

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE ART IN MARTINIQUE,  
3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION



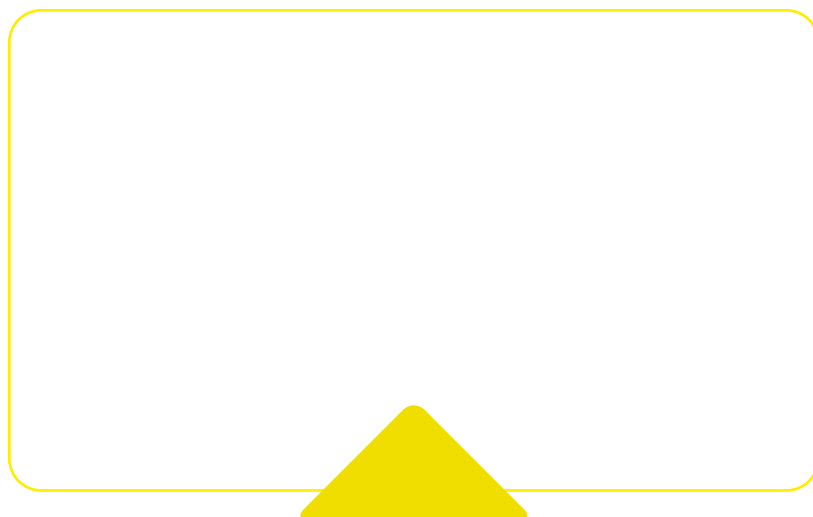
co-directed by Annabel Guérédrat, Alicja Korek, Henri Taullaut

FIAP

MARTINIQUE

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# **LE F.I.A.P. MARTINIQUE 2022**

International Festival of Performance Art 2022,

Third edition, Co-directed and organised

by **Annabel Guérédrat, Alicja Korek & Henri Tauliaut,**

via the association Artincidence.

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### BONUS





This festival was a great success. First of all, it was a success to have made this crazy bet of a shared curatorial team of three: Alicja Korek, Henri Tauliaut and Annabel Guérédrat, because of the friendship that has bound us for many years.

Then we were surrounded by art critics, performers and curators from all over the world, from the Caribbean, from Haiti to Guadeloupe, via Cuba; also from Paris, Germany, Italy, New York, Mexico and Brazil.

Finally, the 2022 edition had a very special character, mainly due to the pandemic, since it was planned for 2021, but we had to postpone this event several times because of the global Covid-19 crisis. Other events have profoundly impacted and changed the very nature of the festival. First of all, events such as the debunking of the statues and the various crises that have taken place in

Martinique and around the world have made the festival even more political.

It is clear that we, curators and artists, could not pass by. We could not fail to give voice to and be in tune with regional, Caribbean and international current events. In addition to the artists present, we wanted to add activists, people who reflect on decolonial and subversive issues.

It was therefore a very political FIAP Martinique with decolonial reflections, both at the various café philo in the morning at the Impératrice Hotel, and at the two workshops held at Lakou Digital in Fort-de-France. The workshop led by

Helen Ceballos, a committed feminist performance artist from the Dominican Republic, living and working in Puerto Rico, with women sex workers from the Martinique branch of the Mouvement du Nid, was also very strong.

We managed to create a powerful counter-power with our naked and dressed bodies, our silent, polyglot, sung and shouted words, our Uranian and also Chthonic energies. A subversive counter-power that feeds on the collective, multiplies narratives, questions, disturbs and transgresses the established order.

Each performance was a miracle, an earthquake, a caress, a healing, a tale, a coup. The artistic proposals, some meticulously prepared and thought out for months, others spontaneous and minimalist, all weaved together an incredible narrative that, while questioning the past, looked to the future.

Talking about performance, performing and making others perform is a form of militancy and a socio-political-artistic commitment, here on Martinique of course, but also in a Caribbean and global perspective.

The performances were as much rituals, places of passage, as moments of consecration, of reunion, of being together and taking care of each other.

There was a strong involvement of the young generation represented by the students of the art school of Martinique, the Campus Caribéen des Arts, during the time of performance art laboratories at the Savane des Pétrifications in the extreme south of the island.

In addition to the Festival in May, the FIAP Martinique programming gives rise to various events: residencies and

restitutions, an exhibition of photos and video performances produced during the festival's high point, the production of a catalogue and its presentation.

Performing to stay alive, performing to challenge the dominant powers, performing to transmit, performing not to forget, performing to heal, performing to reinvent.

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*Annabel Guérédrat, Alicja Korek, Henri Tauliaut*  
Fort de France, 12 December 2022

# Savannahs

## **A school**

On the island, this is how the festival begins. It begins without announcement and without fanfare. First we leave the city to go to the south. Ever-changing greens, browns in the ditches, somewhere the ochre even goes down to black, taking a few detours to turn the eye. One no longer knows what is above and what is below. When the feet finally touch the ground, the path is still wet, along the mangrove. Then everything becomes dry. A desert of rocks, sand and *pyé bwa*. Living and petrified. As a sign of welcome, transparent crabs drip in waves from a hole. A base camp under the shadows, facing the sea. The festival begins here, far from the show,

out of sight. It begins in that precious, thick time beforehand, the time of preparation for something we don't know. As when those who were not yet maroons were perhaps already tasting, secretly, in fragments, this future life, practising it in contact with capricious plants, learning to pass under the branch, to be streaked with shadows, to be a fly and a bird. They learned to melt, to become liquid, to evaporate, to disappear. To transform and become. So this is the performance in question of the performance festival that starts before the festival begins. It requires not only agile action, but also hospitality for what might pass by, pass through *Nou*. This *Nou* which, like other materials, is formed and deformed by the force of the sun, of erosion, of friendship. Liquid and possible *Nou*. The festival begins here in the form of a rehearsal



that is not theatrical. It is a time to taste, to try, a time of wandering, of sleep, of gestures that seek to remember gestures that heal – movement of water on bare arms, bare ankles, hair. It never ceases to begin outside the show. This savannah is already the heart of what it is, moments of serene dispersion, of abandonment where the stage expands, where attention flees. The sleepy eye, overwhelmed by memories of the infinity of greens, sees painted faces, dancing plants, the ear feels the weight of water, hears the voice of a young woman in the distance, lost behind curtains of leaves. The hand feels the sweat of the stones, the uninterrupted flow of the grains of sand. Words slip through. It is a school of art without a master. A school of learning about time, about letting go, about idleness, about the image that emerges and escapes, about the memory of the hip, the eye of the foot and the mouth of the shoulder. We study. That is, we make ourselves available to everything, from everything and towards everything. We become *Nou*. Some of us with water, others by drawing the landscape that keeps falling noisily into the sea, like a game that never stops. Later, we will regretfully leave this petrified savannah for the savannah in the city, carrying with us the traces of one place in the other, of one savannah in the other. Carrying our idle school.

### **Silhouette-Skeleton**

On the second day, a faceless silhouette rises. Covered in yellow flowers, he crosses the savannah where the sun is already doing its job well. He distributes sleep and hallucinations. So, no one has seen the silhouette coming, not the one

who slips supplely into the mangrove branches – as if in the arms of a mother – nor the one who is weaving – his eye is elsewhere – still less the sleepers. All these people are far too absorbed in the work of a morning dream. The silhouette laughs without a mouth. He grabs the hands of those who still linger between the remnants of shadow and the waves. A round in the sand. Like the skeletons danced to exhaustion in a memory of long ago, a macabre and joyful dance, on an engraving. But they were never tired. They didn't care about hunger, as they didn't care about life and death. They just danced. That morning, the silhouette that walks forward, filling his hands with other hands, is of the species of prankster skeletons. Covered in flesh, muscle, nerves, skin, hair, fabric – perhaps oil or plant fibres. And on top of all these layers of history and matter, flowers. Because the man-tree, because the woman-bush, plants that heal and speak. A family. It is not actually a skeleton figure that dances, but rather a plant that dances. A light root underfoot, a silent farandole of the powers of life. He remembers her own, wakes up the people from before, the old ancestors snoring under the wild mango trees. The grandmother is a bearded, green creature. I have seen her.

Dance and laugh, throw water on your little friends! The silhouette drags those who have followed him into the sea up to their ankles. It turns everything into a game. A faceless plant with yellow bouquets, an explosion of joy that invents the step of a dance it does not yet know. He laughs again. Everyone repeats and learns, puts down their laughter and their eyes in this



yellow community. It is not carnival, it happens far from the crowd, below the ears, between the leaves, behind the shadows. He is already gone. Whoever speaks low in the savannah, whoever sinks into sleep, whoever floats and drifts in the lagoon, is no longer sure of having seen it. Laughing perfume that passes. Piece of cherished childhood, gone. This savannah has its stories that no one captures. There is nothing to do.

### Face-landscape

Maybe it's the same day, maybe it's another. This one has started to paint his face, perhaps to ward off boredom. A small mirror in one hand, the other makes quick circles under the imposing mass of hair. A brown surface that turns red. The cheek of a round, almost child-like face stretches towards the ear. The eyes enlarge to the extreme. A feline. The drawing takes shape and relief. The face becomes another face, solar. A plea for fire, the lips explode. He puts on shoes with gigantic heels. Skillful on the uneven and soft ground, a light veil around his torso, he royally descends towards the sea, accompanied by his friend. A parade without a catwalk. He says he wants to be the first drag queen on the island. No one knows if there have been drag queens before, on the island, if in the carnival these kind of exuberant figures were called that or not, if naming them was important then. No one knows if she will be the first because it is an unwritten story. Some may have become a drag queen without a witness in the depths of a night by headlight, to wet music. And it doesn't matter, the savannah doesn't keep score or rank. It doesn't care about

heroes. The important thing is to know how to transform, become and disappear in turn to be the humus of other things, other drags and chimeras. It's done, he's gone, wiped the burning landscape from his face. He smiles.

### Lost voices

An art school students discuss in the savannah school which is also an art school. A school with long days where you float with a horizontal feeling, where you draw, weave, make and talk about bodies, and families. A school where you don't know what to do with all this space and all this time that suddenly falls upon you.

While the plant was dancing in the water, while the face was becoming another face, the voice of a female student left. She was told that she was not ready and because she was shy, she went to hide behind some trees. She wanted to practice without being seen. But in spite of the waves, the wind, in spite of the distance, we could still hear her, high and beautiful, clear. She spoke in song. For in this savannah, everything had already begun and nothing had waited to be ready. And this shy, distant voice was the most beautiful thing because it did not impose itself on anyone. It did not disturb the idleness, the stories *an ba fèy*, or the underwater dream of those who floated far from the shore. Other students, when they left this savannah of the old days, would give substance to other lost voices, those of murdered women who would ask for justice, or who would bury themselves alive in the sand to repair their memories.

### **Savannah in the city**

The savannah in the city also has its petrifications. Faceless statues. It is said that here the empress of the French first lost her head and then fell from her pedestal. Nothing remains of her marble flesh now. The girl from the savannah in the city says that she didn't even know that the head was gone, that she found out by dropping the rest of the body hard on the ground. Golden threads in the shattered marble. The Emperor's lady who restored slavery had earned it. On the savannah in the city, we drop the toxic petrifications. This is a school. Another school. On the other side, on the way to the fort, the statue of the man who gave the island to the French has been taken down. This clears the horizon. This savannah is also a desert, otherwise. A long lawn bordered in places by gigantic palm trees. A place for something that is not there. A party that does not take place. One day, a group sadly played the *gwo ka* to celebrate something, but it was not clear what.

The shy voice of the student who in the old days covered the music of the waves came all the way here, to the heart of the city. Even though she had been told that she was not ready, she came and sang in the middle of this savannah. She sang in her own special way. As a small, colourful kite carried the carefree spirit and seeds of the island into the air, the lost voice, which was supposedly not ready, sang even louder to get rid of the weight of the ground.

### **The outside of time**

Not far from the savannah in the city, under pedestals that have been left empty, above kiosks, on the roof of

a hotel, visage-paysage has begun its masquerade again. The same precise painting gestures. But this time in front of an audience. On the roof of the hotel, everyone is now watching. The music is very loud and dancing. All eyes are on him. But still, he takes his time. That is, the time it takes to change his face to fire. He is sitting at his make-up table and everyone is standing still with this music that insists on dancing. Party music without a party. He has brought back here, on the roof of the city, the petrified time of the savannah. Another time that makes the show a performance, that undoes the time of the show, saturating it with emptiness and a vague boredom. And when he finally leaves the stage to fetch his friend, when they both return as an elegant couple in the synchronous rhythm of the music, it is already too late. Even though they are following in the footsteps of a parade, they arrive after the show, they miss the event. They march out of time.

### **Memory**

Later, the fragile Nou from the petrified savannah finds himself in the city, at the *lakou*. He writes the words of his art school on the floor. Then he says the words and dances the words. He looks for his path, his voice, he weaves the times of the savannah. He makes and practices his place. The festival is coming to an end.

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*Olivier Marboeuf*

With: Diovany Boulangé, Mélodie Tarrieu, Céliane Galion, Christelle Patron, Samuel Jean-Toussaint, Kaella Alexis, Rozina Rakhil, Keycia Virapin as well as excerpts from performances by Ludgi Savon, Marni Kotak, Annabel Guérédrat and Anne Catherine Berry, Helen Ceballos and Fabiana Ex-Souza







**PART I**

Bodies – Memories  
– Living Archives



# Lazaro Benitez Diaz



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Lazaro Benitez Diaz is a performer, choreographer and dance researcher, based since 2019 between Paris and Marseille. Graduated from the University of Arts of Havana in theory studies and research in dance and in Master 2 in Dance at the University of Paris 8, he revealed his first creation in 2015: *Roots, personal construction of my past of hero*, followed by *Diary of unpublished campaign* in 2017, then *I do not like heels* in 2018. With these

creations he participates in contemporary creation spaces in Cuba and especially in Havana. In France, he has collaborated with the artists John Deneuve and Thomas Lebrun. In 2020 he created with two other Cuban artists the Colectivo Malasangre and in 2022 presented the piece *Que bolero o En tiempos de inseguridad nacional*. He is currently working on a cartography of contemporary Caribbean dance and its archives. ■

# Nadia Myre



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Nadia Myre is an indigenous and quebécois artist from Montreal who is interested in having conversations about identity, resilience and politics of belonging. A graduate from Camosun College (1995), Emily Carr (1997), and Concordia University (M.F.A., 2002), Myre is a recipient of numerous awards, notably Compagne des arts et des lettres du Québec (2019), Banff Centre for Arts Walter Phillips Gallery Indigenous Commission Award (2016), Sobey Art Award (2014), Pratt & Whitney Canada's "Les Elles de l'art" for the Conseil des arts de Montréal (2011), Quebec Arts Council's Prix à la création artistique pour la région des Laurentides (2009), and a Fellowship from the Eiteljorg Museum (2003).

In 2017-2018, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts hosted her first solo exhibition. Among her most recent projects, the residency at the McCord Museum in Montreal culminated in the exhibition "*Decolonial Gestures or Doing it Wrong? Refaire le chemin*" (2016). Nadia Myre's work can be found in the permanent exhibitions of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the National Gallery of Canada, the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, the Canadian Museum of History and the Musée des civilisations de la Ville de Québec. ■









# Fabiana Ex-Souza

Fabiana Ex-Souza is an Afro-Brazilian artist-researcher, born De Souza in Belo Horizonte in 1980. She has been living in Paris since 2010. Her work consists of performance, video, installation and photography. In 2014, in relation to her research of diaspora communities, she performs a poetic-political self-decree to redact her slave name and thus transform her name into Ex-Souza.

In her artistic practice, she employs the notion of “body-politic” to raise

questions about the reactualisation of the archives, reparations, transmission and about the process of transmutation that the artist names “ghost objects”.

Ex-Souza is a doctoral candidate in Visual Arts and Photography at the University Paris 8, working on decolonial aesthetics. In 2020 she is one of the recipients of the AWARE/CNAP prize “La vie bonne”. ■







# René Louise



© Jean-Baptiste Barret

René Louise is a graduate of the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris* (painting section). He is the author of several books published by *Éditions caribéennes*, including: *“Peinture et Sculpture en Martinique”*, *“La vannerie à la Martinique”*, *“Poterie et Céramique en Martinique”* and plays such as *“La table du diable”* and *“Trois voyages aux îles de canne à sucre”*, as well as a collection of poems entitled *“La rose et le cheval aux îles de lumière”*.

René Louise is a founding member of the *“Fwomajé”* group (named after the tree with particularly strong and deep roots): this is an association of five Martinican visual artists who have come

together to create around a proposal for a Caribbean aesthetic. Researcher, painter, sculptor and scenographer, René Louise has already participated in numerous projects both in the Caribbean and abroad.

He is in charge of the drawing and painting workshop at SERMAC (Municipal Service of Cultural Action of the city of Fort-de-France). After several years of research, he published *“Le manifeste du marronisme moderne”*, a theory already stated in his doctoral thesis. In this work, he underlines the importance of African roots, but also of Caribbean roots with the consideration of pre-Columbian arts. ■



Conseil L'ARTISAN Billetterie



# To Those Who Enrich The Archives Of All The World | Interview with Fabiana Ex-Souza

by Elena Agudio

**I would like to start this conversation by giving centre to a dedication I read in the end credits of your film “*It Is About Another Way*”, one of the boldest art pieces I had the pleasure and honour to encounter (and watch two times!) in Fort-de-France (Martinique), on the occasion of FIAP 2022: “*To those who enrich the archives of all the world*”. Even if – I have to admit – it has been the experience of meeting you and sharing time and discussions together what really struck me, I have also to admit that what I am carrying on from those days is the force of your work, and its distinctness.**

**Alongside my colleagues at SAVVY Contemporary, for more than a decade, we have been reflecting on the role of transmission, the urgency of troubling and questioning existing archives and their white epistemology, but also and especially the necessity of making and structuring new archives. Those that have been for too long systematically impaired by the epistemicidal agenda of the West, and its racist politics.**

**How central is for your radical and feminist practice this material engagement with the duty of transmission?**

What I am trying to show in the film “*It Is About Another Way*” is precisely this tension that exists in the lives of racialised people in Brazil, because we are aware of the vulnerability of our lives. In this nation project called Brazil everything has been designed to destroy the original peoples’ lives and afro descendants. For instance, it is important to remind that, at present, a black person is murdered every 23 minutes there. We have thus developed several survival strategies, including transmission in the face of emergency and precariousness. I don’t claim to be a filmmaker, but I had to make sure that this story, the story of the Afro-Brazilians’ psychic devices of survival, was transmitted. So I made this montage of archives with the means at hand, finding my sources on YouTube with even more precarious images, that is to say, images in low quality, filmed with cheap cameras. In fact, these archives were made possible thanks to YouTube, which in a way democratized access to the archives of peripheral populations, from *quilombos*, *candomblé terreiros* and Amerindian peoples. I decided to assume a kind of aesthetic of precariousness to the end, both in terms of what we see







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on the screen and in the way the film was produced. To confront the machine of colonial erasure is thus to free oneself from the violence of dominant narratives and the false rhetoric of a racially egalitarian tropical country. The images of the Congadas are thus central to the plot of the film, but there is also the liberating urge to tell this story differently.

