static

thoughts and research from global dis:connect

Commemorating the November pogrom with *The Singer of Shanghai*

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editorial

Christopher Balme

November 2023 sees the 85th anniversary of the infamous *Kristallnacht,* when the Nazi state coordinated and organised pogroms against Germany's Jewish population. It is only fitting then that this issue of *static* features a 'historical drama' directly connected to this event. *The Singer of Shanghai* dramatises experiences of German-Jewish refugees who survived the war in the Jewish community in Shanghai under Japanese occupation. It is thanks to the tireless research by our research fellow Kevin Ostoyich and his colleague Kari-Anne Innes that this largely forgotten chapter of the Jewish exile experience can be re-experienced through the drama, or even better, through a performance of it. As Kevin explains in his introduction, the term 'historical drama', refers more to a pedagogical tool than to a literary genre, and it is designed to bring history alive and make it palpable in the classroom. We are very proud to have hosted Kevin and this project and to have been able to provide a venue for his work, which embodies our philosophy in so many ways. Not only is the exile experience a demonstration of dis:connectivity as a concept, but it also provides an example of how we seek to harness artistic idioms to explore what is often seen as a fairly abstract concept.

The special contribution that artists can make to exploring and visualising dis:connectivity, which is one of the core assumptions of the project, can be seen in the article by Andrea Frohne, an alumna fellow who discusses work by the artist Dawit L. Petros. Originally from Eritrea, he moved first to Ethiopia and then to Canada while still a child. The main image featured here

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creates, as Frohne argues, an abstract field of colour, in the best modernist tradition (pace Greenberg), although it is composed in an actual Kansas wheatfield, in which stands an East African *barella* (a handcart and 'gift' of Italian colonialism in the region) and is framed by the artist's hands. Although the image could be anywhere in the expanses of the American corn basket, it was taken in Osborne, Kansas, which 'designated by geographers as the geodetic centre of North America'. The mapping of the world is another modernist project and a precondition of colonial domination.

Colonialism is also front and centre in Katharina Wilkens discussion of the relationship between religion, African socialism and pan-Africanism. This leads both to a reflection on the place of traditional African religions, which were largely dismissed or even actively combatted in the colonial scheme, and to how African interpretations of socialism led to a reconciliation of a putative secular ideology with both traditional and imported religions (Islam and Christianity). Wilkens shows how this realignment has its roots in the first generation of postcolonial leaders, and it continues into the present with a massive resurgence of various kinds of religiosity in Africa.

Decolonisation in Africa, specifically Mozambique, is the subject of Nikolai Brandes's reflection on a slim volume, a Mozambican translation of a Japanese treatise on architecture, *In Praise of Shadows,* by the novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, first published in the 1930s. The author's critique of Western architecture, and technology more broadly, evidently resonated with the newly established architecture faculty in the former Portuguese colony. The need to critically interrogate Western modularity and reflect on local solutions clearly has a broader relevance to globalisation processes more broadly because it demonstrates how local needs can find creative solutions, including which books to translate.

Sometimes forms of connection inhere in displays dis:connectivity, as Peter Seeland makes clear in his reflections on a performance event at the documenta 15 exhibition. Atis Rezistans, a Haitian artist collective, combined sculpture, music and dance in St Kunigundis, a Catholic church in Kassel. The event brought several elements of Haitian Voodoo to life, and the setting was a vital component, as it simultaneously highlighted certain iconographic similarities between Voodoo and Catholicism as well as stark divergences. As a relatively 'new' religion, Voodoo did not emerge in a vacuum; rather, it borrowed from the Catholic ideas and images that the African slave diaspora encountered abroad and combined these with its adherents' West African roots. Peter's writing and photography, with Atis Rezistans's art as their subject, brilliantly capture the alienation and new forms of community that result from globalisation processes and how they echo through history.

Our thanks to Ben Kamis and the editorial team at global dis:connect for shepherding this issue of *static* to press.

Christopher Balme, September 2023

Commemorating the November pogrom with *The Singer of Shanghai*

Introducing *The Singer of Shanghai*

Kari-Anne Innes &
Kevin Ostoyich

What is historical theatre?

At its heart, historical theatre allows students to create and perform works that convey historical meaning to an audience. The goal is to break the traditional boundaries of the teacher-student echo chamber and encourage students to communicate with the past and educate the public of the present and future directly. Historical theatre encourages students to employ empathy, artistry and intellect to connect with and convey the *humanity* of the past. Historical theatre helps students to see history not merely as an academic exercise, but as a living relationship between past and present. Historical theatre is not a genre, but a pedagogy that merges two disciplines to create a distinct product – whether it be a script or the performance thereof – that can be experienced and/or performed by others in an ongoing conversation of educational discovery and human understanding.

The genesis of *The Singer of Shanghai*

The Singer of Shanghai is the third play to result from our historical theatre programme. The previous plays, *Knocking on the Doors of History: The Shanghai Jews* (2016) and *Shanghai Carousel: What Tomorrow Will Be* (2019), were both written and performed at

Valparaiso University.[1] *The Singer of Shanghai* arose from a series of interviews Kevin Ostoyich conducted with Harry J. Abraham as well as field research Ostoyich conducted in Frickhofen and Altenkirchen, Germany.[2] Ostoyich supplied students with the interviews with Abraham as well as those of other former Shanghai refugees. The group also read various articles that Ostoyich had written about Shanghai Jewish refugees, most importantly his article about Harry J. Abraham, 'From Kristallnacht and Back: Searching for Meaning in the History of the Shanghai Jews' and his article that incorporates Ida Abraham's experiences, 'Mothers: Remembering Three Women on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht'.[3] Ostoyich challenged the students to use the oral testimony and other materials to write a play about a sewing machine that accompanied the Abraham family on their long journey from Germany to China and ultimately to the USA. The format, structure and themes of the play were to be determined collectively by the students and professors. Each member of the group was to contribute research and writing to a script that would narrate the history of the Abraham family and convey the meaning of the sewing machine.

A note on historical accuracy

The Singer of Shanghai closely follows the history of the Abraham family and much of the 'interview' dialogue in the play comes directly from conversations with Harry. Nevertheless, there are several places in the script where the playwrights incorporated elements from other oral testimonies of former Shanghai Jewish refugees (all of which based on Ostoyich's interviews). Therefore, the play is best considered a historical composite. The use of old parachute fabric in making clothes in Shanghai comes from the testimony of Inga Berkey – a former Shanghai Jewish refugee who is also a friend of Harry's. The description of children playing with marbles and cigarette packs comes from the testimonies of Helga Silberberg and Gary Sternberg. The playwrights drew inspiration from the interaction of refugee children with American

1 For a more detailed description of historical theatre, see Kari-Anne Innes, Kevin Ostoyich, and Rebecca Ostoyich, 'Turning "Limitations" into Opportunities: Online and Unbound', in *Undergraduate Research in Online, Virtual, and Hybrid Courses: Proactive Practices for Distant Students*, ed. Jennifer G. Coleman, Nancy H. Hensel and William E. Campbell, (New York: Stylus Publishing, 2022); Kari-Anne Innes and Kevin Ostoyich, 'Characterizing Interdisciplinarity in Historical Theatre: Exploring Character with the History Student', *Theatre/Practice: The Online Journal of the Practice/Production Symposium of the Mid America Theatre Conference 10* (2021). (Published online, 8 April 2021: http://www.theatrepractice.us/current.html).

2 Ostoyich learned a great deal from Hubert Hecker in Frickhofen and Werner Ziedler in Altenkirchen.

3 Kevin Ostoyich, 'From Kristallnacht and Back: Searching for Meaning in the History of the Shanghai Jews', *Society, Culture & Politics, American-German Institute,* 2 August 2017, https://www.aicgs.org/2017/08/from-kristallnacht-and-back/; Kevin Ostoyich, 'Mothers: Remembering Three Women on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht', *Society, Culture & Politics*, *American-German Institute*, 9 November 2018, https://www.aicgs.org/2018/11/mothers-remembering-three-women-on-the-80th-anniversary-of-kristallnacht.

GIs immediately after the Second World War from several oral testimonies (including Harry's). They drew most heavily from the testimony of Bert Reiner for this scene. It was thus appropriate that Bert Reiner played the American GI in the radio-theatre version of the play. The lyrics of the song *You Look Just Like a GI, My Friend*, which is sung in the background and inspired dialogue, originate from the Shanghai Jewish refugee community. Ostoyich found the German lyrics in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, translated them and provided his translation along with other songs from Shanghai he translated for use in the play. The group incorporated the song into the play because the lyrics echo the common refrain in the oral testimonies about how much the refugees (especially the children) were fascinated by the sudden influx of so many American GIs into the city.

Whereas the interviews with Harry provided text for much of the play's interview dialogue, the playwrights wrote original dialogue for the flashback sequences. Such instances allowed them to work creatively within the boundaries of the historical space. In such instances, students explored the connection between themselves and the history to write dialogue appropriate to the historical context and that expresses their own observations and reflections.

This framework of performing stories of the other to inspire dialogue between the subject (the actor) and the object of study (individual stories of humanity) is inspired by the performance theories of Dwight Conquergood. Conquergood drafted a 'moral map' to guide performers toward a balance of committing to the embodiment of the other while remaining detached enough to respect that it is not their story.[4] Thus, students identify with the subject's circumstances, words and feelings while acknowledging differences, therefore enabling them to approach history empathetically yet objectively. Each student's understanding and experience of history becomes as personalised as the stories themselves. The student's experience of history is affected – moved in mind and feeling. In turn, through performance, the student affects the audience, deepening the shared experience of history, an experience that is at once based on historical accuracy yet particularised to each individual's understanding and reflections.

A brief introduction to the history of the Shanghai Jews

Facing increasing discrimination from the Nazis, many Jews started to look for a refuge. In the wake of the pogrom that swept through

4 Dwight Conquergood, 'Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance', in *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, ed. Patrick E. Johnson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 65–80.

Germany and Austria on the night of 9-10 November 1938 (known as the *Reichsprogramnacht*, *Kristallnacht*, or 'Night of Broken Glass'), many Jews (such as Albrecht Abraham in Altenkirchen and Sigfrid Rosenthal in Frickhofen) were rounded up and sent to concentration camps. Often, it then fell to women (such as Ida Abraham) to try to extract their husbands, fathers, brothers and/or sons from the camps and lead their families to safety. Immediately after *Kristallnacht*, it was still possible to secure release if assurances of emigration were given immediately. Nevertheless, the Jews found that doors to the West were often closed due to a combination of quota policies, bureaucratic obstacles and outright anti-Semitism. One peculiar destination became attractive because no entry visa was required: Shanghai, China.

The British pried Shanghai open to the West following the Opium Wars in the 19th century. The city was split into different sections administered by Western colonial powers. The International Settlement was governed by the Shanghai Municipal Council (predominantly under British and American control), and the French Concession was under French control. During the 1930s, the Japanese invaded China. In 1937, the Japanese established control in north-eastern Shanghai. Thus, as Jewish refugees fled to Shanghai, they entered a city that was partitioned into various sections subject to varied administrative regimes.

In December 1941, concurrent to attacking Pearl Harbor, the Japanese forcibly subjugated the International Settlement and started to intern British and American citizens as enemy combatants. This left European refugees vulnerable. Many of the Sephardic Jews who had roots in the city since the 19th century and who had helped the refugees with housing, kitchens and so on could no longer assist them because the Sephardic Jews themselves either fled the city or were forced into internment camps due to their being British citizens.

In February 1943, the Japanese occupiers proclaimed that all stateless persons who had entered the city after 1 January 1937 had to move into a 'Designated Area' in the depressed Hongkew district by 18 May 1943. Approximately half of the 16,000 to 20,000 refugees already lived in the Designated Area; others had to move (losing many possessions in the process). The Designated Area has often been called the 'Shanghai Ghetto'. This should not be confused with the ghettos of Europe during the Holocaust (such as those in Warsaw, Łódź, etc). Though allied to the Germans during the Second World War, it was *not* Japanese policy to kill Jews. This did not, however, mean the Designated Area was pleasant. Refugees tend to remember the time in the Designated Area until the end of the war as a time of hunger, poverty and disease. Their movement was severely restricted, and they needed to apply for passes to leave the Designated Area. The application process was often humiliating, and passes were never assured. Shortly after the Americans dropped atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

in August 1945, the Japanese left Shanghai. As the Japanese left, American soldiers entered, met with jubilation and relief on the part of the refugees. Nevertheless, such euphoria was soon tempered by the tragic news of what had happened to the Jews in Europe during the war. Lists of those murdered in what would become known as the Holocaust or Shoah started to be posted in Shanghai. The refugees then started to realise how important Shanghai had been in shielding them from the fate of friends and relatives who succumbed to the Nazis.

The history of the Shanghai refugees was long barely known. The refugees went on with their lives, and most chose not to speak of their past. In his interviews, Ostoyich has often heard that no one seemed very interested in their story. Recently, scholars and documentary filmmakers have discovered the history of the Shanghai refugees. They have found that, despite tremendous obstacles, the refugees were able to build a surprisingly vibrant community with art, theatre cabaret, music, cinemas, schools, etc in their 'harbor from the Holocaust.'[5] We hope this play not only helps to introduce the history of the Shanghai refugees to a wider public, but also honours the artistic expression of those refugees. Most importantly, the playwrights have taken their cue from Harry J. Abraham in centring the story on the pogrom of 9-10 November 1938. The importance of Shanghai can only be understood in the context of the pogrom and the collective silence and inaction of people and countries to respond to the discrimination and violence that was being unleashed on the Jews.

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5 Tang Yating, 'Reconstructing the Vanished Musical Life of the Shanghai Diaspora: A Report', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13, no. 1 (2004): 101–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/1741191042000215291. We draw here from the PBS documentary titled *Harbor from the Holocaust*, Director: Violet Du Fang, Writer: Lynne Squilla, 2020.

The Singer of Shanghai

written by
Kari-Anne Innes, Kevin Ostoyich, Kayla Owens, Kayli Perrine, and Christian Yoder
under the direction of
Kari-Anne Innes, director, and Kevin Ostoyich, historian

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

HARRY J. ABRAHAM,	older man, former Shanghai Jewish Refugee, founder and president of ProQuip, Inc. in Macedonia, Ohio[1]
LARA,	administrative assistant
ROSE,	college student[2]
IDA ROSENTHAL ABRAHAM,	Harry's mother and seamstress[3]
SA MAN[4]	
WOMAN,	several roles[5]
MAGISTRATE[6]	
AGENT[7]	
BERTHOLD ROSENTHAL,	Ida's father[8]
MINA ROSENTHAL,	Ida's mother
INGA,	a friend of Ida's
IVY,	a young girl
ELLEN,	a young girl
YOUNG HARRY,	Harry J. Abraham as a young boy[9]
AMERICAN GI SOLDIER[10]	
TOUR GUIDE	in cemetery[11]

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1 Originally played by Kevin Ostoyich
2 Originally played by Christian Yoder
3 Originally played by Kayli Perrine
4 Originally played by Jakob Innes
5 Several roles may be double cast. Lara, Woman, Inga, Ellen and Mina were originally played by Kayla Owens
6 Originally played by former Shanghai refugee Eric Kisch
7 Originally played by trustee of the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation Danny Spungen
8 Originally played by former Shanghai refugee Harry J. Abraham
9 Originally played by Kevin Ostoyich
10 Originally played by former Shanghai refugee Bert Reiner
11 Originally played by former Shanghai refugee Gary Sternberg

SCENE ONE: INT. MACEDONIA, OHIO; HARRY J. ABRAHAM'S WORK OFFICE- DAY

HARRY sits at his desk. There is a chair opposite the desk for a guest. An antique Singer sewing machine sits prominently in the office.[12] Offstage, a knock at the door. LARA answers.

LARA
Hello! You must be Rose. I'm Lara, Mr. Abraham's assistant. He's waiting for you. Please follow me.
(LARA ushers ROSE into HARRY's office and stands by the door.)
Mr. Abraham? Rose is here for your interview.

HARRY
Hello, Rose. I hope you didn't have a hard time finding —

ROSE
No, not at all, Mr. Abraha —

HARRY
Please, call me Harry.

ROSE
Will do, Harry. I just want to say that I've been looking forward to our interview. You . . . . your past . . . it intrigues me. Not many people know of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees.

HARRY
It's not only my story. It's my mother's. She's the reason I'm alive today.

ROSE
Wait – Before we go on, I'd like to set up my phone to record –

HARRY
Sure. While you get set up, should I have Lara bring us

[12] Since the first performance of the play, new information has come to light: the actual sewing machine was produced by the Wertheim factory in Frankfurt am Main.

some water?

ROSE
Yes, please.

HARRY
Lara, two waters please.

LARA
Of course. I'll be right back.
(LARA exits. ROSE sits in the chair in front of HARRY's desk and presses record on her phone.)

ROSE
Looks like we're set to go. I have a number of questions here, and at any time you feel uncomfortable, perhaps an uncomfortable question, if you wish, you don't have to answer it.
(Beat.)
First question, could you please state your name, birthday, and a brief introduction?

HARRY
My name is Harry J. Abraham. I was born on March 15, 1938. I am one of about 20,000 Jews who were able to escape from the Nazis to Shanghai, China. This was thanks to my mother. She's the one that helped our family leave Germany after Kristallnacht.

ROSE
Could you tell me more about your parents and about Kristallnacht?

HARRY
Yes, well –

(LARA enters with two glasses of water.)

LARA
Excuse me, Mr. Abraham. I have your wa–
(LARA drops a glass of water on the floor. The glass breaks.)

LARA
Oh, my goodness! I apologize. I wonder what I could've

tripped on? I'll clean it up right away. I'll bring two new glasses once I'm done.

HARRY
No problem. Accidents happen.

(LARA picks up the pieces and exits as the scene continues.)

SCENE TWO: INT. FRICKHOFEN, GERMANY; ABRAHAM'S APARTMENT-EVENING

The sound of a window breaking.

HARRY
November 9th, 1938, Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass; in the little town that I was born in, Frickhofen, which is about 60 kilometers from Frankfurt, the Nazis threw bricks through all the windows. As I've been told, I lay beneath the window in the first house they attacked, and glass shattered all over me. My mother was there with me, and she picked me up, and luckily the glass didn't hurt me.[13]

(A baby cries. IDA enters with baby swaddled in a blanket.)

IDA
Oh, Harry! There's glass all over you! Please be okay, please be okay.
(Pause.)
Oh, thank goodness. It looks like none of it cut you.
(Four bar intro to the lullaby "Raisins and Almonds")

IDA
Shhh, it's okay. Everything is going to be okay. Shh, shhh, shh...
(IDA sings.)

[13] The narrative details in play interview come primarily from two interviews: 1) Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio and 2) Interview of Harry J. Abraham conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 October 2018, via telephone.

"In the temple in a corner room a widowed
Daughter of Zion sits alone.
She rocks her only son to sleep with a
sweet lullaby.
Singing of raisins and almonds.
Sleep child, oh sleep *Yidel. Ailu, ailu*."[14]

ROSE
To clarify, Kristallnacht was a planned attack on all Jews by the Nazi regime?

HARRY
Yes, and in fact, Hitler ordered that storm troopers attack in towns they didn't live in. Most Nazis had grown up with the Jews, and he didn't want them to hesitate; he didn't want them to have that emotional connection.[15]

*(The sound of SA MEN
forcing themselves into
the house, ransacking;
the sound of a bottle
knocked over, baby
cries.)*

IDA
The milk! You've knocked over the baby's milk![16]

(SA MAN enters.)

SA MAN
Where's your husband? Where's the man of the house?

IDA
He's not here! He's away! What are you doing? Why are you doing this?

SA MAN
Let's go. We'll be back.

*(The SA MAN exits. The
sound of a door*

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[14] Abraham Goldfaden, arranged by Kayli Perrine. 'Raisins and Almonds'.
[15] The SA men of the nearby village of Langendernbach were sent to destroy the property of the Jews in Frickhofen. Information provided by local historian of Frickhofen, Hubert Hecker, to Kevin Ostoyich.
[16] The milk story comes from conversations Kevin Ostoyich had with both Harry J. Abraham and Hubert Hecker.

slamming shut. The baby cries.)

Fig. 01: Ida Abraham's Nazi-issued passport from 1939 (Photo by Rebecca Ostoyich and courtesy of Harry J. Abraham and family)

IDA

The milk! You've spilled the milk! Shh, shhh, it's okay, it's okay.

(IDA sings, carrying the baby off stage, exits.)

> "A widowed daughter of Zion sits alone.
> She rocks her only son to sleep with a sweet lullaby.
> Singing of raisins and almonds.
> Sleep child, oh sleep *Yidel. Ailu, ailu.*"[17]

ROSE

And what about your father?

[17] Abraham Goldfaden, arranged by Kayli Perrine. 'Raisins and Almonds'.

HARRY
My father was a middleman who bought and sold cows. He was in the town that he was born in, Altenkirchen. And that night, about 20 km from my town, all the Jewish people, including my father, were taken to the Marktplatz, the center of the town. My uncle, Sigfrid, was arrested in Frickhofen. And they were both taken to Buchenwald.

ROSE
A concentration camp, correct?

HARRY
Yes, the concentration camp.

ROSE
What was it like?

HARRY
From what I've been told, Buchenwald was "dirty and looked terrible, 40,000 prisoners, a very big place, absolutely empty and surrounded by wire fences and watch towers on one side."[18] During the first few weeks of its opening, seven people tried to escape. They were caught by Nazi soldiers and shot. Can you believe that? Seven innocent people killed, just like that.[19] They only wanted freedom. We only wanted freedom.

ROSE
But your father and uncle, were they able to escape?

HARRY
Yes, with help from my mother. You see, my grandfather, my mother's father, was in the German Navy in the First World War. My grandfather told my mother that he heard of places to go if you had the tickets to get on the ship. And the only place left open was Shanghai. So, my mother with that information, found two tickets from Frankfurt.

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[18] The description of Buchenwald is a quotation from a letter written by former Shanghai Jewish refugee, Walter Kisch. Kisch and his brother Dr. Ernst Kisch were imprisoned in Buchenwald while Albrecht Abraham and Sigfrid Rosenthal were. Walter Kisch Letter to Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, 1 August 1967. (Private Collection of Eric Kisch).

[19] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016), 96.

SCENE THREE: TRAIN STATION AND MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE- DAY.

Sound of a train. IDA enters a busy station. A WOMAN stands nearby.

IDA
Excuse me, pardon me. I'm trying to get off. I need to go to the magistrate's office. . . . Excuse me, ma'am, can you tell me where the magistrate's office is?

WOMAN
Sure, see that sign over there. Follow that sign, go up the stairs and walk for about a block then you should see the office.

IDA
Thank you, you've been a big help. Bless you.

(The WOMAN exits. IDA walks to another area of the stage, the Magistrate's office.)

MAGISTRATE
Good day, ma'am. How can I help you?

IDA
Good afternoon, sir. I would like to get passports for my husband Albrecht Abraham and my brother Sigfrid Rosenthal.

MAGISTRATE
Jewish? Are they in a concentration camp?

IDA
Buchenwald.

MAGISTRATE
I'm sorry. I can't help you.

IDA
But I was told that if I could get passports to Shanghai, they would be let go.

MAGISTRATE
Do you have assurances?

IDA
Assurances?

MAGISTRATE
From the steam company saying they'll sell you passage to Shanghai. Then, you come here to City Hall with assurances for your passports.

IDA
Please help me. I've spent countless hours. Back and forth between Frickhofen, Limburg an der Lahn, and Frankfurt.

MAGISTRATE
Then, you go back to the agent to convert your assurances to tickets.

IDA
I've been trying for weeks. My father served in the German Navy. He has friends, money, anything.

