



# **2017 Visible Award**

## **Temporary Parliament**

### The Jury as a Public Event

Saturday, 2 December 2017  
Queens Museum, New York

## Forewords

While looking back at the impressive numbers that define the life of Visible so far – over 240 projects from 100 plus countries, selected by 110 curatorial advisory board members – we feel, even stronger, the need to imagine new ways to sustain and promote artistic visions for social change across the globe. At its fourth edition, the Visible Award travels overseas to bring its temporary parliament at the Queens Museum in New York. We are extremely honored to introduce this collaboration with a pivotal art institution in the contemporary ecology of socially engaged artistic practices. Many artists who had their projects featured in the previous editions of the award have exhibited or imagined their artworks thanks to the Queens Museum's work and the multifaceted communities that animate its programs and audiences. It has been a quite unique opportunity to work in a museum that was once a parliament (the United Nations from 1946 to 1950) and we welcome you to this temporary assembly, with heartfelt thanks to Laura Raicovich, Elvira Dyangani Ose, the Decorators and all those who made this day possible.

**Matteo Lucchetti and Judith Wielander**  
Visible project co-directors

Welcome to the Visible Art Award Temporary Parliament. We are so pleased to be hosting this convening at the Queens Museum. Both the history of this building as the first home of the UN General Assembly and the Queens Museum's own mission as a civic institution that presents avant-garde culture in ways that engage us all, makes this a perfect match. The Queens Museum, like Visible, believes that innovative projects with an origin in art can and should become visible in, and have an impact on, society at large. Many wonderful artists—some of whom have shown here—work every day to make this true. Today we have an opportunity to learn and debate some of their work and ideas, and, in the end, select the one or the group that embodies these goals in the most complex and powerful ways. We are thrilled that you have chosen to spend the day with us to participate in this vibrant conversation.

There is one artist in particular whose commitment to the power of art to make change in the world created the Visible Award; thank you Michelangelo Pistoletto for your enduring vision. Additionally, Visible's co-directors, Matteo Lucchetti and Judith Wielander have been inspiring collaborators, and the Decorators have provided a deeply appropriate physical setting for the Parliament. Further, the Queens Museum's director of public programs, Prerana Reddy has brilliantly managed this complex effort. And, without the ongoing support of the Fondazione Zegna none of this would be possible. Special thanks also to Roland Augustine and Lawrence Luhring and Tauck Rizau Innovative Philanthropy for their additional, generous support.

**Laura Raicovich**  
Director, Queens Museum

There is a common thread among the artist collectives shortlisted in the current edition of the Visible Project Award. Namely, their firm commitment to togetherness; their critical responses to a given sociopolitical state of affairs; and their formulation of platforms of collective knowledge. In doing so, these artist collectives produce strategies engaging in new—and at times, radical— educational, political and entrepreneurial endeavors. Naturally, each of them has something distinctive, reflected in the necessary specificity of their approach to their context, to what is local, and to what is habitual. It is perhaps in the connection to everyday life and its multiple agents and temporalities, where one begins to realize how art can be a true mode of knowledge and, as such, to become a decisive political tool as an agent of social change.

**Elvira Dyangani Ose**  
Senior Curator, Creative Time

**visible**



**QUEENS MUSEUM**



The Visible Award is the first European award for socially engaged artistic practices in a global context. At its 4th edition, The Visible Award will conduct its biennial Temporary Parliament in the United States, at the Queens Museum on December 2, 2017.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will convene a Temporary Parliament that will engage new audiences with nine art projects shortlisted for this year's award. Members of the public and assembled experts and guests from many fields will gather to experience presentations, discussion, and debate, followed by an open vote that will determine the winner of the 2017 Visible Award. The day will be exceptionally introduced by artist and Artistic Director of Cittadellarte, Michelangelo Pistoletto who will present the Award with an inaugural speech. This year, the Award will be chaired by **Laura Raicovich**, Director of the Queens Museum, who will host the debate together with **Matteo Lucchetti and Judith Wielander**, co-directors of the Visible project, and **Elvira Dyangani Ose**, Senior Curator at Creative Time, who will be the advocate for all of the projects.

The Queens Museum has a long-standing commitment to socially engaged art, and its New York City Building was the location of early meetings of the United Nations from 1946-50, making it ideally suited to host Visible's Temporary Parliament. This history was influential in determining the Queens Museum as a partner, and will impact the design of the physical space of the Parliament which is being led by London based design studio The Decorators.

The projects that will be publicly debated by the jury have been shortlisted from a long list of 60 art projects proposed by the 2017 Visible advisory board.

Friday November 19, for the month leading up to the public jury session, the Queens Museum will hosts a screening program on these nine shortlisted projects in the Museum's cafe.

The jury session — live streamed on December 2 at the Visible website ([visibleproject.org](http://visibleproject.org)) and open to interaction through social media — is not simply a dialogue between experts, in order to select an exemplary socially engaged art project, but also a moment for sharing knowledge and collective learning. In the process of assessing the winning project the jury will also offer an opportunity to deepen the debate around artistic engagement in the public domain.

The Visible project, initiated by Cittadellarte — Pistoletto Fondazione in partnership with Fondazione Zegna, is a contemporary art research project devoted to producing and sustaining socially engaged art practices in a global context. Operating since 2010, it has taken a global and interdisciplinary approach to researching the physical and theoretical spaces in which these practices affect society. In 2011, Visible initiated the biennial Visible Award, the first European award for socially engaged artistic practices.

The Visible Award seeks to offer a platform for innovative projects that have the potential to become visible in fields other than artistic ones. Visible's approach has been unique from the outset for piloting the public jury format at the 2013 Award at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. Subsequently, in 2015, the Award was organized in collaboration with Tate Liverpool at the Liverpool City Council, where the notion of a Temporary Parliament was inaugurated. The public's engagement in the assessment and voting on the the art projects transformed the Award into an occasion for collective learning and the expansion of the discourse instigated by and around the projects.

The Visible Award is a biennial production award of 25,000 Euros that aims to support ongoing socially engaged artistic projects. In doing so we create, in collaboration with leading museums and other art institutions, discursive platforms in the form of public juries. These temporary open parliaments offer an opportunity for innovative artistic projects to be made visible in the public domain, crossing boundaries between art and society more broadly.

The Visible Award is looking for artistic practices that can create areas for reflection and mobilization, acting as a field for action within the public domain. The award celebrates art practices that operate as a catalyst for bringing about responsible change and social transformation. The Visible Award is a worldwide network of connected projects that, for example, aim to rethink our cities in their approach to urban and rural communities; put into question education formats while reconsidering different ways of sharing knowledge; support alternative models of economic development and new ideas for the allocation of resources; rethink public access to information; highlight the priority of ecological and environmental needs, as well as explore novel participatory democratic political paradigms.

The award sustains the development of art in a responsible relationship with the complex dynamics of social change. It offers artists real opportunities to work on and produce new visions of the world that can have a significant impact on a shared future. The award intends to give room to a rethinking around the role of art in the public domain in order to focus on new forms of commitment in art and on the relationships between the production of art, science, and culture.

## Previous Winners

2011 *8th Festival de Performance de Cali* by the Colombian collective Helena Producciones

2013 *The Silent University* by the Kurdish artist from Turkey Ahmet Ögüt

2015 *Salt* by the Karrabing Film Collective, Indigenous media group based in Northern Territories, Australia

## How does it work?

Visible renews its Curatorial Advisory Board biannually focusing on curators whose research and specific interests are oriented towards those artistic practices that find a correspondence with the aim of the prize. Every advisor is asked to nominate a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 artists/projects. proposed artists and collectives are then invited to submit their artistic project. The socially engaged artistic project must be an already existing one, which needs support to continue its activities, expand its horizon and impact, or evolve its formats and outcomes. Parallel to the nomination process there is an open call to submit projects, from which those meeting the selection criteria are added to the long list of proposed projects.

The projects shortlisted by the Visible Council (Charles Esche, Matteo Lucchetti, Francesco Manacorda, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Laura Raicovich, Judith Wielander, Andrea Zegna) enter the jury phase that, since 2013, is held as a public event and live streamed on our website. In 2013 the jury was held in collaboration with the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, and in 2015 the jury took place on 31 October in collaboration with Tate Liverpool.

## How to Vote?

After registering for the event on the Queens Museum website (<http://www.queensmuseum.org/events/the-visible-award-2017>) participants will receive a voting card at the entrance of the Temporary Parliament. On the card voters can tick the box corresponding to their preferred project in the voting session that will take place around 5:15pm. Votes will be counted immediately and will help select the winner of the 2017 Visible Award.

## Schedule of the day



2015 Visible Award, the jury as a Temporary Parliament in the Liverpool City Council Chamber, 31 October 2015.

### 10.00am – 11.00am

Registration and brunch

### 11.00am – 11.15am

Welcome by Michelangelo Pistoletto and Laura Raicovich

### 11.15am – 11.30am

Introduction to the jury by Matteo Lucchetti and Judith Wielander

### 11.30am – 12.30am

Presentations of the 9 shortlisted projects and videos by Elvira Dyangani Ose

### 12.30pm – 12.45pm

Coffee break

### 12.45pm – 02.00pm

First round of debate (selection criteria)

