performingborders e-journal in print

#3 entangled practices

Embodying cross-border live art

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Edited text

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Introduction

performingborders is a curatorial research-platform that explores the relations between live art and notions and lived experiences of intersectional and transnational borders

As a project, we have always held hands with artists thinking about how to cross-borders in their practices. Our work has been rooted in this lived experience and as we have continued to extend our network of relationships and tapestry of knowledge(s) with our collaborators, we have been deeply interested in cross-border practices that navigate and critique the power structures that render such work both precarious and vital.

Entangled Practices: Embodying cross-border live art gathers practitioners making visible the many ways we are connected and dependent on each other, our freedom held in each other's hands. In the third edition of our e-journal we have invited artists to reflect on their work through the lenses of the ethics and strategies of meaningful collaborative practices across territories. Through this, an expanded horizon of shared methodologies comes into view – rooted in territories, struggles and ecologies where the dynamics of resistance, collaboration, and organising offer new possibilities for creative practice.

This e-journal was originally published digitally, so this printed version features excerpts from the texts and some images. We invite everyone to scan the QR code and visit the link below to experience the full texts, audio, images, and video. We hope this printed version might encounter you in person, and give you access to this thinking in a new format you can hold, share, and move with.

performingborders

1 Foreword

It is good to see you here, friend, joining us once again; or maybe you're new around here. Welcome to *Entangled Practices: Embodying cross-border live art.*

When I think of entanglement, I think of Anna Lowenhaupt-Tsing's vision of solidarities that emerge in the mosaics of open-ended assemblages of entangled ways of life, as she refers to her analysis of webs of labour in *Mushroom at the End of the World.* Salvage accumulation, is the term she uses, to describe that which takes place at the edges of capitalism, amidst ruins.

When I think of entanglement, I think of cultural geographer and Black studies scholar Katherine McKittrick. She opens her book *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle,* by exploring geographic stories, as she calls them. 'The earth is also skin', she tells us, and 'a young girl can legitimately take possession of a street, or an entire city, albeit on different terms than we may be familiar with'. McKittrick's entanglement is a search for a terrain where 'different geographic stories can be and are told', against the repetitive naturalisation where difference is spatialised.

When I think of entanglement, I think of travelling across the Dnister river in the Republic of Moldova, moving towards the contested territory of Transnistria, and the ways in which many have organised their lives along and around this river, in spite of the borders that split it in numerous ways along its right and left banks, from the Carpathian Mountains through to Odessa and the Black Sea.

When I think of entanglement, I think of how ideas are smuggled across borders; their smuggling makes both the violent border politics and the forms of resistance that refuse them palpable. I think about relations, binds, networks, flight paths and surprising solidarities – many of these gathered in this iteration of the journal. This issue spends time with methods, dreams, tools and knowledges that articulate modes of cross-border working in and beyond Live Art. These are embodied not only because they emerge at the meeting point between many bodies and their own experiences of borders; but also because they locate agency precisely in political imagination – they emerge from, and return to, bodies – human bodies, bodies of water, bodies of knowledge, bodies of time.

I say that we spend time with such reflections because in thinking about what it means to cross-borders – be it a body or a practice or an idea – the contributions here also enact such a crossing at the level of the temporal. So much of the work we do rests on the premise of queer time, time that moves in multiple directions – immediate time and cosmic time, pasts-forever-present and needing to be known, and futures being shaped by relations forged in the now. Thinking about cross-border work necessitates multiple ways of tending to time, stretching out in ways that are not linear, and do not reproduce colonial logics of ordering and sequencing. Here's to moments of quiet disturbance, emergent solidarities, myriad intimacies in the borderlands.

Entangled Practices opens with setareh fatehi's *parallaxing (i): a story of practice,* inviting us for a walk in this microcosm of a practice of remote hosting. fatehi's is a practice that tends to shifting the geographies of distance for intimacies of many kinds; in their words, parallaxing is a way of overexposing 'the void that exists between the images of two locations, two bodies, two actualities that are distanced by the forces that make wars'. Parallaxing contends with moving from and with places deemed to be 'unlivable motherlands', asking, where is my body? Where can my body be? How can we fight to not have to decide where our bodies should be?

Tanja Ostojić reflects on over three decades of work with *Mis(s)placed Women?*, a long-form and long-term art project with contributions from across the world by over 180 participants with experience of displacement. Through shared reflections, an ethics coda and an offering of scores, the contribution entangles methods for cross-border collaboration with performative modes of exploring displacement as a means of unpacking travel, identity, questions of home and belonging, public and private space, safety and solidarity, united by a commitment to a collectively-shaped feminist politics of care.

The multi-form and multi-lingual contribution from Sharon Mercado Nogales and Eli Wewentxu, co-founders of *Moviendo Territorios,* is a five-part tapestry made up of materials gathered since before the formation of the collective in 2020, up to now. They refer to this material as living – made up of videos of journeys, soundscapes of collective labour, images of encounters and amended memories, poems and stories of what has occurred. Like many of the offerings in this e-journal, this is time and place travelling, learning from and with territories, places, people and stories that have emerged along the way.

Entangled stories and practices are also encountered in Rodolfo Suárez and Giulia Palladini's *Backpack,* a sharing and invitation to join this unfolding multi-modal text-action woven around the Fronteras project on migration and exile. *Backpack* is in itself a multi-vocal speculative form of travel and action where transit, exile, displacement become fabrics of grief and possibility. The invitation of a farewell letter you never got to write, or perhaps, one that never got sent, is resonant- and such letters and offerings are woven here in what McKittrick might call geographic stories at the borderlands. 'Yes', we read in *Backpack,* 'migrating is jumping the walls of all frontiers separating us from some kind of fantasy life. It is crossing the desert and becoming a piece of night behind a bush.' The text continues 'when we arrive something in us will feel as if we had arrived there before.'. In transit, what is stable becomes blurred, what is fixed becomes fluid, and we shape-shift and body-morph and for a while, we time travel. I kept coming back to 'incitement' in my reading of *Backpack.* Inciting has an energy that travels with.

From letters of farewell to letters of love, the collective Fehras Publishing Practices offers *Love Letters to Our Comrades.* This collection of letters to those who have offered companionship and camaraderie in the least likely of moments and times stems from a desire to remember and honour love as it emerges in 'the face of loss and genocide'. The letters open with a story of a Sawt Al-Shaab (Voice of the People radio) five hour radio broadcast between Lebanese artist Ziad Rahbani and journalist Doha Shams and others, recorded in Beirut against the backdrop of the lingering Qana massacre of 1996, where the Israeli Occupation Forces destroyed a UN compound in South Lebanon, claiming the lives of over 106 civilians taking refuge. The letters that follow, to culture workers, booksellers and a literary magazine, reflect on the material conditions of cross-border labour and labour in the midst of conflict, the value of poetics, of shaping new political imaginaries, of tending to what intuition offers for revolutions of many scales and seasons. 'This garden', writes Fehras, 'is a paradise of undoing, where weeds and brambles begin to digest the enclosure, and vines embrace the hinges of the gate'. The momentum of what Tsing might call a different form of accumulation, a rewilding.

Across the temporalities of these offerings, new entanglements are produced in their proximity. Postimperial imaginations emerge at all scales, and any border can become a borderland, anyone a time-traveller. This un-mapping, to draw on Tao Leigh Goffe's term, is an undoing and a form of presence: solidarities emerging at the borderlands, entanglement as practice of rewilding. We dwell in these borderlands together, shifting ideas across genres, modes of communication, Live Art practices, bodies, spaces and times.

As a long-term collaborator and friend of performingborders, entangled across many projects and iterations, I hold with me questions of what emerges in the borderlands, what spaces of thinking, critique and experiment are forged in the midst. For this e-journal, attunement has offered a form of being with and alongside the contributions; as my late colleague and friend Rebecca Collins has explored, lingering longer with uncertainty, and finding moments where something else becomes possible – at times, wonder in the midst of grief.

Gratitude to performingborders for gathering us all, and to all time-travellers keen for new stories to emerge at and across the borders. Our hope for this edition is that we might continue to explore what the digital offers in building and holding space for new imaginaries.

