

Salimatu Amabebe
Anamaya Farthing-Kohl
Valencia James
Nivedita Madigubba

CACOPHONIES OF RESISTANCE

1st year MFA Show

Worth Ryder Art Gallery UC Berkeley Department of Art Practice

Text copyright 2023 by individual artists unless otherwise credited.
Images copyright 2023 by individual artists.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without
written permission from the copyright holders.

Published by the UC Berkeley Department of Art Practice on
the occasion of the exhibition "Cacophonies of Resistance" at
the Worth Ryder Art Gallery

Publication date: April 2023

Exhibition Curator: Gazelle Samizay

Program Advisor: Greg Niemeyer

Worth Ryder Art Gallery Director: Gazelle Samizay

Chair: Ronald Rael

Text: Leila Weefur, Kavena Hambira, Greg Niemeyer

Graphic Designer: Olivia Ting

Cover image: Anamaya Farthing-Kohl

CACOPHONIES OF RESISTANCE

1st year MFA Show



TABLE OF CONTENTS

06 *CACOPHONIES OF RESISTANCE*

by Kavena Humbrira

08 Salimatu Amabebe

012 Anamaya Farthing-Kohl

016 Valencia James

020 Nivedita Madigubba

024 Artist Bios

CACOPHONIES OF RESISTANCE

A permanent fixture in the annual calendar for the Department of Art Practice, is the First Year Master of Fine Art Show. At the onset of each Spring semester, a new cohort of graduate students is invited to construct their work within and point to ideas beyond the Worth Ryder Art Gallery (WRAG). Located inside the Anthropology and Art Practice Building, in recent years (2021), the institutions' Office of Environment, Health, and Safety (EH&S) had forced the exhibition to go entirely virtual because of the pandemic. Notwithstanding their own set of limitations and possibilities, the cohort of 2024 features the work of Salimatu Amabebe, Anamaya Farthing-Kohl, Valencia James, and Nivedita Madigubba.

Meanwhile, as the uprisings of 2020 faded distantly into our collective review mirror and the economy opened, workers across The United States grew further empowered by a tight labor market. Spurred on by a resurgence of organized labor and an increase in union membership across multiple sectors, over 48 000 academic employees across the 10-campus University of California system, embarked on an unprecedented industrial action. The Graduate Student strike on Monday the 14th of November 2022 was notable for more reasons than one. Coincidentally, it was the first time this cohort of artists would meet to outline the pith of their first group exhibition, *Cacophonies of Resistance*.

Much like the relationship between subject and filmmaker, the artists continuously contend with the work they produce. Contentions that come to mind, include:

- Who gets to make art?
- Who can or may interact with it?
- Who is permitted to represent it?
- How is it accessed and encountered?

In large part, the work presented in *Cacophonies of Resistance* directly grapples with these questions. One might even argue that the precarity of the moment, affected by the largest (ever) higher education strike in US history, inevitably solicited the response we see in the gallery. Yet, the MFA candidates understood that the conditions that drove thousands to the picket lines across campus permeate broadly within our communities. Demonstrably, much of the work speaks from a different position and attempts to express resistance in art form.

By shifting the equal, square-shaped sides, floors and straight boundary walls of the white cube, language is translated into material. As the unsettled body adjusts to understand how we look at spaces, so too does it learn from them. The body, including the absence of (certain) bodies, becomes a throughline for the different modes of resistance forged together in the show. When Nivedita Madigubba draws from cultural traditions in India, when Valencia James reimagines the Barbados Landship movement, and when Anamaya Farthing Kohl exposes the plunder of Silver from Cerro Rico in Potosí, Bolivia, *Cacophonies of Resistance* investigates the legacy of colonial systems and the impact of extractive industries in the birthplace of global capitalism.

The works in the WRAG equally takes aim at the university. Institutional structures such as the university gallery, have historically exploited and excluded Indigenous, Black, Queer, Trans, AAPI, and People of Color.

- How does one transform a disguised neutral space to actualize an equitable (Black) space?
- Do they function together?

In his immersive video installation, Salimatu Amabebe communicates an opaque black language (dance) and offers no translation. If you know, you know...simple.

Inside a completely blacked-out space, the walls of the gallery disappeared, and the floor seemed to disintegrate beneath the feet. In the book *"The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study"* (2013), authors Fred Moten and Stefano Harney argue that "the societal respectability that universities provide should be rejected." Further, universities are part of a societal structure that turns "insurgents into state agents" (the professional-managerial class, in socialist terms) and upholds existing capitalist society. In this context, the four artists adequately employed a strategy of subversion that supplemented protest within and beyond the institution. "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game," said the late Feminist writer, Audre Lorde.

After a nearly six-week strike that abruptly altered the Class of 2024's first semester, the gallery doors opened to the public, and the annual First Year MFA Show ran as scheduled. Simultaneously, the agreement reached between the University of California and representatives of the academic student employees (United Auto Workers union), was hailed as a new national standard for working conditions and wages at public institutions. However, as the dust settles across the manicured lawns of the UC's campuses, the struggle in the streets rages on.