MAGISTRATE
And, then the government sends your paperwork to Buchenwald.

IDA
Thank you, you've been very helpful.

MAGISTRATE
Once they're released, you will have four weeks to get them out of the country or back they go.[20]

(The sound of a train as IDA and the MAGISTRATE exit.)

[20] This is a common refrain in interviews with former Shanghai Jewish refugees. In the immediate aftermath of Kristallnacht, it was still possible to secure the release of Jews from concentration camps if assurances could be made that they would immediately leave the country.

Fig. 02: Harry J. Abraham's Nazi-issued passport from 1939 (Photo by Rebecca Ostoyich and courtesy of Harry J. Abraham and family)

ROSE

And she was able to help your uncle and father get to Shanghai.

HARRY

Yes, in January of 1939, they left Buchenwald and took the train to Genoa. From Genoa, the *Conte Biancamano* took them through the Suez Canal to Shanghai.

ROSE

It was hard for her to get those tickets. After Kristallnacht, the Jews were cut off from many resources.

HARRY

Yes, and that was something my mother could never get over. She never understood how people could deprive me and her of food. She went out into the streets crying.

SCENE FOUR: EXT. STREET- DAY.

Street sounds. IDA enters with a swaddled infant. SA MAN enters opposite.

IDA
"How am I supposed to get milk for my son?"

HARRY
An SA Man stopped her.

SA MAN
"A Jew kid doesn't need to guzzle milk!"
(Sound of a bottle thrown on ground, breaking. The baby cries. SA MAN exits. A WOMAN enters. She carries milk bottles.)

IDA
Shh, shhh,
(singing.)
"A widowed Daughter of Zion sits alone."[21]

HARRY
A woman helped her.

WOMAN
Ida, come here, inside the door. Shhh, be quiet. "I will help you, but you must promise never to say you were here; you will forget this whole thing, because if anybody knows that I helped someone who was Jewish, it could mean the . . . imprisonment of my family."[22]
(giving IDA the milk bottles)
Here, go out the back door.
(indicating a wall in the distance)
See that wall? I'll leave a bottle of milk on that wall in the back of the yard each morning before dawn.

IDA
Thank you, thank you.

---

[21] Abraham Goldfaden, arranged by Kayli Perrine. Raisins and Almonds

[22] This quote comes from an interview of former Shanghai Jewish refugee, Eric Kisch. Kisch was describing what an Italian man said to Kisch's mother, Grete Kisch, when he helped her as she fled to Shanghai. The playwrights decided to use this to supply dialogue of the woman helping Harry's mother. Interview of Eric Kisch conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 9 September 2017, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

(IDA and the WOMAN exit.)

HARRY
That really affected her. I was only a baby.[23]

ROSE
What was your mother like before Kristallnacht?

HARRY
Well, I didn't know her, you know, beforehand, but in talking with my uncle and others, they said she was a whole different person. She was fairly easygoing in fact.[24]

ROSE
Do you believe that Kristallnacht changed her?

HARRY
I do. That night changed everybody. Nobody trusted anyone anymore and my mother especially became hard, tough, and difficult. You know, after she got the tickets for her brother and my father, she got four more for me, herself, and her parents. But they didn't want to go.[25]

SCENE FIVE: EXT. TRAIN STATION/INT. TRAVEL AGENT- DAY.

Sound of a train. IDA and AGENT enter opposite sides of the stage. IDA crosses toward AGENT.

IDA
Excuse me, pardon me, I'm trying to get off. I need to go to the travel office.

AGENT
Good morning, ma'am, how may I assist you today?

IDA

---

[23] Kevin Ostoyich, 'Mothers: Remembering Three Women on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht', American Institute for Contemporary German Studies of The Johns Hopkins University (Published online 9 November 2018: https://www.aicgs.org/2018/11/mothers-remembering-three-women-on-the-80th-anniversary-of-kristallnacht/).
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

I need tickets to Shanghai. I only had the funds earlier to get two for my husband and brother. Now I need to get tickets for the rest of my family. I was hoping to be able to get four. One for each of my parents, one for my son, and one for myself.

AGENT
The price has gone up.

IDA
But you gave me assurances!

AGENT
There are others waiting that can pay much more than this.

IDA
You gave me assurances at the lower price. Please, I don't have a lot of money.

AGENT
Did you still want the tickets?

IDA
Albrecht and Sigfrid are in Shanghai already. They're waiting for us. My father was in the German Navy. He has friends, money, anything.

AGENT
Remember once you get these you have four weeks to get out of the country.

IDA
Yes sir. I remember all too well.

Sound of a train. AGENT exits. BERTHOLD and MINA enter, meeting IDA.

SCENE FIVE: INT.- DAY.

IDA
Mom and Dad, here are your tickets. I have mine and Harry's in my coat pocket.

BERTHOLD
Schatzi...we...we aren't going.[26]

[26] 'Schatzi' is a German word of endearment akin to 'Sweetie'.

IDA
Not going?? What do you mean not going?

MINA
Ida we aren't going. We want to stay here.

IDA
You have to come with us. I don't want to think about what could happen to you if you stay here.

(BERTHOLD, MINA, and IDA exit.)

ROSE
They didn't want to go? Even though they knew what was happening to the Jews?

HARRY
Well, you have to understand, my grandfather had served in the German Navy and Frickhofen was their home.

ROSE
So, they thought they would be okay.

HARRY
Yes. But even they weren't safe from the Nazis.

ROSE
What happened to them?

HARRY
My grandfather was forced into hard labor and because of that, suffered very much from malnutrition and exhaustion. He died from a ruptured appendix.

ROSE
And your grandmother?

HARRY
She lived for about two years in a house with other Jewish women. But eventually they were shipped off to Auschwitz, and there, all of them, including my grandmother, were killed.[27]

[27] Information about Harry's grandparents comes from the interviews with him. Additional information about Harry's grandmother hiding in Frickhofen comes from conversations Kevin Ostoyich had with local Frickhofen historian,

ROSE
Your mother did her best to keep you all together. It seems like she was a great role model for you.

HARRY
Oh, of course; not only for me, but for others as well.

ROSE
What do you mean?

HARRY
My mother was a great seamstress. She learned how to sew when she was very young from her mother and grandmother. See that machine over there? That was her sewing machine.

ROSE
This... is her original sewing machine?

HARRY
Yes, it is. After Kristallnacht, when she was gathering the materials for us to leave for Shanghai, she made it a priority to bring the Singer along with us. Jews in Shanghai didn't have much. We were forced to give up most of our possessions, even our clothes. Sewing. She loved to sew.[28] She taught young people in Shanghai to sew.[29] Here's a good one for you, when people no longer had clothes, women made blouses out of—

ROSE
My mother and women in Shanghai shared similar talents! She could recreate an old blouse into something new and different.

Hubert Hecker. Since the original performance of the play, new information has come to light: according to The Central Database of Shoah Victim's Names at Yad Vashem, Mina (née Heilbronn) Rosenthal was deported to Sobibor extermination camp on 11 June 1942 and murdered. https://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=11618237&ind=1 (last accessed 14 December 2022). Note: There are alternate spellings of Mina's maiden name in various records: 'Heilbronn' and 'Heilbrunn'.

[28] Kevin Ostoyich, 'Mothers: Remembering Three Women on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht', American Institute for Contemporary German Studies of The Johns Hopkins University (Published online 9 November 2018: https://www.aicgs.org/2018/11/mothers-remembering-three-women-on-the-80th-anniversary-of-kristallnacht/).

[29] Ibid.

HARRY
But these women could make dresses out of parachute material . . .

ROSE
Wow, your mother was an amazing woman. She went through so much, but still found it necessary to help others.

HARRY
It was important to her. Though Kristallnacht really had an impact on who she was, this was the one thing that kept her mind at ease. She just loved to sew.[30]

Sound of a sewing machine.

Fig. 03: Harry J. Abraham posing beside his mother's sewing machine ca. 2017 (Photo courtesy Harry J. Abraham and family)

[30] Ibid.

SCENE SIX: INT. IDA'S APARTMENT IN THE HEIM[31]– DAY.

IDA and INGA[32] are working on a dress that INGA wears as a model.

IDA
Can you hand me the pincushion please?

INGA
What are we gonna do about this area in the back, it's looking a little scarce?

IDA
I know. Right now, I just need to pin the bodice closed so I can remember to sew it up, we can't have the young woman giving a peep show at the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association.[33]

INGA
I'm amazed anyone is still having dances these days!

---

[31] Shanghai had various barracks-style buildings called *Heime* (pl. homes)/*Heim* (s. house) where the poorest refugees tended to live with very little furnishings. Often many refugees from different families would live in the same room with only blankets hung up to provide a semblance of privacy.

[32] The name INGA is in honor of former Shanghai Jewish refugee Inga Berkey.

[33] The Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School (also known as the 'Kadoorie School' after the Sephardic Jewish benefactor, Horace Kadoorie) was the main school for the refugee children in Shanghai. It served much more than a school, however. It also was the location of vocational training, cultural events, and religious services. It even served at times as makeshift housing. For more information about the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association school, see Steve Hochstadt, 'The Kadoorie School: Educating Refugee Children in Shanghai', in Kevin Ostoyich and Yun Xia, eds. *The History of the Shanghai Jews: New Pathways of Research* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 99-131. Harry J. Abraham attended a different school in Shanghai known as the Freysinger School. Nevertheless, the Abraham family most likely would have attended events at the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School.

IDA
I couldn’t agree with you more! Dances are a time for celebration! What is there to celebrate here?

INGA
I mean think about it, wouldn’t you want to celebrate something even if it’s not how you want it to be, instead of celebrating nothing at all?

IDA
At least some people will have good memories when they leave Shanghai. Now help me figure out what we’re gonna do to the rest of the dress.

INGA
Hmm let’s see, well the dress is coming together quite nicely Ida, but what if we reconstructed the bodice and took some material from there and added it to the gown?

IDA
No, no, we can't do that; then she would have less coverage at the bodice and, trust me, that would not work for a modest Jewish family like hers.
(Chuckling. Pause. IDA and INGA quietly think to themselves. IDA snaps her fingers.)
I know what to do! Come help me get it from the kitchen.
(IDA and INGA cross off stage and re-enter with a large white parachute.)
Albrecht brought this home yesterday and I felt the need to keep it for something useful, and I was right!

INGA
What on Earth is this? And, it has a huge mud stain on it!!
(laughing)

IDA
If you’d use your imagination this dirty old parachute will complete the two layers of draping on her gown that we need![34]

[34] The parachute story is based on former Shanghai Jewish refugee, Inga Berkey’s description of how her aunt made clothes in Shanghai out of a parachute that Inga’s uncle found discarded in Shanghai. Interview of Harry J.

INGA
You still haven’t answered my question about the giant mud stain at the center of it.

IDA
Oh, that’s nothing a good old wash can’t get out, have some faith in my abilities
(chuckling).
She won’t even be able to tell what material this is because it will be hidden under the first layer we already have! Just wait and see! You may not know this about me, but I was taught by the best.

INGA
(chuckling)
And who exactly was that?

IDA
My grandmother. You see that sewing machine we’ve been using this whole time to make the dress?

INGA
Yes.

IDA
Well, she taught me everything I know, and I couldn’t just leave it when we were fleeing to Shanghai; I would feel as if I were leaving a part of me behind. It keeps me connected to my grandmother. And now I want to use this same piece of machinery to bring this dress together.

(Sound of a cell phone ringing. IDA and INGA exit.)

ROSE
Oh, excuse me, I have to take this . . . . Yes, well I am actually in the middle of the interview as we speak . . . . okay I’ll check my email when I hang up.

HARRY
(chuckles)

ROSE
What’s so funny, Harry?

Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio.

(Sound of three notifications on cell phone.)

ROSE

Oh that? Yeah, I get a lot of notifications throughout the day, but that's the only way I know when I get a new message, so I can immediately check it.

HARRY

This generation and their technology I tell you; you wouldn't last a week back in my day. Picture it, you're a young child in a very unfamiliar place, you can't go back home because it's being torn down from top to bottom, you couldn't bring your toys, just the bare necessities if that....so what do you do to have fun? You make something out of absolutely nothing. The year is 1943, the date is February 18th. You're playing outside when you see a flyer posted on a telephone pole about a new proclamation issued by the Japanese. All stateless refugees that entered Shanghai after 1937, in other words, the Jews, have to move into a Designated Area, in Hongkew, with all of the other Jewish people and poorest of the Chinese. All this time Shanghai is occupied by Japan, allies to Germany. Life in Shanghai was good at first, it wasn't the French Concession, where people had a lot of space, made a fairly good living, and didn't face a lot of oppression, but we made the best of it.[35]

[35] Eric Kisch, Webex meeting with Valparaiso University students, 7 April 2020.

SCENE SEVEN: EXT. PLAYGROUND- DAY.[36]

ELLEN[37] and IVY[38] enter playing.

ELLEN
How do you like your new house?

IVY
I don't know. It isn't much, but it's a place to live, you know, even though it has a lot of people living in such a small space.

ELLEN
I miss where we lived before the Japanese said we had to live here. It isn't like the fancy house I used to live in on the other side of the bridge.

IVY
Do you think the Japanese knew it was mean?

ELLEN
I don't think they did. The Germans made them do it.

IVY

---

[36] Although Harry had friends in Shanghai, he had a hard time remembering them during his interviews with Kevin Ostoyich. The playwrights decided to provide a scene of children discussing conditions in Shanghai and playing games. The scene is a historical composite based on interviews of multiple individuals, including 1) Inga Berkey, Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio and Interview of Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 7 October 2017, Cleveland, Ohio; 2) Helga Silberberg, Interview of Helga Silberberg, conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 18 September 2019, San Francisco, California; 3) Bert Reiner, Interview of Bert Reiner conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 October 2017, Las Vegas, Nevada; 4) Gary Sternberg, Interview of Gary Sternberg conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 28 October 2017, Henderson, Nevada; and 5) Ivy Green, Interview of Ivy Green conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 29 June 2019, Sydney, Australia.

[37] The name ELLEN is in honor of former Shanghai Jewish refugee Ellen Wolf.

[38] The name IVY is in honor of former Shanghai Jewish refugee Ivy Green.

Do you have a lot of people living in your house like I do?

ELLEN

Yes, but everyone is in my family, so I guess that helps a little bit. Do you like where you live?

IVY

It's hard having to share sinks and toilets, and the little bugs in our beds and rice are annoying.
(pause)
How are you liking it?

ELLEN

It's getting better . . . when we first moved here, I heard a lot of people complaining that the designated area was just a bombed out, burnt out place.

IVY

Is your family having a hard time living here? There are a lot of families living in my house and the rooms are divided by curtains.

ELLEN

Yeah . . . . it's not the cleanest place to live; there are a lot of people living in my house. Three floors aren't as big as you think. The first floor is a giant bedroom and a small bedroom in the corner that is mine. The next floor is where my aunt, uncle, uncle's cousin, and grandpa sleep. The next floor is for my uncle, aunt and my cousin, and the outhouse is a little room above that.[39]

IVY

We don't have an outhouse. We have to use honey buckets.[40] The smell is horrible because so many people are using them.

ELLEN

Ewwww, honey buckets. Why do they call them that? The smell of them is so gross and nasty. I feel bad for the

---

[39] Interview of Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 7 October 2017, Cleveland, Ohio.

[40] Given the lack of indoor plumbing, most refugees had to use buckets for relieving themselves. The waste from the 'honey buckets' was collected on the street by Chinese labourers and often used as fertiliser. Honey buckets are described in multiple interviews with former Shanghai Jewish refugees.

people who empty them every day. What a crappy job.
(girls laugh)
Do you get tired of eating beans? There are so many beans in my house that other people ask me, "What color did you have last night knowing it was one color of beans: purple, brown, black, white, or yellow."[41]

IVY
Were you able to bring any toys or anything with you? I couldn't bring my teddy bear with me, and I miss him a lot.

ELLEN
I don't have any kind of toys. Not a doll, not a teddy bear. I've never learned how to ride a bicycle even.[42]

IVY
What do you play with then?

ELLEN
Sometimes I play this game with marbles that I learned from my friends, and my family also plays Shanghai Millionaire sometimes.[43]

IVY
That sounds fun. I wish I knew how to play. Do you think we could play? I don't want to be sad anymore.

ELLEN
Sure! I could teach you. My marbles aren't the prettiest, but they're still fun and special to me.

(ELLEN drops marbles from a small bag on the ground.)

IVY
Can I play with this one? I like the color.

---

[41] The description of eating beans of different colors on different days comes from interview of Bert Reiner conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 October 2017, Las Vegas, Nevada.
[42] Interview of Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 7 October 2017, Cleveland, Ohio.
[43] Interview of Helga Silberberg, conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 18 September 2019, San Francisco, California. 'Shanghai Millionaire' was a variant of Monopoly.

ELLEN
I like that one, too. It's my favorite. Put your marble on the ground like this and flick it to try to hit another marble.

IVY
Don't we need more people to play?

ELLEN
No, we can play with the two of us. Sometimes people play with four or five shooting the marbles, but we don't need that many. Hey, have you heard of packs? I've seen some of the boys play that.[44]

IVY
Is that the game with the cigarette packs that you fold and throw at each other?

ELLEN
They seem to have fun playing it, but they never let me play. I guess some of the packs are collectible, but I don't see what is collectible about a folded cigarette pack.

(ELLEN and IVY laugh and keep playing.)

HARRY
Don't get me wrong, it's not like we enjoyed every second of our time there nor were we always happy but what were we to do? Sit around and sulk? That wasn't an option, so we didn't have a choice but to use our imagination.

(pause)

Everything that you hold near and dear is on your phone, right?

ROSE
For the most part yeah, I keep all my passwords on my note's app, all my family photos—

HARRY
Right! See if your phone were to stop working right now, you'd have a heart attack, wouldn't you?

ROSE
I'll give you that one Harry. I will say that my phone has definitely become part of my daily life, but I didn't

[44] Description of 'packs' comes from multiple interviews conducted of Gary Sternberg by Kevin Ostoyich in Henderson, Nevada.

always have this small rectangular piece of metal and glass to keep me entertained.

HARRY
Please enlighten me!

ROSE
Let me see, some of my favorites were Simon says, kick ball, oh definitely dodgeball. Dodgeball could get real violent. I've gotten hit in the face a few times by accident. That was not fun to say the least.

HARRY
I don't know many people getting hit in the face "by accident" even if it's just a game. On a serious note, there weren't many activities in school outside of racing and soccer. When school was over, we went home.

ROSE
Are there any other moments you can remember when you were in school?

HARRY
Oh definitely! I'll never forget this.

ROSE
Alright what happened?

SCENE EIGHT: INT. IDA'S HEIM- DAY.

HARRY
It was later, after the war was over. Everyone was distracted, thinking about getting out of Shanghai. The teacher would walk up and down the aisle and warn you when you would take a test. I couldn't concentrate. I'll never forget he had a ruler behind his back, and he gave me a whack across my knuckles, I can feel it now! And I hid my hands behind my back when I got home, and my mother was wondering what I was doing, so I showed her and it was all red, and of course you don't lie to your mother, especially my mother, she was tough.

(Sound of sewing machine. IDA enters looking for YOUNG HARRY.[45] *YOUNG HARRY*

[45] Important Note: The play was originally performed as a Radio Theatre Broadcast. Kevin Ostoyich played both HARRY and YOUNG HARRY. For live performances of this play, it

enters.)

IDA
Harry, is that you?

YOUNG HARRY
Yes, ma'am.

IDA
Well come in here and let me see you, what are you hiding for? How was school?

YOUNG HARRY
It was okay . . . Well . . . umm we had a test in History class today . . .

IDA
Just okay? How'd you do?

YOUNG HARRY
I think I did pretty good, but . . .

IDA
But wha—? What are you rubbing your hand like that for?

YOUNG HARRY
Well . . . the teacher hit me on the hand real hard in class and it still hurts.

IDA
What happened this time?

YOUNG HARRY
Well, he hadn't passed all the tests out yet, so I thought it was okay to keep talking until he was finished but then he came over and told me to hold out my hand and he popped me with a ruler.

IDA
Let me see your hand.

YOUNG HARRY
See it's still red.
(IDA slaps YOUNG HARRY.)

---

is suggested that a child actor play the role of the YOUNG HARRY.

IDA
Maybe he didn’t hit you hard enough.

ROSE
Whoa! Your mother did not play, she meant business.

HARRY
Education was very important to my mother.

IDA
What are you going to do when we go to America? Do you want to be behind all of the other children?

YOUNG HARRY
We’re moving to America?!

IDA
When the quotas come through. Your father has a cousin that will sponsor us.

YOUNG HARRY
The quotas! That could take years!

IDA
Then you will have plenty of time to work on those marks in school.
(pause)
What do you want to be when you are grown up in America?

YOUNG HARRY
I don’t know. A businessman, like Poppa, or an engineer.

IDA
You want to be like your father? Selling tin cans to the Chinese to make rain spouts?

YOUNG HARRY
Sure! Look at all these bags of money Pa’s made. We’re Shanghai millionaires![46]

IDA
(laughing)
Yes, but with inflation, it’s not worth the money it’s

[46] The playwrights wished to underscore the popularity of the game Shanghai Millionaire among refugee children here. A Shanghai Millionaire board game made by two refugee children from a US Army cardboard ‘K’ rations box is in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Accession Number: 2009.106.1.

printed on. Kindling for the stove!

YOUNG HARRY
What will you do in America?

IDA
Well, I'll sew, of course, on my Singer sewing machine.

(Sound of sewing machine. IDA goes to machine and sews.)

YOUNG HARRY
What are you sewing now?

IDA
A jacket, for you, out of my old ski pants. I don't need them here in Shanghai. Here try it on.

(IDA holds up a shirt made to look like a G.I. Soldier, and a hat. HARRY takes the shirt and hat.)

YOUNG HARRY
Wow! American badges, and a soldier's hat! Where did you get these!
(pause)
Wait, mom! You put the buttons on the wrong side! You think I'm a girl![47]

IDA
(laughing)
You look like a man, sweetheart!

YOUNG HARRY
I look like a G.I.!