Diana Damian Martin

performingborders e-journal #3
Entangled Practices:
Embodying cross-border live art

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3 MIS(S)PLACED WOMEN? METHODOLOGIES OF EMPOWERING FEMINIST ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Tanja Ostojić

Mis(s)placed Women? (2009-2022) is a complex long-term art project that includes solo and group contributions by over 180 individuals from six continents, embodying and enacting some of everyday-life's activities. These thematise displacement experienced by migrants, refugees, and itinerant artists traveling the world to earn their living. Contributions/contributors originate from places including, among others, Aberdeen, Aix-en-Provence, Calgary, Gaborone, Montevideo, New York, Wuhan. While some of the performances and workshops deal with migration issues, others engage with feminism, queerness, gentrification, inclusion, accessibility, power relations, and vulnerability, particularly as they relate to women and non-binary people, an aspect that figured prominently in the past three decades of my artistic practice. *Mis(s)placed Women?* investigates privilege by distinguishing between working mobility, forced or desired migration, and how arbitrary laws apply to migrants. The project also explores diverse public spaces and the invisibility of certain groups within them.

Mis(s)placed Women? workshops apply the principles of Art as Social Practice and explore a variety of public spaces and the possibilities for temporary interventions in them. They empower participants via a kind of master-class block seminar—a laboratory outside of official educational institutions, so to say—while developing new collective and individual works, performances and performance scores, and in some cases as well activist actions and performances. I have conducted numerous workshops across the world in which the participants are selected by open call.

Local and international *Mis(s)placed Women?* gatherings are organised around the idea of community building, as well as sharing struggles and strategies via creative exchange and performative actions between different ecologies. To do so, for example, long term contributors from Canada, across Europe and Bangladesh gathered in Belgrade (2021) and in Istanbul (2022).

In this text, I share some of the methodologies of empowering feminist artistic practice that I developed over the period of 13 years in the framework of my *Mis(s)placed Women?* project. Through its collaborative and multifaceted aspects, this project seeks to raise awareness and visibility for marginalised and discriminated minorities on the local and international scale, while the artistic process brings together research, theories, praxis and artistic production. I want to share some of the ethics that were crucial to the processes of the project's development, and will give as well insights about steps of the workshops' creation and delivery.

I realised that there is a 30-year-long mutual learning process between the methodologies I use in my teaching formats and in my artistic practice, and that the ethical aspects of working with people play an essential role in it. For instance in the framework of my other, in part parallel, long-term-project *Lexicon of Tanjas Ostojić* (2011-18) that developed further the strategies of conscious ethical politics in artistic production, the creation of a community with shared authorship and ownership (with an intergenerational group of 33 name sisters of different social and ethnic backgrounds), and the emancipatory potentials of collective autobiographical methodologies as the basis for art-making; this included the creation of an Ethical Codex that in most aspects applied to the *Mis(s)placed Women?* Project.

Work with Performance Scores

Performance scores are instructions on how to perform a piece, described in simple steps. They can be understood as an overall frame, a starting point, or as an inspiration. Some of them are written before and some after the initial performances. One score can result in numerous and diverse performances depending on the interpretation.

In my artistic practice I build, use and share an archive of performance scores as an artistic, pedagogical and activist tool. In the framework of the *Mis(s)placed Women?* Project workshops (as well as at other workshops, or while teaching seminars at universities) we are engaging with this archive of scores (some examples in the conclusion below), performing archive, usually in the form of embodied performances. We are combining scores and developing them further. Proposing and writing new scores that we share. The power of working in a group gets amplified via tools, such as exercises and scores, that are like vocabulary for us to be examined and tested on how they work in different contexts.

Example of JIN[x] JÎYAN AZADÎ / WOMEN LIFE FREEDOM Action[1]

JIN[x] JÎYAN AZADÎ / WOMEN LIFE FREEDOM was a collective action of the *Mis(s)placed Women?* Community in remembrance of Jina Mahsa Amini, and in solidarity with the activists, especially all women, silenced and murdered in Iran. The action started at Galata Square in Istanbul on the 22nd September 2022 at 11am, combining three performance scores from the *Mis(s)placed Women?* Performance Workshop held one year earlier, (September 2021, Istanbul), including walking backwards and waving of colourful scarves that as community performed at Istiklal Street, and Opening of The Choice, action of collective screaming while walking busy streets in Kadiköy. So, when the *Mis(s)placed Women?* community from Istanbul joined forces with the *Mis(s)placed Women?* community from Berlin and London in 2022, after one day of indoor performances at Depo, on the second day of our workshop, we decided to combine the above mentioned three performance elements/ three scores so to say, creating a powerful action in solidarity with women, silenced and murdered in Iran. We walked backwards carrying above our heads our colourful scarfs connected with nods to each other, along the Büyük-Hendek-Street until the square at the junction with Meşrutiyet-Street and Şişhane Metro, continuously screaming. We raised great interest, and people were standing up from their chairs in cafes across the way, taking pictures of the action.

Example of Score #7, The Safe Circle

In September 2019, Luciana Damiani came from Montevideo to Berlin with a travel grant from the Uruguayan Ministry of Education and Culture in order to meet with me and to collaborate on the *Mis(s)placed Women?* Project, as she wrote, it was "necessary for me to try to get an opportunity to share my experiences and generate bonds with other people who have experienced similar situations" regarding misplacement. So, I organised a workshop for her in the Park am Nordbahnhof Berlin, where she had chosen a place, drawn a circle with yellow chalk, and performed the *Score #1: Unpacking a Bag of Your Own,* which I wrote in 2009. Then she read her Manifesto, and afterwards performed as well the *Score #2: Holding the 'Misplaced Women?' Sign*[2], in her version, the 'Misplaced Human?'. In September 2023, I wrote a *Score #7: The Safe Circle* and shared it in a workshop in a public space close to the construction site for the inclusive social housing for multigenerational lesbian women. I would like to share at this point and at the end of my essay, those four short texts/instructions/ scores (the manifesto below and three scores at the end) as an invitation to perform them and I would be pleased to hear back from you in case you perform them. I will start from this:

Luciana Damiani's Manifesto[3]
I am a body and I am a statement.
I am a witness and I am evidence of manipulation.
I don't want to ask for permission to be.
I don't have to ask for permission to be.
I don't want to be defined by you, or anybody, or anywhere, or anything.
I don't want to be from here or there.
If my existence threatens you, that is because you're afraid to lose your privileges.
If your walls surround me, my words will be the weapon to make them fall.
If you hurt me, I will heal.
And I will repeat this all over again.
Because I have a pact with all of my kind.
Because that's my duty and my only way to resist.

Conclusion and Scores Offering

It means to me a lot to get an opportunity to hold the space, to invite to share and discuss anti-discriminatory knowledges, endorsing, and transformative artistic practices, in the first line with others who identify as women, many of whom did not had an access to the arts, art production, access to art education, similar to mine, got marginalised due to the processes of canonisation, or on the basis of lack of opportunity and compatibility with art market/carrier dynamics due to maternity engagement, or peripheral geographies... So, the methodologies of empowering feminist artistic practices and alternative pedagogical formats I wrote about above, have been developed over decades of working from a marginal position myself, and have been embedded in my own artistic practice. In this way there has been a mutual learning process between the two, as well as, between the participants and myself, and others as hosts or facilitators. Those mutual learning processes and empowerments have been interlaced with appreciation and long lasting women friendships, sisterhoods, resulting from community building processes. Reunions, and international community gatherings have been incredibly rewarding and productive, as women would meet and reunite, often in a new life cycle, different life stage and circumstances. With time, the trust and openness to the group dynamics and the process grows.

Between the major challenges I have been facing over the years, in many of the project workshops and exhibitions, what emerged was precarity (lack of funds, limited time, space and organisational facilities), post production that, especially at the earlier stage of the project's development, was not understood as part of the process; there was too the complexity of organising work, travel, communication, documentation, archiving and crediting with numerous and such diverse participants. It is worth investing the extraordinary effort needed to assure that in participatory artistic practices ethical guidelines are respected and all contributors are credited, even in the case of, for instance, the 27-metre-long *Mis(s)placed Women?* project's timeline installation covering a period of 13 years, between 2009–2022, that has been on display at Depo-Istanbul, consisting of photos, videos, signs, banners, accompanied by over 200 names of participants, partner institutions, documentarists, locations, dates, etc. It is worth the effort of crediting, and thanking everyone.

Score offerings

Alongside the manifesto above, below I am including in this contribution three existing performance scores, that I offer to the reader of the performingborders e-journal: *Score #1: Unpacking a Bag of Your Own* (2009); *Score #2: Holding the 'Misplaced Women?' Sign* (2012); and *Score #7: The Safe Circle* (2023).