### 2.00pm – 2.15pm

Coffee break

### 2.15pm – 5.15pm

Second round of debate

### 5.15pm – 5.30pm

Voting & coffee break

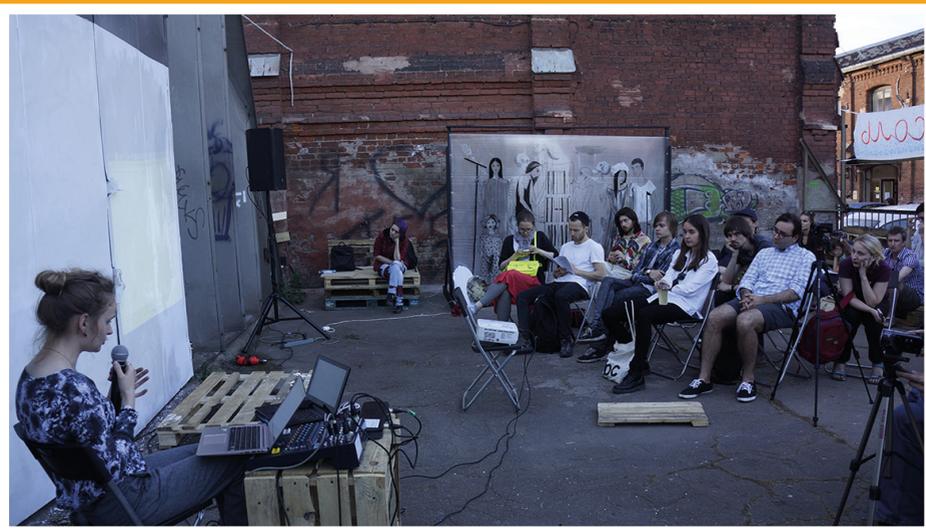
### 5.45pm – 5.50pm

Announcement of the winner of the Visible Award & Skype with the winner

### 5.50pm – 6.00pm

Closing Remarks

<b>The Shortlisted Projects</b>	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Texts</b>
<b>The School of Engaged Art</b> by Chto Delat (Saint Petersburg, Russia), proposed by Martina Angelotti	<b>11</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Brigada Puerta de Tierra</b> by Jesús 'Bubu' Negrón and Luis Agosto-Leduc (San Juan, Puerto Rico), proposed by Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga	<b>13</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Hunger, Inc.</b> by Elia Nurvista (Yogyakarta, Indonesia), proposed by Tang Fu Kuen	<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Sakiya – Art/Science/Agriculture</b> by Nida Sinnokrot (Ramallah, Palestine), proposed by Nat Muller	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>The Reading Room</b> by Narawan Kyo Pathomvat (Bangkok, Thailand), proposed by Simon Soon and Tang Fu Kuen	<b>19</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Inhabitants</b> by Pedro Neves Marques and Mariana Silva (New York, USA), proposed by Margarida Mendes	<b>21</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise</b> by Renzo Martens (Former Unilever Palm Oil Plantation, Lusanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo), proposed by Victoria Ivanova	<b>23</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Social Botany, Land and Turf</b> by Xu Tan, (New York, US; Shenzhen, China), proposed by Xiaoyu Weng	<b>25</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>IsumaTV</b> by Zacharias Kunuk (Igloodik Hamlet, North Baffin Island, Canadian Arctic Archipelago), proposed by Candice Hopkins	<b>27</b>	<b>42</b>



## The School of Engaged Art

(Saint Petersburg)

Since 2013

## Chto Delat

proposed by Martina Angelotti

### About

The School of Engaged Art is a radical art education initiative with the goal of establishing a community of creative workers who use art language as a tool for the transformation of society based on the values of justice and equality. The school is established and operates inside Russian social and political situations where basic democratic freedoms are under threat, in conditions that offer no support whatsoever for a critical culture, and where there are no academic programmes in contemporary art at all. This situation demands the development of its own tactics and methods as to how to survive and reclaim the access to a larger public sphere.

The curriculum of our school is a hybrid of poetry and sociology, choreography and street activism, political economy and the sublime, art history and militant research, gender and queer experimentation with dramaturgy, the struggle for the rights of cultural workers with the 'romantic' vision of art as a mission. A central component of our school is the focus on collective practice. We are convinced that a community of learners together are able to challenge the status-quo of artistic life and appeal to society at large.

In last four years we worked closely with about 120 young professionals who now play a decisive role in local public life, organising public campaigns (feminist-queer, precarious workers, conferences and shows). The project is realised with the support of Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Moscow and Chto Delat Mutual Aid Fund.

### Who

Chto Delat was founded in 2003 by a group of artists, philosophers and writers from Russia. From the very beginning, Chto Delat co-initiated different activist campaigns: Russian Social Forum, May Congress of Creative Workers and more. Chto Delat runs the space Rosa's House of Culture, has participated in theatre festivals with Learning Plays and has been part of many cultural platforms like *Truth is Concrete*, *Former West*, Creative Time and biennales including Sao Paulo 2014 and Istanbul 2009.

[chtodelat.org](http://chtodelat.org)



### **Brigada Puerta de Tierra**

(San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Since 2015

### **Luis August Leduc and Jesús 'Bubu' Negrón**

proposed by Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga

#### **About**

Puerta de Tierra (PDT) is a neighbourhood founded in the 17th century, located in the periphery of the historic urban centre of Old San Juan, in Puerto Rico's capital. PDT has a strategic and historical value in Puerto Rico. Its most important resource is its own people who, for centuries, have struggled and survived adversity and injustice. Today there is blight, noticeable urban decay, an ageing population, lack of ownership, and a disenfranchised young working class that fights to stay in their community despite an inequitable real estate market, which forces them either to leave or to remain in an isolated, poor, unsafe, and deteriorated urban ghetto.

*BRIGADA PUERTA DE TIERRA* (BPDT) is a grassroots artist collective formed in 2015 mostly by children and young community members, centring its activities on the preservation and well-being of the neighbourhood, its history and its people. BPDT organises horizontally and operates through four key concepts: self-management, consciousness-raising, strategic planning and collective decision-making.

BPDT uses art as a tool to challenge top-down standard urban development practices. For the past two years BPDT has succeeded in an outreach community campaign with the slogan 'AQUÍ VIVE GENTE', engaging residents and raising awareness on the role that youth empowerment can play in flourishing a sustainable and inclusive community-centred development. This campaign frames our development theory and creative problem-solving approaches. As a result, BPDT has made the accomplishment of bringing the San Juan Municipality to negotiate with the PDT community for the acquisition of two abandoned buildings to be developed into community-driven Social Centres.

#### **Who**

Jesús 'Bubu' Negrón (1975, Barceloneta, Puerto Rico) is an artist whose work is characterised by minimal interventions, the re-contextualisation of everyday objects and a relational approximation to artistic production as a revealing act of historical, social and economic proportions.

Luis Agosto-Leduc (1976, San Juan, Puerto Rico) is an artist interested in community groups, structures of care and support, utopian architectures, toxic colonialism and political ecologies.

[brigadapdt.org](http://brigadapdt.org)



**Hunger, Inc.**  
(Yogyakarta, Indonesia)  
Since 2015

**Elia Nurvita**  
proposed by Tang Fu Kuen

### About

Hunger, Inc. addresses the issue of food and its relation to economic, political, and social class within the context of urbanity in Indonesia. It looks deeper into the spectrum of poverty, from mental aspects to structural problems.

Rice is more than just a staple food in Indonesia; it is linked to political economy in the country. Rice has also been used as a political tool. An example of this is the RASKIN programme, a subsidised rice programme for low-income households, which has often led into conflicts; from bad quality moldy rice and corruption among bureaucrats, to the exclusion and inclusion of receiver households that have sharpened horizontal conflicts.

As an aesthetic intervention, Hunger, Inc. together with people who live near riverbanks, created a series of events, including reconstructing the media clip of a crowd fighting for rice, commonly shown on TV news. This re-enactment was carried out by a group of people who have struggled with this issue and brought it into a performative context. Through this performance, we would like to bring the images seen on TV into real life as a catharsis.

We then created other events such as a parody symposium on the tendency of NGOs to 'sell' poverty to obtain funds from international aid agencies, as well as discussions about food commodities like sugar, coffee, spices, and palm oil, which have a long history in colonialism, economy and politics.

Hunger, Inc. is a way to build a long-term institution that focuses on reflection, discussion, building discursive strategies, and strengthening solidarity among people who live in a precarious condition. Through several activities linked to food sovereignty, the institution aims to create several experiments and speculations around autonomous solutions to the problem of poverty.

### Who

Elia Nurvita was born and lives in Yogyakarta. She is interested in exploring a wide range of art mediums with an interdisciplinary approach and a focus on the discourse of food. In 2015 she initiated Bakudapan Food Study Group. With Bakudapan, she has conducted research on food within socio-political and cultural contexts.

[elianurvista.com](http://elianurvista.com)



**Sakiya – Art/Science/  
Agriculture**  
(Ramallah, Palestine)  
Since 2016

**Nida Sinnokrot**  
proposed by Nat Mueller

### **About**

In search of an antidote to the neoliberal, alienating consumerist culture sweeping Palestine's cities and the increasing number of disenfranchised youth in our refugee camps and rural areas, Nida Sinnokrot along with architect Sahar Qawasmi, established Sakiya – Art/Science/Agriculture, a nomadic international, interdisciplinary residency programme with a mandate to bridge fading local traditions of self-sufficiency with contemporary ecological practices.

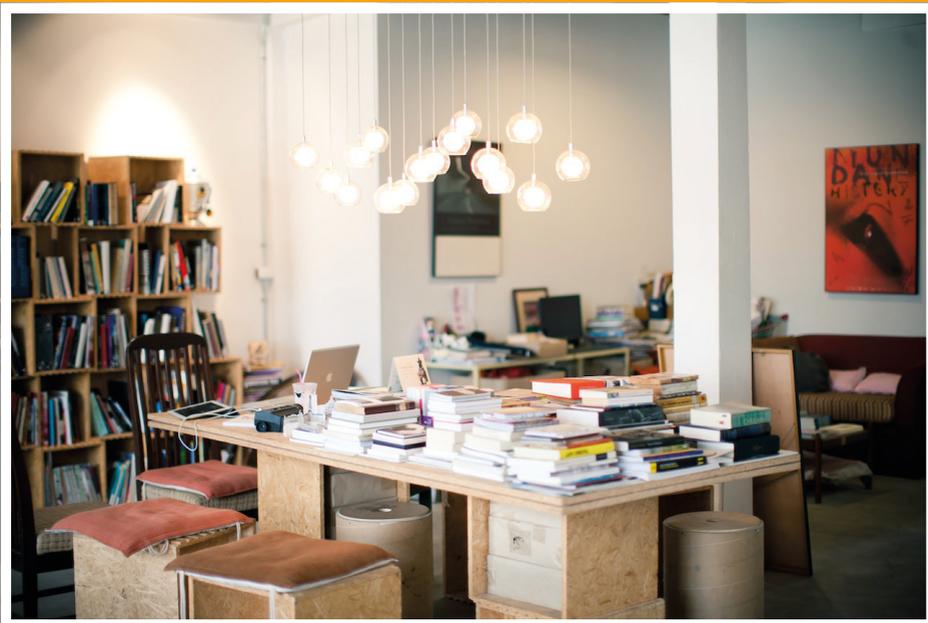
Sakiya's long-term approach maintains that through integrating farming and agrarian heritage into the fabric of contemporary arts and sciences, both sectors can be enriched, challenging the class divide between urban and rural, which characterises many cultural institutions in Palestine. The first phase of Sakiya, launched in 2016 during the Qalandiya International III biennial, in partnership with the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, was marked by the establishment of a Garden Laboratory with local agro-ecologist Saad Dagher. It facilitated such sustainable agricultural practices as botanical research; a Compost Centre innovatively made from modified cement mixers and serviced by local restaurants and residents; a Library Project; a regional, open source networked library featuring a custom built, portable BookScanner courtesy of Marcell Mars, in collaboration with Beth Stryker and Cairo's Cluster Group's PILOT library initiative and an inter-city Moving Garden project by the Danish artist Anika Barkan.