IDA
You look like a G.I., my friend![48]

---

[47] The story of the buttons being on the wrong side is one of the most vivid memories Harry has of his mother's sewing in Shanghai.
[48] This refers to an original song from the Shanghai refugee community titled 'You Look Life a G.I., My Friend'. Willy Rosen. New text by Kurt Lewin. English translation of Lewin text by Kevin Ostoyich. Arranged by Kayli Perrine. Lewin text located in United States

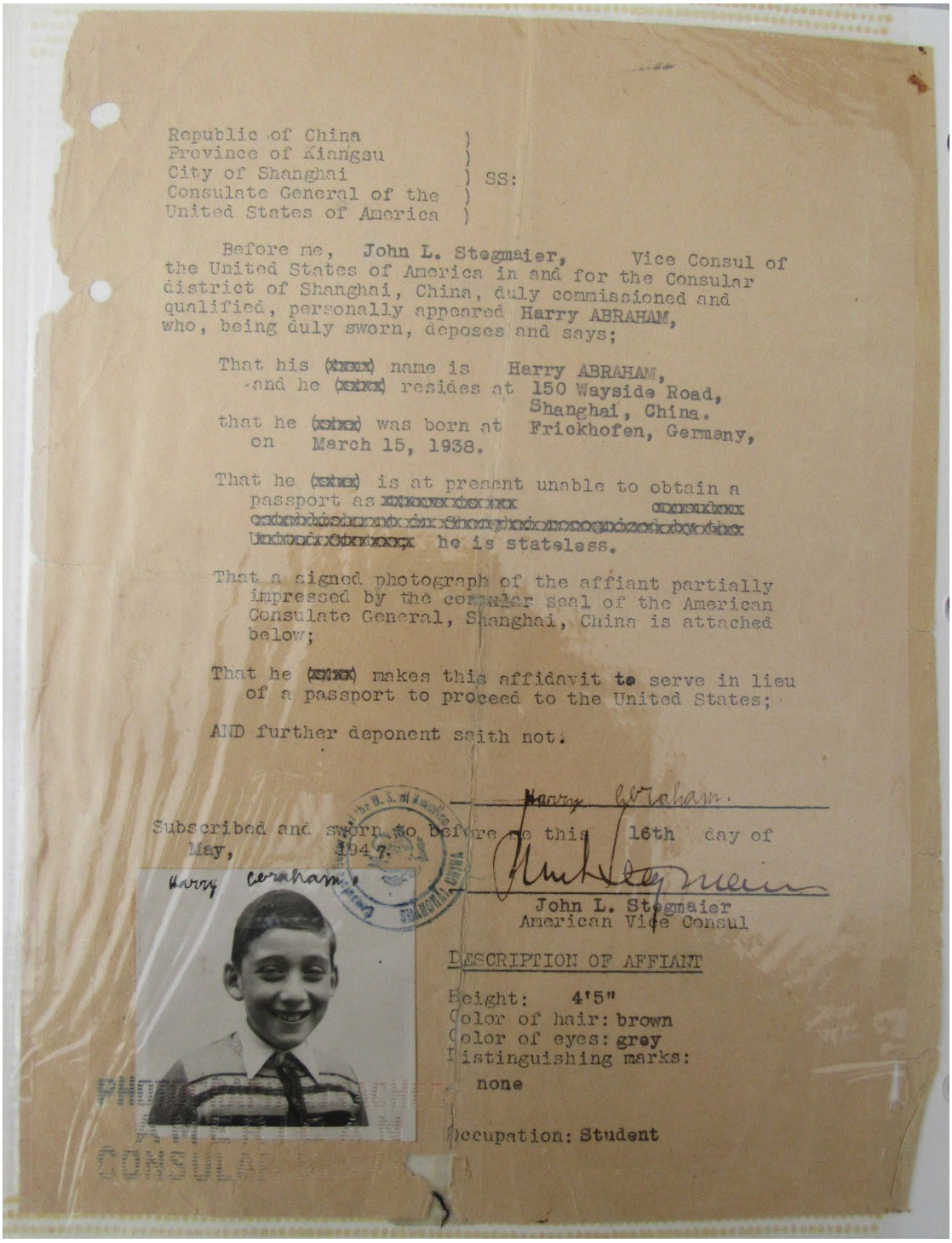
HARRY
I'm going to go show the kids!

(YOUNG HARRY exits. IDA continues to sew. As IDA sings "You Look Like A G.I., My Friend," there is the sound of a sewing machine.)

IDA
(singing)

"After a long time indeed, we were finally freed.
Over night we'd discern that fortune had returned.
Work brought by military corps gave golden dollars, more and more.
Running after cash and prizes no one recognizes:
You look just like a G.I. my friend,
But you get nothing on that account, my friend."[49]

Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Harpuder Family Papers, Accession Number: 2010.240.1.
[49] Ibid.



Republic of China)
Province of Kiangsu)
City of Shanghai) SS:
Consulate General of the)
United States of America)

Before me, John L. Stegmaier, Vice Consul of the United States of America in and for the Consular district of Shanghai, China, duly commissioned and qualified, personally appeared Harry ABRAHAM, who, being duly sworn, deposes and says;

That his (xxxx) name is Harry ABRAHAM,
and he (xxxx) resides at 150 Wayside Road, Shanghai, China.
that he (xxxx) was born at Frickhofen, Germany,
on March 15, 1938.

That he (xxxx) is at present unable to obtain a passport as [redacted] he is stateless.

That a signed photograph of the affiant partially impressed by the consular seal of the American Consulate General, Shanghai, China is attached below;

That he (xxxx) makes this affidavit to serve in lieu of a passport to proceed to the United States;

AND further deponent saith not.

Harry Abraham.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 16th day of May, 1947.

John L. Stegmaier
American Vice Consul

DESCRIPTION OF AFFIANT

Height: 4'5"
Color of hair: brown
Color of eyes: grey
Distinguishing marks:
none

Occupation: Student

Harry Abraham

Fig. 04: Harry J. Abraham's identification issued by the US consulate in Shanghai in 1947 for travel to the USA (Photo by Rebecca Ostoyich and courtesy of Harry J. Abraham and family)

SCENE NINE: EXT. PLAYGROUND- DAY.[50]

ELLEN and IVY continue playing marbles. *A G.I. SOLDIER enters.*

G.I. SOLDIER
What are you kids playing?

ELLEN
Hey, you're the soldier that gave us candy in my English class!!!

G.I. SOLDIER
Yes, I am! And what is your name??

ELLEN
My name is Ellen, sir!

G.I. SOLDIER
Well, it is nice to meet you, young lady, what do you girls have there?

IVY
It’s a game called marbles.

G.I. SOLDIER
Hmm, I see, and have you ever played baseball?[51]

IVY
Nope!

G.I. SOLDIER
You’ve never played baseball before, not even your own version?

---

[50] In addition to the Harry J. Abraham interviews, this scene draws inspiration from the interview of Bert Reiner conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 October 2017, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[51] Harry believes that it was later through baseball that he became integrated into American society. See Kevin Ostoyich, ‘From Kristallnacht and Back: Searching for Meaning in the History of the Shanghai Jews’, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies of The Johns Hopkins University. (Published online 2 August 2017: https://www.aicgs.org/2017/08/from-kristallnacht-and-back/).

ELLEN

(laughing)

No sir, I've seen a few soldiers playing around here, and I enjoyed watching them play. It looks like so much fun. When one soldier would hit the ball, I could hear it echo and watch it soar through the sky and land in the trees!!

G.I. SOLDIER

Well Ellen, today is your lucky day. I'm going to show you how to play my country's favorite pastime!

IVY

But we don't have any balls or bats?!

G.I. SOLDIER

Don't you worry about that, my boys and I have plenty! You'll be pros in no time!

ELLEN

Now I bet the boys will let me play!

IVY

Look over there! Who's that?

ELLEN

It looks like Harry.

IVY

What's he wearing? That jacket makes him look like a G.I.

ELLEN

Hey, Harry! Over here! We're playing baseball!

(IVY and ELLEN run off. Music up for chorus of "You Look Like a G.I. My Friend." IDA sings and sews.)

IDA

"You buy everything second hand, that's true,
and you leave the fighting for others to do.
You look just like a G.I. my friend,
Yet you were never in the thick of it my friend.
Only Jews in Hongkew know the score,
a profess'nal emigrant and nothing more.
You look just like a G.I. my friend, a

G.I. my immigrant friend."[52]

(IDA exits.)

HARRY
"My mother was tough, hard-nosed, and sometimes difficult. But that difficulty was what created the ability to accomplish what she accomplished."[53] Did I tell you about a trip we took back to Germany to check on the graves of my family members and see if they were being attended to?

ROSE
No, tell me.

SCENE TEN: EXT. FRICKHOFEN JEWISH CEMETERY, FRICKHOFEN—DAY.[54]

Sound of rustling of leaves in the wind. IDA and TOUR GUIDE enter opposite.

IDA
Excuse me sir, I'm looking for the graves of my parents Berthold and Mina. Would you be able to help me?

TOUR GUIDE
Sure. What did you say your parent's names were?

---

[52] 'You Look Life a G.I., My Friend'. Willy Rosen. New text by Kurt Lewin. English translation of Lewin text by Kevin Ostoyich. Arranged by Kayli Perrine. Lewin text located in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Harpuder Family Papers, Accession Number: 2010.240.1.

[53] Kevin Ostoyich, 'Mothers: Remembering Three Women on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht', American Institute for Contemporary German Studies of The Johns Hopkins University (Published online 9 November 2018: https://www.aicgs.org/2018/11/mothers-remembering-three-women-on-the-80th-anniversary-of-kristallnacht/).

[54] The scene is loosely based on the return of Ida Abraham and Harry J. Abraham to Frickhofen in the 1970s. The Frickhofen cemetery actually contains the graves of Ida's grandparents: Siegmund Heilbrunn and Rebeka Heilbrunn. Rebeka Heilbrunn is the grandmother who gave Ida her sewing machine. There are alternate spellings of surname in records: 'Heilbronn' and 'Heilbrunn'. The current tombstone uses the 'Heilbrunn' spelling.

IDA
Berthold and Mina Rosenthal.

TOUR GUIDE
They should be over here along that wall; follow me this way. Your father is buried over there in the Jewish cemetery, and there is a plaque for your mother. They aren't the easiest to find, some of the tombstones are missing.[55]

IDA
Ahh, here they are.

TOUR GUIDE
I'll let you have a moment alone. Come back to the entrance when you're ready to go.

IDA
Thank you.
(Pause. Takes a deep breath)
Mother and Father, I miss you both dearly. I wish you could see everything we've been through. There is so much I wish I could tell you. I wish you would have come with us to Shanghai. I wish I would have known when you told me you weren't coming that you were signing your own death sentences. I would have thanked you more for everything you did for our family. That moment weighs heavily on my mind and will for the rest of my life.
(Pause.)
I wish you could see how tough I've become through all of this. Everything you and grandmother taught me has served me well. I can't thank you enough. I did everything for my family. All I hope for is that a hard work ethic and determined mindset will get them anywhere. I can see so much of myself in Harry.

(Sound of rustling leaves in the wind. IDA exits.)

[55] The original tombstones were destroyed by the Nazis. New tombstones were placed in the cemetery after the war. Pieces of the old tombstones are still found by hikers and joggers and are placed in the cemetery. Information provided by local Frickhofen historian, Hubert Hecker to Kevin Ostoyich.

Figure 5: A memorial in the Frickhofen Jewish cemetery to the Jews murdered by the Nazis (Photo by Kevin Ostoyich)

Fig. 05: A memorial in the Frickhofen Jewish cemetery to the Jews murdered by the Nazis (Photo by Kevin Ostoyich)

ROSE
What else can you tell me? I have a lot of questions, but sometimes I forget to ask the most important ones.

HARRY
During the trip I had an encounter with some of my father's friends.

ROSE
How did that go?

(WOMAN and others (not the actress playing IDA enter).)

HARRY
"I'll tell you a story. I sat in the room in Altenkirchen in the room with [people] that grew up with my father. And they were sittin' on the couch . . . They were sittin' on the couch. And I was asked before I came by the, and I have the paper,
(cough),
the German newspaper, I'll send you a copy if you're interested. And I was handed the questionnaire . . . you know they wanted to ask a certain question, they said . . . . 'If you feel uncomfortable talking about anything, let us know.' I said, 'No, but can I ask you questions? If you feel uncomfortable in terms of me asking questions, then you tell me.' 'No, you can ask whatever you want.' I said, 'Fine.' So they brought these people in . . . they grew up with my father, and as I started to ask questions, they started to cry, they were crying, they said . . . ."[56]

WOMAN
"We didn't know anything about this . . . ."

HARRY
"Because you know what I asked then? I said, 'How could you let my father go to Buchenwald? How? You were there. What did you do about it? . . . This one said. . . 'He was my best friend. I knew him as a Jew, but he was my best friend.' 'Then how could you let him go?' And these were people, in the town, that knew my father, that were allowing this to happen. A simple question."
(Silence.)

---

[56] Direct quotation of Harry J. Abraham from Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio.

"They had no answer for me."[57]

WOMAN
"We didn't understand."

HARRY
"But they started to cry. . . I mean, they lived together, they grew up together, they played together, went to school together, you know, it's what they said before that.
(Pause.)
That stopped after I started asking my questions . . .[58]

(WOMAN and others exit.)

And that's even the point today. . . ignoring reality, in some ways. . . ."
(Pause.)
"Because if that would have been recognized and reacted to at that time we wouldn't be talking maybe about Shanghai Jews, or the Holocaust or anything."
(Pause.)
"There has to be something that you can see through that people are just overlooking because it keeps continuing to come up, it just keeps coming up . . . I think even now that things are happening in the world and people are ignoring it. They're just standing by and not really doing anything about it you know. I'm seeing repeated now on the world stage just a few years after all this happened."[59] But wait, I would like to ask you a question.

ROSE
Of course. Go ahead, Harry.

HARRY
(defensively)
Why do you care? I mean, why do you care about our history? "In this case of the Shanghai Jews, what it possibly could leave, um as a memory for the future?. .

---

[57] Direct quotation of Harry J. Abraham from Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio.
[58] Direct quotation of Harry J. Abraham from Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio.
[59] Direct quotation of Harry J. Abraham from Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio.

.This happened so long ago. It's small, 20 thousand Jews, and it's so far away, and it's really insignificant on the world stage, it didn't really create anything, you know in terms of making history, as far as development and so on, so why would someone even begin to think about it?"[60]

ROSE
I understand where you're coming from, Harry, and I can understand why you're confused about my interest. But the thing is . . . your history, the history of the Shanghai Jews is not insignificant. Twenty thousand people escaping death is not insignificant. It's just like you explained with Kristallnacht. Something like that should never, ever happen again. I want to learn about your story and tell it, Harry, so that I can help you in making sure nothing like Kristallnacht ever happens again.

SCENE ELEVEN: EXT. STREET IN FRICKHOFEN. DAY.[61]

Sound of rustling leaves. GUIDE and IDA enter together. HARRY joins them.

GUIDE
Which house was yours again?

(Sound of breaking glass.)

IDA
It's that one. See the upstairs? We used to rent the second floor.

GUIDE
This was one of the first houses raided in Kristallnacht, wasn't it?

---

[60] Direct quotation of Harry J. Abraham from Interview of Harry J. Abraham and Inga Berkey conducted by Kevin Ostoyich, 27 May 2017, Moreland Hills, Ohio.
[61] The scene was inspired by conversations between local Frickhofen historian, Hubert Hecker and Kevin Ostoyich as well as the recollections of Harry J. Abraham of the reunion he and his mother had with the woman who provided milk in the immediate aftermath of Kristallnacht.

IDA
Yes... see the window on the right? On the night of Kristallnacht, my precious Harry, who was only an infant at the time, was sleeping under that window when a rock was thrown through it shattering glass all over my sleeping baby. Do you know what my biggest concern was in that moment out of everything that happened, even bigger than my Albrecht being sent to Buchenwald?

GUIDE
What's that?

IDA
Why couldn't I get milk for my son? Why did the Nazis refuse us food?

(WOMAN enters.)

WOMAN
Ida? Ida Abraham. Is that you?

IDA
I'm Ida, who are you?

WOMAN
I put the milk on the wall, over there in the back of the yard.

IDA
It's you? It's really you? This is my son. This is Harry. Harry, this is the woman that saved your life.

HARRY
They embraced.

(The women embrace.)

You have to remember that, even in a story like this, there were some good people.

IDA
Why was my family imprisoned?

WOMAN
I'm so sorry, Ida... Harry.

IDA
Why did everyone shut us Jews out? Why was Shanghai the only place for us to go?

WOMAN

I'm so sorry.

(WOMAN exits.)

HARRY & IDA

"Why, why, why?"

(IDA exits.)

Fig. 06: A plaque on the Frickhofen town hall memorialising the 33 murdered Jews of the town and their suffering at the hands of the Nazis (Photo by Kevin Ostoyich)

HARRY

(Pauses)

I'll be right back. I need to get some more water.

ROSE

We can take as long as you need.

(HARRY exits.)

ROSE

I hope I didn't upset him.

(LARA knocks and enters.)

LARA
Rose? It’s Lara.

ROSE
Hello again! Please, come have a seat next to me.

LARA
I could overhear you from the other room. I wanted to say that, even though Mr. Abraham can get worked up talking about his past, just know that this really means a lot to him. Knowing that people care about Kristallnacht, about Shanghai, about his mother . . . people aren’t normally interested in this kind of stuff.

ROSE
Of course. I mean, these interviews are the least I could do. I think that if people hear these stories, especially from refugees themselves, they will start to see how the Holocaust and the Nazis affected these peoples’ lives.

LARA
I agree.
(Pauses)
I know your interview is coming to a close, but I wanted to make sure you got a good look at Ida’s sewing machine before you left. I overheard Harry mention it to you earlier.

ROSE
Yes, he did. It’s remarkable he has it with him still.

LARA
I know, right? I also think it’s amazing how intact this thing is. It’s a bit dingy and matted from years of wear and tear, but with a good polish I’m sure this thing could look brand new!

ROSE
I think its unpolished state says something about the machine and about Harry and Ida’s lives. With everything they experienced, they made it through, together.

(HARRY re-enters.)

HARRY
Beautiful, isn’t she?

LARA
I figured I’d show it to Rose while you grabbed some more water. How are you feeling, Mr. Abraham?

HARRY
I'm fine . . . a little tired, but fine. Thank you, Lara.

(LARA exits.)

ROSE
Wow. This machine holds so many amazing stories.

HARRY
I keep this in my office in memory of my mother and the perseverance she showed. It inspires me every day.

ROSE
I'm happy you could share some of those stories with me.

HARRY
Oh, there are plenty more! There is one thing you should keep in mind. Shanghai was just a part of my life. Just a part. I just want to remind you and everyone else studying this history that it is important to go past Shanghai. A refugee's story doesn't end there. Those of us who survived have lived out the rest of our lives as normally as we can. But occasionally, something happens and it reminds us of those times. It's important that we look out for one another now more than ever.

ROSE
Would you be willing to tell me more about your life? I mean . . . after Shanghai?

HARRY
Yes, of course. We could meet again.

ROSE
Yes . . . When would you be free?

HARRY
How about the same time next week?

ROSE
Yes . . . that works!

HARRY
Yes . . . and then I can tell you about my mother's adventures in the United States behind the wheel.

ROSE
Behind the wheel?

HARRY
Oh...she loved cars. Oh, I can tell you about her beautiful red Cutlass![62] And about her working at Sears Roebuck—in charge of the slip-covers. Oh, and I need to tell you about the time I criticized her driving at an intersection, and she just got right out of the car leaving me there in the middle of an intersection!

ROSE & HARRY
(laughter)

ROSE
Wow! Shanghai isn't the end of the story. . .

HARRY
It is just the beginning!

(Sound of cell phone ringing.)

ROSE
Well, Harry, I would love to do a second interview. Thank you so much for your time and sharing your history.

HARRY
No, thank you. Lara, could you please see Rose out?

(LARA enters.)

LARA
Sure thing, Mr. Abraham. It was nice meeting you, Rose.

ROSE
You too, Lara. I will be coming back next week to learn more . . . Apparently, Mrs. Abraham was quite the driver.

LARA
Oh yes, you have learned the history of the Singer of Shanghai, but just you wait for the Cutlass of Cleveland!

(LARA and ROSE laugh and exit. HARRY and the Singer of Shanghai are left on stage).

THE END

[62] Oldsmobile Cutlass automobile.

Fig. 07: Harry J. Abraham with his parents Ida and Albrecht in Shanghai (Photo courtesy Harry J. Abraham and family)

Image
Seward Road in the Designated Area of Shanghai ca. 1943 (photographer unknown, Wikimedia,
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghaier_Ghetto#/media/Datei:Shanghai_ghetto_in_1943.jpg**)**

Afri-
con-
nect-
ions

Atis Rezistans at documenta 15: St. Kunigundis meets Haitian Voodoo

Peter Seeland

A human skull opens its jaw. Maybe in an obscene laugh? Metal, cables and wire form its body, which is erect in a coffin. A metal phallus protrudes from the lap. It is a scene that is difficult to reconcile at first with the clearly Christian motifs in the stained-

Fig. 01
André Eugène: *Gede Sekey* (2009), here in the St Kunigundis church in Kassel. while d15. Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022.

glass windows in the background. A skull without a reliquary in a church? On top with a huge phallus?

We are on the periphery of *documenta 15* in the Bettenhausen district of Kassel, in the Catholic church of St Kunigundis. We are looking at *Gede Sekey*, a sculpture of the Haitian collective *Atis Rezistans*, which is exhibiting here (figure 01). The church was consecrated in 1927 and is made of quarry stone and prestressed concrete. Built in the architectural style of the *Heimatschutzarchitektur*, the interior is decorated with mosaics and the exterior above the doorway with sandstone figures. The building has been renovated, and it reopened for the first time in 2022 for the d15 exhibition.[1]

Atis Rezistans was founded in the 1990s in Port-au-Prince.[2] Today, members from all over the world create art from diverse media and forms. The central themes are Haiti's role in the global postcolonial liberation struggle and conditions in contemporary Haiti. The formal language is influenced by everyday Haitian culture, the social landscape and Haitian Voodoo.[3]

The exhibition takes extends throughout the church grounds. An overarching theme is the Haitian Voodoo. A YouTube video gives an impression of the exhibition while the collective performs (figure 02). But what do Voodoo and Haiti have to do with a church in Kassel? The artworks guide us through the exhibition for answers.

Two cross-shaped sculptures by André Eugéné made of stacked oil drums flank the entrance to the church (figure 03). The sculptures bear the names *Bawon Samedi* and *Gran Brijit*. They stand in front of the figures of Mary and the saints under the entrance.

Fig. 02
The collective's opening performance invites visitors to participate in the Voodoo ceremony.
Image: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDr3_PjcyWI&ab_channel=documentafifteen.

1 Georg Dehio, *Handbuch der deutschen Kunstdenkmäler. Hessen 1, Regierungsbezirke Gießen und Kassel* (Munich: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 2008), 103.
2 Detailed information can be found on the website of the collective: www.atis-rezistans.com.
3 Rafael Camacho, 'Photo Essay: Atis Rezistans: Preserving Haiti's Anticolonial Resistance', *NACLA, Report on the Americas* 50, no. 2 (2018): 188–93.

To grasp the sculptures, a look at the structure of Voodoo helps. The world of Voodoo is divided into two parts: a mundane world with humans, animals and objects and a transcendent world of spirits and the dead. Homage is paid to the *Lwa*, the spirits. They were given to people to connect them to the transcendent world. The *Lwa* are divided into families, called Nasyon.[4] In the case of Bawon Samedi, the stamped patterns indicate his position. He is the head of the Gede, the Nasyon responsible for death and fertility. Through him, one can communicate with the deceased. As one of the popular *Lwa*, he is a popular motif in Haitian art.[5] In Voodoo, the shape of the cross stands for the crossroads between life and death. *Bawon Samedi* decides at the crossroads which path the faithful have to take.[6]

Death occupies a special position in Voodoo. When ancestors pass into the realm of the dead, it becomes possible to communicate with them. It enables a spiritual connection and transmission of tradition through the generations. *Gran Brijit*, *Bawon Samedi*'s wife, is the guardian of graves and cemeteries.[7] Eugéné thus marks the exhibition site through *Bawon Samedi* and *Gran Brijit* as the *Ounfo*, or cult site, of the *Gede*.