**The body is another fundamental pillar of your artistic practice. The living body. Not just because you are not only a filmmaker but first and foremost a performance artist, yet due to the fact that you understand the body as a site of discourse. A site of resistance, and also an archive. As the theatre scholar Esiaba Irobi wrote: as “a somatogenic instrument as well as a site of multiple discourses which absorbs and replays, like music recorded on vinyl, epistemologies of faith and power grooved into it by history.”**

### **How do you unfold these body politics in your practice, and how important is it to you?**

As a performer artist I work primarily with my own well-being. I tell myself that whatever a black body does in this white supremacist world, it is already performing an incredible life force. I then make sure to organise a method of working and setting up my artistic plasticity that goes against a safe place, ready to welcome me.

What I really appreciated about the invitation from the Fiap curators was the possibility to let the atmosphere of the island soak in, to settle down, to breathe the fresh air of its beaches and surroundings to create my performance. As a racialized artist, being able to take time, to enjoy the time, while feeling safe in a setting designed for this purpose creates plasticity in itself.



At the Savane des Pétrifications, I had time to remember how my grandmother used to weave palm leaves. I was able to wander through the streets of Fort-de-France, and reconnect with a strange and new sense of belonging, as everyone was gathering me. I was able to talk to the market women, who reminded me of my aunts. One of them introduced me to Nancy Stelly, from Stelly's Creation stand. For my performance, I wanted to buy local, living seeds, in other words without chemical treatment and still able to germinate.

Nancy, who works with seed-based jewellery creation, told me that she has been collecting various seeds in a bag at home for two years. She told me about a dream, and that she knew someone would come and collect them. I was amazed, I collected with her a two kilo bag of seeds from Martinique and Guadeloupe too. In a very generous way she explained its uses and shared her

knowledge with me. I wanted to bring this generosity back into my work, and I told myself that I had to create broad, sonorous, free and light performative gestures. At La Savane, the wind blew generously and lightly. It was therefore necessary to use this force and this place was an obvious place to host the performance. That's where the idea of working with handmade kites came to me. On the internet, I discovered that there was a kite club in Martinique, run by Georges Pluton, former French boxing champion. I get with Georges 7 kites, coming in person to deliver them to me. We spend the afternoon together at the Savane, he explains the different models and techniques, and especially he teaches me to fly them, all this while telling me how the kites were for him a tool of psychic protection.

A dance, a song, began to take shape in my head. I wanted to add to my performance the energy of carefreeness,



a life perspective that is often impossible for racialized people. And then there was the song, which became more and more present in my head:

*if there is only the wind  
if that's all I have left  
I'll gladly take it  
and make my party*

I learned that one of the fine arts students, invited by the Fiap to assist the artists of the festival, was a singer and wanted to make her voice heard. So, I invited Mélodie Tarrieu, a young artist and performer with a lyrical voice of rare beauty, and we decided to work together. Then we needed a name. In order to persevere in this dynamic relationship until the end, I asked the curator Chris Cyrille, also a participant in the festival, if he would like to give me the title:

*"Never the dis/persion of seeds will enclose. And if the earth wanders in your hands, it is because it dreams of savannahs, out of all control",* Chris sent me before nightfall.

On the day of the performance the wind was capricious. Surrounded by the royal palms, Melodie and I waited for the participants and passers-by. On the ground, we could already see the seeds and the kites laid out on the ground, in the centre of the circle formed by the trees. During the performative action, I presented the seeds and their uses to those present. I then invited the participants to touch them, to feel them. Then we started to hang the seeds on the tails of the kites. How can we disperse the impossible in the air?

Let us anchor the dream. If the remaining of the impossible imposes itself as a living wound, if it is interwoven among the cracks, it is because cracks exist.

If by wound we mean open, this can be configured as patterns.

If by fissure we mean space, what painful but necessary paths can still emerge? If by fatigue we mean celebration, if by resilience we mean carefree, if by thought we mean dance, we can rise from the damaged ground, we can move away from the broken gesture, and guide, for the time of a pause, a common destiny for healing.



Some kites took flight. We finished by dancing a Ciranda, a dance in a circle very well known in Brazil. Each time smaller, this circle ended up encircling also the energy of our bodies, our stories and our healing processes. Some of the participants stayed in the La Savane square, as night fell, daydreaming about the kites that would not leave.

**The issue of epistemic violence is intimately entangled with the one of toxicity.**

**I think your research acknowledges that very powerfully, and engages with both the immaterial exposures to racism, sexism and as much as with the very material manifestation of coloniality. In an inspiring conversation that we had in the context of a public discussion during the FIAP, we talked about the work of Vanessa Agard-Jones and her long-term research on racialization, environmental degradation and the politics of gender and sexuality in Martinique. Making a clear connection between plantations and pesticides – in a book that I never had the opportunity yet to have in my hands, but that she introduced to me and my colleagues at SAVVY already many years ago: *Body Burdens: “Toxic Endurance and Decolonial Desire in the French Atlantic”* – she reframed the concept of body burden to account for the accretion of toxicities in Martinique, a French territory in the Caribbean. As she writes somewhere else:**

***“In Martinique, a French territory in the Caribbean, narratives about the origins of gender transgression and same-sex desire have shifted recently to include a story about their relationship to pesticide contamination on***

***the island’s banana plantations. As a source of rising levels of estrogen in the environment, the pesticide chlordécone has been linked to both male infertility and prostate cancer. Concerns about the effects of this contamination have been heightened by uncertainty about the range of its impacts, and popular responses have included panic about male effeminacy and intersex births as well as critiques of the postcolonial dynamics that drive uneven exposure. Drawing from 18 months of fieldwork on the island, this talk explores how the paradigmatic narrative about the origins of gendered forms of sociality in the Black Atlantic – violent relations under slavery – are being transformed through the transnational travels of a hormone-altering pesticide.***

***How did you and your body react to the material and immaterial toxic context of Martinique and its environment and people?”***

I knew the history of Martinique when I was already living in France, and once there I already had an idea of the local historical and racial issues. Indeed, racial tension is present everywhere. A bit like in Brazil. Even though in Martinique, especially in Fort-de-France, I was amazed to see so many black people everywhere. It made me feel very comfortable and I had a kind of relief in my lower back. My neck was also less tense. Coming from an extremely toxic country myself, I learned to deploy protective circuits around me. I then try to cope with toxic situations in my environment by creating counter forces. I then try to cope with the toxic situations in my environment by creating opposing forces.

**You work has to do with repair, with the resilience of the black “body”, and the need of enacting practices of psychic protection and survival. In your film “It Is About Another Way” you are talking about a material mutation that the black body had to go through to survive slavery and colonialism, about a conscious defence mechanism that transformed its immune system to endure and fight colonial technologies. It is a striking ode to the potential of a collective labour of repairing, in community engagement.**

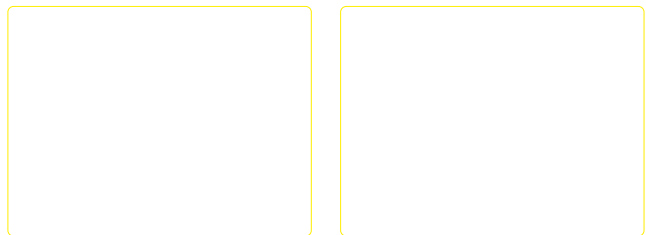
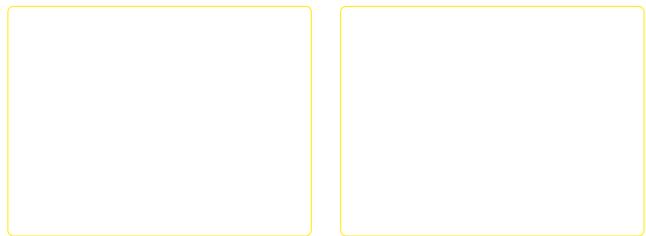
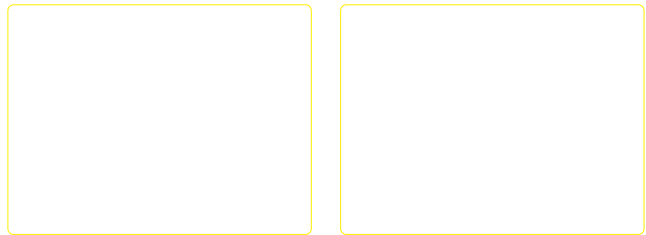
**In your film you suggest a material trasmutation that happens through spiritual and religious healing, however in your work, you deploy an artistic practice which puts a feminist ecology of care as central.**

Yes, thank you for this analysis, it is my wish to put into practice in my life a real dialogue with the heritage of the emancipatory gestures of racialized peoples. The ecology of care is a concept, but in reality it is living beings who struggle daily to survive above all else, so taking care of each other becomes the only possible solution. To think about the ecology of care is to think first of all about our history with the earth and this cannot be done without taking into consideration the destruction put in place by the colonial system. We cannot care for the land if we do not have access to it. Racialised people in Brazil survived by helping each other, but we are still fighting for the demarcation of the lands of the Amerindian peoples, the recognition of the lands of the *quilombolas*, the de-democratisation of the MST (Landless Workers' Movement), etc. We don't

have time to conceptualise these relationships too much yet, because we are always running. From the police, from the armed militias, from the evangelists, from the extreme right-wing supporters of Bolsonaro. In this way, I seek to appeal to the power of transmutation (transformation) by the earth in my performances in order to participate in this historical claim linked to the right to land but also to the political place that this can create in the world. ■

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*Elena Agudio*



# A slight tremor | to the vibrating clemencies from the fibres of Fiap 2022

by Arlette-Louise Ndakoze

*The click of heels*  
*The sound of jewellery*  
*On the body*  
*In motion*

**Diovangy Boulangé**

Answer to the question:  
« What is the sound that gives you joy? »,  
asked during the café philo, 21.05.6259 (21.05.2022)

Voice: Raucous //

Frequency: Irregular //

Intensity: Restless //

Word: Of Non-Normative Clarity //

Subject: Non-Subjugated

In the absence of clacking shoes, devoid of scraping wrists, in the half-light of a shrill sun screaming out silence undone – the resonance of space succumbed to time struck by a delaying intensity. marked by a key, of G major, of force majeure, on a repressed floor,

it was set.

Then,           reposed.  
The water,   opposed.

30







Another way of saying: missing. Opposite, the street, in opposition to us, one facing everything, was the careworn escalator of pre-existing social classes, resonances of the constant forces of order, and the disorder distorting an ethic attracted by the preponderant sun sciences.

Instead of ethics: A label for prowess.

My chair, between the floor of the café and the pavement, between the classroom and the street, the street not devoid of classrooms, my chair, and my bedroll, it was time, this lightning time marking non-linearity and non-alignment, marking transposition and circulation of events and survival, my chair, no longer pretending to follow the course of things, an important exchange about the resistance of oppressed people in Brazil, my chair and my ease, sailing, giving the clacking of shoes missing from the feet of the passer-by, opposite the street, opposite the street, my ease and my balance, it was time, between the walls of the threads of time, between the threads of time binding, now, staggering.

« (...) police (...)! »

I don't remember exactly what words preceded and succeeded the exclamation followed by the semantics of 'police', undoubtedly euphemised by 'force de l'ordre', 'police', that semantic so problematic for the seeds of peace —

Since  
The order  
Was  
Occupied —      Itself, too.

She, too.

She, like the surrounding organs and organisms, like the feeling hearts and reflecting brains, she too had marked time, she too got marked by the events, she too refused the abundant,

she too,  
in order to face “the order”,  
overthrew the 'order', threw out of the norm  
all  
could not pretend not to hear.

which everyone

« [...] all just [...] »



The subject: non-subjugated  
the object: an opacity – the stomach stomach – the heart heavy,  
here,

There are no deaf people, who cannot put the treble clef on the major forces  
of disorder.

Here, so, it has been too long already, so,

in the alteration of a here.

The sun, penetrating, the air, fleeing, the words, in their turn, evaporating.

What condensed in the objection to the condescending, prepared its  
rebound, to respond, to the cosmic forces balancing with Maat, solar  
wind, revolving around Nun, cradle of Atum, which forms a strange simi-  
larity with A-Tom confirmed at distant millennia, Atum//Atom, a world  
of its own, supporting that which resumed its staggering step, seeking  
the rhythm of Shu, blowing on the marked wounds, due to, these forces,  
these orders, in disorder, it took everything not to think of the cosmic  
consciences, recalling the keys of F, from under the G-round,

death never forms the void,

*The wave-corpuscle duality would refer to that of mind and matter:  
the mind did not come from elsewhere to graft itself onto matter  
at a given moment of its evolution at the organic stage,  
It was already there in a potential state from the start.*

Cheikh Anta Diop,

« Les crises majeures de la philosophie contemporaine », note, en bas de page,

Lecture held at the colloquium *Philosophie et Religion*  
organised by the "Revue sénégalaise de Philosophie",  
at the l'Université de Dakar from June 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 1983,  
published in: *Revue sénégalaise de Philosophie*, n° 5-6, janvier-décembre, 1984

[own translation from French]

the void did not rush to form the death, it gathered it, encompassed it in  
its nascent state, never forming, but already, all-ready, déjà [already in French]

Composed of dès and Old French *ja* denoting a moment in  
the present or the past  
(Passion, ed. d'Arco A Valle, 131, 429, 430)



from Latin class. *Jam* “as of now; now, in a moment, just now, a moment ago,ant, déjà”. [Le Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales (CNRTL)],

already, déjà which expressed yesterday which confirms tomorrow before yesterday, before yesterday

**ejo** : yesterday or tomorrow in Kinyarwanda

**lobi** : yesterday or tomorrow in Lingala

**kal** : कल: yesterday or tomorrow in Urdu/Hindi

**kala** : कल: indistinct, inarticulate (of a tear), low/soft (of a sound), emitting a soft, melodious sound (like a voice or a throat)

passing never forms a void,

the West wanted, at last, to believe in it, in its industrialised era, from the outside, finding the nucleus by its envelope – the depth by its limit, but just as much in its expression of a moving being, it was in the 19th century, when a Robert Brown, botanist that he was, observed under the microscope the particles of his non-living plant, to see that, although in their post-active stages, the particles were moving, the movement survived its cessation of action, this movement recognised by Browne, this “Brownian movement”, came to confirm what our Kamite ancestors perceived, with the naked eye,

*Just as contemporary physicists are trying to understand the nature of the universe, the ancient Kemetic people tried diligently to make sense out of their world, their universe, and the universes. To them, as we have now come to understand, the universe was once a tiny ball so dense that it could not be penetrated by any light, and it could never release the light that it contained. Physicists tell us that it was the Big Bang that started the universes. The ancient Kemetic people understood all of this in symbolic form. Thus, when Ra created the universe, it was Ra alone from whom everything flowed. Every living thing, all forms of creatures, and all humans descended from Ra’s creation. Ra was to the ancient Kemites the dense ball out of which all things were created when the Big Bang happened. Whether in the form of the supreme deity Ptah or Atum, Ra was the supreme originator because without Ra nothing that we know could have been possible. We owe even our lives to Ra’s creation. The Africans believed that light itself was the creation of Ra.*

Molefi Kete Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*, African American Images; Illustrated edition (16 Nov. 2020), Chapter 1

passing never forms a void,

it is in constant activation, for those who cannot miss the infra-sound passengers,  
who speak the language of those who do not forget, who pass the word to the family,  
where to get fresh air, from which river to drink, from which tree to eat, what frains and  
re-frains to dwell on, when it would be better to protect oneself from the ground,

passing never forms a void,

the ground cannot escape it,

the earth offers what is bound to it.

Eventually, expressing itself,

«slightly tremble»

defining the act of “dancing”,  
“probably of Germanic origin”,  
dated from the 1200s,

The Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales (CNRTL)

Something that makes me really happy is the bleating of the goats.

## Christelle Patron

Answer to the question:

“What is the sound that gives you joy?”,

asked during the café philo, 21.05.6259 (21.05.2022)

After days of workshops in the open air,  
based on the fibres of the air, after the  
expressions of energy merged through  
shared performances, we sit down for a  
listening session,

Café Philo, on 21.05.6259 (21.05.2022).

Perhaps it would be necessary to undo  
the wind, breathe out the surge of time,  
condensed in the breath, confluent in  
the waters, it is, above all, on the waters,  
not to say the bones, that foils itself the  
hyphen, the abstract of the transcended  
concrete – between here towards before  
and after.

If the performers Helen Ceballos, Nadia  
Myre, and Annabel Guérédrat have  
found their guiding thread in water, it  
is surely for the most concrete reason:  
that water is a powerful guide. Water  
as a conductor of sound, water as a  
creator of reflection, water as a trans-  
mitter, water as a preserver, water of  
life, water of transition, water of rebirth,  
preponderant water.

Bodies leaving, bodies going, bodies  
coming. In Helen Ceballos' work, it is  
the bodies that are guarded by water,  
the bodies of women, women who move  
the emergency, who make the passage  
from their zone of conflict towards a  
hoped – for protective world, women  
who leave their lives on the water. In  
Nadia Myre's work, it is the mirror water  
that gives a glimpse, it is a watching eye  
that the water sends back – to send the



exploiter, this seer who does not think he is seen, straight home, gently and surely. In Annabel Guérédrat's work, it is the body that comes to life, in a ritual practiced in community, to life come evoked bodies.

Everything that is natural, that has not been built by human.

### **Samuel Jean-Toussaint**

Answer to the question:

“What is the sound that gives you joy?”,  
asked during the café philo, 21.05.6259 (21.05.2022)

We talk about the performances of artists Helen Ceballos, Nadia Myre, and Annabel Guérédrat. We begin with the most recent event, a ritual offered the day before by Annabel Guérédrat and Anne-Catherine Berry. To evoke the performance, I question the witnesses, the audience present, expressing the work through those who received it, expressing the body of the voice through its indirect language. Evoking the performance: Javier Contreras Villaseñor, an artist from Mexico, present the day before, is willing to respond to the invitation.