Mis(s)placed Women? workshop, Istanbul, a collective action 'Opening of ones voice', in Kadiköy district (2021), with the participation of: Arzu Yayıntaş., Gülhatun Yıldırım, Gizem Yılmaz, Nazlı Durak, Persefoni Myrtsou, Vanessa Ponte, Sabbi Senior, Selma Hekim and Tanja Ostojić. Photo: K. Kaygusuz, copyright: T. Ostojić

Score#1: Unpacking a Bag of Your Own[4]

More or less than an hour, with or without preparation, one or more performers, migration-specific locations

About *Misplaced Women?* is an art project that welcomes contributions by people from diverse backgrounds that embody and enact everyday-life activities that touch upon forms of displacement. Participants are invited to perform and reflect upon different notions of travelling, identity, illegality, homelessness, security, private/public space, and to share their experiences on the project blog.

Instructions
1. Select a migration-specific place that resonates with you (such as public transportation, central bus station, airport, border, different areas affected by gentrification).
2. Get there and unpack a bag of your own (such as your own purse or backpack, or a bag with empty plastic bags, or packaging from consumer articles).
3. Take every single item out and turn it inside out. Take everything out of your pockets. Turn your pockets inside out. Take your shoes off. Once you have unpacked everything, search to see if you have discovered something else.
4. For those more advanced and highly motivated: You can repeat the same action in various places and times, and see how it is perceived by those around you. If you choose this option, draw a map of places where you performed each of the unpacking performances.

Note Reflect upon how it felt to do this in public. Did you feel exposed? How did it resonate with your life experience, and did it bring you closer to the people on the move, people on the street, etc? Be open to talk to the passers-by about what you're actually doing and why. Let this performance last for at least half an hour. If you have unpacked your things in a hectic way, after a break, try to pack items back with appreciation and care (or the other way around).

Attention Places that are generally understood as public spaces might appear not to be such. That means that with your performance you might challenge the notion of public space, and see where it is (not) possible to do your action. A security guy might push you one metre away from the entrance (in a shopping mall, or what many train stations have become nowadays, right?) A policeman might ask you, "What are you doing?". I can only advise you to bring one person with you to try to talk to any security personnel you encounter, so that you can finish your performance. You may also say that you are searching for an item of your own that you really need but you are not sure if you took it with you (Whatever that might be, right?). This is to avoid being kicked out or arrested, given that performing and filming is usually not allowed in some "public" places.

Score #2: Holding the "Misplaced Women?" Sign[5]

Less than an hour, with or without preparation, one performer

Instructions
1. Select a migration-specific place that resonates with you.
2. Make your own "MIS(S)PLACED WOMEN?" / "MISPLACED MAN?" / "MISPLACED HUMAN" sign or banner (on a cardboard, on a piece of paper, on some cloth. It can be a drawing or an embroidery or even a collage).
3. Stand there and hold it for at least half an hour.
4. Ask someone to take a photo of you standing there.
5. You can repeat the same action in various places and times, and see how it is being perceived by those around you. If you choose this option, draw on the map the places where you performed each action.

Note Reflect upon how it felt to hold the sign, how it resonated with you, with your life experience, how the location you chose affected you. Be open to talk to the people that are passing by about the sign you are holding and related issues, and hear what they have to say about it.

Crediting and Publishing It is important to credit everyone properly. With the *Mis(s)placed Women?* project we pay special attention to that. Please be sure to fully credit your action as: (your name) Mis(s)placed Women? delegated performance by Tanja Ostojić, whenever you publish it. We will do the same with your contribution. Send a photo or a drawing of yourself performing, a description about how it went (include your name, date, time, duration, location(s) name(s) of everyone involved, photographer and notes). Please let us know if you would like your contribution to be published on the project's blog. We would greatly appreciate your permission to do so.

Score #7: The Safe Circle[6]

Around 30 minutes or longer, without preparations, one or more participants

Location A public, semi-public, or private space where one can feel protected

About This score derived from Luciana Damiani's, performance entitled The Safe Circle, based on my Mis(s)placed Women? Score#1 and Score#2, realised in the framework of Mis(s)placed Women? Workshop, Park am Nordbahnhof, Berlin (2019), as well as out of my own performances Personal Space (1996) and On Rape Attempts (2021). All those performances had an empowering effect on authors, as they had on a few others who re-performed and witnessed them, so I created this score as an invitation to others who would like to reflect and to share their personal experiences in a safe circle. It is important to try out this score, to visualise and possibly even share stories, feelings and thoughts, if you feel that it will be an empowering experience for yourself and others around you, and a part of your healing process. You need to be in control of whether to share and how to share your experiences. You can choose in what circumstances and at what level of detail you feel comfortable talking about it. Ultimately, what matters most is what has value and meaning for you.

Instructions
1. Let your friends from the group give you a healing hug when you finish, if you like.
2. Select a location in a public space where you can feel safe and protected (by architecture, greenery, and by a crowd that would gather to support you).
3. Choose a colour and a size of the circle, or some other shape that speaks to you and draw it yourself with chalk on the ground.
4. Position yourself in a safe circle that you have drawn on the ground.
5. Think about situations in which you felt safe/unsafe. You may start with memories from your childhood, or by situations that affected you the most in your life.
6. You can take time to write down or draw your thoughts, and feelings for a while.
7. When you are ready you can invite your people to come around the circle or to step inside. Share with your trust group your findings (such as: reading some of your notes, explaining a drawing...).
8. You may instruct one of your friends to co-perform, and try to translate your words or drawings into improvised bodily movements or another artistic medium.
9. You can choose to shake out the stress from your body.

Notes Reflect upon: What does safety mean to you? What do you feel you need in order to feel safe? With whom do you feel safe? Where do you feel safe? Do you feel safe here (in this neighbourhood)? What colour and what size is your safe circle? What considerations/reservations do you have? What other feelings do you associate with safety? We can discuss together as well, what is the difference between safety and security.

1. JIN[x] JÎYAN AZADÎ / WOMEN LIFE FREEDOM action, with the participation of: Gaby Bila-Gunther aka Lady Gaby, Selma Hekim, Kathryn Fischer aka Mad Kate, Susan Merrick, Tanja Ostojić, Vanessa Ponte, Hieu Hanh Hoang Tran aka Hany Tea, Adrienne Teicher, Mürüvvet Türkyılmaz, Arzu Yayıntaş, Gülhatun Yıldırım. Organised in the frame of: *Tanja Ostojić: MIS(S)PLACED WOMEN? 2009–2022, A Collaborative Art Project,* Exhibition at Depo Istanbul (2022), *Mis(s)placed Women?* Community Gathering and Live Events, curated by: Arzu Yayıntaş and Tanja Ostojić.
2. Tanja Ostojić, "Score #2: Holding the 'Misplaced Women?' Sign", 2012.
3. Luciana Damiani's Manifesto, first published by T. Ostojić at the *Misplaced Women?* Blog, 2019.
4. Tanja Ostojić, "Score #1: Unpacking a Bag of Your Own", 2009.
5. Tanja Ostojić, "Score #2: Holding the 'Misplaced Women?' Sign", 2012.
6. Tanja Ostojić, "Score #7: The Safe Circle", 2023

4 Moviendo Territorios

Sharon Mercado Nogales & Eli Wewentxu

This text was originally written in Spanish, the English translation was done with support from Camila de la Parra. To read the version in Spanish please follow the QR code.

Moviendo Territorios[1] is a collective born in 2021 in Berlin, Germany, formed by Eli Wewentxu (Wallmapu-Chile) and Sharon Mercado Nogales (Bolivian Andes), to create actions that activate our discourse and generate relationships that go beyond the institutional ones.

Moviendo Territorios creates a direct bridge with communities and spaces that are working the land, building self-sustenance, caring for seeds, and through the recognition of their territory are fostering la resistencia del pueblo, the peoples' resistance. Since we started, we have been able to connect with 3 territories: Chomio-Wallmapu, Cusijata-Bolivia and El Chaco-Argentina.

Through these nexuses, Moviendo Territorios seeks to create an alternative view of the concept of "solidarity", questioning it from the power dynamics it tends to exert, which reduce the role and voice of those receiving the benefit.

Moviendo Territorios organises Soli Parties in Berlin with the intention to fundraise large sums of money. This financial support covers materials, transport, snacks and others, as agreed with each community, according to their needs or desires. All of this is only possible through a network of friends, spaces and collaborators that support us at every event.