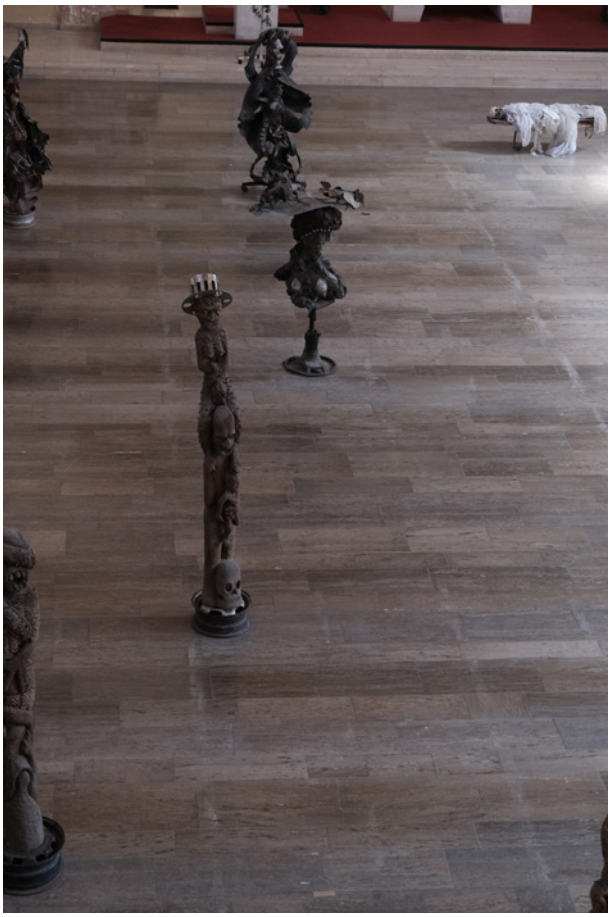
4 Turine Gael and Laennec Hurbon, eds., *Voodoo* (Tielt: Lannoo Publishers, 2010), 11, and Emmanuel Felix, *Understanding Haitian Voodoo* (Milano: Xulon Press, 2009), 54–56.
5 Gael and Hurbon, *Voodoo*, 182.
6 Gael and Hurbon, *Voodoo*, 182.
7 Gael and Hurbon, *Voodoo*, 221.

Fig. 03
André Eugéné: *Bawon Samedi* (2022), here in front of the St Kunigundis Church in Kassel (while d15). Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022.

Fig. 04
Lafleur & Bogaert: *Famasi Mobil Kongolè* (2019-2022), here installed in the Lady chapel of St Kunigundis, Kassel (while d15).
Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022

The location of the sculptures in front of a Christian church is reminiscent of Plaine du Nord in Haiti, a Voodoo pilgrimage site whose entrance is lined with a large cross. Colonial powers once forced Catholicism upon the enslaved people there and placed its symbols on Voodoo places of worship.[8] There is a striking reference to this past in front of St Kunigundis: Haitians displaying Voodoo symbols in front of a church. It's perhaps more an invitation to dialogue than an act of suppression. There is a transfer of ideas from contemporary, lived Haitian Voodoo to the middle of Europe. A transfer that surely displays aspects of dis:connectivity: just as the common, echoing colonial history connects, spatial and cultural distance simultaneously disconnects.

8 Gael and Hurbon, *Voodoo*, 100.



Entering the church, we come to a Lady chapel with a wooden Virgin Mary flanked by two sculptures of Lafleur & Bogaert, an artist duo (figure 04. Plastic buckets were connected with tape and covered with coloured pills. Congolese flags are stuck between the pills. The title *Famasi Mobil Kongolè* reveals yet more: the artists allude to the mobile pharmacies of street vendors and so to Haiti's fragile health system. These vendors provide medical care to many Haitians in place of an intact health system. But what does the reference to Congo mean? The answer lies in colonial history. After the island was conquered by the Spanish, the western part, today's Haiti, was left to the French and the indigenous population was almost wiped out by epidemics and forced labour.[9] In order to continue operating the plantations, millions of enslaved people from Africa were forced to Haiti. At the end of the 18th century, 90 per cent of the population were enslaved Africans,[10] most of them from the Congo.[11] *Famasi Mobil Kongolè* thus refers to the historical connection of modern Haiti

↖ Fig. 05
View into the St. Kunignudis Church during the Atis Rezistans exhibition at d15.
Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022.

↑ Fig. 06
View into the St Kunignudis Church during the Atis Rezistans exhibition at d15.
Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022.

9 George Kohn, *Encyclopedia of Plague and Pestilence. From Ancient Times to the Present*. (New York: Infobased Publishing, 2007), 160.
10 C.L.R James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Penguin Modern Classics, 1963), 55; Andrian Kreye, 'Napoleons Schmach: Die Wurzeln des Elends liegen in der Vergangenheit: Haiti bezahlt immer noch für seine Befreiung vor 200 Jahren: Auch damals nahmen die Wichtigen der Welt den Insel-Staat nicht ernst.', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 January 2010.
11 Gabriel Debien, 'Les origines des esclaves des Antilles', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noir*, 1963, 396.

to the Congo but also to the disconnection through the diaspora. Objects of health are installed here as in a shrine around the Virgin Mary. Do they represent a plea for relief from the current misery in Haiti and the Congo caused by the colonialism? However, the Haitian reality is here juxtaposed with a Christian-European context. Where otherwise Catholics present petitions, here it is followers of Haitian voodoo who erect a shrine.

Leaving the Lady chapel behind and entering the nave, we gaze upon an abundance of sculptures and paintings. Anthropomorphic figures populate the space usually occupied by the pews where the congregation attend services (figure 05, figure 06). At second glance, one sees that the figures are formed from human bones held together by recycled wire, cloth, mechanical objects and plastic. At third glance, one notices artworks in the side niches and a floating platform between the ceiling and the floor.

Turning to the niches, we see a sculpture floating in the air at eye level (figure 07). There, where the Passion of Christ is usually depicted, hangs a doll sitting on a horse. Dressed in dark robes and laughing, the right hand wields a cardboard sword. *Sen Jak Maje*, Saint James the Great, is the title Katelyne Alexis gave to her work in 2015. How is this childlike knight connected to Saint James, who is known as a pilgrim with a dog and a cape? If we look deeper into the Christian-European iconography of Saint James, similarities emerge. According to legend, James stood by Iberian Christians as a warrior against Muslims.[12] Bringing the depiction of George the dragon-slayer and this legend together, the depiction of James as a riding warrior developed in ninth-century Spain.[13] Named *Santiago Matamoros*, he was invoked primarily in confrontations with Muslims or in the conquest of America,[14] for example, in the sculpture above the main altar of the Church of Santiago in Logroño , which can be compared with the *Sen Jak Maje* in Kassel. However, *Sen Jak Maje* does not point his sword at Islam but swings it towards the altar.

But how did a Catholic Saint end up in the title of this work? And how does its iconography relate to an *Ounfo*? The history of Haitian Voodoo helps to understand its relationship to Catholicism. Haitian Voodoo has two main origins, both in Africa: the *Rada Cult*, originated in Dahomey and the *Petro Cult*, which originated in the area of modern Congo. Neither cult is clearly defined, and local varieties can differ greatly. These cults came to Haiti on slave ships. There they met in a confined space and syncretism occurred. The new cults synthesised in the melting

12 Klaus Herbers, 'Politik und Heiligenverehrung auf der iberischen Halbinsel: Die Entwicklung des „politischen Jakobus"', in *Politik und Heiligenverehrung im Hochmittelalter*, ed. Jürgen Petersohn (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1994), 233–35.

13 Adám Anderle, Hungría y España. *Relaciones Milenarias. Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó* (Szaged: Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó, 2007), 16.

14 Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, 'La Auténtica Batalla de Clavijo', *Cuadernos de Historia de España 9* (1948): 94–139.

pot, forming the basis of Haitian Voodoo and differing from each other as much as from their origins.[15] The Catholic colonial powers used the strategy of cultural amnesia to break the people and make them submit. Before being abducted to Haiti, they had to circumvent the so-called tree of oblivion to turn their backs on their cultures.[16] The Christian mission entailed imposing Catholicism by using laws and religious prohibitions to compel the slaves.[17] But instead of mere Christianisation, the cults developed under this repression. It led to some standardisation of the cults and the formation of identities.[18]

But violence led also to the adaptation of Catholic elements in Voodoo through forced estrangement and complying with new rules as a means of survival.[19] The cults thus include Catholic saints in their pantheon, merge them with African-rooted deities and incorporate Catholicism into cult practice. In doing so, the

15 Luc de Heusch, 'Kongo in Haiti: A New Approach to Religious Syncretism', *Man* 24, no. 2 (1989): 290.
16 Gael and Hurbon, *Voodoo*, 11.
17 Rosa Amelia Plumelle-Uribe, *Victimes des esclavagistes musulmans, chrétiens et juifs. Racialisation et banalisation d'un crime contre l'humanité*. (Paris: ANIBWE, 2012), 112.
18 Katherine Smith, 'Sean Jean Baptiste, Haitian Vodou, and the Masonic Imaginary', in *Freemasonry and the Visual Arts from the Eighteenth Century Forward. Historical and Global Perspectives*, ed. Reva Wolf and Alisa Luxenberg (New York: Bloomsbury Publisher, 2019), 243.
19 Daniel Douglas, *Pioneer Urbanities: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Fransisco* (Philadelphia: University of California Press, 1980), 136.

Fig. 07
Katelyne Alexis: *Sen Jak Maje* (2015), here in the St Kunigunis Church, Kassel (while d15).
Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022.

Catholic is complementary and superficial rather than dominant.[20] However, iconographic or attributive similarity also often promotes a synthesis rooted in compulsion and steers it in certain directions.[21]

This explains *Sen Jak Major*: *Ogún*, a Yoruba war divinity, who is considered one of the oldest and most popular West African deities.[22] He is depicted as a warrior on horseback.[23] Thus, he resembles *Santiago Matamoros* and is associated with him under the name *Ogou Feray* by early Voodoo, which also contains Yoruba influences.[24] *Sen Jak* is thus a syncretism of *Santiago Matamoros* and *Ogún*.[25] So, an African god, wearing a Catholic mask through colonial history, turns his sword towards the altar. He points to the religion that committed crimes against his people and culture. Is he drawing attention to the fact that colonialism has not yet been overcome? Is he encouraging the inexhaustible struggle for freedom?

Throughout Haitian history, Voodoo consolidates and serves as a retreat and social identity in times of fear and misery.[26] It has also exerted great influence on Haiti's independence efforts and revolutions. Voodoo priest Dutty Boukman is said to have preached about 'freedom or death' in 1791 and thus instigated one of the first revolts.[27] Today, Voodoo still stands for the struggle for freedom. The society is still roughly divided into a small, wealthy, Catholic and Westernised elite and an impoverished majority with Voodoo beliefs. The Catholic Church continued its campaign against Voodoo into the 20th century, violent repression continued in 1942.[28] Today, most Voodoo believers are baptised Catholics, and Catholicism is an integral part of Voodoo. Since 2003, Haitian Voodoo has been the official national religion.[29]

The altar area is unusually open. Where priests normally say mass, we encounter further sculptures by Jean Claude Saintilus. *Notre Dame de Sept Doleurs* (figure 08). To the left of the altar she sits on a plastic chair. Blue textiles veil the body, head and shoulders. Only the face of a human skull peers out from the headscarf. Her eye sockets are filled with metal. Around her neck she wears a clock. In her lap lies a nest made of wire, on which an unclothed doll with dark skin is bedded. The doll wears a shell necklace.

20 Heusch, 'Kongo in Haiti: A New Approach to Religious Syncretism', 291.
21 Heusch, 'Kongo in Haiti', 291.
22 See: Baba Ifa Karade, *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts* (Maine: Weiser Books, 1994).
23 Hans Gerald Hödl, 'Afrikanische Religionen II – Einführung in die Religion der Yorùbá' (Lecture Summer Term 2003, Universität Wien, Wien: Memento Internet Archive, 2003), 10.
24 Hödl, 'Afrikanische Religionen', 294.
25 Heusch, 'Kongo in Haiti', 291.
26 Heusch, 'Afrikanische Relgionen', 290.
27 Ghetto Biennale Atis Rezistans, ed., 'Booklet St. Kunigundis', 2022 See: Haitian History.
28 Heusch, 'Kongo in Haiti', 294.
29 Alfred Métraux, *Voodoo in Haiti* (Gifkendorf: Merlin Verlag, 1994), 291.

Between the watch and the doll is an open Bible. Matthew 27.20 to Matthew 28.6, the condemnation, mocking and crucifixion of Jesus until the resurrection, are visible. The sculptures immediately bring to mind representations of Mary and baby Jesus.

The Catholic reference is obvious. One interpretation could be that the Bible passage and the Child (Jesus?) in combination with the clock are symbols of life approaching death. Many iconographic details seem to indicate that the specific role of death in Voodoo and the image of man linked to it are brought together with Christian ideas. This is also reflected in the synthesis of the formal languages: a Christian Mary made of classical Voodoo cult materials, like recycled material and human bones. The syncretism reaches a climax here.

Voodoo iconography is in a constant state of change, and the Catholic influence is one of many.[30] *Atis Rezistans* are no exception, and they find their own formal language. They imbue bones and waste with spirit and religious ideas. By decorating the bones with objects of the present, they, like the *Lwa*, span a bridge between death and life, history and the present.

That the exhibition, its works and artists inside have sprung from contemporary Haiti is also evident in the ceiling installation *Floating Ghetto* made of metal, cardboard boxes and cables.

30 Smith, 'Sean Jean Baptiste', 245.

Fig. 08
Jean Claude Saintilus: *Notre Dame de Sept Doleurs* (2015), here in the St Kunigunis Church, Kassel (while d15). Image: Čedo Dragomirovic, 21.06.2022.

Church, sculptures and the installation intertwine in the shadows. It seems to run parallel to the artists intertwined with history, culture and Catholicism. *Floating Ghetto* depicts the area around Boulevard Jean-Jaques Dessalines in Port-au-Prince. The adjacent neighbourhoods are populated by the poor, and this is where the recycled material comes from. It connects different historical, geographical and social spaces and is understood as a symbol of the city. This is where Atis Rezistans and their works come from. Many of the people whose bones are used spent their lives on these streets. These bones are provided with recycled remains of a global and local economy, so the sculptures are placed in the Haitian history and a global present. The descendants of people who were exploited to generate the wealth on which the modern Western economy is partly built locate themselves in this world. Placed in the middle of Europe, they thus draw attention to their history and the present and invite us to broaden our perspective.

On several levels, the exhibition reveals a global dynamic of ideas involving change and syncretism: slavery forces African cults into Haiti. A dis:connective relationship emerges: the cults are connected to their homeland through cultural tradition and religion and simultaneously disconnected through the diaspora and the pressure of repression. Haitian Voodoo emerges under this dis:connectivity. *Atis Rezistans* brings the contemporary lived Haitian Voodoo through art to Europe. The locally lived Voodoo is embedded in a local Catholic space as a result of global processes of dis:connectivity. *Atis Rezistans* proceeds cautiously, allowing cultural exchange and avoiding unilateral imposition. Africa, Haiti and Europe all find a place here under one roof. The *Gede* and St. Kunigundis are in lively dialogue.

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Field surveys, Western modernity and restituted global disconnections

Andrea E. Frohne

Surveying a wheat field

The setting for figure 1 is a wheat field in Osborne, Kansas, which has a historic distinction that is central to its self-definition: it

Fig. 01
The juxtaposition of the Kansas wheat field, the imported Afro-Italian cart and Dawit L. Petros's hands suggests migration, mapping of territory and colonial settlement of the prairies.

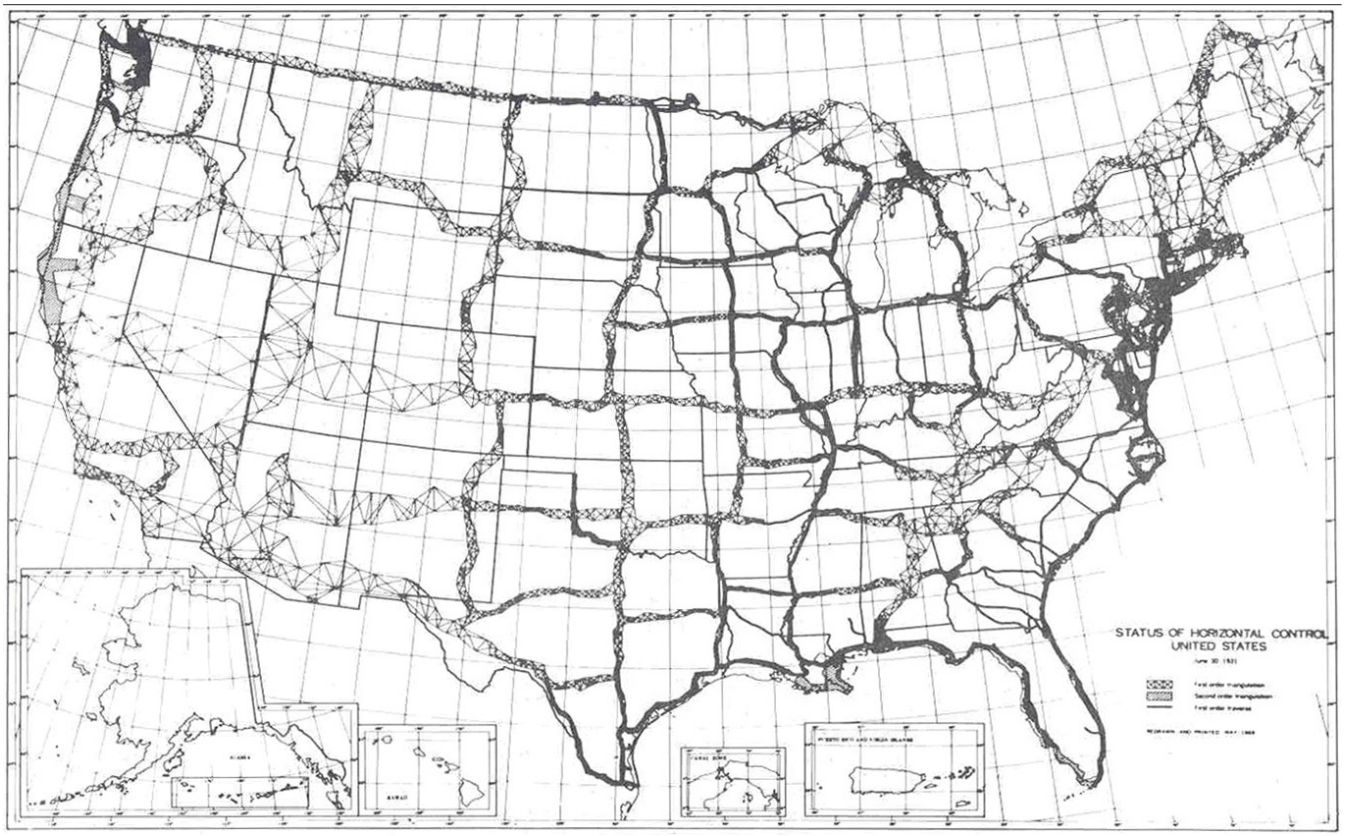

Fig. 02
Triangulated mapping that emanates from Kansas as a means to survey the nation-state.

was designated by geographers as the geodetic centre of North America.[1] A national system based on coordinates came into use in the late-19th century to survey the continent. A federal agency created what is called a triangulation station at Osborne, making it a fixed and central point. Networks of triangles are calculated eastward and westward from there to survey longitude, latitude, elevation and shoreline (fig. 2).[2] Osborne marks the point from which surveying and global positioning extend in all directions across North America.

Dawit Petros's work asks, 'What is one's relationship to place?'[3] He underlines through global conversation the complicated transnational, polycentric trajectories underlying a sense of place. One trajectory is a mapping system that contributed to modernisation in North America. As such, it is an end result of the colonisation process that claimed land from indigenous peoples across the North American continent. The artwork therefore engenders a disconnection regarding the stereotype that the Kansas prairie is occupied by European Americans, both historically and today. For instance, African American pioneers settled Kansas in the late-19th century, and their descendants remain today. Another trajectory regarding the sense of place is

1 Dawit L. Petros, *Barella & Landscape #3, Osborne, Kansas*, 2012, archival digital print, 30 x 40" (76.2 x 101.6 cm), photo courtesy of the artist.
2 'Horizontal survey control network in the United States' (June 1931), Wikimedia (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Horizontal_Control_Network_of_the_United_States_June_1931.jpg, 12.05.2023).
3 Olga Khvan, '"Sense of Place" Exhibit at the MFA Marks Homecoming for Dawit L. Petros', *Boston Magazine*, 11 November 2013.

Dawit Petros's invocation of Clement Greenberg's critical look at Western modernist painting, which dominates the methodological understanding of art in the field of art history. Figure 1 invokes a disconnection from this mainstream Western art history.

Surveying modern European art history

In a formative 1965 article titled *Modernist Painting*, Greenberg expostulated, 'Flatness, two-dimensionality, was the only condition painting shared with no other art, and so Modernist painting oriented itself to flatness as it did to nothing else'.[4] The monochromatic square of colour in figure 1 is reminiscent of the history of modern Western art, including Abstract Expressionist American art from the 1940s through 1960s. The influential critic Clement Greenberg labelled the style of art 'Color Field painting'. Artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Sam Gilliam, Frank Bowling,

4 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', in *Art and Literature* 4 (Spring 1965): 193-201. Reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 1993), 756.

Fig. 03
A photographic archive by Dawit L. Petros of earth, sky and built form from Ethiopia.

Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman painted large fields of single colours. The flat, solid colours, understood as pure and monolithic, became the sole subject matter of the artwork. Greenberg contrasted the Color Field artists' treatment of space in terms of flat planes with the earlier representation of three-dimensional space by 'Old Masters' through one-point perspective and the horizon line.

Dawit Petros refers to Greenberg's framing of Western art history. The artist manufactured a set of barellas, or handcarts, used among Habesha peoples in the Horn of Africa.[5] He travelled with a three-dimensional barella to Kansas, photographing it against land (fig. 1). The artist aligned the top white wooden handle of an olive-green square against the white horizon line that divides the field from the sky. The alignment can only be observed by a slight interruption in the horizontal green line that splits the top half of the entire photograph into a field of white colour and the bottom portion into a field of green. Dawit Petros identifies the horizon line but stops short of using the one-point perspective perfected by Renaissance artists. Instead, he references the Color Field style.

The flat, olive-green square in the centre of the photograph was sourced from images of Ethiopian land using a process of enlarging digitalised photographic details.[6] The photographed colours are in fact digitalised details of the ground and the earth from Ethiopia (fig. 3).[7] Dawit Petros photographed various patches of ground in Ethiopia, and in each one a dominant colour was brought forward. Dawit Petros then abstracted the colours from the photographs using computer software to generate a square of colour. By using photographs sourced from his visit to Ethiopia, Dawit Petros draws Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa into ongoing dialogues about modernity. The artwork effectively invokes a restitutive global reconnection.

In figure 1, the olive-green plane or field of colour is placed on top of what at first glance appears to be another flat plane of colour. But on closer inspection, the bright green, flat colour 'field' that forms the background of the bottom half of the artwork is a field, in the literal sense, of Kansas wheat. Therefore, a photographed slice of Ethiopian land is held against a photographed section of land in Kansas. Because of the use of modernism's two-dimensional flat planes instead of the Renaissance's illusion of three-dimensional space, it appears as if the geographic distance between the green Kansas field and the olive-green Ethiopian-sourced colour field

5 Dawit L. Petros, interview with Andrea Frohne, Brooklyn, NY, 2014. Habesha refers to people of Ethiopia and Eritrea without specifying the name of a country. Traditionally, it referred to those who live in the highlands, a terrain that straddles the border.
6 Dawit L. Petros, interview with Andrea Frohne.
7 Dawit L. Petros, *Notations (A Catalogue of Addis Ababa), Artist's Archive*, 2010, courtesy of the artist.

has now been collapsed and eradicated. In effect, the artist has disconnected the physical separation between two continents.