Framing these components, Sinnokrot curated Under the Tree – Taxonomy, Empire and Reclaiming the Commons, an academic roundtable discussion moderated by Dr. Shela Sheikh, on the colonial legacies of botanical classification featuring the participation of local academics and farmers including Dr. Omar Tesdell and Dr. Munir Fakher Eldin.

### **Who**

Sakiya is an international Art/Science/Agriculture residency programme with a mandate to bring international and local practitioners together for academic, artistic and ecological interventions emphasising sustainable practices across disciplines. Founded by artist Nida Sinnokrot and architect Sahar Qawasmi, Sakiya arose from a belief that cultural initiatives must recognise and halt the extremism affecting our societies, politics and environment alike and as such become a potent artwork in itself.

[nidasinnokrot.com/text/symposium/](https://nidasinnokrot.com/text/symposium/)



## The Reading Room, Bangkok

(Bangkok, Thailand)

Since 2009

## Narawan Kyo Pathomvat

proposed by Simon Soon

and Tang Fu Kuen

### About

The Reading Room is a contemporary art library, activity space, and project platform. One of its main obligations is a direct response to severe socio-political climate in Thailand, especially the realisation that there is a lack of public and independent space in the country. Therefore, it has focused on providing an open space for broader public discourse through diverse programmes including seminars, lectures, screenings, workshops, and politico-cultural projects, in order to create dialogue and discussion among people from various fields of knowledge and communities in Thailand. It does this through collaborating with diverse practitioners; from human rights organisations, activist groups, digital rights advocacy, independent arts and cultural collectives, academic institutions, literacy and literary initiatives, etc.

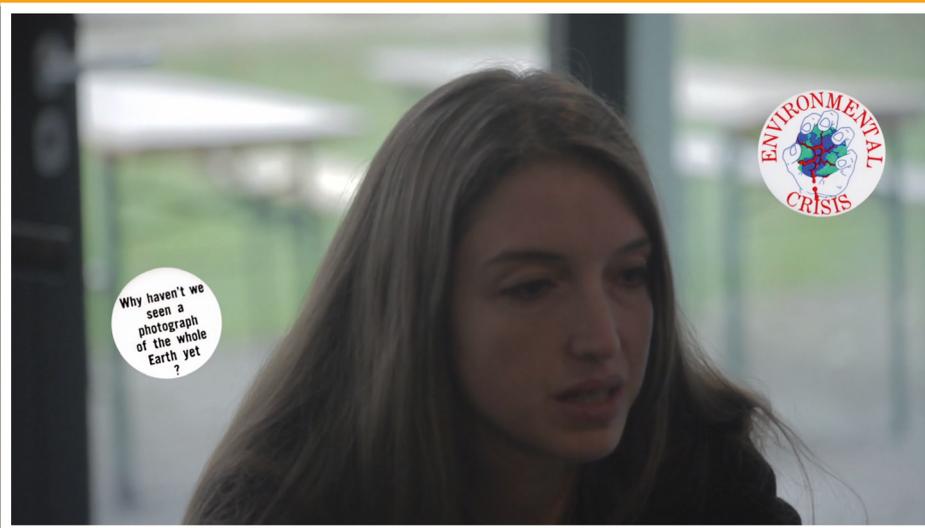
Under intense monitoring and censorship from the military government toward social and political oppositions, academics, journalists and activists have been primary targets. As one of the initiatives under surveillance and suppression, The Reading Room has adapted to simultaneously battling and evading these abusive powers through instrumentalising diversification, deviation, and subversion in producing events and programmes. This includes Sleepover project (a six-month project in which six diverse cultural individuals from Thailand and SEA takeover the space and produce series of public program that reflect socio-political stances); Night School (an eight-month alternative school programme on online culture), Rereading Group ( who reread and reinterpret classic works in sociocultural fields), Right Here, Right Now (a talk series exploring keywords from right wing ideology); and this year, the main series will focus on student movements in SEA and civic education.

### Who

How about The Reading Room opened in 2009 with a strong conviction in free and accessible knowledge and freedom of expression. The Reading Room has provided all resources for free, through onsite and online books, archive, and activities. It also commits to providing a safe space for activists and academics facing censorship and concentrates on creating cross-disciplinary and discursive exchange between diverse knowledge and practice.

[readingroombkk.org](http://readingroombkk.org)





**Inhabitants**  
Since 2015

**Pedro Neves Marques  
and Mariana Silva**  
proposed by Margarida Mendes

**About**

Inhabitants is a free, online video channel: a website and monthly distribution of video episodes on YouTube, Facebook, and Vimeo. The project seeks to respond to the emergence of citizen journalism and (very) short-form video as a native online genre. It is significant for us that a worldwide discussion is underway about social media bubbles and online news amidst rising political conservatism. Artists can critically contribute to such debates, deconstructing terms such as post-truth and questioning the circulation of information. Drawing from art, we offer videos that hopefully play with the often stifling conventions of such online video while retaining journalistic urgency and the capacity to reach non-art audiences.

Throughout our seasons we have focused on environmental and social justice, with episodes that introduce complex themes such as: geoengineering, resource extraction and neocolonialism; video and social media literacy; corporate personhood and video as legal evidence. We'll continue to develop these themes in the upcoming seasons: mapping the geopolitics and economics of deep sea mining for rare earth minerals; indigenous land rights in Brazil and the repatriation of indigenous human remains in the US (Adam and Zack Khalil).

From the start, it has been our ambition to expand inhabitants by inviting (and paying) artists to develop political videos and campaign videos in collaboration with activist groups. To this day inhabitants has no fixed partners (beyond episodic collaborations listed below) and works mostly pro-bono. This has guaranteed editorial independence but risks our sustainability and capacity to put such relationships between artists, journalists, and activists in motion.

**Who**

Launched in September 2015, inhabitants is in its second season with a total of 23 published episodes. It has worked with the institutions Max Plank Institute & HKW, Berardo Museum, Triangle US, and Contour Biennial 8; commissioned videos by artists Filipa César & Louis Henderson, and Adam & Zack Khalil; and the activist campaigns *Wages for Facebook* and *For an Oil-Free Future* against oil extraction in Portugal. It is in the early stages of a long-term campaign against deep sea mining.  
[Inhabitants-tv.org](http://Inhabitants-tv.org)



## Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise

(Former Unilever Palm Oil Plantation, Lusanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo)  
Since 2014

**Renzo Martens**

proposed by Victoria Ivanova

### About

CATPC was founded by plantation workers, trapped at the bottom rung of global value chains, to take centre stage in debates around inequality, the ecological crisis and the legacy of colonialism, by developing a platform to gain agency both in and outside the art world.

Since 2014, the cooperative has produced and exhibited figurative sculptures. The sculptures are made in clay, 3D scanned and uploaded into the cloud. They are then cast in chocolate originating from African plantations. Overwriting existing value chains, CATPC started to sell these chocolate sculptures, so far grossing €150,000, resulting in a net profit of €50,000. Since 2016, CATPC invests all profits into buying back land to start inclusive and ecological post-plantations. Last January, Matthieu Kasiama opened CATPC's first US solo show in NYC and found himself on the front page of the NYT arts section. The next step is to repatriate the art institution back to the plantations that have historically financed them (Tate, Van Abbe and Ludwig museums have all been financed by plantation labour).

In April 2017, CATPC will repatriate a quintessential White Cube, designed by OMA, on the former palm oil plantation of Lusanga, formerly known as Leverville, and curate its opening exhibition. An internet server located inside the White Cube will relay CATPC's research to plantations and white cubes globally. The White Cube will become a legitimisation machine, validating and relaying strategies of resistance worldwide. Plugged into international networks, this apex of the art world will expose inequalities, and generate the visibility and capital needed to design a blueprint for a social and ecological shift. Here, the art world will be put to the service of a new ecological and economic model: the post-plantation.

### Who

In three years' time, the Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC) has grown from an informal workshop to a structured cooperative, with museum shows in Africa, Europe and the U.S. More importantly, its status and the founding of its museum on the plantation allows CATPC to attract the most vocal activists and artists to its birthplace, the former palm oil plantation of Lusanga, reversing the usual brain drain affecting rural zones in the Global South.

[humanactivities.org](http://humanactivities.org)



**Social Botany, Land and Turf**  
 (New York, Shen Zhen)  
 Since 2013

**Xu Tan**  
 proposed by Xiaoyu Weng

### About

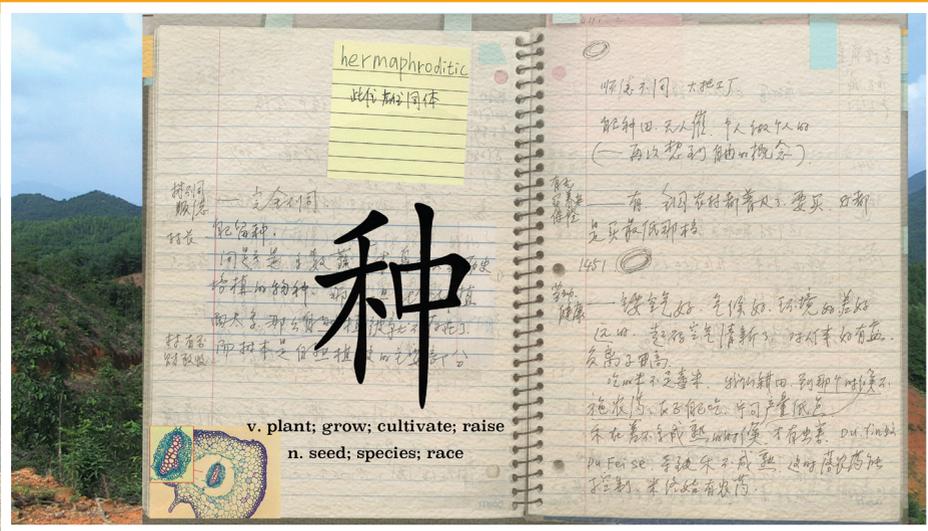
My proposal is to continue work on my project, Social Botany–Land and Turf. This is part of the Keywords Laboratory series. I have established a relationship with a number of groups in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) of China: farmers and especially the Tanka people who live on the river. The conversations that I have with individuals in these groups and my interest in expanding my research to other groups is the core of my current art practice.