The following text, written by Eli Wewentxu and Sharon Mercado Nogales, contains all the endless material that we've been documenting since 2020, prior to the consolidation of Moviendo Territorios, until today. This living material continues to take various shapes: videos recorded in the intimacy of our journey; sounds that remind us of certain moments of labour, realities, landscapes and gazes that treasure our unique encounters, intervened images, poems and narrations of what´s been experienced.

This project has made it possible to learn more about territories that preserve, in essence, the resistance of existing, the desire to remember, and the struggle of each community. We thank performingborders for the opportunity to develop this documentation and to work with other formats, which is also part of the nature of the collective and our work together.

CHOMIO

my great-aunt has exchanged several of these seeds with me. Others, also from txafkintu, I exchanged at some rural schools in Mapuche communities where we sometimes host art workshops, this practice/exchange takes place among the student community.

when do we stop seeing their importance?

The need to look after their genetics by exchanging them for other seeds originating from other territories, other soils.-

The importance of preserving these practices and learnings is fundamental to our self-sustenance and nutritional autonomy. – //

one day, someone said to me: going back to the territory where your father, grandfather and grandmother, your great-grandfather and great-grandmother, and his father and mother sewed – you work the soil and eat from it... maybe this will clear away your pain and the coldness accumulated inside //

akuy mawün akuy mawün akuy mawün akuy mawün
let the rain come!

for liberation
for the freedom of water
for the freedom of forests
for the freedom of territory
free Wallmapu!
for the freedom of peoples' decision-making
for the freedom of political prisoners
for the freedom of childhoods
Out with the forestales[2] from Wallmapu!

CUSIJATA

Titicaca Lake – Aymara Territory
Awichas (grandmother – Aymara), is an elderly women's collective with two sites in the city of La Paz and another in Cusijata, where they hold various activities from workshops in vegetable gardens to weaving. These three physical spaces are responsible for gathering and serving lunch throughout the week, making this the core activity of the gathering. In the Cusijata space, the grandparents receive lunch from Monday to Friday. During this time, they leave their homes to gather with the community to share, pi´jchar[3], converse in their mother tongue, Aymara, and decide on upcoming activities. Francisca Chambilla is in charge of the Cusijata group and, with the support of her family and particularly her daughter Elizabeth Oquendo, organises all the activities and communications between Awichas La Paz and Cusijata. This created a space that, through the years, has established a care network where they all keep up to date with the life of the grandparents, their nutrition, ailments and other preoccupations.

Sapito Piedra Lluvia – Little toad Stone Rain
Within the Andean cosmovision, the toad is a very important and complex being who reveals, tells fortunes, gives and sometimes asks in return. When I arrived at Cusijata for the first time, a small toad hopped on my path and, as a reflex, I said: There it is! Money we will surely have... I took it as a good omen, grateful for our encounter, maybe I was internally asking for everything to go well, revealing a fear of failure. From the motorway, we went down the hill until Cusijata, where we were welcomed by Francisca's little house with a nice rosemary tea from her garden and marraqueta bread. Preparing the space and deciding to build on it requires consensus and permission from the space itself. Delineating it, closing it and giving it a purpose is a process that takes time. The space at Cusijata requires a lot of responsibilities since creating a vegetable garden, a school or a workshop involves all the young, adult and elderly comunarios who live in the community. They are the ones participating in these activities at various points in their lives in Cusijata. One of the young people who helped us build the greenhouse shared with us their enthusiasm for supporting this project, revealing that these spaces will continue to operate in the long term, maybe in different ways, but that people will inevitably grow old, and they hope to do so as part of a community.

To our bad luck, the rainy season started early. Our plan to build with adobe bricks made with our own hands was left unfinished since most of them didn't dry on time, which led us to decide to finish the work with bricks. This process taught us how to handle a budget, dialogue with all the Awichas and generate a space where there is a balance between the wishes of the community and the construction and transport budget. Disrupting the idea of "charity" is also to disrupt the power dynamics it entails. To be supportive, we have been taught to recognise the poor and identify them as ignorant. To disrupt the idea of "charity" you must break the concept and remember the reciprocity within a community. The concept of Ayni could be the closest one to describing this practice. Ayni is a concept that describes the practice of reciprocity between the Aymara and Quechua communities and families in the Andes. "To return what is received" and "receive as a devolution of what is given". For Moviendo Territorios, it is a constant challenge, since we do not want to play a paternalistic, institutionalising role, but want to present ourselves as another community capable of sustaining a relationship and responding to wishes that go beyond what is proposed in each encounter.

For this trip around the Sun with Moviendo Territorios, we wanted to fulfill our desire to revisit one of our previous projects. We took advantage of Sharon being in Bolivia, and we: Liqkoyam, Anke and I, decided to climb from Temuco-Gulumapu to La Paz. Almost simultaneously, from the other side of the mountain range or Puelmapu, Pipi was climbing too. A few days after, we all got together in La Paz – arriving to a February that was festive and rainy with the spirit of carnival That's how Cusijata welcomed us, with one of those rainfalls that you can only see by Lake Titicaca. We got together in the dining room of the awichas[4] where we shared food, memories of our previous visit, some seeds I brought over from Chomio mapu, sowing secrets, wool tapestries, words in mapuchezügu and Aymara, mate and little jokes. This was where pu wechekeche, or Mapuche youths, crossed paths with the awichas, or Aymara grandmothers.

As a project, this year we were driven by our newen, by our strength and desire for the seeds to be freed so they can be shared and exchanged between people, as done by pu kuifikeche or our ancestors. We were also moved by our wish to bring our youthful energy to working the fields, where it is mostly the elderly who remain, who guard and care for this vast and vital knowledge of working the land. And so too, they make space for the crossing of ancient people and ancestors, to share and celebrate that we are still alive and resisting, within our communities or beyond them.
ELI.-

(....)
For me, Moviendo Territorios imagines a possible cross-border reality
confronting the home
Establishing practices that push or embrace each anonymous being in its context
To make an empanada, or watch the door,
to examine a broken finger or travel 13 hours in a day
To mock the existing economies and introduce more plural ones
(....)

It's not just the support, the matter,
the axis, the definition,
the search or even the counter-narrative
It's the interest.
It's the affect.

What I understand of this project is
not just a foundation
surrounded by gratitude
But also an out-of-focus lens to revisit what has been forgotten
Many stories fade through communication, the media, and charity
Others, we might get to witness if we're lucky
and remember with fragility.

Excerpt from *Resolución – Cusijata,*
Feb 2024, Pipi Villadangos

CHACO

Gallinero, Chacra and structural support for the Merendero (community kitchen and picnic space) Ismael Ramirez, Barrio La Matanza, Sáenz Peña, Argentina. March 2023
When we arrived at Saenz Peña, Ale welcomed us with their whole family, lots of cumbia villera, open arms and loving children's smiles all around. El Chaco is a hot place, with an intense sun but extremely scarce water. Our wish for the merendero and Ale's family was to support them with buying a new water tank, table and gas, alongside the construction of a chicken coop. Behind Ivana's house, who is Ale's daughter, we began the construction. We worked arduously on a diet of mate and coca leaves to build the chacra – farm, we moved the earth and prepared it for sowing. Ale jokingly would say to us how did you all come all the way here... from so far away. The memories created allowed us to foster a closeness almost like a family, where Ale and everyone treated us, Eli, Froilan and I, as their children.
Sharon.-

For the right to live in peace, and grow up healthy and free, we say 'no' to violence against childhoods in territories of resistance.
Justice for Ismael Ramirez.-

HUMBOLDT FORUM ACTION

MANIFESTO AGAINST HUMBOLDT FORUM – NUEVOS TERRITORIOS

We don't want to be welcome in this palace.

A palace full of stolen objects from other cultures, a palace full of colonial wounds in glass-cases guarded by the working class of Berlin.

It is not the house of culture, it is a palace of elitist white colonial consumption, which seeks to satisfy an identity and a culture based on white supremacy, while being one more economic contribution to this country.

What is the need to create a monument like this one?

A cultural extractivism that manages, controls and doesn't allow us to be and exist on our own terms.

In order to remove their shame, Humboldt Forum commissions art concepts created with stolen objects, at the expense of the creativity and identity of artists from oppressed territories.

For us what we are doing now is an intervention, for the Humboldt Forum with its academics and curators this is seen as a work of art.

How many thousands of euros would Humboldt Forum offer us to do this intervention as part of their program?