Looking to the future, one is less hopeful. Dozens of States across the union will consider the promulgation of anti-transgender legislation and policies that ban or severely restrict both

surgical and non-surgical gender-affirming treatments. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, over 19 States have pre-filed or enacted voting restrictions since 2021. A year later, The Supreme Court of the United States fundamentally eroded women's protections for abortion by repealing Roe vs Wade, against nearly 50 years of precedent.

According to data released by the organization *Mapping Police Violence*, US law enforcement killed at least 1,176 people in 2022, making it the single deadliest year for police violence nationwide. Much like the structures that govern our relationship to the institution, the abhorrent murder of Tyre Nichols by five Black Memphis Police Department officers in Jan 2023, underscored the systemic and structural racism that is baked into the fabric of our society.

Its significance notwithstanding, truthfully, hope is not a strategy. What we require are spaces for artists like Nivedita, Valencia, Anamaya and Salimatu to make work that reimagines a future where we are all free.

Kavena Hambira, MS, MFA

Post Graduate Fellow 2023

UC Berkeley - Department of Art Practice

A LIMITLESS BLACK

Community, for Salimatu Amabebe, is more than just a fellowship, a gathering in familiarity, or a space in which commonality is a primary focus. In Amabebe's practice, community is a material. His initial exploration of this was with Black Feast, a food-based collective dedicated to gathering community in the name of a gustatory experience. In this context, food was the vehicle for bringing together artists, writers, and creative minds alike in the spirit of forming a culinary kinship.

GRASS, a video installation that Amabebe describes as multi-sensory, brings land and body together to create a full-bodied and abundantly Black experience. Considering his proclivity for engaging with the mouth, it seems fitting for their intentional visual pursuits to extend to the other parts of the body. In this case, he uses the darkened enclosure of a video room to explore the limitlessness of Blackness and invites viewers to engage in the tactile, taking off their shoes to walk onto a floor covered in a thick layer of soil. The feet, a durable yet vulnerable part of the body which we rarely expose in the context of a museum or gallery, are literally and figuratively planted in Black space. Once your feet and the dirt are acquainted the body is instantly cooled by the temperature of the earth beneath you and yet it is a reminder of interconnectedness — just as the earth cools your feet, your body transfers its own warmth in exchange.

In an effort to disintegrate the whiteness of traditional gallery walls and dissolve the confines of the Worth Ryder Art Gallery, a multi-channel video is stretched across the room, creating a panoramic view of Black bodies. Black bodies in

fellowship, in movement, in praise of queer liberation. Although not visible, there is the presence of a spiritual body in the room floating in between you and the dancers, in perfect sync with the percussive-heavy soundtrack. Everyone in the room is in command of this invisible ancestral guidance offering us, Black bodies, a reminder of the ownership we have of our own movement and our ability to resist translating ourselves for anything outside of the spaces we define.

It is important to note, Amabebe's community-seeking practices are as much a part of the work evidenced in their choice of collaborators. Artists and performers NIC Kay, Gabriele Christian, and Styles Alexander, are among the bodies in this movement ensemble set to a backdrop of melodic, Jazz-inspired music by Zekarias Thompson. It is in this collaborative effort that Amabebe's focus on creating spaces through shared labor and support further emphasizes the limitless nature and generosity Black space can offer us.

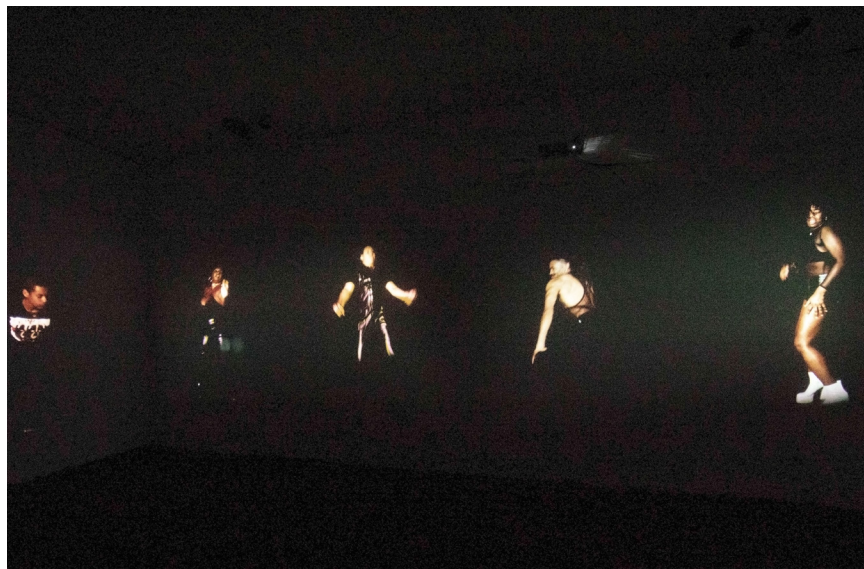
In this new work, they have discovered in community a material that is fluid and dense, malleable yet resilient, and boundless in possibility. If what we know of community offers anything, it is a life of infinite discovery. **GRASS** is a celebration of an infinitude of Blackness.