Started in 2012, Social Botany is a research-based project using my Keywords methodology to combine social studies and artistic practice. One of the past studies was made in an area of the PRD, Guangzhou, where the Tanka people live. The Tanka people are from the traditional fishing villages of Southern China. They have lived on boats and the water for hundreds of years, therefore they are unable to own land. After 1949, the Tanka people underwent a significant change. They moved into an agricultural life, possessing land-use rights, but they lost the rights again in the 1980s, so they had to go back to living on the water. The latest problem they face is the increasing pollution of their water environment. The Tanka people are losing their basic living, and they have to discover a new way of life. Using my show at OCAT in Shenzhen, which included workshops with activist students and urban farmers, I brought the plight of the Tanka people to their attention and generated lively discussion on the theme of land-use.

I propose to continue to do deeper research on the land issues of PRD area, but I would like to expand this research on a global scale, creating a comparative study and educating people about the conditions of farmers and other agricultural workers both in China and in their own countries.

### Who

In the 1990s, I was in the Big Tail Elephant Group. My recent work combines art and research. In 2005, I initiated a research-based project *Searching for Keywords*. The project has evolved from *Keywords School* (2008) to *Keywords Laboratory* (2011). *Keywords Schools* were at the Venice Biennale (2009). I also worked with young Chinese-Americans in a special *Keywords School* in San Francisco Chinatown. Parts of the *Keywords* project have been shown in China, Japan, Europe, and the US.





## IsumaTV

(Igloolik Hamlet, North Baffin Island,  
Canadian Arctic Archipelago)  
Since 2008

## Zacharias Kunuk

proposed by Candice Hopkins

### About

In the Inuit language Isuma means to think or thoughtfulness. IsumaTV (thoughtful media) uses Inuit video art – community-based Inuit-language digital filmmaking – to record our cultural history, preserve our language, create jobs for youth and economic development, strengthen our legal right to be informed and consulted in mining developments on our land and express Inuit identity and point of view in a world globalized by new media technologies. Inuit culture is an Oral Tradition passed down through generations for four millennia by storytelling the knowledge in our heads; we have no libraries. In the past 50 years residential schools, town life and foreign TV disrupted our storytelling tradition as our last elders passed away. Inuit media art recreates oral history and knowledge for present and future generations, keeping Inuit storytelling alive in the 21st century. I was born in a sod house in 1957, never saw a white person until age 9. First I made whalebone carvings, then bought my first video camera in 1981; started Igloolik Isuma Productions with three partners in 1991; made our first feature *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner* in 2001. In 2008 we launched IsumaTV, the first website just for Inuit and Aboriginal films. In 2012 we built Digital Indigenous Democracy, IsumaTV's network of local servers to inform and consult Inuit on mining in communities where internet bandwidth is too slow and costly for Youtube or other media websites to work. Today IsumaTV carries 1300 Inuit films and videos, of a total 6000 films and videos in 80 languages worldwide, and brings the social, political and collective power of community-based media to remote communities on the wrong side of the Digital Divide. Next 5 years we hope to expand IsumaTV in Canada and around the world.

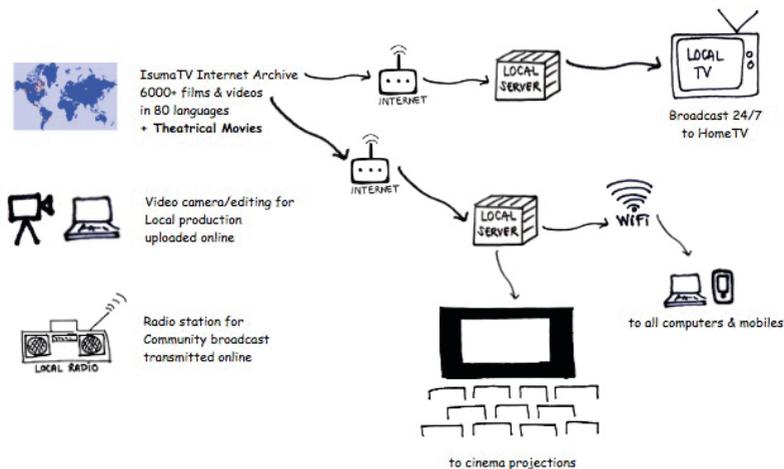
IsumaTV started in 2008 in Igloolik Hamlet, north Baffin Island, Canadian arctic; local server network expanded 2012-16 to Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Iqaluit, Clyde River, Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Taloyoak, Kugaaruk, Kugluktuk, Gjoa Haven, Old Masset and Skidegate (Haida G'wai). Located in physical communities (local servers, TV channels, local video production) and online in cyberspace, 6000 films and videos, in 80 indigenous languages, from 6 continents.

### Who

My Canadian name is Zacharias Kunuk, I have five Inuit atiiit. As a child, I had to wear number E356 on a leather disk around my neck, Inuit names being too confusing for government to handle. I moved from land at age 9 to go to school in Igloolik, finished grade 8. First video camera 1981; Isuma partners work together 1985; first drama *Qaggiq* 1988; *Atanarjuat* wins Cannes 2001; start Isuma Distribution 2004, IsumaTV 2008, Digital Indigenous Democracy network in 12 communities by 2016.

[Isuma.tv](http://Isuma.tv)

IsumaTV's local server network provides an  
Integrated Media System (IMS)  
in each community



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**Education as a tool of liberation  
and school as a vessel for  
transformation**

**Martina Angelotti**

in conversation with

**Chto Delat** (Dmitry Vilensky, Olga Tsaplya Egorova, Nina Gasteva and Nikolay Oleynikov)

on **The School of Engaged Art**

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**Martina Angelotti** And which are the urgencies on which the program is based, also in terms of education and art production?

**Dmitry Vilensky** In Russia we certainly have to compensate for a lack of general knowledge and practice of inclusive democratic process in society. We try and build new forms of political autonomy out of subjugation to the conservative status quo. And we treat art as a method to address things which are excluded from the public debate, repressed and marginalized. This is very urgent in Russia. So we try to transform our weakness (the lack of a proper institutional framework and the fact we live inside a rather oppressive society) into the power of experimenting with issues which are never properly studied in a normalized academic process.

**MA** How can those urgencies reverberate and reflect in a more general context, out of the school?

**DV** The school is located at Roza's House of Culture which is a place where different activists and cultural initiatives

have a place. You can call it a dissident or counter space. At the same time, it is a welcoming place inviting many people to come by and engage in activities which can hardly be found in other places in the area.

**MA** Why should young people undertake this path, instead of the traditional one?

**DV** I cannot say if they should or not – we are talking of a relatively small community and numbers. We cannot give them a practical base (like teaching how to make a proper career or money – in Russia there is no institution to support the art we make), rather, we involve them in a risky way of living. They know that police can raid the school at any moment for a heap of reasons (LGBT propaganda, anti-war in the Ukraine issue, harbour of leftist extremists, a place where suspicious books and zines are distributed, a place where many illegal actions were prepared and so on).

**Nina Gasteva** The very term “tradition” is very tricky, though it is at the centre of our studies and pedagogies. Since we are following a certain path of experimental, politically grounded practices and pedagogies of liberation, we admit that our school sometimes develops this confusion, and we have made ourselves ready to deal with it. We invite our participants to dip into the adventure of a hard-core, old school engagement of artists into daily life, grass roots politics, and so on. Our challenge here is that now in Russia almost no one speaks this language anymore, so in a way we impose a situation in which a squad of dinosaurs calls for a herd of mammals to teach them some techniques to survive against the frost, and then they find a lot of interesting things to study in return.

**MA** Do you think it would make sense to try and find another word to replace the word “school” in order to define this project?

**DV** We like the word school. And it is a school.

**Nikolay Oleynikov** Though, there is a certain verbal detournement. Of course our school does not have anything to do with the frontal oppressive system of schooling (we realize that schools in general were and are used to establish certain values of the ruling system), but we seriously take education as a tool of liberation, and school as a vessel for transformation. And together with our participants we try to experiment to find new forms for it.

**Olga Tsaplya Egorova** It is also a kind of school where the roles of tutors and students are rather interchangeable and this process is very performative in its nature.

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## Aquí vive gente

**Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga** in conversation with **Jesús Bubu Negrón and Luis Agosto-Leduc** on **La Brigada Puerta de Tierra**, August 2017

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**Jesús Bubu Negrón** La Brigada started as an immediate response to the systematic destruction, abandonment and dispossession of the Puerta de Tierra (PDT) neighborhood. It developed quite organically, through observation and listening, and the shared recognition that we are all affected as neighbors by these processes. Our initial goals were to reactivate the communication and solidarity bonds in the community by organizing initiatives aimed at the rescue of the neighborhood, its history and its people. Since 2014 we have recovered derelict spaces together with the neighbors and the drug users that inhabit them, to stop speculation and development, but also to prevent the spread of Zika and other diseases. This is also connected to the creation of common and neutral spaces in the neighbourhood that enable a sense of belonging, which has been constantly undermined. These spaces are the *Infanzón*, which should become a community centre; the bus stop under the almond tree, in collaboration with the architects of Taller Creando Sin Encargos; or the Vivero square, with a community garden, an information station and place of encounter, used by citizen lobby groups and hosting film screenings. Other aspects of our work deal with developing

empowering tools for social leaders and the area, such as self-management, participation and other creative strategies. Although we visualize our project as long term, the work is set in an atmosphere of proximity, focusing on small daily actions that work towards the bigger goals. There is a pedagogical and artistic vector that crosses everything we do, connected to taking charge of the reality of the neighborhood and understanding ourselves as active agents in its transformation and its future. This is especially important given that we mostly work with youth, which serve as a catalyst to the rest of the community.

**Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga** What do you feel has been the most important change, and what are your biggest challenges now?

**JBN** One of the most significant improvements is that today B PDT has become an official voice of the community, both internally and externally. It has a very active role in the media representing and claiming our needs. Young people in the neighborhood are becoming conscious of the importance of community leadership, and the cultural arena that had been abandoned for decades has been reactivated. Also, we have managed to raise interest in other community groups and encourage collaboration with them. And we have raised attention both locally and internationally of what is going on in PDT.

**Luis Agosto-Leduc** With the *Infanzón* on our horizon, our main challenge now is to build a sustainable economy. We have been working on a basis of voluntary exchange of actions and services, but we need to be self-sustainable and autonomous. We are now researching

different cooperative economic models that could suit us.