Humboldt Forum takes advantage of the precarity of artists of color to buy our faces and our bodies and make out of this a decolonial publicity screen.

Humboldt Forum exoticizes and objectifies.

We do not judge the artists who decided to accept the money and the conditions, but we do question when they lend themselves to reproduce extractivism and cultural appropriation.

Sacred objects must be returned to the place where they belong so that the people and the pueblos can decide what they want to do with them.

Stop institutional paternalism.

The stolen objects wrongly called collections are locked up and deprived of the mountains, rivers, volcanoes, deserts, forests, oceans, which are the places where they have always belonged.
Sharon Mercado Nogales & Eli Wewentxu

1. *Moviendo Territorios* – Moving Territories
2. *Forestales* typically refers to companies, industries, or actors involved in forestry activities, which include logging, timber extraction, and other uses of forest resources, they destroy whole ecological landscapes, wild life and community life.
3. *Pi´jchar* is a term in Aymara used to describe the ritual of chewing coca leaves
4. Grandmother in Quechua, used to term elderly members of the community (term of endearment)

2

parallaxing (i) : a story of a practice

setareh fatehi

This is a story
of a practice

a gathering
of words that came out through worlds meeting
each other,
the worlds that although they might seem
close, they feel pretty far

It is a choice
a temporal way of living through the conditions
that (i) have been born to

(i) so far have called it parallaxing (i)

This text is written
to be recorded
to be listen to
while walking
or somehow traveling from one spot to another[1]

This text is written to be listened to in different places at the same time[2]

Thank you for being here,
thank you for being somewhere.

Salam

I am setareh,

my pronoun is ای .
There is no such word in English so I mostly remain
unidentified or
mis-gendered when I am referred to as the other (i)
I'm sitting on a balcony of an old house in the mountains
around Polour
(I'm sitting behind my desk in my studio in Ekbatan complex
in west Tehran)
(I'm sitting infront of a microphone in andisheh studio in
Villa street)
It is few minutes to 7:00 am
(It is few minutes to 12:00 PM)
(It is a few minutes after 6:00 PM)
I hear the sound of a bird, like a rusty bicycle going up some
hills in the far
(I hear the highway, like a white noise from a river in the far)
(I hear my own voice through the headphones that I am
wearing)
I feel the morning mist on my skin
(I feel the cool air from the AC)
(The air is very still but not too hot)
it must be around 20 degrees in the altitude of around 1200m
(it must be around 20 degrees on the 3rd floor
of a 9 floor building)
(it must be around 20 degrees in this wooden room
with the wooden walls)
Today is 7 of August 2024
(Today is 22 of August 2024)
(Today is 28 of August 2024)

Day 321, or 903, or 3
Today is just another day for some but certainly not for all.
17th Mordad 1403
۱۷ دادرم ۱۴۰۳
(1st of Shahrivar 1403)
(۱ رویرِهش ۱۴۰۲)
(7th of Shahrivar 1403)
(۷ رویرِهش ۱۴۰۲)

Today I am here on your screen and your speakers or
headphones, as a vibrating light and sound that is allowed to
touch and be touched from far.

Let's start with a minute of stillness from wherever you are.

Listen to the space around you
Hear the sound of your heart,
Think of the ones who were not allowed to walk
where you are.
(1 min silence)
And now parallaxing (i)
a choice
a research

Introducing a practice of remote hosting across localities
that are
separated, against their wish, by the borders that have
ignored their presence once and for all!
Hoping to counter the debilitation caused by the alienating
forces that are separating (i)s and We,
countering projects that are benefiting from separating
Them from Us

It has started with a question,
Where should my body be?
It has started with a frustration of having to answer,
Where are you based at the Moment?
for which the answer I do not know and I know why!

It explores the conditions of hosting the entangled presence
of remote bodies
It is a way to understand what is it that I call other and what
is it that I call (i)

It is an anti-microcosm
meaning that it does not encapsulate in miniature, the
characteristics of something much larger.
It is a miniature world made by (i) and the other (i).

An exercise of gathering with remote bodies that (i)
know(s), bodies that hold 'knowledges' that do not fit in
the dichotomies of practice and theory, body and mind,
movement and stillness, presence and absence, digital and
physical, virtual and real, thinking and doing, life and art.

Parallaxing (i) is a practice that hosts practices of few
of the many bodies who had to leave their so called
"unlivable" motherland to be a part of the making of the
future of this planet,
to get rid of their Colonial Fomo
and to be heard by the ones who have created that fomo.

It borrows the definition of "body" and "presence"
from discourses where body's agency and right to be
fluid and opaque is valued.
It hopes to point out the 'entangled presence of
bodies' that are kept far, by fearing them of their
differences from one another
What defines the border of my body in relation to others?
What constitutes a collective body beyond the borders that
their transgression is the most punishable of all?
How can (i) relate to Them?
How can they relate to (i)?

What measures of presence are at stake when my body
consists of all the cables and electricity and screens that
connect them to (i)?

I am trying to find an answer by hosting their story in the
story of the (i)

DAY 1
Multitudes of (i)[3]
Many Moons ago
with Ogutu Muraya in Nairobi and (i) in Amsterdam
he is here with his words and with his eyes

Twende kazi {It's in the going}
Let's go بچرخ.

Where
Is
Where can it go
Where should it
It
It the body
It the (i)
It the presence

Where do you think you are now?

Make a frame with your hands in front of your eyes.
Hands being the frame
Close to the face
Face is a frame

If (i) would favor looking outside of the frame, what would
you be against?

Parallax vision
Two images that do not match each other
Two different conditions existing in the same world at the
same time

If (i) would favor being in the pain of seeing the parallax,
what would you be against?

"Being in contact" is the only way to be affected by anything,
she says.[4]

Distance
Distance from the image
My distance from your image
Distance of the eyes
Distance of the hands
Distance from the other
The number of steps
Distance between the shoulders
Distance between you and them
Distance of the lenses
Focal distance
Legal distance
Social distance
Emotional distance

Class distance
Economical distance
Thickness of a thread
One millimeter
Thickness of a wall
Air distance
4500 kilometers
Five days by car
Forty days on foot

Time distance

Let's pause

It is early morning in Tehran
It is a bit earlier in Nairobi
It is late night in Bogota
It is early morning in Lisbon
It is a bit earlier in London
It is a bit later in Diyarbekir
It is the same time in Ashdod
and, the same time in Rafah...
It is early afternoon in Tokyo
It is a bit earlier in Hong kong
It is early morning in Samara
It is late night in la Serena

How's your time over there?
Where is it going?

(i) once lived for a second and died
It was not long ago, in my understanding of time

Can you enjoy the liminal?
Can you enjoy the limbo?
(i) can enjoy confusion
(i) can enjoy dizziness

But maybe not for too long!

DAY 2
(i)'m going crazy here
They are doing heavy construction
So much noise
Noise makes me nervous and sad
Loud noise
Loud one-(i) do not know why (i) should hear

(i)'m going crazy here
They are doing heavy road construction
So much dust
Dust makes me anxious
Thick dus
Thick one- (i) do not know why (i) should inhale

If (i) would favor taking a deep breath here, what would you
be against?

So, tell me, where are you based at the moment?

Can (i) refuse to answer?
Can (i) at least wait?
Whose time am (i) consuming?

She said in a very funny way:
"As if Brussels is in Brussels
Congo is in Brussels
Both the labor and the earth"
(i) repeat:
As if Amsterdam is in Amsterdam
As if Tehran is in Tehran
As if Nairobi is in Nairobi
As if my body is in (i)
As if (i) is in my body
Both the time and the resources!

Ah darling, don't be scared of the walls that make wars, you'll
be fine!

Coming and going
Here and there
repeat it as much as it loses meaning in every language that
you think
you understand
There here coming going
بچرخ، نرو، بیا، بچرخ!
hapa, kule, njoo, twende

He says that
At those borders the unconditional hospitality that he has
learned from his grandmother turns into the "dialectic of
welcoming and exclusion"
At those borders generosity can easily and with no
understandable logic turn into sovereignty.
This is when they can call the body a risk, or a source of
contamination
At those borders they can call you a virus, depending on
which economy you belong to![5, 6]

When you call me that, that is all (i) want to be!

A virus

It's amazing. I don't even know if I am dead or alive as a virus!

Have you ever thought that the virus didn't even want to go
anywhere but it was forced to?

