coppiku gu jàmp ci dëkk bi. Ci waxtaan yay amee ci palaas boobii ak atalyée bi ay xalaat yu am solo da cay juddoo, niki amal benn barabu lekkuwaay buy xeex ag boddi xeet, fees di dalal ak di tàggatee doxandeem yi ak yeneen barab ci mbedd mi yoy dees na fa mën a defee lu bari. Mu doon lees di teg ci la ki sos Lekkoolu Bauhaus wax ni “tàmbaralee ci kuddu Kafe dem ba daj ub dëkk”, yéene ji mooy fexe ba tiseti Top Manta yi dem ba wër dëkk bépp. Xalaat boobii moo tax sémbu *Toppi Jën Wi* yéenee jokkoo ak njàngaani arsitektiir yi ci yeneen réew yi ngir waxtaane yéene yooyu.

Barabu lekkuwaay boobu dafay xeex ak xeetal, ba noppi duppi la am ca atalyée Can Batlló, nga xam ni waxtu lekk su jotee, toggkat bi dafay

taajsi ñam wi ak bu xol sedd. Li nu jublu ci loolu mooy am foo xam ni dëkkandoo yépp a fay mën a daje di rëgal ñam yoy ci yiy ñore ci dëkk bi lañu koy togge, su ko defee muy fu nuy sottante xalaat, ubbil ñépp sunu wunt. Loolii dafay indiwaat dundiin gi fi amoon ci barabi liggéeyukaay yi yàggul dara. Lekkuwaay yi tay boo seetloo ñam yu wute lees fay toggee te lu bari ci lees koy toggee ñorewul ci réew mi. Li xew tay ci barabu liggéeyukaay yi mooy ku ne dafay fàggu la muy lekk indaale. Muy wane ak bopp sa bopp gu gënul. Ci gàttal kon, ngir soppo loolu manees naa jàngee ci jaaykat yi ci mbedd mi, defar lekkuwaay yoy waa dëkk bi mën nañu di ko doxalal seen bopp, te kenn du fa boddi kenn, ñi am ak ñi amul ñépp di lekkandoo, wanewaataar bi ci bokk.

Bu dee ci lu jëm ci dalu doxandeem yi, manees na leen fay teeru, taxawu leen, su ko defee ñu mën faa nekkandi ba seen xel dikkaat, ñu ne ci anam yu wute ak li am ci kaso yi ñu leen di denc bu ñu duggsee. Dëkkuwaay yooyi nag deesu leen defaree ni yii ñu xam ci dëkk bi te muy saamandaay ag bopp sa bopp. Jaaykat yii di lal ci mdedd mi dañu noo wan ni nii ñu tabaxe sunu dëkkuwaay yi dafa mel ni ku nekk dafay yamale mooroomam: kenn mënu ciy dugg ak a génn ni mu la soobee, te yaatuwul ba ñu man faa wétaliko mag ñi di leen xool bētu yërmande. Li nu jaaykati mbedd yi indil moo di nekkiinu dëkkandoo wu gën a ubbiku.

Am na fu téere Conjitoch ak Sanmàrti (2021: xët 62) di junjee lu mel ni li ñu xalaat. Muy benn feccuwaay bu màggat bu nekk Barsalon te Baay Faal yi soppo ko def ko seen ab dal. Tudee ko Cosaanu Afrig. Doonte lëndëm na te fi ngelaw liy mën a duggee ak a génn taxul mu deme noonu, waaye dañoo jël xott yi kenn soxlaatul fexee ba daggee ci ay néeg yu neex te rafet yoy foo sànni sa bët gis benn. Mu am itam néeg bu mag bu ñuy daje. Fa ñu daan feccee la Baay Faal yi soppo seen barabu jaamukaayu Yàlla ak di fa amal ay xumbeel fu ayu-bis bi di jeexe. Sunu xalaat nag mooy nees di fexee ba defar dëkkuwaay yo xam ni ci yii lees leen di royee, mbaa su ko aajowoo ñu jël xeeti dëkkuwaay ya nekk Senegaal defar ci fii yu méngoo ak ñoom.

Am na itam yeneen xalaat yu am solo yu ballee ca sunu waxtaan wa, muy fexee amal barab yoy dees fay mën a defee lu bari niki ni nu ko jot a junjee, nga xam ni dafay doon fof dinañu fa mën a denc jumtukaay yi nuy soxla te mu doon itam barab yees méngale ak li am njaay laaj. Dafay doon barabu biti bu ñépp di mën a daje di waxtaan ak a sottante xalaat ci lu amul genn boddikonte. Loolu lépp nag xalaat la yu gongikoo ca palaasu waa Top Manta ba faree ca Raval. Manees na ni giseesu ko ci benn barabu yaxantu. Du caaginu barab boobii ñeel fànn yu bari dafay xatal mbedd mi, waaye ag yaatal lay indi nde dina rataxal diggante yi, ku nekk ubbil sa moroom sa kanam. Mu doon luy mën a soñnee jëm ci ag laamisoo. Xalaat boobu peXe la mu mën a tax jaaxle fi mbaa tumurànke fi du gaaw nde dafay doon fees mën a dalal képp ku soxla ndimbal. Dees koy defaree noo xam

dinañu fa mën di toggee ak a yakkee, jaaree ci itam suqali yaxantu gi ci dëkk bi, ba noppo taaral ko ak i garab, sóoraale ci ay barabi waxtaan ak sottante xalaat. Loolu dafay soppo xar-kanamu mbedd mi ba doo séenati la nga daan séen muy ay kër yu tegaloo ci anam yoo xam ni kenn mën maa bañ a séq ak kenn lenn.

Képp ku teewe ndajem kaajaru Topp Jën Wi, dinga gis lépp lu tukkee ci ndajey càambar yi nu doon def ak ay njàngaan yu seen xam-xam màcc ci tabaxiin ak dëkkiin te ñu nekk ci lekkooli arsitektiir yu Barsalon, Lund, Milano, Reus, àndoon ci ak mbootaayu ‘manter’ yi nga xam ni dañoo dogu ci jëm ca kanam yóbbu seen xeex ci dayo yu gën a kawe ba tax ñu lëkkaloo ak woroom xam-xam yu bari te wute te ku ci nekk ñu séqoon ak waxtaan wu am wàll woo mën a feeñale sa xereñte ci mébet yooyu ñu lim yépp. Lëkkaloo googu ak woroomi xam-xam ci wàllu diisoo, yoon, dëkkiin, tabaxiin... guleet, tax mu doon lu bette te neex lool ci xoli ñi leen di bége ndax seen xel mu sell ak xereñte ci jëflante. Moo tax ndajem kaajar mi yor dayob càmbaruwaay. Ndaje la ngir joyanti li récc ci noste kéew mi. ‘Manter’ yi ci seen farlu ak xam li ñu bëgg ak nu ñuy def ba jot ci, fexe nañu ba gállankoor yi ci seen kanam yépp teewu leen a wéyal seen xeex ci àndandoo doon wenn say, di xàccandoo ak a dóorandoo. Moo waral ñu am lu bari lees man a jàngee ci ñoom, rawatina ci laamisoo ak ràñnee wan yoon la nit ki mën a jël ba saafara ay jafe-jafeem. Sunu yéene kon mooy waxtaane aw doxaliin, joyal ay xalaat yu mën a tax nekkiin wi gën a jàppandi, lépp nu sukkandikoo ko ci kureel gu wute ak li nu tàmm a gis. Ndaje lay doon kon moo xam ni dees na ci waxtaane xam-xam, feeñal ci ay peXe, wane ci yoon wow bees ci jaare li nu bëgg dina leer ci bopp yi te aamana mu sotti. Ba tax na, nu bëgg mu doon lol dafay doon ci diggante mbootaayu doxandeem yi, ñi yor wàllu tabaxiin ak dëkkiin ci dëkk bi, waaye itam ak kilifa yi jiite dëkke bi. Ndax kat jataayu càambar yooyu, balluwaayu xam-xam la yoy mënees na cee jariñe dëkk bi ak barab yi koy doxal.

Seen màkkaan ma nekk ca Sants ak ma ca Raval tax na mbootaayu ‘manter’ yi gën a gëm seen bopp. Seen taxawaay it tax na ñu jox leen cër. Wane nañu seen bopp ci aw doxaliin wu lulu ci fulla ak faayda. Seen paspas dafa dëppoo ak xalaat ya *afrotopia* dëxëñ te ñuy dëggal ni yi fi jaar yépp ciy gállankoor teewul xeltug afrig ba tay mi ngi wéy di jariñ. Tugal war nañoo nangoo jariñoo yooyule xalaat yu gànjaru, joyanti doxaliin wi joyal ko ci mboolaay gu gën a tawféexe. Top Manta dafa wane aw yoon ci soppo nekkiin jaare ko ci xereñte, fa ñu gisewul ku leen taxawu ci xat-xat yi ak gállankoor yi. Sémbu soppo tabaxiin ak dëkkiin wi nekk ci sunu kanam, li ëpp solo ngir matal ko mooy lëkkaloo ak ñooñii nga xam ni ñoo ci jóo sunuy xalaat, ñu jàngee ci ñoom boole ci indiwaale ci sunuy xalaat yuy tax mu leer te gën a mucc ayib.

Manul a ñàkk nu dikk ak yeen ci ni nu dëppalee li nu bëgg a sumb ak nees lootaabee ndajem kaajar moomule. Cantieri Navali mooy barab bi Lekkoolu Ramon Llul tànn ngir wane sémbu Catalonia ak Duni Baléares woowu bokk ci Eventi Collaterali bu Ndajem Kaajar mi, muy barab bob dees koy dëppale ak meloy ja mdedd, nit ñiy yaale. Ni mu bindoo dafay tax lees fa namm a wane dafa naan fàngng, am it fees man a jaare jàll ca Canale di San Pietro ni kuy doxantu. Liggéeyu ma-pasin boobu di Lara Fluxà's, ñu wane ko ci Ndajem Kaajaru Venice mi woon 2022, dafa doon fattali ni jaa-ruwaay boobii yoon la woon wu jëm ca tàkkal dex ga.

Sëru njaay yi dañu leen di tàllal ci guddaay tabax bi, di ci wanee ndëxëñteefu tukkiib toppi jën wi. Marse sottante xalaat boobii lu neex a samp la, daanaka soreewul ak lal sërub njaay te lu yomba tuxal laat, boole ci woyof na te du yàq dara. Ngir leeral ko soxlawul lu dul ubbi poranteer yu mag yi féete ci wet gu ne ak bunt bu mag boobu nga xam ni saa su ne mu ngi ni ngàpp. Niki ‘manter’ ni ñuy gaawe ëmbaate seen sër yi ñuy lal su ñu séenee alkaati yi, noonu lañuy defaree barab bi ñuy amale xew mi.

Marse Venice la bu fees ak i sër, te daananaka xar-kanam gees koy jox mooy doon nettalib Toppi Jën wi. Dees koy tàmbalee ak ubbite, teg ci wane mbootaayu ‘manter’ yi, tējee ko kaajarug ay peeñ yuy wane li mën a dooni xar-kanamu ëllëg. Sër bu ci nekk dees koy jagleel ab ponk: Afrig ga doom-aadama soqikoo, siif alali jàmbur, tasaarog saa afrig yi ci adduna, Fortress Europe, kureeli ndimbal, ànd liggéey ak bokk di xalaatandoo ci àdduna ci gis-gisu saa-afrig. Sër bu ci nekk dafay am lu muy fésal jaare ci ay peen ak mbind ak yeneen yees man a seetaan. Mu doon benn ci anam yees mën a wanee ay delluwaay ki ci bëgg a gën a xóotal xam-xamam, boole ci waxtaan yi nga xam ni dees na ko fa mën a séq ak képp kuy sàkku ay leeral. Lépp yaatu, mucce ayib te mën a yokk yaakaar. Waaye ni mu amee ci jaar-jaaru ‘manter’ yi rekk, ndajem kaajar mi dafay topp dundu ‘manter’ yi dalee ko seen tukki, ba ci seen sëri njaay yi, lépp ci anam yu rafet ci gis. Sëri njaay yi bu ci nekk dees koy takk ci moroom ma ba muy saamandaay gaal guy joowu ci géej gu dal.

Mu doon marse buy joowu ci kaw. Sër yi toftalante ci mbalaan mu rëy a rëy mom dees koy defaree noo xam ni dafay neex a taxañaat, mu doon itam luy junj ag noste. Bu ñu tekkee li ñu taqalee sër yi nag, ya ca tafe woon dañu cay topp, su ko defee mbalaan mi yomb a yëkkati. Loolu lépp nag liy tax mu sotti dafa am xereñte gees koy defee jaare ci ay buum ak yeneen jumtukaay yu sew-sewaan yu tax mbalaan mi yeewe mel ni kiiraay gu tiim suuf. Dina bari ay xeeti peen yuy wane liggéey yi jëm ci tabaxiin ak dëk-kiin yu njàngaan yi jot a def. Sër yi mooy dëxëñ lees fa nar a wane. Dees leen di tolloole ak daggiti ndimo yi “manter” yi di jox wàcc-bees yi. Maram

Géy (Maram Gueye) xamal nanu ci am mbindam ni jox gan mbalaan dafa bokk ci teraanga manters yi. Dafay wane ag yaatu ak laabiir. Muy firndeel yéene ju rafet ji dox ci diggante yi, dalal gan. Te loolu lépp jaarewul ci lu dul as mbalaan.

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The sailors of the boats that arrive in the early morning at L'Escaia are Africans, mostly from Morocco. Arrival at the port is frenetic. The fish is sorted and weighed in order to be auctioned at the fish market. L'Escaia, March 2023.

Ryan Bishop  
AbdouMaliq Simone  
Daniel Cid

Following the Fish:  
An Introduction to Textual  
Frames for the Exhibition

In some parts of the world, people survey their situation in relation to others in other parts of the world and say “We are fortunate.” They rarely realize that fortune has little to do with it: that fortune is the residue of design and they the unconscious inheritors of (post-)colonial violence, dispossession and displacement. They little note that the world does not exist to furnish their existence in it. They simply assume it does, and the world has been designed to materialize that assumption.

Others in those other parts of the world might go to great and hazardous lengths to arrive in the complacent spots of the globe. Their legal status and labor options as precarious as their crossings. This too is part of the design of fortune. People rarely aspire to be immigrants or refugees when they are young. Some are forced to be either or both when young, when old, when neither—when choices narrow and telescope to a vanishing point on a rapidly receding horizon. As Neferti Tadiar notes in her contribution to this volume: “To be a refugee is, after all, to be in search of refuge in the aftermath of dispossession from the place of one’s sustained living.” The refuge the refugee seeks exists in the lacunae and interstices of privilege.

In Africa, the vast disproportionality between the volume of resources that come in and go out has long figured extensive circuits of emigration and fugitivity. If the continent is primarily something to be extracted from, the bodies which have been enjoined in intricate ecological relations with the resources taken will not inevitably settle for their dispossession. They will also pursue what has been taken to configure their dispositions in ways that might enhance their endurance. They will also “talk back” to the extractions as if to say that we will, at least through our bodies in movement, take charge of what “goes.” If you take what can reasonably be construed as “ours,” you will have to deal with “us” whose needs and aspirations you deny. At least, as Malcolm says, the chickens will come home to roost.

In situations of plunder masked as the rights of dominion, development, or normal business practice, where growing populations are left with multiple insufficiencies, everyday urban politics is both prolific and intense. There is not enough to go around, and the rulers who have secured their longevity through facilitating the ongoing plunder in a melancholic mimesis of the plunderers eat up space and money with testaments to their glory. Rule itself is ensconced in murky webs of complicities that entail constantly shifting alliances, frequent spiritual warfare, erotic dalliances, and the periodic manifestations of impatience on the part of the young who refuse to remain in the garrisons and the barracks. The incessant volatility and re-arrangements which pervade the most intimate spheres engineer a looseness of moorings. Bodies circulate, collide and chart out trajectories that know no boundaries. Multiple “elsewheres” become fundamental

elements of the “inside,” and thus boats are launched, as are long treks and truck rides across deserts, in addition to the more eligible itineraries of transit—e.g. flights from African capitals to the West are always full.

An aged warehouse stands on a pier in Venice; the tide rises and falls outside and in. The leakage is unavoidable regardless of the boundaries the warehouse walls are built to provide. All the holes in borders cannot be plugged, in spite of vigilance and investment. As the tidal waters ebb and flow, blankets suspended by ropes and pulleys also rise and fall, marking the inhalation and exhalation of time. The theatricality of the site manifests the staged state of affairs by which the blankets have come to be metonyms for the embodied precarity and ingenuity on the geopolitical stage that reside in every European square. The quotidian blanket, itself transported from Western Africa and transplanted in Europe, is shot through with geopolitics, as is any and all space through which we move: either with ease or with friction, with fortune or without, with intentional naivety or with eyes unencumbered by scales.

### *Whither Sovereignty in This Scene?*

Sovereignty operates as a political technology emergent from and reliant on a complex nexus of relations, including political, spatial, temporal, economic, strategic, legal, technological (in multiple senses) and imaginative. A spatial and topographical basis for legal order and control (e.g. *nomos* and sovereignty) as found in the controversial work of Carl Schmitt “contains two competing orders, the spatial order and the plane, the physical and the cartographical, the concrete and the abstract.”<sup>1</sup> Schmitt links sovereignty to the land, *nomos* to the earth and mostly ignores the sea in his political formulations as protean, unstable and lawless. “Without an underlying structure,” Vismann comments, “territory begins to resemble the sea” and thus bereft of political formation. Sovereignty, however, for some time now has had no proper place, no grounded or stable *topos*. And the sea—imaginatively constructed in a Westphalian twilight as being bereft of governance, control and responsibility—over which African refugees traverse is anything other than such imaginings. The conversion of space to territory to sphere of influence has colonial roots in maritime law and is aided by the delocalization of politics and the state without ties to the earth necessarily. Territory and its establishment operate as political technics of asymmetrical design, influence and affluence.

The Mediterranean is constructed as a space strategically and conveniently that makes it the moat for Fortress Europe. As such, it is simultaneously the most surveilled and untouched by sovereign nation-states of any body of water on the planet. These entities position themselves in

<sup>1</sup> Cornelia Vismann (1997). “Starting from Scratch: Concepts of Order in No Man’s Land”, *War, Violence and the Modern Condition*, Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, p. 62.

relation to maritime law, international laws and human rights accords to their maximum advantage and minimum responsibility. After the codification of the legal rights and liabilities of nation-states in the 1982 Convention of the Law of the Sea, maritime jurisdiction and law resulted in what some call “unbundled sovereignty” in which terrestrial sovereign rights and regulations become delinked from maritime rules predicated on state extent. This confusion and complexity works to strategic advantage for states and strategic disadvantage for refugees. The means by which jurisdictional and legal concepts map onto, or not, geomorphic formations provides nation-states the cover to dodge humanitarian obligations and rights for migrants on the sea whilst protecting national sovereignty, here read as impunity.