**JMA** PDT lies in a territory with a long history of collective resistance movements and solidarity networks, the first one being its origin as a maroon community right after the Spanish colonial invasion, which I find pretty significant. A community built amongst runaway African and indigenous slaves from neighboring islands amidst and against the genocidal violence of colonial rule; a transcultural territory experimenting with diverse forms of communalism such as the agricultural gardens that survived until the turn of the 19th century. These are resistance networks made up of alliances between people excluded from all forms of representation. I am not trying to romanticize it here, because violence remains violence under any form. But I think it is important to take this into account in order to imagine the genealogy of the place.

**JBN** We are not doing anything new here: this is a fertile territory of protest and civic organizations fighting urban planning and expropriation. It is more of a spark that has reignited something that remained dormant.

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## Rice is more than just a staple food

**Tang Fu Kuen**  
in conversation with  
**Elia Nurvita**  
on **Hunger Inc.**  
August 2017

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**Elia Nurvita** In one of Kunci's regular reading sessions in 2013, I came across Claire Bishop's book 'Artificial Hells' where her arguments on 'participation' prompted me to consider a more critical position on audience action and witnessing. I am motivated to find ways to make the social relations and stakes in my food projects reach 'thick description', a term which the famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz developed while studying the layers of 'social power performance' during Balinese cockfighting rituals. I am increasingly convinced that my projects should not serve the 'resolution' of social drama; instead they are situations in which many contradictory and ambiguous positions can be presented and discussed. Finally, I think 'self-reflexivity' is a state which makes everybody aware of the rules of the game, and that change is possible through performance.

**Tang Fu Kuen** Can you tell us a bit more about 'Hunger, Inc.', the project for which you are nominated for 2017 Visible Award?

**EN** 'Hunger, Inc.' was first presented in Jogja Biennale Equator XIII under the theme 'Hacking Conflict'. Framed as an institution, 'Hunger, Inc.' addresses

the issue of food and its relation to the socio-economic and political hierarchies within the context of urban Indonesia. The installation set-up is that of an emergency tent with a big logo - a parody of makeshift NGO tents erected to help people recover from disasters. This tent is equipped with a community kitchen, a community dining table, a TV-which broadcasts news of riots related to the distribution of rice aid and also rice sacks containing poor quality and moldy rice.

'Hunger, Inc.' aims to look deeper into the spectrum of poverty - from mental aspects to structural problems of the society. Rice is more than just a staple food in Indonesia; it is linked to political economy in the country. In the 80's, the Indonesian regime started to socialize rice as the main and only staple food, followed by an ambitious program called Green Revolution. Rice has also been used as a political tool. One example is the RASKIN program, a subsidized rice program for low-income households, which often led to conflicts.

As an aesthetic intervention, 'Hunger, Inc.' invited the gathering of the poor residents near the riverbanks, and actively involved them in a series of events, including reconstructing the episode of crowd fighting for rice. The scenes of RASKIN distributions that are broadcast on TV news have inspired these enactments. This performance was carried out by a voluntary group of frustrated commoners who have been struggling with this issue. They re-enacted their everyday roles within a performative context. Through this performance, we sought to bring the media images into real life as a form of catharsis. Subsequently, we created 'Raskin Gourmet', a travesty on fine-dining dinner experience, using bad quality RASKIN rice as the main ingredient

cooked by a professional chef. Later, we also conducted a series of events, such as film screenings about food from trash; a cooking forum on rice for elementary school students; a parody on the tendency of local NGOs to 'sell poverty' in order gain funds from international aid agencies; as well as several dialogues on food commodities with a long history of colonial power and economic reforms, such as sugar, coffee, spices, palm oil, and instant noodles.

Through several activities linked to food sovereignty, this institution is aimed at creating several experiments and speculations around autonomous solutions on the problem of poverty.

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## Getting our Hands Dirty

**Nat Muller**  
in conversation with  
**Nida Sinnokrot**  
on **Sakiya - Art/Science/**  
**Agriculture**  
August 2017

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**Nat Muller** Together with architect Sahar Qawasmı you've been working on Sakiya for a number of years. Can you contextualize the importance of simultaneously reviving architectural practices, traditions and local knowledge in a place like Palestine in which land takes on such symbolic proportions? What are the consequences of the Israeli Occupation and the subsequent dispossession of (agricultural) land, as well as the increased urbanization and growth of Palestinian cities, on the short and on the long term for the fabric of Palestinian society?

**Nida Sinnokrot** The loss of land associated with the Israeli occupation is not only measured in lost area but also in lost tradition, lost knowledge and the loss of cooperation. In the last 50 years building has replaced agriculture as the main source of employment with many young people seeking work in construction on Israeli and, more recently, Palestinian projects. As a result, there is a brain drain of sorts, a loss of knowledge as it relates to the land. In parallel, many of our historic architectural sites have agrarian roots, meaning the buildings themselves have a direct role in the production and preparation of crops. With the loss of land due to annexation and occupation

and laborers seeking employment in the building trades, the original role of these buildings is lost, feeding into their disrepair. What if we could rehabilitate the land, would the historic building then come back to life?

In the past decade, we have been increasingly occupied and preoccupied by seeking security as measured by neo-liberal definitions of success. Consequently, competition is highly regarded whereas cooperation is nothing more than a catch phrase. Neoliberalism, NGO-ization, brain drain... all of this is cultivating a culture of dependency. Farming teaches us how to cooperate. In short, this is how we approach sustainability. And in our contemporary culture, we believe it's the role of artists and cultural institutions to cultivate these benefits of sharing.

**NM** Sakiya is conceived as a residency project. Why is the format of an interdisciplinary residency particularly suited for your objectives?

**NS** That goes back to sharing. In permaculture there is the term 'guild' that refers to how different plants, when brought together, take care of one another, repelling bad insects or attracting beneficial ones. Similarly, bringing together fellows from different disciplines leads to cross pollination and a sense of how individual practices relate to one another and share common objectives. Having someone well versed in contemporary Green Technologies work closely with someone who specializes in traditional dry stone wall building, here in Palestine could very well shed light on how these historic structures function as heat sinks, regulating temperature, increasing harvest output, creating microcosms for reptiles and insects etc. There is another

dynamic at play here and that is people sometimes need the interest of an outsider to recognise the value in what might otherwise have a stigma as being out-dated or old fashioned.

**NM** Can you talk a little about how this project expands on your own artistic practice and concerns? As well as how you specifically see the role of art at large in the project.

**NS** My work tends to be concerned with systems – those that give rise to structures of control, for example, and how we can expose them to better understand our points of view. I've been increasingly interested in those systems at play in Palestine that foster individualism and competition as measures of success and as such, security. Art, in whatever form that takes, is the way I seek to balance this equation and shed some light on the forces at play here. I believe that artists, through their individual work as well as their collaborative discourse, production and creative teaching, can directly address such complex cultural problems and provide critical frameworks that we need, in order to solve them. I see the work of Sakiya as an extension of my practice as an artist/educator. It has already become a dynamic classroom for the community in which it moves.

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## What is a space but politics?

A text by **Simon Soon**  
on **The Reading Room** project

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Situated in downtown Bangkok, one climbs up three flights of stairs before discovering a room filled with books. These are stacked in piles on a large wooden table located at the centre, lined neatly on a large rack close to the entrance, stuffed into wooden niches along the walls. The books range from critical theory to art and design, social sciences to literature, film to philosophy. The selection is eclectic as well as idiosyncratic, often centred on the taste and discernment of its founder and owner, Narawan Pathomwat. But it also in many ways reflects her politics.

This is the Readingroom Bangkok. We are not on neutral ground. Since 2009, upon being dismissed from her contract position as a researcher from the Asia Art Archive, a contemporary art archive based in Hong Kong, Narawan began searching for a different vocabulary for a kind of situated practice. Her previous role required her to play local interlocuter, surveying the Bangkok art scene, shipping catalogues to AAA's Hong Kong headquarters. The process simply abetted in the enrichment of a center. It became apparent that when major policy reorientation was put into place and when her contract was up, they simply let her go and moved on to greener pastures.

The Readingroom was therefore conceived on the one hand as a riposte against the international curatoriate and the various institutions that continue to play handmaiden to neoliberal agendas

under the pretence of research. Instead, it functions primarily as an art library and a place for alternative programs to exist in contrast to commercial museums and galleries. That also means a principled refusal to stage exhibitions and an avowed lack of rhetorical framing of its programs as curatorial gestures or interventions. Talks are talks, a bookshop-mapping project is a bookshop-mapping project, and a screening is a screening. Not an intervention.

This is refreshing given that the contemporary art world and middle class Bangkok thrive on what Anna Tsing calls an 'economy of appearance'. In that they share a love for all the surface ceremonies, turns of phrases and gestures that often lack depth and substance.

This is further compounded by a series of coups since 2006, which ousted the then popularly elected Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, divided the country into yellow and red (amongst other politics of colour) and is finally under the current military regime of Prayut O-Cha. It returned the country to its pre-1992 days under various succession of military rule since 1938, four years after Field Marshall Phibulsongkhram wrested control of the People's Party who just four years before successfully staged a revolt that brought an end to absolute monarchy.

Internal struggles within different factions of the military played to the advantage of the monarchy, through which it successful carved out a very public and visible role as an arbiter of Thailand's politically divide. This was done through the revival of traditional court ceremonies, strategic deployment of fascist visual vocabulary to install monarchical divine privilege that centred on the circulation of the image of the

King and his family, building an economic network that provided the capital (both figuratively and metaphorically) to brand the restitution and resacralisation of the monarchical institution from the mid-1950s onwards.

In the 21st century where it is once again established that in Thailand, military rule is norm rather than exception, life goes on as usual. The tourists are still arriving; Bangkok maintains its spot as the middle-class gay mecca flushed with pink dollars from across the sinosphere. Amidst the swirl of commercial life along downtown Sathorn district, the Readingroom is a bit like a beacon that shored together geeks, nerds and activists of all stripes.

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## **Inhabitants in focus, mobilization in art and media**

**Margarida Mendes**  
in conversation with  
**Pedro Neves Marques  
and Mariana Silva**  
August 2017

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**Margarida Mendes** Much of your focus is dedicated to issues related with social justice, but also the defense of anti-extraction politics proposing a turn towards the green revolution. Can you elaborate on your thematic outreach and lines of programming over the past seasons?

**Inhabitants** In two years we have produced up to twenty-five videos, some of which on very different subjects and with very different aesthetics. And yet we feel we are still learning how to work with complex issues in short-form video while keeping things formally interesting. That is, how to combine investigative reporting on given political issues while rupturing with expectations about how the form of such informative videos should look like. Unlike other platforms we are not so much interested in a coherent theme, but in maintaining rigor and formal experimentation in our approach.