— Leila Weefur





GRASS, dirt, 5-channel video projection. Projection duration 10m50s. Photos: Marcel Pardo Ariza.



Credits:

Dancers: Talia Monet, Naike Swai, Gabriele Christian, Audrey Johnson, Styles Alexander, NIC Kay, Eniola Fakile and Christian Washington. Audio by Zekarias Thompson. Deep gratitude to all of the artists who collaborated in making this work possible.

VOICES IN THE MINE

Qhipa, is a mysterious portrait of Bolivia and its role in globalization — a portrait of a particular period, a set of circumstances, and its resulting consequences. Anamaya Farthing-Kohl's installation features a kinetic sculpture situated at the center of a textual projection and a dialogue between a protagonist, named Sinsombras (without shadows), and a narrator, the Virgin Mary. At the heart of this story are three apparent antagonists: extractivism, patriarchy and capitalism, systems to which Bolivia, and much of South America, fell prey.

This sculpture, the Virgin Mary as plastic bag, is seen bathed in pink and purple gradient lighting while flapping in a wind that is only present in the narrative space, like an animated micro-gesture that extends a ghostly digital figuration into our material reality. It is a plastic bag flapping in the wind, but it has been lifted directly out of the Bolivian mountains of Sumaj Orcko and into the center of the dark recessed room in the back gallery. This Virgin is casting a shadow. Behind it, lining the floor, is a trail of silhouetted feet looking as if they are standing in the pit of Cerro Rico, the silver mine. Perhaps they are the feet of Sinsombras.

A trail of eco-feminist rhetoric guides the voice of María, the scrolling text, begging to lift the veil and expose the underbelly, the unfortunate exploitation whose casualties are womxn and the sacred earth. The epicenter of this violence is in Potosí, a city in southern Bolivia, with a potent history. Potosí is on Sumaj Orcko, a mountain that sits sternly in the highlands. It wasn't until it became Cerro Rico in 1545 that trouble began to stir. For over 300 years, Cerro Rico produced more than 60% of the world's silver, pressed into the form of the Real de a

Ocho, the Spanish dollar, right in the infamous town of Potosí. It is in the shadow of this history where our protagonists and the audience are caught in a whirlwind.

Qhipa, and all of its separate parts, the narrative dialogue, the sculpture, the image of Sumaj Orcko plastered on the wall, form elements of a video game; or at least the voice is telling us that is what it is: simulation with a voice narrating your way through a painful historical sexual violence inflicted on the womxn and land of Potosí. Like a video game, the audience is given agency through the commanding voice of María.

Much like the strings tugging at the delicate corners of the animated Virgin Mary, Farthing-Kohl pulls together many overlapping socio-political issues weighing this region down. While the face on the plastic bag appears to be seductive and cartoonish, the wind and shadow that carries it are thick with anger and grief from the scars of capitalism.