### **Javier Contreras Villaseñor**

*Yesterday, there were like three moments: one, at the beginning, when Annabel was guiding us – she was very clear. She was inviting us and signaling the action. I felt Annabel's strength and her direction was strongly definite. Then I was surprised by her voice when she started to sing. I was not expecting it. It was very strong and beautiful. It happened at*

*the moment when Annabel and Anne-Catherine bathed a woman dressed in blue. From the beginning I could tell that this woman already knew the ritual, that she knew what was coming. When she was bathed, she accepted it, and I think she took a journey deep inside herself. I was very touched by this.*

### **Joëlle Ferly**

What I liked was to see that some people had perhaps received an element of the process – a gesture, a monstration – but they had not been given the whole scenario of the process. And that they were therefore, at the same time, themselves as unannounced performers, but, as Javier said very well, playing the game of performance. So, I found that very interesting. Afterwards, as an artist, my feeling is about the work itself. Obviously, when you are a performing artist and you see artists performing with colleagues, in the rhythm of the music, when someone throws and others take, especially in the work of the collective: you want to participate. And that's when my question arose: can I, as an artist, when I'm not invited – I wasn't invited by a gesture – allow myself to go? Then, it's also the place that inspires me. And I must admit that I was extremely excited and attracted by everything that was proposed there, but in a way I was disturbed by the place: because for me, I would have liked to see this work during the workshops on the beach, in this place where this performance should have been done.

## Nadia Myre

I find it very interesting, what you just said. Thank you for these words. Because it's what I understood: on the one hand, it's this sort of out-of-context situation. The context was the beach. And here, we're out of context, we're not even in a dark room, we're not in a clean room, in another space, and we're testing the limits of what can happen with this. I'd love to hear what it did to you as a performer. The other moment for me is this question – we're in a structure: the set-up is there, Annabel is very clear about what she's asking of each person, but she doesn't know what the other person will do in the end. We keep our shoes on, we do anything, we embellish according to what we think is necessary to improve ourselves, and then we're no longer listening, we're in a performance like: ah, I can be free here. What's interesting is how the main performer will respond. Because she engages, she participates by accepting things as part of the performance. But at the same time, because she does it, all of a sudden, everything happens as if permission was given. So that's the whole question of permission, listening, looking – without knowing what the person is going to do. So, what are the strategies, I would like to know, that you put in place, to move forward, to have control? Is it important to have control, and if not, why not?

## Annabel Guérédrat

Anne-Catherine and I, we had started several months ago a process of performances during the performance art laboratory at the Savane de Pétrifications.

It was more of a creative process around the sorority and the Bain démarré (protective bath) between Anne-Catherine and me, but also between Anne-Catherine, Noah, her son, Keo, my son, and me.

When the question arose: we're leaving the care space that is the Savane des Pétrifications to go into a space that is a bit off the ground, a bit of a No Man's Land, which is the terrace of the Hôtel l'Impératrice, we also immediately had the advice of Olivier Marbœuf and Arlette, to discuss – because that was the idea of the labo-perfs, it was to have outside views that would stimulate us a bit, especially when our noses are in the air.

At one point, quite quickly, because we had started doing it at the Savane des Pétrification, we said to ourselves: we need to get people to participate. The only person involved was Helen Cebalos. The others didn't know what was going to happen. Indeed, as you say Nadia, at a given moment – we had written the score, we had written the score with Anne-Catherine, we were very methodical, but – very quickly, from the beginning, there was something that escaped us in a very organic way: we felt that, finally, the candles had to be given to others, we had to choose the people, the people had the choice of placing the candles. So very quickly, we considered that inclusiveness was part of the process, and that we were not going to control this inclusiveness. Quite quickly, we saw that bodies were beginning to perform, that there were beginning to be proposals that did not correspond to our basic proposal, which was only to fill these small red basins with





a bath, which would then be carried out in the large blue basins. Initially, it was just Helen, Anne-Catherine and I who were to be immersed in the bath. When I saw that the bodies were getting into the bath, the heads were starting to come down, I said, "actually everyone is going to do the bath". Whether they're prepared or not, whether they've got the clothes on or not, we're all going to be in there somewhere, because at that point we all need it.

### **Helen Ceballos**

At first, when Annabel and Anne-Catherine approached me to invite me to participate in the bath, I understood that we were talking about a ceremony, a ceremony that is very familiar to me – for me an invitation to *curandería*. I start from there, I use medicinal plants, I heal myself with herbs, if I get sick, I make myself a tea, when I am emotionally charged, I take a bath with incense, this is already part of the performance ritual that I practice, in my public performances or without audience. So, this kind of ritual is very natural for me. At the moment of sharing, I experience it as a collective performance. It doesn't feel the same to me, in my case, as doing a performance where the subject matter can feel very distant. I went in with a lot of confidence to support an action, and I stayed with that action because I was anchored in it, it was a ground of truth in which I could move in the naturalness of the world because that's what I already practice. When I felt that it was necessary, when I saw that there were other people who stopped standing behind the symbol of the bath, I came to

understand that we were engaging in a truth situation. We were not performing, there was no fiction, we were taking the performance from its root, we were going towards a deeper meaning that has to do with ritual, taking the performer towards a more philosophical conception than that of the modern era, where modernity wants to put the artist on this tower that is impenetrable by a human being who is misunderstood from that place. But in my perception, performance has to do with ritual. And what happened yesterday was an instance of performance that was a great truth because other people who did not understand the code, who were not accomplices, heard all the same. And everyone took their role, and fulfilled it, developed it in a field of freedom. At least, that's what I felt. According to what each one understood, the bodies started to move in a distinct way, they started a dance. Therefore, I did not see that something came out of the libretto, on the contrary, I saw a cause of truth – and in this ground of truth, there is nothing wrong, nothing can be wrong.

### **Arlette-Louise Ndakoze**

In relation to what you mentioned, Helen, as I understand it, the action is what I would call a creation – that's what I've seen in your work beyond what is shown: it's what is generated, like a birth.

### **Joëlle Ferly**

Helen also said an important word: the root – as ritual is part of our cultures, it is as if something is awakening in us. That's what's important. As she says, she





does it in an intimate way, but there is also this need for us, at some point, to be awakened by your intention, because it belongs to us.

*In the Western world, 'God is not man, and man is not God', as Elungu (1987: 97) puts it. There is a separation, a brokenness, which does not allow man to access God, unless God chooses to reveal himself to him, through grace (Elungu, 1987). But in the African spiritual universe, which is fundamentally one and dynamic, the situation is quite different: man participating in the divine experiences it constantly, and has the possibility, by means of appropriate rituals, to enter direct communication with the spirits. The conflict between the two conceptions could not be more marked, but the African conception continues to have a clear advantage. Does this mean that no African has broken with African spirituality? Of course not. It simply means that, in general, African metaphysical principles continue to constitute a fundamental frame of reference for Africans, whether they are aware of it or not. And why should it be otherwise? After all, African culture is a thousand-year-old culture, certainly much older than Western culture. The so-called 'syncretism' of religions such as Vodou and Santeria in the African diaspora results from the need for Africans, harassed by Catholic priests and colonists, to hide African gods behind the image of Catholic saints. But the latter participate in liturgical operations that are fundamentally African.*

Mazama, Ama: *L'impératif Afrocentrique*, Menaibuc, 2003, p.217

## **Arlette-Louise Ndakoze**

In your creations, time-space, the place of creation, water – in your cases there are different reflections, but these things connect: the invisible elements. Music, or singing or the lack of it. How did these things come into your creations?

## **Nadia Myre**

Thank you for the question. I am very conscious of sound in my work, and although there often seems to be an absence of sound, what I hope to evoke is a rhythm. So that there is a rhythm in the silence. And this is done through gesture: the way an image is edited, for example. So, it's a rhythm in real time. Earlier, we were talking about silence and what goes on underneath the silence, and I think that's what I want to get into. Despite what appears to be silence, or despite what appears to be a white body to indigenous civilizations, something underneath persists. Even in my sculptural works – like a hand-made net like you see in Mexico, to catch fish, this net goes up and down, like breathing, evoking indigenous identity: through work, breathing, life. And, in fact, the breathing: but it is the drum. It's the first breath of the drum. For me it's important. So, even if we are in silence, we are not in silence.



© Jean-Baptiste Barret

*The sound of the drum brings me sadness, pain, all emotions. I do bèlè (traditional dance from Martinique). In bèlè, there are all sorts of things related to the body, drums, instruments. That's what makes me happy.*

**Karen**

Answer to the question: "What is the sound that gives you joy?",  
asked during the café philo, 21.05.6259 (21.05.2022)

**Arlette-Louise Ndakoze**

We can also add that in Nadia Myre's work, Home and Native Land, we can see white letter shapes, we see letter

shapes, but the surface is white. Then you see a hand putting earth on top of it. For me it's like saying that nothing is empty, that there is an inscription as soon as we are in our mother's body. There is an inscription in us, at the moment we leave this body, this matrix. And this inscription is perhaps added by what human beings will carry in them, and, little by little, this earth will be created – and from then on, we will be able to see more and more, through our ways of communicating, of relating, we will be able to carry an understanding in these inscribed entities, like the word, like letters. That's how I saw your video.

*I can feel the care of the artist even in a realistic painting, the energy that comes through the care is what I retain.*

### **Léo**

Answer to the question:

“Is a realistic painting artistic?”,

asked during the workshops, Place de la Savane des Pétrifications 18.05.6259 (18.05.2022)

### **Helen Ceballos**

As far as I'm concerned, before the elements that feed the skeleton of the performance – the sound, the presence of sound, the presence of time – I would like to think about the moment that precedes them. To think about where it will land, what it will rub up against, the performance is something that in my mind comes after. I think that in the first place, what is central, has to do with what I want to tell. These bodies from which I am interested in expressing myself, they must express: where is my maternal heritage? How am I going to present this performance as a ritual? The other elements will follow. Without a doubt, they are of great importance, both the sound and the silence that take shape: their place, their space, their materiality. But, for me, I don't want to say the most important thing, but what comes before are the questions: where is the artistic discourse, where is the carnal from which body I speak, where is the content of my work? Why do I do it? This initial moment is what detonates, it is what inflames me, what really eroticizes me. My work is about migrant bodies. I don't use any language, any language

of video or photography, I knew I wanted to talk about the sea, and how these bodies move and move in the sea. And, in many cases: how they die in it. Inevitably, the video will hold a stirring of pain, of these invisible beings that I don't see, that I will eventually not see because they never arrived. So, if we must speak from that place, we have to say that the sea sounds. And that it is the sea that tells me how these bodies sounded when they died in it. Thus, it is the same theme that will codify the form that the performance will take: the space of the sea. The same sea that for us is a paradise, from which we go sunbathing, from which we go on holiday, for many communities it is death, it is a border, it is a cemetery. What I mean is: the way I think and build, the form of my work, is really like a backward march. It's as if the same theme is following me in its own direction.

### **Arlette-Louise Ndakoze**

There's a video performance in which a dialogue stuck in my mind: people are sitting at a table, having a meal, but in fact you don't see a meal, but you see people coming together around a table. There is a split screen, and there is apparently a time before, and a time during: a time when a group of people are talking about the dialogue of people at the table, and a time when we see these people at the table. Then there is a time when people leave the table, and someone says: “*ah, did you like it? It's been a while since we shared a meal*”. Having grown up sitting around the table and sharing the day's experiences, at school or in general: no matter



what, our mother insisted on meeting for a meal at the table in the evening. Whether we were in conflict or not, the table was a common ground, where we practiced above all living together and the art of conversation. I ask myself: what does the meeting at the table mean in your creation?

### **Nadia Myre**

The question is: what happens around the table? Often, at least in my culture, as in many cultures, the kitchen table is the place of first encounter: you are invited to someone's house, they sit you down in the kitchen, they give you food, and right away we have a relationship. They give you tea. We have a relationship. We have a moment together. In the video, we eat and we have a conversation about what it means to be Aboriginal as Métis Aboriginals. The split screen is intended to separate the space-time, to give the taste of the performance, to evoke the two moments, the first moment when I was in conversation with the people, and the second

moment when I was putting the words of natives into the bodies of non-natives.

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These words of natives in the bodies of non-natives, these words that Nadia transposes, are this transfiguration, the perspective from within. Words as looks. Glances that seem to be frozen by the fixed camera of another video-performance by Nadia Myre, where a ship slowly moves forward from afar, around a bluish mist, confluent with the sea, moving forward with a quiet and constant oar – only to stop dead in the foreground of the camera, in the close-up. The zoom that practically brings us into its lens, its lens where the border is demarcated, its lens from which the one who came to watch with a condescending and exploitative gaze is caught with his hand in the bag, the bag that he will not seize from then on: in front of a gaze that presentifies the body. This gaze, silent on the outside and clamorous on the inside, bubbling up from the depths of pulsating salt-water, of the earth tremor.



Voice: Raucous //

Frequency: Irregular //

Intensity: Restless //

Words: Of Non-Normative Clarity //

Subject: Non Subjugated ■

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*Arlette-Louise Ndakoze*



# Dancing life or the aesthetic gesture of Lazaro Benitez

by Louis Bernard Henry





In May 2022, the International Festival of Performance Art (FIAP) brought together dancers, curators, art critics, and academics in Martinique. The challenge was to build a real time of sharing, discovery and creation. For a whole week, artistic performance had to be combined with issues relating to body politics, memory and political struggles.

**What is the place of convocation of artistic creation in the Caribbean?**

The question, although not explicitly formulated, springs up in the background of all the meetings and could therefore be reformulated as follows: what is at stake in an inter-artistic dialogue with regard to what Olivier Poivre D'Arvor, Sophie Renaud and Paul Sinety call the elusive "Caribbean consciousness"? We apologise for our bias in thinking of the FIAP in the seraglio of a triptych: memory, history and Urgency. To say that the Caribbean is a place of common history is obviously to dare to play the game of negation or to succumb to the trap of an unfounded culturalism, given the diversity of the islands' statuses and political conditions: independent states, territories, departments, possessions, associated states. Different exits from slavery and colonisation: anti-colonial, anti-slavery revolution versus gradual shift towards negotiated status, different forms of colonial control: settlement/exploitation. Different cultural backgrounds of settlers/slaves. Different evolution of societies resulting from the colonial system. Different degrees of dependence on the West (Lyonel Trouillot: The Caribbean, a geography in need of a history). However, any appeal to the collective memory of a place

presupposes that all the components of this place have assumed a common political, cultural and social history. Haitians, Martinican, Cubans, Guadeloupeans, etc. may dare to dialogue about a common past but not about a common history.

The slave trade and slavery. This common past has become the only place for dialogue between the peoples of the Caribbean. Genocide of the natives/Treaty/Slavery/Independence/Dependence and the time of the impossible dialogue. Through various performances and workshops, the ambition of the Caribbean artists was to appropriate a historical discourse, an artistic gesture that would give an account of the process suffered by their people which was strong and obvious. It is on the basis of this evidence that we will attempt to speak of the Emergency, which here allows us to ask another equally necessary question. How can the social and political realities of the Caribbean islands be brought into dialogue? Haitians do not respond to the calls for help from the people of Martinique and Guadeloupe who are victims of the consequences of Chlordecone, and they are strangers to the calls from Haitians against the dictates of a world-system that is determined to subject a people to terrible misery and violence.

Lazaro Benitez takes up this challenge by bringing the social realities of Cuba into dialogue with the rest of the Caribbean space. His performance “Threshold of Memory” questions the social movements of 11 July 2021 and the incarceration of 1132 political prisoners in Cuba. This aesthetic gesture puts us at the heart of the issues raised above and allows us to return to a fundamental question: what are the stakes of an inter-artistic dialogue between Caribbean people?

### **The Caribbean in Rebellion**

Since the 1970s in Latin America, “artistic activism” (Lippard; Red Conceptualismos del Sur; López Cuenca) has accompanied social movements – human rights, indigenous and rural movements, decolonial movements, feminist movements, LGBTQI+ movements, student movements, alterglobalization movements, environmental movements, etc. – in a context historically characterized by strong articulations and often assumed permeability between political and legal struggles and symbolic struggles. – In a context historically characterised by strong articulations and an often assumed permeability between political and legal struggles and symbolic struggles. The region historically marked by two great revolutions (the Haitian and Cuban revolutions) is a territory fiercely in rebellion. The first revolution put an end to the colonial and slavery order, the second is in perpetual resistance to an imperialist and capitalist order. To name this constant rebellion is to make an act of convocation. To summon the avant-garde of this political history:

music, dance, song, literature, performance... From Haiti to Cuba there is a flagrant indissociability of Art and politics. The artist is always seen as having to naturally take up a cause, to be at one with the historical movement that is these revolutions. Jacques Roumain, one of the strongest symbols of indigenoussness in Haiti, wrote: “*I cannot do otherwise than be a communist, an anti-fascist. Among a thousand other reasons, because I am a Negro, because fascism condemns my race to all indignities*”. Race here echoes a historical and political condition. The place of convocation of Jacques Roumain's work. A place of rebellion, of memory, and of a political will to build a unity of identity between the peoples of the Caribbean, a unity in the face of a cannibalistic world order. The Caribbean twentieth century is marked by these great artistic gestures, these rebellious gestures. Aime Césaire in “*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*” reinforces this condition of Caribbean art: “*I am standing my people and myself...*”. Let us not think of this condition as essentialism, as being fixed in a historical order. This condition is imposed by the urgency of the often cruel political and social realities facing these peoples. It is therefore the urgency to take sides against oppression, against horror, against the cruelty of a world that excludes according to gender, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, origin and so on. Caribbean Art is therefore in rebellion because it is in constant confrontation with the world and often with itself when authoritarian regimes impose themselves through violence and barbarism, when the weight of traditions imprisons and confines.





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### **Threshold of memory, the aesthetic gesture of Lazaro Benitez**

In the 1980s, artistic development in the Caribbean archipelago was strongly linked to the desire to analyse and critically contextualise artistic practice in the region, and consequently to create new theoretical frames of reference and banish centre-periphery boundaries. This new epistemological urgency empowers contemporary art thinking in the Caribbean. Performance art, already considered as a motor of many social movements in the Latin American space, echoes the very accurate idea that

performance is an event. To perform is to empower the real. Performance is an event (in the sense that it is an action or a set of actions) and not any kind of abstract structure. Thus this event is that of the multiplication or demultiplication of a particular real.

Threshold of Memory can be read in perspective with that of Eva Boddez, not that the creative processes are the same but that the place of convocation is. That of political reality and what it does to bodies in revolt. We present successively the respective realities of the two countries: (Cuba; Lazaro – Colombia; Eva).