Starting with our episode *A Brief History of Geoengineering*, which looks at the economic interests behind technologies that aim at engineering the climate (carbon capture and so on), we have focused on environmental issues. This has translated into episodes on anti-resource extraction movements, for which we began

to collaborate with activists for a better video distribution. However, we don't make much of a distinction between environmental and social justice, as often these are connected. As such, recently we have focused on identity, gender, and indigenous rights.

**MM** Inhabitants is also an open platform where other filmmakers and researchers contribute with films and share their research through moving image. The cautious selection of its contributors and development of its distribution strategies which aim beyond viral statistics is also an important matter. Can you tell us what is your circulation strategy?

**I** Inhabitants is more of an editorial platform than an authorial project. Although we produce most of our videos, the aim has always been to open Inhabitants up to other filmmakers. This is something we are focusing on this coming third year of operation: not only funding and showcasing politically-focused filmmakers but also hopefully connecting their work with activist groups and movements. For the moment, Inhabitants isn't really a self-sustainable model, yet we hope to work further in this regard.

In terms of distribution we've also realized that instead of aiming for a video to go "viral" it is rather more interesting to be in touch with activist groups and make sure they get access to the content, that they find it useful, and that we time each episode launch according to their calendar of events. This implies questioning the techno-utopianism underlying the social media hype, the market and algorithmic logic of virality, and the recent economic investment by news outlets in video

content. We will continue to research meaningful ways to sidestep this type of distribution, the middlemen it creates, and the further concentration of power it can contribute to.

**MM** Several of your episodes address resource management and follow recent struggles, such as the fight against oil and gas extraction in Portugal or the emerging deep sea mining plans that are projected for the Pacific and Atlantic ridges projected to be a series of episodes in 2017/2018. These particular episodes are built as a series, tackling the complexity such themes from multiple angles and deploying diverse formal strategies, documental but also humorous. Can you talk a bit about this?

**I** The video series are a way of approaching complex topics that demand of us a more narrative, chapter-like format, with each episode in the series focusing on a single aspect. We began the video series format with our *Anthropocene Issue*, continued with the anti-oil extraction series *For an Oil Free Future*, which reacts to attempts at oil drilling and fracking in Portugal, and are at the moment producing a five-part series on deep sea mining. For the latter we are mixing data-visualization episodes on the mining economy or deep sea biodiversity with more interview-based episodes in the Azores, where we will meet with local groups. Doing so also allows us to test diverse techniques, breaking with preconceived ideas about what a journalistic or activist video should look like. We have had some great surprises regarding how people are using the episodes!

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**On April 21-22 2017,  
a White Cube Opened  
in Kinshasa**

**Suhail Malik**  
in conversation with  
**Renzo Martens  
and Nicolas Jolly**  
October 2017

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**Suhail Malik** I think it's stronger than "don't want to get involved". I think people repudiate power, as corruption of the ethical truth of art's critical moment. And I think what your project does is to try and use power structures to effect the changes that have been declared by it. Your project sets up an engagement across a global hierarchy, which stratifies places of high reputation and places like Lusanga, which is not even marginalised but rather altogether absent from the map. You've connected this previously absent point to the centres of power in the art world. But also there's a kind of hierarchy within the Congolese art scene, and you produced a kind of restratification within that scene as well. You produce stratifications and hierarchies in a new way.

**Renzo Martens** Do you think that LIRCAEI (Lusanga International Research Centre for Art and Economic Inequality) is relevant within a post-colonial framework? Does that interest you at all? Because in that field one often tries to deny the White Cube its agency, or one blames it because obviously, the White Cube is an apparatus of power.

**SM** What I see happening with your project is something much more about current forms of economic and social modernity, where it's no longer comprised or dominated by a colonial relationship. It's a modernity formed in part by economic extractions, which are exploitative, but these exploitations are also happening from within the South, as well as from North-South. There's a reconfiguration of what the extracted relationship is different to colonialism or even imperialism. The anthropologist Aihwa Ong talks about something similar happening in East Asia, where a new type of globalised South modernity is being constructed by global chains, some of which are de-territorialised, some of which are territorialised. Such constructions seem to be the kind of complex formation that you're working with. So for me, to describe your project in terms of post-colonial tropes is too limited a logic. Where you're actually operating is in the more complex formation of the global economy, the global culture that is being set up now.

**Nicolas Jolly** Now that you've been on site, would you change anything to the affirmative talk you did?

**SM** I don't disavow my engagement with the project. I think there's a lot more to be done with it. One of the tasks ahead is how you coordinate what you do with it, in terms of its manifestation in the global art field and also with regard to how it reorganises the Congolese art space. Because if it's successful it's going to have major effects. And then the other immediate effects are what it does within the Lusanga village, the former plantation. That will be the moral test of your project because the consequences are existential. I think if the White Cube is just a place in

which this relationship between the rich North and the very poor South gets played out, or gets demonstrated, and that's a smart move in essence for the art system, that's already doing something, but in a way it is only doing something for us who are anyway the beneficiaries of the global system of extraction from that place and others like it.

**RM** It wouldn't be enough.

**SM** Not if your project is a moral project, right?

**RM** Sure. The end goal has been clearly identified by the Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC), with their president René Ngongo. Whatever type of capital that is being attracted from the art world to Lusanga is reinvested into starting a new type of plantation in their own hands, owned by them, what we call "the post-plantation".

**SM** I think what your project demonstrates is the way in which those moral compunctions don't have to stay at the level of just witnessing immoral things elsewhere, and getting a kind of kick out what you witness. That's common enough in contemporary art — sliding into documentary photography. In intervening and trying to rectify them, you're actually trying to transform an area which is destitute into something less bad.

**RM** And simply through using the apparatus of art....

**SM** In a way, your White Cube functions in a regular pattern. That model is gentrification, in which a White Cube is a sort of leading edge of new investments.

But the very rapid and improper use of the White Cube through your project means that you have bypassed the whole "Let's wait for a certain point of development and then move in on it", typical of gentrification strategies. The Lusanga White Cube certainly speaks to an art world that often claims to be interested in the same issues of global poverty, but not in the usual art way of dealing with it, which is to shine a light on something, whereas your project is a very clear and strong intervention. Because what you do here is to move directly in Lusanga to reorganise that village. There you don't have to deal with the usual art world politesse, so your intervention is more directly social and not just artistic. It's a very new thing, so the consequences still need to be understood.

**NJ** We've touched on the White Cube, its value chain, and its moral economy, but now I want to hear your opinion on CATPC.

**SM** I was impressed with the Skype session between the CATPC and the Indonesian plantation workers' union SERBUNDU. What struck me was what had been set up there between the plantation workers in the Congo and those in Indonesia, in the sense that actually we need to talk to one another, to think about global plantation workers' conditions and how they compare — and also the relief on the Congolese side that they get paid much more!

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## An inquiry into the Keywords Laboratory through the lens of Social Botany — *Land and Turf*

A conversation between  
**Xu Tan** and **Xiaoyu Weng**,  
August 2017

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**Xiaoyu Weng** What is the impact you hope to generate through this project? What kind of change will it bring to the Tanka people and why is it urgent?

**Xu Tan** (...) This project starts with the Tanka community but extends to examine the landownership and use rights in our current global context, its historical genealogy and the capitalist condition. Another important attempt of my work is to explore and reconstruct certain conditions and experiences prior to modernity and modernism. On the one hand, the disappearing of traditional modes of living, including its habitat and culture (such as music, boat building techniques, etc.) are certainly a result of the modernization China is undertaking. On the other hand, how can my practice re-conciliate epistemology and aesthetic experience? The two are not always clinically separated. Many historical practices in China, for example, have aesthetic tendencies and values. The separation further accelerated when capitalism defined and confined the social division of labor. I want to investigate, how we can integrate aesthetic experience to the process of understanding the world and how to incorporate the knowledge from corporal experience of the world when making aesthetic expressions?

**XW** Is “Keywords Laboratory” your method of research, in other words, a methodology you invented? What has inspired or influenced you to come up with such a methodology? Does it concern disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, or linguistics?

**XT** (...) The process is a kind of “public laboratory” that encourages and appeals to the civilians for their participation in the research on specific issues. In doing so, I hope problems such as “land and survival” can attain a level of public recognition. The “laboratory” often adopts the model of a workshop. After each workshop I emphasize achieving certain conclusive results. It can be small like the creation of a concept such as “animality freedom.” Most importantly, the long-term goal is to look for answers as to how can “societal matters” become part of everyone’s self-cognizance; in order to do so, in my opinion, we have to first re-investigate the construction of the concept of “otherness.” How can “otherness” transform from an idea of other people to the elementary component that forms our own consciousness. In fact, “other people,” “other things” are always fundamentally part of our collective cognitive activities. In the field of contemporary cognition discourse, it is worthy of in-depth research, as how to stimulate the shift from the consciousness of “I” to the consciousness of “other” is in fact part of “I.” If we were able to fully integrate social events into the “I,” what kinds of aesthetic experience would emerge?

**XW** How do you think your workshop differentiates other non-art oriented discussions in terms of aesthetic experimentation?

**XT** I think art is based on aesthetic experiences and comes from a human’s aesthetic consciousness. In the workshop, we connect everyone’s aesthetic antennae through language and display. The entire space is filled with flows of aesthetic consciousness and how to activate such experience is part of my job. I often communicate with the participants afterwards and they tell me that the activities made him/her “full of feelings.” Therefore, it is important for an organizer to be fully aware that aesthetic consciousness is ubiquitous and the key is how to fuel and guide it. This is also why I continue to explore how to bridge the field research results with exhibition display that is intended for a public audience.

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## Giving Indigenous media-makers a voice

A curatorial statement  
on **IsumaTV**  
by **Candice Hopkins**

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I remember the first work that I saw of the Isuma collective, it was a video released in 1993 called *Saputi (Fish Traps)*. Like most of Isuma's videos, the emphasis is on action not on dialogue. The camera follows a family in the late fall as they go about setting rock traps along the shallow water near the shoreline to catch fish. It's a sustainable practice based on knowledge of the tidal systems and fish habitat that goes back hundreds of years—when the tide goes out and the water recedes larger fish are trapped in the rocks, making for easy catch for the family. The film doesn't build up to a big event rather, it is made up of the culmination of small moments; a hand comes in to help another move a stone, small talk shared as people slowly tread across the tundra toward the open water, the time spent in silence waiting for a catch.

From the beginning, Isuma's practice was different—they were the only video-makers active in this part of the Canadian Arctic. The word *Isuma* in Inuktitut roughly translates as “thinking for oneself,” self-definition and determinism that is rare in this part of the world. Zacharias Kunuk, one of the co-founders of Isuma Productions, had his start at the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation just a few years after he bought his first camera. In 1984 there was still little content broadcasted in his community that originated in the north.