Reconstituting global processes

The artist stands in the middle of the wheat field behind the green square, and only his two hands can be seen (fig. 1). The bodily presence of the brown hands and the Ethiopian-sourced olive-green square inscribes an African presence into the work's polycentric modernities in a way that does not objectify the black or brown body. The artist explained in an interview that he decided not to place the body on display, but used the barella to stand in for the body, and that 'within that refusal is agency'.[8] The African presence in the middle of Kansas iterates a narrative of postcolonial migration and new African diasporas. Dawit Petros lived in Kansas for the duration of an artist residency, and his encounter with Ethiopia for this series reminds us of his emigration. Dawit Petros relocated several times after his birth in Asmara, Eritrea. When he was very young, his family moved to Addis Ababa,

Fig. 04
Two women in Ethiopia demonstrating a barella handcart to carry materials.

8 Dawit L. Petros, interview with Andrea Frohne.

Ethiopia, and had to leave again during the Ethiopian Red Terror in 1977. The family finally moved to Saskatoon, Canada, where the artist would live out the rest of his youth.

The Osborne work alludes not only to new African diasporas but also, through the barella, to colonialism and hidden migrant labour. Dawit Petros encountered a version of the square with handles that serves as a handcart for construction workers when he was in Ethiopia. The handcart was brought to the Horn of Africa through Italian occupation and retained the Italian name in its new home (fig. 4).[9]

While barellas signify the Horn of Africa's colonial history, Dawit Petros exploited the fact that their appearance also evokes works of Western modernism, particularly Piet Mondrian's squares of pure colour. Dawit Petros was inspired by another Dutch artist named Bas Jan Ader,[10] a contemporary, experimental artist who himself had investigated and interrogated Mondrian in 1960s performance art. Mondrian's work, created during the first half of the 20th century, served as a predecessor for the Color Field artists. Dawit Petros disrupts the trajectory of European modernism again by sourcing colour from the Ethiopian land and by referring to Mondrian by way of Ader, himself an immigrant to the United States, in his case from Holland in 1963.

This depiction within the artwork of the act of looking from the perspective of someone with a brown body supplants the presumed white male gaze that dominated Western modernism. The primacy given to Western modernity in the history of art is cancelled by the African specificity Dawit Petros brings through the presence of his brown body and Ethiopian-sourced colour fields. The artwork disconnects the idea of a solely white population from the state of Kansas by reminding us of Native Americans, new African diasporas, migrant farm laborers, and antebellum and post-antebellum people of colour living in Kansas. As a result, Dawit Petros decentres modernity into polycentric arenas that coalesce and co-occur by restituting global disconnections in the field of art history and in a Kansas field of wheat (fig. 5).[11]

9 Dawit L. Petros, photograph taken on a research trip from personal archive, n.d. Courtesy of the artist.

10 Dawit L. Petros, interview with Andrea Frohne.

11 Dawit L. Petros, *Sense of Place* series, 2012-2013. *Barellas #1-6* in foreground, 2012. Archival digital prints; enamel on MDF, sapele, and pine. Installation view in *Encounters Beyond Borders: Contemporary Artists from the Horn of Africa* at the Kennedy Museum of Art, Ohio University, 2016, photo courtesy of Ben Siegel.

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Fig. 05
***Barella & Landscape #3, Osborne, Kansas* is part of a series titled *Sense of Place* on view in an exhibition curated by Andrea Frohne at Ohio University.**

Religion, African socialism and pan-African dis:connections in the Cold War era

Katharina Wilkens

Richard Wright, the African American journalist, former communist, strict secularist and pan-African observer of the independence movements in late-colonial Africa, travelled to the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955. His report from one the founding meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was attended by many leaders from Asia and Africa, intertwines the themes of racism, colonialism, imperialism and communism in the Cold War era. The title *The Color Curtain* borrows its imagery from the so-called 'Iron Curtain', dividing the Western from the Eastern bloc.

The USSR and People's Republic of China were vying for hegemony in the communist world. A question raised, but also skilfully skirted at the conference, was how many of the newly emerging nations would be interested in allying with China or the USSR rather than the USA.

> 'But is there not something missing here?' asks Wright. 'Weren't all these men deeply religious? Christians? Moslems? Buddhists? Hindus? They were. Would they accept working with Red China? Yes, they would. Why? Were they dupes? No, they were desperate. They felt that they were acting in common defense of themselves. Then, is Christianity, as it was introduced into Asia and Africa, no deterrent to Communism?'

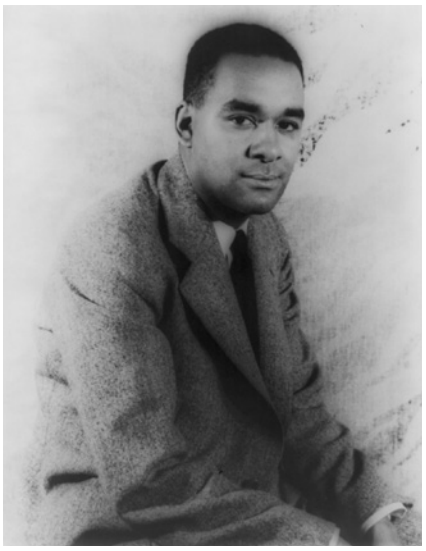

Fig. 01
Carl Van Vechten, *Richard Wright*, 1943, photograph, Van Vechten Collection at the Library of Congress, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1430629

> He answers his own question quite succinctly: 'Obviously, religion, and particularly the Christian religion, was no bulwark against Communism'.[1]

Among the delegates in Bandung was Kwame Nkrumah, then prime minister of the Gold Coast which was still under British control. Richard Wright had visited him a few years earlier during his first journey through a continental African country, when Wright began to weave his own personal pan-African consciousness spanning both sides of the Atlantic. Nkrumah, together with Sékou Touré from Guinea, Léopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal, Julius Kambarage Nyerere from Tanganyika, Modibo Keïta from Mali and others, was a founding figure of African socialism.[2] All of these leaders, however, insisted on the religious nature of their version of socialism. And they were not afraid to defend their religiosity against Chinese and especially Soviet accusations that they were violating the 'true teachings' of Marx and Lenin.[3]

How to grasp the role of religion in African socialism

Wright's confusion is understandable. Karl Marx famously criticised religion, particularly the Christian church(es), as part of the superstructure of capitalism. Both Lenin and Mao implemented atheist regimes and vigorously popularised atheist attitudes. Many African labourers and students in France and Great Britain in the 1920s and 1930s founded organisations combining pan-African and communist ideas.[4] This earlier generation of freedom fighters

1 Richard Wright, 'The Color Curtain', in *Black Power. Three Books from Exile* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 429–630. For a historical and contextual re-evaluation of Wright, see Michael E. Nowlin, *Richard Wright in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

2 William H. Friedland and Carl Gustav Rosberg, eds., *African Socialism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964). I focus here on the 1950s and 1960s, when African leaders developed pre-independence arguments for self-rule and formulated early rules for national integration. These discourses had two audiences: the colonial governments in Europe and the local people who lived in these artificially created territories but spoke dozens of different languages and had previously lived in completely different kingdoms and chieftaincies. Ghana (the former Gold Coast) gained independence from the UK in 1958. Guinea followed in 1958, when it refused to join a new French constitutional arrangement in the colonies. Most Francophone and Anglophone countries were granted independence in 1960, while the Lusophone countries were involved in years of separatist wars through the 1960s and 1970s. At the height of the Cold War, independence required the African leaders to identify with and implement either socialism or capitalism – a fierce binary that most leaders overcame through their personality cults and that gave rise to distinct political atmospheres. African socialism, as described in this article, dominated continental public discourse at the time.

3 Julius Kambarage Nyerere, 'The Varied Paths to Socialism', in *Freedom and Socialism. A Selection from Writings and Speeches 1965-1967* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1969), 301–10.

4 Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013); Holger Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic: African American Agency, West African Intellectuals, and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

often followed atheist ideals unlike the later, more pragmatic leaders of the African independence movements.

Nyerere and Senghor were both practicing Catholics, Touré and Keïta Muslims, Nkrumah and others were Protestants. None were shy about it. Indeed, they argued that their anti-atheist position was a distinction between African *socialism* from Soviet-style *communism*.[5] Nkrumah writes: 'Insistence on the secular nature of the state is not to be interpreted as a political declaration of war on religion, for religion is also a social fact and must be understood before it can be tackled'.[6] For all leaders, Christianity and Islam were essential moral underpinnings of African socialism while also vital aspects of modernisation, progress and development. In the words of Senghor, 'it is false to claim with the Marxists that Christianity and Islam scorned, or even neglected, the sciences'.[7] While Wright might have balked at a sentence like this, the socio-political place of religion in the colonies differed from that in the metropoles.

Fig. 02
***President Leopold Senghor Viewing African Art at the Musée Dynamique, During the Festival mondial des arts nègres (FESMAN)*, Dakar, 1966, African Art After Independence, 1957-1977, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan, https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/maa/research/art-of-a-continent/senghor-dakar-1966.**

5 Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'The Theory and Practice of Senegalese Socialism', in *On African Socialism*, trans. Mercer Cook (London: Pall Mall, 1964), 105–65; Nyerere, 'Varied Paths'.
6 Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (London: Heinemann, 1964), 13.
7 Senghor, 'Theory and Practice', 164.

Fig. 03
Steve Evans, *9–10-year-old boys of the Yao tribe in Malawi participating in circumcision and initiation rites*, 2005, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5246384.

Dis:connecting religion and civilisation

Studying the global spread of the concept of 'religion' (as opposed to church institutions), scholars of religion have noted its immense impact on the discursive construction of 'civilisation' and thence on the colonising strategies of European empires. Only 'civilised humans' have religions, so the Spanish argued, conversely implying that non-Christian 'barbarians' in South America in the early 1500s, for example, could be exploited.[8] A couple of centuries later, Hegel dismissed Africans as 'immoral barbarians' without law, as 'cannibals' and as 'fetishists' without proper religion or even self-awareness. He argued that they 'were not part of history' because they were not 'capable of development'.[9] His arguments

8 Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Religion, Religions, Religious', in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 269–84; for a discussion of humanness, religion and Oxford scholarship before and after the Zulu wars in South Africa during the 19th century, see also David Chidester, *Savage Religion: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996).

9 Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction: Reason in History*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister, trans. Hugh Barr Nisbet (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 173-190.

were often repeated in political and missionary discourse of colonial imperialism and occasionally resonate even today.[10]

But even when academics, policy makers and colonial officials grudgingly began to accord African religion a place in history, the prevailing evolutionary theory placed 'fetishism', 'animism' and 'ancestor worship' on the lowest rung of religious development, thus denying Africans any indigenous civilisation. In their minds, civilisation could only be established alongside Western (and mostly Protestant) Christianity – David Livingstone's three C's of the colonial and missionary enterprise: Christianity, Civilisation and Commerce – held well into the first half of the 20th century.

10 This enduring view of African religion, culture and civilisation was repeated by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy on a state visit to Senegal which in turn triggered student protests and a wave of post-colonial debate. To take just one example, see the reaction by Achille Mbembe, 'L'Afrique de Nicolas Sarkozy', *Mouvements* 4, no. 52 (2007): 65–73; Holger Weiss, *Framing a Radical African Atlantic: African American Agency, West African Intellectuals, and the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

Fig. 04
Digr, *St. Joseph's Cathedral in Dar es Salaam*, 2009, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=38285920.

In the 1930s, Western anthropologists were bent on salvaging indigenous cultures in books and museums because they thought them doomed under imperialism and secular modernity. Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, government anthropologist in southern Sudan and leading scholar of indigenous African religions among the Azande and Nuer, wrote his findings in the present tense typical of the ethnographic genre that denied the research subjects the possibility of having their own histories separate from the colonial enterprise as well as their own agency in contemporary social transformations. In the 1940s, South African anthropologist Meyer Fortes, himself a son of Russian Jewish refugees, was among the first to discuss the impact of colonialism on the religio-political-juridical system of ancestor veneration among the Talensi in northern Ghana.

Reconnecting with the African past

The counter movement followed from the early 1950s, when Christian theologians, both Western and African, began writing about indigenous religions in a new style. African religions were cast as 'natural religions' (rather than 'heathendom').[11] In this argumentation, the god of Christian salvation worked through the gods and priests of African cosmology prior to Christianisation, allowing pious Africans into salvation history. Under the rise of nationalist ideology, religion as a marker of civilisation was thus restored to indigenous peoples. The image of 'African Traditional Religion' (ATR) created by these scholars was free of cannibalism and violence, instead emphasising community, beauty, natural philosophy, spirituality and unity across seemingly heterogenous traditions. Prominent writers in this vein from the 1940s to 1970s include Ghanaian politician and theologian Joseph Boakye Danquah, Ugandan theologian John Mbiti and Nigerian theologian Bolaji Idowu. However, despite their celebration of traditional religion, they agreed that it was passé. With the coming of Christ (through the colonial missionaries), Christianity was the way forward, albeit in thoroughly Africanised garb.[12]

The leaders of African socialism were aware of these discursive positions in the disciplines of anthropology, history and theology, in which many held PhDs. In their publications, they consistently maintained that Africans had been 'civilised' people prior to the advent of the European colonisers; that their culture was morally advanced; and that their ancestral religions had the same worth as mission Christianity.

11 In the 18th century, Enlightenment philosophers and deists such as David Hume began critising the teleology of church history as the only salvation of mankind. They disrupted the binary of Christendom and heathendom by including a category of 'natural religion', in which morality, spirituality and the knowledge of God were just as manifest as in the gospels (Smith, *Religion, Religions, Religious*).

12 Katharina Wilkens and Mariam Goshadze, 'Indigenous Religions in West Africa', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.1133.

In 1943, Eduardo Mondlane, leader of the Mozambiquan liberation movement with a doctorate in anthropology, wrote in a letter to former Swiss missionary teacher and close friend André-Daniel Clerc:

> I think that the beliefs placed in my heart by my grandmother about our ancestors had something to do with my spiritual progress. I believed that there was another life after death because my grandparents live in spirit (even though they are bodily dead). And from this when I heard the story of Christ and God I immediately accepted.[13]

Mondlane later added a further thought to his reflection on religion: 'Our indigenous religion could have remained and continued to thrive if there had not been another which offered better answers to the questions of the future'.[14] In emphasising the ancestral lineage of faith in God, Mondlane sets the indigenous way of life on par with Christianity-as-civilisation. Simultaneously, he concurs that the universal church (or rather, Africanised church and neither a specific national nor denominational church) was best suited to modernisation and national independence. While ancestral religion was seen positively there, it belonged to the past.

African scholars and independence-era writers tried hard to counter the Hegelian trope of African a-historicity. Notably, Cheikh Anta Diop, a Senegalese Egyptologist argued in his 1954 thesis *Nations Nègres et Cultures* that ancient Egyptian civilisation was derived from the same black civilisation as that of West Africa. His contemporary Léopold Senghor pits the concept of Négritude against the French anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's theory of 'pre-logical mentality' and similar theories.[15] He also emphasised that African religion was based on both reason and idealist ontology; it touched on life and meaning beyond the everyday, perceiving beauty and searching for the divine in nature.[16] However, he opposed 'magic' to 'animism' (the Francophone alternative to 'African Traditional Religion', not the primitive religion of evolutionary theory). He considered 'magic' and particularly the so-called secret societies, or mask societies,

13 This and the following letter are cited in: Robert N. Faris, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique: Faith and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2015): Robert N. Faris, *Liberating Mission in Mozambique: Faith and Revolution in the Life of Eduardo Mondlane* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2023), 18.

14 Faris, *Liberating Mission*, 20.

15 Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Vues sur L'Afrique noire ou: assimiler, non être assimilés', in *Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme*, ed. Léopold Sédar Senghor (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1964), 36–69: 43. This essay was written in 1949.

16 Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Éléments constructifs d'une civilisation d'inspiration négro-africaine', *Présence Africaine* 24/25, no. 1 (1959), 249–79.

who ostensibly practiced it, to be 'a superstitious deformation, too human'.[17]

In the discursive framework of Africanist history, anthropology and theology, 'religion' was a pre-condition of 'civilisation', which in turn was a pre-condition for independent rule, free of colonial paternalism. Though I am oversimplifying the complex economic and political negotiations of the independence movements, of course, the strategic role of the discursive figure of religion as the basis of civilisation – and thus modernity – must not be underestimated.[18]

Disconnecting religion and culture

In Europe, however, public interest in religious and church matters declined steeply in the 1950s and 1960s, while theories of secularisation-as-modernisation abounded. Christianity and Islam had lost their discursive weight as harbingers of modernity while outright atheism, general agnosticism and New Age spirituality gained ground. Instead, culture and art (rather than Christianity) became arenas of communication about contemporary values, morality and visions for the future. In socialist states cultural propaganda became a preferred method of education and indoctrination.

In the nascent African nations, religion was not controversial. In contrast to Europe, however, Islam and Christianity (not indigenous religions) were seen positively because they offered global networks of moral support, education and development aid. Conversion accelerated in these decades, especially in urban areas. Political leaders, however, preferred the discursive formation of 'culture' when talking about the necessity of Africanisation as part of de-colonialisation and independence. Across the continent, presidents and ministers celebrated African culture, created ministries of national culture, instituted festivals

17 Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Ce que L'homme noir apport', in *Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme*, ed. Léopold Sédar Senghor (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1964), 22–38: 36.

18 There are many other reasons why Christianity and Islam continued to play important roles in African socialism. For religious biographies of the leaders, missionary education in general and the problem of the economic monopoly of Sufi brotherhoods in various trades and plantations, see Katharina Wilkens, 'African Socialism: A Blueprint for Secular State Formation at the Time of Independence', in *Working Paper Series of the CASHSS: Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities* (University of Leipzig, open access (forthcoming), n.d.).

and held dance, art and music competitions.[19] Soviet-style realism in art, however, never outshone the policy of Africanisation, which favoured more abstract and expressionist styles.[20]

In true socialist fashion, Nyerere, Touré, Senghor and other leaders combatted 'backwardness', 'traditionalism', 'superstition' and 'witchcraft'. While Marx saw these forces reflected in Christianity and feudalism, the African leaders associated them with indigenous religion only. Ancestors were thus separated from their rituals. Mondlane, Senghor, Nkrumah and many others praised the tradition of African ancestor veneration as symbols of proto-socialist communalism, but never addressed them as spirits afflicting people through sickness and demanding bloody sacrifices as a remedy. The latter was 'magic'.

In Guinea, Sékou Touré went furthest of all presidents in fighting so-called superstition, which he found in indigenous religions in mystical Sufi brotherhoods alike. Soviet Africanist I. Bochkarev supported this approach: 'The Democratic Party [of Guinea] is aware of the need to dispel the religious myths with which the minds of the people are befuddled, and is taking steps in this

19 Julius Kambarage Nyerere, 'President's Inaugural Address', in *Freedom and Unity: A Selection from Writings and Speeches 1952-1965* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 186–87.; Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Fonction et Signification de Premier Festival Mondial Des Arts Nègres', in *Liberté III: Négritude et Civilisation de L'Universel* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1977); Sékou Touré, 'A Dialectical Approach to Culture', *The Black Scholar* 1, no. 1 (1969); for an overview of pan-African festivals, see Yair Hashachar, 'Guinea Unbound: Performing Pan-African Cultural Citizenship Between Algiers 1969 and the Guinean National Festivals', Interventions 20, no. 7 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2018.1508932.

20 Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'L'ésthetique négro-africaine', in *Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1964).

Fig. 05
Leaders of the non-aligned movement, 1960 in New York (Jawaharlal Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sukarno, Yosip Tito), Intellivoire – Portal ouverte sur l'Afrique, Sommet Asie Afrique 60 ans après la conférence de Bandung, avril 20, 2015, https://intellivoire.net/sommet-asie-afrique-60-ans-apres-la-conference-de-bandung.

direction'.[21] In an effort to break the power of the local chiefs and sheikhs and to subsume them under party politics and national integration, Touré initiated a cultural revolution (modelled on China) and a programme of 'demystification'. Ancestral mask dances were summarily forbidden in order to de-legitimise the chiefs' power.[22] This violent incursion into rural social structures (heavily aided by party secret service agencies) diverged from the celebration of annual pan-African festivals of art and culture that attracted performers from the Americas and throughout Africa.

The dis:connected legacy of African socialism

Today, after the Cold War and in an era characterised by religious resurgence, indigenous religious leaders are rallying and claiming their own public space while Pentecostal Christians and Salafists compete for political attention. What then is the legacy of African socialism, an ideology classified by Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni among the pre-eminent epistemologies of the Global South?[23] The nationalist nostalgia for a unified 'African culture' was heavily critiqued by later generations. Nonetheless, ideas of ancestral communalism live on in Ubuntu, African Renaissance, Afrotopia and other post-colonial visions of Africa's future.

By focussing on secularity and the negation of atheism in African socialism, the complexity of scholarly, political and activist networks with their attendant ideological dis:connections emerges. Mobile and well-educated pan-African activists managed the independence movements across three continents. They had to argue against Western orientalist and colonial scholarship that insisted Africans were not civilised because they had 'no religion', while simultaneously shaping smart alliances according to Cold War logics. Marxism and socialism were not born out of class struggle in an age of industrialisation, as Soviet commentators often criticised. The pan-African fight against racism and imperialism, however, lent itself easily to Marxist rhetoric, but without needing to declare war on Africanised Christianity and Islam.

Beyond these global discourses, political leaders in the nascent nations of Africa had to contend with local politics, rival chieftains, party opponents and eminent religious leaders. What

21 I. Bochkarev, 'The Guinean Experiment', *New Times*, no. 29 (1960): 28, quoted in Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *Soviet Perspectives on African Socialism* (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1969): 107.

22 Ramon Sarró, *The Politics of Religious Change on the Upper Guinea Coast: Iconoclasm Done and Undone* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute London, 2009).

23 Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Epistemic Freedom in Africa. Deprovincialization and Decolonization*, Rethinking Development (London/New York: Routledge, 2018): 19-52 and Chapter 4, in which African Socialism is discussed under the broader term of African nationalist humanism.

emerged was a pan-African ideal of African socialism refracted in local implementations that differed widely across nations and over time. Connections on one level of discourse coincided with disconnections on other levels, even if the results might surprise astute contemporary observers, such as Richard Wright.

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Dis:con-nected objects

Tanizaki in Maputo. Japanese cultural theory and the decolonisation of architectural education in Mozambique[1]

Nikolai Brandes

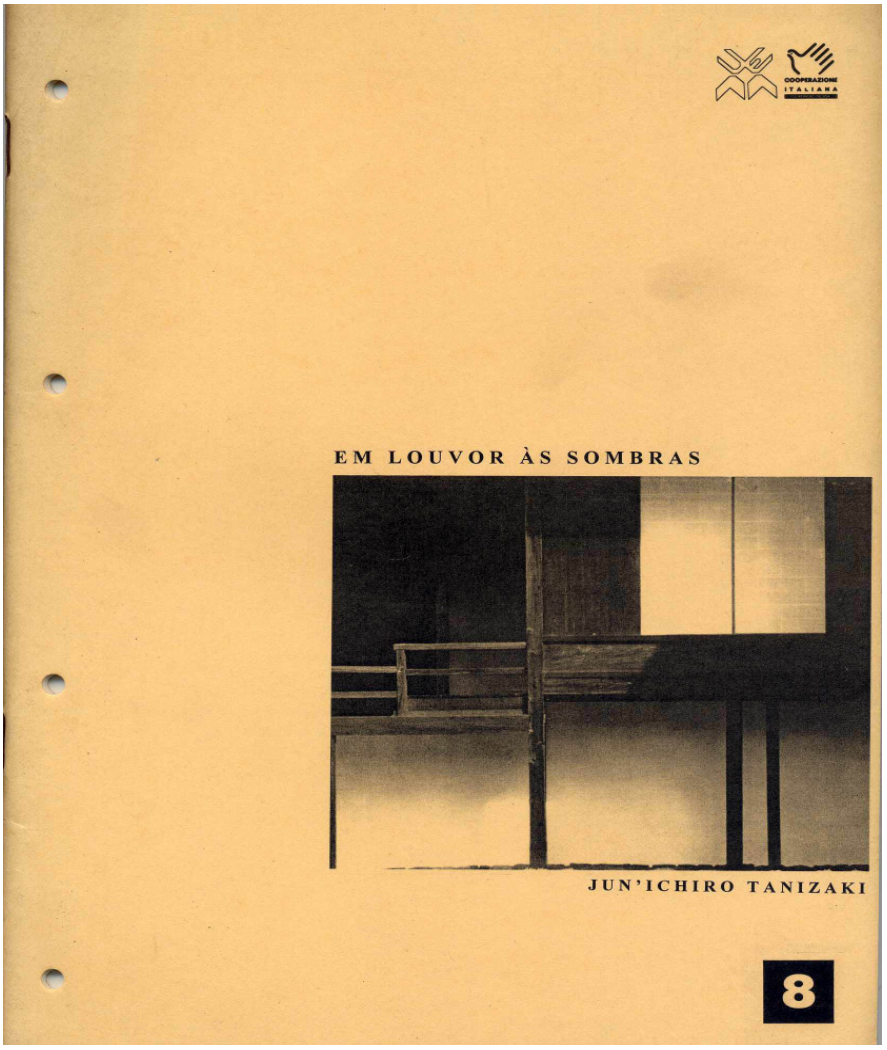

Fig. 01
FAPF, front cover of the Mozambican edition of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *In Praise of Shadows*, 1999, monochrome print, A4.