— Leila Weefur

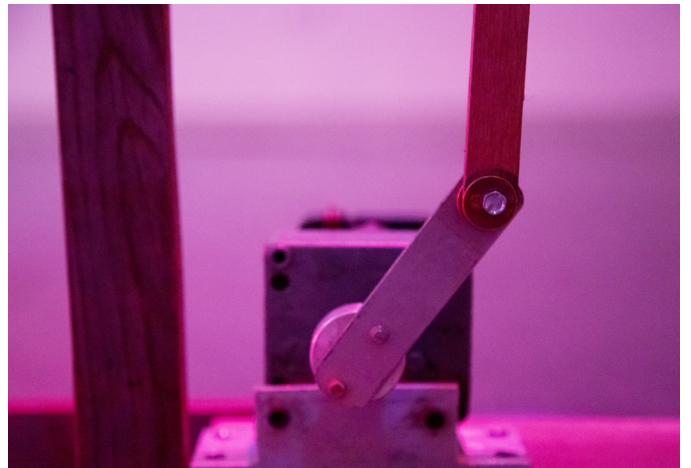
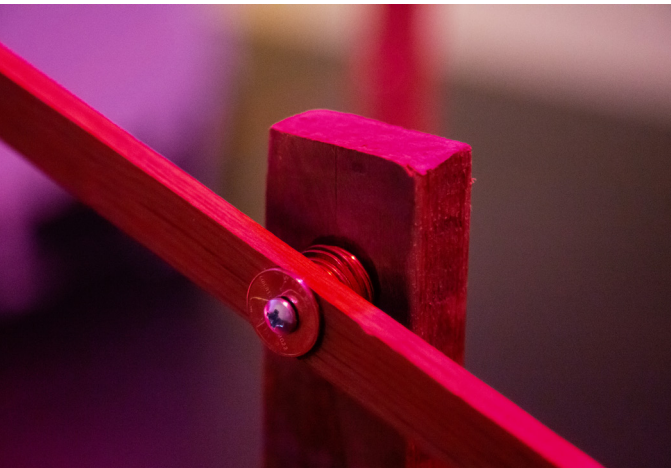
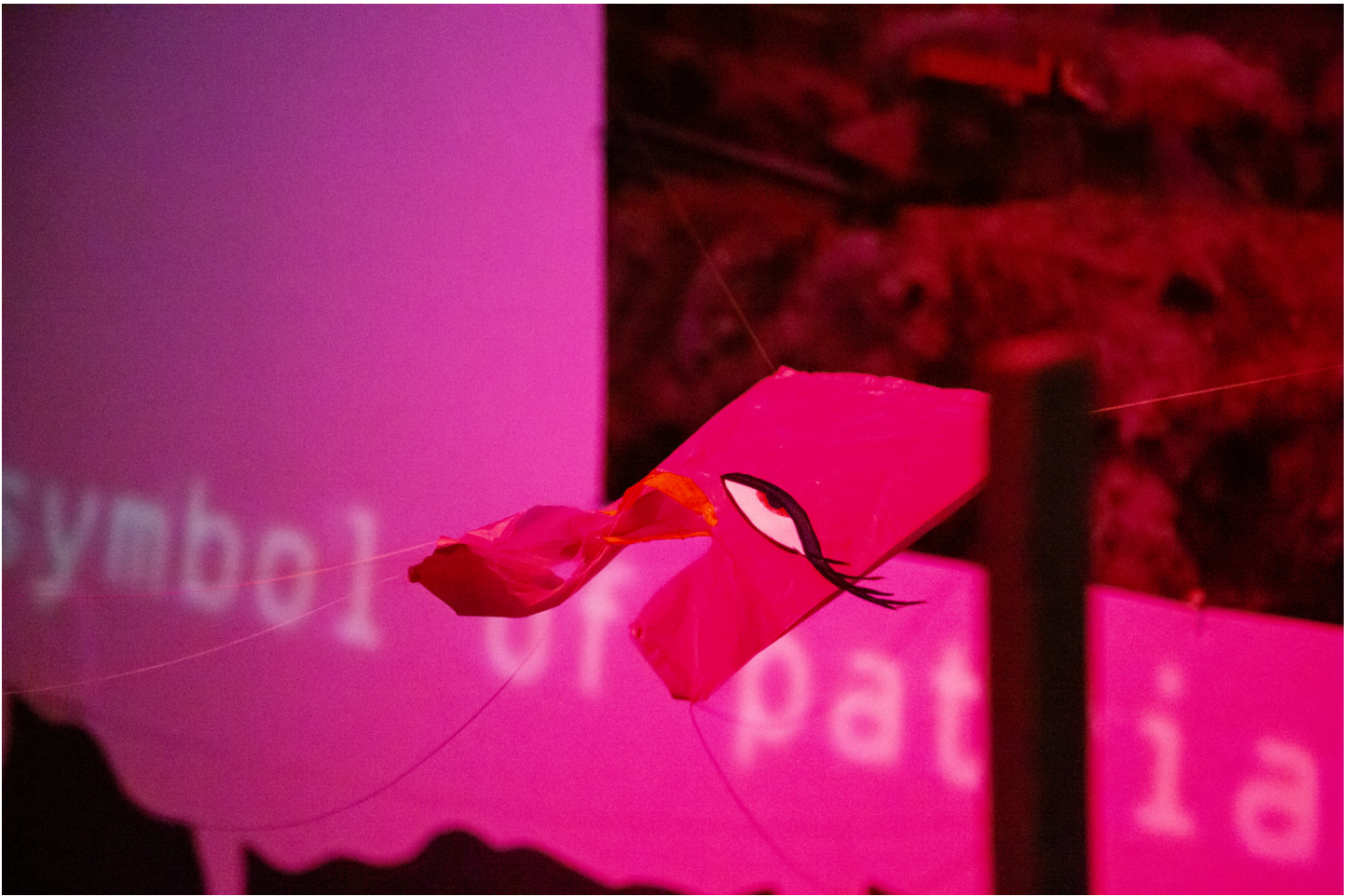
“Now, let me share your quest with you: to help heal the Cerro, to help her to understand that her body is not the enemy, that she can be her own ally, that feeling empty after the abuses of extractivism is not because the Cerro did something wrong.”

— María



what it meant to be the Mother of God.







