

# FORBES EAST 8

Mentorships for Audacious Minds



**FORECAST  
FESTIVAL**

MARCH 15–16

RADIALSYSTEM

**Forecast is an interdisciplinary platform dedicated to facilitating, mentoring, and promoting trailblazing creative practices and audacious artistic practitioners. Its international program Forecast Mentorships offers a new generation of artists and creative thinkers the chance to work with accomplished mentors toward bringing their project ideas to fruition. Forecast transcends neatly defined genres and eschews prescribed themes of research to carve out space for the questions on the minds of future trailblazers.**

**In winter 2023, creative practitioners from around the world answered an open call and submitted their proposals to work with one of the mentors shaping Forecast Mentorships' eighth edition. Active in a variety of disciplines, from poetry to fashion design and improvisational physical performance, the mentors in the 2023–24 edition all share a common engagement with practices that highlight the autonomy of creative endeavors and emphasize the significance of independent art-making in today's deeply politicized arena of cultural production and its reception. In a climate defined by impersonal, screen-based interactions driven by algorithms, Forecast seeks to forge audacious paths forward for practices that thrive and rely on unmediated situations.**

**Reading a total of 800 applications from over 100 countries, the mentors invited 18 nominees to participate in the Forecast Forum in July, 2023, at Radialsystem, Berlin. There, visitors could experience boundary-pushing contributions ranging**

from performances and poetry readings to immersive explorations in moving images and aural experimentations. At the event's conclusion, the mentors each selected one mentee and accompanied the development of their respective projects until their premiere at the Forecast Festival.

Over the course of eight months between the Forum and the Festival, one-on-one mentorships took place, in which each of the six mentees went on an individual work-stay with their respective mentor. In this edition, Forecast partnered with organizations in Brazil, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, and Chile for these work-stays, which offer generous space for a condensed period of creative exchanges, finetuning, and concrete mentoring. These personal exchanges and work sessions, which prove crucial for the final productions ahead of the Forecast Festival, were captured in short videos produced with local camera people on the ground.

Having reached the end of their mentorship period, the mentees will unveil their productions in the two-day Forecast Festival. In addition, the mentors will also offer insights into their own work, and the topics that inspire and move them. All of Forecast's initiatives are centered on in-person gatherings and exchanges not only between mentor and mentee, but among all participants across the different fields of creative expression. It is in this trans-disciplinary approach that Forecast radiates far and wide, and new ideas blossom.

# Defying the Subordination of Art

FREO MAJER

*Artistic Director, Forecast*

There seems to be a prevalent hope or desire that an uplifting art experience will bring the kind of catharsis that idealistic thinkers in Germany expected from theater around 200 years ago: a sort of spiritual and moral purification, a deep, warm cleanse from within that can perhaps be envisioned like bathing in hot springs. I can't say whether any of the arts can bring about such catharsis. But I doubt that this is art's task. Because this kind of functionalization of the arts, the subordination of artistic creation to a "higher purpose" deprives art of what distinguishes it from so many other disciplines: its unconditional independence and freedom.

Why should we, whose lifeblood is precisely this freedom, allow this to happen? But for the sake of the argument, let's accept for a moment the assertion that art only assumes value when it tackles big social and political issues, when it, bursting with ideological fervor and superiority, stands up for a moral cause and takes the side of a single valid truth. What this truth is seems to be immovable for some actors, especially for the loudest voices on social media. Isn't it fascinating how attractive, sexy even, people seem who are completely sure of themselves and their worldview, who have no doubts

whatsoever, and stir every intricacy and complexity into their hot boiling soup of opinions until they completely evaporate? Whether a person with these qualities wants to lead a cult, sell esoteric miracle cures, or embark on a populist political career—their charisma will surely take many of us by storm.

In our latest edition of Forecast Mentorships we had the pleasure and privilege of working with a different kind of person. Yes, our mentors and mentees in the eighth edition have a special radiance and charisma, but not through manipulation for the sake of power. They do not claim to possess the rare genius that would make us better people through exposure to their talents. These artists create a shared experience and mutual understanding. They approach every object, every being, and especially every person with openness and a clear view of the possibilities; "What could we do together?" "What makes us curious about one another?"

There was a moment in the process when the special character of Gabeba Baderoon, Greg Fox, Roe Rosen, Irakli Rusadze, and Yuya Tsukahara became particularly clear. During the Forum week in July 2023, they attempted to describe their impressions of their respective nominees to one another. Each of them found a distinct way to express their appreciation and interest, but above all to emphasize the uniqueness and individual skills of each of their three nominees. In fact, the eighteen participants



From Gustavo Gomes's performance *Blue Shoe* at the Forecast Forum, July 2023. Photo: Camille Blake

in Forecast Forum 8 were truly impressive—some thanks to their experimental spirit and energy, some with their clarity of thought or humor. We were able to offer six of them the opportunity to further refine their concept alongside their chosen mentor over the last few months, and we are proud and excited to present the results of their work as part of Forecast Festival 8.

Our mentors, mentees, and not least our institutional cooperation partners always express appreciation and enthusiasm that Forecast has been funded by the the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media since its inception, supported by resolutions of the German Bundestag. Our sincere gratitude goes to them. The special privilege of this funding also means a

particular responsibility for us. We have made it our goal to consistently review and revise our work, processes, formats, and communication strategies for Forecast since our inception in 2015. The cultural diversity and thematic variety of the annual submissions we receive through our Open Call have grown steadily, and in the current edition the Forecast mentors had to sift through over 800 highly interesting applications from 106 countries. It is our conviction and also a realization of the past years that these audacious minds who bring extraordinary abilities to the table fully deserve this recognition and support. Working with the mentees and mentors of this cohort fills us with great gratitude and confirms our confidence in what we do.







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MENTOR  
GREG FOX

CARLOS  
GUTIÉRREZ  
INFINITE  
WARP AND  
WEFT

Carlos Gutiérrez is a composer, performer, and researcher based in La Paz, Bolivia. His work is influenced by the indigenous music of the Bolivian Highlands and extends to creating instruments, public interventions, and installations that explore tuning systems, the spatialization of sound over long distances, and aural illusions. His project *Infinite Warp and Weft* entails a digital matrix score conceived as an expandable and collapsible notational space. It can generate elastic music structures with multiple coexisting time layers, rhythm configurations, and combinatorial possibilities. With flexible time and pitch parameters, the spatial sound installation he has developed can turn rhythms into continuous tones. Add to these movements the possibility of generating several interdependent rhythmic levels and you'll obtain a multilayered grid, a complex weaving of time.

Musician Greg Fox, who named his field of mentorship *Rhythmic Excavation*, accompanied the project's development as a mentor. The two musicians met for a work-stay in Tokyo, where they also performed together. During their time in Japan, they've encountered different approaches linking traditional practices and techniques with new technology, and explored the ways in which such connections also resonate with Gutiérrez's project. Fox said: "Carlos Gutiérrez's particular ethnomusical and compositional interests, and the multidimensionality of the ways in which they can be conveyed speak directly to the (admittedly somewhat cryptic) theme of *Rhythmic Excavation*."

# Greg Fox: Rhythmic Excavation

American musician Greg Fox is a multi-instrumentalist, interdisciplinary artist, and teacher born and based in New York City. A versatile and prolific creative, he moves through musical stages as both listener and player, a transformative rather than performative force. As a drummer with hundreds of credits on obscure records, Fox is well-known

in the lesser-known. He has toured, recorded, and released numerous records with Liturgy, Guardian Alien, ZS, Ex Eye, Skeletons, Teeth Mountain, Dan Deacon, Colin Stetson, Ben Frost, and many more.

Fox is also a slow theorist, a musician aware of those who came before him, and a teacher of drumming, with students all over the world. He has worked with drummers like Thurman Barker (Mighty Joe Young, Marvin Gaye, Cecil Taylor), Guy Licata (Drummers Collective, Jojo Mayer, Jim Chapin), Marvin “Bugalu” Smith (James Brown, Sun Ra, Chet Baker, Charles Mingus), and Milford Graves. Fox has a practice that goes beyond drumming—he is a certified professional coach who focuses on transformational life changes. He helps people find their rhythms, in behavior, mind, and spirit.