DAY 3
(i) think you are very far
What does distance mean when there are no papers?

What if inclusivity was about how to exclude?
What if hospitality was about how to be homeless?
What if belonging was about how to lose? (5)

He asked: Would you work with European money?
(i) said: As if Europe is in Europe
As if you is in you
As if money is in money

Have we decided if we like the virus?
Have we decided who is in and out of this "we"? Who gets to
decide?
Should we make a decision and post it online?

(i) asked him to be my avatar.
He could choose between the purple eggplant and the
armadillo lizard
(i) was gonna be online.

(i) told him that
(i)'ll be glitchy, cutting in and out, that (i) won't be able to
hear properly, (i) will only see the things that come to the
frame, (i) might feel claustrophobic at times,
(i) told him that we will need to trust each other.

He said: "I mean of course I trust you".
Do you trust me?
Can they trust us?

This question of where my body is, could be, should be
Is it actually about me?
Is it actually a question that can take multiple answers?
Is there a choice to be made?

(i) want to be able to live the afterlife of "nomadism",
"homelessness" and "homesickness".
Maybe that's what this practice is about!

Day 95
(i) a diasporic parallax[7]
With Kamran Behrouz in Alpenhof and (i) in Tehran

Kamran made K!ttar – a 3D talking head out of our faces
– and
We haven't spoken since, and I'm not sure if I know why!
We wrote a poem for a panel that was called: "Is there a
middle eastern body?"

Which middle?
Which east(ern)?
Which body?
In fact whose Middle East? and Middle of which fucking
East?

Natascha uses the notion of parallax
to observe the techniques of 'looking awry'
Parallax as an impalpable sensation of absence or confusion
in telecommunication devices,
a feeling of absence as to where the other person is actually
looking and whether they are paying attention or reading
their emails on the side.[8]

Parallax overexposes the void that exists between the
images of two locations, two bodies, two actualities that are
distanced by the forces that make wars.

Once upon a time there was a body that wanted to be able to
chose
She wanted to be mobile
But not to be mobilized
She wanted to be seen
But maybe not be visualized

She lived in Tehran, Malindi, Chania, Amsterdam, Istanbul,
London, Ebesh, Karaj, Uidong valley, Frankfurt, Pol-e-Moon,
Rome, Sydney, Bogota and Qeshm;

She came from the past that was forgotten and she was
walking backward towards what might be her future
She refuses to identify with
She refuses to identify with
She refuses to identify with

Day 255
(i) disabled IRL (in real life)
with Shahrzad Irannejad in Istanbul and Babak Amrooni in
Tehran

(i) am here

A 'legal' citizen of two cities,
One situated in the Middle of someone's east
And the other in the West of that so called East
Two 'distanced' localities that are few hours of air distance
apart
Two cities that may seem as absolute opposites, but my body
felt them otherwise.
Their difyferences are apparent but their separation can not
be excused by those differences at all!
Two cities that although they may not seem in a war, but their
border function as a front line!

I have lived back and forth in between their lands and
languages,
fighting not to have to decide where my body should be.

My body, the inseparable glitching software and "wetware",
has been trying to make sense of this mobile materiality to
be present in their double standards.

(i) am here

(i) in lowercase and in between parentheses,
looking for the meaning of individuality and authorship ,
let the third person singular Other define the borders of its
first person singular.
Similar to the "I" in Aymara.[8]

The language that ch'ixi is used in the place of I.
Ch'ixi as a collective subject forged through the negotiation
of the individual "I" and the collective "we".

She quotes : "To exist as me, I need someone else to point to
me, to recognize and acknowledge me. In other words, to be
me, I have to walk and talk with others".[9]

(i) am here

Critical of "digital dualism", that almost antiquated
discussion when we assimilate digital and virtual and oppose
virtual to real.[10]

(i) am here

skeptical of the debilitation caused by the mandate of
physical presence, where the only way to be considered 'Real
in Life' is to exist under the same roof;
Where, as they put it "biopolitical ruling benefits from the
separation of debilitation and production of disability;
Where "targeting to disable" and "targeting the disabled"
are put against one another.[11]

(i) am here

With my dis-locating, ghostly, encrypting, errant, viral and
mobile body[12]
And (i) can not agree more with this sentiment that
in case (i) is present in any form possible
everything around that presence is real,
in whatever form it manifests that (i)

Let's have a pause

Day 415
tamasha: hosting you hosting (i)
With Katerina bakatsaki, Ayda Alizadeh and Saina Salarian
in Arti gallery in Amsterdam and Reyhaneh Mehrad and (i) in
my neighborhood park in Tehran[13]
Anything can disappear and reappear at any time
The image on the wall
The wifi connection
The mirror
The battery charger

They might cut out electricity and internet again
The price of everything went high!
People got killed again. Executed. Genocided.
Anything can disappear and some might never reappear
again.
Bodies, stories, hopes, smiles
The sound of your steps
Her voice
Your motivation
And mine

She said:
Space is a skin
and
Screen is a space[13]

There in the space,
somewhere between your skin and my screen,
the borders disappear.

Those borders that are constantly afraid of our bodies
transgressing them;
Those borders that made countries in the late 19th and early
20th centuries in consequence of Colonial adventurism;
Those borders that protected the monopolization of the
dream of being "the first, the best, the most, the only one", by
internalizing the self-degrading belief of the un-livability of
all the other lands...
The lands that have been the playground for their looting
adventures for centuries and now being the abject to build
their identity against!

There in the space,
somewhere between your hands and my eyes,
we can see very clearly that in the stories of (i)s, there is
something that is you as well as it is (i).[14]

1. Recorded by andisheh music studio.
2. The first iteration of this text has been published in *Corea#8* magazine in Portuguese by Patricia da Silva in 2023.
3. Muraya, O. & Fatehi, S. (2020). *Multitudes of (i)* at Veem Huis voor performance Amsterdam.
4. Povinelli, E.A. (2016). *Geontologies A Requiem to Late Liberalism*. Duke University Press.
5. Khosravi, S. (2010) *'Illegal' Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders*. Springer.
6. Tasche (2015). *parallax* [online] Possest. Available at: https://possest.de/2015/05/04/parallax/ [Accessed 30 Jan. 2024].
7. Behrouz, K. & Fatehi, S. (2022) *(i) a diasporic parallax* at Orient institute CME conference Istanbul.
8. Taylor, D. (2020). *¡Presente! The Politics of Presence*. Duke University Press.
9. Diana Taylor asked Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui a feminist sociologist and activist from Bolivia, how to say "I" and "me" in Aymara.
10. Jurgenson, N. (2011). *Digital Dualism versus Augmented Reality*. [online] Cyborgology. Available at: https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/02/24/digital-dualism-versus-augmented-reality/ .
11. Puar, J.K. (2017). *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham: Duke University Press,
12. Russell, L. (2020). Glitch Feminism. Verso Books.
13. Bakatsaki, K. & Fatehi, S. & Mehrad, R. & Salarian, S. (2022) *TAMASHA/ hosting u hosting (i)* Performance-installation FLAM festival of live art Amsterdam.
14. Thanks to performingborders for their invitation and thoughts and to Neda, Ogutu, Tanya, Naghmeh, Yalda and Hikaru for proof reading.

3

Backpack

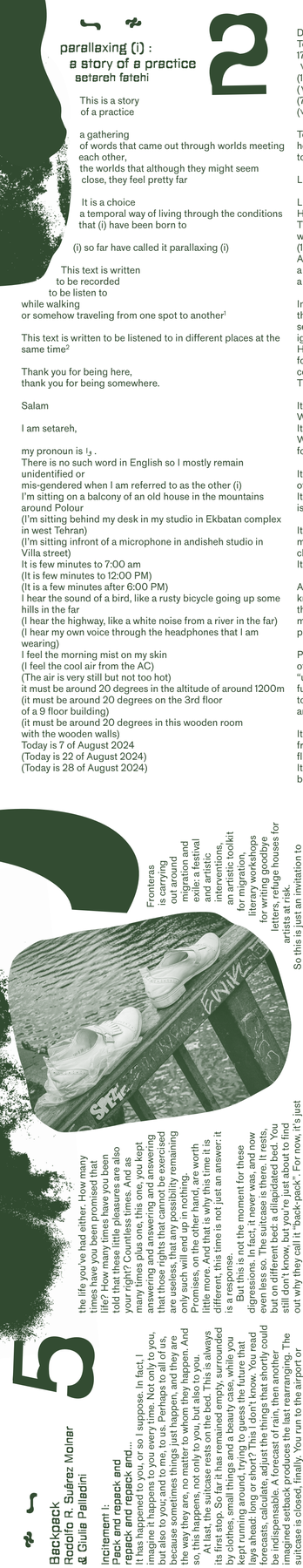
Rodolfo R. Suárez Molner
& Giulia Palladini

Incitement I:
Pack and repack and
repack and repack and...