Qhipa, 2023. Story, translation, voice of Reyna Ayala, recording of Cerro Rico in Potosi, Bolivia, March 13, 2021 at 10:22 am, recording of breathing September 12 2022, 11:47 pm Mexico City, Mexico, wood, plastic bag, electrical tape, latex paint, rainbow string, 18 pennies, motor, bolts, inkjet print. Subtitle duration 08:41. Images: Julia Fairbrother and Anamaya Farthing-Kohl

Credits:

Much of the research for this project started from visiting Potosi in 2021 during a residency Anamaya did at Galería Kisoko, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia.

Anamaya would like to thank Reyna Ayala, Félix Méndez, Juan José Toro, Isaac Tejada, Juan Tellez, Ana Hanko, Samuel Rosales, Amaël Marchand Mendoza, Andrea Ancira García, and everyone at the Casa de la Moneda in Potosi, Bolivia and Galería Kisoko.

SPIRITED TRADITIONS

An installation anchored by relics from Barbados, **Landship Valiant Star** is a materialization of a speculative narrative rooted in tradition and cultural preservation. Standing at its center you feel as though you are witnessing artifacts come to life. This installation, outside of an art context, can be read as a collection of archival specimens from Barbados, taunting its colonial past with ownership of its own history and a memorial to a historical figure. Valencia James complicates this perspective as she gently ushers in sentimentality through an important auto-biographical detail of her own family lineage. A large plastic bag filled to its brim with dried sea moss carries with it a history of the Valiant Star, a boat led by Valencia James' own Great Grandfather, Captain James. According to the artists' story shared through a large wall text, Captain James traversed the Caribbean transporting sea moss for commerce.

In each object lives a voice, both individual and collective, whispering oral histories into the gallery. Just a few steps from the sea moss is a table full of carefully placed memorabilia, including a replica of Captain James' uniform acting as a shadow to his portrait. The Landship Valiant Star flag is very clean and austere and hangs as a tender textile object in the center of the action, commanding its own importance among the others.

Many of us are familiar with the silhouette of a maypole. An erected wooden pole extending into the vertical, far above the average human eye, and drawing the line of sight into the sky. In James' installation, the Maypole can almost reach the ceiling, causing the blue, red, black, and green satin ribbons to elegantly cascade down past its dark wooden figure to the floor of the gallery. This towering presence of an old colonial tradition invites warmth into the familiar

ceremonial folk dance James is reimagining, to celebrate the critical socio-cultural movement in Barbados known as the Landship. The Landship is more than a brief parade or performance, it is an organization founded by a collection of Bajan seamen who had served in the British Royal Navy and the Black working class. James exclaims that this restaging of the Landship is not about imitating traditions of colonial Britain but instead is a collective action for survival and resistance to their colonizer: A people gathering to reaffirm their rightful place as the world's newest republic.

To further illustrate the depths of the narrative, the installation was accompanied with a performance from the artist. Set to a soundtrack of crashing ocean waves, James adorned herself in the same brilliant white naval uniform and gave a pregnant pause before crowning her head in the captain's hat. Contemplating journey, her body mirrored the motion of waves and the surrounding stillness invited the ghosts of past lives into the room. After the performance, James invited seven members of the audience to restage the Maypole dance at the center of the gallery, assembling each of those slippery ribbons into a colorful braid and swathing the rigid wood in a dance.

Landship Valiant Star feels like a folktale told through a personal archive and historically significant elements that, when staged together, act as a record of James' lineage, sharing its path with the many spirits of treasured Bajan histories, and at the same time set a course for future solidarities with the new nation.

— Leila Weefur





The Landship that Made it to Sea

The Landship is a movement in Barbados, established by the Black working class for collective survival. Members participated in a community saving system called “meeting turn” or “susu”.

They created a dance that embodied the movement of a ship and performed the maypole ritual in naval uniform.

In October 1937, Marcus Garvey, controversial political activist, visited the island for one night and Landship members formed the guard of honor. This meeting had a lasting impact on the Landship and labor movements in Barbados.

This installation tells the speculative story of the Landship Valiant Star that was inspired by this brief encounter to purchase a boat they called the Valiant Star of course. Captain James, Valencia's great grandfather, sailed the Caribbean with the Valiant Star crew, trading in seamoss.

They spread the message of Pan-African unity and shared their dances or “manœuvres” as an embodiment of Afro-Barbadian self-determination.



Landship Valiant Star, 2023. Reclaimed wood, satin ribbon, printed fabric, vinyl wall text, dried seamounts, framed digital print, indigo textiles, conch shell, silk flowers, glass vase and vessels, clear glass gems, seashells, candle, bottled Florida water, water, reclaimed naval uniform and live performance, Variable Dimensions.

Credits:

Maypole woodwork by: Samuel Wildman

Graphics by: Wes Taylor

Live performance music by: Stefan Walcott

Music for maypole dance by: Wayne "Poonka" Willock

Special thanks to Botond Bogнар, Daniel Chapman, Eniola Fakile, Vernon and Elizabeth JAMES, Greg Niemeyer and the MFA 2024 cohort.