## **Cuba**

*"In the last 12 months, 1,167 verified political prisoners have been registered on the list of defenders of prisoners in Cuba. March 2021 started with 135. Since then and until the end of February 2022, in addition to these 135 prisoners, 1,032 new political prisoners have been added in these 12 months, bringing the number of political prisoners in Cuba verified by Prisoners Defenders to 1,007 at this time. This is only a fraction, between 60 and 70 per cent of the actual numbers, the full verification of which is simply inaccessible to any organisation except, of course, the regime on the island."*

## **Colombie**

*"Human rights violations in Colombia remain a constant, as evidenced by extrajudicial executions at the hands of paramilitary forces and the army. There are countless reports of disappearances, including of political, social and environmental rights defenders (such as the missing Viviana Cuellar Gallego), kidnappings and killings of civilians. There are still thousands of political prisoners in the country, and the practice of torture is a reality. Deputies, politicians and former high-level state officials have been convicted by the courts for their links with the paramilitaries. The theft of land and the forced eviction of peasants for the benefit of large landholdings and multinational consortia is still going on."*

The two realities come together in the sense that they remind us that politics acts first of all on the body, the prison is at the same time the place of confinement of a cause, of a voice but also of

a body. Eva and Lazaro insist on this: what does politics do to bodies in revolt? Both then summon up the urgency of memory, memory that puts people in dialogue and dialogue that demands relationship. A demand for relationship, a demand for a common possibility of revolt. Lazaro's aesthetic gesture is both the place of enunciation (the victims are named, their bodies are described...) and of memory. This connection allows us to grasp the time of creation and the highlighting of political issues.

Lazaro's performance, unlike Eva's which incites indignation, seeks tears and anger, summons the spectator to solidarity. The play is a double solidarity/refusal of confinement. It also invites us to accuse history, to leave behind the great revolutionary myths in order to ask the question of how bodies resist social oppression and what kind of Cuba should the world account for today? This question does not play into the hands of any ideological chapel; it justifies the role and function of the Artist (Lazaro Benitez). He is a witness.

The performance as an event was provoked by the artist's body. This body represents both the confinement, the conditions of confinement, and the consequences of confinement. The other medium used is the medium of enunciation. A recording that brings out the cries of the imprisoned women and the social reality in Cuba. The call for solidarity was made by a red thread. A thread that the artist holds out to the public, free to undo the confinement or to keep it there. To free or not the artist and through him to show solidarity with the 1132 political prisoners in Cuba. This was the symbolism of the thread.



Few materials were used because the most important element was the participation of the audience. It was the gesture of solidarity that determined this participation. The artist holds out the red thread to the public, red to mark the pain, the blood, the horrors of confinement. The body and the thread. Symbolism of confinement. The artist's body, the 1132 bodies locked up. The thread of oppression, the weight of the violence that these bodies suffer. And the thread stretched out to the public, defines the possibility of solidarity with these 1132 bodies.

The audience will immobilise the Artist with the wire, refusing to be in solidarity with these bodies?

This gesture can be read as a test of the limits of the relationship between the Artist and the audience. Between the event and the questioning of the event. In 1974 Mariana Abramovic's "Rythme 0" also experimented with the limits of this relationship. If Lazaro's performance attempted to highlight the limits of a dialogue between the social realities of the Caribbean peoples, Eva Boddez's performance sought to construct a new politics of memory in Colombia. Here, then, lies the challenge of this aesthetic gesture: how to build a common memory between the peoples of the Caribbean? Here we do not mean a common memory around cultural identity, which is obvious anyway. It is about the unity of struggles and revolts.

How can we make the Caribbean a common place for political action? This is the relevance and the challenge of the master event that was offered by Lazaro Benitez. ■

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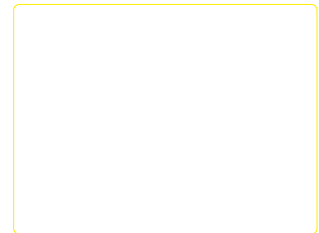
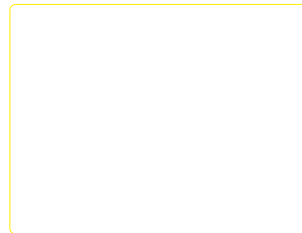
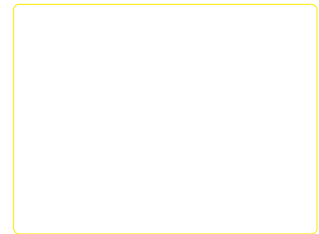
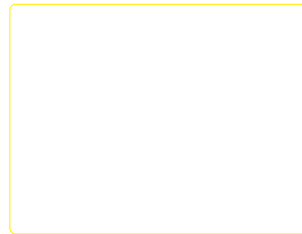
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Louis Bernard Henry





**PART II**

Resilience – Ecofeminism  
– Queer – Anty-patriarchy



# Helen Ceballos



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Transdisciplinary performance artist who uses himself as subject and object of study to expand signs. Born in the Caribbean in the 1980s, between three islands: Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. She is a worker of art

and cultural management, her role as manager is crossed by a vocation of community social service, which like any attachment can embrace, empower and stifle it at the same time. ■











# Javier Contreras Villaseñor



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He has a degree in Hispanic Languages and Literatures and is a graduate of the Centre for Cinematographic Studies in Mexico (UNAM). He has participated in the UIA's Judaic Studies Programme. Student of the Choreographic Research Centre (CICO-INBAL). Student at the School of Cinema and Television of San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba. Doctoral student at the University-ISA of Arts of Cuba. He was director of the Centre for Choreographic Research (CICO) from 2012 to 2022, where he is currently a lecturer. He is also a professor of the Master in Dance Research of the Cenidid José Limón, and of the Doctorate in Visual

and Performing Arts and Interdiscipline of the INBAL. He was founder and co-director of the interdisciplinary group Proyecto Bará. He has published seven collections of poems and the book *"Targum en una botella (cartas desde la danza)"*, by Conaculta-Inba in 2013. As a choreographer/performer lecturer and teacher he has participated in meetings, congresses and workshops in Mexico and abroad. He is a member of the international dance research team Descentradxs. He has received grants from INBA-FONAPAS, the Ministry of Culture of Mexico City, PADID and FONCA. ■

# Alicja Korek



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Alicja Korek is a Polish visual and performance artist. She leaves Poland at the age of 24 (in 2007) and travels around the world in search of new narratives and creative energies: she lives in France, England, the Canary Islands, Argentina, Martinique and Algeria. In 2012, she coordinates the first publication in France on Jerzy Skolimowski, Polish filmmaker (Editions Yellow Now). In 2016, she meets in Martinique a couple of Caribbean artists, Henri Tauliaut and Annabel Guérédrat, and joins the Laboratoire des Pratiques Performatives, a collective of Caribbean visual and performing artists. Since

then, she has created more than twenty performances, both solo and with other international artists. In 2018, Alicja Korek initiates the first performative climate march in Dakar, with Senegalese artist Malik Diouf. In 2019, she performs at the second edition of FIAP Martinique, of which she is also the coordinator. In January 2021, one of her feminist video performances is presented at the Institut Français du Togo (Emomé' Art performance festival). In September 2021, she is part of the Festival of Naked Forms in Prague, Czech Republic, as well as the 2nd edition of the International Meetings on Art in Trzebiatow, Poland.





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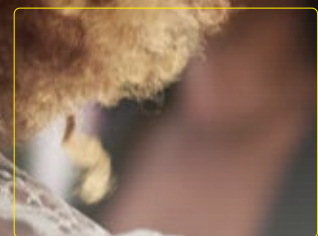
Currently, she is preparing a visual project and a performative workshop for 2022 in partnership with the National Museum in Szczecin, Poland. She is also a student of the MA in Gender and Sexuality in Global Politics at SOAS University in London.

In her creative work, Alicja Korek questions feminism, ecofeminism and sexuality through body art, pagan rituals and mythology. Through her performances, she becomes in turn a fish-woman, a druidess, a Baba-Yaga, a Slavic shaman or a chimera, always in connection with her feminist philosophy on the one hand and her fascination

for the strange and the extraordinary on the other. The female body occupies a central position in her performative universe. This body enters into conversation with various issues such as sexual violence, confinement in space and time, nudity, social reproduction, motherhood, intersectionality, capitalistic usurpation. She claims that performance art, thanks to its subversive dimension where the artist appears simultaneously as subject and object, can and must contribute to the establishment of a new bodily politics. ■



# Diovany Boulangé



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He is a 23-year-old student from Martinique, studying art at the CCA art school, Campus Caribéen des Arts in Martinique. Passionate about fashion, make-up, drag performance and the world of art, he identifies himself as a “non-binary” person. In addition to the

aesthetic, politically committed aspects of his art, he seeks to defend the voice and dignity of the LGBT community. He likes to transform himself during his performances, and insists on demonstrating to his audience the process of transformation. ▣





# Afro-Caribbean feminism and healing at the heart of FIAP #22 Martinique

by Fabienne Arvers

The only one of its kind, FIAP#22 (International Festival of Performance Art in Martinique) performs the cultural space of the Caribbean, which has entered into resistance at a time of decolonisation of the arts, ecofeminism and the use of Afro-descendant traditions to recreate links and influence artistic practices.

In the street of Fort-de-France, a woman can be heard shouting and repeating as she walks: *"You are all sick. The police are mad. Can't you see that?"*. In a fraction of a second, her intervention interrupts the course of a discussion between performers, researchers and art critics at the first *café philo* held at FIAP 22. We find out that police officers cut her hair and beat her. *"There is violence in Martinique. It is there. That's what this woman's body says,"* states Annabel Guérédrat, co-founder of the festival together with Henri Tauliaut. A burst of reality that brutally echoes the words of Brazilian artist Fabiana Ex Souza at the same time: *"When you are an Afro-descendant artist, urgency is part of your practice. As racialized people, we don't live in the same time. We are still running like the first slave who ran away. Running is a political decision"*. For Fabiana, choosing to change her surname, from De Souza to Ex Souza, is a way of breaking with

its meaning. At the time of slavery, her family belonged to the Souza family, like a chattel: *"Our names and our histories were taken from us. Reparation must come from within. The colonial wound forces us to take a stand. This is done by speaking out. When I think of black and Amerindian Brazil, I know that survival was possible thanks to the collaboration and solidarity between these populations"*. Reparation as a feminist practice is at the heart of her performative work. It is also one of the paradigms that unites the performative practices of all the performers from all over the Caribbean and the Americas who are descendants of Amerindian peoples and black slaves for this third edition of FIAP. Performance as a tool for resilience and as a space for struggle.

This meeting was the first open to the public after three days of performative laboratory that took place about an hour driving from Fort-de-France, at the Savane des Pétrifications, between



mangrove and sea. Once again, this festival stands out for the method used which was organising the meeting in a protected space and time between art school students, artists and researchers, anthropologists and critics, and curators. Let the meeting infuse to elaborate together performances that will be presented to the audience at the end of the festival. Like a utopian phalanstery that takes root, germinates and develops, in the image of the theme chosen this year: Martinique, an ecosystem in precarious balance.

The greeting circle at the beginning of the festival was an opportunity to meet two historical figures of Martinique's performance art, René Louise, painter, poet, performer and author of the "*Manifeste du Marronisme moderne*" and Habdaphaï, first a dancer before becoming a painter and performer, alongside young artists. From the dancer Jean-Hugues Miredin who performed with Pina Bausch or Lloyd Newson, among others, before returning to Martinique, to Nadia Myre, an aboriginal performer from Canada, or Helen Ceballos from Puerto Rico, we are captivated by the non-violent dimension that distinguishes their artistic approaches and poses as a weapon of resistance against the "*violence of this colonial Martinique habitat*", as Annabel Guérédrat and Henri Tauliaut define it.

These performance laboratory days are also an opportunity for artists, researchers, students and curators to meet for improvised collaborations that mix generations, like Habdaphaï's proposal presented with a female student: "*In Martinique, we have a lot of undivided*

*houses that remain empty, while a maximum number of people live in social housing (HLM). People don't dare to occupy them. But when you try to get in, you feel an incredible energy. It's as if the houses want to tell a story. I have made two objects that look like houses and can be thought of as masks. I am going to take the place of the storyteller who is trying to tell a story. Except that there are so many stories to tell at the same time that the audience will not understand anything. A bit like the Creole language forged by people from different parts of Africa – Mandingo, Malinke, Wolof, etc. – who did not understand each other at first but who, over time, forged a common language, the Creole language".*

This porosity between reality and artistic expression that underlies the performative act echoes the landscape of the mangrove where the festival is rooted. For Annabel Guérédrat, "*taking you to the Savane des Pétrifications for the first three days is first and foremost a way of connecting together, of protecting the group from the outside world. It's creating bubbles of amniotic protection, like in the practice of body mind centering. Then, this community moves like a cell and arrives in For-de-France for a connection with the public. This cell, already more or less in ramification mode, like the mangrove, comes to integrate the urban landscape where everything happens. The violence takes place here, whereas in the savannah, we are protected because we are in the first geological strata of Martinique and we can connect with each other like landscape feelings, as Rachid Ouramdane says".*





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Landscape feelings that can be seen during the video showcasing evenings where we discover the performances of the invited artists, whether they are present or not, like Schneiderson René, who was unable to obtain his visa to come from Haiti, and whose video, “*Renaître*”, was one of the highlights of these evenings. With his body entirely covered by a gangue of elastic fabric, his wandering through the natural and urban landscapes of Haiti with an incredible fluidity responds to the video of Nadia Myre's first performance, in the erasure of her features obscured by the fabric, until the final image, made twenty years ago, sailing on a canoe she

built herself and captured in an image with blurred contours that masks and erases all recognizable traces to leave a pure spectral presence, bearing the disappearance of her Indian ancestors as well as her desire to reconnect with her origins. Here, beauty takes on the weight of pain, sublimating it in order to better transmit it and share it.

*“This year's main theme which is Martinique, an ecosystem with a precarious balance, responds to several issues: ecofeminism, healing in the face of toxicity, the unbolting of statues, the strikes that took place here last November, the resistance of a large part of the population to compulsory*

vaccination (60%), the percentage of votes for Marine Le Pen in the second round of the elections”, Annabel Guérédrat says. “We live in a space where communities do not meet and clash economically”, adds Henri Tauliot. “The slightest event creates an explosion, an insurrection. Generally speaking, we always expect the solution to come from elsewhere, from the state, from politicians. But we have understood one thing: nobody else will help us. We have to initiate and bring communities together, let the word spread”.

To sum up, the theme of its third edition, Martinique, an eco-system in precarious equilibrium, will have surfed for a week on planetary, cosmic and insular rhythms, putting the notion of centrality back in its (inoperative) place to favour the constellation of expressions and reflections. Performance was not only a question of the evenings of performative proposals bringing together artists, curators, researchers, art school students and the audience in the same space, but also of the workshops.

Notably the one directed by curators and critics Olivier Marboeuf and Chris Cyrille – From activist practices to art, in relation to the commemoration of the abolition of slavery – where a young female student, present at the debunking of the statues of Schœlcher, Joséphine de Beauharnais and Pierre Belain d’Esnambuc on 26 and 27 July 2020, turned her testimony into a performative act claiming the awakening of consciences: “The head of the statue of Josephine had already been cut off in 1991 by nationalists, which may seem violent. But we cannot forget that it was she who asked Napoleon to re-establish

slavery in Martinique. It took one day to remove the statue of d’Esnambuc, a *genocidaire*. Its repercussion was at a worldwide level and other statues fell in Canada, the United States, Brazil, Guadeloupe. Three weeks ago, four activists were arrested for destruction of public property. But for a long time we had been asking the town hall of Fort-de-France to remove these statues, which glorify slavery and are a demonstration of the colonial power that still exists. We were not heard. If there was to be a statue in Martinique, it should be that of Frantz Fanon. The act of unbolting the statue has raised awareness. If the artistic value of the statue of Joséphine is undeniable, the political symbol is even stronger. This is not a racial fight, but a fight for justice. We have the right to reclaim reparation”.

It is a fact that oppression cannot be made to look beautiful. If there was any beauty, it was in each performance, showing the vivacity, power and strength of the Caribbean cultural space. All were singular, combining humour with cruelty, the celebration of life with the need for reparation (Nadia Myre), the denunciation of violence and femicide (Helen Ceballos or Laurent Trouard), the affirmation of a non-binary gender (the formidable art school students from Fort-de-France, Diovany Boulangé and Samuel Toussaint) or the bitter-sweet evocation of a housewife of about fifty (Jean-Hugues Miredin), his mouth crossed with a black scotch tape, a duster with LGBT+ colours in hand, who launches into a jig with small steps, before letting go of the momentum that carries him.



Another great moment of the performance evenings: the hilarious and totally “Pina Bauschian” play on patriarchy, with an intentionally irresistibly idiot and funny starting point – “*What I want to say is what they (women) want to say because I know how to say it better*” – by a quartet including Javier Contreras Villasenor, poet, anti-patriarchy activist and Mexican dancer, Nathalie Hainaut, curator and critic, Paola Laura, anthropologist and Alicja Korek, performer and co-curator of FIAP. Perched on a pile of books, like Toto in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Uccellacci e uccellini*, Javier Contreras

Villasenor interrupts the dialogue in Polish and Sardinian of the two female performers who are talking about their struggles as women, to jump off his pedestal and throw himself into a jig carrying the torch of the ridiculous and to make his observation as a man who loves women for what they are: “*Catching the word of the other is like dancing ridiculously. It is better to listen and learn.*”

The ritualistic dimension also inscribes the performative act in a specific, even sacred, space that bends reality into the curve of a particular intention. With Le





*Bain démarré*, Annabel Guérédrat and Anne-Catherine Berry set up a ritual of protection by inviting the audience to enter the performance space, allowing the unexpected to gain ground. A pure moment of grace that updates the challenge of the ancestral ritual: “*Untie the knots, feel new again to start again*”.

Ceremonial also for the Promenade crépusculaire – Blues, Afro-Caribbean Performance by René Louise, which invites the audience to a pilgrimage between forest and mangrove. Dance, music, poetry, plastic and symbolic installation, his performance carries the

seeds of past, present and future struggles of the Caribbean: “*I was born in an island of light plunged into darkness by lies, unspoken words, massacres... from the tree of oblivion, the rituals of depersonalisation and dehumanisation of the twilight journey*”.

It is a fact: if slavery was abolished in the West Indies, this did not produce more justice. On the contrary. It was the slave owners who were compensated by the French state for the financial loss of these men and women who were considered as “movable furniture”. For Olivier Marboeuf, “*the question of*





reparation is there: why people who were enslaved have not been compensated? And why did we compensate the slavers who benefited? We forget that sugar was a huge market at the time and the West Indies were one of the richest regions in the world. If we think that we are only going back to history for emotional and identity-related reasons, as our conservative opponents say, that is not true. We are going back on economic issues. Because we have to talk about economic exploitation. The economic and political elite is at the service of the non-functioning of the territory. Édouard Glissant spoke about this very clearly in his *Discours Antillais*: 'The elite serves to maintain our inability to produce things. We are here to consume. Martinique is one of the poorest departments in France and prices are extremely high. The high cost of living is a regular cause for revolt in the West Indies. We forget that the Yellow Vests started here and that the LKP in Guadeloupe in 2009 already gathered huge demonstrations against the high cost of living. These are colonial territories because they do not function normally. A French department or region has an economic margin of decision. Here, nothing is decided. It is therefore a colony'.

FIAP's strength lies in its desire to make the silent voices heard, such as the voices of the Afro-Caribbean feminists that Elsa Dorlin empower in "Feu! Abécédaire des féminismes présents", bringing together 68 texts. Invited to present her book at the festival, she makes the point: "This book also responds to the idea of restoring an imperial history of the French state in

terms of issues related to gender, race or class antagonisms to completely displace the idea that black, Afro-descendant feminism is Afro-American feminism, and to reinscribe very deeply a diasporic feminism in the genealogy of black feminisms with a Caribbean, decolonial eco-feminist perspective that Annabel Guérédrat carries. The word I gave her was 'witch', which was a huge success with Mona Chollet's book. But what is forgotten in the question of the witch as a figure of feminine resistance is her plantocratic genealogy (linked to the colonies) and the power of women in the slave and colonial system. Annabel reinscribes this idea of communion, of another revolutionary cosmogony, of a decentring in relation to a white bourgeois European rationality. Ecofeminism in its work on sargassum denounces the poisoning of populations, of women's bodies by the imperial state, with this articulation between plantocratic, extractivist and patriarchal capitalism".

If the third edition of FIAP 22 Martinique ended on Sunday 22 May with the sound of the Haitian *Rara* led by curator Giscard Bouchotte, its groundwork continues in November with an immersive exhibition in Martinique and the United States of performance art videos made in the Savane des Pétrifications and in Fort-de-France. Work in progress is perhaps the most appropriate definition for this art of gesture that invites everyone to participate and give of themselves. ■

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Fabienne Arvers



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# More than a performance | An encounter\*

by Nathalie Hainaut

*No se oculta tras las máscaras.*

*Detrás de los gestos y los símbolos vibra desnuda la verdad de sus deseos, batallas y preguntas.*

Javier Contreras Villaseñor  
Cuaderno de la amigada piel  
Voz Lírica, México, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Destination FIAP MARTINIQUE 2022. It already sounds like a landmark year for this third post-pandemic edition, which will remain engraved in the memories. A series of events around the performance art irrigated this dense week from 16 to 22 May, in the middle of the month of the abolition of slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Just fallen from the sky on Sunday, the team of festival guests boarded a small shuttle bus, heading for the Savane des Pétrifications for a round of presentations, all seated on the sand in the shade of the few trees on the seafront.

The meeting with my Mexican artistic partner Javier Contreras Villaseñor, choreographer, dancer, poet, activist, researcher and teacher of dance aesthetics, took place, and on the second day of the laboratory we began to think about the performance that would be presented in three days. "*Yo lo sé mejor, naturalmente*", I know better, naturally, is the title of the performance that Javier took a long time to find and which will finally be a "quartet of co-authors" since he has invited two women to participate: Alicja Korek, Polish performance artist, co-curator of FIAP 2022, and Paola Lavra, anthropologist, professor of aesthetics of Sardinian origin.

The appropriation, substitution and invisibility of the word of the Other are therefore at the heart of this performance, which will demonstrate and then dismantle the patriarchal, masculine arrogance towards women. Nourished by all the visible or invisible traces linked to forms of family violence, colonial violence, gender violence and others, Javier Contreras Villaseñor has decided to question these unconscious practices through which we have, or may have, become accomplices to this brutality. His performance is as much about the contestation of women, of the people, and a reflection on the power of logos and the body in the political space.

\* Alicja's words to describe this performance.

1. Javier Contreras Villaseñor, *Cuaderno de la amigada piel*, *Voz Lírica*, p.55, México, 2021.



The rooftop of the Hotel L'Impératrice is silent, although full of attentive spectators, when Javier settles on a pile of beautiful books, including Henri Tauliaut's thesis in plastic arts (2019), which will serve as a platform for his intervention as a dominant and knowing male. On the other side of the performance space, Alicja Korek and Paola Lavra make their entrance by speaking softly, each in their respective language, Polish, Italian, then they will increase the tone by approaching the man who holds the podium by repeating without complex *"What I want to say is what they want to say because I know how to say it better"*.

In the spirit of Pina Baush's "dance theatre", the trio moves from movement to words until the artist – who does not listen to the two women but follows them avidly with his eyes – "flips out" and jumps off his pedestal to start a ridiculous dance, where he uses the tent's feet as a pole dance bar with his trousers and pants pulled down to his ankles. *"My idea was to create a performative situation in which this violence of appropriation would be ridiculed, a performance in which the hierarchical exercise of the invisibility of the female word would be critically highlighted through irony and humour"*<sup>2</sup>.

It is in the present that creativity can express itself and Javier, with whom we 'prepared' this performance, wishes to leave the freedom to each of the two female speakers. The laughing effect of this partly naked man and the reversal of power are immediate, while Alicja

and Paola sing a Polish lullaby for the former and a more cheerful Italian song for the latter, without paying any attention to the artist who decrees: *"Catching the other's word is like dancing ridiculously. You have better to listen and learn."*

All three wander in sequence and movement through the performance space, where a few artificial flowers from the previous performance punctuate the floor with patches of colour. Alicja Korek strolls around in her red dress with her glamorous lipstick spilling over her cheek, while Paola Lavra sings at the top of her lungs this seemingly festive song, before crushing, even trampling Javier's trousers with glee in a true performative and symbolic gesture that also corresponds to a Sardinian ritual; *"the couvade, where the man leaves the woman who is giving birth and her trousers are tied and beaten outside the house as a punishment and bullying."*<sup>3</sup>

It is then that Javier will kneel between the two performers and ask forgiveness with just the word, forgiveness to all women for having ignored, rejected, strangled with a macho and patriarchal rope their words – thus their existences and identities. It is worth noting that during the performance, which I had to join as a translator of the artist's words, which was not necessary as he expressed himself very well in French rather than in Spanish, both the audience and myself, the art critic, felt exultant in front of such a striking and political subject.

2. Interview with Javier Contreras Villaseñor, June 2022.

3. Interview with Paola Lavra, August 2022.





Conscious of being irreverent and breaking away from the mandates of dominant masculinity, Javier Contreras Villaseñor also emphasises the energy and the pleasant surprises that occurred during the “performance”, where, according to him, the main thing was the actions and the words. By confiscating women's speech, thus closing the mouths of those who have given them the breast, the men represented by

Javier the performer find themselves dispossessed and deprived of their mask of power through performance. “*No se oculta tras las máscaras*”, “one does not hide behind masks”, says the poet Javier in the quote at the beginning of this article. ■

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*Nathalie Hainaut*  
Curator





**PART III**

# Ritual performances



# Annabel Guérédrat

Annabel Guérédrat is a choreographer, performer, researcher and “*bruja*” (from Spanish-Caribbean witch). Born in New Caledonia, she lives and works in her native Martinique, where she has set up her company Artincidence. She trained in Butoh dance, pilates, yoga, ladjá, krump and *Kyudo*, a Japanese form of archery combining martial art and Zen practice. In addition to that, she is a practitioner of body-mind centering®, a somatic practice that enables her to write organic performances linking the intimate and the political. She had three decisive encounters in 2010 with Meredith Monk, Keith Hennessy and Anna Halprin, which led to her solo performance “*A freak show for S., homage to the Black Venus, Saartjie Baartman*”. Inspired in particular by the “*dancing witch*” energy of Valeska Gert, Annabel Guérédrat creates

modern witch figures with “*Valeska and you*” (2015), “*Hysteria*” (2017) and “*I’m a bruja*” (2018). She is mainly interested in the body politic and social posture of black and mixed-race women in the Caribbean. Between 2011 and 2022, she began work on her black feminism, writing a trilogy: “*Women part one at Rio de Janeiro*”, “*Women part two: You might think I’m crazy but I’m serious*” and “*Women part 3*”. For 2025, she is preparing a new choreographic piece: “*Women part 456*”, the continuation of her trilogy begun in 2011. She is also a proponent of trashy ecofeminism and dark ecology, using the toxic sargassum seaweed that regularly invades Martinique’s Atlantic coastline and into which she buries herself in “*healing*” rituals. This was the birth of “*Mami Sargassa*”, with “*MamiSargassa 2.0*” in 2022 and “*MamiSargassa 3.0*”

in 2023. Annabel also co-founder and co-curator, together with visual artist Henri Tauliaut, of the International Festival of Performance Art, the FIAP Martinique since 2017 until today. Together they have created 4 performative worlds: "aqua", "iguana", "afropunk" and 'technochaman'. Since 2017, the couple have been creating performance art

laboratories every two months at the Savane des Petrifications, in the far south of Martinique, to practise in situ performance in the middle of nature, with other artists. Alongside her creative work, Annabel is involved in dance initiatives in the fields of prostitution, prisons, education, medicine as well as the socio-humanitarian aid. ▀





# Henri Tauliaut



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For two decades, the artist-researcher has been interested in the relationship between art and science, directing his research in two main directions: “*interactive art*” and “*Bio-Art*”. He holds a thesis whose title is: “*Biological and digital arts in relation with the living in the contemporary artists of the Caribbean and the American continent on these subjects*”.

It exhibits and performs in the Caribbean, South and North America, France, Senegal and China. He represents Guadeloupe and France in 2015 at the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial of Havana with “*Jungle Sphere 3.0.*” Henri Tauliaut presents “*Flying Shape Courtship*” at the National Gallery of Jamaica at the 2016 Digital International Exhibition. In July 2018, he is an artist residency at the prestigious

Red Gate Residency in Beijing. In October 2018, he presents the exhibition “*Empowerment*” at the Contemporary Art Fund of Guadeloupe. In April 2019, he presented the “*Bubbles*” performance at the Wolfsonian-FIU Miami Museum, as part of the All-World Festival organized by the French Institute of Miami. In July 2019, he presents the “*Bio-Art project*” for which he designs and builds the mobile laboratory Genetic Experimentation Device.

Since 2015, the artist performs a series of performances with the performance choreographer Annabel Guérédrat. Together, they realize in April 2017 then in November 2019, the 1<sup>st</sup> then the second edition of the International Festival of Performing Arts of Martinique.



Together they have developed the artistic universes of “Aqua”, “Iguana”, “Afro-Punk” and “Techno-Chamane”, as well as co-directed the cyber Afro-punk laboratory around performative practices and land art, at the Savane des Pétrifications in Martinique. In August 2016, they were invited to the “NAVE” artist residency in Santiago, Chile. In April 2017, they produced

the 1<sup>st</sup> International Festival of Performance Art (FIAP) in Martinique, and in 2019 its second edition. In addition to that, Henri Tauliaut created two monumental murals: “Matynina”, on the Malécon in Fort-de-France in 2017, then “Rezome” in June 2018, on the forecourt of the University Library on the Schœlcher campus (Martinique). ■



# Habdaphai



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An established visual artist with a reputation throughout the Caribbean Region. Trained as a dancer, he took part in numerous international tours between 1975 and 1991. His multi-disciplinary and atypical quest gradually led him towards painting, sculpture, installations and performance. Between 2012

and 2015, he strengthened his theoretical knowledge by taking a university diploma in dance and performance at the University of Besançon and the HNDPE (Diplôme National Supérieur d'Expression Plastique), Art option, at the Institut Supérieur des Beaux-Arts in Besançon. ■







# Ludgi Savon



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Ludgi Savon, a visual artist from Martinique, explores a phantasmagorical universe. Graphic and pictorial practices (drawing, watercolor painting), assembly, sewing and embroidery, digital arts (studio and digital photography, digital art on smartphone and tablet, video) and

performance: his protean creation is part of a poetic and humorous dimension. He stages his body as in a process of re-presentation where, this one, subject or object, embodies an invisible universe. ■





# *Ben démaré #2: the performative work as a relational object & space of being-together*

by Anne-Catherine Berry

On the Hôtel l'Impératrice terrace (Fort-de-France, Martinique), on the evening of 19 May 2022, art professionals, artists from various fields, art critics, curators, journalists, art teachers, art lovers, and also a novice public, are gathered for the inauguration of the 3rd edition of FIAP, the International Festival of Performance Art.

As soon as they arrive at the venue, the public discovers an installation taking shape on the ground. Neon lights frame a long transparent plastic film that covers a rectangular surface several metres long. The whole contributes to delimiting a space in the making that the viewer apprehends with curiosity. A number of elements contribute to this arrangement: plastic basins of different sizes and colours, pots and containers, all empty; there are also two trays containing natural essences, lotions, holy water, incense, matches and two *chachas*, as well as candles, white flowers and foliage. This composition acts as a stage, with the setting set and waiting for action.

The audience is waiting. The spectator does not really know what to expect, but in the next few minutes he or she will witness and participate in an artistic performance created and implemented

by Annabel Guérédrat and Anne-Catherine Berry, myself. This performance, entitled *Ben démaré #2*, involves the active participation of the audience and is part of a ritual aesthetic and a magical-religious dimension.

This raises a number of questions. To what extent can an artistic performance take on a collective and participatory dimension? In what ways does an artistic device allow the audience to take part fully? How can the performance art link people together and thus promote a 'relational aesthetic'<sup>1</sup>? In what way does action art succeed in combining art and life, art and the sacred? Action art offers perspectives of inclusion of the spectator in the work, of invitation to participate in an event, of elaboration of a space of "being-together"<sup>2</sup>. It is also a question of the public having a sensitive experience of the performative work,

1. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle*, Dijon, Les Presses du Réel, 1998.

2. Eliane Beaufils, Alix De Morant (dir.), *Scènes en partage. L'être ensemble dans les arts*





which is ritualistic in this case and which is a form of rite of passage.

“Art as a state of encounter”<sup>3</sup> or the performative work as a privileged space of encounter, is first and foremost a collaboration between two women, Annabel Guérédrat – performer – and Anne-Catherine Berry (myself) – researcher, in a collaboration that began on the occasion of an experimental performative research laboratory in the middle of nature, at the Savane des Pétrifications (Sainte-Anne, Martinique), carried out around the notions of sorority, care and ritual. Notions that mark out a cycle of performances already initiated in Annabel’s approach and which gave rise in particular to a performance entitled *Ben démaré* presented on 20 November 2021 at Lakoudigital on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition *Homo Sargassum*, as part of Holdex’s residency with the Tout Monde Art Foundation.

*Ben démaré #2* begins when we both take action with a sound and light signal. Taking off our shoes, we enter the stage and walk around the installation on the floor for a few minutes. We exchange glances with each other and with the audience, all without a word. This silence will prevail throughout the performance. The different elements previously arranged, representative of certain magico-religious rituals, will be used according to the pre-established protocol. They involve precise gestures and postures such as the lighting of candles and incense, as if to purify and consecrate the place. The public is very quickly invited to take part in the process, by first placing certain ritual objects in the dedicated

space. Then, at a fairly steady pace, other spectators designated by one or the other (Annabel or me) will come on stage to join the preparation of the ritual. Simple gestures and glances from us guide them in the actions to be carried out. They are given plants with medicinal or magical virtues to condition as well as a *cuit* to preserve the leaves and petals. Others are given lotions, essences and various waters to be used for the preparation and crystallisation of treatments, sometimes administered directly to the participants or poured into the bath water prepared in the other containers; the larger basins, which can accommodate one person, are intended for bathing. Thus, the action that we both initiated is multiplied by a diversity of repetitive gestures and autonomous actions. The whole unfolds in a sound dimension mixing progressive immersive music, the rhythm of the *chachas* and at certain moments the incantations or mantras emitted by Annabel and certain participants.

Several postures are then observable among the spectators. While some make brief and effective appearances, others invest in the action until its conclusion. Among the latter, some will tirelessly repeat the task they have been given (stripping the leaves, playing the *chacha*, applying a solution, mixing essences, etc.), while others are very freely autonomous and emancipated, interacting with the different components and actors of the work. It is a new experience for the audience, who switch from being passive spectators to active participants, becoming spectator-actors or even spectator-creators. In this way, through

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*performatifs contemporains*, Montpellier, Deuxième Epoque, 2018.

3. Nicolas Bourriaud, *op. cit.*, p. 18.





the performance *Ben démaré #2*, we have aroused in the spectator the desire for action, the desire for a real experience, the desire for a relationship.

The performative device here plays with otherness and creates social links, it provokes and favours the relationship around care, in a form of collective ritual. It is a question of “making a body”, of “making a world”, at the risk of disarming individualism, at least for the duration of the work. The actions carried out by the various spectators-actors are active in the work whose choreographic score escapes us at a given moment. Performances are born at the heart of the one we have initiated, they interact with each other, rubbing up against each other or crossing each other or even intertwining. The collective performance here is about being together through the question of an ancestral initiation ritual, an undeniable identity marker and a symbol of belonging. It thus refers to relational aesthetics<sup>4</sup>, to take up the concept of Nicolas Bourriaud, who writes that “Any work of art could thus be defined as a relational object, as the geometric place of a negotiation with innumerable correspondents and recipients. It seems possible to us to account for the specificity of contemporary art with the help of the notion of production of relations external to the field of art (...): relations between individuals or groups, between the artist and the world, and by transitivity, relations between the viewer and the world.”<sup>5</sup>

In a society where violence is relentlessly insinuated, where the idea of colonisation persists, associated with a capitalist and patriarchal logic, some

artists are in reaction and resistance. The political and health issues that have raised many controversies in recent years have not spared the West Indies, which have been stigmatised through cultural and identity-based misrepresentations. When the need to regroup and to be a people is obliterated or even erased, when cultural specificities are scorned, could art, and performance art in particular, not be able to respond to certain public needs and desires? ■

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4. *Id.*, *ibid.*

5. *Id.*, *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.





# Revisiting tradition through contemporary performance

## | Traditional procession versus hollywoodised carnival

by Giscard Bouchotte

While the Old World treats traditional popular events as a resurgence of what is no longer (Venice Carnival, Basel Carnival, Rio Carnival), the New World is full of places where these events are still "live", performed by the spectators themselves.

From New Orleans to Rio de Janeiro, via San Salvador de Bahia, the carnival, which is based on the Christian calendar, reminds these countries of the past in a very organised way. Performance competitions from the neighbourhoods, parades all the more seductive to capture audiences and juries, with all the means of the show invested there by the popular, duly selected, well supervised.

In Haiti, while carnival is still the object of local covetousness with regard to advertising interests, *Rara*, in general, does not receive support. Moreover, it is almost unknown internationally, – admittedly it is a popular ritual procession during Lent – but it remains fully a sacred moment. This experience shared by all, nothing schematises it in the announcements, does not make it explicit, does not distract from its vigour. It is a collective catharsis.

Not subjected (until now) to neo-commercial lifestyles (advertising, visibility, parade organisation, consumer

guidance), the *Rara* brings together several hundred pedestrians in the streets. It is the guardian of freedom, often only attached to a voodoo shrine.

In some rural areas of Haiti (not far from Léogâne or Jacmel), the non-urban *Rara* reconnects with the invisible forces that occupy the space, through its songs from the voodoo repertoire, its rituals of greeting the spirits and dancing, in all public spaces. For the participants, it is a commitment from each one, which is valid for the whole year.

The *Rara* is the strength of a tradition that neither the city and its endless slums, nor time nor the contempt of the public authorities have been able to alter. These real communities value themselves and are not “invited to show themselves”. It is by themselves that they impose themselves, confined to the omnipotence of their practices linked to the *Lakou* (a place with a peristyle that precedes a high place of pilgrimage).



### **A performance in the public space**

A collective performance, between reality and the beyond, *Rara* refers to our present day, even if the after-effects of the past are still present. They still reveal, by their existence, the flaws; the symptoms of a post-colonial society dedicated to precariousness, violence, discrimination, thwarted but still recurring racism, and gender hierarchy.

The music, most often based on a traditional voodoo chant, is all about bamboo, drums and singing. It springs from the full force of popular release, in conscious response to social constraints. Community encounters: music and dance are the outlet which, for the duration of a procession, erases the anxieties of everyday life and social problems.

Thus, as a collective performance, *Rara* forces us to consider differently the audience of contemporary practices since there is no difference between the actor and the spectator. The individual body only exists in a collective body and thus forces us to question the boundaries between art, performance and tradition. For the participants, the communal experience of singing and dancing brings benefits, peak moments of solidarity and surging strength: it is the liberation of a people that is theirs.

In opposition to the general practice of specialised and closed spaces of distribution and sale, *Rara* takes over the paths, the streets, the whole space. Neoliberal capitalism places the individual at the centre of everything, whereas *Rara* imposes a collective response during the night, in the face of the reality of the country, with its share of misery and political violence, and all too often its laws of gangs, true feudalists in their

neighbourhood. *Rara* imposes songs, dances and drum rhythms as a kind of popular resistance, both happy and serious: it is transcendent, intergenerational and unifying.

### **Contemporary reinterpretations of traditions**

For FIAP 2022, I invite four contemporary artists, Henri Tauliaut, Annabel Guérédrat, Habdaphai and Luigi Savon to reinterpret this Haitian tradition of a *Rara* as a collective performance rocket, capturing individual performances. And this in Fort-de-France, an increasingly urbanised city where gentrification is in full swing. While the group Génération Tout Moun Jwenn takes over the Perrinon courtyard, these four contemporary artists each offer an individual performance before and during the parade.

Henri Tauliaut, wearing boots and a punk outfit designed by the young artist Kaella Alexis, proposes "*Immanou*", named after the boat of "*Agwé*", deity of the seas, to take us on an artistic and spiritual journey.

The artist's speech 'Hadaphai in the form of a political conference, a meeting between witnesses to pay tribute to the heroes of the struggles and confrontations.

For a long time exclusively male, the *Rara* is led here by Anabelle Guérédrat who dons the costume of "*MamiSargassa*", the one who opens the barriers, at the crossroads. A "*Mama Legba*" who leads the group through the city.

At the end of the parade, Luidi Savon proposes a root gathering as a celebration and homage to the ancestors,





in full black dress, with roots and red petals, as many pearls forming a new constellation.

Of course, these approaches to revisiting traditions are not new. Artists have long been investing traditional sounds and images to reinterpret them. Reinterpreting a tradition does not erase

it; on the contrary, these experiments should nourish it. Thanks to them, the streets of Fort-de-France are transformed into a place of entertainment. Like in Port-au-Prince! ▀

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*Giscard Bouchotte*



# Ludgi Savon, *Solar Communion*

by Anne-Catherine Berry

Ludgi Savon is a multimedia artist developing an autobiographical approach that touches on the personal and intimate, using the commemorative ritual medium. His creation could be seen as a form of personal mythology. It is rooted in his childhood memories and the bonds of filiation that he maintains and cultivates preciously in his artistic achievements. His family and his ancestors, his grandfather, in particular, nourish his approach through which he pays tribute to them.

He creates a phantasmagorical universe through various practices: graphic and pictorial (drawing, ink, gouache, watercolor), sewing and embroidery, digital arts (photography, video, digital art on smartphone and tablet), and also performance art. His protean creation has a poetic and humorous dimension. He stages his body in the process of re-presentation, where it, as subject or medium, embodies the invisible.

What Ludgi Savon draws and paints, is brought to life via photographs, short videos, broadcast on social networks, or during artistic performances. For this purpose, he makes outfits and accessories with which he stages himself. His body, previously represented in his graphic and pictorial expressions, is sublimated by the artifices of filters and interfaces. The passive becomes active, then the medium seems to embody a spirit or a divinity. These appearances are thought out in the slightest detail and are distinguished by the abundance and vivacity of colors.

The masks completing certain outfits are linked to the body and gestures in a ceremonial dimension. In this context, the mask reconnects with an African tradition, where the object is inherent to a system. The relationship to ancestrality then takes on its full meaning. As for the veils, they envelop the body like a second skin, cover the head and also mask the face, and are intended to herald a total transformation. Plethoric frills and flashy ornaments bring glitter and luxuriance and characterize plastic components initially belonging to the world of couture and embroidery: pearls, sequins, bells, lace, veils, flowers, and petals...

Savane des Pétrifications, Sainte-Anne, Martinique, May 2022, three days are dedicated to the performance laboratory proposed in the framework of the FIAP for its 3rd edition. The artists are invited to experiment, produce and create actions under the eyes of art critics, curators, and exhibition commissioners and possibly with their











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complicity. Dressed in a full-body suit covered with petals, beads, and fabrics, Ludgi Savon proposes an action in his attributes that have become recurrent in recent years. Adorned with (artificial) petals, he appears as a hybrid being whose presence contrasts strongly with this coastal space. The ensemble is in shades of yellow, orange, white, and gold, and symbolizes the artist's grandfather. A light long orange veil covers his face and cascades down to his knees. Another white veil decorated with artificial flowers, white or yellow roses, also adorns her outfit. At the beginning of the performance, another fabric covers her head and upper body, dark with golden patterns.

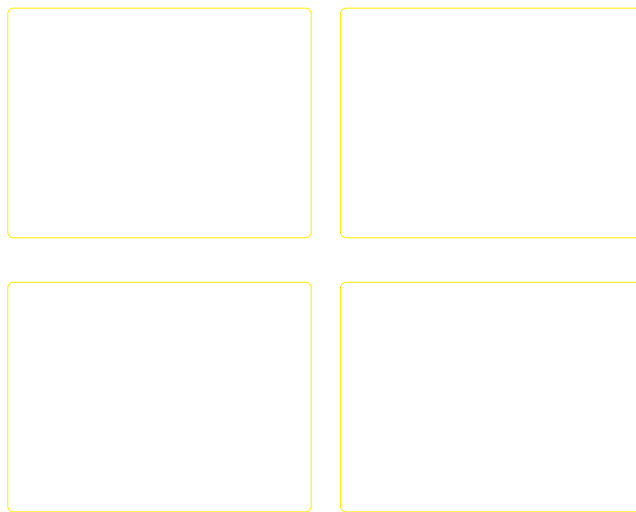
In addition to her poetic presence in this natural marine environment, the artist adds a participatory dimension to her intervention. The public present, students, artists, and other professionals from the art scene are invited to accompany him, as if in a silent procession. He presents them with a disc that he holds in his hands, which is also decorated with colored petals and beads. The participants are invited to form a circle by holding hands around this disc as if to celebrate it and embrace each other in a friendly way. The artist is also at the center of this circle, bringing people together in a ceremonial and convivial dimension.

Each of the artist's creations, from drawing to performance, via photography and video, not forgetting the making of outfits and attributes, has a sacred dimension. The whole is part of a real cult that he devotes to the plant world, to the rose in particular, to his grandfather, as well as to his family lineage. The body, always in full metamorphosis, presents different aspects according to the hybridization process at play, it adopts plant forms (roots, leaves). A body between two temporalities, past and present, between two worlds, visible and invisible, puts the child artist and the adult artist in dialogue, weaving links between two universes. This figure of the child is fascinated by plants and his memories as much as his emotions are crystallized in the family garden, which explains the artist's formal vocabulary: flowers, leaves, roots, ramifications...

This omnipresent body acts as a receptacle dedicated to embodying the spirits. It tells a family story and celebrates the ancestors. ■

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*Anne-Catherine Berry*







**PART IV**

# The unclassifiable





# Marni Kotak



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Marni Kotak is a multimedia and performance artist presenting everyday life being lived. She has received international attention for her durational performances and exhibitions, most notably *"The Birth of Baby X"* (2011) in which she gave birth to her son as a live performance and *"Mad Meds"* (2014) during which the artist slowly withdrew from psychiatric medications prescribed for postpartum depression. In *"Treehouse"* (2017), Kotak — who had just experienced a devastating fire in her home — created a refuge for herself and others to pause from the overwhelming aspects of life. For *"Dancing in the Oval Office"* (2019), the artist invited the public to join her in her version of the oval office to dance for a more open, inclusive, and peaceful society. Kotak's works have also appeared at the Santiago Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile, Artists Space, Exit Art, Momenta Art, English Kills Gallery, Grace Exhibition Space, among others.

She has performed extensively in the US and abroad. Kotak's work appears in *"The Art of Feminism: Images that shaped the Fight for Equality"*, 1957-2017 by Helena Reckitt (Chronicle Books, 2018) and *"Blackwells Companions to Contemporary Art: A Companion to Feminist Art"* (2019) among other publications. Her exhibitions have been featured in ArtFCity, Artforum, Blouin Artinfo, Art Pulse, The Huffington Post, Hyperallergic, Los Angeles Times, Studio International, The Brooklyn Rail, The New York Times, The Village Voice, Time Magazine, Washington Post, among many others. She has also appeared on Good Morning America (ABC), CBC Radio, NPR, and other broadcasts. Grants include Franklin Furnace Fund Award and the Brooklyn Arts Council among others. Marni Kotak received a BA from Bard College and an MFA from Brooklyn College and is represented by Microscope Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. ■



# Laurent Troudart



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After a career in teaching history, Laurent Troudart has been trained in jazz dance, which also involved classical and contemporary dance. His professional experiences with different companies allowed him to be confronted more specifically with various currents of contemporary dance in Europe.

In 2012, back in Martinique, he founded with Jean Hugues Miredin the company Art&Fact which develops around dance-theatre.

Since his meeting with the company Artincidence in 2017, he has been immersing himself more and more in the culture of performance... ■





# Jean-Hugues Miredin







Jean-Hugues Miredin is a dancer, choreographer, performer and dance teacher. He's been working nationally and internationally across Europe, Asia and United States.

At the age of 19 Mister Miredin left his island Martinique for Paris to pursue his education. There he joined the "Paris Centre" dance school. Then he moved to New York City where he studied, performed and taught in different venues such as Merce Cunningham Studio, Dance Space, Steps, Ballet Arts, City Center. He's been collaborating with different artists and choreographers such as Camilla Stage, Anders Christiansen, Kitt Johnson, llyod Newson, Kirstie Simson, Jan Martens... just to name a few. Miredin in 2012

Co-founded the company "Art8Fact" home based in Martinique. The company's aim is to create a bridge between the Caribbean Diaspora, Africa and Europe and help the slowly emerging contemporary dance community in Martinique to take shape. "Art8Fact" has been granted funds from the French Art council (DAC), La CTM (Collectivité Territoriale de la Martinique), and was invited to perform in Africa (Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast), at Cayenne (French Guiana), Czech Republic (Prague) and Fort de France (Martinique). The first work of the company "*Salut mon frère*" was made possible with the help of Kulturstyrelsen and the "*Diva*" program and Åben Dans Company in Roskilde Denmark. ■



# Lucien Peter

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Lucien Peter holds a national diploma in jazz dance teaching and is a certified professor in plastic arts.

Educator, practitioner and even theorician, the dancer, performer and visual artist, originally from the archipelago of Les Saintes in Guadeloupe, took his first ballet, modern and jazz dance classes at Studio Scherer to major afterwards in contemporary dance as well as in caribbean ritual and percussive dances, at Sermac in Martinique and at Djoniba Dance and Drum Center in New-York. Peter has studied the Englishspeaking world's languages, literatures and civilisations (LLC), dance sociology and anthropology, art history, aesthetics and fine arts, in the Caribbean (universities of the West-Indies and of the French West-Indies), the USA (New-York and Colombia universities) and Europe (Trondheim,

Szeged, Auvergne and Roehampton universities), His academic research focus on the development of african-american and caribbean dance (master LLC of the English-speaking world), the performance of gwoka in London (master Choreomundus) and the art of performance (master in plastic arts education teaching and training /MEEF).

Infatuated by the tenuous ties connecting the biological, the sociologized and the spiritual bodies, the artist in his last performance presented at the closing ceremony of the FIAP Martinique 2022 – has syncretized afro-cuban, amerindian rituals and the rave-party culture, so as to prompt the spectators to question the traumatic memory traces embedded in caribbean bodies and spirits during the context of global pandemic crisis. ■







# Schneiderson René







He was born on 1 December 1994 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He is an emerging actor, director, choreographer and dancer. In 2010, at the invitation of Julien Ganthier, coordinator Jeunesse, an association rooted in sport, education, culture, and social issues. At En Développement (JEDe), he began creating his own stage productions and choreographies in Aquin Sud, Haiti. In December 2016, at the invitation of Wadline Terrassé Guanthier, dancer, choreographer and creator of the “*WadlineTranse Expression*” Company, he acted as a dancer and a performer in the company's first show entitled “*À la croisée des rythmes*”. In May 2018, he took part in several workshops

as part of the Port-au-Prince Art and Performance Festival (PAPAP), directed by Kettly Noël. He worked with several dancers, actresses and international contemporary dance choreographers such as Anouschka Brodacz, Éva Doumbia, or Dorothee Munyaneza. In May 2020, his performance project “*Corps en ébullition*” was selected as one of three projects for the PAPLAB artistic residency (Port-au-Prince artistic laboratory) under the direction of Kettly Noël. He then spent two years at the Quatre chemins Festival. *Transe Dantor* is his latest creation, selected at last year's festival Quatre Chemins. ■

# Performing motherhood | Interview with Marni Kotak

by Alicja Korek

**Hello Marni, since the wonderful FIAP 22 edition on May 22 where I had a chance to meet you in person, I am happy to talk to you again. The purpose of this short interview is to investigate the relationship between motherhood and performance, the major leitmotiv in your art.**

**In October 2011 you gave birth to your son, Ajax, in a rather unusual and surprising setting: you decided to perform your baby's delivery at Microscope Gallery in NYC! "The Birth of Baby X", as you called this birthing performance, has initiated a complex "Raising Baby X" durational art project where you unfold to the audience various motherhood-related situations and issues such as, just to mention a few, education, nutrition, playtime or health. You sort them out from the private sphere of your household to render them visible in a public space. Is it easy to put into a conversation the intimate with the "extimate"? Do you consider moving from the private to the public a political act?**

For me, who has consistently performed my everyday private life as art in my practice, "Raising Baby X" has been the most challenging project to bring into the public sphere because it involves the delicate life of my child. I have always been careful to consider Ajax's wishes in his involvement in the project. And I

believe this project is the most important of all of my work to bring into the public eye because childrearing and growing up as a kid is so valuable, yet under-recognized by our society.

I do consider moving from the private to the public a political act, because often we keep certain things private due to societal taboos. Motherhood and childrearing in general are taboo in the work and art world specifically. They are generally considered activities to be kept separate. One does not expect to walk into an art gallery to find a mother raising her child as the work of art. Usually people work at a job – in the case of an artist, this is making art – to then afford to go home and care for their families. In my ideal world, life and art are one and the same and feed into each other, and as childrearing is so significant an endeavor in my eyes, "Raising Baby X" is my masterpiece.

**In your artist statement published on your website, you argue that "we are not necessarily aware that we are performing, when we are so engaged in the present moment that we transcend the issues of spectacle that have come to dominate much of contemporary society, and hold onto what is real". In this vein, I would like to ask you to what extent, from your experience, motherhood can be performable. Do you identify any limits/borders (bodily,**





© Marni Kotak

### **mental, social, cultural) to performing motherhood?**

Since Ajax's birth on October 25, 2011 at 10:17am, I have been performing motherhood in my project Raising Baby X. I have been performing it as I have been living it, and figuring it out as I go along. My main interest in the project has been to spend as much quality time with my son as possible and to be the best mother I can be — that is addressing all aspects of childrearing to the best of my abilities, including food, education, clothing, the child's room, healthcare, playtime, travel, safety, discipline, entertainment, and simply loving the child – and devising ways to express this performance through art that highlight the social significance of childrearing in society.

I have chosen various artistic methods so far to convey the performance of motherhood including video with Raising Baby X: Little Brother, paintings with my Raising Baby X: Herstory diaristic paintings series where I make one painting out of diary entries from each month of Ajax's life, annual birthday performance from years one through ten, and performances and full-scale exhibitions depicting aspects of my experience of motherhood such as Raising Baby X: The First Year (2012) that dealt with my experiences from the first year of raising baby Ajax, Treehouse (2017) where I created a sanctuary for myself, a 5-year-old Ajax and others to spend time after a devastating fire in our home, and Seriously Kidding Around (2022), where Ajax and I live our daily lives as mother

and 10-year-old child in the gallery for the duration of the show.

**Let us continue with the “mother-artist” topic, as it is a passionate issue. If mothering is an artistic performance, are we all mothers-performers in the same way? Is performing motherhood a universal question for you? How, from your point of view, do art, social reproduction, and intersectionality communicate and collide one with another?**

I believe that the performance of motherhood is predominately highly specific to the individual, and while there are often ways that caregivers can relate to each other, how we raise our children is personal. After deciding whether or not

to be a mother at all, the next question for a parent is how to raise his/her/their child. In “*Gesturing My Maternal*” (2021-2022), I attempt to create a vocabulary of maternal gestures that arose out of my own experience of mothering Ajax. It starts with my sitting atop a birth ball, preparing for my gallery birth, and moves through other gestures such as my “*mother-child*” pose where the baby is wearing a GoPro to record my mothering of him. Other gestures included are myself as “*Marnitov Cocktail*”, my performative alter ego who is an all-powerful American secret agent against political corruption in the U.S.; another where I am wearing one of the Love Masks I created during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the work finishes with myself in





turn wearing the GoPro to record Ajax growing up. All of these poses are highly relevant to my raising of Ajax as a mother artist, and most likely not transferable to other caregivers.

I do not believe that I can speak for other mothers in general in my work, though I am happy when, at times, I can use my art as a platform for social change and to speak out on issues that many mothers face such as how to have a healthy birth in the U.S. with such high rates of C-sections and infant mortality, how to address the causes and develop better treatments for postpartum depression, and how to increase visibility and credit for childrearing as an the highly important endeavor it is in society.

**And if we talk a little bit about your son, Ajax? How the fact of being a human “piece of art” has impacted his life? Also, I wonder to hear more about the way you both collaborate, for instance, while preparing for public shows and then during interactions with the audience, in situ at the Microscope Gallery where all of your mother-artist performances take place.**

Ajax and I are very clear that he is not a static piece of art, but is a human being. I believe human life to be the most profound work of art, so Ajax is not a work of art in the traditional sense as a rarified object. That is why I have made it clear that my real life performance art projects are not for sale, and cannot be re-performed as they are particular to my life. For me, life can never be commodified. It is only possible to acquire the artworks generated from the performances, such as the installations, videos,

paintings, photographs and other mixed-media works.

Ajax and my collaboration has developed over the years from his either agreeing or not agreeing to wear the camera to record his life from his point of view as a toddler (I didn't make him wear the camera if he didn't want to) in *“Raising Baby X: Little Brother”* (2012-ongoing)—a project in which he records his life with a GoPro Camera, and attending his annual birthday party performances and exhibitions related to the project that I created independently, to being a full collaborator in these artistic practices. Since he turned five with *“My Halloween Birthday Party: Ajax Turns 5”* (2016), his artistic contribution to the birthday party events has increased exponentially, and he has chosen all of the themes for the parties, while we have continued to put together the events collaboratively. He also has had increasing control over when he wears the camera to record his life and how and what he would like to record. This year he visited Disney World with his grandparents and took the camera on his own without any of my direction and creatively shot the entire trip, even editing his own face into underwater shots. While these are Ajax's contributions to our collaborative works which essentially began just months after his birth, he does identify himself as a photographer, and also creates his own independent works such as *“My Word Paintings”* (2017), and his biggest interest, photography, which includes hundreds of shots since age five in instant film, analog and digital, such as *“Ajax and Mommy”* (2020).

*“Seriously Kidding Around”* (2022) marks Ajax's first full scale exhibition of



collaborative work in the “*Raising Baby X project*”. When I began envisioning this exhibition about two years ago, I had no idea whether or not Ajax would really be interested in being involved in it as a performer with me in the gallery. In fact, I expected that he wouldn’t. At first there seemed to be some hesitation on his part, which I expected, but then last year, everything changed. I think as he started to identify himself as a creator of artworks, specifically photography, he was naturally drawn to this project. I am so proud of him that he has the talent and resilience to be involved in such a high level installation/performance exhibition at age 10, but then again, he has been doing this for his whole life!

**Tracey Emin, a British multidisciplinary controversial artist, said in one interview that “There are good artists who have children. Of course, there are. They are called men.” How do you interpret Tracey Emin’s words? What are the biggest challenges for you as an artist-mother and feminist?**

It is challenging to be both a good mother and good at any other career, including art, I think, because both require so much time and attention. I have chosen to embrace this struggle by making art about my life as a mother, as I have made art about all of the aspects of my life previously. Life in general is not always easy, but if we regard all of the



ups and downs with equal significance, we can find value in every moment and turn it into gold.

I believe Tracey Emin's comment to be very outdated and even offensive to all of the amazing women artists I know who have children, however, I realize that many people still feel this way. One only needs to visit art galleries and museums and browse through art magazines and to see virtually no representation of motherhood or child-rearing in art. I am working to change this in my own way as an artist, even including our photograph "*Seriously*

*Kidding Around: 10 Years Have Passed*" (2022) as a full-page ad for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, September 2022 issue of Artforum.

**Thank you, dear Marni, for your time. I wish I could continue this conversation with you for hours, but it seems impossible as I have to pick up the kids from school, make lunch, and then drive them to a birthday party!**

Thank you so much dear Alicja! ■

# Blob Castle (2022) | A New Found Performance by Marni Kotak for FIAP Martinique 2022

by Alicja Korek

*«Blob Castle (2022) is a new live performance in which I, wearing an oceanic blue bikini, construct a large scale drip sand castle – what my family has always called a “Blob Castle” – out of blobs of sand on La Francaise beach in Fort-de-France, working directly with the shore environment of Martinique.*

*The piece continues my ongoing practice of presenting everyday life as*

*art through my Found Performances– or works based on my daily activities, experiences or accomplishments, such as giving birth (The Birth of Baby X, 2011), attending my grandfather’s funeral (My Grandfather’s Funeral, 2009), constructing a refuge to convalesce after a fire in my home (Treehouse, 2017), and in this instance, making blob castles as a child with family and friends and*







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now as a parent with my son. I call these works found performances in that they are time-based performances found from real daily life in the sense of Duchamp's readymade found object sculptures.

In *Blob Castle*, I am inviting the audience to join in the familiar, intimate activity of making a sandcastle with family and friends, while contemplating the fragility of the beautiful Martinique landscape at this time of global environmental crisis. Throughout the approximately one hour performance, I will be digging and gathering sand from the

beach, as well as buckets of water from the ocean, and mixing them together to build a large-scale sand castle. I will also be covering myself with wet sand, and will eventually lie down and bury myself inside of my creation.

After building the *Blob Castle*, the public will also be invited to help bury me within it. The castle will stand after the performance until the tide washes it away». ■

Marni Kotak  
**Blob Castle**

## **The F-R-A-G-I-L-E.**

*Your castles of sand drops  
Stumble on the invisible line of the fragile.  
The littoral architecture of your flesh  
Swings on the terrain-vague(s) of the La Française Beach  
Which smells  
Piss  
Sargassum  
Chlordecone  
Cigarette butts  
Sunscreen.*

*The wavy caprices of the Goddess\*  
Regularly devour your construction  
Symbol of resistance to oblivion,  
Ritual of a postcard childhood.*

*The sea that your navel sips  
The sand that performs between your teeth  
They also  
Also have a Memory.*

*Each drop of sand is an archive of the fragile  
A memory of a deconstructed landscape  
Of a non-time space  
Of the infinitely small in the infinitely large.*



What other form of expression would better describe Marni Kotak's performance than a poem?

On the edge of body land art, ecofeminism and the living archive, Marni Kotak's poetics seeks to intercept the ephemeral, the fragile, ultimately giving it more importance than the constructed, durational. The ephemeral is thus, politically and artistically speaking, the perimeter within which the artist oscillates when she tries to build her constructions of

drops of sand. She herself becomes a body-receptacle of this ephemera, on which Blob Castles are respectively built and deconstructed, in an almost "accordion-like" way.

These castles of sand drops, or rather drops of memory, are intended to bring back to Marni Kotak one of her fondest childhood memories: building Blob Castles with her family on a New England beach. Helped by children, all delighted to be authorized to throw water and

\* Refer to Manman Dlo, the Deity of the See in Martinique.



sand on an incognito body, as well as by several adults embarked in the vortex of this collective movement, Marni Kotak becomes, little by little, an organic fortress. The breathing of her body imposes a gentle and regular rhythm on the mounds of sand formed on her neck, chest, stomach, and legs. A rhythm that breaks down each time with the arrival of a new series of waves that disturb the peace of this cellular sculpture. As a result, the building

Louis. The latter remains unchanged, untouched, like a lifeless body, despite a few jolts of the tricolour flag taken hostage by the trade winds, alizés.

Marni Kotak's performance is a poem about the fragile: transmission, memory, fragments, time, and space.

It is also an ecofeminist poem (the spirit of Ana Mendieta is so tangibly present!): the body of the artist becomes an extension of the coastline, this body of a woman-mother who has already



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suffocates, deforms, and disfigures. The construction process must begin again – and what is fascinating about this performative movement is precisely its repetitive, cyclical, and philosophical dimension of eternal return.

This conversation of the constructed with the deconstructed acquires more politico-poetical significance as it takes place in the foreground right in front of an immense military fort, the Fort Saint

given birth to the world and who now seeks shelter in the placenta of Mother Nature.

But Mother Nature's womb burns with rage.

And her waters still remember.♦

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*Alicja Korek*

Lyon, september 2022



# Chich!

by Nathalie Hainaut

«*Chich !*» – in Creole – is the title of the proposal made by Lucien Peter in the Lakou Digital round on a Saturday evening in May 2022. A researcher in dance arts and anthropology, dancer, choreographer and teacher, Lucien Peter agreed at the last minute to present a performance at FIAP 2022. It is about trance, or how to "go wild" with non-verbal communication after two years of pandemic and compulsory wearing of masks, that he will offer body and meaning. By mixing and diverting various rituals relating to the figure of Ogun with a machete as his attribute, as well as to that of an Amerindian shaman crowned with a medicine headdress made of black and red feathers, the artist will carry the public seated around him away to ecstatic music.

Chich! It's time for an incarnation of Ogun, a Yoruba orisha, a lwa of Haitian voodoo, to enter the circle, a blade across his mouth symbolising the threat of the newly arrived C19, who will threaten the whole audience by staring them straight in the eye. The performer moves in gyrations, faster and faster until the machete falls to the ground; "the threat is over because the iron is down". The dance and symbolism that accompany Lucien Peter's work in this ephemeral artistic action involve a Whole, the space of Lakou, an evening of FIAP, the body of the dancer-performer and his connection to his audience.

As in a story from afar, the time for breathing and cleansing comes after a violent episode. The purification trance takes shape; the artist then empties his Caribbean basket, taking out a shamanic headdress adorned with feathers which he ties on his head, a red cloth and a *kwi*\*

filled with sand. The second movement of 'Chich!' is in operation and is most certainly an exit from the constrained post-covid body. To the tunes of Dance of the Moon<sup>1</sup> Lucien Peter will "invite" us to open a new energy field, to enter our sensitive body, to reconnect to the anima in order to share a collective and restorative experience.

The incarnation of the shaman-dancer, the one who whispers in the ear of the forest and of those who find themselves in his company on this night in May – when Martinique celebrates the abolition of slavery – provokes a deliverance in the assembly of Lakou Digital. The multiple questions that occupied the minds blinded and instrumentalized by the health crisis and its mismanagement in our territories dissipate as the trance initiated by Lucien Peter spreads to all the spectators who have become actors. By closing the eyes to better identify

\* *kwi*: half calabash.

1. Dance of the Moon, Ecstatic Dance with Sophie Sôfrêe, Mana Mei & Layla El Khadri, 2020.



the other senses, by reopening them to follow the peacock feather rattle that the performer waves with his hand, the mind calms down to let the body enter the dance-trance.

This highly interactive performance where theatricality and shamanic techno music are an invitation to a sensory journey has largely worked. The space of liberation, that is to say the round, is occupied by almost all the people present at this dedicated evening. A real challenge, "Chich!" succeeded in

putting us in unison by hybridizing, weaving and re-establishing a common thread that connects us all. Without any complexes, the public sinks on the track to the sounds of afro-futuristic Djing, where some feathers of the Amerindian shamanic headdress still fly under the feet. ■

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*Nathalie Hainaut*

Curatrice

Critique d'art, AICA SC & CEREP







# CONCLUSION

*Le FIAP #LAB at the heart of performative practice*  
by Paola Lavra

*Bifurcations of the diamond: de-exposure, performance*  
by Chris Cyrille

*Five moving frames: notes on FIAP22*  
by Javier Contreras Villaseñor

# Le FIAP #LAB at the heart of performative practice

by Paola Lavra

Thinking of the space as a laboratory, the incident and the chance as triggers for the performative act, the ritual as a sacredness of the gesture and the body in their relationship to nature, this is how the Fiap opens up to the possibilities in a heuristic approach that gives a central place to improvisation and experimentation.

The action is, of course, the result of the determination of the artists to take their place and their voice in the political space but also in the city of utopia, poetry and the imaginary which nourish the projects and move the lines drawn by colonial history to bring order to the chaos of the conquest.

This colonial history has had a major impact on Martinique's means of production, its human ecology, and even its ecosystem, whose precarious equilibrium raises questions for us at a time when the climate emergency is alerting the planet.

Once again, the damage is measured on the scale of the islands in a space, the Caribbean, which has experienced the clash of cultures and the underpinnings of the history of the slave trade and slavery, but which has also survived dehumanisation in an invention of everyday life that ensures the circulation of knowledge and a connection to the world, the paradigm of the "all world" of Edouard Glissant.





Recognising and deconstructing the legacies of colonialism, excavating the earth and its strata which accumulate insecurity, poison and tremors, planting seeds by forging new modes of thought and artistic production fuelled by black feminism and the contemporary emergence of Afro-futurism: this is the backdrop and the filigree work that is being constructed at the heart of the Savane des Pétrifications where the meeting of opposites shows that nothing is set in stone.

### **From physical space to symbolic place: initiatory walks**

At the southernmost point of the Sainte-Anne peninsula, we arrive at the Savane des Pétrifications, a bare, stony area named after the silicified woods cleared by erosion. The Morne des Pétrifications and the Pointe des Salines are the only aerial vestiges of basaltic volcanism followed by hydrothermal activity. This activity betrays the presence of magma masses that are still hot at depth.

This space and its bubbling constitute the privileged place of creation in situ, facing the surprising beauty of a strip of land torn from the monoculture and production of a sugar island, a place where nature imposes silence and listening.

The circle triggers exchanges, loosens tongues, crosses our eyes, gives power. The power of speech then gives way to the power of gesture when the practice of Body-Mind Centering induces letting go and allows us to apprehend the body as a simple tool of creation and communication, the place of language. We roll gently towards the sea, lulled by the waves in a movement of benevolent reciprocity that places us gently in each other's arms.

Thus, our travels and wanderings as artist-seekers are more like initiatory walks in search of inspiration, of a place of knowledge and/or recognition, of an Ariadne's thread that guides us through the labyrinth of our thoughts and gestures to finally induce and guide the gesture of the other, of others.

Offerings, flowers, magic circles, giving and receiving, potlach, dances, care, love, care...

We are above all guided by the desire to imitate the magic of the place, to develop our own singular magical act, to invent a language that defies and destroys the barriers of language, the taboos and the unspoken words of all those who dare to look at themselves, more or less shyly, in the mirror of the other.

### **Interrogating space/ Crossing perspectives. The FIAP#LAB 2022 Actors.**

Choreographers, dancers, visual artists, designers, performers, academics, researchers and curators, but above all young students from the École supérieure d'art (CCA- FDF), participate in the creation of this space for research and creation in a real activist posture. From the Caribbean to the Americas, from Africa to Europe, debates emerge and provoke connections, announcing collaborations, present and future. The culture of performance thus finds its roots in contemporary dance and dance theatre (Laurent Troudart and Jean-Hugues Miredin - Martinique) as well as in multimedia art, in the visual arts and in the transdisciplinarity between art and cultural management. The questions that animate the FIAP's actors take different forms of expression, fed by a space of exchange fertilized by the power of gesture.

From the narrative of daily life in the process of being lived (Marni Kotak – NY) to the claim of a 'body-politics' that questions and denounces the dominant History from its existential condition (Fabiana Ex-Souza Brazil, France).

From the vocation to serve the social community (Helen Ceballos – Puerto Rico) to the reversal of gender belonging in an ode to the feminine (Javier Contreras Villaseñor – Mexico)

From the use of ritual in art as a tool to connect to mother earth, a telluric space carrying mysteries, (René Louise-Martinique) to the poetic and empathetic character of his ritual walks (Ludgi Savon – Martinique).

From art as a dialogue around identity, resilience and the politics of belonging (Nadia Myre-Montreal) to the forms of mediation specific to pan-African sciences and the link between cultures (Arlette-Louise Ndakoze-Germany)...

By running on the red thread of theoretical approaches and the important contribution of curators and researchers who participate in the circulation of artists and works (Giscard Bouchotte-Haiti; Chris Cyrille-Paris / Guadeloupe; Elena Agudio-Germany; Paola Lavra-Italy-Martinique; Nathalie Hainaut-Guadeloupe; Anne-Catherine Berry-Martinique; Olivier Marbœuf-Rennes / Guadeloupe; Martine Potoczny-Martinique).

Thus a circle of artists and thinkers of the contemporary question the space, the glance turned towards the horizon of a new conquest: that of the body in movement.

**From care to word, from body to text: towards a new founding narrative.**

The body is at the centre of this device which mixes care and ritual in a space of immersion which imposes its presence and its suffering: that of a land *"polluted, chlordeconditioned, silted up, for a long time [...] ransacked for centuries by Europe, the State, Capital* (Guérédrat, A. in Dorlin, 2021, p.581). Performative and ritualistic actions aim at the preservation and care of the body-territory that is reappropriated and mobilised to (re)call the ancestors. Care is thus a "moment of healing" when it allows one to anchor oneself, to *"immerse and merge with nature"* (Ibidem, 583).

The female body occupies a central position in this performative universe: feminism, ecofeminism and the claim of a "witch sexuality" through body art, pagan rituals and mythology are key concepts in the work of Alicja Korek (co-curator of FIAP 22) who claims the subversive dimension of performance art where the artist appears simultaneously as both subject and object and *"must contribute to the establishment of a new politics of the body"*.





Care and ritual have animated the work of Annabel Guérédrat and Henry Tauliaut, curators of FIAP and co-directors since 2015 of the cyber afro-punk laboratory around performative practices and land art at the Savane des Pétrifications, a place that has nourished, among other things, Henry's reflection on the relationship between the digital and the living.

If the ritualistic care device triggers the action, the presence of two professionals in the narration of the performative space (Chris Cyrille and Olivier Marboeuf) provokes a dialogue in a podcast with the students of the Caribbean Arts Campus, who are led to address questions of restitution, reparations and rehabilitation, minority representations and modalities of knowledge transmission, decolonial practices; the body thus becomes a space of archives and gives life to a new founding narrative.

(Podcast produced with Samuel Jean-toussaint, Kaella Alexis, Rakhil Rozina, Djovany Boulange, Christelle Patron, Melodie Tarrieu, Celanie Galion).

### Weaving...

I remember the first day of our Laboperf...

The idea is to form artist-researcher pairs, capable of relating theoretical approaches to artistic expression, whose genesis, creative process and poetics we observe...

I am paired with Marny Kotak, a New York-based artist known for her long-running performance *"The Birth of Baby X"* at the Microscope Gallery in Brooklyn. My anthropological approach to birth is similar to her committed posture in denouncing the extreme medicalisation of childbirth; in a relationship between

biology, obstetrics, philosophy, ethics, anthropology and contemporary creation, obstetrical violence is only a prism for observing birth as a staged event: a real work in progress at the crossroads of human sciences and art!

However, I am seized by everything that happens around me in a continuous movement that leads us all to a silent search for an object, a place, an encounter, an unexpected event that influences and determines the course of things. The art of the unexpected (otherwise known as serendipity) consists of discovering, inventing and creating what one does not expect. The crucial art of finding the unsought plays a very important role in the performing arts.

By walking the paths of randomness, I find myself confronted with the need to tame the unknown of artistic creation, to put my body to the test. My silent observation stops for a long time on Djovany, a young art student, whose face becomes a canvas and a support under his skilful gestures as a plastic artist: he superimposes with mastery and precision layers of matter, colours, lines that refine his features until they are metamorphosed. The long time it takes for a chrysalis to hatch allows me to go and get it a head-dress, a crown! I make it with subtle branches and cactus flowers, my fingers filled with thorns, those of Christ... I place it gently on her head: the rest is weaving, a canvas that takes the sea.♦

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Paola Lavra

Savane des Pétrifications, Monday 16, Tuesday 17, Thursday 18 of May 2022

# Bifurcations of the diamond: de-exposure, performance





## Bifurcation A

Carnivals, processions, all of these forms have always played with the fact of being exposed. If by "expose" we understand: to make visible, sensitive, present, and thereby fixed and intelligible<sup>1</sup>, the West Indian-Caribbean image (from the matrix place of the plantation) has always preferred *de-exposure* to exposure. *De-exposure* is not exactly opacity (the refusal of light), still less an escape, but rather: the mixed, trembling and vibrating line of the spatio-temporal contours of any exhibition scene. In other words, it is that which disappears under its own exposure. We see this everywhere in the West Indies: days more opaque than a night, nights brighter than a noon, colours darker than an abyss, abysses even more clairvoyant than a dawn. *De-exposure* does not necessarily relate to night, rather, it circulates in an *in-between-night-and-day*. To take an example: in the moments of the carnival there is a shimmering of skins and masses that is neither transparency nor mere brilliance but rather a constantly changing surface effect. The shimmering is neither superficiality nor even pure appearance but an overload of information where – although there, in front of us – the thing is *de-exposed* under its own shimmer. At other times, the masses melt into the night...



1- We rephrase: to make visible, sensitive, present, to make fixed, intelligible, to then make available, ready for circulation, exchange and commodification.

2- I saw Annabel Guérédrat perform "*I'm bruja*" at the Théâtre de la ville d'Orléans on Tuesday 16 March 2021.

3- I am thinking of the artist's solo exhibition: Kenny Dunkan, Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, 6 March-22 May 2021.

## Bifurcation A.1

Let us rephrase. What we call *de-exposure* is what disappears by exposing itself, in and through the exhibition. I am thinking of Annabel Guérédrat's constellated body in her performance "*I'm a bruja*" (2021)<sup>2</sup>, where the artist finishes her rite by transforming herself (thanks to the shimmering) into a kind of divinity, or the *Mas*<sup>3</sup> of artist Kenny Dunkan: a kind of automaton, of skins joined together that he makes. Here again, something seems to disappear when something else appears...

### Bifurcation inconnue...

There are no totally distinct and clear lines in the layout and topography of the West Indian space (cut up by the plantation system), there seem to be only bifurcations. And even if one can try to draw a map or, rather, a route, as was the case for Édouard Glissant or Maryse Condé (mornes at the top, fields in the middle, beaches and mangroves at the bottom), everything can change at any moment from one domain to another, from one place to another, from a laugh to a *kri*. Sometimes it is enough to turn, to wander, to take a *chimin* (wandering line) to pass "*d'un mòn à un autre mòn*". West Indian cities are not open-air stages. There are no large squares or avenues, but *ouélélément*: a perpetual intrusion and infringement of space (it is said/shaken from the inside



and the outside). Everything is jostled around and once the door is unfolded or broken down, we come across the most distant, which is nevertheless, right here, the closest. In this configuration, it seems difficult to impose a structure of inside/outside (public space/private space, visible/invisible...) and therefore to delimit the contours of the places of contemporary art (to take the example that interests us here). The capharnaum is so close, the landscape as oulélé is so close, that they are almost necessarily inserted in any attempt at scènification. The question is therefore not to produce scenes, well-defined and guillotining lines which, once again, will turn our bodies into reserve materials and laboratory materials; nor even to import models such as that of the museum which, if they are not reinterrogated, will have difficulty functioning and finding their audiences...

### **Foreshore, pause**

Let's rather try to imagine and make our place as a strategic tuft only to be able to better separate and fly elsewhere, towards other tufts...

### **Bifurcation D**

The very category of "performance art" is still vague in the West Indies. This is probably because there are not many places or events devoted to it (let us recall the initiative of the FIAP Martinique festival co-founded by Annabel Guérédrat and Henri Tauliaut). But we cannot, either, call for the *importation* of categories, in order to imitate them, under

the pretext that *we lack something*. The discourse of lack often obliterates, not only *what we have in spite of everything*, but above all *what we gain from not having*, for example: an absurd list of dysfunctional and ultra-costly museums or art places that function on the precarization of subaltern bodies. So the question is not what is missing, to list and inventory it in order to call for someone (from the outside) to grant all the wishes. The question is rather to study how it already works, sometimes differently, in the corners, in the lakous, in the cayes, and to try to extend it in order to constitute, not a scene, but what we (there are already a few of us using the term) call a *relational plateau*. A sort of network of solidarities that does not seek to confuse but to link in the gap.

### **Unknown bifurcation...**

Whether in feminist studies, *queer* studies or black studies, the concept of performance and performativity (mostly) accounts for the subject's capacity to act, to produce and to materialize itself, and thus to change, by narrating and *writing itself*. From the West Indies, we would like to briefly reflect on this dimension of performativity from the concept of *de-exposure*. Firstly, we propose the idea that if there is performativity, it is not due to the body alone. When we rise up, it is never the body alone that rises up and enunciates (represents) itself: it is the dunes, the seabed, the ghost towns, the still burning stones, the dogs, turtles, crabs, mongooses and cockroaches that seek refuge in the unstuck breaths, the smoke



of a nearby burning box. *The limits of our own bodies are themselves indefinable.* It is in this sense that, if there is a performance, it engages all around. To take the example of this event that hosts my text here (the FIAP Martinique 2022 festival): almost all the performances have chosen the outside, the forest, the outdoors. It would be wrong to think that this was only because of a lack of space, and even if this was the case, it is not the most interesting thing. The most interesting thing is that space is indefinite and that it is always caught in an outside that is immediately political. It is a precipitate of the political, as we saw with the debunkings, where what we call “art” directly confronted the political. In short, we say that performativity engages, here, the whole space (and not only the subject).

Secondly, it would probably be necessary to deepen the analyses of several thinkers, artists and dancers in order to reflect on the distinction, not only linguistic but conceptual, between the *kò* and the body. There would be,

to schematise, the body-cadaver (perhaps: flesh, meat, the computer machine) and the body-body, the one that *de-exposes itself in the exposure of the other-body.* Between these two bodies, in their entanglement, there would be a whole history of Caribbean-Black resistance. Performativity, in this case, is not a way of making oneself visible or recognizable, nor even a flight into a sometimes fantasized cut, it is a way of appearing in order to disappear, disappearing in order to appear elsewhere, the infinite bifurcation of a monster, a chimera, an excess or an aporia, a body in another body...

### **The diamond, finally**

At the end and next to the exploded speech: a thought for these days at the Petrification Savannah, for the uncertain relationships and for the always unexpected encounters...▪

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*Chris Cyrille ou Ti-Krab*

# Five moving frames : notes on FIAP22

by Javier Contreras Villaseñor

*For Annabel Guérédrat, Alicja Korek, Paola Lavra & Nathalie Hainaut*

## 1

As soon as I begin to write these lines about FIAP22, I realise that the images, the affections, the reflections, the experiences are piling up. It is impossible to give a full account of how much this meeting moved me, how deeply it marked me. There are many stories - scenic, emotional, political, biographical - that were brought into play at FIAP22. I do not think that any of us who took part in the event came away from it untouched, unmoved. It was a radical experience of encounter, of knowing each other, of listening to each other, of dislocating, of de-centring, of inquiring into the mandates that construct us in an oppressive way by virtue of our shared, and at the same time diverse history of subjection to colonial and patriarchal logics. But it was also, and above all, an exploration of the liberating, audacious, passionate, embodied responses – from ritual to exercises in tenderness – that we have given to appropriate the capacity to proclaim ourselves as free subjects.

Recalling the basic definitions of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 2009) on the epistemologies of the North and the South, I think it could be said that FIAP22 was an encounter-sampler of performative enunciations, reflections and affective dialogues rooted in the poetics of the South. As the Portuguese author tells us in the case of epistemologies, in his theoretical proposal, north and

south are not Manichean geographical concepts but political-cognitive places. The north corresponds to those epistemological frames articulated to the sphere of authoritarian dominations (of class, gender, race, etc.) and the south to the elaborations of complexifying and liberating knowledge. Continuing with these ideas, it could be said, as I suggested earlier, that at FIAP22, performative, video, visual and reflexive proposals were presented, analysed, shared, inscribed in the endeavours of the poetics of the south, that is, those that seek to give voice to the socially invisible and that construct new subjectivities, new and different ways of feeling, naming, experiencing and desiring. From this poetic south, artists, curators, theorists from Guadeloupe, Haiti, Brazil, the United States, Santo Domingo, Cuba, Canada, France, Poland, Mexico, Germany and Italy, travelled to Martinique.

And, it goes without saying, a central element of the meeting was that of performative corporeality, that which puts into play, into skin, into flesh - through this complex dialectic between presentation and representation - our histories, our memories, our impulses, our inscriptions, our joys, our wounds, and resistances.

## 2

And what has been said in these performances, what procedures of enunciation have been used to make a critique of





the world or the assertion of obvious or implicit ethical and political stakes? Once again, I must say that it would be difficult to describe all the works presented, all the actions carried out. I will therefore choose to name what seem to me to have been the poetic logics present at FIAP22:

1. Stage ritualisation as an action vindicating the imaginary of Afro-descendants in feminist, solidarity, community and anti-colonial terms.
2. The recovery and vindication of the affective truth contained in minimal loving actions - even if they may seem kitch - in the face of the daily violence of patriarchal subjectivity.
3. The exercise of something like empathic journeys, proposed as ways of putting into practice the act of accompanying, listening to and standing in solidarity with women who have been violated.
4. Feminist and anti-colonial performance intervention in parades or public marches.
5. The recovery of children's play as a way of constructing a friendly civility and encounter.
6. The experience of the power of poetry as an experience born of shared transparency in song, look and touch.
7. The desacralisation of the prestige of patriarchal virility.
8. The performative critique of the social performativity that organises and hierarchises genres.
9. The widening of the spaces of performative action to bring the stage, the street, the garden, the beach into dialogue.

All this gave rise to moving experiences, impossible to outline, so I will only sketch: the dedication and commitment of those invited to a ritual formulated as a participatory stage experience (it was a privileged moment to witness how a new collective subject is being built, our own, common), the listening to an indigenous song presented nakedly in a minimalist action (the ancient voice that sustains and caresses us), the participation in a children's beach game (it was to honour the essential gesture of accompanying and sustaining the joy of the other, of the other), the journey along

the banks of a small river that became a sort of pilgrimage through the seasons of violence against migrant women, the jubilant irruption of Afro male characters carrying their rebellious smiling corporealities to the sea, the acts of feminine healing updating rituals of self-care in the middle of the sweetness of a river, the round in a park singing together a children's song while kites raise seeds of our part of the world, a skirt set on fire on the hill of a park surrounding the will made body of a soridary woman, the public assumption of a decentring of the usual gender normativity, the dance homage to a grandmother really embodied in the gestures of the performer, etc., etc. There were numerous bets, challenges and searches, enunciated from a powerful and moving consequence.

### 3

In a vaguely remembered conversation with Brazilian friends, someone argued that the brutal deterritorialisation brought about by colonial policies against African communities led Afro-descendants in the diaspora to reterritorialise their bodies and culture. I mention this because I do not think it is a coincidence that FIAP is taking place in Martinique. I think, for example, of the artistic journey of Annabel Guérédrat, one of the central organisers of the meeting, and I notice a significant aesthetic transfer – which is also political – from the “dance” to the “performative” that goes in this sense of territorialisation itself. Let us say that – and I know I am being outrageously generalising and approximate – if the “dance” is a field traversed by a priori aesthetic norms, the performative discursive logic, at least in principle, supposes

that each presentational/representational act inaugurates its own codes. Of course, I am aware that the situation is more complex and that performative discursivity can also be stabilised and homogenised. However, this distinction serves me to approach the profound effort I see in the “French” Caribbean to poetically generate a rebellious and free embodied subjectivity. The processes of performative enunciation would allow us to critically confront the histories inscribed and operative in the density of our first, immediate and unrenounceable condition (the corporeal) and to explore new paths of self-constitution of the subjects. That is why it does not seem random to me that in a social situation as complex as that of Martinique (in which the past and present of coloniality are articulated), performance artists as rigorous and radical as Annabel Guérédrat emerge, and that a festival as intense and significant as FIAP is convened on this beautiful island.

### 4

In particular, as a “Latin American” (and here I remember the Martinican theorist who participated in the meeting and who, based on his individual positioning – “*You do not know my real name, because my surnames were those of the slavers*” – confronted us with the political necessity of self-enunciation), I am also grateful to FIAP because it allowed me to experience for the second time that mixture of closeness and strangeness that I am questioned by when I visit the island. It is clear to me that although Martinique, Guadeloupe, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and our continental America share similar histories of



colonisation, similar processes of acculturation and hybridisation, and similar demographic floods, it is also true that imperial policies have separated us. And where there should be mutual understanding and camaraderie in struggles, we still walk parallel paths. In this sense, FIAP is, as I have already written, an effort to build bridges between the south of the world, in general, and between the south of the different Americas, in particular, an endeavour that has allowed me to get to know a little of the island's creative hotbed and to start walking together for good.

## 5

And the conversations in the early morning picnic areas, and the collective dialogue with the sea, and the sky as the blackest ink of the Caribbean, and the kindness of elective affinities, and the old and new friendships, and the collective reflection, and the playful forms of reflection, and the companions of creation and the varied languages, and the interweaving of dignified rage, sweetness and creativity, and the new worlds we are building, and... ▀

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*Javier Contreras Villaseñor*

*Santos Boaventura de Sousa (2009), Una epistemología del sur: la reinención del conocimiento y la emancipación social, Siglo XXI y CLACSO, México*







# Bonus

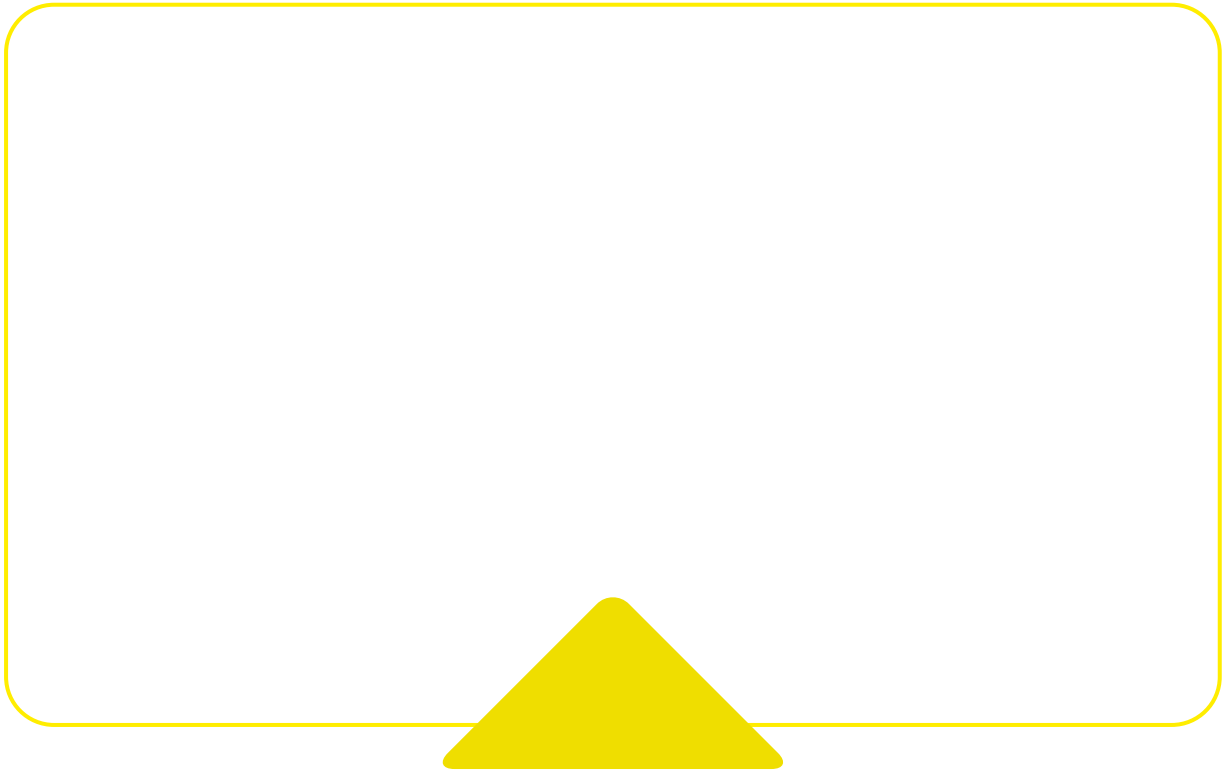
***Making-off of the Laboperformance at Savannah of Petrifications***

***Making-off for the 2022 Festival in Fort-de-France***

# Laboperformance

## Savannah of Petrifications

FIAP#22 Making-off  
mai 2022



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# Performances in Fort-de-France

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mai 2022



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137  
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↘ **FIAP website** [fiap-martinique.com](http://fiap-martinique.com)



↘ **Event co-directed by**

Annabel Guérédrat, Alicja Korek & Henri Tauliaut

**Festival International  
d'Art Performance  
| FIAP22 Martinique**



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↘ **FIAP facebook** [Fiap Martinique](https://www.facebook.com/FiapMartinique)



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So it was a very political 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of FIAP Martinique. We succeeded in creating a powerful counter-power with our naked and clothed bodies, our silent, multilingual, sung and shouted words, our Uranian and Chthonic energies.

This subversive counter-power was nourished by the collective, multiplied

questioned, disturbed and transgressed the established order. Each performance was a miracle, an earthquake, a caress, a healing, a tale, a coup d'état.

The artistic proposals, some meticulously prepared and thought through over months, others spontaneous and minimalist, all weaved together an incredible narrative that, while questioning the past, looked to the future. Talking about performance, performing and getting others to perform are a form of militancy and socio-politico-artistic commitment, here in Martinique of course, but also from a Caribbean and global perspective.

The performances were as much rituals and places of passage as they were moments of consecration and reunion, of coming together and taking care of each other.

Performing to stay alive, performing to challenge the dominant powers, performing to transmit, performing to remember, performing to heal, performing to reinvent.

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*Annabel Guérédrat, Alicja Korek, Henri Tauliaut*  
(F-d-F, septembre 2023)



FIAP MARTINIQUE