I first heard about Tanizaki last autumn in Rome, on a rainy day under the umbrellas of a café in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. I had an appointment with Maria Spina, an Italian architect, from whom I wanted to learn more about the history of the Faculty of Architecture (Faculdade de Arquitectura e Planeamento Físico, FAPF) at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Spina had been teaching at the FAPF since the 1980s under a cooperation agreement. She brought an inconspicuous brochure to our meeting, which revealed unexpected insights into the idiosyncratic programme of the small publishing house that the FAPF had established in the 1990s.[2] In the brochure, I was struck by the title *In Praise of Shadows* by the Japanese author Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. I had never heard of him. As I was soon to find out, Tanizaki's essay, published in Japan in the 1930s, dealt with the changes that technological impulses from the West sparked in Japan's material culture.

The Mozambican translation in Edições FAPF was published in 1999.[3] The situation at the time made the publication of this text in Mozambique an unlikely undertaking. The war between government troops and RENAMO, supported by apartheid South Africa, was only a few years away. Mozambique was one of the poorest countries in the world.[4] Public works had to repair war-damaged infrastructure and provide housing for internally displaced persons and the exploding urban population.[5] Paper was scarce. But despite these challenges, the only architecture faculty in the country at the time not only maintained its own publishing company to produce manuals for cost-minimised DIY housing and instructional material adapted to local conditions, it also published theoretical works that only circulated among connoisseurs even in WEIRD countries.[6]

Tanizaki was one of the most popular Japanese novelists in Europe in the 1960s and was translated into many languages. A first translation of his *In Praise of Shadows* into English was released in 1977 by Leete's Island Books of Sedgewick, Maine. A German translation was published by Manesse in Zurich in 1987. In 1999, Relógio d'Água in Lisbon published a Portuguese translation. In 2007, the São Paulo-based publisher Companhia das Letras, a heavyweight in the Lusophone literary scene, published a translation into Brazilian Portuguese.

1 This text was facilitated by a research grant from the German Historical Institute in Rome.

2 See Faculdade de Arquitectura e Planeamento Físico, *Publicações FAPF* (Maputo: Edições FAPF, ca. 2005).

3 See Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, *Em Louvor às sombras*, trans. Margarida David e Silva (Maputo: Edições FAPF, 1999).

4 In the year of the translation, Mozambique ranked third to last in the UNDP's Human Development Index, see 'Human Development Index', ed. UNDP (2023). https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI..

5 See José Forjaz, 'Research Needs and Priorities in Housing and Construction in Mozambique', *Habitat Intl.* 9, no. 2 (1985).

6 That is, Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic.

Lisbon and São Paulo: the logic of the global book market demands that translations into Portuguese be driven by the big publishing houses from these two cities, not by those from Praia, Luanda, Macao, Luxembourg or Dili, cities shaped by the Portuguese language through colonialism and labour migration. The fact that a volume reflecting Mozambican DIY aesthetics appeared in 1999 with a run of 500 copies thus subverts the postcolonial script (even if, unlike the Portuguese and Brazilian editions, it is not available in online bookshops today).

However, I am not interested here in the fact that the Mozambican guerrilla translation caught up with and surpassed publishers from Portugal and Brazil years after the guerrilla war. Rather, I want to look at the universalist claim inherent in this publication. By publishing Tanizaki, the FAPF self-consciously inscribed itself on a global architectural discourse despite and because of a multitude of disconnective structures that the country confronted amidst epistemological decolonisation, post-war reconstruction and structural adjustment programmes.

Conditions of translation

The Maputo edition, a plain, double-stapled brochure in A4 format, contains 44 pages. It was printed in black and white at the university print shop. The translation is based on the US edition and was provided by a local Portuguese UN staff member. The cover, like the text, is illustrated with architectural photographs taken from a book on Japanese architecture published in the USA in 1960. (The US edition was not illustrated.)

Tanizaki's essay develops a meandering reflection on cultural differences between Japan and Europe. It starts with architecture, touches on ideals of physical beauty, gastronomy, theatre and stagecraft, product design and the role of whiteness in Japanese identity formation, only to return repeatedly to the built environment. The author asks how cultural achievements from Japan and Europe could be integrated in equal measure in the construction of a modern house. A central feature of Japanese building culture is the use of shadows, which for Tanizaki constitutes part of Japanese aesthetics. For him, however, shadows also symbolise traditions endangered by the electric light imported from the West and the literal enlightenment of everyday life that results. Tanizaki calls for electric lights to be switched off occasionally 'to see what it is like without them'.[7]

Life without electric light: due to occasional power cuts while working in Maputo, this was probably familiar to the translator of the Mozambican edition. Her client, the FAPF, had started operations in 1986. The historical context in which the faculties

7 Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, trans. Thomas J. Harper (Stony Creek: Leet's Island Books, 1977), 42..

in Maputo and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa emerged have hardly been researched.[8] Apart from South Africa, where art schools were already training architects in the early 20th century, the first schools were only founded in late colonialism (Kumasi and Ibadan, 1952). In most countries, however, schools of architecture were founded after independence (Addis Ababa, 1954; Khartoum, 1957; Dar es Salaam, 1964). It took particularly long in Francophone Africa, where students of architecture necessarily made detours via Paris long after decolonisation (Lomé, 1976). The ideological orientations and institutional environments of these schools could hardly be more different. In Ethiopia, Swedish foreign aid

Fig. 02
Lucio Carbonara, FAPF teachers and first-year students in front of the architecture institute in Maputo, 1986, photo print.

8 For an attempt in this direction, see Mark Olweny, 'Architectural Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Investigation into Pedagogical Positions and Knowledge Frameworks', *Journal of Architecture* 25, no. 6 (2022).

supported the establishment of the school until experts from socialist states took over. In Togo, UNESCO set up a school that was to serve as a locus of education for all of Francophone Africa. And the structural adjustment measures of the 1990s prompted the establishment of numerous private schools across Africa.

In Mozambique, founding schools was particularly challenging. The fascist government in Portugal refused decolonisation even when the African 'wind of change' proclaimed by British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1960 became cyclonic. Until 1975, the country had to fight for liberation from colonial rule – a 'liberation without decolonisation', as the Mozambican historian Aquino de Bragança called it.[9] Whereas Great Britain began establishing local architecture schools from the 1950s onwards to prepare its colonies for independence, Lisbon never saw a need for such institutions.

After independence, the erstwhile liberation movement rebuilt the country along Marxist-Leninist lines but remained undogmatic in its choice of international partners. In much of the country, there was war against the anti-communist RENAMO.[10] In this situation, the FAPF was founded on the initiative of José Forjaz. Forjaz, a Portuguese-born architect, worked in Mozambique as early as the 1950s, spent time in exile in Swaziland (now Eswatini) as a supporter of the liberation movement, and held key positions in the country's public building sector after 1975. From the early 1980s, Forjaz proposed an 'unorthodox school of architecture' that would train 'worker-students' as experts in the basic needs of the population.[11] The well-connected Forjaz found allies for the budding faculty at the Sapienza Università di Roma. Lecturers from Rome were also responsible for most of the catalogue of the in-house publishing house[12] and managed the teaching until a first cohort of Mozambican architects took over.

Mozambique in the architecture world

Forjaz's enthusiasm was grounded in Mozambique's long-standing integration in the global architectural discourse. The money that Portugal released for its colonial containment policy in Mozambique resulted in a building boom.[13] The eccentric manifestations of this boom, influenced by Oscar Niemeyer,

9 See Aquino de Bragança, 'Independência sem descolonização: A transferência do poder em Moçambique, 1974 – 1975', *Estudos Moçambicanos* 5-6 (1985).
10 See Marina Ottaway, 'Afrocommunism Ten Years after: Crippled but Alive', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 16, no. 1 (1987).
11 José Forjaz, 'Por uma escola de arquitectura não ortodoxa', (unpublished manuscript, ca. 1983, FAPF archive, Maputo).
12 Some of these publications were pioneering works on Mozambican architectural history.
13 See Nikolai Brandes, 'Developing the Late Colonial City: Strategies of a Middle Class Housing Cooperative in Mozambique, 1951–1975', *Cities* 130, 103935 (2022), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103935.

Fig. 03
Nikolai Brandes, *Escola Secundária da Polana* (Forjaz and Tinoco, ca 1973), Maputo, 2012, digital photograph.

critical regionalism and new brutalism, also astonished Udo Kultermann, as evidenced in his reference works on African modernism.[14] Professional networks stretching as far as Brazil, Portugal, South Africa and Nigeria shaped Mozambican construction. With Pancho Guedes, a unique figure in 20th-century architecture, Mozambique was also represented at the meetings of Team Ten, the elite architects' club of post-war modernism.

After 1975, however, disconnective forces were ascendent. The country decoupled from old colonial networks. The war worried investors and disrupted attempts to build new supply chains. And the impositions of international organisations and structural adjustment programmes limited Mozambican autonomy in construction partnerships.

But political flexibility, financial constraints and sovereign decision-making induced a volatile situation in which new relationships emerged. In the Mozambican construction industry of the 1980s, Chilean exiles worked alongside East German, Cuban and Bulgarian state-owned enterprises, Swedish aid workers, US volunteers and the Roman delegation to the FAPF. Establishing a

14 See Udo Kultermann, *New Directions in African Architecture* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).

school of architecture was a means for architects and planners to empower themselves and forge new, independent relationships with the world. In this context, Tanizaki's translation was perhaps most emblematic: a local publisher had autonomously decided to draw the attention of Mozambican students to a dusty essay from a country that was almost invisible in African construction at the time. But why this particular text?

Reading Tanizaki in Maputo

In praise of shadows was well received in architectural theory. Charles Moore, a pioneer of postmodern architecture, even wrote the foreword for the US edition. However, there is no evidence that Tanizaki circulated among African architects in the 1990s, though José Forjaz did teach in Japan. In fact, his designs may also be read as studies on shadows and shading. But local questions were what piqued interest in the text in Maputo. From the 1980s onwards, Mozambican architects such as Luis Lage, João Tique and Mário do Rosário at the FAPF had been looking for ways to cope with the country's pressing building tasks – especially the construction of housing, schools and clinics – despite poverty and shortages of materials and skilled labour.

One answer to this challenge lay in local knowledge, in traditional, regionally diverse building materials and in the proficiency of local craftsmen.[15] In 1990, Forjaz further developed these considerations with his programmatic manifesto *Between adobe and stainless steel*, calling for decolonisation of architectural education and emphasising the potential of architectural planning based on local 'solutions [...] and a discipline liberated from the images and models generated by the colonial system'.[16] Forjaz was not only concerned with technical issues. Certainly, he criticised a design practice that ignored dependence on imported building materials and the lack of skilled labour for construction and maintenance and damaged the country's ecosystems. Above all, however, he criticised the legacy of colonial axioms, which he contrasted with the urban population's own knowledge:

> The regular, linear and monumental pattern of grand avenues and boulevards and monumental squares do not in fact serve any identifiable use or have a clear meaning for the majority of our population. But

15 Nikolai Brandes, '"Das Ziel waren Wohnungen für die ganze Bevölkerung." Ein Gespräch mit dem mosambikanischen Architekten Mário do Rosário, der in Maputo die Umsetzung eines der letzten Wohnungsbauprojekte der DDR im Ausland begleitete', in *Architekturexport DDR. Zwischen Sansibar und Halensee*, ed. Andreas Butter and Thomas Flierl (Berlin: Lukas, 2023).

16 The essay first appeared in *Arquitrave*, the FAPF's student magazine, in 1990; in English translation in an exhibition catalogue in 1999; and finally on the website of Forjaz's architecture firm. I follow the online publication: 'Between Adobe and Stainless Steel', José Forjaz Arquitectos, accessed 6 September, 2023, https://www.joseforjazarquitectos.com/textosen/%E2%80%9C...between-adobe-and-stainless-steel%E2%80%9D.

> they are still being designed and built. [A] productive use of land [...] balanced with a regular distribution of market and service centres minimizing transport needs and providing employment could [...] create a new [...] urban environment. [...] With our negative, stagnant or barely positive rates of economic growth against the explosive demographic growth it is vital to find alternatives to classic development strategies. The people of our cities are finding those alternatives by themselves and it is our responsibility as planners and architects to understand their ways and to help them resolve better the spatial problems that they face.[17]

The opposition to imported technocratic expertise and directives of international donor agencies and the preference for local solutions had a distinctly disconnective, isolationist component. And yet, as an epistemological project, it was embedded in global discussions. In architecture, site-specific ways of life, architectural styles and building materials received increasing international attention by the 1970s. With the end of the great modernisation narratives, corresponding tendencies found expression in other fields too, first and foremost in social science. Paralleling postcolonial construction research at the FAPF, Mozambique saw the emergence of public intellectuals such as Aquino de Bragança, who viewed the anti-colonial liberation struggle as an incubator for new, practical knowledge about social dynamics. The rediscovery of these specifically Mozambican approaches was essential to the 'epistemology of the South', which sparked international interest in the social sciences.[18]

Mozambique, however, not only contributed to a global discourse on local knowledge but also made use of geopolitically surprising models. For the editors at FAPF, Tanizaki had apparently raised questions in 1930s Japan that seemed significant for the future of architecture in postcolonial Mozambique.[19]

Tanizaki discusses domains in which Japanese products, techniques and cultural practices are superior to Western innovations, from the quality of writing paper to optimising the interior climate of living spaces and the haptic quality of lacquerware crockery. However, he is not only concerned with nostalgia for a past universe. Rather, conservative Tanizaki is concerned about the disappearance of a material culture in which formal design and social practice meaningfully interpenetrate. The motif of shadows that characterises his description of

17 Forjaz, 'Between Adobe'.

18 See Boaventura Santos, 'Aquino de Bragança: criador de futuros, mestre de heterodoxias, pioneiro das epistemologias do Su', in *Como fazer ciências sociais e humanas em África. Questões epistemológicas, metodológicas, teóricas e políticas*, ed. Teresa Cruz e Silva, João Paulo Borges Coelho, and Amélia Neves de Souto (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2012).

19 This transfer of ideas is ironic in that Japan itself was aggressively building an empire at the time of Tanizaki's stance against Western cultural influence.

architecture, with its semi-transparent paper walls and dark alcoves, recurs consistently in other miniatures on Japanese society, especially when he declares particular technical and cultural imports from the West to be simply unsuitable to local needs. For example, he accuses the phonograph of cementing a Western understanding of music and sound that underrates pauses (the acoustic equivalent of shadows) in Japanese oral and musical culture. If modern medicine had originated in Japan, he suspects, the bedrooms of hospitals would not be white, but sand-coloured, and thus more beneficial to recovery processes. 'Here again we have to come off the loser for having borrowed',[20] he writes.

Similarly, Forjaz fears that the 'systematic adoption of values and forms imported from other cultures and societies'[21] might dramatically worsen the living conditions in Mozambican cities. What Tanizaki and Forjaz have in common is the concern about technological globalisation, which standardises uniform, often unsuitable solutions. But while Tanizaki nostalgically bids farewell to local idiosyncrasies, Forjaz thinks of the local more hopefully as a laboratory for future innovation:

> Our role as architects and planners in the Third World is, primarily, to deepen the understanding of the economic, social and cultural characteristics of our society, and their dynamics of change in order to find adequate and necessarily new solutions to our spatial and building problems.[22]

Compared to Tanizaki, Forjaz is clearly anti-traditionalist. Genuine and contemporary Mozambican architecture is yet to come:

> Traditional societies in our region did not have to answer this scale of problems [...]. We have to create now an architecture that expresses our new social order, and there is not much we can take from our architectural traditions. [...] Like the cities of Europe [...] need their cathedrals and their castles, their walls and great squares; like the typical American city needs its courthouse square and church, we need our tangible signs of an order superior to the tribal and different from the colonial.[23]

In Mozambique, the international disconnect caused by extreme economic and political circumstances even invigorated participation in global academic discourses and prompted contributions to global transfers of theory. A particularly unusual publication, this Mozambican edition also highlights the obstacles

20 Tanizaki, *In Praise*, 12.
21 Forjaz, 'Between Adobe'.
22 Forjaz, 'Between Adobe'.
23 Forjaz, 'Between Adobe'.

that continue to exclude African universities from global academic publishing even now.

At the time, the decision to publish Tanizaki fit the search for a genuine path in the field of architecture, and it again relates to current discussions in South Africa and Great Britain about decolonising architectural education.

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gd:c reports

Nomadic Camera: revisiting a workshop on photography and displacement at gd:c

Sophie Eisenried

From 13 June to 15 June 2023, a hybrid international workshop bearing the title *Nomadic Camera. Photography, Displacement and Dis:connectivities* took place at the Käte Hamburger Research Centre global dis:connect in cooperation with the Brandenburg Centre for Media Studies (ZeM) Potsdam. *Nomadic Camera* was dedicated to processes of migration, exile and flight and their visualisation, perception and dissemination through photography. The workshop explored the technical, medial and aesthetic relationship between photography and contemporary migration, historical exile and flight as a central discursive setting in which specific forms of mobility are negotiated from the mid-19th century to the present. The interdisciplinary workshop was organised by Burcu Dogramaci (Munich), Jens Jäger (Cologne), Winfried Gerling (Potsdam) and Birgit Mersmann (Bonn). The workshop kicked off with the gd:c annual lecture given by T. J. Demos (Santa Cruz) on the topic of *Weaponized Environments. From the Migrant Image to the Media of Causes*.

Annual lecture, 13 June 2023

In his lecture, T. J. Demos talked about the dynamics and aesthetics of migratory images and probed the representational regimes of refugees. He described the mobility of images of migration and problematised the migrant as a representational subject. He noted that images of migration became mobile screens onto which all kinds of content can be projected by liberal and right-wing media alike. Demos concluded that such

Fig. 01
Erich Stenger, *Die Geschichte der Kleinbildkamera bis zur Leica*, (Wetzlar: Umschau Verlag, 1949), 16.

projection is driving the rise of epistemic inaccuracies in images and their lack of documentary potential, which themselves are due to visually simplifying image regimes and resulting political interests. He described this development as a photography of faces, whereby subjects are reduced to their physiognomy. As a result, migrants have been dramaturgically and racially limited to their stories (of flight), and no critical reporting takes place.

Demos then proposed a shift from a photography of faces to a photography of causes, asking what aesthetics and image regimes were necessary to legitimise this shift. For him, the answer lies in linking the concept of *figure* with that of *ground*, not considering environments as neutral contexts but rather asking how images and subjects are connected. He proposed forensic research as well as politically comprehensive analyses to paint a clear picture of political and economic antagonisms and to show networks of power by challenging racialised images in media.

Fig. 02
Annette Vowinckel introducing Noemi Quagliati (photo by the author).

14 June 2023

Nomadic Camera began with processes of migration and flight after 2015 and their representation, perception and dissemination through photography. The participants examined the relationship between photography and contemporary migration in technology, media and aesthetics as well as historical exile and flight as central discursive settings. Reflections on creating places and belonging, ruptures between life and work in the past and present, experiences of loss and challenges of beginning were prominent topics. As a concept, *nomadic camera* focuses on:

- how dislocations relate to the technical development of photography as a mobile medium;
- how camera technologies presuppose and influence the visual formulation of experiences of exile, migration and flight;
- what changes in the aesthetics and style, methods and practices of photography imply for temporary mobility, geographical displacement and resettlement.

The first panel was dedicated to the topic of techniques and technologies. Beyond discussing the camera as an artificial object, the participants also considered how perspectives of shooting and their results have changed concepts of photography.

Svea Bräunert (Potsdam) connected techniques and technologies of nomadic cameras to the fact that the 21st century is hardly imaginable without accounting for the digital. For her, 'the digital' refers to migrants' (as she referred to them) use of smartphones to plan their escape routes and stay in touch with their social networks as well as to the virtual fortification of borders through surveillance, biometrics and other technologies. She described migrant aesthetics as a 'moving stream', in which movement is central in determining the connection between the digital and migration. She concluded that films can no longer be clearly distinguished from photographs. While films have slowed, now containing abstract-looking still images, photography has become a stream always consisting of multiple images. As well as exemplifying what Nathan Jurgenson described as 'social photos',[1] the latter also defines smartphone photography, where one image is synthesised from many shots and motion is routinely added.

Florian Krautkrämer (Lucerne) took a different tack, asking what dangers and responsibilities participatory techniques of filmmaking entail in the context of flight and migration. He pointed out that the participatory often makes use of the pain, fear and worries of others. The question of who films what for whom arose. Referring to, Wu Wenuang's *China Village Self-Governance Film Project*, which captures the public and political life of Chinese

1 Nathan Jurgenson, *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media* (London: Verso, 2019).

villages through the lens of their inhabitants, Krautkrämer emphasised that it is important to distinguish between the handed-over and the given camera. The handed-over camera reduces people with specific goals to human tripods. With the given camera, on the other hand, not everything is predetermined; the nature of the camera is important to the outcome. Although no political conflicts can be solved by the given camera, the filmed person can receive a hearing and attention. Thus, Florian Krautkrämer claims that the given camera is more politically open.

The second panel was dedicated to bodies, agents and performativity. The discussion focused on the importance of the context of images/photographs and drew attention to the performative character of photography and a theorisation of the term *agency*. Burcu Dogramaci asked how the concept of the performative relates to migrant photography.

Lara Bourdin (Montreal) addressed that question by talking about *Notícias de América*, a performance by Paulo Nazareth. The Afro-indigenous Brazilian artist pictured himself alone and together with anonymous people holding a cardboard sign. One of the signs, for example, bore the inscription: 'I am not migrating to the USA'. The surrounding elements, however, suggested otherwise. With his simple clothes and dirty feet, Nazareth recalled the stereotypical figure of the *Latin American migrant* that circulates in Western documentary photography.[2] By developing an imaginary migration story, a re-enactment of real migration stories of people and bodies took place, whereby the performance is a direct, political intervention that exposes forms and racialising processes of photojournalism.