INSTRUMENTS OF LANGUAGE

Language is much like music, offering simultaneous combinations of contrasting sounds, shapes, and words. And, like music, language cannot exist without silence. Nivedita Madigubba's, ***before the words roll off our tongues***, is an installation best described as a sensorial collision and polyrhythmic exploration of language. She juxtaposes materials and processes to comb through the manifold knowledge systems that only further complicate our experience of language.

The first element of the installation that greets you is a wooden object, appearing as a podium at first glance but in close proximity, it transforms into an invitation. It is personified by an inscription whose voice gives you permission to engage — "Listen with your palms." This text quietly suggests an immediate disruption of any perceived solitude and silence living in this wooden object. As your hands meet the surface of the raw wood, a percussive dialogue is transmitted, animating every cutaneous nerve in your hands with raw vibrational force. It is in this relational circumstance that the viewer is transported into an instrument of translation. Madigubba's apparatus reconfigures the practice of translation through tactile percussion, blurring physical boundaries so we may learn the conditions of language beneath the material by listening with something other than our ears.

In an attempt to unsettle architectural boundaries, Madigubba installs a moveable divider wall at an acute angle, pushing the viewer into a tight corner. Along this wall is a series of figures made of gypsum (or plaster of Paris) arranged in such a way that resembles the structure of a word or sentence, albeit illegible. According to

Madigubba, it is a sentence or at least a reference to one, and it is meant to be obscure. While this configuration of characters anticipates a confoundment from the viewer, it also antagonizes our expectations of legibility. For most of us, this sentence doesn't say anything recognizable but for her, it is a space of cultural familiarity. This abstracted quote, "...holds a memory of a Sanskrit poem from a Vedānta text that speaks of a true self or a universal self known in Sanskrit as Brahman."

On the inner wall is a short, looped video projection of hands with pieces of chalk. This is yet another example of the tactile properties of language, only we are not participants, just witnesses. These hands pictured here are scribes, using the friction between the dark surface and the pale white chalk to create words, which are also illegible. Layered directly on top of this projection are three wooden sculptures casting shadows onto the wall and video behind it. Each sculpture is a variation of the other, a series of a single letter, "I", conjoined in the shape of a circle. It is capitalized and drawn out, the circular formation almost mimics the shape a mouth might make when saying it out loud.

before the words roll off our tongues, is proof of Madigubba's careful study on the body's way of performing the language, reflecting back to us the ways we seek to understand or misinterpret through our many sense receptors.

— Leila Weefur





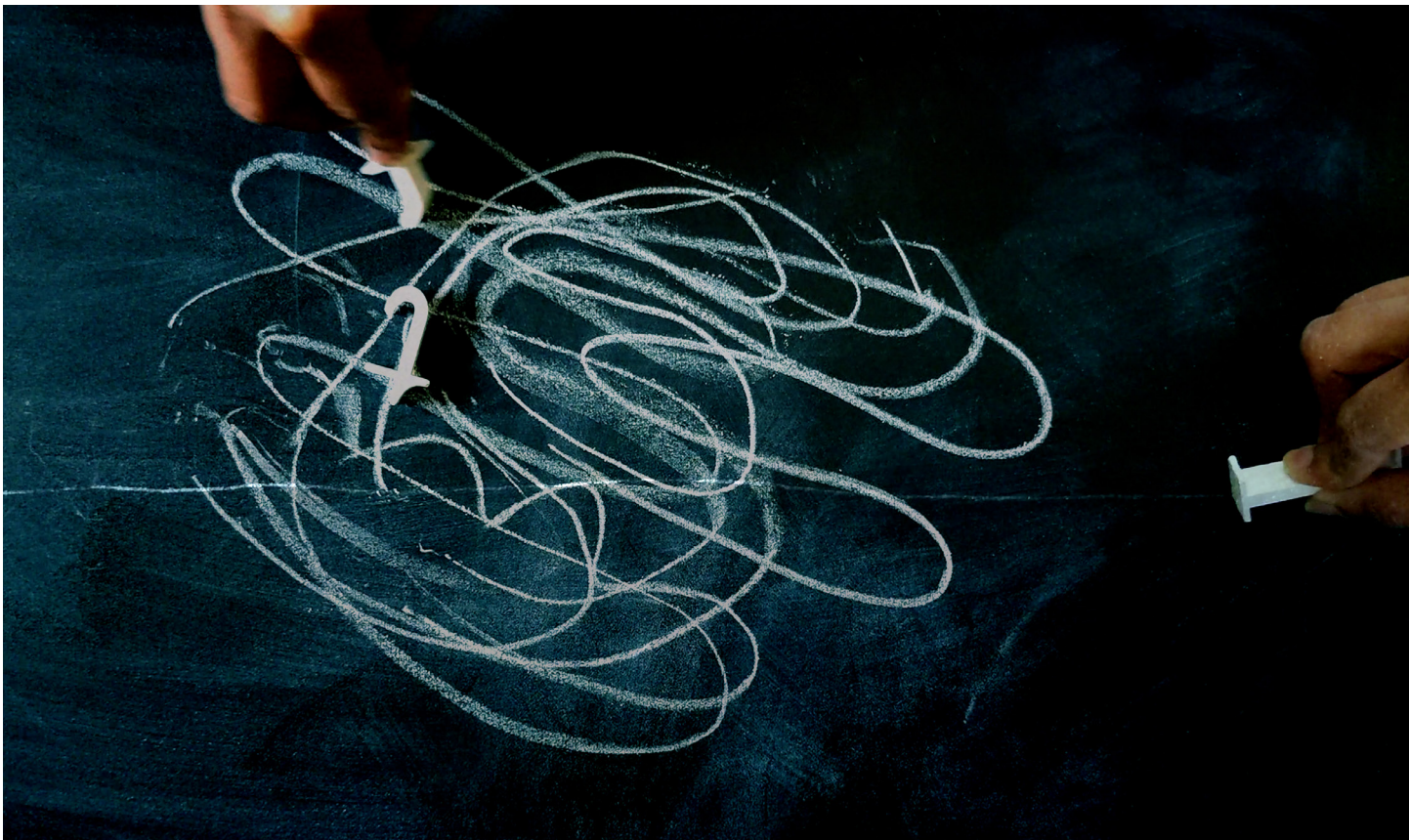
before the words roll off our tongues, 2023, gypsum, wood, tactile transducer, audio recording of rhythms performed on gallery wall, projection duration 02:32, gypsum cast english letters on blackboard, Variable Dimensions.
All images by Julia Fairbrother (this spread) and Greg Niemeyer (previous page)