It has happened to you, or so I suppose. In fact, I
imagine it happens to you every time. Not only to you,
but also to you; and to me, to us. Perhaps to all of us,
because sometimes things just happen, and they are
the way they are, no matter to whom they happen. And
so, this happens, not only to you, but also to you.
It's first thing in the morning and you're packing your
suitcase, the Ziploc bag resting on the bed. This is always
by clothes, small things and a beauty case, while you
kept running around, trying to guess the future that
lays ahead: long or short? This I don't know. You read
forecasts, calculate, adjust the things that shortly could
be indispensable. A forecast of rain, then another
imagined setback produces the last rearranging. The
suitcase is closed, finally. You run to the airport or
through the fear controls, in fact. One, two, three.
Maybe there is still time to buy a little something
at the duty free, maybe not. A goodbye to the one
who rests. Perhaps a doubt, a memory, a farewell are
haunting you while the fuel is being loaded. You forgot
the toothpaste, you think to yourself, while listening to
the security instructions: "in case of emergency, leave
your belongings behind...". You know. We both know
it would then be a matter of life or death, but you still
can't avoid this disassociation, this stupid necessity to
save something. Then the indispensable is no longer
the same, it cannot be.
You re-pack, mentally, but only your carry-on
luggage: the rest will be lost, hopelessly. You start
taking out some things, almost everything in fact, in
order to make room for the forgotten things that only a
second before were not indispensable, that perhaps you
only now realize it was indispensable, that perhaps you are
so afraid of losing and which you will end up letting
go of, if you don't return, perhaps the jumper eaten
away by time, the one you have been unable to get rid of
because something binds the two of you, something
ineffable, standing somehow beyond that jumper and
yourself: time, time itself. Yes: I know that. I know that
in the space be
You re-pack, mentally, but only your carry-on
luggage: the rest will be lost, hopelessly. You start
taking out some things, almost everything in fact, in
order to make room for the forgotten things that only a
second before were not indispensable, that perhaps you
only now realize it was indispensable, that perhaps you are
so afraid of losing and which you will end up letting go
of, if you don't return, perhaps the jumper eaten away
by time, the one you have been unable to get rid of
because something binds the two of you, something
ineffable, standing somehow beyond that jumper and
yourself: time, time itself. Yes: I know that. I know that
in the space between life and death all this is nonsense,
but even so you cannot avoid it. Maybe if the emergency
would happen for real, but as long as it remains unreal,
it is hard to conjure enough detachment to run away
solely with the clothes one is wearing. In that instant, in
the fiction propelled by the mere possibility of death,
refusing to abandon everything is still a way of clinging
to life.
Stop. Rewind.
This is not your journey. And this is probably not
the life you've had either. How many
times have you been promised that
answering and answering and answering
that those rights that cannot be exercised
are useless, that any possibility remaining
only such will end up in nothing
promises, on the other hand, are worth
little or nothing, that this time it is
different, this time is not just an answer: it
is a response.
But this is not the moment for these
digressions. In fact, it never was, and now
even less so. The suitcase is there. It rests,
but on different bed: a dilapidated bed. You
still don't know, but you're just about to find
out why they call it "back-pack". For now, it's just
a sack, with an open zip: jaws giving the impression
that they're about to devour something. What? The
essential? Precisely like that other person, the one
who had to suddenly ask themselves what is essential,
what is indispensable, what is worth saving from a
different kind of death. Different somehow because the
journey is riskier, and the death is more likely, but also
because returning is another way to die, only slower
than it would be if the plane had crashed. So, what to
bring with you in what will be your only home for some
time? For a long or a short time? This I don't know.
The memories are many and very heavy, but you are
still willing to carry them. You pack a few: the obvious
ones. Soon the suitcase is almost full and soon you will
discover that you must make room for some hope. No
matter how little, you're going to need it. When you are
in the middle of the mud or the jungle, in the middle
of the river, the sea or the desert, only this breath of
hope will keep you moving forward. Only this will help
you move forward. The rest is worse than dead weight:
a ruin, a trace, an anchor. You take something out
to put in a yearning and a spare pair of shoes. You
accept it, holding back tears as you tell yourself that
forgetfulness is lighter after all... until you remember it.
I wish it would end here. Impossible.
Amid the back-and-forth between memories and
dreams, life in its most insipid form takes over: that
of the necessities, the same which are forcing you to
leave. Now next to the shoes lie two or three changes
of clothes, a hat, a deodorant, and a single soap. Then
ropes, a rosary, an account number, and a bible. This
time, the photograph: perhaps all of them. You pass
the first kilometers carrying all of them. You have to
tear up, you recalculate your hunger, you leave a few
more banknotes on the table for the family, just in case
it takes longer that the coyote "te enganche" (hook-
up with someone who can give you work). You get
blessed, you kiss and get kissed goodbye, you swear
you will come back someday and promise to send
something as soon as you can. I'm going to miss you;
all say to one other.
Pause.
Maybe it is, in fact, your journey.

Invitación I:
reloaded

Backpack is a text-action that unfolds through
different formats, phases and authors, and is part
of the artistic actions/interventions that the project



Fronteras
is carrying
out around
migration and
exile: a festival
and artistic
interventions,
an artistic toolkit
for migration,
literary workshops
for writing goodbye
letters, refuge houses for
artists at risk.
So this is just an invitation to
participate in this collective exercise that
seeks to apprehend, in a device curated by Giulia
Palladini and Rodolfo Suárez, the idea of migration
that we will construct together. All the people who
participate will be its authors; even those who prefer
not to sign.
The exercise is about writing the farewell letter you
didn't write (or maybe to send the one you didn't send).
It can be in any format and digital or physical support,
addressed to whoever you want (real or imaginary):
a person, a territory, an object, a custom, a word, a
feeling, a something that repeats itself or has ceased
to do so...
If you decide to accept this invitation, you are also
welcome to decide the future of that letter: to share
it with us or not, to publish it on your own or in the
framework of the project, to send it to someone or
secretly to somewhere kind of eternity.
The leitmotif of the exercise is to explore the
possibility of linking migration (as an affective event) to
absence and estrangement. In this endeavor, we shall
assume from the outset the impossibility of filling this
void, even at the level of the very definition of migration.
This absence is not very different from those effects of
events in which, fortunately or unfortunately, forgetting
prevails over memory. The nostalgia of a non-place,
the hope of reaching a future that just existed in past
images that will gradually fall into oblivion, are just
some of the elements that make up the distance
that migration entails: the uprooting and the settling
in a place as natural and as artificial as a museum or
a train station. This does not mean disregarding the
political, economic or social dimensions of migration.
On the contrary, the point is to draw on them in order to
explore a possible aesthetic dimension, metaphorically
situated next to that of uncoding a bunch of grass and
flowers in a refugee camp.
Perhaps the moment to write it has come,
perhaps not. Also time and its arrival is a form of that
irremediable and necessary absence.