In fact, Igloolik was one of the last Arctic settlements to get TV. They kept voting it out because of lack of northern content. In a recent conversation Kunuk relayed how he felt that the programming then was also conservative, it was very difficult to speak about any issues facing the north and certainly not politics. He took things into his own hands, quite literally, in 1981 when he sold some of his stone carvings to a gallery to buy his first Sony Portapak video camera. He was interested in video because of a shift he had observed in his community. The youth, who in the past had learned cultural knowledge through Elders' stories, was no longer listening. Instead, they were gathering in front of TV sets. Broadcast television had come to replace oral tradition. Instead of being a detriment, he saw it as an opportunity and one that he didn't want to take on alone.

Individual pursuits don't make a lot of sense in the Arctic. Collectivity is essential to survival. You would never hunt alone lest you get injured or captured in a blizzard. Walrus can weigh more than 1000 pounds, catching a seal is a waiting game at air holes, to harpoon a whale can take dozens. Caribou also require intimate knowledge of migration patterns and a means to not only track an animal but to find your way back in a flat treeless environment. Families are tight-knit—it wasn't that long ago that everyone lived in the same room and shared a common bed to stay warm over the long winters. Kunuk soon began working together with his collaborators. In particular, experimental videographer Norman Cohn had relocated from Montreal, Quebec to Igloolik. Together they would change the face of Canadian filmmaking practice, first with releases like *Nunavut (Our Land)*, a 13-part mini-series made particularly for the television format, and later the renowned feature-film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*. It

was only when *Atanarjuat* started to receive awards overseas, including the *Caméra d'Or* in Cannes, that they started gaining more recognition back in their home country as well.

This collective methodology extended to the production process. In Igloolik, there were no trained scenographers, costume designers, audio technicians or actors. Instead, seamstresses, predominantly elder women, sewed costumes and in the process passed on vital traditional knowledge, including how to make waterproof stitches in sealskin boots; others were engaged in making igloos, hitching sled dogs, and making harpoons for hunting. At the same time that they were acting these customs, others were learning these skills. This is how culture stays alive. Isuma simultaneously produced a cultural investment and an economic one which is unique. Most of the artistic production from the north is immediately sent south, including thousands of stone sculptures, prints and drawings each year. Art is one of the largest economies in the north and more people identify as artists here than anywhere else in Canada. In the 1940s and 1950s art came to fill in the void left by the collapse of the fur trade at a time when Western economic models were replacing sustenance lifestyles and modest trade. For Isuma, film production is a means to provide well-being in the broader community and is a way to provide for the well-being of the community. [...]

New Media democratization allows new groups of people to have access to media tools that were initially exclusive to them. People can use media to recover language and indigenous traditional strengths and transform these into contemporary strengths. IsumaTV is available to anyone with an Internet connection and a computer or mobile device.

## Visible Award Temporary Parliament designed by The Decorators

On Monday 12th December 2016 at 4:08 PM, we received an email from Judith Wielander inviting us to design a temporary parliament for the 2017 Visible Award. Visible is an award appointed through an open jury consultation. Conceived as an assembly, this year's jury session required a spatial configuration that would facilitate a democratic decision making process. In order to design a parliament, however, you first have to decide what kind of parliament you want it to be.

### 'The shabbier the collected chamber, the better the democracy' Carne Ross, The Accidental Anarchist

We face a design-democracy paradox. The spatial organisation of formal assemblies has not changed substantially from the Athenian assembly. Classical democracy created an architectural typology which has dominated both the form and style of parliament buildings to the present day, giving rise to representational parliament systems that inevitably always has those it leaves out.

However, the direct democracy that can be seen played out in social movements such as the the worldwide Occupy movement, 15M in Spain and Black Lives Matter in the USA, demonstrates that it is in the public assembly that space for inclusive direct democracy can be found and the unrepresentable can have a voice.

Observation of these groups' public assemblies in action reveals that very little 'designed' infrastructure is needed for direct democracy. They make use of the infrastructures that are already in place, those that are most direct and accessible, the street, the bench, the wall, the lamppost.

The Queens Museum has an embedded parliament, both historically and actually in terms of its infrastructure. From 1946 to 1950 it housed the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations. In the space now occupied by the Queens Museum's sky-lit galleries, the very space where the Visible Awards jury session will take place, the General Assembly was laid out. Rather than re-enact the building's history of representative democracy, we want to make space for a more direct democratic process by building a parliament from what can already be found at the museum. The stacked chairs, tables, and ladders hidden in the museum's storage areas are the invisible parliament already existent in the museum's everyday.

Anyone who wishes to participate in the Visible Award jury will be invited to bring this invisible parliament out into the museum's public arena. We will simply provide an inventory of the museum materials and objects that can be used to create a space to gather, listen, discuss and debate.



1.



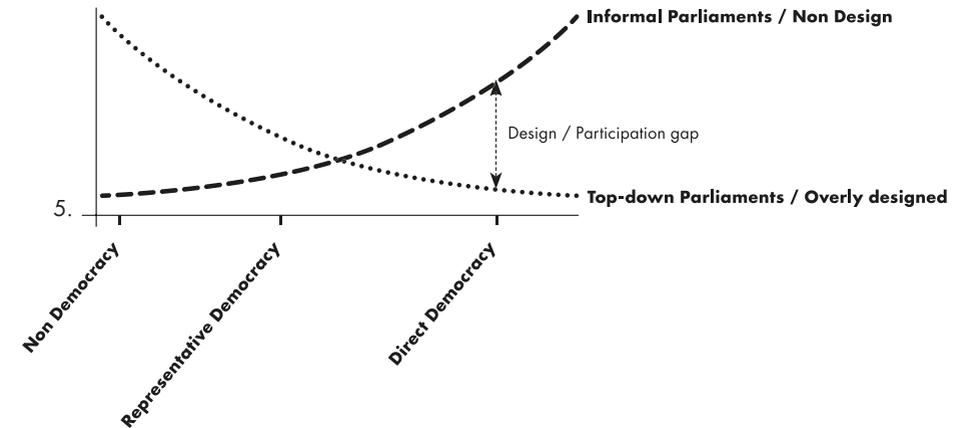
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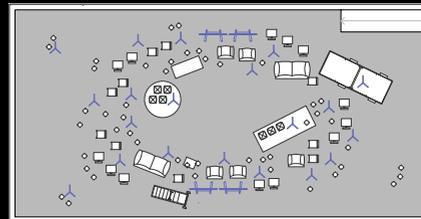
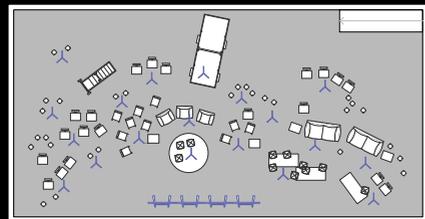
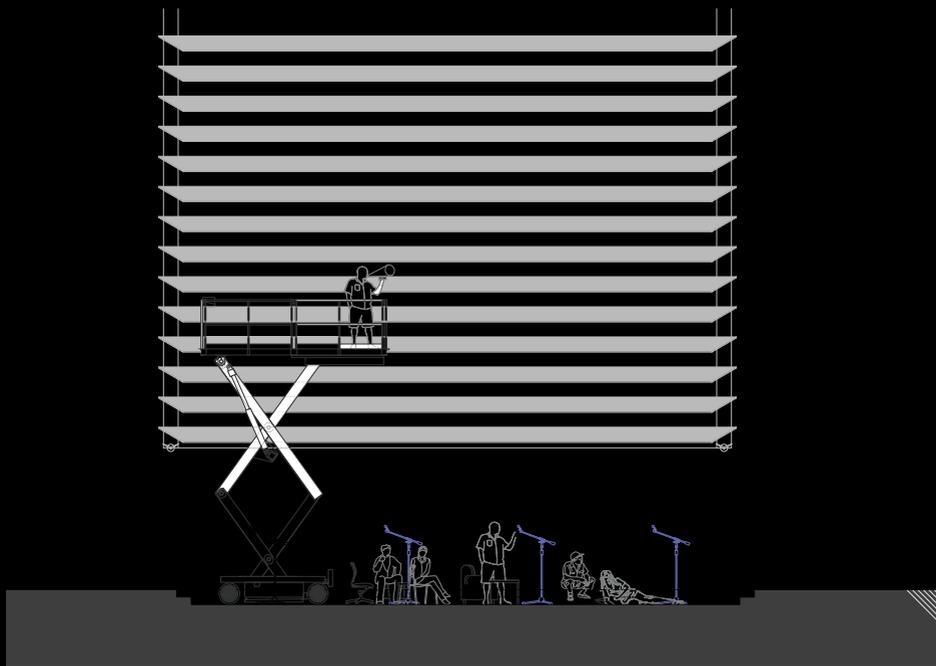


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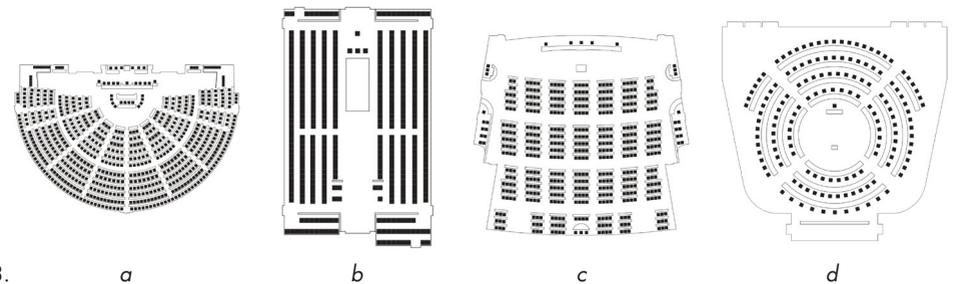
1. Representation of an ancient Islamic 'Shura', an example of a proto-parliament by Horace Vermet, 1833.
2. The Agora was a central public space in ancient Greek city-states. The literal meaning of the word is 'gathering place' or 'assembly'. Drawing by Joseph Buehlman.
3. United Nations General Assembly Chamber, NYC. Photo by D. Myles Cullen.
4. Occupy assembly in London, 2011. Photo by Voltaire7878.
5. Diagram showing scale of design in relation to democratic participation.



1.

“WE (THE MUSEUM)  
ALREADY HAVE ALL  
THAT IS NEEDED  
FOR THE PARLIAMENT  
TO TAKE PLACE”

2.



3.