Credits:

performance of sound by:
Anamaya Farthing-Kohl
Juniper Harrower
Nivedita Madigubba
Aditya Valluri



023



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Salimatu Amabebe

Salimatu Amabebe (they/he), is a trans, Nigerian-American chef and multimedia artist, working in food, film, photography, sculpture and installation. His work focuses on the intersection of food and art while centering community activism, African diasporic culinary traditions and Black queer/ trans liberation. Amabebe is the founder/ director of Black Feast — a culinary event celebrating Black artists and writers through food.

Amabebe received his Bachelor's Degree in Film Production from Bard College in 2010. He is a recipient of the 2021 Eater New Guard Award; his work has been featured in Vogue, The New York Times, Eater and A24's cookbook, Horror Caviar. Salimatu is a recent awardee of The Museum of the African Diaspora's 2023-2024 Emerging Artists Program (EAP).

His exhibition will open at MoAD in September 2023.

www.blackfeastdinner.com

Anamaya Farthing-Kohl

Anamaya Farthing-Kohl (Bolivia, 1988) is an artist who makes work in collaboration with the public, often asking for help in defining, circulating, or discovering her work. The things that Anamaya makes are projects for participation: they are nuclei for thinking. Anamaya attempts to remove herself as the sole author by inviting others to participate, with the hope of making each thing a producer-place. The network of authors are held together by one central nucleus: the thing. Anamaya is less interested in the thing she created than the network of interconnected parts that circulate it.

She received a BFA in sculpture from Tyler School of Art, Temple University, 2011, in 2014 she received a Fulbright to go to Mexico and study in SOMA's educational program. She has shown her work with solo shows at Fylkingen and Moore College of Art (in collaboration with Nathalie Wuerth), Refugio Para Emergencias Visuales, Galería 10,000, Crater Invertido, SOMA, and CASA TENEMOS in Buenos Aires. Anamaya has participated in group shows in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Sweden, Japan, and the United States, some venues include: the New School, Museo de Arte Carillo Gil, NoAUTOMÁTICO, Museo de la Ciudad, Ladrón Galería, Estudio Marte, La Ene, Casa Maauad and EX TERESA Arte Actual.

In 2022, Anamaya was in residence at RAIR in collaboration with Nathalie Wuerth, that same year they received a grant from the Foundation of Contemporary Art and Globus Opstart support from Nordic Culture Fund. In 2021, she was a resident at Kiosko Gallery in Bolivia. In 2019, Anamaya received a Stockholm Stads grant, in 2017 she was a fellow at the Luminary in Saint Louis, Missouri, and resident at TransAcciones Utópicas Centro Rural de Arte, Cazón, Argentina (2016). In 2015, she received an AMEXICD grant from the Mexican Government.

Her work has been published online, in books and magazines in the United States, Brazil and Mexico.

www.anamayafarthingkohl.com

Valencia James

Valencia James is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher from Barbados interested in the intersection between dance, theater, technology and activism. Her work has explored remote transdisciplinary collaboration, immersive interactive technologies and the development of novel, artist-driven open-source software tools that push the boundaries of live performance. Currently, Valencia is investigating how experiences involving performance and play can reveal or reimagine hidden histories from the Caribbean, and how cultural and spiritual forms have been used by communities in active resistance and problem-solving in the face of colonial systems.

