

**NOTES: L'INTERNATIONALE WORKING GROUP FOR REWINDING  
INTERNATIONALISM**

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## December 2020:

The below is some notes from the discussion. I have included my presentation in the folder for you to revisit if you wish.

Bojana began the discussion by asking how nationalism might be considered or feature within the exhibition, given the 90s saw a turn to extreme ethno-nationalism, specifically within the context of former Yugoslavia. Whilst I pointed out the move within the framing of the project, specifically to avoid the binary of nationalism / internationalism, the emergence of extreme forms of nationalism in the 90s will undoubtedly be present, if not addressed specifically. The example that Bojana later brought up with the conference 'Living with the genocide' is perhaps a clear example of this as propositional form that art and trans / international solidarity can play within the context of rising nationalism in the 90s.

Pablo introduced the possibility to look outside artistic frameworks or formats, noting that the examples I cited very much came from within the art system. How might the project move away from a form of exhibition history to look at other forms of internationalist approaches. He pointed to the work of Alan Sekula 'Waiting for Teargas' in the MACBA collection (<https://www.macba.cat/en/art-artists/artists/sekula-allan/waiting-tear-gas>) as a way to both point to the anti-globalisation movements of the 90s as well as to think about the role and circulation of images as political / cultural strategy. Also interesting to think how the idea of the multitude – introduced by Hardt and Negri in the 90s (first with Empire and then in the book titled Multitude published in 2004: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/292993/multitude-by-michael-hardt-and-antonio-negri/>) - might be thought through in relation to this piece – or more broadly the relationship between images and political concepts.

Pablo also mentioned the contexts of AIDS in the 90s and ACT UP (<https://actupny.org/>) as international coalition / movement that could be important to consider. Whilst the Archivo Queer is something that we have already included (somewhat prematurely!) in the 80s project, what might be interesting entry points, specific sites / instances within ACT UP / the AIDS movement that could serve as inspiring models of internationalism, especially within the context of another global pandemic.

Pablo also touched on the Zapatistas and the way they create links outside the art system but draw on artistic strategies. Reflecting on these comments and to further what I said during the session, I would be very keen to think through these different models of solidarity and trans-national alliance. I am wary that the examples or points of departure I presented arose from institutional beginnings and if the project aims to propose different models of internationalism or internationalist agenda, it is important to look beyond the circuits of art, (even if they are not part of the more visible art world circuits of the 1990s). I think what would be both interesting and important to consider and what Pablo touched on is how images and artistic strategies are used within these contexts or how they interface with more clear 'art' histories / exhibitions / examples.

Farah and Amira brought in the context of Turkey and the prominence of a group of artists coming from the Kurdish east - at a time when the Kurdish movement was on the rise - to the international scene. There was a form of internal (inter-national we might say) tussle between what constituted the national within Turkey. A group of artists were regularly being shown

on the international scene together: Karamustafa, Halil Tengere, Alpetekin and others and presented as orientalist (exhibitions such as this: 1994 - *İskele. Türkische Kunst Heute* at ifa-Galerie Stuttgart Curated by Sabine Vogel & Beral Madra

<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/189111> or 1993 - *A Foreigner A Traveller* at Stedelijk Museum, curated by Vasif Kortun.

<https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/188971>) The question we touched on was rather than documenting the history of these exhibitions, how might we tap into the possibility and promise of some of the networks. Maybe this best comes through artworks themselves that don't need to be explained in a certain way. But how to engage with the practices of these artists and a certain moment and possibility of internationalism, without deferring to the framework of artists presented under the false rubric of their 'Turkishness' on the international stage? My impulse here – but I could be wrong is to go through the work itself.

This made me reflect on a wider question for the exhibition project, which I wrote in the text but maybe it's worth reiterating. My hope is with this material to offer something other than an accumulation of material relating to things that happened. This may sound like a strange thing to say but hopefully points to the possibility of a more blurry, sometime intimate, sometimes troubling (or ambiguous to use Nav's term) constellation of ideas.