Photo: Camille Blake

Photo: Ebru Yildiz



“The mentors I’ve had in my life have helped me clarify and articulate who I am as an individual, as an artist, and as a human being. With the slight exception of Milford Graves, who was on a high pedestal

for me, I have been close friends, collaborators, and comrades with the people I consider to be my mentors. I approach being a mentor in the same way, without any pretence of hierarchy, offering friendship and collaboration, and that is exactly what Forecast has been for me.” GREG FOX

Photo: Stefanie Kulisch / CTM



# Music for the Head and the Body

**In *Infinite Warp and Weft*, Carlos Gutiérrez highlights the experience of sonic illusions that arrive after an intense, concentrated musical experience.**

*Interviewed by* EMILY BICK

“When I was studying and wanted to start my career as a composer, I had this problem of how to represent my sound ideas,” says Bolivian composer Carlos Gutiérrez, whose project for Forecast, *Infinite Warp and Weft*, uses the structures of traditional textile weaving as a metaphor for composition. His work incorporates several forms of indigenous Andean music. Often working with panpipes, Gutiérrez employs a subtle interplay of tones, movements, and beat frequencies produced by a group of players to compose intricate structures.

“In part, the idea for this project started with the problem that emerges when you want to transcribe an Indigenous song,” he explains. “Western researchers transcribed examples of these tunes, but there is a huge lack of information in their documents. In the Western way of notating music, you can’t really notate most of these gestures and sounds because they are not really in the tonal system. The Western tools to analyze and transcribe the traditional music of Bolivia, and of many other cultures, are not enough to represent that. I was thinking of ways to not only represent this music, but also the compositional ideas that I have.”

Early visual representations of Gutiérrez’s project appeared onscreen as a landscape that could be navigated along a two-dimensional x-y axis, with a third dimension of zooming in and out of focus on granular moments or elements of sound. This movement reflects the minute differentials of tone in panpipes that elude other forms of notation. “If you have the same pipe, let’s say the pipe number five, there are small differences in each instrument. They provoke these beating sounds, and the smallest pipes have even more interesting beating results,” he explains. “Indigenous groups are looking for these sorts of differences. When you have this whole group playing you have different kinds of beatings sounding. These very small differences are even less than a quarter of a tone. The idea of the grid, which can be compressed or expanded, was to be able to work in very small detail.”

**Emily Bick** is Commissioning Editor for *The Wire* magazine, and a writer on music, technology, and culture. She is based in London.



### Weaving Sound with the Audience

In preparation for his project being selected for Forecast, Gutiérrez presented a modified version of a workshop that he used to do with children and audiences using traditional Andean music. He handed out pan-pipes to everyone in the group, and then gave them a rhythmic call and response exercise. Gutiérrez and his mentor, Greg Fox, met in Tokyo to further develop the project. “We’re going to present a sound installation,” Gutiérrez explains. “People will grab a pan-pipe, and we would probably have four or six mics, each with a specific programming. For example, if you approach the mic and play it

just like ‘ah’ [sings] you will have a certain response, a rhythmic response. A different mic will give another response. People will be able to play in groups in front of these mics and have a more direct relationship with this idea of rhythms and flexibility.” A Bolivian artisan will supply the pipes and Gutiérrez is working with the programmer Carter Williams to deliver software that will generate rhythmic feedback from the players’ input. It’s a setup that allows for emergent complexity to be generated from simple starting conditions, as rhythms are looped and woven together.





The movement of players through the space is as important as their activity at the mics and the triggered rhythmic programming. Gutiérrez describes a formative experience at a festival of traditional Bolivian music, where he wandered through a huge gathering of several large groups of twenty or more musicians playing their own tunes in the same style. “When you are walking in this space and listening to these infinite configurations of sound, you can’t really even decide which kind of weaving to follow; it’s just really impressive, a massive experience in the space,” he says, “And it is always a very important topic for me in the composition.”

### **The Sajra**

Gutiérrez also relishes the experience of sonic illusions that arrive after such an intense, concentrated musical experience. After one such festival that lasted several days, he continued to hear a mirage of music in the distance: “When I got back to the city or to my home, I kept listening to this sound, it’s incredible. It’s like there are soundings far away from here.” Later, he spoke with a researcher about a belief of indigenous Bolivian people that explains this phenomenon affecting musicians: “There is this spirit, it’s kind of a devil-like entity, but it’s also very fertile, which can give you some very

## The movement of players through the space is as important as their activity at the mics and the triggered rhythmic programming.

interesting things. It's an ambiguous entity that stays in your head. It's called the *Sajra*," Gutiérrez explains. In order to cast out the *Sajra*'s sonic devilry, legend has it, the affected person needs to hit themselves on the head with a lucuma fruit. "I didn't try that," says Gutiérrez, "I really like the aural illusion. In an installation that I did in 2018, I installed a lot of these whistling bottles that sound because of the movement of the water, and there's a whistle in one of the bottles so you have these different tones. I was installing them the whole day, and I clearly remember back in my hotel in that night, I had this same sensation... I decided I need to work in that way of composition, composed for the head."

In *Infinite Warp and Weft*, music for the head and the body intertwine as players interconnect and respond to each other within the space and through infinite feedback loops of sound. "I was thinking that they also have the possibility to create these weavings in the space of the speakers, in this case," Gutiérrez says, "This will be, for me, just the start of this idea. These sonic textiles could likely be expanded to more speakers, to different distances, to different ways of situating the speakers or the musicians in the space. It's a field that I would like to research. This will be the starting point of what I intend to develop, a really big rhythmic generator."



### Project credits

Programming: Carter Williams  
Bamboo tubes prepared  
by Vicente Torrez  
Thanks to: Orquesta Experimental  
de Instrumentos Nativos

Watch a video recap of  
Carlos Gutiérrez and Greg Fox's  
work-stay in Tokyo:



[forecast-platform.com/  
work-stay-carlos-gutierrez/](https://forecast-platform.com/work-stay-carlos-gutierrez/)

AIDAN JAYSON  
PETERS  
**DEADSTOCK**

**LIFE OF A  
GARMENT**



MENTOR  
**IRAKLI  
RUSADZE**

Aidan Jayson Peters, aka Klein Muis, is a South African designer whose research-driven work prioritizes problem-solving in scalable and ecologically responsible manners. Using materials from Johannesburg’s so-called “discard sites” of European clothing to create complete looks, his collection reflects the clothing items’ journey from the Global North to the Southern hemisphere through photography, texts, and a short film that describes a garment’s life cycle. In this collaborative project—Klein Muis’s debut collection—the looks underscore the environmental impact of the garment industry as well as the informal economies that pop up around it. But above all, the looks highlight the ingenuity of those who have found new ways to process and reinvent discarded products.

The project’s first phase was titled *Dunusa—Life of a Garment*, after the large, open-air thrifting mecca in Johannesburg’s Central Business District. At the Forecast Forum, Peters presented three upcycled looks, an editorial, and a short film that convey the atmosphere of Dunusa market and the chaos and thrill of thrifting there. “It was important to debut the project to an audience who wasn’t familiar with Dunusa or its inner workings. There was an extreme sense of appreciation and curiosity for the idea as a whole. This is partly what we set out to do: create those dialogues across cultures, borders, and oceans,” he explained.

Fashion designer Irakli Rusadze worked with Peters on developing the collection further. They met for a workstay in Mexico City, where Peters seized the opportunity to explore how local ecologies connect with the main themes of his project: sustainability, local knowledges, and craftsmanship. Rusadze said: “Peters is sharing the culture of his home country through a sustainable and socially engaged approach. I’m touched by the energy he puts into his project and the vision he has for his future.” The collection evolved to include sixteen pieces, cocreated with Khumo Morojele, and unveiled at the Forecast Festival under the title *Deadstock—Life of a Garment*, alongside with a film directed by Jack Markovitz.



# Irakli Rusadze: Sartorial Identities

Irakli Rusadze is the creative director of the Tbilisi-based fashion brand SITUATIONIST, which he cofounded in 2015. A self-trained designer, Rusadze's distinctive pattern-cutting and tailoring form the basis of his designs, alongside a desire to challenge "post-Soviet" stereotypes and reflect on contemporary social issues in Georgia. Only two years after its launch, SITUATIONIST was featured as a guest brand at Milan Fashion Week in 2017. The brand began presenting its collections at Paris Fashion Week the following year,

and in 2022, Rusadze, who is committed to working sustainably, unveiled a zero-waste collection there. "Through the years, we learned how to make fashion and art communicate, and at the same time also sell the collections that we are proposing to the global market. Even though the platforms we work with propose products to a wide audience and in large quantities, we stayed true to our values and kept hand-making all our garments in the most sustainable way possible."



SITUATIONIST Spring/Summer 2021



SITUATIONIST Fall/Winter 2021



SITUATIONIST, Look from *Forbidden Family*.

As a mentor, Rusadze sought candidates who understand “how to build their identity through their originality.” He encouraged applicants to apply with projects that are unique, sincere, and authentic. “We should

feel that the projects are the result of personal questioning, and in touch with the present fashion scene and market,” he added, stressing the commercial aspect of realizing a collection.

Photo: Grigor Devėjiev



**“Knowledge is made to be shared with others. Knowledge is an asset that really makes all its sense when it is passed down to younger generations or people who wish to extend their own knowledge.”** IRAKLI RUSADZE

# Designing for a Nascent Cultural Identity

**Aidan Jayson Peters's debut collection highlights the erosion of local craftsmanship as the hidden cost of a global fashion industry.**

by QUYNH TRAN

Imagine a “pre-owned” or “pre-loved” garment in the Global North, where these terms have recently come to signify a savvy, responsible buyer, and a romanticized idea springs to mind of a treasure-hunter strolling through a quaint vintage market in a hip neighborhood. Flip the poles and consider that same garment in the context of the Global South, and it may have been scavenged out of necessity from the surplus waste offloaded on the markets of the poor.

The fault lines between what we've come to call the Global North and the Global South are deeply woven into the things we wear, many of which were produced in the sweatshops of the South for the consumerist temples of the North. In an ironic twist, a hyper-capitalist boomerang sends those very

items back, and into a market of excess disposal. Some African countries have become both a smorgasbord of industrial resources for global industries and a landfill for the things Europe no longer desires. The influx of discarded textiles, for example, has reached a point where some countries now call for a ban on European second-hand imports.

## **Dunusa Market as a State of Mind**

At Johannesburg's most famous flea market, the Dunusa market, discarded clothes from Europe arrive in fifty-kilo bundles. They're piled on the floor and sold by weight. In fact, the word Dunusa has taken on a new meaning, describing the act of bending down and pointing one's backside outward as shoppers do when they sift through heaps of used garments. These fabrics have become a boon and a burden. The one-way flow of goods has created a trade ecosystem that has made clothing more affordable for the less affluent. However, the industry is slowly killing local textile production. The hidden cost of the global market is the erosion of the very fabric of local craftsmanship. “This wouldn't happen if it wasn't waste for Europeans,” says Johannesburg-based designer Aidan Jayson Peters. Donating your unwanted clothes to

**Quynh Tran** is an independent writer and researcher based in Tel Aviv and Berlin. She investigates cultural discourses within shifting global hierarchies, looking at the intersection between culture, design, politics, and society. Her work has been published with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Zeit Online*, among other publications.





organizations that send them to Africa is not as sustainable as some may think, he emphasizes, as most of the garments end up in massive landfills rather than being reused.

Nevertheless, this is where Peters sourced the fabrics for his debut collection *Deadstock–Life of a Garment*. The young designer eschewed the classic model of working with themes and mood boards, replacing them instead with the ingenuity of the street. He pays homage to Dunusa as a state of mind. “It’s less about the ideas than what’s out there

and what we can make of it,” he says. A cornucopia of discards, Dunusa market provided him with a bundle of used denim, old sportswear, leather, worn-out stretch shirts, and office wear. Peters embarked on a trajectory of trial and error to explore the interdependences of the global fashion market. This resulted in a sixteen-piece avant-garde collection, interwoven with the threads of critical dialogue on the disproportionality of resource consumption between the North and the South.

## A Gesture of Liberation

Peters explores the boundaries of concept-driven design through the deconstruction and upcycling of discarded clothing. The collection picks up on the black, red, and white color palette of the ubiquitous polyester tartan bag that originated in Hong Kong yet has traveled so widely it now has as many names as destinations. A soccer-fan jersey is carefully cut into diamond-shaped patterns and turned into a sculptural, custom-made quilted vest. Denims are twisted into draped skirts and a trench coat gets a Dunusa makeover with checked patchwork. The bold shapes of inflated white-collar silhouettes feature scraps of streetwear highlighted by intricate Zulu crochet pieces. The act of making “crazy, beautiful clothes” from discarded garments and integrating the craftsmanship of local artisans becomes a gesture of liberation in a cycle dominated by European markets.



The young designer eschewed the classic model of working with themes and mood boards, replacing them instead with the ingenuity of the street. He pays homage to Dunusa as a state of mind.

## A Nascent Cultural Identity

Growing up in the small town of Kimberley, famed for its diamond mine, Peters describes a sheltered childhood. His environment was influenced by football and cars rather than the arts, but his parents encouraged his creative forays into fashion and film. At the age of sixteen, he founded the streetwear label LO-C-DORE with a friend, citing Virgil Abloh’s Pyrex Vision and the aesthetics of the early 2010s as an influence. Peters would have been labeled “Colored” under the Apartheid regime, and he considers his cultural identity in post-Apartheid South Africa to be a nascent one. “We’ve only existed for a few decades. We are still creating this culture and shaping this identity and I’m part of it,” he says.

After a short stint studying law in Cape Town, he went on to study fashion design at South Africa’s Stadio School of Fashion. But it was Forecast’s mentorship program with Irakli Rusadze that took him out of South Africa for the first time. “I’m only slowly being introduced to the world,” Peters says. He creates his collection under the moniker Klein



accompanied by a film and an editorial. To him, fashion is art, but intimate conversations with his mentor Rusadze have nurtured both a sense of practicality and responsible production. As much as his debut offers a humanist perspective on the sweatshop machinations of a faceless fashion industry, Peters is also discussing the possibilities of responsible economic development. “I’m trying to get out of the cycle of seasons for the sake of an alternative schedule based on when I have something to say,” he explains. “I’m at the very beginning of the journey.” And he is taking time to find where he wants to go, on his own terms.

Muis, a nickname that stuck from childhood and translates as “little mouse.” Having gone on a work-stay to Mexico City as part of the mentorship program, Peters elaborates on how these experiences find their way into his work: “Johannesburg is a space that is meant to serve a purpose, but in Mexico City, I found architects like Luis Barragán and Tatiana Bilbao putting thought into how edifices can be humanized.” He considers the complex history of Johannesburg and South Africa critical to his work and identity, but it is the approach of humanization through design that Peters explores through Klein Muis.

Indeed, his debut collection reflects the complex topologies of South Africa, and that’s one of the reasons why it is also

#### **Project credits**

Creative direction, Garments:  
Klein Muis & Khumo Morojele  
Photographer: Jack Markovitz  
Assistant photographer:  
Sante Chiweshe  
Models: Hlagu Junia,  
Tracy Mokgopo,  
Tshedza Mashamba  
Production assistant: Zano Nkosi

Watch a video recap of Aidan Jason Peters and Irakli Rusadze’s work-stay in Mexico City in collaboration with SOMA:



[forecast-platform.com/  
work-stay-aidan-jason-peters/](https://forecast-platform.com/work-stay-aidan-jason-peters/)

MARCELA  
HUERTA

# WHITE HORSES ALWAYS RUN HOME



MENTOR  
**GABEBA  
BADEROON**

Chilean-Canadian writer Marcela Huerta's project proposes an intimate, poetic portrait of the author's mother, Yolanda Huerta, a refugee of the 1973 Chilean coup. The two participated in a variety of somatic practices to find new ways of co-narrating the histories that have shaped their relationship. Together, they revisited the geographies of Yolanda's refugee story: Maipú, the neighborhood where she lived before being abducted; Mendoza, the city where she spent her solitary time in hiding; and Winnipeg, the place where she painstakingly built a new life. These trips informed the subsequent manuscript, portraying not a past trauma but an enduring one that lives in the ways both mother and daughter relate to the world. In unearthing inter-generational trauma and documenting it through a multifaceted process, *White Horses Always Run Home* aims to create an emotionally cathartic access point for reflecting on how past atrocities shape the struggles of the present, while also creating an empathetic and collaborative poetic experience between a mother and daughter.

Poet Gabeba Baderoon accompanied Huerta in creating a portrait of the author's mother—a project that Baderoon described as an “evocative experiential poetic collaboration.” Their work-stay took place in Santiago de Chile and Valdivia, Chile. Baderoon said: “In January 2023, Forecast issued a call for applications for projects that engage with Voluptuous Silence and Sociality in Poetry, the first time verse was included among its mentorships.” She adds, “I felt nourished by our exchanges—discussing new versions of poems and sometimes working line-by-line on revised work.”



# Gabeba Baderoon: Voluptuous Silence and Sociality in Poetry

Gabeba Baderoon is a South African poet, editor, academic, memoirist, and performer. She took her first class in writing poetry at the age of thirty and still describes herself as a student of the writing arts today, a quarter of a century later. Baderoon is the author of the collections *The Dream in the Next Body* (Kwela Books, 2005), *A hundred silences* (Kwela Books, 2006), and *The Museum of Ordinary Life* (DaimlerChrysler, 2005), as well as the monograph *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* (Wits University Press, 2014). Her work has been honored with the University of Johannesburg Prize, the Elisabeth Eybers Poetry Prize, the Daimler Award, and a best book award from the

National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Baderoon teaches Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, African Studies, and Comparative Literature at Penn State University, where she co-directs the African Feminist Initiative. She has been an Extraordinary Professor of English at Stellenbosch University since 2012. She is currently a fellow at the Center for Humanities and Information at Penn State, where she's working on her memoir *The Concussion Diaries: Relief Map of a Drifting Mind*.

"My life as a poet began with a class in writing poetry. It changed my life. It was like a love affair—I felt a recognition, a mystery,



Photos: Camille Blake

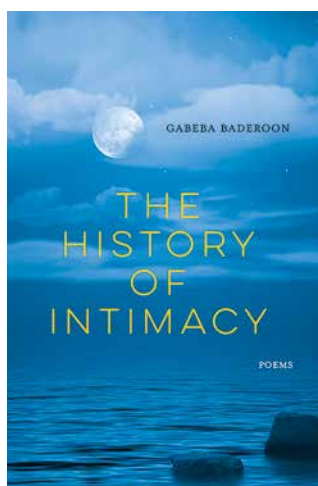
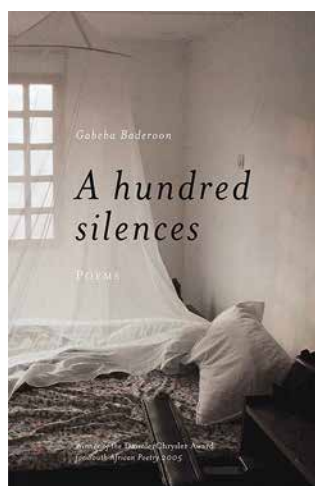


**“A deep lesson was the comfort and the deepening that can come from listening to others who have been on the path before me. I often felt baffled and frustrated and lonely in the face of writing and the sheer solace that other writers could offer was immeasurably precious.”** GABEBA BADEROON

a rightness, an excitement, a commitment, and a sense of a future,” Baderoon recalls. “Gabriel Welsch, Kim Welsch, Robin Becker, and Sean O’Brien were my great mentors. Their love of being in the company of words, and their gift for teaching us how to end a line, the role of the body in writing (for instance, in sound), how to follow a sentence in a poem, taught me a life in poetry. Once I had written enough ‘homework’ for these classes, I also learned from the generous community of older South African

poets who mentored me, like Ingrid de Kok, Kelwyn Sole, and the late, great Keorapetse Kgositse.”

As a mentor, Baderoon sought applicants working with poetic language, in any tradition or mode. “I myself work in the lyric poetry tradition, which means I am in a world sensuously alive with the intuitions, whispers, and hesitations of language, which I press beyond the small circle of the ‘I’ toward an intimacy with history, theory, and politics,” she says.





# Siting the Unsayable

On Marcela and Yolanda Huerta's collaborative poetic experience as a form of bodily reckoning.

by PABLO LARIOS

Some stories have no beginnings, or at least no beginnings commensurate with the real experiences of the people who share them. Marcela Huerta's *White Horses Always Run Home* is one such story. Marcela is a poet and writer who, in their project for Forecast, confronts aspects of inherited grief, loss, and trauma as experienced by their own mother, the folk singer, performer, and artisan Yolanda Huerta. Marcela and Yolanda use poems, theater, games, and somatic activities to work through and reinscribe what Marcela calls Yolanda's "geographies of trauma": bottomless passages through a horrifying displacement that, perhaps, nobody but Yolanda can describe. But that's just it. Who can ever re-inscribe the traumas of the displaced?

"This excess of words is a response to being silenced," Marcela writes of their own roving and multivocal writing. *White Horses Always Run Home* navigates many universal experiences—silencing, movement, labor, trauma—but it's always about the transmissibility of particular experiences and our attempts and failures to describe and retell these acts. Which is to say, it's also about poetry. It's also about the specific relations that family lodge us within, and about how incommunicable these relations are, even as they are transferred within and externalized through the body: which is to say, this is a project of performance as a form of bodily reckoning.

## Caballito Blanco

*White Horses Always Run Home* begins with Marcela's attempt, about half a decade ago, to actively picture Yolanda's life in Chile before her life as an exile. Marcela, who was born and grew up in Canada, was told stories by their mother about the Chilean coup. In contrast to the habituated silence that often exists among many survivors, Yolanda gave Marcela snippets of experiences, but these were (Marcela says) rather fragmentary and decontextualized. This sense of narrative fragmentation is an important starting point because it allows for the arrays of verbal, bodily, and visual bricolage that give life to *White Horses Always Run Home*.

In a chapter entitled "Going Home," Marcela explains the origin of the project's title—the lullaby "Caballito Blanco" their mother sang to them as a child (*Little white horse, / Take me away. / Take me to the town, / Where I was born*). In a startling prose sequence, Marcela describes a terrifying dream in which they imagined some of the violence their mother had experienced. After their mother soothed and calmed them in the wake of the nightmare by singing "Caballito Blanco," Yolanda confessed to her daughter that she dreamt that she was dying at the same moment that Marcela was dreaming of their mother's torture.

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“This is a project about return. return of the scene of the crime. return to the terrain...,” Marcela writes in that chapter. The project is about tracing the “geographies of this trauma,” as Marcela says: virtually revisiting Maipú, Yolanda’s hometown; Santiago de Chile, where she was detained; Mendoza, where she was in hiding for a year; and Buenos Aires, where Yolanda and her sister left South America—and finally Winnipeg, where she landed in Canada and gave birth to Marcela.

### **Painful Legacies and Somatic Practices**

Marcela writes about finding poetics in the body. A core part of their work concerns a type of physical theater, therapeutic movement, and visualization work known collectively

as “somatic practices”—all focusing on the *soma*, the body as visualized by an inhabiting self. Proceeding from an insight that experience is inscribed on the body, present-day somatic practices use dance, theater, visualization, and games to undo trauma that, when further considered, manifests itself on a physical level. These practices of awareness then use the body to work through somatic trauma that remained buried.

Marcela’s practices refer, among others, to clown work developed by Canadian clown Richard Pochinko, while another touchpoint is derived from Yolanda’s experiences acting and writing for the play *I Wasn’t Born Here* (1988) by Lina de Guevara, which focused on the experiences of immigrant women from El Salvador, Chile, and

## Marcela and Yolanda use poems, theater, games, and somatic activities to work through and reinscribe what Marcela calls Yolanda’s “geographies of trauma”: bottomless passages through a horrifying displacement that, perhaps, nobody but Yolanda can describe.

Nicaragua. Some of the somatic connections among performance, writing, and healing can be read through Yolanda’s words, recounting realizations provoked around this time through yoga: “[d]oing this exercise I suddenly felt like fainting. Dizzy. I have this strange pain in my back, right down on the end point where there is a little bone. I remember, when I was in the stadium, a military man kicked my back there. He kicked me with his boot. It was a horrible feeling.”\*

Such a recollection can allow us to understand how unprepared Marcela felt, as they told me, for the actual challenges of confronting these experiences. In our conversation, they speak about their initial reluctance to even self-characterize as the child of a refugee and survivor—only to learn that many children of refugees often have the same sense of withholding from themselves. Already there, we can see how this repression persists through generations—even while such silencing afforded Marcela the ability to confront this legacy by turning to writing.

### Communicating Without Communicating

From poems and zines to yoga and breathwork and a clown workshop, *White Horses* explores the many ways that suppressed histories can resurface through body awareness and body movements. Another important aspect of this project are the *arpilleras* made by Yolanda. This form of resistance art arose amid the Pinochet dictatorship, when thousands of people were abducted, made to disappear, or murdered. Chilean women, seeking and mourning missing relatives, turned to *arpilleras* as a form of vernacular



\* Quoted in *Bodies of Knowledge: Embodied Learning in Adult Education, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education 134* (2012).

art: naïve-seeming textile tapestries and quilts on potato sacks that contained messages expressing the horrors and suppression of the Pinochet regime. Predominantly crafted by women—often in workshops organized by the Roman Catholic Church, who also sold



these to raise funds for women’s groups—these *arpilleras* were shipped or snuck out of Chile, containing pockets that enclosed secret messages. By the time the Pinochet regime outlawed *arpilleras*, they were an important form of political messaging and resistance. Marcela shows me an *arpillera* made by their mother, depicting Yolanda and her sister arriving in Winnipeg.

Marcela’s poem *cenicientas* begins with an experience of “learning how to write in English” while a child watches movies while a mother cleans houses. Other textual-bodily games include *Palabritas*, a round-robin poem and game in which two or more players construct a poem together following an initial prompt word (the poem starting with “Chile” finishes with the moving “BUT / SOON / THEY / WILL / BE / BUSY / WITH / THEIR / WORLDS / OF / SOLITUDE”). *Compartecuerpo* (“share-body”) involves tracing the outline of a body on paper on the ground. The game’s participants are asked

personal questions—but instead of answering the question verbally, the respondent simply points to a part of their body.

How do we talk about our families, and do we need to talk about them at all? As an immigrant myself, I bristle with the over-determined language used by people to categorize my own experiences, legacies. And so, I understand part of Marcela’s argument in affixing these experiences to the body as a form of bringing them to their primary geography: the body itself. This endeavor seems to me to be an attempt at communicating sometimes without communicating, which allows people to undo the painful legacies forced upon them from above.

#### Project credits


Performance and writing:  
Marcela Huerta, Yolanda Huerta  
Archival photos: Raul Nuñez  
Zine design and layout:  
Marcela Huerta  
Additional art: Fatim Yassine  
Special thanks to: Pilar Huerta,  
Rodolfo Cerda, Sara Laura  
Huerta Garcia, Pato Ibáñez,  
Beatriz Fuentes Ortega, The Centre  
for Oral History and Digital  
Storytelling at Concordia University,  
Colectiva Crear Poder Popular,  
Scott Boudreau, Malva Schmidt,  
Kaylah Zander, and Hernan Efef.

Watch a video recap of Marcela Huerta and Gabea Baderoon’s work-stay in Santiago de Chile in collaboration with coma:



[forecast-platform.com/  
work-stay-marcela-huerta/](https://forecast-platform.com/work-stay-marcela-huerta/)

# VICTOR ARTIGA RODRIGUEZ THOUGHTS ON FLUID ASSEMBLAGES



MENTOR  
**YUYA  
TSUKAHARA**

Hailing from El Salvador, Victor Artiga Rodriguez is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the convergence of poetry, the body, and digital technologies. Collaboration, co-creation, and co-authorship are fundamental to Artiga Rodriguez's practice. For his project *Thoughts on Fluid Assemblages*, he has invited the artists, performers, and dancers Carla Anacker, Edgar Lessig, and Icaro Lopez de Mesa Moyano to jointly experiment with collaborative methodologies of dramaturgical, choreographic, and scenographic creation. Together, they developed a performative project that examines how bodies, human and nonhuman, are subject to experience climate changes on a micropolitical scale. The first iteration was presented at the Forecast Forum in July, 2023, and throughout the following months, their collaboration developed through ongoing exchanges of ideas and reference materials, and physical experimentations during short residencies.

The resulting work consists of a series of scores, diagrams, and verbal explorations that facilitate an in situ rehearsal. Acting out different scenarios, the creators and performers of the work engage in somatic and sound exercises relating to the impact of contaminated water sources. It's a corporeal and sonic exploration on the contamination of bodies in the technocapitalist era.

Experimental theater director Yuya Tsukahara accompanied Artiga Rodriguez in his collaborative creative process. Tsukahara said: "I have decided to work further with Artiga Rodriguez, who tries to connect his own body with his roots and the history of the land he comes from—and the reality in which we live—in a playful way. Together, we seek to discover in more detail what our bodies can carry and share that in a way we've never tried before. May the spirit of Post Punk Performance (whatever that may be) be with us all."



# Yuya Tsukahara: Post Punk Performance

Japanese performer, director, and choreographer Yuya Tsukahara is a cofounder, together with dancer Masaru Kakio, of the improvisational performance collective contact Gonzo. Formed in 2006 in Osaka, contact Gonzo developed an improvisational style of physical practice in which fluid movements are accompanied by blows and slaps that resemble physical altercations, thereby blurring the boundaries between violence and trust. Tsukahara and Kakio describe their approach as “Philosophy of pain, technique of contact,” radically

deconstructing the idea of conventional performances. The collective performs in public space, nature, galleries, museums, theaters, dance festivals, and also stages urban interventions in cities around the world.

Besides performances, contact Gonzo creates and exhibits installations made with video, photography, and zines. Tsukahara additionally works as a solo artist and directs performance programs for festivals. He was the scenographer and choreographer for the theater piece *Prathana*, which was directed by Toshiki Okada and based on a



contact Gonzo and YCAM BIO RESEARCH, *Wow, see you in the next life*. Photo: Yuki Moriya



contact Gonzo, *Minima Moralia*, 2020.

novel by Uthis Haemamool. Since 2020, he is a co-director of KYOTO EXPERIMENT, an international theater arts festival. Tsukahara also teaches at art schools in Kyoto.

As a mentor, Tsukahara sought applicants who are interested in creating performative work, and intend to explore the very form of performance: meaning, considering together the power of improvisation, errors and failed attempts, and the

murky distinctions between humor, play, and somber performativity. “Hanging out and playing becomes part of your job,” he says. “I wish to create something we’ve never seen before, which touches on and deconstructs the frame of ‘performing’ in a playful way. I would like to meet people who want to create a new value set in the performing arts scene, something that hasn’t yet been understood as art.”



Photo: Camille Blake

**“Most of the creating I do is within a collective framework, so I always have somebody to talk with, like as a mentor. Being myself in this role of a mentor now, I think it’s important for me that we get to be friends first so that we care about growing together.”** YUYA TSUKAHARA

# Thoughts on *Thoughts on Fluid Assemblages*

In Victor Artiga Rodriguez’s project, kidneys become the metaphorical site of the work and renal relations comprise the conceptual and the choreographic stuff of a piece rooted in interaction and improvisation.

by FLORA PITROLO

The collective moniker under which Victor Artiga Rodriguez makes work—comprising of Artiga Rodriguez himself, Carla Anacker, Edgar Lessig, and Icaro Lopez de Mesa Moyano for this particular piece—is Tremenda Corporea. The name seems to relate “corporeal” and “*tremenda*,” which in English has slid semantically towards “tremendous” but whose Spanish meaning is closer to “horrible” or “awful.” The work *Thoughts on Fluid Assemblages* somehow manages to activate the nuances of both languages, conjugating the miserable, even the tragic, with the scale of the vast, the great. Artiga Rodriguez’s practice in general can be read through an attention to scale—bodily, local, global, cosmic—and even more crucially to one’s positioning, to one’s point of view in experiencing scale.

The title of this performance already engages scale and perspective, as it extends and expands the previous *Fluid Assemblages*,

staged in 2023 with different collaborators, as a set of “exercises.” Meanwhile, the added outer encasing, *Thoughts on*, puts an existing work on the table for analysis in the new one, establishing a relation between the two that feels less like seriality and more like *mise en abyme*.

## Remaking Contact

In our historical moment, the word *fluidity* tends to signal the instability of identities in singular experiences, so there is something delicious and disruptive in attaching the idea of fluidity to contact. In this sense, fluidity is not, or not only, protean and mobile but also, and perhaps more importantly, rooted in interaction and improvisation, contextual and responsive and, because of this, shape-shifting. At the same time, the re-utilization of the syntax of contact improvisation as a genre of the 1970s allows us to reframe its political substance, which—removed from the decolonial clarity we may be gaining now and the climate catastrophe we are most certainly facing—may have appeared less flagrant or less urgent at the time. If contact improvisation considered itself radically anti-hierarchical, improvisational, and centered on co-responsibility, it was also always tinged with evocations of softness,

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naturalness, and escapism. These sentiments are echoed, for example, in choreographer Steve Paxton's talk of "just want[ing] to be able to leave the planet and not worry about the re-entry."\* Contact was therefore political in the key of the utopian, perhaps, and in this sense also preparatory for an idea of dance and dance culture in which leaving the planet may have become a political *solution*; still, relatively mellow in hindsight if we consider that Paxton's *Magnesium*—widely credited as contact's first public performance—was staged in 1972, around the same time as Foucault's first formulations of biopower in the Collège de France lectures.

\* Steve Paxton in Wendy Perron, *The Grand Union: Accidental Anarchists of Downtown Dance, 1970–1976* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2020), 140.

### Renal Relations

Leaving the planet is very much not in the cards here, and the landings aren't so soft. Indeed, Artiga Rodriguez redeploys the notion of contact in a performance that has its painful starting point in the acutely bio-political episode of a worker on an organic farm in El Salvador dying from kidney failure while Artiga Rodriguez was on residency there in 2021. The occurrence is unfortunately not rare, and as a Salvadoran himself, Artiga Rodriguez can never quite ignore the progressive poisoning instigated by intensive farming, which has colonized the bodies of Salvadorans as well as the land ("coffee, tobacco, bananas" is a refrain he pants during the performance). But because of a particularly adventurous kind of scale-thinking, the focus immediately

becomes micro-micro-political, zooming in not so much onto that episode per se but further into its bodily location: the kidneys become the metaphorical site of the work and renal relations the conceptual and the choreographic *stuff* of the piece.

This makes for some extreme shifts in points of view. Both verbally and physically, the performance foregrounds the equation of body and landscape. Hydration packs—which feel medical and not outdoorsy in this context—are sucked on while speaking of oceans, lakes, and rivers. Bodies and bodies of water collapse here into a single planetary unit. A livestreamed “kidney cam” is strapped to the performer’s back at kidney height, and although it points outwards and films the room, it still evokes endoscopy, highlighting endoscopic looking as a kind of pornographic nay colonial gaze, just as controlling from the inside as the drone from above.

**Both verbally and physically, the performance foregrounds the equation of body and landscape.**

Beyond the perspectival though, the focus on the kidneys is choreographically strange and productive. Early in the piece, Artiga Rodriguez notes that the organs are “a little higher than I thought—Carla is going to mark them on me so I can feel it.” This



Photos: Camille Blake





## Endless Returns

Return, in the geometric form of circularity, dominates the choreography, the stage itself, and the quality of text and movement: the water always comes back, from bodies of water to bodies and back, purified or poisoned, life-giving or deadly. However, with this piece, Bremen-based Artiga Rodriguez also returns to El Salvador, further layering these *thoughts* with his own return as artist and intellectual laborer, a voyage itself inscribed into much larger (here comes scale again) political, economic, and ecological dynamics, which also demand our careful attention. In this sense, making contact with the mysterious, toxin-flushing kidneys in *Thoughts on Fluid Assemblages* obliges us to attempt a contact with other hidden structures and ongoing processes to discern our place within them, laying our hands on our backs and feeling both *tremendously* powerless and powerful.

reminds us that a kidney dance is a dance with an invisible, non-isolatable, unglamorous body part, just as much as it is powerful and necessary as an organ. Keeping contact with each other's kidneys, a central tenet of this choreography, makes for an off-dance: lopsided, wooden at times, even painful. This rough and syncopated quality is central to how the performance feels (and thinks). Elastic yet hard, its relationship to fluidity is established as a problem and dealt with on-stage in an almost awkward register that feels distant from both dance and body-based performance practices, staged as hesitant and private, in fact perhaps more like a *thought*.

### Project credits

Creators and performers:  
Victor Artiga Rodriguez,  
Carla Anacker, Edgar Lessig, and  
Icaro Lopez de Mesa Moyano

Watch a video recap of  
Victor Artiga Rodriguez and  
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work-stay-victor-artiga-rodriguez/](https://forecast-platform.com/work-stay-victor-artiga-rodriguez/)





GUSTAVO GOMES  
**MANHANDLE**

MENTOR  
**ROEE ROSEN**

German-Brazilian choreographer, director, and filmmaker Gustavo Gomes is debuting a docufiction that focuses on sexual violence against men. Entitled *Manhandle*, the film interlaces mythology and interviews with survivors and social workers in Germany. The work deals with the complex thresholds between fantasy, perception, and dissociation while exposing coping mechanisms that survivors develop as adults.

This project is a further development of Gomes's previous works on apophenia, the human tendency to perceive meaningful patterns across unrelated, random occurrences to ascribe meaning. These thought processes often expose truths based on experience; it's the ability to only see what you already know. Dialoguing between film and performance, the film project explores the boundaries of the traumatized body, and the brain's ability to recreate reality in order to survive. The first iteration of the work took the form of a live performance entitled *Blue Shoe*, and was shown at the Forecast Forum in July 2023. Gomes met with his mentor Roee Rosen for a work-stay in São Paulo, where they began the process of shifting the project from the stage to the screen.

Rosen said: "Gomes boldly tackles the oft-repressed topic of sexual abuse of men by men, and he does so with emotional complexity, sensuality, and humor. Gomes's aesthetic approach fuses the flamboyance of Camp and the subtlety of Butoh, the impactfulness of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater, and the palpable presence of Mario Bros. and mashed-up pop tunes. These qualities converge in a choreography wherein verbal testimonies are juxtaposed with a dance that is radical, erotic, disturbing, physically taxing, and breathtakingly beautiful."

# Roe Rosen: Troubled Humor and Tainted Beauty

Roe Rosen is an Israeli-American artist, filmmaker, and writer. He is known for his multilayered and provocative work, which often challenges the divides between history and the present, documentary and fiction, politics and erotics. Rosen dedicated years to crafting his fictive feminine persona, the Jewish-Belgian Surrealist painter and pornographer Justine Frank, a project that entailed fabricating her entire oeuvre as well as a book and a short film, *Two Women and a Man* (2005). In 2010 Rosen created two films, *Hilarious* and *Out*, in which a BDSM session

becomes a political exorcism. *Out* premiered at the Venice film festival, where it won the Orizzonti award for best medium-length film. Rosen's film *The Dust Channel* was coproduced by documenta 14, where it was exhibited along with two historical text and image installations: *The Blind Merchant* (1989–1991), an artist book retelling Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* focusing on the figure of Shylock; and *Live and Die as Eva Braun* (1995–1997), a work that stirred a political scandal when first exhibited at the Israel Museum.



*Hilarious*, 2010. Film still courtesy of the artist.

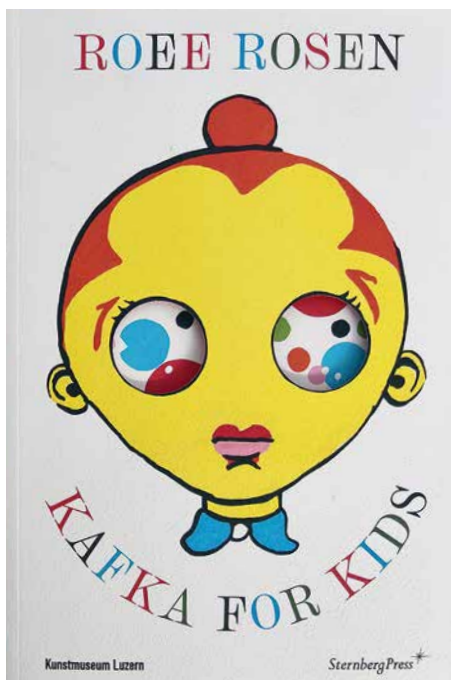
“When I was over 40 years old, a video artist and a friend, Boaz Arad, encouraged me to believe in my ability to put together a short video, and offered his help in editing. I always had cinematic ideas, but



felt incompetent with issues such as fundraising and production. Little could I guess that this kind display of faith will enable me to dive head on into the making of moving-image works, in a time when I was known for conceptual text and image works.” ROEE ROSEN

Rosen is currently working on a book about illness in the guise of coloring pages entitled *Lucy Is Sick*, a part of which was published by Steirischer Herbst (2020). His latest film *Kafka for Kids* (2022), which premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival, is a musical comedy combining fiction, animation, and documentary. *Kafka for Kids* is also the title of Rosen’s latest book. “The title I chose for my Forecast mentorship stems from my own practice,” Rosen says. “I see myself as working in a comic mode, but one where laughter is often heavy-hearted and touches upon uncomfortable political, historical, and erotic topics.”

“I see beauty and seduction as crucial to the artistic experience, but they always suggest ideology, power structures, and manipulations,” he adds. “This tendency for complication, confusion, and ambivalence also points at a resistance to specialization: I am a painter who writes, an author who makes films, and I often combine different media into hybrids.”



Roee Rosen, *Kafka for Kids* (Sternberg Press and Kunstmuseum Luzern, 2022). An English-German edition of the full script of the film, with essays by Jean-Pierre Rehm, Sergio Edelstein, and Fanni Fetzter.

# Desire, Guilt, and the Ability to Connect

Addressing hidden histories of exploitation and suffering, Gustavo Gomes's work *Manhandle* promises to accomplish art's great alchemy of turning private pain into shared healing and transcendence.

by ANA FINEL HONIGMAN

Gustavo Gomes navigates the treacherous territories mapping desire, trauma, existential awareness, and intrapersonal understanding in his project *Manhandle*, a docufiction on sexual violence against men. In this intensely personal narrative, Gomes explores how we process the unruly and perilous areas where yearnings, needs, and our essential selves evolve. His nuanced and insightful work recognizes the evolving yet still imprecise vocabulary for discussing, internally and with others, the complexity of intimate experiences.

Using the body to explore inherently physical experiences, Gomes evokes profound responses in viewers beyond cerebral ethical, legal, or psychological engagement. Avoiding moralistic binaries and utilizing

humor and pop-culture references to tread the gray zones of the unsayable, Gomes gives his characters space to explore themselves and their actions within the larger framework of their personal and cultural histories. While the character Carmen sings in Georges Bizet's 1875 tragic opera, "[Love] has never, ever, known the law," Gomes's narrative recognizes that we, as a society, are now developing more refined methods of responding to sexual and emotional situations that were murky and hidden under veils of shame and blame.

## Threads of Toxicity

As Gomes says, speaking of his protagonist in *Manhandle*, for some "home is only a place of toxicity." By using movement to examine the toxic threads that impact individuals' behaviors and experiences, he weaves a narrative full of complex characters who refuse to occupy the traditional roles of victim or victimizer but instead constantly combine vulnerabilities and predatory instincts.

Gomes's character of the cat, for instance, exemplifies the essence of sexual desire and life-force, embodying both resilience and the drive to destruction. The cat becomes the spirit through which the

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audience explores what philosopher Georges Bataille identifies as the key ingredients motivating most human desire: Eros (life-continuing energy) and Thanatos (the death instinct). Through her multiple deaths and resurrections, the cat constantly cycles between drives for death, fear of death, and the need for connection and erotic expression. As the embodiment of hyper-sexuality, the cat lives with the thrill of courting and confronting death while striving to find, in the lyrics of the pop-song she sings, if “sun shines through the rain.” How does the cat’s own needs intersect with her vulnerabilities and does that complexity direct how the audience interprets its experiences? The cat struggles with the tensions that Venus expresses in Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* when she sings, “what you desire shall be your doom.” Yet, the cat also demonstrates perseverance and endurance, maintaining her identity through violations and injury to continue her quest for herself.

### **Challenging a Fixed Notion of Love**

Throughout his career as a choreographer, dancer, and artist, Gomes has explored frictions between external and essential selves, as well as the interplay between objective and subjective truth, particularly within the contexts of romantic or erotic dynamics. *Hilarion*, his 2023 dance, explored the life-cycle of lust and romantic bonds. As a modern and more maturely nuanced adaptation of *Giselle*, *Hilarion* challenged the static notion of love in much traditional dance—where characters’ infatuations are conflated with lasting commitment. The lies, evasions, and loss are not seen as beautiful sacrifices to love, as in the original, but more common hurtful manipulations familiar to most adult audience members whose own romantic histories include moments of betrayal, silencing, conflicting signals, and confusion. “What is the guilt,” asks Gomes when reflecting on the themes he explored in *Hilarion*, which evolved into a complex



## Violence, lust, and hurt are theatrically expressed through Gomes's choreography while artistic expression is promoted as a healing process.

meditation on individuals' personal understandings of monogamy and commitment. "What is fidelity?" he questions, "What is the idea of fidelity? Is it being together? Is it the emotion of being together but with other people? What is the network? Why do we call someone or something 'faithful'?"

Drawn from Heinrich Heine's epic poem, "Die Lorelei," Gomes's *Lorelei: Matriarch* tells of a siren looking inward to

understand the force of her own erotic power. While recognizing her influence, Lorelei reconciles being both object and subject of desire. Her experience as the cause of "wild and aching woe" exists both for her and her victims, who resist or willingly submit to her call. For Gomes, the focus becomes Lorelei's own processing of her power. Meanwhile, the abuse of authority and poisonous influence of power to direct our perceptions was the subject of Gomes's immersive theater performance *The Golden Age of Alternative Truth*. In this 2019 work, Gomes uses his hyper-real aesthetic and assertive movements to deconstruct historic and current abuses of information and trust. The struggle to construct a relationship to reality becomes a physical battle for Gomes in this work.

### Trauma and the Physical Self

For *Manhandle*, created in the framework of Forecast with artist Roe Rosen as his mentor, Gomes revisits many of these themes but cast into the fraught, cold, and often silenced landscape of men's sexual trauma.





Here, Gomes interrogates how we digest what we've experienced through our desires and abilities to connect—as people, professionals, and a community. He asks how we develop a sense of “home” through familiarity, even when the familiar is laced with trauma and harm. Gomes explores men's histories of trauma and theories of how trauma shapes our physical selves, health, and relationships with our bodies, as popularized by Bessel van der Kolk in *The Body Keeps Score*, by tracing his characters' lived experiences through their movements and physical selves. Violence, lust, and hurt are theatrically expressed through Gomes's choreography while artistic expression is promoted as a healing process. As Gomes describes, *Manhandle* has become a work where “the act of making art has a healing influence in the lives of men I meet.” By addressing hidden histories of exploitation and suffering for men, the *Manhandle* promises to accomplish art's great alchemy of turning private pain into shared healing and transcendence.

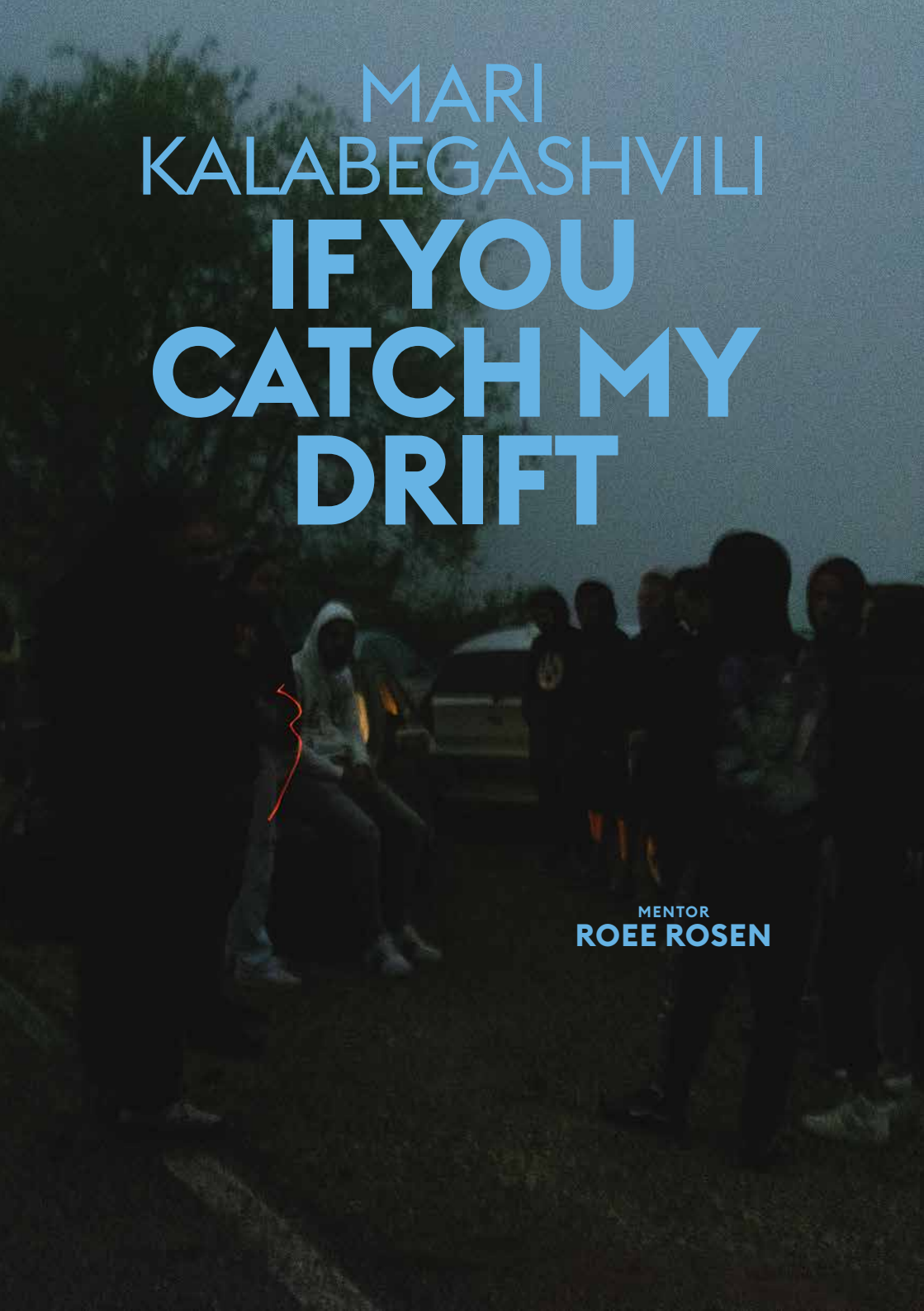
#### Project credits

Written and Directed by:  
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Leandro Berton, Gustavo Gomes,  
Michael Ostenrath, Syreena Mars,  
Haris Ajrulah, Nathan Ishar,  
Malte Raabe, Rober Gómez, and  
João Pedro de Paula  
Filmed by: Haris Ajrulah  
and Anna Júlia dos Santos  
Editor: Max Lomberg  
Music: Ulysse Zangs and  
Haris Ajrulah  
Costumes: Gustavo Gomes,  
Sarah Aphrodite,  
and Lucie Hedderich  
Special thanks to: Daniel Cremer,  
Cristian Duarte, Clarice Lima,  
Benjamin Seroussi, and  
Casa do Povo

Watch a video recap of Gustavo Gomes and Roe Rosen's work-stay in São Paulo in collaboration with Casa do Povo and Oficina Cultural Oswald de Andrade:



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MARI  
KALABEGASHVILI  
**IF YOU  
CATCH MY  
DRIFT**

MENTOR  
**ROEE ROSEN**

Artist Mari Kalabegashvili is entrenched in Tbilisi's counter-cultures. She is a keen observer of these environments, and the visible as well as hidden scars and ruptures that shape them. Her lens-based project *If You Catch My Drift* examines urban environments as extreme playgrounds through a focus on the subcultures that claim them as such. Her photography and video installation blurs the lines between professional engagement with the material and having fun in the process of capturing it, as all subcultural happenings depend and thrive on communal interactions.

Kalabegashvili's point of departure for the work, which she presents as an image- and sound-installation, is the male-dominated scene of automotive vehicle enthusiasts who compete in car races on the city streets and in professional championships. She takes the spiraling rubber tracks left by those races as an analogy for our existential journeys, drawing formal parallels to prehistoric depictions of coils or mazes.

Kalabegashvili worked with Ukrainian photographer and documentary filmmaker Mila Teshaieva, who participated in Forecast 8 as a mentor in the field *From Questions to Images*. Following a work-stay in Beirut in the fall of 2023, Kalabegashvili continued developing her work with Roe Rosen as her mentor. "I believe that each of our peculiar cultural and biographical identities should be challenged, but they are also a source of concrete interest and knowledge. That is, I look forward to learning from the experience of a dialogue with a mentee," Rosen said. "Ultimately, I believe in artists who enjoy and dare to challenge the machinations and preconceptions of their chosen forms of expression."

# Drifting on the Border of Public and Private

**Mari Kalabegashvili's project *If You Catch My Drift* views urban car racing as a gently rebellious means of marking territory, both literally and metaphorically.**

by DARIA KRAVCHUK

Cityscapes serve as a visual and philosophical language to address the contradictions of contemporary life. This topos allows for a critique of living and working environments that evaluates policymakers' impact. Artists working with cityscapes as material navigate the boundary between art and urbanism. Their work often presents visionary proposals that draw attention to overlooked aspects of human scale and the psychology of movement through shared spaces. Such approaches highlight the social hierarchies inscribed in concrete and render legible urban designs that foreground crowd control and surveillance.

Artists researching this domain prompt viewers to reflect on how urbanism can either enhance or diminish a sense of common good and public life. Viewed as catalysts for social change, urban policies and development strategies risk alienating individuals from culture, self-expression, and community, which ultimately erodes a sense of solidarity. To counter these trends, artistic projects strive to draw us closer to communal and cross-cultural engagement, resisting the potential disintegration of shared values and connections.

Mari Kalabegashvili, a visual artist based in Tbilisi, works within the realm of photographic and multimedia practice. She

seeks to delve into the essence of urban cohabitation in order to recognize the role of culture, and subcultures, in reflecting identities, opening new discursive terrains, and engaging in community-oriented projects. Kalabegashvili navigates the challenges—often visible but not immediately apparent—of contemporary life within social and urban landscapes.

## **The City as Playground**

*If You Catch My Drift* sensitively touches upon the subject of one's personal orientation within the public realm and the states in-between. It emerged from research Kalabegashvili initiated in 2022–2023. The artist's practice of embedding herself within a specific subculture served to raise questions about the urban context as a metaphor for local current events, with the evolution and reconfiguration of the city echoing broader societal agendas.

**Daria Kravchuk** is a Tbilisi-based curator, cultural producer, and art journalist with over a decade of experience working internationally with artists, galleries, museums, major art fairs, private collections, and brand collaborations. Her curatorial practice focuses on contemporary art, exploring projects that are contextual, socially engaging, and emphasize locality.



Kalabegashvili's methodology emerged from researching Tbilisi's urban environments through the context of street racing and, more specifically, the Georgian Automobile Federation and a group of automotive enthusiasts who compete both on the streets and in professional events. The artist embarked on the project in response to feeling personally alienated from Tbilisi, despite her lifelong connection to the city. This sense of dissociation was heightened by Georgia's restrictive political atmosphere.

The turning point came during nighttime activities with friends engaged in the graffiti and skateboarding scenes, which led to an unexpected immersion in the car-racing community. Despite a lack of personal

interest in cars, Kalabegashvili began to see this subculture as a captivating form of radical engagement with the city. The streets, at least for the duration of a race, turned into a reclaimed playground—a site with a unique aura and potential. The context of car racing, which the artist views as a form of gentle rebellion, offered a means to mark territory, both literally and metaphorically. As the wheels of racing cars leave traces on the roads, like signatures of the drivers, Kalabegashvili captures the patterns of spiraling rubber tracks, reevaluating them both as a testament to the energy and individualism of the man-car construct, and as a form of claiming personal space within a tumultuous political climate.



The artist's involvement in car racing became a therapeutic escape, an unlikely place for individual self-reflection. Both watching and participating in these activities brought about a newfound sense of vitality, prompting her to delve further into Rally Championships, and capturing portraits of drivers and their environments. Through conversations and casual interactions with the drivers, it became apparent to Kalabegashvili the extent to which their childhood experiences influenced the development of their careers in male-dominated sports. Conversations also revealed shared sentiments of seeking ways to express non-conformity, self-observation, and community belonging. Those were the ideas Kalabegashvili aimed to transfer into the visual, photographic realm. She extended this exploration to similar communities in Armenia and Croatia, finding similarities in style and cars across different locations.



### Decoding Tbilisi's Public Sphere

*If You Catch My Drift* is rooted in the context of Georgia. The artist's ongoing project explores the relationship between individual and collective memories, public and private spaces, and the idea of a woman claiming



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male-dominated realms within a cityscape. It also responds to cultural and ideological codes built into the current state of the city. In order to document and understand the local momentum, it is crucial to delve into the unique relationship between public and private spheres, a relationship that is thematized by several local initiatives. One such project embedded in the city's fabric is The Tbilisi Architecture Biennial (TAB), which connects its biennial chapters via the umbrella of storytelling. In the third edition of TAB in 2022, the research highlighted temporality in urban and social life. Like in many post-socialist states, citizens of Georgia perceive their lives in terms of temporality, one in which tomorrow is unknown. It's a prospect that is daunting yet also provides space for creativity. Drawing from Georgia's recent history, the concept of temporality intersected with conditional factors, exploring time, space, and the built environment. The discussion aimed to examine architecture within the context of duration rather than its physical dimensions, thereby emphasizing its coexistence with everyday life.

Another recent example of self-organization around a private-public theme is The Kibe Projekt, initiated by the team of international architects and researchers. It stands out for its focus on preserving and renovating a historic courtyard staircase in

Tbilisi's city center. This nineteenth-century structure, an iconic wooden spiral staircase, was deteriorating. Extensive surveys—historical, geological, topographical, structural—led to the preservation of this significant historical element, ensuring one of the unique urban routes within the cityscape. In this context, Kalabegashvili expands her research beyond image production, probing the political and aesthetic complexities of the city. She asks questions about ideologies, controversies, legacies, and future images within cityscapes. Her vision, presented here as a multi-channel projection, seeks to recontextualize sites of supposed anonymity. Operating at the intersection of art and urbanism, Kalabegashvili immerses viewers in the performative aspect of claiming both private and public spaces.

### Project credits

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Original score and sound design:  
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Watch a video recap of  
Mari Kalabegashvili's work-stay  
in Beirut:



[forecast-platform.com/  
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[forecast-platform.com](https://forecast-platform.com)

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