Evelyn Runge (Cologne) took a step back from the performative and asked about agency. She examined the ethics and agency of digital images and photojournalistic experiences with the help of the actor-network-theory.[3] She found that ethics and agency are strongly intertwined and asked whether the nomadic digital represents the new 'normal'. She attested to the participatory nature of the digital image through mechanisms such as reposting on social media and describes this process as nomadic. Afterwards, T. J. Demos asked whether the term nomadic is not inflationary and whether the nomadic is falsely equated with precarity and migration more generally.

15 June 2023

At the beginning of the third panel, devoted to media narrations and narratives, Birgit Mersmann pointed out that photo stories

2 I refrain from further explaining or exemplifying the stereotype of the *Latin American Migrant* in order to avoid reproducing racist representations.

3 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

contribute to the narrative of migration and that, with the advent of new media and the resulting storytelling possibilities, narratives of migration have undergone a techno-social change. She probed the connections between media historiography, the nomadic camera and new narratives photography is producing. She noted that means of displacing and interrupting narratives can be analysed and distinguished in photographs.

Anna Messner (Düsseldorf) added that there is a contradiction between what is seen/displayed and the actual event, referring to how objects can oscillate between visibility and invisibility – appearing, disappearing then reappearing – depending on the context in which media like photo albums are viewed.

Subsequently, Ainslie Murray (Sydney) discussed narrative interruptions in her own art project called *Registry of Itinerant Architectures* – a dynamic online registry of wild, mobile, temporary and inventive forms of architecture associated with contemporary nomadic life. She talked about how her project began, about her walk through the wilderness in central Australia on the Larapinta trail from May to October 2022 during the Covid-19 pandemic. She referred to her preparations, initially hiking in a group and then deciding to continue her journey alone.

Fig. 03
The workshop participants enjoyed an evening viewing at the Arena Cinema in Munich (photo by the author)

The fears and worries that repeatedly interrupted her journey were captured through artistic/photographic methods in her art project. But besides creating images of interruptions, the images show improvised scenes of place-making and offer insights into the intense physical and psychological dimensions of mobility, characterised by risk, repetition, interruptions and failure where the landscape played an important role, as in the search for shade.

The fourth panel dealt with circulation, archive and memory. Jens Jäger asked what and how we think about the term *circulation* and what forms of knowledge production play a role. He suggested the archive as a place where knowledge is stored and ascribes it to a tradition of reliving biography. Memory is the constant movement of experience. The archive also shapes ideas about and memories of migration and is therefore significant to nomadic cameras.

Helene Roth (Munich) reflected on the archive by discussing her analyses in the ERC project *Relocating Modernism: Global Metropolises, Modern Art and Exile (METROMOD)*. In recent years, the team has developed an interactive digital archive of emigrant artists in the six METROMOD cities of Bombay, Buenos Aires, Istanbul, London, New York and Shanghai. The archive not only contains archive entries, but also locates home and work addresses on city maps. The archive also provides important research-based insights. Roth investigated photographers who emigrated to New York in the 1930s and 40s, asking who inscribed themselves in the city's history and how. How are the emigrant photographers (in)visible on the city map? In what contact zones, networks and specific neighbourhoods did they work and live in New York? How were transcultural networks between the METROMOD cities created by migration movements? Roth described the challenges of handling of fragmentary information, which in turn is connected to media like photography. However, the digital archive lends itself to visualising fragmentary and nomadic knowledge through, for example, maps.

Afterwards, Zeynep Gürsel (New Brunswick) mentioned that every archive contains certain temporalities. She looked at the effects of the ghostly presence of photographs in an archive of the Ottoman Empire, from which those photographed and captured had left the country without a chance to return. Zeynep Gürsel traces the circulation of 393 individuals and photographs to examine mobility, nationality, archives and the construction of individual and collective memories. She found that each image contains two temporalities: that of the Armenian past and the future of the homeland to-be.

Elizabeth Edwards (Leicester) contextualised thoughts on memories with a historiographical intervention on the archive. She used Zygmunt Bauman's term *liquid times*, which refers to the uncertainties in contemporary society, in which mass migration

and the fluid definition of 'home' are essential features.[4] She asked how photographs produce *strong histories*, as she named them, and suggested that this is only possible because of their fluidity, in that their power structures and political and social agency change depending on what one inscribes on the image. However, images are used/understood as witnesses as well as legitimators of existences around which we, as humans, construct our realities, make new connections and thus create a tapestry of history and reality.

The final discussion, beyond those sadly not mentioned here, was devoted to defining the term *nomadic camera* and, more broadly, what the nomadic might be. It quickly became clear that there is no single exclusive definition of nomadism, let alone the nomadic camera. It is much more important, as numerous discussions and lectures have confirmed, to refer to the political in the nomadic, recalling Demos's lecture about the danger of romanticising the nomadic as boundless travel and thereby overlooking the fact that the less privileged are excluded from this freedom.[5] Hence, it is necessary to recognise and analyse technologies, agents, narratives and archives of nomadic cameras, without forgetting that nomadic does not inevitably mean freedom and that freedom remains a fantasy for many.

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Finding aesthetics everywhere: recalling a workshop on *Ecology, aesthetics and everyday cultures of modernity*

Felix Ehlers

> *Slow time can lead to more meaningful work.*
>
> Ananya Mishra, workshop attendee

Global dis:connect was honoured to host *Ecology, aesthetics and everyday cultures of modernity*, a fascinating workshop held on 10-11 July 2023 and conceived by our fellow Siddharth Pandey. The event brought together scholars from various fields to discuss linkages between ecology, everydayness and aesthetics by looking at the modern period from the 19th century to the present. The participants shed light on several topics related to aesthetics by looking at art – movies, paintings and literature – that confront humanities' relationship with the environment.

The sound of crickets chirping fills the air, which is heavy with the smell of freshly mown grass and smoke from burning larch. I inhale the air and look over my laptop into green trees, moving in the wind of an approaching thunderstorm that's already rumbling among the mountains. It's a picturesque setting, inspiring surroundings for writing, reading and thinking. It is an aesthetic environment, a place that clearly collapses the illusory dichotomy between nature and culture. Somewhere in the Austrian mountains I can to write about culture in nature, and I do so using cultural practices and materials in an environment that feels wild and untouched but is designed by humans. This aesthetic place is the Anthropocene in microcosm, perfectly suited to write this reflection.

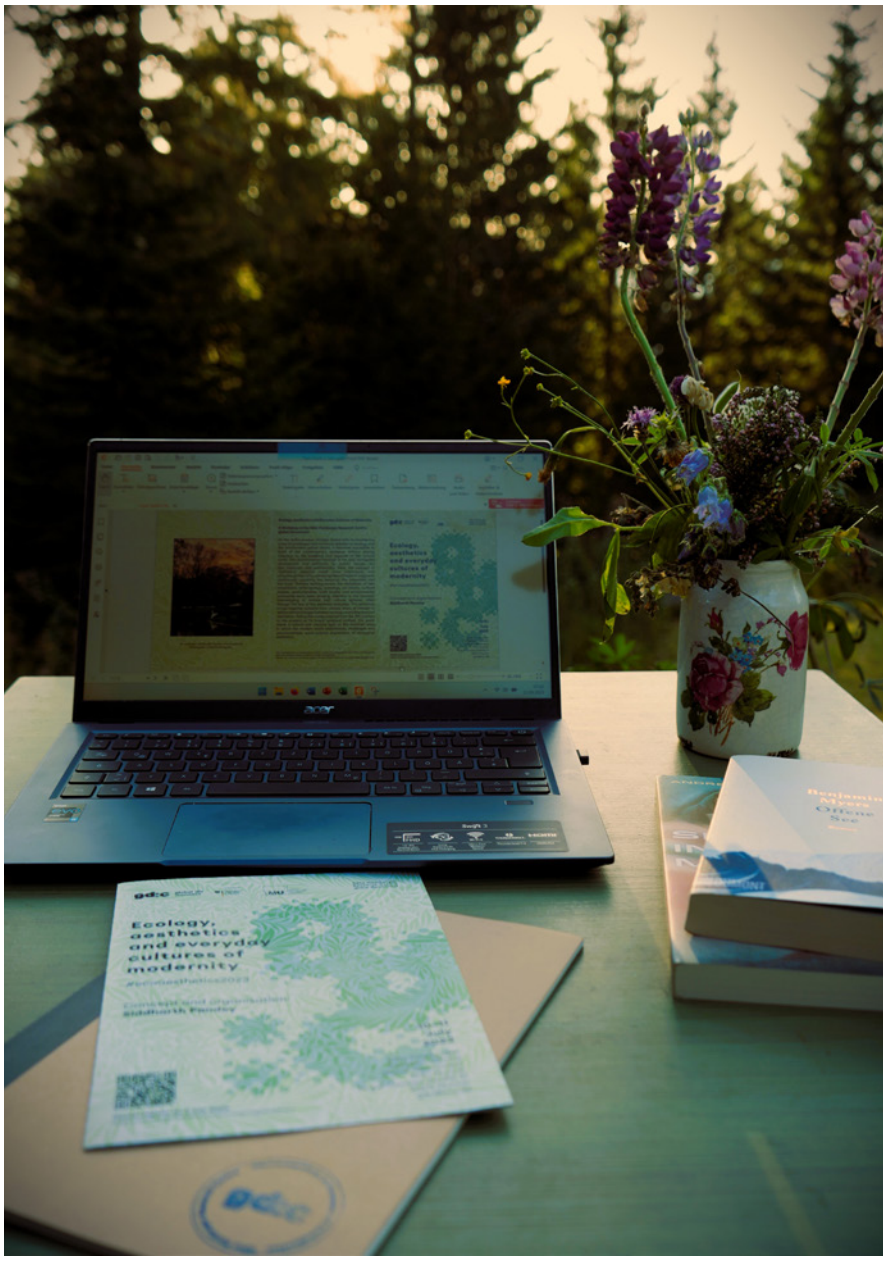
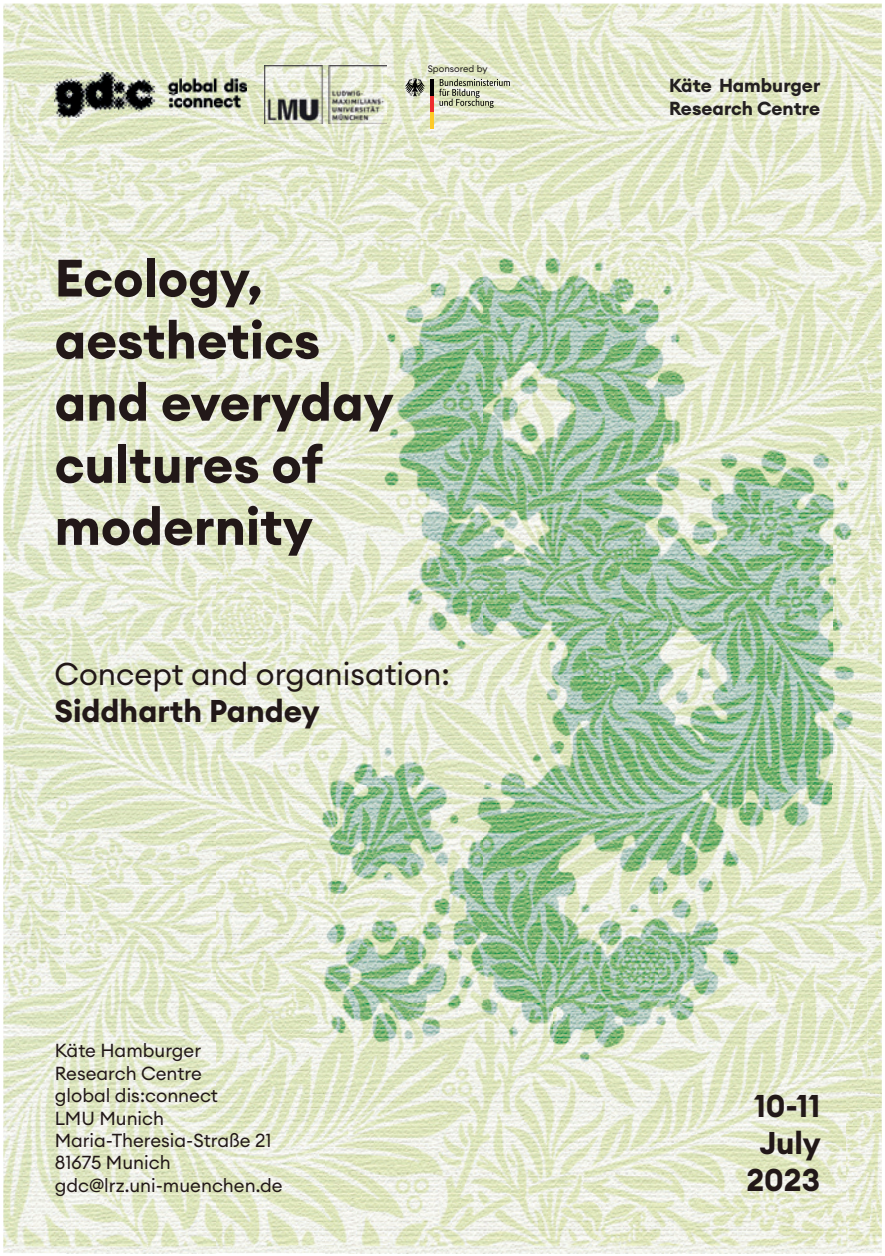


Fig. 01
Where does nature begin and culture end? (Photo by the author)

The word Anthropocene, like the geological epoch, is charging ahead, having become a buzzword evoking dystopian images of environmental degradation, global human-caused pollution and mega-cities expanding in formerly wild environments. The world in the Anthropocene isn't aesthetic, but what counts as aesthetic changes. Most people would consider winter in general and especially snow in the Alps beautiful, but prior to the rise of tourism and winter sports in the second half of the 19th century, winter in the mountains signified danger and death, not beauty and joy.[1]

What is aesthetic? Siddharth Pandey claims reception through our physical senses provides the best access to the concept of aesthetics, which was later connected with evolving conceptions

1 For further information, see Andrew Denning, *Skiing into Modernity: A Cultural and Environmental History* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).



of beauty. Today, aesthetic and beautiful are practically synonyms. When reflecting on aesthetics, one starts see them everywhere – our aesthetic environment, the beautiful library of on the ground floor of our gd:c building, the alpine setting where I wrote this article. Aesthetics influence our thinking and our work as researchers.

Even so, the Anthropocene was indelibly inscribed in the workshop's topic and influenced the discussions of artworks showcasing the interplay between humans and the environment. But aesthetics offered an alternative to the stereotypically dystopian view of the Anthropocene. We noticed this already in the early stages of preparing the workshop when Siddharth Pandey, Daniel Bucher (another member of gd:c staff) and I met for the first time to discuss how to design the posters and flyers.

Fig. 02
The workshop poster

The first drafts visualised a dystopic environment, but Siddharth Pandey wanted to reconceive the design. Using motifs by the British craftsperson, polymath and founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, William Morris, we combined the ideas of everyday culture, aesthetics and the intertwining of nature and culture.

On two scorching days in July, the participants gathered in the gd:c library, where we discussed many topics. We listened to Salu Majhi's poetry, saw photographs of sled dogs towing a sled through a shallow, crystal-blue lake on still-frozen sea ice, recalled our childhood memories with an analysis of the visual language in *Bambi*, learned about Chile saltpetre in artworks and as a medium, virtually visited the *Time Landscape* project in lower Manhattan, and more.

As a historian, I was unfamiliar with art historians' and literary critics' approaches, but all the panels were inspiring despite (or because of) that, relating easily to my own field and interests. Each presentation touched aspects of everyday life in some way. Our reliance on synthetic fertilisers to produce food, firsthand experiences of the effects of climate change and a childhood encounter with Caspar David Friedrich's romantic paintings are just some examples.

Fig. 03
The presenter's view of the library (Photo by Siddharth Pandey)

The workshop opened with David Whitley's keynote on how the textual descriptions in the 1928 novel *Bambi. A Life in the Woods* by the hunter Felix Salten had been translated into visual forms in Disney's *Bambi* movie. His analysis of a movie most of us recall from our childhood was fascinating, because the visual language is typically absorbed unconsciously. Whitely's exposition of such aesthetic commonplaces set the tone for the following presentations.

In the first panel on the language of plants, Sarah Moore spoke about Alan Sonfist's *Time Landscape* project, in which he and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation represented the ecological loss in Manhattan over the last 400 years with a slow-growing forest on a quarter-acre of land that was no longer maintained as a park. Moore connected this project with works of the 19th century that were already dealing with human-induced environmental degradation, like Thomas Cole's works and contemporary seed banks. Moore presented *Time Landscape* as a place where trees bring us a message from the past, a message that recurred in other presentations.

Next, Vera-Simone Schulz discussed images of plants, analysed how ecology and aesthetics influence these depictions, and why depictions of tropical plants can be intentionally misleading. The floral decorations at lunch were a glaring coincidence.

Geopolitical aesthetics were the topic of the second panel treating mineral resources, their exploitation and related artworks. Nicolas Holt's presentation focused on minerals, especially Chilean saltpetre, a powerful natural fertiliser that is less harmful than synthetic fertilisers gained by the Haber-Bosch-Method, as a medium in art history.

The next presentation by Ananya Mishra focused on the translation Salu Majhi's songs and analysed how local forms of protest against mining companies are expressed in his poetry, showing that Majhi considered his poetry as a form of protest as well as part of his everyday life. Beyond the topic itself, Mishra's multidimensional presentation was intriguing. Not only did she show and discuss translations of the poems on a screen, she combined this with audio recordings of Salu Majhi singing the poems as ambient sound. Together with a video of her journey to Salu Majhi documenting her research, this blended the object of research, the act of research, the past, the present and the presentation.

Hence we return to the quote opens starts this report. 'Slow time leads to more meaningful work'. This is a concept I cherish in my own work: not working slowly in terms of pace and productivity, but taking and investing time for the best possible, most meaningful result is valuable and necessary.

Of form and feeling was the topic of the third panel. Nathalie Kerschen opened the panel with her talk on expressing nature in architectural design and how the experience of nature, termed *eco-phenomenology*, influences design. She also touched on the importance for scholars not to lose their connection with everyday experiences. Touch grass.

Following up was Jane Boddy with her presentation on form-feeling and the aesthetics of nature around 1900. She asked whether form-feeling was a general collective experience and about the role of nature in that experience. Boddy demonstrated the importance of looking at feelings and emotions. In her words 'the feeling of a form (Formgefühl) is source and intuition of style'.

The last panel on the first day was titled *Between the known and unknown* and dealt with experimental prehistory and Bermuda oceanographic expeditions. Jutta Teutenberg started her talk about experimental prehistoric research with a focus on recreating the conditions under which prehistoric artists created art and crafts by referring to the ethnographer Frank Hamilton. This again invoked positionality and the importance of considering feelings, as an experimental prehistoric researcher who feels like an artist will experience different things and produce different results than a researcher who does not.[2]

Magdalena Grüner analysed three of Else Bostelmann's 1934 paintings capturing fishes with watercolours as seen by oceanographic expeditions to Bermuda in their natural environment and by taking into account how the colour spectrum changed with the depth. She used taxidermically stuffed animals as models and descriptions by the deep-sea researcher William Beebe because Bostelmann hadn't ever seen the real thing. Bostelmann therefore worked with her imagination and artistic methods, diverging from the aim of the expedition, which was to gain scientific knowledge.

The fifth panel, titled *The limits and edges of perception*, opened with Jessie Alperin's presentation about the imagination of the Earth from above in Odilon Redon's *Le paravent rouge*, a folding screen made for André Bonger. She analysed this artwork as an everyday, aesthetic object, which made it possible to view the impossible: the Earth imagined from above visualised inside a home.

The sixth panel on the prism of the pastoral began with Mihir Kumar Jha, who talked about spatialisation in colonial literature and the pastoral as a genre that deals with man's interaction with nature. He analysed the pastoral landscape with a view to

2 For further information on the effect of emotions in research, see Ute Frevert, *Gefühle in der Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021).

the surroundings of Hazaribagh as an ecological space between wilderness and civilisation, between nature and culture.

From the pastoral in colonial literature, we moved to the pastoral in paintings by the Belgian artist Roger Raveel and his attempts to develop an aesthetics of complexity, as presented by Senne Schraeyen. This talk also focused on the nature-culture nexus and how the environment changed through the rapid economic change in the second half of the 20th century. Recalling how the Alps also changed radically in the last century and the ensuing sense of ecological loss, I felt compelled to ask whether the loss and damage, the pollution and the destruction are necessary to prompt new aesthetic perceptions of formerly inaccessible landscapes and our environment in general.

The final panel was titled *Ice tales* and offered a stark contrast to the 34-degree temperatures that afternoon. Oliver Aas opened the last panel on Artic Sea ice by analysing art that depicts melting sea ice and questioning how our view of the Artic changes in light of the effects of climate change.

From the ice of the present, we moved to Kaila Howell's close reading of Caspar David Friedrich's *The Sea of Ice* and its historic depiction of ice of the past. She combined her analysis of the painting with Kant's philosophy and the concept of scale in art history.

After seven closely connected and very diverse panels with fascinating and inspiring presentations and discussions, Camille Serchuk's concluding remarks were the grand finale. Serchuk wonderfully summarised the diverse presentations and related them to her own work on medieval maps, which demonstrated the relevance of the topic beyond its chosen modern period. Still, the end had to be aesthetic. Therefore, we enjoyed a walking tour through the English Garden in the sweltering heat, but it made for a perfectly aesthetic ending thanks to a field of wild flowers, a part of the English Garden uncultivated and untouched by landscapers, bringing us back full circle to the *Time Landscape* project.

Reflectively synthesising nature, culture and aesthetics

The workshop is over, but the associations and threads it spun continue.

Holt's paper, for example, evoked the relevance of mineral resources in the context of digitalisation, especially with regard to the humanities. Mineral resources make our daily life possible, though we take them for granted. Digitalisation, which is as indomitable as it is universal, also shapes our research practices

and relies heavily on mineral resources. This text, for instance, was written on a laptop produced in Taiwan with mineral resources from China and Latin America, and I also use it to read digital papers by scholars from the Netherlands, the USA and India.

The more we digitalise, the more we lose a genuine connection to our analogue environment. But ironically, that same digitalisation and environmental alienation coincides with greater environmental exploitation. Materials are a medium by which we surpass our natural boundaries and enter a digital space. We do well to remember, however, that this journey is predicated on natural resources. The virtuality of digitalisation is an illusion. In the end, everything is analogue.

Many of the presentations, especially those from Boddy, Grüner, Mishra and Moore highlighted the importance of reflecting on emotions in research. Art is emotion; it is, to paraphrase Benjamin Myers, the desire to cast the moment in amber.[3] Seeing Caspar David Friedrich's paintings, hearing Salu Majhi's songs, smelling the plants growing in the *Time Landscape* project makes us feel. Those feelings can be shared or disparate, again depending on our mindsets, experiences and many other factors. If a good poem breaks open the oyster shell of the mind to reveal the pearl within, as Benjamin Myers writes,[4] then art in general can have the same, if not a much more intrusive effect. This must be especially true for art that confronts humans' impact on the environment, the nature–culture interaction and everyday life.

In research as in life, we work with narratives, and our preconceptions, beliefs, values and feelings affect those narratives.[5] To observe and note the influence of our feelings as agents in the past and the present in producing and distributing knowledge is sensible for various reasons, but especially for art and aesthetics. The concept of aesthetics relies on our senses, which combine with and shape our feelings and emotions.