1. Temporary Parliament: section, layouts and inventory.
2. Quote by Prerana Reddy, Director of Public Programmes at Queens Museum. Set in Avenir Heavy and Black, font family of Queens Museum.
3. Diagrams from research project 'Parliamentbook' by XML:
  - a. *Semicircle*: Also known as Hemicycle, refers to classical antiquity, typical in Europe.
  - b. *Opposing Benches*: originates in British parliament. Tied to vertically organized societies and many former British colonies.
  - c. *Classroom*: common in countries which rank low on the Democracy index (China, Russia, North Korea).
  - d. *Circle*: only adopted by 9 countries, based on the original Icelandic Althing.

## Chairwoman of the 2017 Visible Award

**Laura Raicovich** is President and Executive Director of the Queens Museum. An advocate of art as a tool for social change, Raicovich oversees an inviting and vital commons for art, ideas, and civic engagement in a stunning and newly expanded building located in the one of the largest parks in New York City. She is responsible for an ambitious scope of projects, events, and public programs that together reflect the diversity of the borough, public life, and the museum's commitment to celebrating difference and multiplicity.

Prior to Queens Museum, Raicovich inaugurated Creative Time's Global Initiatives, served as deputy director of Dia Art Foundation, and worked at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Public Art Fund, and New York's Department of Parks and Recreation. Raicovich lectures internationally and edited *Assuming Agency: Boycott, Resistance, and Cultural Agency*, with Carin Kuoni and Kareem Estefan (OR Books, 2017). She is also the author of *At the Lightning Field* (Coffee House Press, 2017) and *A Diary of Mysterious Difficulties* (Publication Studio, 2014).

## 2015 Visible Award Advocate for the shortlisted projects

**Elvira Dyangani Ose** is Senior Curator at Creative Time, Lecturer in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, member of the Thought Council at the Fondazione Prada and independent curator. She was part of the curatorial team of the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2016 in Geneva, Curator of the eighth edition of the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary art, (GIBCA 2015) and Curator of International Art at Tate Modern (2011 – 2014). Previously, Dyangani Ose served as Curator at the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, as Artistic Director of Rencontres Picha, Lubumbashi Biennial (2013), and as Guest Curator of the triennial SUD, Salon Urbain de Douala (2010). She has curated, among others, the retrospective exhibition *Carrie Mae Weems: Social Studies* (2010) and the interdisciplinary project *Across the Board* (2012–2014). Dyangani Ose has contributed to art journals such as *Nka* and *Atlántica* and has served as guest editor of *Caderno Sesc\_Videobrasil* 10.

## 2017 Visible Award advisory board

**Amanda Abi Khalil** Lebanon  
**Hoor Al-Qasimi** UAE  
**Yazid Anani** Palestine  
**Martina Angelotti** Italy  
**Ethel Baraona** Spain  
**Eva Barois de Caevel** France/ Senegal  
**Michael Birchall** UK  
**Osei Bonsu** Ghana/UK  
**Gregory Castera** France  
**Iliana Fokianaki** Greece  
**Gilly Karjevsky** Israel/Germany  
**Sohrab Kashani** Iran  
**Tang Fu Kuen** Singapore/Thailand  
**Amanda de la Garza Mata** Mexico  
**Natasha Ginwala** India  
**Cecilia Guida** Italy  
**Candice Hopkins** New Mexico/Canada  
**Victoria Ivanova** Ukraine  
**Qinyi Lim** Hong Kong  
**Vuth Lyno** Cambodia  
**Camila Marambio** Chile  
**Renée Mboya** Kenya  
**Margarida Mendes** Portugal  
**Julia Morandeira Arrizabalaga** Spain  
**Manuela Moscoso** Ecuador/Brazil  
**Nat Muller** The Netherlands  
**Bavisha Panchia** South Africa  
**Pablo José Ramírez** Guatemala  
**Francesco Scasciamacchia** Mexico/Italy  
**Moses Serubiri** Uganda  
**Simon Soon** Malaysia  
**Anne Szefer Karlsen** Norway  
**TOK** Russia  
**Yesomi Umolu** USA  
**Xiaoyu Weng** China/USA  
**Dana Whabira** Zimbabwe

## 2017 Longlisted projects

### **Ackroyd & Harvey**

*Beuys' Acorns*

### **Adan Vallecillo**

*Materias Primas*

### **Agency – Assembly**

### **Anahita Razmi**

*DO FARD / Underwear*

*Tehran – Berlin*

### **Art Labor**

*Jrai Dew*

### **Aslı Kiyak & Sevgi Ortaç**

*Crafting Neighbourhoods*

### **Buku Jalanan Collective**

*Buku Jalanan*

### **Carmen Papalia**

*Blind Field Shuttle*

### **Cecilia Vicuña**

*Oysi Cantos del agua*

### **Co-art Co-op (CACO)**

*Sewing Histories*

### **Critical Archiving Laboratory**

*Donbass Museum*

*of Contemporary History*

### **Dani Zelko**

*Reunión*

### **DingDingDong**

*Huntingtonland, Exploration No.4*

### **Eduardo Navarro**

*Light Language*

### **Effi & Amir**

*The Complete Jessy*

### **Equipo Palomar**

*El Palomar*

### **Erin McElroy**

*Anti-Eviction Mapping Project*

### **Fernando Palma**

**– Calpulli Tecalco A.C.**

*Adopta una milpa*

### **Francesca Recchia**

**and Lorenzo Tugnoli**

*The Little Book of Kabul*

### **Fuentes Rojas**

*Embroidering for peace*

*and memory. One victim, one*

**Green Park (G.Argyropoulou,**

**K.Tzimoulis, V.Noulas)**

*DIY Performance Biennial*

*'NO FUTURE'*

### **Helen Eriksen, Ebba Moi**

**and Stefan Schröder**

*Tenthous Oslo*

### **History of Others/Terike**

**Haapoja, Laura Gustafsson**

*Museum of Nonhumanity*

### **Jean-François Boclé**

*Global Space of the Voguing Bodies*

### **Jorge Menna Barreto**

*RESTAURO – Environmental Sculpture*

### **Keg de Souza**

*Redfern School of Displacement*

### **Keleketla! Library**

*Keleketla! After School*

*Programme (K!ASP)*

### **Larissa Sansour**

*HEIRLOOM*

### **Li Mu**

*Quizhuang Project*

### **Maria Gaspar**

*96 Acres Project*

### **Marjetica Potrc and Design**

**for the Living World**

*Design for the Living World*

### **Matthias Einhoff and Alex Head**

*Wasteland Twining Network*

### **Mirna Bamieh**

*Potato Talks*

### **Monica Castillo**

**and Jaime Ruiz Martinez**

*Lugar Común*

### **Mthabisi Phili**

*Feet-in City Township Expressions*

### **NGO – Nothing Gets Organised**

*The Garden Of Fugacious Sentiment*

### **Nico Angiuli**

*Contrainte. Compagnie Transnationale*

*d'Art et Théâtre Migrant*

### **Nida Sinnokrot**

*Flight – Jalazone*

### **offshoreart.co**

*offshoreart.co/off-course*

### **Piyarat Piyapongwiwat**

*Messages from now to nowhere*

### **Postcommodity**

*People of Good Will*

### **Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam**

*White Crane Films Resistance Archive*

### **Rojava Film Commune**

*Rojava Film Academy*

### **Stephen Stapleton**

**and Matteo Lonardi**

*CULTURUNNERS*

### **Syowia Kyambi**

*Between Us*

### **Tania El Khoury**

*Female Art Forces*

### **Tarek Atoui**

*WITHIN*

### **The Vann Molyvann Project**

*The Vann Molyvann Project*

### **Valentina Karga**

**and Pieterjan Grandry**

*Market for Immaterial Value*

### **Vitshois Mwilambwe Bondo**

*Kin ArtStudio – Mobile Gallery*



## Queens Museum

The Queens Museum is dedicated to presenting the highest quality visual arts and educational programming for people in the New York metropolitan area, and particularly for the residents of Queens, a uniquely diverse, ethnic, cultural, and international community.

The Museum fulfills its mission by designing and providing art exhibitions, public programs and educational experiences that promote the appreciation and enjoyment of art, support the creative efforts of artists, and enhance the quality of life through interpreting, collecting, and exhibiting art, architecture, and design.

The Queens Museum presents artistic and educational programs and exhibitions that directly relate to the contemporary urban life of its constituents, while maintaining the highest standards of professional, intellectual, and ethical responsibility. [queensmuseum.org](http://queensmuseum.org)



## Cittadellarte – Michelangelo Pistoletto Foundation

The Cittadellarte – Pistoletto Foundation is a socially responsible non-profit organization established in 1998. Using the principles of the Manifesto Progetto Arte conceived by artist Michelangelo Pistoletto it proposes a new role for the artist, as an activator of projects and creative ideas to stimulate responsible change in different areas of society.

Cittadellarte is a new form of artistic and cultural institution that converges creativity and enterprise, education and production, ecology and architecture, politics and spirituality. The fundamental theme of Cittadellarte’s activities is the relationship between the freedom of art and the ethics of social responsibility with the shared belief in the “common good”. [cittadellarte.it](http://cittadellarte.it)



## Fondazione Zegna

Fondazione Zegna was established by the fourth generation of the Zegna family in 2000, to improve the quality of life of communities and individuals around the world – a mission rooted in the beliefs of the company’s founder, Ermenegildo, for whom ethics, business and aesthetics were intrinsically interwoven. In the 1930’s he created one of the earliest Italian examples of environmental and social patronage, through the reforestation of the mountain area surrounding his eponymous wool mill and the establishment of welfare facilities. The Foundation plans and coordinates international humanitarian initiatives in four areas of activity: conservation and amelioration of environmental and cultural resources; fostering of sustainable development in local communities, in Italy and abroad; support for medical and scientific research; education and training for young people. Fondazione Zegna is based in Trivero, where Casa Zegna, an industrial historical archive and cultural center, and Oasi Zegna, an “open-air laboratory” covering over 100 km<sup>2</sup> and focusing on the mutual relationships between people, mountain culture and nature, are also situated.

[fondazionezegna.org](http://fondazionezegna.org)

## Credits and acknowledgements

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The Temporary Parliament wouldn't be possible without the precious contribution of The Decorators, Prerana Reddy, Vyoma Venkataraman, Ayanna Long, and the whole production team of the Queens Museum.

Visible would like to thank all the artists that have generously shared their incredible projects.

Roland Augustine & Lawrence Luhring

Temporary Parliament design  
The Decorators

Visual Identity  
Leftloft

Graphic Design  
Kaspar Hauser

The 2017 Visible Award  
is made possible thanks to

**visible**



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