Valencia was commissioned by Mozilla Foundation to co-curate an online experience based on Octavia E. Butler's Parables series with Detroit-based artist, Ill Weaver for MozFest 2023. She has been a 2021-2022 Sundance Interdisciplinary Fellow and a 2020 Rapid Response Fellow at Eyebeam NYC.

She has presented work at TEDxGöteborg, the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Buenos Aires, ISEA 2015, SIGGRAPH 2021, Gray Area Festival 2021 and the 2022 New Frontier exhibition at Sundance Film Festival. Valencia has served on the jury of the SIGGRAPH 2021 Art Gallery and has moderated panels on art and artificial intelligence and women in data visualization in 2020 and 2021 respectively. She has been a guest lecturer at the Brendan Bradley Integrative Technology Lab at New York University and has given talks at several universities including the New School, Rhode Island School of Design and York University, among others.

www.valenciajames.com

Nivedita Madigubba

Nivedita is curious about the collision of different knowledge systems brought on by colonization and the social, economical, and political forms they take today. Her practice engages with products of cultural processes – found images, ritual vessels, the sound of words, architecture, etc.— as materials that embody memories. Additionally, she reframes cultural memories that are weaponized by nationalism today.

She is a student of Vedānta philosophy, a trained Bharatnāṭyam dancer, and has been part of several group and solo performances in India. What is being (un)learned, translated, fragmented, and forgotten are questions that Nivedita often poses when studying Vedānta through its English translations. These questions seep into her art practice as investigations of the impact of colonization and its consequent embodied memories.

Working in collaboration with artists extended her attention to mechanisms of tangible and intangible borders. She is a member of a collective of transnational artists—We Da Pepo. As a collective, We Da Pepo foregrounds the complex and contradictory experiences of living in the United States of America as immigrants.

Nivedita holds a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute and has been awarded the Barbara McKee Memorial Scholarship, The Leap Prize, and recognition of Academic Achievement.

www.mnivedita.com

ABOUT THE UC BERKELEY MFA PROGRAM

The Masters of Fine Art program at UC Berkeley was established in the 1930's and has since focused on supporting artists with a particular interest in creative research. Admitting about 6 students per year, the intentionally intimate and interdisciplinary program, led by a diverse faculty, focuses on research-driven studio work.

This research includes material, critical and creative research. Material research focuses on media, materials and techniques supporting creative expression. This may include the development of pigments for paint, code for new media, or new printmaking methods.

Critical research aims to explore assumptions inherent in existing works of art as well as their curation, collection, circulation and reception. At times this includes considering historical forms of art and culture from contemporary viewpoints.

Creative research seeks to derive inspiration and insights from a wide range of humanistic, historical, political or technical contexts. From such foundations, artists can develop new ideas, expressions and forms through synthesis of diverse sources.

For *Cacophonies of Resistance*, the artists engaged in all these forms of research. Valencia James entangled and unveiled histories of anticolonial performances in Barbados and also investigated sea moss and maypole construction. Salimatu Amabebe critically researched white cube power dynamics by holding space for Black Queer self expression and did material research on soil as a gallery floor. Nivedita Madigubba critically peeled back the layers of systemic colonialism in English language education in India and explored illegibility as a medium. Anamaya Farthing-Kohl examined one of capitalism's origin stories from the perspective of a mountain and built a mechatronic Mary to share that perspective.

Beyond creating their own work individually, the four artists all created a space of radical care for each other in a particularly trying time, when the University of California was shut down by a massive and extended graduate student strike. The situation inspired the group to reconsider everything, from the way we met to discuss the show to whether and for whom an art show should be prepared. When, in the end, the labor dispute was resolved and the show opened on time and on campus, the power of the students' solidarity, listening and care remained present and palpable. It was their show, showing everyone how they collaborated closely, held space for each other, and held space for uncertainty. Standing at a forking path, they took all paths at once, together.

The MFA program is two years long. In the first year, students participate in a First Year show at the Department's Worth Ryder gallery. In this context, students can experiment with manifestations of their work wildly, and take a wide range of risks. The gallery director, Gazelle Samizay, and the MFA program director jointly curate this show over the course of six weeks.

The First Year show serves as a reference point and testing ground for the second year Thesis show which is curated by Berkeley Art Museum curators and presented in the BAMPFA galleries and screens.

From there, students graduate and pursue careers as exhibiting artists, authors, recording artists, arts managers or art faculty in institutions across the United States.

Applications to the program are due online around December 15 of every year. The application review process is based on faculty assessments of artists' portfolios and, of course, the material, critical and creative research that supports the work.

— Greg Niemeyer



ART PRACTICE

University of California, Berkeley
Department of Art Practice
347 Anthropology and Art Practice Building
Berkeley, CA 94720
art.berkeley.edu

Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA