FILM SCREENING

the dance mimes secretly the refusal they cannot utter

PROGRAM BROCHURE

A film program curated by Adam HajYahia
Produced by Thái Hà

19 July 2025

Moving is diachronic; it is historical. In times of social repression and political foreclosure, movement, in its multiple connotations, becomes a ground for struggle. As organizing and embedding oneself within a movement grows precarious, and moving freely from one place to another becomes more taxing, stillness begins to plague the streets, social relations become stuck, political discussions reach a dead end, and nothing moves but the always-dying flow of capital. But moving is not the opposite of being inanimate; to move is to traverse, to undergo a passage not marked by linearity, but a shift or a turn. To move is to cross right through the frontier. A trespassed border transforms the subject upon crossing to the other side. To move is to be an unpredictable subject because, as you move, you change your colors and contours. They cannot foresee your steps. This is why the one who is on the move cannot be analyzed based on a synchronic set of conditions. Moving is not only being mobile, but being mobilized.

Observing the colonized from his point of view as both a psychiatrist and a comrade in struggle during his time in Algeria, Martinique, and elsewhere across the African continent, Frantz Fanon perceived that the built-up pressure caused by colonial violence was experienced through "contracted muscles" in the bodies of the colonized subject. In his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon articulates this contraction, this built-up tension, as something that bubbles up with a necessity to be released. Although they labor day and night, the muscles of the colonized contract due to a lack of movement, a political stasis that incapacitates their living body. When contraction is released without anti-colonial struggle, it manifests in inter-communal violence, and when the colonized dance, "it relaxes their painfully contracted muscles", relieving the tension and letting off steam. For Fanon, colonialism produces this contraction to prohibit the passage from taking place, to limit movement. This is why bodies are incarcerated. This is why the living cannot dance.

the dance mimes secretly the refusal they cannot utter is a film program curated by Adam HajYahia for *The Year Is XXXX*, as well as in response to Joud Al-Tamimi's rotating curation titled *Letter to the Cadres*. The program draws on Frantz Fanon's writings while also departing from his formulation, through poetic appropriation, to think of different modes of moving in the world that refuse the imposition of the state of siege, stillness, and inactivity. The framework of the program favors poetic acts materialized in movement over dialogue that is bound by speech, with the intention to move beyond the failure of language in these times of crisis. When speech is not heard because of who utters it, when a common dialect no longer indicates kinship, and words lose meaning in the face of a surpassing disaster, movement springs forth, taking its place.

By taking different subject positions of figures that move through the colonial and imperial ruins, this program attempts to articulate political subjectivity not through analysis but poesis. We follow the six dismembered figures in their movement: the Forager, the Fugitive, the Dreamer, the Militant, the Maroon, and the Smuggler, as they stretch, move, reach, and leap towards new possibilities.

The Year Is XXXX, an exhibition curated by Thái Hà,
was held at Nguyễn Art Foundation between April–November 2025.

Letter to the Cadres, a rotating display curated by Joud Al-Tamimi,
was held at Nguyễn Art Foundation between 14 June – 26 July 2025.

For more information, please visit:
https://nguyenartfoundation.com/exhibitions/the-year-is-xxxx/

The Militant

The militant endures violence: he is a witness to it, and he understands how it works. The militant is born in flames and therefore understands how to pass right through the inferno that scorches his land. He wants to bring about the end of what transformed him; the end of the structures that condition his militancy is what he is after. He chooses a life away from his kin. He leaves his friends, family, and loved ones. Death does not scare him, as life lived in indignity is a life sacrificed. His love is both a fire and an oblation. Although he can rarely be seen amongst his people, he dreams of a society that he wishes to never leave. The militant disappears from the rays of the sun so he can one day freely enjoy its burning touch. He spends his time between the trees, inside the caves, and below the soil. The land is his most faithful companion.

The Dreamer

Those whose self-credence is derived from pragmatism indict the dreamer of losing touch with reality. The dreamer, however, does not bother herself with reasoning her disdain against the stagnant orders that rule her life. She escapes reality in search of what is real. Her movement marks a passage from the night into the day; from nightdreams to daydreams. Her desires emerge. Her wishes lead. She sees her environs for what they are, and she loses her mind. The dreamer is both repulsed and enchanted, seduced and pushed away. This world is too repressive for her liking, and as such, she constructs her own, abandoning all that is known to her. The dreamer's movement can hardly be detected. While she seems to be in a state of physical stasis, her psyche is busy making transactions. Her dreams shall fuel the construction of this world anew.

The Fugitive

She is either always already on the run, or she stages a reason for herself through which to become a fugitive. She plans her actions ahead of time. She foresees her own steps. She anticipates the steps of others. The fugitive does not seek representation, as opacity is what he is after. His movement is clandestine, his steps both fast and quiet. The space he leaves behind is never empty, excessive in his dislocation. Her fugitivity is dependent on leaving a present absence that precedes her own movement. A desired invisibility and an unsettling absence are constituents of being on the run. Her movement is always marked by two choreographies: the creation of an event of rupture, and the escape from the scene of the event.

The Smuggler

His body is a social body that moves in unison. He is never alone. The smuggler moves with her other as she moves *for* the other. Her movement is clandestine enough to guarantee the defense of the other, yet visible enough to prevent raising suspicion. His body is a vehicle. His eyes belong to many, and his mouth utters only song. The smuggler is the one who can be seen; however, he does not like being in the light. He is more comfortable blending with the crowds, to simply be one of many.

The Forager

Hunger is not his motive, but sustenance. Sustenance not only of her body, but of the land she dwells in. The forager is a gentle and precarious mover, and from his precarity, he creates abundance. He moves out of necessity, but it is also the only way he knows how. He does not concern himself with grand narratives; instead, he attunes himself to the smallest details one can. He moves with the pores and curves of the land, and he is led by the sounds of the animals and plants. The more he gathers, the richer the land grows. Below the skies and above the sea, the forager sustains life as he is engulfed by it.

The Maroon

Fighting is never about the opponents, but about the fight itself. Fighting isn't about who is fought, but about whose freedom is consistently fought for. Fighting is transformative because it declares a break in the order of power and bondage. Fight can take the form of flight when one seeks a place without opponents. The maroon flees into a new world, he makes himself with his labor, for himself and for his hands. Each footstep, a building block. Each fugitive, a family member. Marronage is a philosophy embodied in constant movement, developing and complexifying with every breath taken against unfreedom. The Maroon confronts his material reality by altogether exiting the dialectic that fixes him in his place. His escape is a rupture.

DINA MIMI
The Melancholy of this Useless Afternoon, chapter II
2023
00:11:25

The Melancholy of this Useless Afternoon, chapter II researches the links between the fugitive and the smuggler through their shared gestures and relationships to being seen. By escape and flight, risking capture or death, the fugitive works to keep themself hidden. The smuggler, however, moves with stealth, using gestures to hide things, often close to their body. Employing a clandestine style, the film documents the practice of bird smuggling and the part the human body plays in this act.

VALENTIN NOUJAÏM
To Exist Under Permanent Suspicion
2023
00:14:29

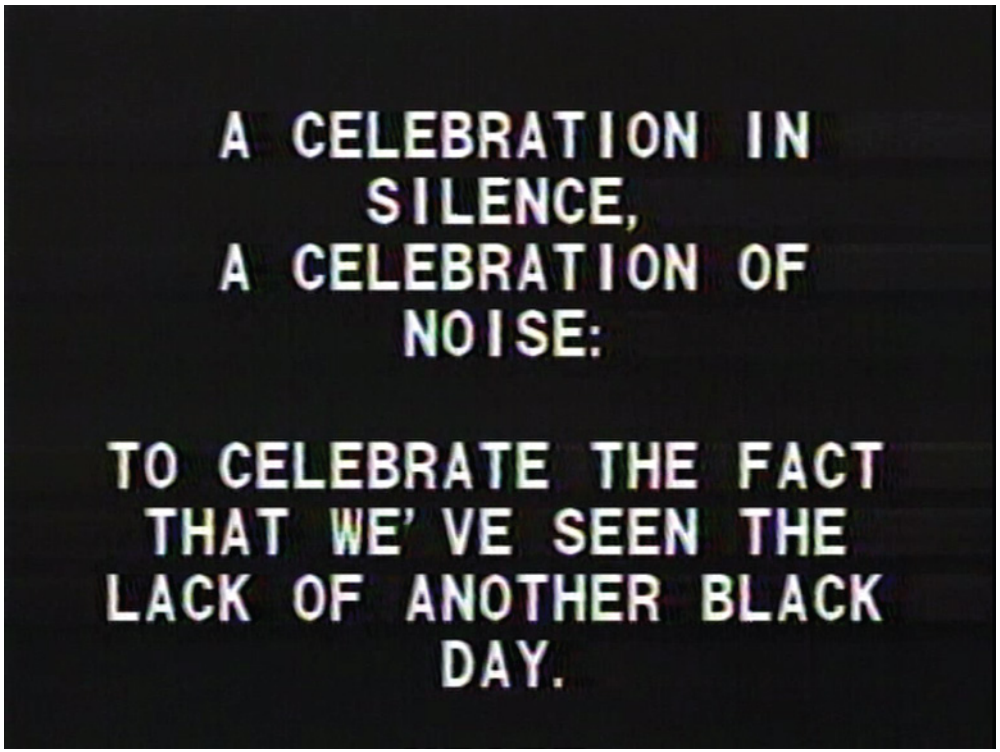
In *To Exist Under Permanent Suspicion*, Kayije Kagame plays an office worker driven to delirium by the degradations of corporate life – and, perhaps, vengeful forces rising up from the land beneath her workplace. Among Valentin Noujaïm's preoccupations is how visions of "progress" predicated upon endless growth, emblematized by places like La Défense (Paris, France), are entwined with surveillance technologies: characters are constantly aware of being looked at and assessed. Building on the filmmaker's earlier exploration of the site's prehistory, the district here emerges as a place where complex dynamics between watching and being watched, surveillant and surveilled, are negotiated, while monstrous forces manifest in surprising and violent ways.

(Courtesy Dylan Huw, "Valentin Noujaïm's 'PANTHEON'", *e-flux*)

JUMANA MANNA
Foragers
2022
01:04:00

Foragers depicts the dramas around the practice of foraging for wild edible plants in Palestine/Israel with wry humor and a meditative pace. Shot in the Golan Heights, the Galilee and Jerusalem, it employs fiction, documentary and archival footage to portray the impact of Israeli nature protection laws on these customs. The restrictions prohibit the collection of the artichoke-like ’akkoub and za’atar (thyme), and have resulted in fines and trials for hundreds caught collecting these native plants. For Palestinians, these laws constitute an ecological veil for legislation that further dispossess them from their land while the occupation’s state representatives insist on their scientific expertise and duty to protect. Following the plants from the wild to the kitchen, from the chases between the foragers and the nature patrol, to courtroom defenses, *Foragers* captures the joy and knowledge embodied in these traditions alongside their resilience to the prohibitive law. By reframing the terms and constraints of preservation, the film raises questions around the politics of extinction, namely who determines what is made extinct and what gets to live on.

TONY COKES
Black Celebration
1988
00:17:15

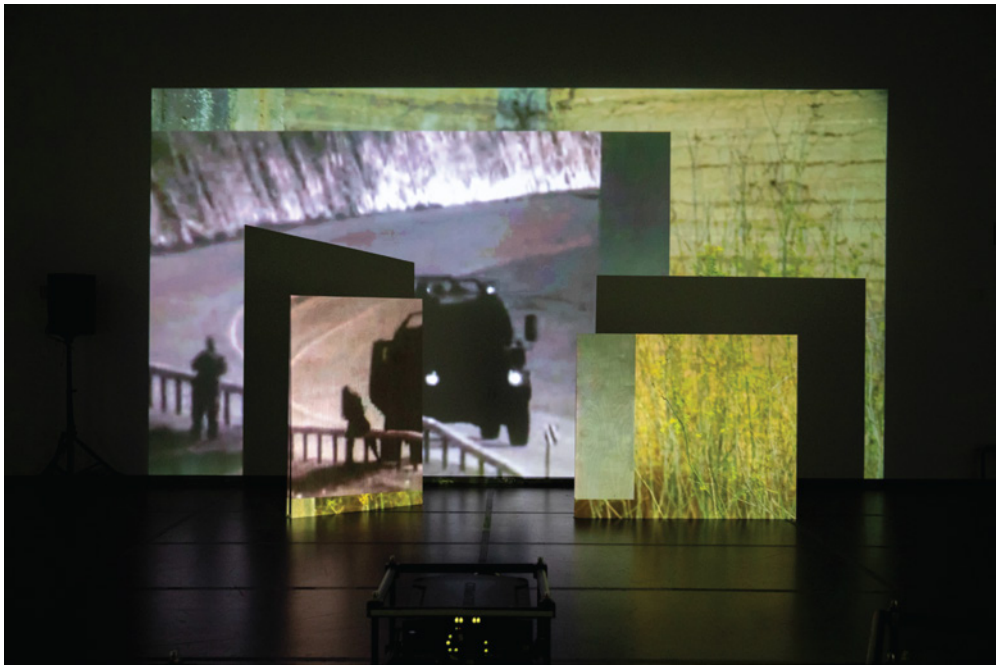


In *Black Celebration*, Cokes merges newsreel footage of riots in urban black neighborhoods in the 1960s with popular music and text commentary to create an incisive counter-reading. Writes Cokes: "This videotape involves the riots that took place in the Watts section of Los Angeles, California in August 1965 and the Black neighborhoods of other American cities during the 1960s. The black and white work uses newsreel footage from events in Watts, Boston, Newark, and Detroit interspersed with text commentary. The newsreel voiceovers are replaced by music. The intent of the piece is to introduce a reading that will contradict received ideas which characterize these riots as criminal or irrational." *Black Celebration* was made for the Bronx Museum of the Arts.

Black Celebration lays the groundwork for the artist's active probing of Blackness in the United States and abroad. Cokes had worked with found footage, text, and popular music before, but *Black Celebration* is sort of the first major, extended work in which he combined loaded newsreel footage with contemporary music (in particular, things like industrial, post-punk, and European dance music) and semi-decontextualized quotes from recognizable figures of the postmodern era (theorists, artists, et al.) that take the place of the "text" (i.e. the newscast) and offer societal critique instead. Those quoted include Morrissey, Barbara Kruger, and others set against a soundtrack from the Canadian post-punk band Skinny Puppy.

(Courtesy Greene Naftali Gallery)

BASEL ABBAS & RUANNE ABOU-RAHME
Only the beloved keeps our secrets
2019–2021
00:10:02



Only the beloved keeps our secrets invites us to consider the forms of entanglement between the destruction of bodies and the erasure of images, and the conditions under which these same bodies and images might once again reappear.

The film, adapted from the artist's three-channel video installation, is structured around CCTV footage taken from an Israeli military surveillance camera. On March 19, 2014, 14 year-old Yusuf Shawamreh crossed the "separation fence" erected by the Israeli military near Hebron. He was going to pick Akub, an edible plant that is a delicacy in Palestinian cuisine, blooming only for only a short period of time and growing at high altitudes. After crossing the fence, Israeli forces ambushed and shot him dead. A court injunction forced the military surveillance footage to be released and consequently circulated online, only to be removed later.

Only the beloved's layered footage, sampled from recordings of the event, brings attention to how images that circulate online can offer a testament to historic events, though that testament can be obliterated when the internet becomes oversaturated with imagery. Foregrounding the simultaneous accumulation and disappearance of data and images, the artists make visible how those "uncounted bodies counter their own erasures, appearing on a street, on a link or on a feed."

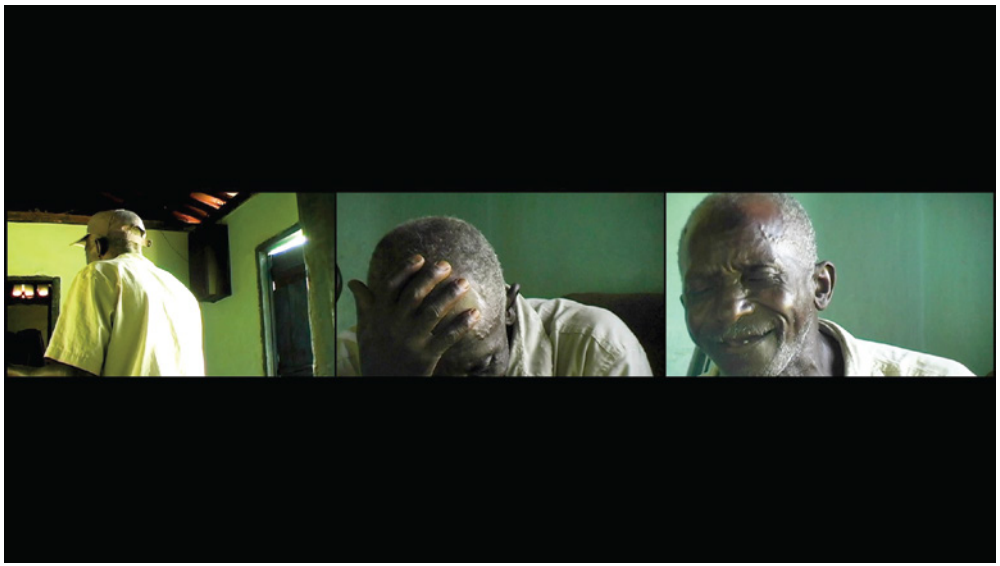
(Courtesy the artists and the Art Institute of Chicago)

GELARE KHOSHGOZARAN
Men of my dreams
2020
00:09:30

Men of my dreams unfolds a series of vignettes that toy with the unstable ground between fact and fiction. Thinking about this past as being materially present in fragments of knowledge carried by the body, *Men of my dreams* delves into the artist's personal history by invoking a group of men that surrounded the artist through their writing, singing, filming and activism while growing up in Tehran and moving to the US, including: writers Edward Said and Roberto Bolaño; poet Federico Garcia Lorca; filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini; singer Farhad Mehrad; Iranian journalist and poet Khosrow Golesorkhi; and also Saeed, Khoshgozaran's father. This work was commissioned by Cell Project Space, London, as part of Queer Correspondence – a mail art initiative curated by Eliel Jones.

(Courtesy Cell Project Space)

EUSTÁQUIO NEVES
Crispim / Encomendador de Almas
2006–2022
00:06:02



Inspired by Arthur Bispo do Rósario, the great Brazilian visual artist who created works of art that he believed to be part of a divine mission, Eustáquio Neves began altering negatives, a technique that became central to his artistic practice. In the forty years since, the autodidact has grappled with the underacknowledged position of Afro-descendants of enslaved people in Brazil. His work captures and manipulates images linked to racial subjugation, intolerance towards Afro-descendant rites, and violence against Black bodies. *Crispim / Encomendador de Almas* depicts the daily life of Crispim, a member of one of the last remaining Baú maroon communities in Minas Gerais established in the spirit of the quilombos. Subsistence culture and the maintenance of ancestral rituals through hereditary religious practices remain central to the communities living there today; Crispim, for example, is entrusted with facilitating the transition between the world of the living and the dead. In Neves's work, his presence is made tangible through medicinal herbs and *vissungo*, a form of call and response in a mix of African languages that was sung by Black enslaved miners in Diamantina.

(Courtesy Haus der Kulturen der Welt)

ADAM HAJYAHIA

Adam HajYahia is a writer and curator living and working in Palestine and New York. He is invested in how practices of image-making, performance, writing, and sound – both within and outside the art market – reflect on, simulate, and initiate sociability and political consciousness. His work looks at the at-once affinitive and conflictual dialectic between psychic desire and capital, and how, through examining this relation, one can understand social organization, anticolonial histories, aesthetic production, labor politics, speculation, and subject formation. He has recently curated *Speaking with the dead* as part of Bilnaes' presentation at the Sharjah Biennial 16, and published his book also with Bilnaes, with Haitham Haddad titled *An Echo in Search of its Shadow: Aesthetics of the Repressed* (2024). His curatorial projects, scholarship, and writing have been recently presented and featured in various museums, universities, and cultural institutions, such as The Vera List Center at The New School (2024), Bard College (2023), The Mosaic Rooms (2023), The James Gallery at the CUNY Graduate Center (2023), MoMA PS1 (2022), The Berlin Biennale 12 (2022), and Mophradat. He has given talks and lectures at the Harvard Law School, Yale School of Art, Yale Law School, and Wolfson College, University of Oxford. He is currently Associate Curator at the Center for Human Rights & the Arts, Bard College.

DINA MIMI

Dina Mimi is a Palestinian visual artist and filmmaker who is based between Palestine and the Netherlands. Mimi works with experimental filmmaking and lecture performances that research the question of how and when bodies become sites of resistance. This question finds its material interest in moving images, especially found footage, that is discarded and therefore deemed invaluable. Understanding editing as a playground, Mimi plays with opacity in moving images by seeking to brush up against footage which desires to be ungraspable or is in the act of vanishing. This is a continuous attempt at non-linear narration as a way of disfiguring one's imagination of bodies as sites of resistance.

VALENTIN NOUJAÏM

Valentin Noujaïm (b. 1991, French–Lebanese) graduated from the Screenwriting Department of La Fémis in Paris and was a guest student at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. Noujaïm's work challenges dominant societal narratives, shedding light on the lives of individuals and communities historically marginalized by systemic discrimination. The cinematic worlds he creates reflect his commitment to exploring diverse formats, including 16mm film, archival materials, digital footage, and special effects.

His films have been selected by numerous prestigious festivals, including CPH:DOX, Visions du Réel, IFFR Rotterdam, DocLisboa, BAFICI, DokuFest, BlackStar Film Festival, and Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur. In 2024, his film Pacific Club was shortlisted for the César Award for Best Documentary. His work has also been featured in several group exhibitions, such as the Fondation Cartier (2025), Nîmes Triennale (2024), Museo Madre (2024), Gianni Manhattan Gallery (2024), Magasins Généraux (2023), CNAC Magasin (2022), Salon de Montrouge (2022), and Air de Paris Gallery (2022), among others. Noujaïm presented his first institutional solo show at Kunsthalle Basel in February 2025.

(Courtesy Arab Culture Fund)

JUMANA MANNA

Jumana Manna is a visual artist and filmmaker. Her work explores how power is articulated, focusing on the body, land and materiality in relation to colonial inheritances and histories of place. Through sculpture, filmmaking, and occasional writing, Manna deals with the paradoxes of preservation practices, particularly within the fields of architecture, agriculture and law. Her practice considers the tension between the modernist traditions of categorisation and conservation and the unruliness of ruination, life and its regeneration. Manna was raised in Jerusalem and lives in Berlin.

She has participated in multiple Im festivals including Berlinale, Viennale, BAFICI, IFFR, Cairo Cinema Days, Goteborg Im festival, Ambulante, Cinéma du Réel, Art of the Real. Her Wild Relatives (2018) won CPH:DOX's New Visions Award, Sheeld Doc's Environmental Film Award, DokuFest Kosovo's Green Dox Award, and Palestine Cinema Days' Sunbird Award. Manna's solo exhibitions include Thirty Plumbers in the Belly, M HKA, Antwerp (2021); Tabakalera, San Sebastian, Spain (2019); The Setting of Noon, Home Works Forum 8: Ashkal Alwan, Beirut (2019); A Small Big Thing, Henie Onstad Museum, Høvikodden, Oslo (2018); A Magical Substance Flows into Me, Mercer Union, Toronto (2017), Malmö Kunsthall, Malmo (2016), and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2015).

TONY COKES

Tony Cokes makes politically resonant works in a visual language all his own. Since the 1980s, his work has surfaced the latent ideologies of popular culture, confronting issues of structural racism, power, visibility, and the defiant pleasures still found under capitalism. Cokes samples and remixes fragments of our media landscape to subvert its governing codes. His tightly choreographed video essays layer found text over vibrant colors and dissonant soundtracks, exploiting the gaps between sensory regimes to heighten and complicate the reading experience. Quoted passages from current events or critical theory take on a new tenor when set to music, resulting in propulsive animations that appeal to the mind and body alike. Cokes's immersive works make text feel visceral and let rhythm spur new insight: as his art attests, "it is possible to dance and think at the same time."

Tony Cokes lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island, where he serves as Professor in the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University. Cokes was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2024 and the Rome Prize in 2022–23. He was the subject of a major survey jointly organized by the Haus der Kunst and Kunstverein in Munich in 2022.

(Courtesy Greene Naftali Gallery)

BASEL ABBAS & RUANNE ABOU-RAHME

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme work together across a range of sound, image, text, installation and performance practices. Their practice is engaged in the intersections between performativity, political imaginaries, the body and virtuality. Across their works they probe a contemporary landscape marked by seemingly perpetual crisis and an endless “present”, one that is shaped by a politics of desire and disaster. They have been developing a body of work that questions this suspension of the present and searches for ways in which an altogether different imaginary and language can emerge that is not bound within colonial/capitalist narrative and discourse. In their projects, they find themselves excavating, activating and inventing incidental narratives, figures, gestures and sites as material for re-imagining the possibilities of the present. Often reflecting on ideas of non-linearity in the form of returns, amnesia and deja vu, and in the process unfolding the slippages between actuality and projection (virtuality, myth, wish), what is and what could be. Largely their approach has been one of sampling materials both existing and self-authored in the form of sound, image, text, objects and recasting them into altogether new “scripts”. The result is a practice that investigates the political, visceral, material possibilities of sound, image, text and site, taking on the form of multi-media installations and live sound/image performances.

GELARE KHOSHGOZARAN

Gelare Khoshgozaran is an undisciplinary artist and filmmaker whose work engages with legacies of imperial violence manifested in war, militarization and borders. They use film and video to construct peripheral narratives that seek to redefine existing constructions of “home” as a means of approaching new conceptualizations of belonging. Khoshgozaran has presented their work internationally, with recent exhibitions and screenings at MoMA Doc Fortnight, Delfina Foundation, Images Festival, EMPAC, MASS MoCA and the Hammer Museum. With a BA in Photography from University of Arts in Tehran (2009), and an MFA from University of Southern California (2011), they are a co-editor of MARCH: a journal of art and strategy, and an editorial board member at X-TRA Contemporary Art Journal. They are assistant professor of art at UCLA School of Art and Architecture.

EUSTÁQUIO NEVES

Eustáquio Neves was born in Juatuba, Minas Gerais in 1955, and today lives and works in Diamantina, Minas Gerais. He earned a degree in chemistry in 1980, but left the field five years later to devote himself fully to photography. Since then, the self-taught photographer has produced photo essays such as *Arturos* (1994), *Futebol* (1998) and *Objetivação do corpo* (1999).

Starting in 2005, he also began producing experimental videos, such as *Dead Horse* (2009), and that same year released his first book, Eustáquio Neves, part of the Photoportátil series published by Cosac Naify. He won the 4th Porto Seguro Photography Prize (São Paulo, Brazil, 2004) and the JP Morgan Photography Prize (São Paulo, Brazil, 1997). His exhibitions include the solo shows “Letters to Sea” (FotoFest International, Texas, USA, 2017), “Valongo: Cartas ao mar” (Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil, 2015), “Memories” (Centre Régional de la Photographie Nord-Pas de Calais, France, 2002) and “Lo individuo y su Memoria” (VI Havana Biennial, Cuba, 1997), as well as the group shows “Agora somos todxs negrxs?” (Galpão Videobrasil, São Paulo, Brazil, 2017), “Afro-Brazil – Photographic Portraits in Brazil 1869/2013” (ifa Gallery Stuttgart, Germany, 2013), the 2nd Biennial of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (Japan, 1997) and “Novas Travessias, New Directions in Brazilian Photography” (The Photographers’ Gallery, London, England, 1996).

(Courtesy America Latina)