As the continental margin slopes away from shore and border waters down to the abyssal plane, territorial claims recede and the high seas become *Mare Liberum*, a kind of free zone where sovereign gain and responsibility has little or no purchase. Such are the occasional interpretations. Because the high seas fall outside of state sovereignty, they are reserved for non-exploitable peaceful purpose (UNCLOS, Article 88), however with a very important caveat. International law dictates that a ship flying its national flag must still abide with its own national laws and is additionally bound to aid all vessels in need. But where and how the extraterritorial application of state sovereignty is applied remains obscure and contentious. Thus, in spite of these obligations, Watch the Med claims that thousands die by policy, in which the sea is cast as frontier: policy that has turned the Mediterranean into “a liquid border” saturated with teletechnological sensors and surveillance equipment, along with a well-articulated military presence to enforce EU visa laws to keep refugee claims along with somewhat spurious “terrorist groups” from shore.

Yet the imaginary compelled by deterritorialization and teletechnological reach and influence also holds in its nostalgic grip the land, the state, the citizenry, and is applied only in haphazard fashion to seascapes. The warehouse with its suspended blankets sits in the littorals, but only as defined by nature, not by political technology. In relation to land and territory, much political theory leaves the sea as a site devoid of legal and governmental scrutiny even if practice suggests otherwise. In spite of this formulation having been thoroughly outstripped by centuries of violence, extractive economies and endless war, and in spite of the demands to consider life and non-life within geo-elemental frames of human limitations, the sea remains a site of sovereignty confusions, contestations, claims and legal complexities. It is on such a paradoxical space refugees set their course in vessels that enter the high seas as imperilled craft from the moment of their launch.

Achille Mbembe’s *Brutalism*, which appeared during global pandemic lockdown, links historical geopolitics with contemporary geopolitical changes, demands and opportunities. He discusses the political subject (and its psycho-social twin: the subject) within systems of control and materiality through the metaphorical and literal elements of Brutalist architecture. The built environment emerges as the site of an articulation of solidity and stability, of spatial control, especially in the post-World War II moment in which Brutalism emerges. Mbembe concentrates on the materiality of this architectural moment and movement, a materiality that embodies symbolic and cultural values of inclusion and rejection found in its assumed indestructibility. But an irony, not explored in the book, exists in this focus on the major building materials of modernist architecture. The promises found in concrete, glass and steel to rebuild and reimagine the world reside in semi-solids capable of moulding and manipulation. For all their rhetorical and aspirational plaudits, they do not provide the robust barriers of protection they might symbolically invoke in wearied imaginations. They, too, leak and are capable of dissolving into other forms due to their ineluctable protean nature.

If infrastructure is about connection, and if connections to the basic resources necessary to survive, to make things, to extend the capacities and temporalities of liveliness and industriousness are distributed equitably across a social landscape, then certain elemental connections among people are assured. People then belong to a conviction that they are in “this” together—whatever the “this” might be. That they need not ask incessant questions about who will survive, and who will not, and to what extent will my actions compromise your survival, and yours mine.

Yet failure is in part, the objective—the tacit effort to curtail the possibilities of collective action, to engender deficiencies that are then attributed to the very character of a particular people. As such, the technical and financial dimensions of infrastructure can only be considered in the context of Africa’s often overwhelming exposure to premature death. And the extent to which this death is enjoyed in certain quarters. Enjoyed not only as an affirmation of privilege, accomplishment, or relief but as the very rationale for the prolongation of rule. If so many bodies are absented and have suffered, then it is necessary to take extraordinary measures to rectify or to move the people out of such debilitating darkness.

Across much of Africa, both liveability and impossible lives have been materialized in an intensive proximity. Here, the trajectories of development seem to carry with them their own simultaneous impossibility—they will never be what they set out to be. Whatever is planned or expected will

only ever be partially the case. Such partiality represents less either an inflation of imagination or a failure of implementation. Rather, it has become the logic of urban development itself. As such, development across the world takes on a seeming generic character—i.e. the same old investments, partnerships, gentrifications, land valuations, construction styles. It would appear that the convergence policymakers have referred to for decades at least takes on the semblance of a material form, even if historical and political conditions provide plenty of differentiation.

African cities have long housed both the living and the dead. They have long been platforms for the exertion of ancestral forces; they have long had to accommodate the realities of so many people and things that have gone on; gone on to a plane that is not over there, beyond any existence, but still here even if visible and conversant in a different way, a way that exceeds conventional verification. Fundamental connections are retained to such forces, sometimes in ways that become more viable, more important than the connection people might attain in the same neighbourhood, the same city. These more social connections may be changing all of the time, because the fundamental, enduring connections are elsewhere, across different scales and media of temporality, and because the struggles for better infrastructure can't quite outpace the intentions of failure.

As such, hundreds of new words and gestures appear in cities on a weekly basis. "Time zones" proliferate—where some individuals live literally in the end of days (the Apocalypse), others in some futuristic warp, and still others in an endless present of putting bread on the table. Actions can be excessively generous or cruel without apparent reasons, as is the coupling of bodies and materials. The interrelationships of these conditions give rise to urban actors to which the usual attributions perhaps make little sense.

All of these intersections of varying temporalities within intense proximity cannot be apprehended—in both the sense of being understood or captured—by prevailing frameworks of law or state policy. But they, nevertheless, are subject to such apparatuses, fall under their purview, and are compelled to have some kind of a relationship with them. The everyday tensions and challenges that arise from the elements of these intersections working or not working together are managed largely by the improvised mechanisms necessary to deal with constantly shifting dilemmas. How to reconcile this everyday politics then to the demands of infrastructural planning and technicity. Particularly as residents seem to wait for grids, adequate supplies of fuel, expanded broadband capacity, efficient sanitation systems, and so forth. African cities always seem to exist in the *meantime*. It is as if residents are saying, In the meantime while we are waiting we will do this, we will practice a myriad of small experiments, off-grid,

improvised, and replete with small sustainability. We wait for all the international "clubs" to deliberate accords and deliverables. We wait for all of the sclerotic generations of "big men" to finally go and for all of those well-trained, brilliant African technicians to assume the mantles of power and act in the general interest. But we will also not wait, and we take bits and pieces of cities on our backs and implant them in all of those spaces where our resources have been stored or put to use by others.

Still, as Mbembe points out, bodies are not simply in motion. The insides of bodies that bear the brunt of the world, that provide a vital infrastructure for the seemingly unimpeded movements of thought on the part of the privileged are not removed from their external environments. "From the perspective of discounted bodies, to be alive is always and already to breach boundaries or to be exposed to the risk of the outside entering the inside."<sup>2</sup> As Davidson (2020) insists then, a sense of justice inheres in the very being of mobility rather than a sense of destination or in the complexion of the distribution of opportunities to move.

What appear to be the defining vulnerabilities of African cities are difficult to navigate in terms of clear-cut meanings and implications. At the level of the prolongation of life, of life as an evolving potentiality of flourishing and sustenance, the ethical and political imperatives would seem clear-cut, informing a trajectory of meeting basic needs, providing for adequate levels of work, and of maximizing the values of human and material resources. On the other hand, it is vulnerability as a structural underpinning of the availability of people and things to each other, of the capacity of people and things to be re-arranged and the concomitant generativity of new combinations of elements to create multiple courses of action, and thus endurance, that has underwritten urbanization processes in large swathes of Africa—in conjunction with an array of political technologies. It is not easy to disentangle availability as precarity and subjugation and availability as generative resource and capacity.

So called modern cities have always taken the energies, experiments, and styles of their different human and non-human inhabitants and "contracted" them, both in the sense of truncating these practices and establishing contractual relationships defining the rights and responsibilities of urban citizens. This "contraction" may provide urban actors with new opportunities for looking, understanding, and organizing themselves. It may provide a framework for how to pay attention to all that goes on in the city and for understanding what it is possible to do and how to do it. But it also takes from them sensibilities, inclinations, and a vast set of provisional "accomplishments" for working with others and using the city and "repackages" them in ways that are then difficult to recognize and be reclaimed as their own. Plunder has not only entailed the theft of resources

2  
Achille Mbembe (2019).  
"Bodies as borders", *From  
the European South* 4,  
p. 5-18.

or the energetic exertions of bodies, but of their own ways of being in the world. As such the running away in acts of fugitivity or the search for refuge is not just heading for the exit doors but also calculated efforts to take something back, to recoup what is yours embedded in the efficiencies and splendours of Europe's built environment.

Yet, another architectural irony lurks in any (misplaced) faith in the built environment of Fortress Europe: the relationship of the built to the unbuilt environment. In order for something to be built, something must be unbuilt to make way for it. "[T]he un-built has apparently interrelated temporal dimensions: the past un-built (demolished, transformed, historicized) allows the new to be built on the old site; and the future un-built is figured only as potential, as yet to be built. The rhetorical form of the un-built would be the empty lot, which marks the un-built in its past and future dimensions as radically outside the present. This radical outside would not actually be discoverable or describable as an experience of the present because it functions simply as a structural condition of possibility."<sup>3</sup> Such an irony rearticulates a concern expressed in Immanuel Kant's "Essay on Perpetual Peace". Every person has a right to claim a space on the face of the earth. However because the earth is a bounded surface of finite space, the claim of such a right proves an affront to others because it precludes their claims to that space. If one thing stands, another cannot stand there but must stand next to it. The built environment signals the same double-bind: in order to build on a site, unbuilding has to transpire first, and the temporal effects of spatial formations come to the fore in terms of erasure, demolition and archiving as well as hope, potential and desire.

Black bodies as borders serve as urban, economic, governmental and corporeal sites of limited mobility and geopolitical power. The most advanced manifestations of planetary calculation and computation convert make these bodies into the most surveilled, detained, deported and calculated for control. As the redistribution of bodies and resources within global systems shore up specific sovereign claims, those targeted for enclosure, containment and the performance of power incarnate become ensnared by biometric borders that have discounted them as global citizens, much less as cogent agents. In so doing, the discounted become, ironically, the most counted of all because they do not "count" as inherently valuable and thus must be accounted for at borders and other sites of imposed blockage of movement. The black body constitutes two sides of a contradictory geopolitical coin for sovereign claims and the enactment of them. Just as bodies become consistent sites and objects of value extraction, with their attendant intimacies and creative possibilities for change and innovation, they also require both free rein and intricate controls. Frictionless

sovereignty often factors individuals and their bodies as control objects or sites of profit, elements of the smooth-running systems flowing in uniform directions, rather than the disruptive tricksters they clearly can be and often are.

In the midst of these ironies and indeed brutal engagements of geopolitics as manifested in architectural incursions of exclusion and inclusion, solidity and destruction, Mbembe finds hope in various African nations' *déclousion* [dis-enclosure] of the world, a gesture toward the possibility of a world without borders and unlocked out into the open. Africa as the primary signifier of colonial violence, extraction and global dehumanization nonetheless has managed to bear through its sustained brutal material and symbolic violence to become an occasional beacon of optimism through its resistance to inhuman and inhumane modes of governmentality. A continent without borders, one that acknowledges the ineluctable seepage and porosity of the governance, could mark a planetary Africanization—the becoming black of the world. Realizing the full brutality of rendering all land, sea, air and even bodies as capable of conversion to the status of frontier invariably reveals its potential reversibility. This common-place "ontology" (pace Derrida), or topology of being (the spatial articulation of being), of tracking and regimes of containment consistently fails, as blankets in the squares signal like flags of hope.

3  
Ryan Bishop, John Phillips, Wei-Wei Yeo (2004). *Beyond Description: Singapore Space Historicity*. London: Routledge, p. 7.

The centrality of textiles for culture, history and articulation of communal values is displayed in the clad figures of the world's occupants throughout history. And the correspondence between textile and text, etymologically evocative in Latin-derived languages, both emerge from terms for woven objects: a process converted into stasis. The correspondence lurks deep, found in the warp and woof of materialities designed to store and voice cultural memory. The blankets (manta) of African immigrants, too, weave memory, history, loss, resilience, dexterity and translation of bodies and meaning across waters and land. In this language of texts and textiles resides an unavoidable insight that one's own language is always the language of the other: it precedes and exceeds us. We enter it just as it enters us. Our own language is never our own. In such realizations the seeds for different means for inhabiting the earth (our collective space) might be found, a hope for making it a true refuge for all and not just some.

The starting point for the texts that follow can be found in a prompt posed in the exhibition's curatorial statement: the meeting point between architecture and the migrant world with the aim of producing alternative stories and architecture to the hegemonic ones. The curatorial statement, as indicated in the exhibition's title, suggests that despite Europe's furthering forces that lead to mass exodus, including pillaging local fish supplies, and requiring deft manoeuvring through the many material and immaterial traps set by Fortress Europe, many immigrants have mobilized political and creative struggles to create other ways of living by repairing what has failed in the cities (that have failed to) receive them. Through the constructive perspective of migrant communities, in this project the curatorial team and its many collaborators seek to redefine the places from where architecture is made: an Architecture that does not seek to build new spaces but strives for habitability. New methods based on reversible architecture emerge, such as reusing and occupying empty spaces, adapting the distribution of facilities, and creating links with the real needs of neighbourhoods. This is precisely the goal of the exhibition: to remove from these blankets the places where architecture is made.

The exhibition has been emergent, inchoate, and improvisatory and remains very much in process. The texts that follow have been simultaneous with the formation of the exhibition "Following the Fish" and hope to complement, further, perhaps contradict, aspects of the exhibition to remind readers and visitors alike that the world is both given and made.



Salt, Vic, Banyoles, Canovelles, l'Aldea, Olot, Terrassa, Sabadell... migrant communities are numerous and connected.



Barceloneta, April 2023.

There are segregated neighbourhoods, markets with different products and different prices, other languages are spoken, other codes to understand what happens on the street. Canovelles market, March 2023.





Aby Sène-Harper

On the Colonial Plunder  
and Assault on African  
Human-Nature Relations

It was during the lean season, in the Senegal River Delta. The millet and rice from the granary were gone. I heard the distressed call of the fisherman, who found no fish in his net. He said “Aby, the lake is not good and now we tighten our stomach.” I saw a pirogue full of Toubab tourists in binoculars, delighted by the generous spectacle of nesting pelicans, and grey crowned cranes in flight. The toubab was unbothered by the women and children bathing in and fetching the toxic water from lake Gorom. Their only source of water, the pesticide dump site of agribusinesses too busy to make profits producing and supplying cheap commodities for the Toubab in Europe.

Later, I went and sat on the banks of the lake, where I once met my grandmother in her realm. I wanted to ask her, what to do with this? My seeping rage, thick, slow moving, molten. The wretchedness of this impossible reality that capitalism and colonialism birthed. The vortex of anti-Blackness of this word that is asphyxiating. I sat on the banks waiting for her, in trance, the enchanting sound of Tunde Jegede’s Kora, *Mali in Oak*. A rustle in the foliage called my attention. It was coming from the typha, an invasive aquatic plant, brough about by the Diama dam and now reigning supreme blocking the waterways, the horror of fishermen whose life and families depend on the river ecology.

From the typha foliage a bright blue and orange kingfisher descended landing by my feet, pacing her hops through the salvinia, another invasive plant, unbothered, so free, the envy of other birds, showing off her explosive plumage beautiful enough to rival my grandmother’s face. My mind was full of crevices, filled by hellish memories, like dark fissures in a globe light. My drive across the drought-stricken Sahel, a place that holds my heart, cattle carcasses, dusky clouds of Quelea birds, looming over rice fields, the horror of farmers. Poisoned waters, dried lakes, dead fish, imperial massacres, burnt flesh. Empire’s fishing boats, Atlantic like obliterated, the Lébou fisherman’s blues. My uncle’s melancholy, waiting, forever, the song of rainbirds.

I returned to Dakar and took a walk on the beach. My gaze fixed upon Black Atlantic, catching the ocean return to its shore, sentinel of the eternal hellfire hissing for the slave masters. My grandmother appeared and whispered that the time of African poetry was coming, when we finally dance on their ashes, when women, children, farmers, cattle herders, and fishermen bask under the rhythmic stars of the Sahel. It reminded me of the fishermen who told me of another life when fish was abundant in the lake. When they exchanged them for rice, sugar, and oil. A time when they resolved conflicts over land and water calling upon the elders and the spiri-

tual leaders. A time, in the present, when their socio-ecological systems are free of colonial and capitalist domination, and land in the Sahel is not owned but borrowed from the unborn.

I often return to this memory of my fieldwork in the Senegal River Delta, capturing the thoughts that besieged me under a constellation of forces. Some hellish, others beautiful. I was there to do research on biodiversity conservation and rural livelihoods, exploring how fisherfolks adapt to seasonal resource fluctuations, drawing on customary management systems to preserve fisheries, protect migratory bird populations, and lubricate social relations. I was less prepared for what I was bearing witness to, conjuring up other memories of my road trips across the Sahel. I watched unfold the lives of the people anti-colonial thinker, Frantz Fanon, described as the wretched of the earth. The Africans whose worldviews and lives are completely different from those who benefit from the racial colonial order imposed on them. The ones who are rendered disposable and condemned to social death by global economic systems. Their lands stolen, waters polluted, and resources depleted to provide comfort for the rich and middle class of the capitalist cores, overwhelming located in Europe, U.S. and Canada. Many of these Africans have made the deadly journey across the Sahara Desert, crossing the Mediterranean Sea, to only find themselves navigating the treacherous racist and harrowing immigration systems of Europe, yet protected by migrant collectives and their communities of care. As sociocultural anthropologist Jemima Pierre reminds us, “the violence of colonial enterprise has not been eradicated”, but simply bundled “through the very structures of liberal modernity.” We are part of this violent system, and it’s part of us, no matter the geographical distance between the wretched and Europe. And nothing reminds us more of this impossible reality than the deadly manifestations at the confluence of climate change, biodiversity loss and the expansion of global capitalism disguised as modernity. A modernity that assaults African social-ecological systems which for the most part have long escaped capitalist logic.

The accelerating and unprecedented deterioration of our natural environment, with deep roots in colonialism and capitalism, is dominating our existence. The resulting climate change and biodiversity loss has far-reaching consequences in our collective lives, and disproportionate devastations for Africans dispossessed and rendered vulnerable by global economic structures. Yet the global systems that plunder nature and people in Africa overwhelmingly benefit the capitalist core in the Global North. It is also clear that lands where African communities exercise their indigenous

customary resource management, unconstrained by the grip of capitalism, is fundamental to reversing the ecological collapse. As such, it is not coincidental that African indigenous lands are some of the most biodiverse and contain the largest assemblages of megafauna. It is because Africans have stewarded those landscapes and the wildlife that roam on them since time immemorial.

In the arid landscape of the Senegal River Delta Biosphere Reserve shared between Senegal and Mauritania, the wetlands are an oasis that gives and sustain life for people, birds and wildlife. Every year millions of Eurasian and African birds migrate to the wetlands for their nesting seasons. For the people of the region who live primarily off the water, fishing is part of their cultural identity, an ancestral tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. Built into their livelihood practices is the traditional ecological knowledge of the Senegal River fisherfolks who adopt seasonal practices such as relocating fishing encampments and switching to farming to sustain viable stocks of fishery resources that feed the people and the birds. Similarly, the Casamance region of Senegal holds one of the most biodiverse areas in the Sahel. On those lands, the Diola people carry on spiritual practices that guide their land and resource use to provide protection for sacred forests, mangroves, and the animals and birdlife that depend on them. The Diola Karone live in and manage nature reserves playing a critical role in the protection of endangered species like the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). On the other side of the continent, in the Serengeti landscapes, the Maasai pastoralists have distinguishable land use practices with seasonal movement of livestock between lowlands and highlands. Despite the deep social and ecological transformations and contrary to the public narrative, The Maasai remain a beacon of communal land grazing practices that is adapted to the seasonal movement of wildlife.

Countless Africans across the continent and diaspora like the fisherfolks of the Senegal River, the Diola of Casamance, the Maasai in the Serengeti, the Fulani pastoralists in the Sahel, the Somali nomads, the Lébou fishers of Ngor, and the Gullah Geechee of South Carolina stood the test of time resisting colonial domination. Their natural world remains deeply intertwined with their cultural identity allowing them to maintain and reinstate non-extractive human-nature relations. It is their resistance to the extractive colonial order that has protected nature and wildlife. They maintain a self-sufficient and sustaining socio-ecological system that operates largely outside of colonial and capitalistic control. It is their resistance to the extractive colonial order that has protected nature and wildlife. That resistance also renders them vulnerable to violence from capitalists and their state allies seeking to extract value from their land, labour and culture.

The wetlands of the Senegal River Delta and the forests and mangroves of Casamance are designated as conservation areas of international importance. Yet today, they are also highly sought lands by Western capitalists who finance the ongoing plunder of nature. In the past two decades the landscapes of those regions are undergoing profound social and ecological changes impelled by European agribusinesses who acquire millions of acres of land for commercial farming. Under the coercive grip of predatory structural adjustments programs imposed by the World Bank, the Senegalese government, like in many other African countries, built the Diama dam in 1986 to provide water benefits to wealthy agribusinesses while dispossessing the countless ones, like the fisherman in my memory, whose livelihoods depend on the river ecologies or the Diola people who live off the forest and the mangroves.

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reports that the main direct drivers of biodiversity loss are land use and climate change. In Africa particularly, natural habitats are being transformed for commercial farming to produce commodities (i.e. biofuels and grains) for export to the global North. Transnational farmland investment has become a key economic strategy for African governments, simultaneously serving national economic development plans and the global expansion of neoliberal capitalism that hardly trickles down to the agrarian majority on the continent. Since the global financial and food crises of 2007–2008, there has been a renewed interest in land both from multinational corporations spurring a wave of highly controversial corporate land acquisitions marred by human rights violations. The Oakland Institute reports that in 2009 alone, “nearly 60 million hectares of land was purchased or leased in comparison to an average annual expansion of global agricultural land of less than 4 million ha before 2008.” Furthermore, they estimated that at the time of their investigation, 50 million hectares had already been leased to foreign entities with at least 20 African countries considering similar deals.

On another front, Green capitalism is the new ideological formation assaulting indigenous human-nature relations threatening Africans, their lands and wildlife. Amid the unprecedented ecological crisis, the UN conservation of Biological Diversity advanced the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, a plan to set aside 30 % of the world land cover for conservation, much of it will be in Africa. The long history of dispossession in the name of conservation has led human rights and indigenous to sound the alarm comparing the plan to a colossal land grab. Countries like Senegal, Tanzania and Congo have already evicted millions of people from their land to set aside 25–43 percent of their national territory for biodiversity conservation, turning them into national parks and game reserves, where

European tourist relish sightings of nature and wildlife, enjoying cultural performances from dispossessed Africans compelled to commodify their culture and labor to survive. Neoliberal policies that spur this land rush and commit human rights violations in Africa are highly favored by the powerful financial institutions like IMF and the World Bank, all meant to reduce the power, reach and interference of government and giving industry greater freedom and less red tape on natural resource use. IMF, the World Bank, European Union are neocolonial institutions all working in tandem to hold dominion over the resources and people of Africa, while Europeans enjoy the comforts that imperialism affords them.

What will it take to eradicate the global systems that reproduce the wretched life of the fisherfolks of the Senegal River? To vehemently reject the life that pushed the African migrants to take the dangerous journey to the shore of Spain? To reverse the ecological destruction that besieges their people, lands and animals? Across the world colonized people understand the stakes of their struggle and are building an anti-imperialist project predicated on the full restitution of land and life. One which will take the good and leave the bad of those human-nature relations that will ensure the protection of people, forests, rangelands and waters. A world in which land is not owned but borrowed from the unborn. They know intimately what Aimé Césaire insisted on when he said:

“For us the problem is not to make a utopian and sterile attempt to repeat the past, but to go beyond. It is not a dead society that we want to revive. We leave that to those who go in for exoticism... It is a new society that we must create, with the help of our brother slaves, a society rich with all the productive power of modern times, warm with the fraternity of olden days.”

# Neferti Tadiar

## Consequences by Design

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In 2011, I was living on the corner of the Plaza de Isabell II, commonly known as Plaza Opera, in the center of Madrid. I was in Madrid to look into the archives of colonial history, to rummage through three hundred fifty years of Spanish colonial rule over the Philippines in order to find ways to rewrite what seemed to me to be a relentless global present. I had expected to find the colonial past I was searching for lurking in the books and newspapers archived in the national library. But every day colonialism reared itself on or near the plaza, present and alive within view from my kitchen window.

On many days, I would see here as well as on the nearby plaza of Puerta del Sol Black West African migrant men displaying their wares (knock-off global designer or brand name accessories, like sunglasses and handbags) on blankets spread on the stone and concrete pavement. The corners of the blankets were tied to ropes gathered in the fists of the vendors, which allowed them to sweep up all their wares in one parachute motion if the police came around. I often saw them do just this, take all their goods in one fell swoop, as the sight of strolling police would send them packing and running for distance. They would pause and linger on a corner or a by a side street, peeking out to assess the situation, the safety of return, and their next move.

Migrants from the global South, especially (but not only) the undocumented, live lives of constant precarity. Their non-belonging in spaces of the global North is not however a matter of individual haplessness; rather, such non-belonging is by design—the consequential effect and determinate aim of a continuing colonialism in the present.

Scholars of slavery and domestic communities in Africa and Southeast Asia draw connections between historical slave-raiding and the contemporary international organization of migrant labor. James Scott notes the economic sense that slave-raiding in pre-modern historical contexts made as a “human resources” strategy, that is, the “advantage” it provided conquerors as a form of surplus appropriation. As he writes: “the conquerors take for the most part captives of working age, raised at the expense of another society, and get to exploit their most productive years...Slave taking in this sense represented a kind of raiding and looting of manpower and skills that the slaving state did not have to develop on its own.”<sup>1</sup> In a footnote, Scott comments that “mass migration to northern Europe and North America, though largely voluntary, accomplishes much the same thing in terms of making the productive life of people raised and trained elsewhere available to the country where they settle.”<sup>2</sup>

Such a “human resources” strategy is in fact that strategy of direct appropriation of surplus-value, also known as ‘primitive accumulation,’ which depends on the persistent relation of domination between the colo-

nial metropole and the (post)colonial periphery that today obtains as the relation between the global North and the global South. This relation of appropriation is not, however, simply a holdover or vestige of a past colonialism, but rather a dynamic structural feature of global capitalism—configured and maintained through practices of permanent war.

War is the means of establishing this relation between domestic economies in the periphery and capitalist economies in the metropolitan core. As Claude Meillassoux argues, imperialism is the mode of reproduction of cheap labour-power carried out through the paradoxical *destruction and maintenance* of the domestic mode of production in the colonized countries. That is to say, the mode of life of the colonized is “maintained as a means of social organization which produces value from which imperialism benefits, and destroyed because it is deprived in the end of its means of reproduction, under the impact of exploitation.”<sup>3</sup> It is this contradictory process, carried out by means of, on the one hand, dispossessive, violent assaults against the social reproductive capacities of global South communities (through militarist counter-insurgency campaigns, political repression, legal disenfranchisement, and neoliberalist structural adjustment and austerity policies) and, on the other, humanitarian rescue and developmentalist, rehabilitative aid and investment, that leaves entire countrysides at once devastated and preserved, their peoples impelled to make themselves available as ever-disposable lives and labor for the global market.

As relentless soft and hard campaigns of counterinsurgent war waged by imperial and proxy armies, agribusiness, resource extractive industries, and other forms of land dispossession in these countries of origin, imperialism propels what now appears to be a full-blown global refugee crisis. To be a refugee is, after all, to be in search of refuge in the aftermath of dispossession from the place of one’s sustained living. The massive number of refugees continuing risk their lives to find other living elsewhere is testament to ravaged worlds, worlds under assault through political and economic means and mired in the violent competition over life, power, and resources that ensues as a consequence.

Whether political or economic refugees, global migrants are expelled from homes that have been made unsustainable, even impossible, only to find themselves in permanent spaces of non-belonging, in homes they are permitted to serve but prohibited (through racist, sexist social, cultural, and legal measures) against being a part of. In a bid to keep themselves and their families afloat, migrants cycle continuously between the places of their own domestic life reproduction in labor “sending” countries and the places of work, reproducing the lives and homes of a globopolitical citizenry in the “receiving” or host countries. Through this violent, contradictory process of generalized destruction and selective rehabilitation

<sup>1</sup> James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Scott, *Against the Grain*, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meals and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

for servitude, imperialism continuously creates necessary conditions for contemporary global capitalist accumulation.

The disjunction between the global South (rural places of migrants' social reproduction), and the global North (urban places of their productive exploitation as casual or captive labor largely in reproductive—domestic, care, food, and transportation—service industries), is crucially what underpins a global capitalist economy increasingly advanced by platform enterprises. War—punitive assaults on the independent life-making capacities of subordinated populations through social, economic, cultural, and legal prohibitions, as well as physical incapacitation and destruction—structures and maintains this disjunction as well as the condition of non-belonging and diminished rights (or outright rightlessness) of this global stratum of refugees/migrants who are slotted for various roles in the reproduction and facilitation of the valued and value-productive life movements of (human, commodity, financial) capital.

The routine chase between the police and the undocumented African migrants I sometimes witnessed, which in 2018 resulted in the death of a Senegalese vendor in his mid-thirties, is only the most dramatic of everyday enactments of imperial relations today. The men are variably policed and chased off, yet also variably allowed to ply their wares or to work in the informal economy, where they serve as disposable casual labor not entitled to the rights and benefits of employment, forced to take a pittance for wages without recourse to complaint. Like their fellow migrants formally employed in the lower tiers of the service industry, undocumented or 'paperless' (*sans papier*) migrant workers are part of a global stratum of serviceable life temporarily 'redeemed' from the generalized absolute expendability of so-called redundant populations produced through unending war. Their serviceability consists not only of their ready availability as cheap labor charged with reproducing and maintaining the valuable lives and homes of citizens, as house cleaners, nannies, drivers, vendors, errand runners, as well as agricultural farm and food service workers, including maintaining the very machines of living and working (houses, appliances, cars, buildings) of valued life. This serviceable disposability also consists of their broader essential role in lubricating and facilitating the forms of movement and circulation that have become driving forces of value-productivity in global capitalism today.

There are many deep historical, cultural differences among migrant and refugee populations and immigrant social groups in 'receiving' countries. In Madrid, I encountered Filipino immigrants working in restaurant kitchen as chefs and dishwashers and in the homes of citizens as domestic workers and nannies; Chinese immigrants managing and working in small dry goods stores that take on the name of their ethnic designation rather

than the sign *Frutas Secas* displayed over their entrances; Latin American immigrants working formally and informally across all businesses and residences; and African immigrants living and working in neighborhoods like Lavapiés, just outside the Centro. Notwithstanding the profound differences across these communities, reified ethno-national and other sociological distinctions can elide the broader conditions that global South migrants, refugees, and immigrants share, that is, the logics of systematic disenfranchisement they experience, which undergird migratory movements and the value-productive mobilities of global urbanism in tandem.

Indeed, assaults on the social reproduction of populations deemed disposable produce the enabling materials and milieus of capitalist accumulation elsewhere. Such assaults through practices of physical, social, and psychic injury as well as dispossession of health, livelihood, and subsistence (in the appropriation and destruction of the lands, seas, and natural environments sustaining people) produce both newly available ever devalued reproductive labor for the service economy and human machinic components of capitalist infrastructure and platforms (as content moderators, 'non-voice' call center agents, troll armies, and digital and AI assistants/operators), which underlie the value-productivity of social connectivity and mobility. For postcolonial nation-states which, acting beyond their historical role as managers and brokers of labor, have become arbitrageurs of the lives of their own marginalized peoples—captive populations whose present and future life-times also function as monetizable assets for financialized and speculative enterprises, including the very financialized enterprise of global policing, and other securitizing industries of war.

It is arguably not a coincidence that many of these migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are vendors of ersatz 'luxury' goods. Both are exemplary figures of excess, seemingly diametrically opposed to each other: one as refuse, the other as wealth. Yet, such polar statuses are in fact mutually defined. The production of wealth entails the production of refuse. The disposable capital that fuels luxury consumption issues out of the disposable life-times that appears to be its polar opposite. Both are the consequences of war as the principal imperial means of reproduction of a global capitalist life built on the productivity of relentless and ruthless expenditure of other, non- and less-than- human, life (people, animals, 'nature').

War as enterprise encapsulates this intimate social relation between superfluous, devalued (actively wasted) existence and surplus value life, which characterizes what has for decades been called globalization. Globalization is the euphemism for the process by which imperialism has been expanding the reach of capitalism over more and more areas of life across the world. This capitalist expansion is accomplished through the violent 'freeing' up of ever more land, labor, and life in the global South for

capitalist exploitation and through the monetization and financialization of what used to be arenas of simply reproductive life everywhere (housing, movement, social communication, creative performance, intimacy, and affective expression)—in other words, through processes of creating ever more disposable life-times to serve as the very fuel and means of production of the technological and economic achievements of megaplatform connectivity and growth. Globalization is thus not simply analogous to war. It *is* war. War creates the generalized expendability and serviceability of ‘lesser’ life—measured in kinds of people, kinds of species, kinds of places, kinds of time—the command over which both middling and staggering wealth and certainly the platform capitalist economy require. But like other financialized industries of security and speculation (real estate, art, currency markets), war also exemplifies a mode of enterprise that can yield spectacular value in the sheer spending down of actively wasted lives.

In 2011, the global financial, housing, and labor crisis that had been reverberating throughout Spain since 2008 finally cascaded into massive political demonstrations and occupations at Puerta del Sol and other plazas. “No nos representan!” (They do not represent us!) cried the tens of thousands of protestors who also came to be known as “los indignados” (the indignant), denouncing the government’s austerity measures, corruption, and collusion with the banks and finance capital, and more generally the role of the political system in creating the conditions of widespread unemployment, economic hardship, and housing evictions, which plagued the nation. It was a time when the global middle classes could still see the turbulence of the contradictory components and entailments of a global shift in capitalist life—projects of gargantuan ambition and promise being undertaken through the construction of global technological, communicative, and urban infrastructure, transportation, and real estate developments (social media platforms, roads and highways, shipping, condominiums, offices), while spectacular financial crashes, bank bailouts, economic crises, currency devaluations, and austerity measures were happening at the same time. It was a moment of transparent reckoning as the investor class exercised its powers of destruction by cashing in on the cheap credit that they had extended across a greater spread of the population—capital seeking new sites of investment, fostering entrepreneurship at all levels, making of people’s lives and their accoutrements for living underlying assets for financial maneuvers, engaging in complex forms of betting based on a massive indifference to and actively, pernicious neglect of the concrete lives and fates of entire communities. Glory and ruin came to be experientially understood as inextricably intertwined, propelling the vigorous protest movements taking place in the metropolitan cores of the global economy.

Yet, as in other cities where anti-globalization protests were erupting, such as in Occupy protests all around the world later that same year, these were largely citizen movements, which only with difficulty and tension could grasp the connections between the privation of globopolitical citizens and the dispossession of global South peoples from Africa and Asia—both forms of active wasting of populations that at the same time required their racialized differentiation and antagonism along the very same lines established by colonialism.

Undoubtedly, the eviction of citizens from their homes, which is the end of predatory loans and foreclosure, is of a piece with the political and economic propulsion of migrants from their own homes—the forces of dispossession that make them refugees. And yet the homes and at-homeness of globopolitical citizens (the privileges and prerogatives they are increasingly denied) depend on and require the increasing homelessness of the formerly and still colonized, accomplished through systemic assaults on their livelihoods, subsistence, safety, and health, and the foreclosure of their own present lives and futures. It is the latter—racialized ‘floating populations’ cycling across the global reproductive divide between valued life and wasted life—who uphold and fuel the immense growth of capitalist wealth, which more and more citizen people themselves are excluded from and disenfranchised by. Disposable populations of the global South uphold and fuel the accumulation of global capital on a scale the world has never seen, not just with their serviceable labor and expendable life but most importantly with their great struggles and work for survival. This vast, diverse struggle for survival—the creative, collective forms of life-making people engage in under the very conditions of permanent assault and imperial war that make them disposable—is the subaltern engine of production of global capitalist wealth.

Rights-based citizen-assimilation campaigns for political recognition, representation, and (re)enfranchisement without a push for a radical transformation of these imperial relations persisting in the present will only further obscure the illegible, essential role of the work of survival of peoples who a globopolitical citizenry views as in excess of or outside their own imagined communities. These lives of migrants, refugees, and immigrants, as well as racialized ethnic minorities can only appear as superfluous to the aims of a good and deserving life for communities bound to and secured by their nation-states, despite the fact that it is the undaunted and resistant life-making of this vast global stratum of disposable populations that make this valued global life—this life worth living—possible at all.

Within the purview of a global present which has normalized and naturalized crisis and war, chaos and catastrophe, as simply part of everyday life, what is impossible to see and feel, or reckon with, is the pain and

exuberance of living and life-making in places of designed disaster, places that are as much a social designation (one's "place" in a dominant social imaginary, a designated, likely racialized, sex-gendered, colonized status of being), as it is a geographical place of origin. And yet, what is precisely beyond the ken of a dominant order is also what lies beyond its command—on the one hand, posing a threat to the dominant global order but on the other bearing the promise of other, more communitarian modes of life.

How communities under permanent assault manage to go on making life for themselves—the inventive, improvisatory, but also inherited and tried ways of sharing and apportioning the burdens and rewards of living among members of their kin and kin-like networks across oceanic and territorial divides—is thus of even greater potential consequence for the world at large than the burdens of disposability they are compelled to bear as the consequence of imperial, capitalist design. For subaltern struggles among the colonized to survive and flourish against such conditions of exploitation and extraction will necessarily contain ways of living and belonging by more equitable, communitarian, and potentially decolonial, designs.

David Theo Goldberg

Ports of Calling  
and Constraint

Life generally, and human life in particular, is defined through movement. Plant seeds are carried by birds, wind, and animal fur from one habitat to another. Animals and mammals traverse more or less expansive areas for warmth, food, water. Migrations are movements from and to sites of (desired) habitation, whether of origin or adopted. They leave from or arrive at places of “rest,” as Gabriel Josipovici characterizes them, whether for shorter or longer times before again moving or being moved along.

Migrants today are people with needs so pressing they are willing to risk the discomforts of moving across and to spaces and places at least initially inhospitable to their movement through and especially to them. They are those compelled to move by condition and circumstance. They are driven by upheavals of environmental destruction and its effects (floods, fires, drought, famine), war, political repression, lack of work or opportunity, even educational possibility. These movements are the consequences of complex mixes of colonial histories, neocolonial impositions, and pulls from societies in the global north with rapidly declining birth rates and demands for sources of exploitable labor.

“Migrant” has grown more readily into a normative legal category than simply a descriptive or analytic one. It can be distinguished from those of “immigrant” or “refugee” who have had the means, categorizable and provable experience, and indeed ethnoracial identity to negotiate the formal legal process. The movement is over land and, especially in the case of Mediterranean migration, across water. “Following the Fish”, as the exhibit insightfully names it, in, through, across water, subject to being consumed or caught along the way.

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The concept of “migration” was first used from the early seventeenth century to refer to the seasonal movements of some animal groups. “Migrant” began to refer to human movement as Enlightenment thinking gave way to the early nineteenth century, and ramped up in this use as more people moved for work and political reasons in the second half.

Shlomo grew up in Latvia, close to the Russian border. A member of the Jewish Socialist Bund active in his city, as pogroms ramped up around him he purchased the passport—still just a piece of paper with no photograph or signature—of a dead Polish man. His name changed, he managed in 1899 to board a cargo boat from Riga to London rather than risk the more regular route for fleeing Jewish East Europeans on trains through Germany to Hamburg, and the two-week detoxification spray and quarantine along the way. In London, the nineteen-year-old was taken in by the East End Jewish network, and spent a year as a barrow boy peddling fresh

fish to clientele on the Spitalfields streets. A year into his London sojourn, he was stopped by police checking on street trading permits. Far from fluent in English, he almost automatically offered up his Latvian name. The authorities could find no record of his entry into England. Released while awaiting further processing, he gathered up his few belongings, Polish passport with its acquired name, and boarded a boat in Southampton. He arrived in Cape Town in 1900, as the Anglo-Boer War flared further north. A reborn man with a newly assumed identity, Solomon settled in with the mixed Malay, Coloured, and Jewish inhabitants of District Six. For another year he sold vegetables and fruits off a cart to the District’s inhabitants, scraping and saving as he could. As the British forced the Boer forces out of Kimberley, Solomon relocated once more to the diamond fields. He acquired the area’s sole small dairy, hired local help, built both a business and connections, steadily acquired property, and rose to reputable businessman with social standing.

Elenka was a daughter of Prague. As a sixteen-year-old she had been a member of the resistant youth group famously pictured lobbing Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks entering Prague in 1968. Denied entry to university because of her family’s resistant political history, almost a decade later she managed to forge travel stamps to her passport and, with a friend, drove across the border into Austria. There she requested asylum, and was placed in a “refugee camp”, a converted military barracks outside Vienna. Granted permission to work and travel in the area, camp residents had to return by a fixed time each evening. Six months later, Elenka was granted political asylum to the U.S., sponsored by Catholic Charities. Destined for Cincinnati, when changing planes in New York she walked out of the airport with a couple of hundred dollars in her purse and a local Czech contact in Queens. Fluent in six European languages, she taught herself English by watching television with her babysitting charges, and worked her way through college. She ultimately earned a graduate degree from NYU’s Institute of Fine Art, the leading Art History program in the U.S., and pursued a career as a college art history slide librarian, art gallery owner, and writer of art books for children.

Emmanuel came of age on the outskirts of Dakar. His grandparents were peasant farmers in rural Senegal. Changing weather made yields more challenging and his parents moved to the city in search of opportunities. By his early twenties Emmanuel had become a fine mechanic capable of repurposing used parts to keep even the most challenged vehicles running. Even so, he was scraping by, watching those who had managed to make it to Europe both sending back remittances to family and in some cases returning with the ability to build impressive if often boastful family homes with the funds they had acquired while away. Scrimping together

savings and family support, Emmanuel made it to Libya in 2018, where he “fixed” often stolen cars and earned enough to pay the \$3500 for a pressed place on a rickety motorboat. Following a harrowing nighttime ride across the Mediterranean managing to evade both military patrols and militant anti-migrant *Generation Identitaire* vigilantes, Emmanuel was one of the fortunate to land undetected in Europe. He was able to wind his way across the countryside, walking, hitchhiking, and on busy trains. He settled in Lyon, his contacts there providing a short-term shared room, until he could secure mechanic’s work providing enough for a room of his own, food, and some warm clothing. Eventually, he earned enough to send money regularly to his Dakar family while working quietly with local rights groups towards status for those like him while ensuring funding for his own residency application if and when the time materialized. (Remittances constitute 10 to 30 percent of many African countries’ GDPs, providing much needed boosts to local economies and extended family lives, though not without intra-familial contestation and broader political conflict.)

Emmanuel was seen in France as the exemplary embodiment that Renaud Camus’s “Great Replacement” characterization was conceived to bemoan. By contrast, Elenka never thought of herself as a refugee. She was ever-grateful to President Carter for asylum but never considered it a marker of her identity. Both she and Solomon occasionally sent modest sums to the families they had left behind, thinking of these contributions as gifts rather than remittances. For Emmanuel, by contrast, this was a central aim and expectation of the risks he had taken on, returns on family property such as goats sold to fund the first leg of his trip to Libya. Solomon quickly came to be recognized as white in the British-ruled Cape. Elenka was identified as such from the moment she applied for political asylum. Given his place and race of origin, Emmanuel could never fully achieve their sort of social standing, no matter his achievements.

Solomon briefly returned to London a decade after arriving in Cape Town, to secure for himself a Jewish wife. Payment to her parents and *shidduch* (matchmaking service) was secured in diamonds sewn into the inner lining of his jacket never leaving his back throughout the ship’s journey. Elenka was able to return to Prague, reconnecting with family left behind, once the Soviet sphere evaporated, and dreamt of one day retiring there. For Emmanuel, the choice was never one country or the other, but a life eventually of co-habitation, “going and resting” as frequently as circumstances and capital made possibly, but providing also a degree of distance and freedom from family imposition and squabbles that his French sojourn and remitted funding enabled. Solomon and Elenka would never be thought of as migrants. Emmanuel could never avoid the characterization, no matter his legal status.

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Architectures of migration are first and foremost infrastructures of restriction and refusal. They are those through which the migrating are channeled in their movement and immediate experience. Small watercraft in the pressed experience of the journey resemble open versions of the slave ship hold and are often as dangerous if not as openly violent. Containers on cargo ships or trucks are at least as challenging. Coast guard policing or military vessels pick up migrants at or in the sea. The concrete apparatuses that are ports of landing are more often than not the first landfall. The administrative structures—tents or temporary structures or offices—are there to establish an official record of arrival, processing, temporary quasi-admission or immediate return. Official vehicles of transportation shepherd the once-processed to pressed (at least initially intended as temporary) camps or barracks during the process of bureaucratic and legal determination. And in cases of those given temporary stays, these sojourns almost invariably prohibit self-sustaining wage work. Rather, they require repeated visits to local offices of reportage, incessant surveillance, and extended processing.

The migrant experience, in short, is always in process, being processed. It is invariably paperworked, under administrative oversight, the invariant subject of harassment, being shuffled from one site to another, overseen, underworked, and over-efforted. It is camped and cramped even when not, of legal, extra-legal, illegal exploitation, threat, and danger.

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The antipathic stereotyping associated with dominant rejection of migrants is that the experience hardens its subjects into hustlers and opportunists, dangers to the generosity and charitability of the host society. As “Follow the Fish” and the *Manta* project demonstrate, however, experiences of migration are—if of necessity and certainly by contrast—abundantly those of networking and interweaving, mutual engagement and aiding, creativity and agility, caretaking and co-making, struggle and resistances. But also of joys and guilt, hopeful aspiration and dejection, if not depression.

Migrant networks enable access to support groups, ranging from legal help for applications or police targeting to financial aid in times of dire need. They provide also after-school programs to supplement educational challenges and otherwise potentially lost cultural heritage provision, along with psychological care when desperately needed.

The *Manta* project, moreover, makes evident how economic, cultural, and social support are woven together. The practical material uses of blan-

kets for displaying and gathering wares on the street double for warmth in winter. They are put to work in mounting dynamic cultural exhibitions not just for the participants but to inform and educate the broader public of the challenges migrants face and how they might be addressed. Further, the blanket exhibition materially displays the considerable cultural and material skill and dynamism at work, as well as demonstrating the enormously creative uses of space, in contrast with the almost invariably cramped and enervating experience that is the legal-bureaucratic processing and control in operation.

Besides their practical uses, in short, blankets are also semiotic signifiers, suggesting passage: in surviving journeys on foot or water, from waking to sleeping states, from enduring inhospitable weather and conditions to climates more easily navigable, from commercial street to making home even out of the uninviting.

In all this, we can say, blankets offer the texture, both materially and symbolically, of migrating lives.

## Marame Gueye

Whatever Contains Your  
Source of Sustenance,  
Contains Your Dignity

To many Europeans, the *manteros*—as street vendors are called in Spain—are sore inconveniences that pollute the aesthetics of cities like Barcelona. They're seen as undesired black bodies, walking boutiques that sell counterfeit merchandise, crumble local business, and suspected of working with the mafia. But this is Europe's story of the *manteros*. We almost never hear from the *manteros* themselves. Obviously, the narrative that these men who cross the Atlantic to Europe at great risk have of themselves, their trade, and why they continue to do it despite the abuses they experience from European police, is different. To those of us who also come from West Africa, this undignified narrative of otherness is not what we see when we look at the *manteros*. We see resilient men who work hard against all odds to support themselves and their families. We see their determined faces, their bundle and the hopes and aspirations it holds. The bundle they carry contains their savings, their dreams, and those of the families they left behind. But mostly importantly, we see a community that has so much to offer to Europe, if only given the opportunity. What if Europeans looked at *manteros* from that perspective? Men who leave their families behind and are likely to not see them for years, brave cold climates, displacement, marginalization, and much more to wake up every day and fling a bundle that sometimes weighs more than its carrier, and roam cities under the judgmental and sometimes racist gazes of some Europeans. Resourceful and cultured men whose resilience and creativity are boundless.

In Wolof, the lingua franca of Senegal where many of the *manteros* come from, there is a proverb that states: *Lu ëmb sa sànxal, ëmb sa sutura* [Whatever contains your source of sustenance, contains your dignity]. There are several keywords in this proverb and their meanings extend beyond the translation attempted here. *Lu* means “what”, “whatever” “whatever that is”. But because of the word *ëmb* which means “bundle” or “to bundle”, one can infer that *lu* refers to *that which* is used to create a bundle. In this case, a *sër*. *Sër* is a multifunctional rectangular cloth that women wear as a skirt, and can be turned into a blanket, a baby carrier, a travel bag, a shopping bag, and much more. *Ëmb* is a noun and a verb. Used as a noun, it means “bundle”, or “pregnancy”. As a verb, it is the act of “gathering things into a bundle”, “being pregnant”, or “the state of encompassing many characteristics or meanings”. *Sànxal* is broken raw millet like polenta. *Sutura* is “discretion” or “dignity”, the act of preserving one's dignity, especially to the outside world. It must be continually guarded, shielded, bestowed on others to recognize and honour their humanity.

All keywords in this proverb are important but the principal one is *lu* or the *sër* because without it, there is no bundle. *Sër* is generally a piece of cloth tied around the waist as a skirt that is often as part of an ensemble. Depending on the thickness and value, it can have many other functions.

For example, in rural areas women wear several *sër* as they complete domestic chores. One can be rolled into a base to steady a pail of water over one's head or tied around a bundle of wood to be carried over the head, yet another can be used to bind a baby to one's back. Some *sër* are prized family heirlooms that are passed down from generation to generation. They are called *sër u ràbbal* or *sër u dënk* to refer to the style of handweaving mostly done by Malinke weavers who come from Mali or Guinea to hire their services to affluent women. They are thick handwoven cotton panels that are patched to create a piece of cloth that is central to Senegalese family traditions and social transactions. Women collect these *sër* and use them as gifts during family ceremonies. They are sacred pieces that are present in every stage of life from birth to death.

It is said that when a new immigrant arrives, the *manteros* offer them a new *manta* to get them started. The tradition of giving a *manta* to the new immigrant is reminiscent of how *sër* are passed down in Wolof families. When a baby is born, the first gift they receive is a *sër u dënk* from their paternal aunt as a welcome gift to the family. They are covered in it as they receive and hear their name for the first time. Later, the same *sër* is used as a topper over the white cotton baby carrier called *mbootu*. When young boys are circumcised, they receive a *sër u ràbbal* from their mother as a blanket that shields them from negative energies. When she sets out for her marital home, a bride uses the *sër u dënk* she received from her paternal aunt as a veil. When a person passes away and their body is prepared for burial, a *sër u ràbbal* is placed over them until they get to their final resting place, the *sër* is then returned home. The gifting of a *manta* to a newcomer is like welcoming a new member to the family, showing them that there is a community behind them. It is a display of *Teranga* that Senegal is known for, the land of hospitality. *Teranga* goes beyond welcoming someone in one's home and making them feel comfortable. It is how you treat the other by making them feel seen, all in the spirit of *dimbalante* (helping each other) or *jàppalante* (supporting each other). It is how you convey to a fellow human being that they matter and that they can always rely on you to treat them with dignity, care, and compassion.

*Sànxal*, that which is contained, is also essential to this proverb as it is the source of life. In Wolof farming communities, millet is the most important grain, and like the *sër*, is present in every stage of life. It is transformed into many kinds of foods from flour to coarse granulated, to couscous, and much more. It is one of the grains that the newborn is bathed in, and a bride receives it in her hands for fertility. In farming areas, it is the crop that keeps people alive from one rainy season to the next. It symbolizes life, fertility, abundance. When made into *laax*, a thick porridge with yogurt on top, it is an offering to the ocean deities in return for an abundant fishing

season. Families offer *laax* to pray for healing, a job, a marriage, anything. *Laax* is the first meal served at breakfast during a naming ceremony, and it is also the first meal that a bride and a groom share. When made into tiny balls, steamed with sugar, it is the sticky *nàkk* that is distributed to mourners at a funeral. In fishing villages, it is what the King of the Sea, a community designated wiseman whose role is to oversee all occult and spiritual matters related to the ocean, feeds the termites in exchange for more fish in the ocean. Of all the byproducts of millet, *sànxal* is the most versatile. It can be made into *laax* or steamed and eaten with a delicious peanut sauce for lunch. When cooked in a spicy peanut sauce with dried fish and the sour leaves of the hibiscus plant, it is a comfort food that helps those afflicted with the flu or malaria find their appetite back. The process of making it is intricate because millet must be broken in specific ways. One must be careful not to pound it too hard lest it becomes flour, yet the pieces cannot be too large.

Metaphorically, the proverb suggests that one's *sànxal* is whatever activity, situation, opportunity, relationship provides them with their source of sustenance, what guards their dignity and prevents them from losing it. A person who does not have a source of sustenance, loses their dignity. To the *mantero*, the *sër* and what it contains stand between him and loss of dignity. The *manta* is that which bundles his source of sustenance and those of family members left back in Senegal. It is his *sànxal*, as Europe refuses to give him other opportunities for a dignified life. The presence of the *manteros* in Europe is not an isolated phenomenon. They do not come to Europe because of its pretty streets, they come because they need a source of sustenance. They come for work to support families back home, a home that has become hostile to them through no fault of their own. The devastation of our environment, the pillaging and overfishing in the waters near the villages where they once found sustenance, and many other geopolitical circumstances bring these dignified men to the streets of Europe. Without the fish that once supported their lives and allowed them to live with dignity, they have no choice but to leave in the same boats they once used to fish. When the fish has gone North, they must follow it because it was their source of livelihood, their *sànxal*.

It is no coincidence that the Wolof language uses *ëmb* to refer both to a bundle and to a pregnancy. Bundle suggests consolidation, combining, to make many into one. It makes it possible to carry many at the same time, creating comfort and ease. In West Africa, it is usual to see women carry a bundle on their heads whether to travel or go to the market, or to carry wood that was gathered in the forest. Bundles are part of daily life, its aesthetics. As a verb, *ëmb* means to contain or to carry something within. It can mean the state of comprising many aspects, a multiplicity,

nuance, complexity, just like pregnancy and the many possibilities it carries. Pregnancy is a promise of life, and wherever there is life, there is hope of posterity, possibility, expansion, growth. In Wolof culture, motherhood, the ability to carry life is venerated, worshipped because it is what guarantees continuity of lineages, life. The belly of the pregnant woman promises possibility as no one knows who the unborn child will become, but every pregnancy brings hope of an added life. Therefore *ëmb*, a bundle, has its own aesthetics from the way it is tied to how it is carried.

The *mantero's* act of flinging his bundle over his shoulder is called "doing the Santa". This too is a European narrative. Beyond the image, there are no similarities between the *mantero* and Santa. Santa does not work for his gifts; he is a messenger sent by parents and loved ones. He has no children to feed and works one day a year. The *mantero's* gift-giving is year-round and he must work for it. Many of the *manteros* come from fishing villages where the pillaging and overfishing by foreign vessels depleted fisheries and pushed the populations toward Europe in the motorized dugout boats they once used to fish. Now the fish has gone yet the *mantero* must survive. In Europe, all he can do is fling a bundle over his shoulder with the hope of finding a buyer so he can continue to live with dignity however he can. These men are often the financial backbones of the families they left behind. If the *mantero* does not send money, there is no food, rent, school fees, medical bills, nothing is paid. Dignity is lost.

The *manteros* are not men without history, and neither did they leave that history behind. It is no coincidence that the street sellers who are mostly from the Wolof ethnic group call the *manta* "*sër*" and their bundle "*ëmb*". Beyond the promise of financial opportunities, could it be that the Senegalese men are attached to the *manta* because it is the only thing familiar to them in this new and hostile place that Europe is? As immigrants, we always look for things that remind us of home in our new environment, and when we find them, we cling to them because they give us a sense of having a piece of home with us. These *manteros* must have left behind a treasured *sër* given by a mother, a paternal aunt, a wife. Could it be that the Senegalese men's attraction to the *manta* is because it bears similarities with the *sër* that they know so well? Their bundle reminds me of the nets they once pulled out of the ocean, pregnant with fish that supported their lives, shielded their dignity. Maybe these former fishermen find comfort in carrying the bundle like Santa because it reminds them of how they once pulled nets full of fish from the ocean, a time when their lives were filled with abundance, and they had no desire to leave home. Read from this perspective, the *mantero's* attraction to the *manta* is no longer a sign of desperation, but of reinvention, resilience, and the ability to use one's own culture as a source of sustenance in the face of displacement and all

the challenges it presents. From this viewpoint, the *manta/sër* and the bundle/*ëmb* it creates are pregnant with possibilities to integrate *mante-ros* in Europe where they enrich the landscape and cultures of cities as part of an urban melting pot of people with histories, dreams, and hopes.

In the English translation of the proverb, the verb “contain” has opposing meanings. It can mean “hold” or “accommodate” within itself, but also it means “to restrain” or “to stifle” something. While the *manta* holds the source of the *mantero*’s sustenance and his dignity, the system stifles his dreams and aspirations, annihilates them. It becomes a matter of life and death because whatever contains your source of sustenance, contains your dignity, and we will all fight to keep our dignity. He must find creative ways to attract customers and convince them to purchase his goods. He does not go “Ho-ho-ho” to announce his arrival because the police are on the hunt for him. Maybe the *mantero* envies Santa for his sledge and wishes he had one, so he could escape the police, or maybe make an overnight trip to his home to see the family he left behind years ago. But the *mantero* is no white man with a white beard, and if he could afford a sledge and have the popularity of Santa Claus, he would not be in the streets of Barcelona risking his life. All the *mantero* desires is to guard his dignity and that of the family he left behind.

So next time you see a *mantero*, pause and think about the image you see. Remember that the bundle he carries, is a testament of his history, struggle, sacrifice, creativity, resilience, and quest for a dignified life for him and the many people back home in Senegal. Do not pity him, just respect him for his resolve to be here and “keep fighting”, as Pope Francis once told Moustapha Ndao. In the end, all human beings want and deserve to preserve their dignity. *Lu ëmb sa sanxxal, ëmb sa sutura.*

## Graham Harwood Matsuko Yokokoji (YoHa)

### Plastic Raft of Lampedusa

“Stories of rubber boats being imported from China and transhipped in Malta and Turkey are supported by a recent interception by Maltese customs of 20 packaged rubber boats in a container destined for Misratah, Libya.”<sup>1</sup>

Being at sea in an inflatable boat implies a certain proximity to death. The placeless sea is where technical objects and flesh fuse and reform into communities that hold each other up on the water’s surface outside the bounds of state actors. Such non-terrestrial environments (being at sea) problematise many assumed forms of European phenomenological, political thought and philosophical renderings.

The current European and English/French Channel migrant crisis has often been rendered spectacular within wider media and art. Therefore it is important to state from the outset that the *Plastic Raft of Lampedusa* is not a project that is concerned with the morals of the migrant crisis, nor is it an attempt to re-invoke the sublime of European aesthetics invoked by many artists. This project is about the single purpose design of a plastic boat whose journey from China to the Mediterranean sea and the English/French channel, takes place in the sea’s lack of fixity, the space between different state actors and scales of administrative discipline.

The statement above allowed for certain forms of conversation to arise while denying others. In China this simple statement allowed the *Plastic Raft of Lampedusa* to be shown at Power Station Arts, a state-funded contemporary arts space in the Shanghai Biennale, simply because the Chinese authorities will not sponsor moral judgement of other nation-states. The same statement caused some contention when the work was repeated in Berlin for Transmediale 2017.

YoHa’s interest in seas led us to investigate the origins of boats used in the so-called European migrant crisis. They appeared wrong to YoHa as a maritime technical object. At 5 to 8 metres long, the windage alone would make rowing or paddling impossible in the event of engine failure. Cheaply made in China, the boats are formed from a slightly heavier European dustbin bag type material: Polyvinyl chloride and phthalates. The boats are delivered with four stroke outboard engines that are made from poor grade non-ferrous metals. Bolts shear off if you attempt to undo them. The boats are able to be shipped between different state actors and their respective markets through compliance to CE, European health, safety, and environmental protection standards. This creates a form of unverifi-

able remote control on the invisible conveyor belt of goods from China to Europe. An attempt to govern the placeless and unruliness of seas by filling in a form.

As the project took shape it became clear that the *Plastic Raft of Lampedusa* would be premised on the proposition. What happens if we unpick an inflatable boat together in different parts of the world? What holds a body on the surface at sea or allows it to drown? What forms of governance are at work, what technical objects, technologies of power reconstruct this transversal being and what new bodies are born from its imaginary? It was decided that we would dissect one boat in Shanghai and another in Berlin.

It was our intention that *Plastic Raft of Lampedusa*, would be a physical diagram, a critical space for the people working with us in both sites. From previous visits to Shanghai with our Taiwanese friend Illya Eric Lee in 2012 and contact with Chinese allies, we were informed that the state actor was ideologically wedded to notions of building, making, expanding, and accumulating. So our instinct was to expose, reveal, deconstruct in



view of the Yangtze river. We felt this could interact interestingly with the political realities of working within a state-funded organisation and where being censored was mandated.

We decided on the simple strategy of dull bureaucracy to work with Chinese censorship. We would video the workshops and write software that would randomly play back 10-second clips from the 2-terabyte of footage we’d assembled; that way the censors would need to watch at least 40 hours of video to establish things that they may wish to censor. The second phase of the software would construct a textual narrative that would be written in the context of the footage, but not about any specific cut. Shudhabrata Sengupta, a member of Raqs media collective who were curating the show, was still worried that we may find problems so he suggested that we inter-cut the text with CE European safety standards. So if the censor survived the first onslaught of boredom watching nuts and bolts being undone from a 40hp outboard engine, they would then need to go and look up and read the entire CE European safety regulations.

<sup>1</sup> EUNAVFOR MED Secret report – Operation SOPHIA, Six Monthly Report: June, 22nd to December, 31st 2015, WikiLeaks release: February, 17th 2016.

Added to YoHa's censorship strategy, we knew that to be critical is a difficult concept in China. Not so much because of political censorship this time but more because the privileging of the individual manifests differently in Europe and China. This difference creates different formations of power in a social space. Matsuko highlighted that cultures with a Chinese root shun putting oneself too far forward in a group for many reasons that I cannot cover in this text. Common sense is to meld with the group, keep one's head down—the tall flower syndrome. While on the other hand working together, making together, sharing the coordination of action and thinking through an active process is a much more comfortable space to interrogate a subject. I'm not suggesting that group working or group shyness exists only in Chinese-rooted cultures, but the flavour seems different in Europe. So for YoHa the space created by unpicking a plastic raft became the chance to create a different conversational place in the particular cultural and political context of both Berlin and Shanghai.

### *The Seas*

For much of Christian Europe's history the sea has been a mysterious, incomprehensible abyss composed in part by the genealogy of European culture through the biblical Genesis, The European continent, as an imagined garden of Eden had no ocean within. It was thought that the flood that engulfed Noah's world carved out Europe's shorelines and in retreat left the stench of mephitism, rotten carcasses of the sinful, accompanied by petrifying companion species and every creature that did not make it to the Ark. The flood caused by a vindictive God now flows over the unchristian flesh of the dead, lying under the Mediterranean sea and English Channel. We do not have space to explore Europe's necropolitics of the Mediterranean here, so it will have to suffice that there is a whole validation process that goes on here—aesthetic, cultural, social, political and economic—which could be explored by unpicking a *Plastic Raft of Lampedusa*.

The flows of the same seas distance it from the norms of land, its state actors and fixed capital investments. We can think of this space in which our little plastic boat travels as a kind of placelessness, a harbour for an ecological hetrotopia that works to both shore up and reinvigorate established forms of power, and at the same time sow seeds for utopian vision at the ecological/economic margins. Migrants on small boats demonstrate the 'necessity' for safety, defence and order for state actors and at the same exploit and reveal the freedom of unregulated space between states. The outboard engine allows independent, direct connection between two states circumventing border regulations. In this way the placelessness of the sea allows for different scales of the political imaginary to birth new

bodies that are squeezed out of the contradictory pressures of the freedom of movement for trade and the control of fixed assets, borders.

Is our lack of engagement with the seas the thing that allows the powerful to carve them up, compete for and deplete resources while constructing ideological force fields in the seas' placelessness? I'm left thinking that maybe it's the catalogue of horrors such as slavery, war, colonisation and disease associated with the sea that stops us thinking *with* it. Maybe it's the blindness of our phenomenology, of being biologically terrestrial, that makes the sea appear invisible in trade and migration.

We are left at the end of the project thinking the migrant crisis is a mephitism that makes the wealth, freedom and civilisation of Europeans visible. Has Europe always needed people to die for it in a spectacular form? After all, what 'right-minded' migrant would not risk everything to enter the Garden of Eden?

### *Afterthought, Dover Port*

Dissecting a plastic raft revealed to YoHa a transversal space where technical objects, laws, safety standards and flesh fuse and reform into new physical/political bodies, which separated abstractions from the materiality of crossing seas, seeding both freedom and control. After YoHa's rafts had been packed up in China and Germany we began working with Hear Me Out,<sup>2</sup> an organisation that takes music-making into UK immigration detention centres to release the words, music and life stories of people held inside. The organisation was interested to see if YoHa could think of a way to work with the charged atmosphere of Dover where, in 2022, 40,000 migrants crossed the sea in small boats. This migration created the very real problem of overwhelming local services, mainly due to the UK government's incompetence of sharing the load throughout the UK or providing any safe methods for seeking asylum. Dover had seen white nationalists and neo-Nazis recently kneeling on the A20 road outside Dover's Eastern Docks to protest the migrants' arrival. This is a fairly poor white-ish town where very few of the riches en route to the continent are shared locally. Dover is sliced apart by the four-lane A20 at Snargate Street, cutting local people off from the sea. On both sides of the cliffs overlooking the town stand two castles to defend the Country from invasion. The one that interested us was the Citadel, which was at one time a prison for young offenders and then became a detention centre for immigrants from 2002 till 2015. We visited the local Dover Museum, which held important relics such as the 3,500 year-old Bronze Age log boat and architectural histories of the area including the Citadel but not about the detention centre. As well as scoping out the castle and museum we attended music recording sessions,

gigs by migrants and spoke to people who had worked in the Citadel. In association with Hear Me Out, we proposed to the museum that we would work with migrants that had been held in the Citadel and have their stories presented in the museum alongside other objects. We were excited at the prospect of the contrast between the 3,500 year-old log boat's freedom of travel and the migrants' stories of imprisonment. Because all the local schoolchildren go to the museum, we felt this would be a subtle intervention. We also wanted to teach migrants how to sail as both a method of building confidence and as a way to irritate the right-wing politicians. As Covid engulfed the enterprise, we discovered that the museum and local politics were hostile to having a dialogue around migration and small boats, and definitely around teaching migrants how to sail.

Undefeated, we then decided that it might be productive to engage with local Dover politicians through their stomachs to unblock the situation; after all, English food is so bad that most of them would be eating migrant food anyway. We would work with asylum seekers who had recently arrived in the country and cook food for local Dover politicians. If we could align this with the Bishop of Dover, then local politicians might find it harder to say no to the invitation. We knew that many migrants arrive with only the clothes they stand up in—that food, its memory, preparation, and sharing was a strong link between migrant groups and a memory, materiality of home. We would propose a migrants' cookbook and eat our way to political success.

In memory of the sadly missed bright light that was Ilya Eric Lee who put so many people together and inspired us all, and in thanks to the Global network Ex students of Goldsmiths, University of London.

YoHa has for some time been concerned with the method, art as a method of inquiry, a compacted intellectual form that makes the space between theory and practice, proposition and realisation ambiguous. Art as inquiry can simply be thought of as artists make/explore things, attempting to explain the phenomena caught in the gaze of the project or proposition. Where explanation is not necessarily a reduction of phenomena to literature or a system of logics, but can instead be thought of as knowledge incorporated into a thing, a looking at, or a pointing to that produces a diagram of relations.

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[www.yoha.co.uk](http://www.yoha.co.uk), [wasted.yoha.co.uk](http://wasted.yoha.co.uk)

# Lionel Manga

## 8' Away From the Sun...

How far will this Faustian-driven world sink into entropy? As I write, here in Paris, the same story is going on again. The night is cold and the days ahead will still be rough. Black juveniles are freezing out there, camping in front of the Conseil d'État, the body in charge of scrutinizing laws. I've witnessed this before, in January 2018. Fragile tents in five below zero. An icy night in Whiteland, the world of what the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk dubbed stabilized extravagance. Not far from this site of shame shines the famous Rue de la Paix, a stronghold of Whiteland with its luxurious jewelry shops. According to Michel Serres, such juxtaposition is not to be seen as randomness, as the French "contingence" suggests, but as times of shifting and one would even say *kairos*. Do we, on this Earth, share the same idea of Paix? Peace? Frieden? Mvoua<sup>1</sup>? UNESCO claims that 6,600 languages are spoken. Diversity and universality are staring at each other. Five minutes on foot lay between these emblematic poles of our dire times. Nothing, indeed, compared to the light-year distance when it comes to purchasing power, having or not having enough money to live your days smoothly.

That said, all the money hidden offshore, some 80 billion dollars, is not worth a single human life, let's make it clear. Not even the 100 trillion dollars nourishing the financial market almost around the clock: the Big Game, as the players dub that business. And guess who sets the price of cocaine higher and higher with constant need, triggering the narcos' brutality? Scientists skilled in the field of particle physics have designed the high frequency trading platforms operating 85 to 90 % of this fiction at the scale of 100 milliseconds latency, and almost at the speed of light. And everything is supposedly fine on Christmas Eve. Dignity is at ease? Come on, Joe! I was in the gentrified Sentier on Thursday, on 1<sup>st</sup> December, to attend a book launch. Flooded with the cold light emitted by hundreds of LEDs hanging from façades, I felt, while walking quickly through this zone to catch the last bus, as if caught in some sort of visual hallucination. Another picture of stabilized extravagance in Metropolis, this time displayed at a mainstream scale: is that not some kind of populism in disguise? And human beings are freezing a few steps away, while nowadays in metropolitan France 10,000,000 dogs plus 7,500,000 cats are daily shown tenderness, are fed and more than a few are also carefully dressed to take a walk outdoors. Not surprisingly, two global players are facing off to grab the cake by any means: Mars and Nestlé. And still you say, dignity is at ease, my dear fellow Joe? How could it be so, under such weird parameters? Note that weird stands here as an acronym for Westernized, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Developed, an extensive but very concise characterization of what the Faustian profile is.

Mastering fire, the acknowledged starter of our cultural journey as a species in search of affordances on this blue-gray planet, was a thermodynamic issue: our ancestors had to keep the fire lit for the sake of security, and also for food, necessity coupled with quality. Yet, darkness was actually an entropic moment to go, given the predators swarming around. And the coming twilight was certainly a routine road towards a climax of anxiety, since some animals are night hunters. Can you figure that out for a few seconds, Joe? Being prey? Emerald green eyes of a black panther piercing the night and you are done a few seconds later. It's worth a mind experiment, as those Einstein was fond of and leading to  $E=mc^2$ . Let's say a quantum fluctuation induces the above to all the Terrestrials over 18 years old, this could indeed be a fair ground for renewing the so-called democracy, if we really want to enjoy a future worth that label. For no one can escape coming back largely shaken from. We are now living Benjamin-Adorno-Debord times, considering the field of cultural industry and the merry go-rounds? What the hell is this, my brother Joe? They are treating us day after day like idiots? BAD days are quietly blooming? Where has our generation of the 70s gone? Where are they, men and women? Don't they get how much ugliness is seizing the world day after day?

Let's, my dear, put aside the tedious list of "isms" that have designed History in the long run as a shape, spreading blood, death, fear, pain, etc., and consider it just like water, soil and air. As a milieu, then, it is also subjected to entropy, simply by isomorphism. It's a matter of patterns, at the end of the day and not only ideology, Joe. In fact, I increasingly suspect that it acts like a *champ de freinage*, slowing the dynamics of transformation at every level of complexity. Who would ever guess that architects' and migrants' concerns with Metropolis could one of these days come to meet, so closely as to co-produce this artistic project displayed as a political installation within the ongoing 2023 Venice Biennale, "Following the Fish"? Seen from a classical/Newtonian point of view/perspective, no one, for sure, would have dared to place a one euro bet on this unlikely conversation/connection. Napkins made out of silk are not usually/really supposed to mix with rough burlap handkerchiefs, right? However, what does this "contingence" stand for as such? It is without doubt a significant clue that our journey on Earth is entering the unprecedented, as Soshana Zuboff uses and understands the concept, throughout her thick book unveiling the big data tactics and strategy. This novelty requires a different mindset than the one driving the average Faustian nowadays in Whiteland, a mix of sheer arrogance, a good deal of paranoia coupled with profound ignorance and historical denial, plus some other ingredients as a stakeholder benefiting from five hundred years of mercilessly raiding non-European worlds at large.

Do you remember those Stones' concerts we used to attend in the 70s? When *Gimme Shelter* started, the crowd would brandish lighters in the venue and wave them, many thousands of people singing in unison "*Rape, murder, it's just a shot away; it's just a shot away...*". Can you still feel, Joe, how thrilling it was? I still do, believe me, forty years and more later. Young and romantic, confronting Karl Marx and the Situationists, among many intellectual exercises of that kind and range during our leisure hours, we dubbed them "manipulating the concept", with Weather Report in the background, if it was not Return to Forever, my Led Zeppelin favorite *Stairway to Heaven*, or someone else. Taking the stand as EU boss, Ursula von der Leyen once argued that immigration rules were actually meant to safeguard the European/Faustian *modus vivendi*. She instantly faced the screeching outcry of activists and was forced to apologize a few hours later. Her disastrous take spoke for the silent majority of racist white people.

It's commonplace to say in 2022 that the Mediterranean Sea has turned into a cemetery, while tears dry quickly in the Sahara, after having hastily buried a companion, but it shouldn't be so. Homo sapiens sapiens is a walker by definition; and no border can stand against this fundamental skill, be it as high as the barbed Spanish fence in Melilla. Nothing can prevent human beings from looking for a better place to live: for millions of years it has fueled our odyssey among the living, equipped with this big brain. Isn't it time to quit the geocentric stand inherited from the Greek philosophers and move towards the heliocentric one? In other words, what are we waiting for to translate cosmology into politics? We all, as Terrestrials, reside eight minutes away from the Sun, and in the light of that, borders are just a marvelous inanity, as are flags and nationalities. Born Polish, and one of those who benefited from Varian Fry's help in Marseille, the writer Jean Malaquais ended up with an American passport. In between he wrote a novel entitled *Planète sans visa*. Will this wishful thinking ever become true in our lifetime, Joe?

While music, alongside goods and air pollution, is always free to cross borders, Walkers who still make that music and produce the goods sometimes are not, although fleeing rape and murder, or other looming threats. "*Go back home!*" a far-right French MP bluntly said recently to his leftist African-born peer, as a debate on the burning issues of immigration was turning wild at the National Assembly. Xenophobia is so deeply rooted in some Faustian minds that its outburst would forget courtesy. Dignity can't be at ease under such gloomy circumstances, my dear and old friend. As nature standing on legs, according to an African divination, we are free beings whose main task is to escape the existential mesh by cultivating our gifts, in order to improve the world by tackling entropy. The *Mantero* Union is clearly in that mood, the crystal way: "we are subjects not

victims” is for instance their message to the world, by operating their own Top Manta brand in Barcelona. Casting a glance into the rear-view mirror of time, I still can see those of the 70s laying out their blankets at the Trocadéro plaza, in Paris.

None of us is on this Earth to stay more than a short piece of time, and History is just a blink of the eye compared to the six million years this process of humanization has been going on. Michel Serres has dubbed hominescence the very phase we are going through nowadays, thanks to all the powers our species detains. Caught between noise, as the theory of information understands it, and glittering, a reduced attention might eventually miss what is still a fragile bud under this smart neologism created by the author of the *Hermès*. Rethinking the metropolis is indeed a challenge, such as making it an inclusive one, but not only that. Seen from the science of thermodynamics, towns are entropy strongholds. The next duty awaiting architects and their colleagues the urban planners is therefore to imagine towns where building rules are clearly designed to reduce entropy. “Following the Fish” is a clue of hominescence opening the way to (re)establishing unlikeliness as a way to make sense of whatever might happen on the stage of things as they come into contact, *la contingence*. In this light, “Following the Fish” takes us out of a cognitive dissonance becoming more and more of a seemingly endless tunnel. Using some jargon, I would consider it an hysteresis, that is the intrinsic status of a system that keeps running the same dynamics while the external conditions are changing.

Some morning of serendipity, and obsessed by “curiosity”, I came to discover that cure and care stem from the Latin root of that very word, and it made my day. For this etymological link, trailing such a semantic radiance has dramatic consequences on a political level: can you figure out, Joe, a shift from yesterday’s cognitive patterns our contemporary institutions are designed with? Acknowledging the pragmatic value of Top Manta’s instability-driven experience, as material worthy of a laboratory for the future, is a gesture of a magnitude as huge as *praxis*, despite its small size. The post-metropolis era will be one where keeping curiosity alive is the main issue at stake in co-producing a town. Does it require any post-doc qualification to understand instantly that one who is not curious, lacking this openness, will not take care of anything, unless he is motivated by self-interest only? Saying that, I mean curiosity bears nowadays the same symbolic value fire had 600,000 years ago, Joe. It’s a bridge over the troubled waters of obsolete patterns.

Crossing and confronting the Sahara from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century with camel-constituted caravans, Arab merchants succeeded in trading salt for gold at a shocking rate, throughout western Africa then called

Bilal-al-Sudan i.e. the country of Black people. Can you imagine for one second, Joe, the amount of gold so collected? One kilo of salt was worth one kilo of gold! In other words, no Islamic so called “Golden Age” is conceivable without this thuggery extending over six centuries, along with the slave trade. The Portuguese would take over as the 15<sup>th</sup> century dawned, and History now knows how it ended up fostering the New World many thousands of nautical miles away from African shores. Given all the knowledge Muslims provided to Europeans, then thanks to the property of transitivity, Renaissance, Mona Lisa & Co logically owe the same debt to Bilal-al-Soudan, isn’t it so, Joe? Long before South America was targeted by this European compulsion for gold, and thanks to the Arab merchants’ noria, Timbuktu was already the legendary Eldorado, even featured in “Take a Message to Mary”, the famous Everly Brothers song from 1960. Is not the tale of Aladdin, by the way, a reliable clue of this historical fact? The cool genius living inside the magic lamp is sketched with big lips and more, that is the old-fashioned and racist, visual representation of black people.

As I write to you, dear Joe, my body and my mind are enjoying a smart location that many would envy for sure. Namely a terrace set on the top of a five-floor building in the wealthy Marais. Surrounded by silence, such a deep quietness is definitely unthinkable at this hour of the night, where I live in Douala. For there will always be a noisy *made in China* bike passing by my hermitage, a so-called bend-skin taking his share of the urban mobility business to make a living, instead of looking in vain for a monthly paid job that doesn’t exist within the Cameroonian context. Due to the structural inability of this economy to produce consistent wealth from local resources and relying since six decades on raw material exportations only, unemployment is doing heavenly well in the country of Osende Afana Castor. Having brought to light the sneaky mechanism behind the unfair trading practices in the cocoa market, and being at the eve of a fake independence, this first Sub-Saharan scholar to hold a doctorate in economics decided to take up weapons to fight the dictatorial regime of former president Ahmadou Ahidjo. Isolated, and receiving no support from anyone in that time of cold war, he was killed on March 15<sup>th</sup> 1966 by a military squad and beheaded. In 2022, Castor remains an anonymous figure, whereas Che Guevara’s struggle against imperialism is largely celebrated all over the committed world.

Immigration was discussed yesterday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 2022, at the Palais Bourbon, where the French National Assembly is seated, and journalistic accounts speak of a hot ambiance with sharp words flying from one side to another. The common xenophobic stance is prompt to depict African women and men, who seek a better life in Europe, as beggars rushing towards a supposed banquet. The truth of the matter, Joe, is that their

odyssey is deserving of a share of what was stolen from their countries by capitalist exploitation over the years. I therefore mean that Faustians must give back, *volens nolens*, and however that is done. As time goes by, there is increasingly no place left for denial, blindness and deafness. Faustians ought indeed to face reality in their comfort bubble. A Bassa<sup>2</sup> saying goes this: “the world is a chimpanzee’s fall, it self-disturbs and then self-restores.” Would I be on Earth the only Terrestrial, my long time fellow Joe, to stand thrilled, thanks to this sharp statement matching without any doubt the theory of self-organized systems? Look, the sake of the future actually requires high frequency translators, smart enough to bridge the gap that is still lying between the poetic/comprehensive way to know the unknown in Africa and the historical Cartesian style. WE ARE WAVES. Yet concerned with quantum entanglement: that’s my new motto, Joe.

<sup>2</sup>  
A Cameroonian  
Bantu group.

Aminata Cécile Mbaye

Migratory Assemblage:  
Life Trajectories of Senegalese  
LGBTQ+ Migrants in France

“Everything changed when I arrived here.” This sentence was the first one that Babacar\* uttered when he described his move to France. At that time, I was reading *L’aventure ambiguë*<sup>1</sup> by the Senegalese writer Cheikh Hamidou Kane. I remembered thinking for a long time about Babacar’s words. Was it a sign of a nostalgic yearning that he may have felt after his departure from his homeland? At first, Babacar described an irreversible metamorphosis that was integral to his arrival in France. I wondered: did this change trouble Babacar’s perception of his identity, such as Kane’s main protagonist Samba Diallo? However, I quickly realized that the imaginary setting featured in Kane’s novel was far from the reality of Babacar’s life.

I met this 27-year-old man in 2010. At that time, I had already begun to work on my PhD research analyzing discourses around same-sex intimacy in Senegal. While I was in France, I decided to speak with LGBTQ+ Senegalese people who had migrated there. When Babacar and I first met, he had been living in France for almost five years. He was introduced to me by a common Franco-Ivoirian friend. I remember our first meeting; it was on a sunny day in May. A few days before, we had agreed that we would meet at Chatelet’s train station, a central location in Paris, not so far away from where Babacar used to spend time with his friends. Dressed in slim-cut blue jeans and a white polo, he took out his brand-name sunglasses and shook my hand vigorously. This first chat marked the beginning of a long series of conversations.

First, it was just the two of us, often in a café near Chatelet or le Marais. But then, after a few months, he introduced me to close friends and invited me to their parties. The life of Babacar was nothing like that of a solitary man. He had a large community of friends, mostly from West Africa and the French Antilles. Babacar evoked the circumstances that brought him to France. He told me that he began to have intimate relationships with men in Senegal. However, in Senegal, he neither perceived himself as gay nor as a heterosexual. Despite the pressure put on him by his parents to have a wife, Babacar resisted and always found an excuse to evade their insistent requests. He explained to me that the demands of his parents constituted one of the motivations of his departure to France. In fact, his migration allowed him to distance himself from his relatives and continue that law studies that he had initiated at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar.

Babacar’s remark on his sexual identity is not unusual. Several research participants that I met in Senegal did not use westernized labels and terms such as “gay,” “bisexual,” or “queer” to designate themselves. Some of them, who were part of HIV/AIDS prevention associations, used the expression “men who have sex with other men,” or MSM. This was especially the case when these men were carrying out prevention activi-

\*  
All names used here  
are pseudonyms.

ties in collaboration with scholars as well as international national stakeholders. Regarding his sexual experience in Senegal, Babacar recalled: “at that time, it was not so important to me [...]. I didn’t care to give a name for what I was! I was just having sex with someone I liked. [...]. It was only after I arrived in France that I began to call myself ‘gay.’” How could this change be interpreted? Babacar’s words made me realize the necessity to de-homogenize and temporalize existing discourses on same-sex intimacy in and from West Africa and Senegal.

Nowadays, in Senegal as well as in other parts of the world, more and more people are appropriating the LGBTQ+ terminology. This is primary due to the creation of LGBTQ+ transnational networks between the Global North and the South and among sociocultural areas located in the Global South. The mobility of these communities certainly contributes to the creation of “new forms of ‘gay/lesbian’ or ‘queer’ identity, of sexuality, of intimacy, erotics, and community”.<sup>2</sup> However, many scholars working in Africa warn against the risk of importing theories from the Global North as they emanate from a particular socio-political context.<sup>3</sup> Many research participants with whom I spoke use specific terms according to the relation to which they were. This echoes Serena Dankwa’s<sup>4</sup> point of view, when she highlights the fact that “the correlation between sexual practices and social identity is not universally given.”

I remembered a Senegalese artist, Djibril, who once told me that, ironically, he had two wives: the first being the mother of his three children with whom he was living in Dakar, and the second being his male partner with whom he shared his life in Paris. Djibril refused to choose between both and vehemently stressed the importance of having children. However, my interlocutor had the economic capital to go back and forth between Paris and Senegal. His wife, a beauty products trader, knew his double life, and “she is free,” Djibril observed during one of our chats. When I asked what was this freedom that he was referring to, he pointed out that “you know, I am not constantly on her back. Her situation is better than many of her friends who deal with abusive husbands.” As I never met Djibril’s wife, I don’t know if she also was seeing someone outside their marriage.

In the case of Babacar, however, the arrival in France marked a watershed moment in his life. One day we were coming back from a party in which he had introduced me to some of his friends. It was late and cold at night. At the same time, we were both happy and extremely tired. Sitting in front of me, Babacar quietly stared at the window. At one point, he turned his head and suddenly began to speak about his family and how they came to know that he had sexual relationships with other men. It was the husband of his sister, with whom he was sharing an apartment in France. One day, Babacar left his phone in the living room; his brother-in-law snooped

<sup>1</sup>  
Hamidou Kane (2011).  
*L’aventure ambiguë: récit*. Vincent-Mansour  
Monteil (ed.). Paris:  
Éditions Gallimard.

<sup>2</sup>  
Elizabeth A. Povinelli,  
and George Chauncey  
(1999). “Thinking  
Sexuality Transnationally:  
An Introduction”. *GLQ: A  
Journal of Lesbian and Gay  
Studies* 5 (4), p. 439.

<sup>3</sup>  
Marc Epprecht (2008).  
*Heterosexual Africa?: The  
History of an Idea from  
the Age of Exploration to  
the Age of AIDS*. Athens:  
Ohio University Press,  
pp. 23–24.

<sup>4</sup>  
Serena Owusua Dankwa  
(2021). *Knowing Women:  
Same-Sex Intimacy,  
Gender, and Identity  
in Postcolonial Ghana*.  
Cambridge: Cambridge  
University Press, p. 20.

inside the phone and discovered pictures of naked men. He immediately informed his wife and Babacar's parents. Although this incident happened a long time ago, Babacar's eyes became watery, and his voice cracked when he remembered the sadness of his parents. He recalled that among all his brothers, he was the favorite and the only one for whom his father financed his studies. But after the revelation by his brother-in-law, everything changed. "My mother called me a disgrace of God...My father refused to speak to me for several years. They were both ashamed of me." Over time, the relationship with his parents improved slightly. However, his sexual orientation still remained taboo within his family.

In recent decades, several studies have been initiated to document the life path of LGBTQ+ people in Senegal.<sup>5</sup> Many of these works have mainly focused on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections among MSM. Part of my own research revolved around the complex mechanisms through which same-sex intimacy has become a subject of political and religious contestation in Senegal. Most of the research on this topic underscores the recent spread of homophobic rhetoric in Senegal, as well as in other African countries.<sup>6</sup>

The story of Babacar echoes what has been written on the perception of same-sex intimacy, not only in Senegal but also along the diasporic trajectory to France and other localities. During one of our talks, Babacar also emphasized that several of his friends in Senegal had intimate relationships with other men. Some of them were married and with children, while others shared an apartment with their lovers and presented themselves as roommates in order to avoid backlash from their neighbors. Instead of recalling the various discriminations he had experienced, Babacar highlighted the solidarity that exists among his friends. He gave the example of the numerous parties organized at university, in which the members of his community tried to create a safe environment for meeting other men and establishing networks of belonging. It never came to be, but I think he provided me with such stories as a way to counterbalance the negative response of his relatives and other peers.

Notions of solidarity constituted recurring themes in Babacar's stories about his life both in France and Senegal. After his arrival in France and the rejection of his family, Babacar could get through this difficult time thanks to the friendships he had made. For him as well as other Senegalese and Afro-LGBTQ+ people I met, the creation of bonds and friendship within and outside Senegalese communities helps (re)build a second family, different from blood ties, especially when the members of the latest community do not show any support. Such extended networks of relatedness are able to emotionally and materially nurture people like Babacar with love and acceptance.

Now I understand Babacar's statement from our first meeting. If everything changed, it was not only due to the experience of a spatial and cultural displacement, but also because of the new experiences and life that he had crafted because of his departure. This does not mean that Babacar, a black Muslim man living in France, had only positive experiences; indeed, the fact that he did not have to hide his relationship with other men did not free him from other types of discrimination. Studies conducted on Afro-LGBTQ+ people living in the Global North have shown that these populations are often confronted with invisibility and racism.<sup>7</sup> Given that both of us were living as black people in France, Babacar often discussed with me his feeling of foreignness. In a place where we never completely belonged, we both realized that we developed similar attitudes and gestures. We always carried our identity papers with us, for example, in case of unexpected police controls. As a black Senegalese man with a student visa, Babacar in particular feared state actions and controls against migrant bodies.

What does the story of Babacar tell us about the process of moving away from a country and coming to a new place? While in *L'aventure ambiguë*, migration leads to the isolation of Samba Diallo, the main protagonist, the example of Babacar's trajectory offers a more nuanced perspective. In fact, my interlocutor did not describe his moving to France as an act of erasure. "Personally, I am what I am: I am a Senegalese who likes other men," he said once. In Senegal as well as in France, Babacar felt himself inhabiting a dualized position within a paradoxical space, neither completely inside nor completely outside the sociocultural textures of the two nation-states. While such spatial in-betweenness escapes any forms of individual or collective idealization, it provided Babacar with a spatial-temporal location where he could find new ecologies of relatedness. New networks of feelings, emotions, and material support expand and rise beyond heteronormative conceptions and national borders. In other words, laborious ways of being can contribute to the mobilization of imagination, collective ties and friendships as powerful political tools to resist a neoliberal, heteronormative and racist worldview.

5  
Aminata Cécile Mbaye (2018). *Les Discours Sur l'homosexualité Au Sénégal. L'analyse d'une Lutte Représentationnelle*. Munic: AVM Edition; Niang, Cheikh (2010). "Understanding Sex between Men in Senegal: Beyond Current Linguistic and Discursive Categories." *A Routledge Handbook of Sexuality, Health and Rights*, edited by Peter Aggleton and Richard G. Parker, First issued in paperback, pp. 116–124. Routledge Handbooks. London: Routledge.

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Patrick Awondo, Peter Geschiere, and Graeme Reid (2012). "Homophobic Africa? Toward A More Nuanced View". *African Studies Review* 55 (3), pp. 145–168.

7  
Fatima El-Tayeb (2011). *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Jasbir K. Puar (2007), *Territorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Jenny Mbaye  
Rachel Jenkins

## Un-Telling An-Other Story

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Previously presented in context of an ‘exotic’ Other, Africa now takes centre stage, at one of Europe’s crucibles of power and privilege: La Biennale di Venezia. While critical spatial experts and practitioners are increasingly interrogating how wider issues—such as politics, ecology, citizenry, race, history, technology and economy—are manifested in space, La Biennale, as an event, assumes a position that it can *guide* a discourse on spatial practices through the appointment of curators and their thematic prompts. Holding, therein, the potential, through the display of spatial engagements and ongoing spatial strategies, to enable and shape a more just, functional and beautiful world in wider contextual terms.

Embedded within this Biennale’s language of spectacle, however, how can invisible and marginalised voices *participate* within existing frameworks? Who elects and shapes the ‘global’ agenda and what counts as knowledge? And does design sponsored by the privileged inevitably perpetuate forms of dominance? In other words, and as bell hooks would ask: how to proceed without ‘eating the other’ (hooks 1992)?<sup>1</sup> How to cede space, place, power, privilege? How to be respectful guests at a conversational table about others’ cultures with larger processes of class, race, gender, ethnicity, generation, and legal status without making ourselves guests of honour, or even worst, the hosts? The challenge here is one of humility and courage that calls for a capacity to retrocede so as to avoid any well-intentioned yet tokenistic effort. This is as significant as it is an all-consuming and tiresome task—but so necessary—for it asks: how can we conceive of an intervention that would not constitute an ephemeral performance for the white gaze?

Fuelled by revolutionary optimism, an ongoing ambition of the authors is to disrupt, decolonise, challenge and above all create opportunities for transformative social justice and action. There is no utopia, it is not a destination, but rather a process. From this standpoint, we dedicate our efforts to critically revisit the past and shape dialogue, question and challenge established and normative canons of ‘knowledge’, speculate about possible futures and uphold creative practices that deal with conditions of anti-coloniality, anti-racism, activism, and entangled histories. We operate at the intersections of culture, language, architecture, creative practices, collective organising, community-building, art, politics, spirituality, and translation—ourselves and thousands of other actors.

Top Manta—dubbed as such due to the blankets (*manta* in Spanish) the vendors use—refers to Barcelona’s community of mostly Senegalese street vendors, which created the Union of Barcelona Vendors in 2015. Top Manta has since become many things and taken many forms, navigating with intention away from the liminal terrains, and becoming agents in the fight for more just and inclusive societies. Featured in this exhibition,

<sup>1</sup> bell hooks, 1992 (1992). *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. London: Turnaround.

Top Manta turns an object into the subject through the blanket—which affords mobile vendors to create, very rapidly, pop-up / pop-down retail spaces: creating opportunity for trade, problem-solving, community building, circulation of knowledge, networks of solidarity, negotiating forms of temporality in largely fixed and controlled public contexts—not to mention feeding ‘luxury’ hungry consumers with affordable commodities, and more. In this, it takes precedence of everyday public life in many spaces across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and uses a commonly available item, to create spaces of social, cultural and economic engagement—and as their online shop suggests even *thriving* on and beyond the fringes.

But where, beyond this authored existence, are the voices, aspirations, tales of mental degradation, as well as joy, of the marginalised to insert an alternative agenda into curated practices? How can this form of engagement and professional gatekeeping really allow for the marginalised to realise their own power? To be heard and understood, countering dominant perspectives, challenging state powers, assisting to develop new undisciplined discourses, concepts, languages, ecologies, and ultimately, shaping the canon that is ‘architecture’ in a changing world?

As it stands, this staging of Top Manta, in this environment of power and spectacle, and as represented by their instruments that ‘visibilise’ the invisible Black workforces that inhabit liminal terrains, does not threaten the establishment nor the status quo.

Stemming from this reactionary perspective, we see and choose to take this opportunity to insert an alternative ambition into the story, one that goes beyond the physical realm and includes the spiritual—showing a complex, subtle and textured humanity not reflected in the abstractions of Top Manta’s narrative. Our intention here is motivated by the following question: What if we looked beyond the tool, the means, the instruments, the commodity; beyond the blanket as object, beyond a focus (implicitly) objectifying, instrumentalising and commodifying the individual; beyond the trader even, *goorgoorlu* and this ingenious art of making ends meet—what if we actually look, and seriously look, at the textures and multi-layered nuances of (their) humanity—in all its complexity? Neither saints nor sinners as Kathleen Collins would say.

What makes you happy? What brings you joy? What do you joke about? What do you laugh about? What do you fantasise on? What do you aspire to? What are you ambivalent about? What do you dream of? What do you sense? What do you eat and love preparing? How do you pray and soothe your mind and soul? And how do you heal your body and your spirit?

Subtle experiences of individuals are part of envisioning Black Futures as a collective endeavour which uses emotional tools such as joy and ambivalence to ‘help build [its] material and discursive realities’.<sup>2</sup> Such a

posture necessitates coming and connecting beyond the anecdotal or the incidental; beyond the street creativity, the labour networks of solidarity and other remarkable survival strategies; and still, beyond the objects, and into the depths of the subjects. The body as a starting point, really: the multi-dimensional Senegalese/African/Black bodies in Catalan/European/White cities. Such a positioning sets us to explore the sensible, the spiritual, the mystical, the sensual, the instinctual like a sucking of a tongue, peculiar interjections, or languages within the language.

Attentive to everyday experiences of connection and belonging, the exploration is about the different modes of being in the world, in the city, and a capacity to celebrate and ‘re-embody’ shared heritage, ‘re-remembering’ unknown stories, hidden narratives, invisible connections, and missing bridges of shared cityness and citizenry—paying attention to the meaningful value for European cities and their African tales, albeit more often than not, unrecognised, unknown, unappreciated, and only lately and always partly celebrated.

It is our belief that every space—including ephemeral affluent mega events such as the Biennale and this exhibition—hold the potential for meaning-making. How effectively the prompts activate narratives of activism, self-preservation and critical resistance lends to a form of curatorial intervention that seriously questions the politics of representation, thus subverting racial, social, economic, environmental domination—for again, celebrating does not eradicate such politics of domination.

A visual lullaby rocking our contribution, Mati Diop’s *Atlantics*, proclaims: “Some memories are omens [to] remind [us] of who [we] are and show [us] who [we] will become. Ada [or those], to whom the future belongs.” This film lands a radically welcoming and embracing affirmation of the ocean that we are. *Atlantics*, indeed, brings texture by letting the spiritual in for another way of telling stories, with an alternative temporality and sensibility that bend the space-time continuum: “Pouring light into the depths”, so “to bring [us] to the shores”.<sup>3</sup>

As the story unfolds, we ‘*feel*’ and ‘*feel for*’ the men who we never see taking to the sea but, whom we connect with, through the women praying for their brothers to make it to Spain; We ‘*listen*’ to silent conversations between Ada and the Sea, powerful presence, conversing beyond words, through sounds of waves as an utterly expressive language; We ‘*see*’ images of the moon in all its phases as a cosmic timer providing a temporal rhythm to the narrative.

Rather than the usual story of our men, their resilience, and creative survival strategies, Mati Diop’s curated experience is an invitation to meaningfully bring texture through the senses; a ‘sense-able’ and *texturing* creative practice that makes space for the worlds of the unknown,

<sup>2</sup> Francesca Sobande and Akwugo Emejulu (2021). “The Black Feminism Remix Lab: On Black Feminist Joy, Ambivalence and Futures.” *Culture, Theory and Critique* (ahead-of-print), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Mati Diop (director). 2019. *Atlantics*. Les Films du Bal. Netflix.

where the invisible is palpable. In the film, indeed, the world of mystics and imaginaries is where the spirits of possessed women right the wrongs and become the genuine voice of the voiceless, speaking the truth to power and bringing by the same token both social justice and healing.

In the same vein, in “*Peuple de l’Eau*”,<sup>4</sup> Issa Damaan Sarr shows us how our sustainable relationship with nature, earth, and life unfolds in the myths, places and spaces of sacralisation. His poetry celebrates how, in societies of oral traditions, and through the world of the sensible, representations are cultivated in imaginaries to open the individual up to a sensibility that translates into a sense of responsibility towards the environment, the other and oneself.

Our spiritual invocation is then an Afrofeminist call for more creators, designers and curators of African descent to tell these meaningful stories with love and care. We intend for this work to be humanely engaging and done with a focus on everydayness and quotidian sensibilities. We mean for all this to shape hospitable spaces that are relational and about the art of connection between individuals, communities, their past, present and future, their essence and their experience, their voices, presences and imaginations. We mean for all of this in pursuit of realising a not-so-utopian vision of physical and spiritual healing that speaks with and through the diversity of minds and hearts constituting Black experiences in Europe.

What is more human than a deep dive into the worlds of the subtle, sensible, of the texture, the nuance and the unknown?

Situated at the intersection of art, spirituality and urbanity; design, culture and city; architecture, science and technology; creativity, knowledge and society, we draw on the inspiration of our artists and designers currently exploring how to weave links that forge us, while taking care of the social and urban fabric. Our invocation forms a series of questions about the human and the humane—and only by extension their labour as traders with their *mantas*. Meaningfully, we pose these questions with the intent to animate and motivate a caring, nurturing and embracing understanding of Black/African/Senegalese experiences of city-ness and citizenry in White/European/Catalan cities.

<sup>4</sup>  
Issa Damaan Sarr (in press). *Le Peuple de l’Eau*, Award Ibrahima Sall.

# Estrella Sendra

## Soumbédioune, a Canvas of Those Who Dream About Following the Fish

*Je suis perdu dans l'aller* [I am lost, drifting away]

Dakar is a living canvas, an ever-changing “city of contrasts”, as depicted by Djibril Diop Mambéty in his very first short film, *Contrast City*, in 1969, where art becomes the platform to create, perform and archive dreams. As Oumar Ndao arguably noted, “Never will the story of this city be told in its entirety because it has an air of mischief about it; an air that always confounds the senses.”<sup>1</sup> When daring to depict it, through an impeccable multi-modal approach, in *Dakar, l’Ineffable, raconté par Oumar Ndao*, this leading cultural figure hesitatingly declared: “I think this territory is undecided.” (or “uncertain”) [*Je crois que ce territoire est indécis*]. And he continues thus: “I believe that the land route also leads to the city’s marine entrance and to the air route.”<sup>2</sup>

Movement, migration, both physical and psychological, is thus an intrinsic dimension of this multi-faceted space. Dakar is “an Afrotopia”, the term coined by Senegalese philosopher Felwine Sarr to refer to an “active utopia which aims to track down from the African reality the vast spaces of what is possible and to grow them.”<sup>3</sup> This Afrotopia is shaped by a de-localization of its presence in a perpetual future... Because the African continent is the future that it will be, this rhetoric suggests, in hollow, that it is not, that its coincidence in a present time is flawed.”<sup>4</sup> This leads to a dream-like quality in this coastal city, surrounded by the sea, the same one that both separates and unifies the continent with the rest of the world, the one that feeds most of the population, following the fish, under the leadership of the Lebus, the fishing community in the region.

It was in the summer of 2013 that I first went to Soumbédioune, one of the twelve beaches held sacred by the Lebus, with a popular fish market and artisan village, close to Médina, home to many Senegalese artists and artisans. The name derives from the Wolof terms *sumb* and *jun*, meaning “undertaking something difficult” or “plunging in head first”.<sup>5</sup> What took me there was precisely a quest for images and soundwaves that could symbolize the lives and dreams of those who had undertaken a difficult journey, moved by the Wolof phrase *tukki, tekki, ted ak terale*, meaning “travelling, making it, achieving social success and helping family and friends”.<sup>6</sup> At the time, I was making a documentary film on migration from Senegal to Spain, with Mariama Badji, its co-director, Nazir Cissé, a camera operator and Mamadou Khouma Gueye, a sound recordist. This would be called *Témoignages... « waa suñu gaal » / Testimonials from the people in Senegal*.<sup>7</sup>

As much as we obtained useful images and ambient sound, we could not limit this to ‘ambient’. We had to look elsewhere, to listen through filming. The walls were talking to us, showing us that dreams originate long

<sup>1</sup> Oumar Ndao (2020). *Dakar, l’Ineffable, raconté par Oumar Ndao*. Dakar: Vives Voix, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Felwine Sarr (2016). *Afrotopia*. Paris: Éditions Philippe Rey, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Ndao, *op. cit.* p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Mohamadou Sall et al. (2010). “International migration, social change and local governance in Ourossogui and Louga, two small urban centres in Senegal.” In: *Human Settlements Group, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)*, p. 24.

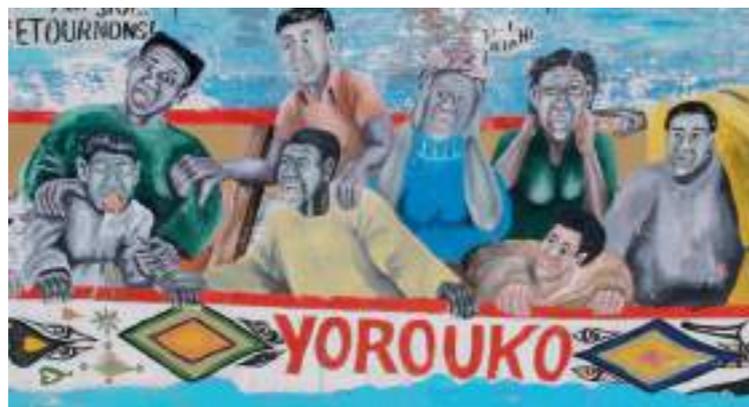
<sup>7</sup> Estrella Sendra and Mariama Badji (2016). *Témoignages... « waa suñu gaal »*. Senegal-España, 55 min. [Documentary film]. Available at: [www.estrellasendra.com/film-production](http://www.estrellasendra.com/film-production)

<sup>8</sup> Sarr, *op. cit.* p. 15.

before the moment of stepping into the sea. It was difficult to allocate a temporal dimension to such ghostly images. On the one hand, there was a solitary young child lost at sea, drifting away, following the fish, who knows where, on a paper boat. On the other hand, there were panic group images, of people who had refused to be deprived of their right to dream, of their right to move freely. Both Nazir Cissé and I, as the camera operators of the documentary, could not help but hand-hold our camera in an attempt to listen. The resulting images, from different angles, were particularly shaky. I still shake when I recall that moment, and when I look back at those images, made still on the wall, and yet still moving and eroding, as if touched by the sea breeze.

There is a kind of empathy and solidarity in these murals that goes beyond the social function of raising awareness. The eroded walls in Soumbédioune convey an affective multi-layered canvas rooted in the lived experience of a Afrotopian creative population “that places the human being at the heart of its concerns” as the basis for “the positive transformation of African societies”.<sup>8</sup> The fish market becomes a live, open museum, whose walls are canvases, encouraging an affective engagement with archives of the past, the present and the to-be-transformed future.

*The wall as a first canvas on which to dream,  
eroded by time, by the sea,  
the same sea that is eventually crossed  
in order to turn dreams into reality.  
A reality perhaps unfound  
Yet sought out, created, reimagined*



## Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin

### Estranged. City. Stranger(s)

“Strangers are not simply those who are not known...but those who are, in their proximity, *already recognized as not belonging*, as being out of place”<sup>1</sup>

These vignettes, informed by fieldwork on youth and labour and low-income women and urban change in Ibadan, Nigeria, reflect the shared struggles of those designated as “recognized strangers”<sup>2</sup> under neoliberal urbanism. Taking seriously Simone’s<sup>3</sup> invitation to move beyond characterizing the uninhabitable urban life as inevitably precarious, I consider how the everydayness of seeing, embracing, interacting, and colluding with strangers destabilizes the “recognized stranger”. This destabilization sometimes offsets precarity.

*Baba Eleja*<sup>4</sup> has disappeared again

It must be the last Friday of the month  
The loan officers have come to collect  
Fellow market sellers fabricate the same story,  
Friday after Friday.

Protectively guarding *Baba Eleja*’s secrets  
“Everyday is for the thief..”<sup>5</sup> warn the officers.  
It depends which side justice is on?

*Iya Bisi*<sup>6</sup>, the seamstress, is in a confused state

Evicted from her shop, demolition exercise underway  
Eyesore shop in exchange for something prettier  
Though shocked, not surprised  
This is the life of a recognized stranger

*Iya Bisi* wanders

*Baba Eleja* hides  
Unplanned collision of sorts ensues  
Two perfect strangers, briefly share their woes  
Finding answers in an increasingly questionable city

Saturday comes.

*Baba Eleja* has reappeared but with a new shop mate  
*Iya Bisi* has a new space  
*Baba Eleja* is no longer worried about the lack of funds  
to sew his children’s school uniform

Streets full of recognized strangers

Becoming unrecognizable recognized strangers  
to each other, each passing day

Strange becoming familiar  
Familiar becoming strange  
The displaced, temporarily emplaced.  
Afterall, problem no dey finish<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ahmed, S. (2000). *Strange encounters: embodied others in post-coloniality*. London: Routledge, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Simone. (2019). *Improvised lives: rhythms of endurance in an urban South*. Cambridge: Polity.

<sup>4</sup> Baba means father in Yoruba, Eleja refers to a person who sells/owns fish. In this case, Baba Eleja is a fishseller who is an elder male and thus respected by being called baba.

<sup>5</sup> From the Yoruba proverb, “Every day is for the thief, but one day is for the owner.” Baba Eleja is considered the thief here because he refuses to pay back the high interest loan. The question then becomes, who is the real thief—in some cases if you borrow 200,000 Naira you pay back 250,000 Naira or more.

<sup>6</sup> Bisi’s mother.

<sup>7</sup> Pidgin for there will always be problems/problems never end.

Familiar greetings of “*e ku ise o!*”<sup>8</sup> “*E karo o!*”<sup>9</sup>,  
 offered to strangers every morning  
 Heard even over the sounds of incessant honking,  
 the melodious call to prayers and advertisements  
 for cure all medicinal herbs blaring on megaphones  
 Mama Puff Puff’s<sup>10</sup> delectable golden  
 deep-fried round balls keep getting smaller  
 particularly during this rainy Naira<sup>11</sup> season  
 that won’t stop falling,

Inflation, yet another turmoil in the city  
 But who can resist the tantalizing smell  
 when passing by the car park?  
 It’s hard to break with routine

Whether inside the *Keke*<sup>12</sup> or bus,  
*Japa*<sup>13</sup> and the upcoming elections are two favourite topics  
 Strangers sharing stories and rumours  
 of *japa* successes and failures  
 Truth is, not everyone can *waka*<sup>14</sup>  
 Disagreements about the merits of voting often get heated  
 “It’s not worth it to vote”  
 “They’re all birds of the same feather”  
 Are the most popular refrains  
 (popular last election season, and the season before that too)  
*Ilu o ni baje o*<sup>15</sup>, strangers encourage  
 each other when alighting  
 Despite *sapa wahala*<sup>16</sup>  
 Inshallah  
 “It is well o”, is the automatic, prophetic response.  
 An attempt to both predict the future and  
 will their dreams into reality  
 The condition in the city is one of perpetual liminality  
 Patience is a subtle thief<sup>17</sup>

8  
 Yoruba word that roughly translates to well done —often said in the context of greeting someone who is working.

9  
 Yoruba word for good morning.

10  
 Deep fried yeast dough (like doughnuts).

11  
 Running joke during the rainy season in 2022, was that the rain is now competing with the naira—speaking to the currency devaluation in conjunction with inflation.

12  
 Tricycle/Auto-rickshaw.

13  
 More recently the term refers to emigration (from Nigeria). In Yoruba, *japa* means to flee, run quickly particularly in reference to a dangerous situation.

14  
 Walk/leave.

15  
 The city will not ruin / become bad.

16  
*Sapa* refers to the state of being poor/broke. *Wahala* means trouble.

17  
 Inspired by Ishola-Adedeji’s book, I think this saying is appropriate here because although enduring the urban, waiting for the city to get better takes patience. And yet, it is a long wait. This patience then ends up robbing one of many things, including the possibilities of deferred dreams or the things you desire never happening. Ishola-Adedeji, A. (2022). *Patience is a subtle thief*. New York: Harper Collins.

## Salacious Infidelity

Illicit affair with capitalism  
 Reckless abandonment to the market  
 Self, stranger to city  
 City, stranger to self  
 Refused by the city, the estranged become mathematicians  
 Balancing Equations. Calculating.  
 Certainties unsure. Uncertainties sure.

Some estranged mathematicians become Gboys<sup>18</sup>

Online scamming, the most sensible formula  
 The moral high ground uninhabitable,  
 particularly when there are others to care for  
 Gboys who did their calculations:  
 Expenses > income  
 Legitimate work ≠ legitimate  
 Wages that barely cover  
 transportation + feeding = illegitimate  
 Unaffordability + city = sleepless nights  
 Responsibility × Responsibility × Responsibility  
 = ∞ Responsibilities

The estranged search for equilibrium

Building bridges along the way.  
 A collective of savvy entrepreneurs  
 Acquiescing to pleas of “cut soap for me”<sup>19</sup>  
 Bonding over probabilities, risks, and speculations  
 Mocking neoliberal respectability and meritocracy  
 Infusing life where there was once a refusal of life  
 While they can, dey go chop life well well.<sup>20</sup>

18  
 Contemporary popular term for yahoo boys/419ers, scammers/fraudsters. It’s been argued that Gboys are engaged in reparation work.

19  
 Slang for show me the way, teach me your secret to success.

20  
 Pidgin for enjoying life and enjoying oneself.



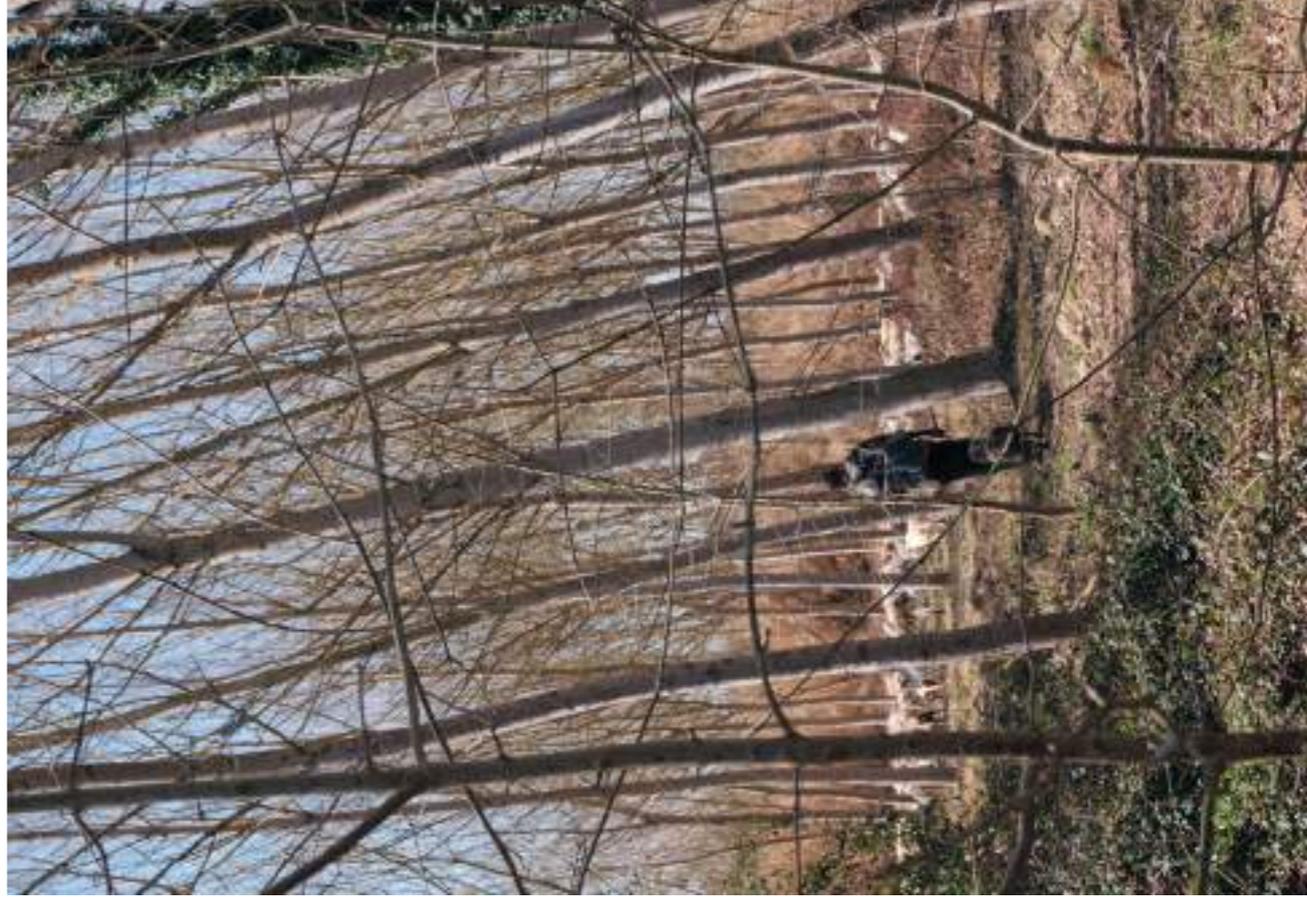


Vacant lot around the University of Reus, March 2023. Like in the desert, you just have to wait a short while to see that it is actually full of people circulating from who knows where towards who knows where.

Martí Boada tells me how important African migration is to the territory. The city depends on it. Maresme, March 2023.



Dem belongs to the Fulani ethnic group, nomadic desert shepherds. He does not need ultrasounds to know when a sheep will give birth. He is hired as qualified worker for his knowledge in this trade. Sant Celoni, March 2023.





Temporary workers and agricultural workers do not like to be photographed. They hide from me or they scold me when they see my camera. Terres de l'Ebre, March 2023.

Leve

## Architecture of the Here and Now

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“Architecture is starting with nothing  
and ending up with something worthwhile.”

Bombo Ndir, Senegalese feminist activist

There is no model

There is no ideal world

There is no blank slate waiting to be filled

Not everything is possible: there are conditions

## CONDITIONS

It is imperative to know how to see them, recognize them,  
engage with them; and to question them, fight against them  
when they become unacceptable.

If architecture were a verb, being an architect would be  
a profession of transformation.

We would make processes, not products.

We would pose challenges instead of pursuing outcomes.

Architecture is constituted from conditions.

They must be looked in the eye and challenged!

Playing with them fosters creativity.

Accepting them is subservient.

## SERVITUDE

Why are we so docile when we are so prepared to confront complexity?

Why do we want to be so useful, so efficient, so competent  
and available?

Why does it seem ok for us to be a simple service of technical  
problem solving, of the assumption of legal responsibilities and  
of the symbolic production of institutional and market powers?

Question the terms.

We seek to understand the innermost meanings of the rules  
and the nature of the laws before complying with them.

We refuse to be manufacturers of deceptive and aspirational  
images. We are getting off the bandwagon.

We want to break the spell that makes us believe that this is  
simply how it is and the only way it can be.

## ISOLATION

The world is not a board game that is scrutinized from the outside.

The myth that creative work must be solitary is no longer credible;  
it's laughable.

We must stop recreating ourselves in beauty, analyzing it,  
mapping it; entertaining ourselves with abstract games.

We must reestablish a direct contact with the realities  
of the street.

Let's pay attention to alternative perspectives.

Abandon the center, move to the margins,

and dedicate ourselves to looking for the cracks  
between what is possible.

## WE ARE PEOPLE JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE

Just one more, a nobody, with the world not separate from it.

Let us make ourselves understandable

Let's not use empty words, nor waste the few we still have.

We must recuperate vocabulary and enrich it.

Blur categories.

*A briefing, a mood board, a rendering...* these are no longer  
useful tools but rather extra conditions.

Let us form alliances and accept the consequences

Participation is measured by involvement

Participation requires time

Participation breaks down authorships

Seek empathy

Let's form a network. We demand that the institutions  
provide the conditions to make it possible!

## SOCIALS

We must not be paternalistic or solely functional.

Helping “others” means that “the other” exists. It reaffirms and stigmatizes differences.

Social architecture is not charity or solidarity, it’s an architecture that can only be understood from the collective, from our relationship with each other.

We flee from condescending positions of superiority that subordinate and suppress the ability of local agency.  
Let us connect and foster co-learning.

## PUBLIC

Neither women nor slaves entered the agora.  
Today those who do not have a home or those who are undocumented are expelled from public space. They are denied it.  
The street is a place to negotiate and reach agreements, not a scene without conflicts.

## REPARATION

Quality of life for some is achieved thanks to the plunder and exclusion of others.

Let’s imagine a world less dense and with fewer resources, a change in geologic time scale that we can’t even imagine yet.

Let’s make other wishes.  
Pursue a decent life under these conditions.  
We must look to those who know how to live better with less; their expertise is a rich source of knowledge.

## COMMUNITIES

Individualism is unsustainable.  
Community structures are more efficient.

What then are the possible spaces? The critical dimensions?  
What’s the scale? The typologies? What are the limits?  
Where are the seams? What potential do they have, here and now?

The challenge of DECARBONIZATION is not just a matter of technology or increased regulation. Careful with green capitalism.  
Let’s focus on the techniques of living together.

DECOLONIZATION occurs by abandoning the narrative of modernization. Let’s enter into dialogue with non-hegemonic narratives.

The challenges of DECOLONIZATION and DECARBONIZATION today are unquestionable conditions and they are intrinsically linked.  
Let’s stop being naïve. We must work from these challenges and about how to influence the realities we are faced with.

Let us wrench architecture from its boxes, expand its limits and its field of action, place it alongside other practices, hybridize it, free it from disciplinary isolation and abstract thought; we must be reminded of its dormant potential.

## ARCHITECTURE OF THE HERE AND NOW

Thought is born of action

Let’s merge our perspectives together

Verbalize the challenges

Accept the contradictions

Let’s branch out

Join forces

Carry on

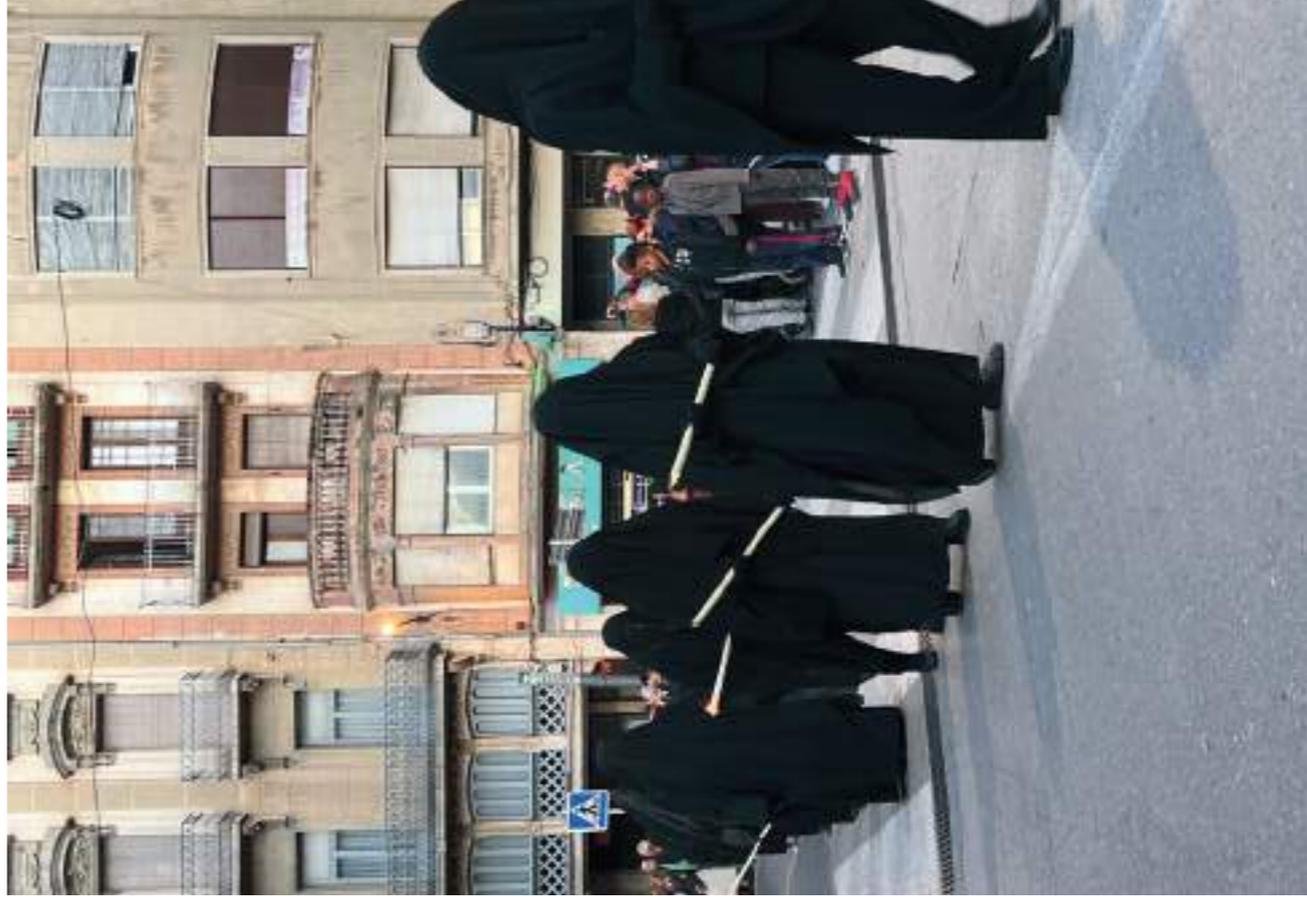


"Many of the mosques are in industrial parks. Many have security cameras. It's not God watching over the house! The police recommended it and it was accepted," Mostafa Shalmi told me in Salt.

Barcelona, April 2023.



The overlap between Ramadan and Holy Week, April 2023. Procession of Holy Week in Tortosa, April 2023.



“Describing reality means talking about contradictions”  
Mostafa Shaimi, Salt

When you spend so many months working on a topic means you must open your field of vision, look at it from other points of view, contrast the meaning of what you are looking for with reality.

Here the work begins of opening the curatorial project up in search of images that illustrate the premise that has served as the project’s driving force: we live in a territory that is also African and we believe we have much to learn from the migrant communities.

We go out in search of images and we meet people who compel us look at things that are out of sight; who help us to think about everything from another place entirely. We learn about their professions, their daily lives, their struggles. And at the same time we also record this landscape of renunciations, mistrust, survival and segregated neighborhoods. Eventually everything comes to light, but only little by little.

This collection is just the beginning of this photographic research.

Eva Serrats



Leaving for Ramadan dinner, when the sun sets in Aldea, April 2023.

Featuring:

AbdouMaliq Simone is Senior Professorial Fellow, the Urban Institute, University of Sheffield, co-director, the Beyond Inhabitation Lab, Polytechnic University of Turin, and Honorary Professor, African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town.

Aby Sène-Harper is a Senegalese national who is a researcher and professor in natural resource management at Clemson University. She is a trained biodiversity conservation scientist whose work informs strategy and policy development for socially and ecologically just governance of conservation areas and natural resources in Africa and the US. Her research lies at the intersections of protected area governance, indigenous land and resource sovereignty, and rural development.

Aminata Cécile Mbaye is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Queen's University from May 2021 to April 2023. Her primary research focuses on same-sex intimacy and queer aesthetic in Senegal and francophone African countries.

Daniel Cid is Associate Professor of Design at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton (UK) and he collaborates with Leve on research projects. He moves in the world of design theory and practice.

David Theo Goldberg is a Distinguished Professor, Departments of Anthropology, Comparative Literature, and Criminology, Law, and Society, University of California, Irvine. He recently concluded more than two decades as Director of the system-wide University of California Humanities

Research Institute. The latest of his many books include *Dread: Facing Futureless Futures* (Polity, 2021), and *The War on Critical Race Theory: Or the Remaking of Racism* (Polity 2023).

Estrella Sendra is a researcher, filmmaker and festival organiser, working as Lecturer in Culture, Media and Creative Industries Education (Festivals and Events) at King's College London. Estrella publishes on festivals, film, creative industries in Africa and video essays, with a regional focus on Senegal.

Eva Serrats is the founder of Leve. She is an Adjunct Professor of projects (ETSAB-UPC) and head of strategic development at the Cooperative of Architects Jordi Capell. She works in the fields of photography, film, architecture and cultural management.

Francesc Pla is a member of Leve studio. He is Head of Architecture, Engineering and Landscape Utilities of the Directorate of Public Space Services of the Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona, as well as Adjunct Professor of projects at the Vallès School of Architecture (ETSAV-UPC).

Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin is an Associate Professor at Queen's University in Ontario, Canada. She is a feminist scholar who is interested in African urban futures and black futurities. She currently conducts research on youth identity, labour practices, psychosocial well-being and future orientation in Nigeria.

Jenny Mbaye is a Reader in Culture and Creative Industries, as well as the Associate Dean, Employability, Engagement and Enterprise, for the School of Communication & Creativity at City, University of London. Her work focuses on urban cultural economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a specific interest in urban creativity, development and transformation, creative labour and entrepreneurship, as well cultural policy and governance. She is a research and policy consultant (UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, OSIWA; British Council; Goethe Institute) and a member of the Kôrè Institute's (IKAM) educational committee. Dr Mbaye lives and works in London.

Lionel Manga is a cameroonian writer, author of *L'Ivresse du papillon* or *La Sphère de Planck*. Content designer of Afrikan Logik in Yaoundé, end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He aired Klorofil, the first radio program on green issues, as Le Petit Homme Vert. Writing extensively in various publications on many topics, he has committed the afterword of Benjamin Bratton's *Terraformation*. Co-organizer of *Cosmocides* (2018). Lecturer at "Les Ateliers de la pensée" second edition in Dakar.

Maramé Gueye is Associate Professor of African and African Diaspora Literatures at East Carolina. She is a scholar activist of women's rights, and her work focuses on the verbal art of Wolof women, gender and language, hip hop, and migration.

Neferti X. M. Tadiar is a feminist scholar of Philippine cultures and global political economy and Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Barnard College, Columbia University. She is the author of four books, the most recent of which is *Remaindered Life* (Duke University Press, 2022).

Rachel Stella Jenkins is the founder of the studio genuinefake, a multidisciplinary platform, where partnerships in the realms of design, architecture & urbanism are realised. Next to lecturing at University of the Arts London, commissions, presentations and partnerships have included The Folkestone Triennial, RIBA, the AA (Architectural Association), Oxford University, Het Nieuwe Instituut and the Fondazione Feltrinelli (Milan).

Ryan Bishop is Professor of Global Art and Politics at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton (UK).

YoHa. Graham Harwood and Matsuko Yokokoji (YoHa English translation 'aftermath') have lived and worked together since 1994. Their work involves the use of art as a mode of enquiry into technical objects most recently within the fields of health, war, oceans and death. YoHa's inquiry is usually populated by an interconnection of technical objects and other kinds of bodies as in a clinic, hospital, battlefield or at sea. The focus of their enquiry is where the flows of power can be reconfigured by the ambiguity of art, not necessarily to make art but to make use of it within a wider enquiry. Their work has been internationally awarded and part of collections at the

Centre Pompidou, Paris and Tate Britain, London and ZKM Karlsruhe, Germany, Manifesta, Italy. Graham Harwood is Reader in Media Communications and Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, where he convenes MA Digital Media, Data Visualisation.

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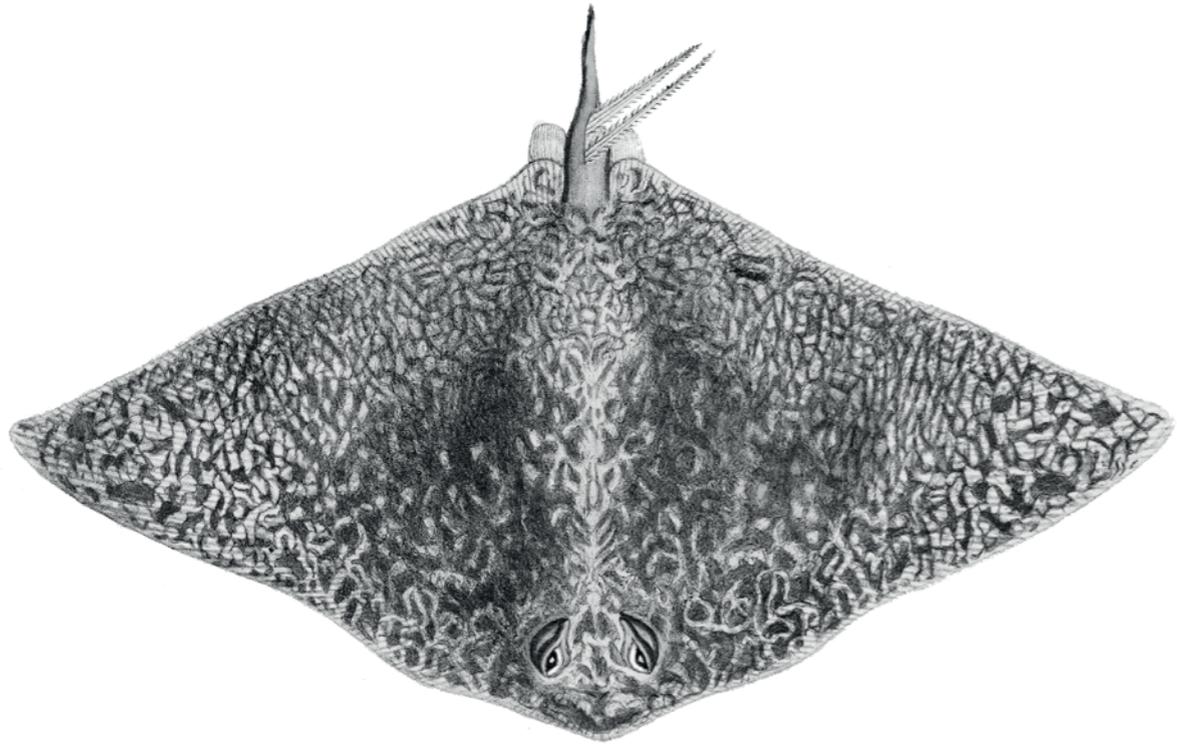
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“This thing that you’re doing, is it upsetting the paradigm we’re faced with today?”

Mostafa Shaimi, Salt