4

Love Letters to Our Comrades

Fehras Publishing Practices

Prelude
"Sobhi El-Jeez"

My comrade, Sobhi El-Jeez
Left me on the ground and went away
My comrade, Sobhi El-Jeez
Put down the broom and left
They didn't tell me what I could do
For the millions of poor people
Comrade, oh comrade
Where are you, my comrade?
You burdened me with so many things
Stones, dust, and boxes
You changed my last name
And made my name "Comrade"
Comrade, I have no comrade
And my name will remain "Comrade"
I'm searching for someone else
I'm searching for someone like you
Walk, walk, I walk
We walk and continue the road
Oh comrade

Written by Ziad Rahbani

As we give thought to the poignant moments of our
interconnected histories, we are transported to a
radio show in 1997, a year marked both by sorrow and
continuing resilience in South Lebanon against the
Israeli Occupation. That year, "Sawt Al-Shaab" (Voice
of the People) radio station hosted the Lebanese artist
Ziad Rahbani in its Beirut studio where one can hear
the lingering echoes of the Qana massacre of 1996.
An IOF (Israeli Occupation Forces) shelling of a UN
compound Near Qana, in South Lebanon, claimed
the lives of 106 civilians who had taken refuge in that
compound. For five hours, the influential composer,
pianist, and dramatist poured their heart out in an
open conversation with journalist Doha Shams and
other guests, discussing the very essence of political,
social and cultural work.
Ziad Rahbani lived through years of intense regional
political and social transformations following the
collapse of the Soviet Union. Every image they painted
in a song or a theater piece was based on the harsh
reality of their time, which witnessed a violent Civil
War and occupation. Their talk during the interview
resonated beyond escapism, touching on themes of
mental health in times of crises, the struggle for a living
wage, the contrasts of Marxism and neoliberalism, the
profound influences of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
the rise of China, and the repercussions of the first
Palestinian Intifada worldwide.
Throughout this on-air gathering, Ziad shared
reflections on collective memories behind the musical
scene. During the program, Bisan called in— a young
child whose name echoes the beauty of a Palestinian
town to the south of the Jordan River. Bisan sang a
heartfelt poem that Ziad composed as a tribute
to their comrade and companion, Sobhi El-Jeez.
Sobhi died during the ravages of the Civil War in
Lebanon. The purity in Bisan's voice reminds us
of the fragility of life and the enduring power of
love that binds us together even in the face of loss
and genocide.
The companionship and the camaraderie of this
story inspired us to write love letters to honor our
comrades who strived for a better reality.
A love letter to a garden, one that strives to rise above
its own "happy laws of gardening". But more than that,
it serves as a reminder that whenever we leave behind
the theater of men, we witness the maternal flourishing
of intuition. The revolution is constant, unfolding every
year, every season, every cycle.
Through the mechanism of these love letters,
we can hear the clatter of inclusion between the
unassuming flowers and the resourceful shrubs. This
garden is a paradise of undoing, where weeds and
brambles begin to digest the enclosure, and vines
embrace the hinges of the gate. It is a garden where
growth is ripping the seams of the engine apart.
In every struggle and every field of work, we
find reverberation of our love, a testament to our
collective liberation.

To our Beloved Cultural Workers,
In every quiet moment of the day, our thoughts
inevitably drift to you—you who breathe life into our
world with your boundless creativity and unwavering
dedication. We worked together shoulder to shoulder,
wearing many different shoes. Do you remember
when we were watching your dance, and you asked:
"How many hands move in the orchestra?" then you
murmured: "The timelapse of the gestures of those who
weave a story must be long."
In those days, you kept repeating a catchphrase:
"All the stories are impure."You were shimmering in
our eyes. We cherish those moments when we plough
together and cultivate the city. We humbly receive
these sweet, sweet tastes of camaraderie.
When you were watching in the shoes of
collaborators, as builders, art handlers or artists,
the degree of freedom and recognition you offered
throughout our collaboration filled our eyes with tears
of respect. You blessed us with trust and selflessness,
despite the craze of the cultural scene on authorship.
You watched over us where labour laws were biased.
And We got warm under the light of your humbleness.
With immense appreciation to accompany you on this
journey. We humbly receive this delicious auspice.
When you were walking in the shoes of curators, we
were lucky to have a coworker who knew how to put
a screw in the wall. You graced us with unparalleled
care. That empowering sight of your attention on
where to put down your foot! You weaved a show,
carrying no ego. Your patience stunned us. You
believed in people above aesthetics, ensuring that
you acknowledged all the names, hands, and deeds
of whoever made the show possible. You actively and
meticulously rejected the hierarchies of ideals and
stood on the ground of materials. We humbly receive
this candied taste of care.
When we were in the shoes of producers, you
overfilled our hearts with joy when you told us how
material conditions of labour are more important
than the story: " Let's not forget that it is just a story;
it works even better when it's less perfect," you
claimed. You were always attentive to others' needs
during a production. You even forethought the labour
of dismantling, ensuring you won't overspread your
shadows even in the end. We are in awe and humbly
receive this sweet taste of awareness.
When you were walking in the shoes of initiators,
the creations crafted by your hands enchanted us.
Hands trained by the movement of prints, whether you
were creating books, magazines, or an announcement
for selling a risograph machine in your neighbourhood.
Your devotion to highlighting details on the edge of a
page or along the spine of a book, made each piece
unique and illuminating. We will never forget the photo
you captured from that orange tree on the southern
route of Haifa, where that grand house stands. We
eagerly await your return, carrying from your distant
travels the leaves of olives and lavender you hid
between the pages of your last diary book.

To our Beloved Booksellers,
When we saw you, you stood resolute in your cherished
spot, whether under the blazing sun or in the biting
cold, fiercely defending the heritage and traditions of
your craft. You offered wisdom to those seeking the
dormant knowledge within the pages of old books. Your
pure spirit shone upon our slender figures, our faces
adorned with longing smiles. Through the chronicles of
relocated publishing archives, you brought the present
to life. You guided us to street libraries and drew
insights from book markets that have bravely survived
wars, fundamentalism, and populism.
That day, you followed the marginalia of forgotten
tomes, tucked away in boxes on dusty shelves, to
uncover secrets sealed within their introductions.
You spoke of LOTUS: Afro-Asian Writings magazine,
published by the Afro-Asian Writers Association,
sharing your vast knowledge of the association's
history and its magazine, which began in 1968.
You transformed that space into a warm sanctuary,
where tall stacks of books and magazines embraced
us. We sat on small purple chairs as you showed us
issue no. 2/3 of LOTUS. Flipping through the pages,
you stopped at page 123, revealing a poem by Iraqi
poet Nazik Al-Malaika, a pioneer of Arabic prose. The
poem, about a dream of a visitor waiting in the folds
of the distant future, turned those velvet chairs into
a capacious green field. In your hand, you carried a
book titled A World Without Maps, where you hid a
clipping confirming the poet's presence alongside the
Cameroonian activist and writer Marthe Ekemeyong
Moumié and the Uzbek poet Zulfiya Isroilova at the
second Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in the main
hall of Cairo University in 1962.
Amid the chaos of random shelling and endless
checkpoints, you became a bridge, transporting
boxes of publications to a safe refuge from absurd
death. Defying borders, you continue to trace books
with unwavering passion, even in the internet age,
as print seems to wane under its dominance. Like a
paratrooper, you descended to assist us in preserving
the publishing memory of LOTUS magazine. From
Cairo to Cyprus, across Amman and Beirut, the
magazine— a testament to the Afro-Asian Solidarity
Movement—flew to feed its readers, becoming the
bread of words.
We shared with you our reproach over the absence
of female poets and writers in the magazine. Your keen
memory quickly escorted us to the shore, pointing
us toward Amal Farid, Laila El-Hakim, Nihad Salem,
Rosette Francis, Samia Assad, Sanaa El-Beissy among
other writers and translators, and their contributions to
the magazine across its peak decades.
Thanks to you, we learned that artistic research
should be a love letter.

To our Beloved LOTUS,
Your collective endeavour has given birth to a
literary treasure and carved out a post-imperial
political imagination—a revolutionary dedication to
transcontinental cooperation. In a world divided by
crimes of power structures, you have illuminated a
path for collaboration, understanding and mutual
respect. The Afro-Asian Writers' Association's vision
has bridged continents, creating a tapestry of voices
that speak to the shared human experience, rich in
color and united in purpose.
Through LOTUS, you provided a platform for
voices that might otherwise have been silenced. The
magazine is a testament to the power of words and
the strength of solidarity, reminding us of the beauty
and necessity of relational works that cross cultures
and geographical boundaries. We recognise the
immense labor and resources required to create and
sustain such a monumental project.
Your work has enriched the literary landscapes
and sown the seeds of liberation for a more equitable
global society. We continue to draw inspiration from
your tireless efforts, finding in LOTUS guiding stars
for our ongoing efforts to bring healing. Your legacy
is a beacon of hope and a call to action for all who
believe in collectives' transformative power.
Dear LOTUS, performingborders, binding new
pages along your path. We can witness your flower
blooming afresh. Another entry commissioned in the
garden of performingborders who can attest to this
observation is an assembly by Party Office called *we're
the ones we've been waiting for.*

A journey to Bisan Bookstore in Beirut, 2023. A book published by Women's Research & Documentation Center - Unesco, 1st edition 2015, Al-Birah, Palestine.

Back cover of *Jayyash Al-Shaab (People's Army)*, a weekly magazine, issue no. 862, 1968, Damascus.