Jha's reflections prompted me to reconsider the landscape I feel close to, as he described a place totally different but then again very similar to the place in the southern Alps that inspired me and where I wrote these words. A landscape that seems wild, inhabited by wild fauna with wolves returning, but shaped by grazing cows, ruminating sheep and humans cutting trees and building ski slopes on which deer – animals designed to live in open spaces – spend the dawn reintroduces questions of perception and emotions. Would the Alps be perceived as beautiful were they wild rather than cultivated? Sharing these forests and mountain ridges with

3 Benjamin Myers, *Offene See* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 2020), 14.
4 Myers, *Offene See*, 2022, 111.
5 For further thoughts on how we shape our narratives, see Douglas Booth, 'Seven (1+6) surfing stories: the practice of authoring', *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 16, no. 4 (2012), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2012.697284.

wolves, after their local extinction centuries ago, is changing my feelings for this region, but I'm not yet sure how. Perhaps the landscape will now feel wilder, and it would be more romantic if the call of the rutting deer mixed with the howling of a wolf. But even if they pose no threat to me, their effects on grazing livestock – possibly fatal – and measures to protect them, like herding dogs, will likely lead to a loss of human freedom and carefreeness.

Superficially, we learned a lot about works of art treating and confronting humans' impact on nature, a lot about art historical views on everydayness and ecology. Underneath that surface, though, the workshop raised far more questions, some of which I have raised here. Despite their apparent disconnection, when seen from above these questions might reconnect many things, including us as feeling, emotional beings, dependent on but alienated from our environment.

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Global Munich – a transfer project by global dis:connect

Christian Steinau

Making globalisation processes visible on the ground

Globalisation affects our world in diverse and complex ways. Based on the work at gd:c, the transfer project *Global Munich* shows how dis:connective globalisation processes shape the city of Munich, ranging from historical examples to astonishing contemporary references. From economic and cultural connections to more or less visible borders, Munich is linked to the

Fig. 01
Image courtesy of Adobe stock, adapted by the author.

world in many ways. But how do these links become manifest in the city itself? What makes Munich a global city?

The gd:c TransferLab is the brains and motor behind Global Munich.[1] The mission of the TransferLab is to develop applications for our output and to draw on current developments in the field of transfer. Transfer refers to the 'dialogical communication and transfer of scientific findings to society, culture, the economy and politics' and vice versa.[2]

Global Munich applies the concept of dis:connective globalisation to the city of Munich and relates it to concrete examples in the most local of contexts. It will create public documentation and provide opportunities for gd:c staff and fellows to get involved in the process. And Global Munich will engage stakeholders outside the university.

Munich as a global city? A first (dis:)connective look at the city

Due to its diverse connections to the world, Munich is a vivid example of how globalisation processes form a dense network. The city is a transport hub in the air and on land. People and goods move in all directions, as do data. This connectivity is the heart of Munich's globally connected economy. Munich is home to some of Germany's largest companies, and many international corporations do business here.

Munich is a locus for culture and the arts, home to globally active and connected publishing houses, advertising agencies, film producers, art collections and museums. Tourism is a key economic factor, and the city receives millions of guests annually. Munich is also a magnet for international emigrants who contribute to a lively cultural exchange. Globalisation processes pervade the city and leave their visible and less visible traces all over the cityscape and in the lifeworlds of both visitors and inhabitants of Munich.

Many of these links and connections have a long history and reach back to imperial times or even further. Think of the Orientalism mirrored in the Chinese Tower in the English Garden, the role of the Bavarian 'Chinese warriors' from the Max II barracks in quelling the Boxer Rebellion and the global branding success of the 'world's largest folk festival', the Oktoberfest. Small wonder that the first impulse to document and make visible the various manifestations

1 For more on the Transfer Lab, consult our webpage: https://www.globaldisconnect.org/transferlab.

2 Wissenschaftsrat, *Perspektiven des deutschen Wissenschaftssystems* (Cologne, Bielefeld, 2013), 2, https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/3228-13.html. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

of these links originally came from the field of history. Global Munich takes its cue from this historical approach and extends it into the contemporary realm.

The concept of *transfer* in Global Munich

A particular concept of transfer underlies the content and methods of the TransferLab. Every transfer project must confront the question of what transfer means. What is to be 'transferred', how and why? What is the added value of the concept?

There is no single definition of transfer. A range of transfer activities can perform the underlying transfer (Latin trānsferre = 'to carry from one place to another') of findings and knowledge, for instance in fields such as relationship management, entrepreneurship, scientific consulting, science dialogue and research and development with society.[3] Alongside the existence of the necessary institutional prerequisites, the quality of transfer depends on 'more or less comprehensive, forward-looking, longer-

3 Andrea Frank et al., *Transferbarometer: Executive Summary, Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft* (Essen, 2022), https://www.stifterverband.org/transferbarometer/executive-summary.

Fig. 02
The Chinese Tower in the English Garden (Image: Adobe Stock)

Fig. 03
Image courtesy of Adobe stock, adapted by the author.

term and interactive or dialogical processes'.[4] Accordingly, 'a simple linear model of transfer in the sense of transferring already acquired explicit and documented knowledge to other areas of society is unrealistic in most cases and falls short'.[5]

The TransferLab at gd:c is guided by the purpose of developing persuasive and innovative transfer, and Global Munich is one of its best examples. The historical data and sources on global places in Munich that our colleagues at the history department have gathered provide the raw material for a long-term transfer process that does not presuppose an epistemic conclusion, but expands and creates new knowledge on the basis of dialogue. The process pursues five principal goals:

1) rooting the concept of dis:connective globalisation in the documentation of concrete local examples
2) illuminating Munich's municipal history and present from a new globally dis:connected perspective
3) involving gd:c staff and fellows in a transfer project right at their doorstep
4) systematically planning and implementing transfer activities, ranging from (dialogue-oriented) research communication to participatory processes involving non-academic stakeholders

4 Wissenschaftsrat, *Wissens- und Technologietransfer als Gegenstand institutioneller Strategien* (Weimar, 2016), 11, https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/5665-16.html.
5 Wissenschaftsrat, *Wissens- und Technologietransfer*.

5) making the concept of dis:connectivity accessible to target groups outside the university

Modules of Global Munich

Global Munich operates across these diverse transfer contexts with three modules, each of which relates to both content and methodology:

1) opening the historical perspective to (interdisciplinary) contemporary references
2) involving gd:c staff and fellows
3) involving stakeholders outside the university

Opening the historical perspective to (interdisciplinary) contemporary references

Global Munich is developing a collection of global historical sites in Munich. One component is expanding the range of sources to contemporary references and other, less historical perspectives. A transfer perspective recommends this because communication is successful precisely when it is relevant and current. So, where is dis:connection currently materialising in Munich?

Integrating contemporary sources aims to highlight both the ubiquity as well as the complexity of globalisation processes and to infer new connections that define Munich as a global city. The project maintains the historical view of a rich urban history while seeking points of connection in the present. To extend the historical material, this historical knowledge is linked to new contexts from other disciplines and non-academic sources.

Involving staff and fellows

The core of global dis:connect are the research fellows. They enrich our academic exchange and add new perspectives to the discussion on dis:connectivity. Beyond broadening the question of where dis:connectivity appears historically and presently in Munich, Global Munich provides staff and fellows the opportunity to apply their art and research to the city of Munich. It offers a framework for exchanging ideas on our underlying research question through the location of Munich. Unlike colloquia or conferences, however, this exchange does not heed academic rules. There is no right or wrong, no obligation to participate in anything and no pressure to publish. The focus is on the curiosity about what constitutes dis:connectivity and where it appears in Munich.

In addition to the TransferLab's own research, the output of fellows and staff can feed into conclusive results. In this respect, Global

Munich is based on cooperation and exchange that combines different bodies of knowledge in conversation about the city. This can include roundtables, walks, coffee talks and similar formats. The project is a space for dynamic, spontaneous exchange between fellows and staff.

Transfer presupposes an open-ended exchange. Global Munich nudges staff and fellows to apply their knowledge in a new context, eliciting unusual insights and exciting discussions. Participation is voluntary, aiming to go beyond our research.

Involving stakeholders outside the university

The third module follows from the assumption that a project called Global Munich cannot be thought of solely from an academic point of view. Our circumstances are privileged. Public funding makes us independent of short-term economic vacillations. Without neglecting research, transfer adds a dimension of academic work. By reaching out beyond to diverse actors in Munich's urban society, new perspectives and sources for research emerge. Likewise, the diversity of urban society becomes methodologically visible.

The focus is an open-ended exchange, without commitment to a final result, preferring a multi-layered image of Munich developed by project partners, stakeholders and communities. Global Munich is designed to be open-ended and to adapt through non-linear dialogue.

Transfer aims to develop and explore of research perspectives with partners outside the university. The project attempts to go beyond typical academic work, to reflect on them and to complement them with practical, problem-solving research. By looking 'outside', scientific work changes. Global Munich proves that transfer can meaningfully complement research in the humanities and social sciences.

Formats of public documentation

This text could only provide a rough sketch of the possibilities for locating globalisation processes in Munich. Global Munich aims to explore where globalisation takes place in urban space as concretely and practically as possible and to make it accessible with texts, images and sources. Such documentation will form the conclusion of the project and will be compiled until spring 2025 as a test of global dis:connect's hypotheses about dis:connectivity with reference to real-world examples.

Various opportunities for communication emerge in the course of revising and expanding the non-academic source material on global places in Munich. Global Munich will continue to integrate narratives from our neighbours and cooperation partners.

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Follo-
wing
fellows

Alumna but not forgotten: an interview with Christina Brauner

What were you working on during your time at global dis:connect?

I was at global dis:connect from October 2021 to September 2022, working on my monograph on advertising practices and the construction of markets in an early modern border region. As academic schedules demand multi-tasking, there were also some side projects to be pursued: I finished an article discussing the emergence of the 'Global Middle Ages' in historical scholarship – a publication linked to my broader interest in temporality and periodisation in global history. Together with a group of colleagues, I worked on an edited volume about *Encountering the Global in Early Modern Germany* (hopefully appearing with Berghahn in 2024).

Where do you work now and are you still dealing with dis:connectivity?

After my stay in Munich, I returned to Tübingen University, where I work as a tenure-track professor of late-medieval and early modern global history, aiming to finish the monograph in 2024. In discussions with colleagues as well as in thinking about my own work, the theme of dis:connectivity helps me to reflect on the changed and changing position of global history. In this sense, I always found it helpful to conceive of dis:connectivity both as an agenda for obscure and invisible research topics and as a call for a more reflective edge in historical scholarship and the humanities, thinking about the conditions and limitations of our engagement with the world at large.

What work have you encountered recently that particularly impressed you?

Stuart Hall's *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands* (2017, Duke University Press). It's a captivating intellectual autobiography about the making of the postcolonial.

Which song could be the soundtrack for your time at gdc?

The Kinks, *Waterloo Sunset*

Whom would you most want as a dinner guest – anyone alive, dead or fictional?

If this is about food for thought rather than an elaborate meal, I think Thomas 'Mad Hatter' Tryon (1634-1703) might be an interesting dinner guest. Feasting on a cup of fresh water and some gently steamed vegetables, we could talk about religious radicalism in early modern London, life in Barbados and the Caribbean plantation economy, before moving on to discuss Jacob Böhme, Hindu religion and the importance of a well-aired bedroom, alongside vegetarianism and animal rights. It would be hardly anything than a very sober meal but a thought-provoking one, to be sure.

Christina Brauner

Fellow travellers

Cathrine Bublatzky

Cathrine Bublatzky is a media anthropologist and senior lecturer at the University of Tübingen. She researches diaspora and exile, archives, visual and digital media cultures, photography, art, activism, and the aesthetics and politics of belonging throughout Europe, South Asia and the Middle East. Cathrine authored *Along the Indian Highway: An Ethnography of an International Travelling Exhibition*. Her project *Contemporary Photography as Cultural Praxis of Iranians in the European Diaspora*, which she will continue at global dis:connect, received a scholarship from the Baden-Württemberg Foundation.

During her fellowship at gd:c, Cathrine is researching a private archive of photographs from 20th-century Iranian exiles. The politically sensitive photographs are from the archive of an exiled Iranian artist and relate to questions of why and how photography functions as a medium for global communication, memory processes, identification and belonging. She inquires how archives and photography contain traces of time and belonging for their audiences in and beyond exile as a cultural field of simultaneously dis:connective and interruptive social interactions.

Arnab Dey

An associate professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton, Arnab is a historian of modern India and the British Empire who focuses on law, labour and the environment. Arnab's first monograph, *Tea Environments and Plantation Culture* looked at the monoculture tea enterprise of British East India. This study brought the plant and the plantation together in analysing the politics of commodity capitalism.

Arnab's project at gd:c examined the 'invisible' costs and consequences of mining in the British Empire, especially India, between 1820-1940. This imperial mainstay and its global dominance have been studied in terms of 'overground' activities and material relations of production. This project takes an 'underground' approach to highlight the 'invisible' and 'precarious' in transnational energy regimes. It will focus on issues of industrial health and ecological 'ruin' to connect globalisation, work and the politics of 'absence'.

Andrea Frohne

Andrea is a professor at Ohio University, with a joint appointment in the School of Art + Design and of African studies. Her first book is *The African Burial Ground in New York City: Memory, Spirituality, and Space*. Her second book titled *Contemporary Arts from the Horn of Africa: Encounters Beyond Borders through Conflict, Colonialism, and Modernity* is forthcoming. She earned her PhD from Binghamton University (State University of New York). She has taught at Cornell University, Pennsylvania State and Dickinson College.

Andrea is drafting a book titled *Waterways in Contemporary Arts and Visual Culture of the African World*. The project examines geographic features of water in relation to socio-political and geo-political histories and arts of the African world. Diverse waterways affect and inform the arts as a result of slavery, colonialism, migration, global production, piracy and Afro-politan travel. These water networks, tides, currents and fluidities envelop frictions connected to raw materials extraction, transportation and (im)mobility.

Jeanno Gaussi

Born in Kabul and raised in Kabul, Delhi and Berlin, Jeanno's interests transcend national borders and genres. Initially focused on film and video art, her work now transcends genre boundaries. Starting from a narrative concept, she creates installations that include video, photography, objects and texts. Her art explores the places where she's worked, travelled and had meaningful encounters. It engages with remembrance, identity and the social and cultural processes associated with them. She develops projects in relation to the place of their creation, examining the unique aspects of her surroundings.

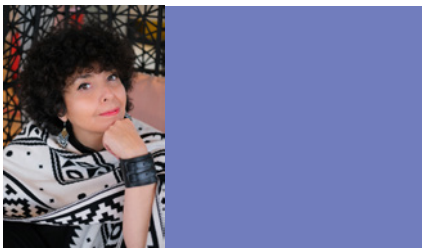
During her fellowship at gd:c, Jeanno reflected on a fragment of her childhood in India. By working with specific material, she reconnected with memories, decontextualised them and connected them in new forms and narratives.

Anna Grasskamp

Anna Grasskamp is lecturer at the University of St Andrews. She authored *Art and Ocean Objects of Early Modern Eurasia. Shells, Bodies, and Materiality* and *Objects in Frames: Displaying Foreign Collectibles in Early Modern China and Europe*. Her articles have appeared in *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, *Renaissance Studies* and other journals. Anna is a subject editor at the review journal *SEHEPUNKTE* and a member of the editorial boards of the book series *Global Epistemics* and the *Journal for the History of Knowledge*.

Anna has been the principal investigator of two research projects funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council, *Ocean Objects: Maritime Material Culture in Southern China from a Global Perspective* and *Upcycling Hong Kong: The Circular Economy of Recycling Material Culture in Pearl River Delta Jewelry Design*. At gd:c she worked on a project entitled *Trash as Treasure: Value Disconnections and the Recycling of Chinese Matter in Art and Desian. 1500–2020*.

Yolanda Gutiérrez



Born in Mexico City and living in Hamburg, Yolanda Gutiérrez is a choreographer, video artist, curator and producer whose projects have appeared in a number of international festivals. She has worked with dancers, actors, wrestlers, musicians, DJs, composers, laypeople, children, costume designers and set designers throughout Europe, Asia, Latin America, the USA and Africa. Since 2017, she has choreographed the URBAN BODIES PROJECT and DECOLONYCITIES, consisting of decolonising audio walks with dance interventions.

Continuing her investigations into the connections between colonial pasts, architecture and the body, her work at gd:c comprised three modules: a research phase, a period of reflection and a concluding project in Munich.

Viviana Iacob

Viviana Iacob is a theatre historian. Her work relies on interdisciplinary methodologies and a trans-regional reading of Eastern European theatre during the post-1945 period. Her research focuses on the history of international theatre organisations and their role in the globalisation of state socialist cultures. Thanks to a Humboldt fellowship, she wrote a monograph between May 2020 and July 2022 that explores the trajectories of Eastern European theatre experts in international organisations.

Her project at gd:c re-historicised the relationship between globalisation and theatre by analysing the practices of internationalisation and cultural diplomacy deployed by illiberal regimes before and after 1989. The project identified trans-regional dis:connections that differ from those emerging from the West. The research combined the study of late-Cold War globalisation processes with a focus on international theatre organisations.

Gabriele Klein

Gabriele Klein is a sociologist and dance scholar. Her work draws on a range of mixed methods. She has published almost 30 books and numerous articles on body aesthetics, body images and body politics, the globalisation of pop and dance cultures, dance theatre (especially on Pina Bausch), dance as and in protest culture and the transfer of African dance cultures to the global art market. Her current research addresses the tension between globalisation and (re) nationalisation, decolonisation and digitalisation.

Her project at gd:c explored the tension between the decline of in-person communication and the simultaneous expansion of digital communication using contemporary dance as an example. It showed how established artistic working methods, forms of communication and collaboration, and performance formats have changed since the Covid-19 pandemic. It investigated how this has transformed the perception and the understanding of dance.

Nic Leonhardt

Nic Leonhardt is a theatre scholar and writer commenting on global theatre history; media, popular and visual cultures; and archiving and curating theatrical history. She has served as a senior researcher and fellow in multiple projects. Her latest monograph, *Theatre Across Oceans. Mediators of Transatlantic Exchange* (1890-1925), was published in 2021. She edits *Global Theatre Histories* and created the theatre history podcast *Theatrescapes*.

At gd:c, Nic is addressing the challenges of global theatre histories and the difficulties in understanding and writing a globally interconnected history of the performing arts. She will interrogate the gap between global and entangled histories, which are both shared and divided. This project invokes connections, disconnections and detours extending across research, knowledge transfer, methodology and epistemology.

Sabrina Moura

Sabrina Moura is a teacher, researcher and curator from Brazil. She holds a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Campinas. She authored Arqueologia da Criação – a book on the work of Brazilian artist Rossini Perez – and edited Southern Panoramas: Perspectives for other geographies of thought, which presents historical and artistic perspectives on the Global South. Her work has featured in *Mousse Magazine, Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften, Stedelijk Studies Journal, African Art, Critical Interventions, 3rd Text Africa*, among others.

At gd:c Sabrina is developing *Cabinet Exotica Performing Absent Agencies from the Dawn of Natural Sciences*, a project that focuses on contemporary visual and performative strategies. It pursues the restitution of absent agencies in the history of the natural sciences. This research analyses museological and display policies around collections that were gathered during 19th-century expeditions of exploration and are held in Munich institutions, integrating decolonial theories, exhibition histories and museum studies.

Kevin Ostoyich

Hailing from Valparaiso University, Kevin Ostoyich has published on German migration, German-American history, historical pedagogy, the Holocaust and the Shanghai Jews. He has been interviewing Holocaust survivors for many years and is frequently invited to speak about the history of the Shanghai Jews around the world.

Kevin's forthcoming volume, *The Herero and the Shanghai Jews: Oral History in Genocide and Refugee Studies*, will analyse two little-known groups via oral history. The book will explore major themes of commonality and divergence among two groups who have experienced genocide and exile at different points in the 20th century. The goal is to elucidate how victims relate their experiences across generations, the meanings accorded to the refugee experience, perceptions of commemorative activities and how oral history can illuminate the experiences of genocide and forced migration.

Siddharth Pandey

Siddharth Pandey belongs to the Shimla Himalayas and has a PhD in English and materiality studies from Cambridge University. He has held fellowships and grants in global history, art history and colonial history at LMU, Yale, the Paul Mellon Centre, and the Charles Wallace India Trust. Pandey's research interests include fantasy and children's literature, nature and travel writing, craft theory, folk and popular culture. His first book, *Fossil*, explored the Himalayas through a geo-mythological-poetic lens. His photographic-curatorial work has appeared in London's Victoria and Albert Museum and Durham's Oriental Museum, among other institutions.

Pandey's project, *'This fissured land': ecological aesthetics, dwelling perspective and modernity's entanglements in the Western Himalayas*, studies the Himachal Himalayas as a terrain of belonging and rootedness. It also investigates how this sense of belonging is threatened by modernity's pressures, which invariably lead to a growing sense of disconnection.

Katarzyna Puzon

Katarzyna Puzon is an anthropologist and has conducted ethnographic research primarily in Lebanon and Germany. She has found academic homes in Beirut, Berlin, Edinburgh, London and Warsaw. Most of her work focuses on heritage, memory, mobility, loss and – more recently – sound and empire. She has also produced diverse media, including a sound installation at the Amsterdam Museum.

At gd:c, Katarzyna worked on her *Daring Sounds* project. Analysing connections and disconnections in relation to phonographic archives, this research examines how the archives' entangled legacies might contribute to current debates on Europe's colonial history and imperial past. By attending to sound, the project valorises listening as a critical interpretive approach.

Katharina Wilkens

Katharina Wilkens is a scholar of religion interested in the fields of African religions and aesthetics of religion. She has taught at the universities of Heidelberg, Munich, Bayreuth, Zurich, Salzburg and Leipzig. Her PhD project was a case study of Catholic exorcism and healing in Tanzania. Katharina has published on religious healing, spirit possession, the practice of drinking the Quran, travelogues written by Africans and the aesthetics of material texts.

At gd:c, Katharina studied the formation of religion, both as a discursive category and a social practice, under the auspices of African socialism from the 1950s to 1980s. In opposition to Marxism in the USSR, proponents of non-aligned African socialism insisted on the importance of religion for human society. While leaders such as Leopold Senghor and Julius Nyerere favoured Islam and Christianity, they neglected traditional religions and celebrated traditional arts and culture.

Franziska Windolf

Franziska Windolf is a visual artist who explores the performative potential of patchwork. She deconstructs the patchwork into 'patch' and 'work', understanding these terms as fragments and action in public or gallery spaces. For her, art is a catalyst, a method of investigation, a means of connecting to people and a way to explore exile and commemoration. By contesting relationships and hierarchies and by reassembling research findings, Franziska conceives the artwork as inconsistent, absurd and yet within reach.

While at gd:c, Franziska worked with diverse portable sculptures whose forms emerge through encounters in public spaces. She sought to create an imaginary space of remembrance and reflection in which fragmented memories of exiled artists in the city as well as history of Munich could find a poetic presence.


MDCCCLXI


Klosterwirt
Augustiner-Bräu München

**gd:c at urban bodies project,
July 8th 2023.
(Photos by Felix Ehlert)**

A note on the embroidery on the front cover:

Hanna Selma (née Kiewe) Bensadoun, *untitled*, ca. 1947-48, 34 x 31 cm, cotton fabric, Hanna (née Kiewe) Bensadoun & family collection, Philadelphia, PA.

Hanna and her parents and three brothers were Jewish refugees in Shanghai, China during the Second World War, much like the family depicted in *The Singer of Shanghai* contained in this issue. Hanna's family had fled from Königsberg, Germany, where Hanna's father had been arrested during the Kristallnacht (9-10 November 1938). Hanna created the piece in Shanghai when she was ca. 13-15 years old. Her daughter, Doris Lipsky, writes that her mother 'had art classes after school, and this was one of the crafts they were taught'.

static: thoughts and research from global dis:connect

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