Bojana then reflected on a concurrent symposia to the Non-Aligned project she has begun researching that took place in Jakarta in 1994. 'Living with the Genocide' took place at Moderna Galerija in 1996 and was conceived, as I understand it as an international collection that was connected to the For the Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 2000 Project – described as a museum of solidarity (interesting to think of in relation to Art Contre Apartheid for example). Having a quick scan on MG's site, I see this was part of the discussion / context for the summer school last year (<http://www.mg-lj.si/en/events/2577/summer-school-2019-the-big-shift/>) so it would be interesting to hear how it was addressed / received then. And then to think what potential grouping of projects might emerge around different examples and models of institutional solidarity. (If I think of how Art Contre Apartheid, Living with Genocide and the Non-Aligned show sit in relation to today and art institutions instagramming a black square to profess alliance with Black Lives Matter, the contrast is pretty striking.)

Sebastian begun by tracing the current ideological nightmare in Poland, and specifically the 'second job' of supporting the womens' strike, back to the so-called abortion compromise signed by the Catholic church and the government in the 90s which signalled the beginning of the current nationalist-conservative agenda.

He introduced the work of Betsy Damon and the ecological / environmental movements that begun in the 70s but that by the 1990s manifested in the project 'Keepers of the Water' <https://www.keepersofthewaters.org/about> which held an (inaugural?) festival in China in the 90s, that included a number of performances and art interventions. Sebastian mentioned that Betsy was keen to revive some of the alliances and that AAA has the archive digitised so there could be something interesting to delve further into there (you can find it here: <https://aaa.org.hk/en/collections/search/archive/betsy-damon-archive-keepers-of-the-waters-chengdu-and-lhasa-11525>). Much like thinking through examples form directly outside the art sphere it would be important to think through how artistic strategies / tactics were used as well as the role of images within this context.

A third stand, related to the first, came out of the outcomes of Sebastian's recent conference 'Internationalism After the End of Globalization'

<https://artmuseum.pl/en/wydarzenia/internacjonalizm-po-koncu-globalizacji> and some of the reflections that begun then in terms of identifying and tracing how the anti-globalisation movements that begun in the 90s have been hijacked by the right and different ethno-nationalist projects. It would be interesting to think how this could be further delved into ....

Hiuwai raised the important question of how to engage with or own institutional histories of the 1990s, what the space might be for institutional critique and a reflection on the type of shows we were doing. The fact that a number of the confederation partners were founded or had their early years in the 90s is something I touch on in the text. I think it's important to consider – the question for me is how to bring these stories and considerations in so we again don't have a series of exhibition histories. Are there specific acquisitions or works that were shown that might allude to a specific institutional moment rather than just presenting documentation around exhibition histories. This alludes to the fact that I am keen to keep in mind the ways in which 'research' or thinking through either the 90s or a set of ideas, is manifested, beyond resorting solely to what remains in the archive. That is not to say the archive should in any way be discounted but how can it be supplemented, furthered or troubled?

Hiuwai went on to touch on the history of La Ricada, the building designed by architect Antonio Bonay, who fled to Buenos Aires during Franco's dictatorship (I found some nice pictures of it here! <https://archeyes.com/la-ricarda-house-or-casa-gomis-antoni-bonet-i-castellana/>) The house was conceived as a place for cultural exchange with figures such as Merce Cunningham and John Cage performing there – alluding to the fact that cultural exchange in this context operated as a form of political resistance. In 2006 a piece was made about La Ricarda, which would be interesting to get more details on.

Pablo made some observations / reflections on the differentiation between internationalisation and its manifestations in the art world in the 1990s (the biennialisation of the art world mimicking processes of globalisation and neoliberalisation that equated movement of people and objects with creativity) with politically internationalist projects. The workers movement of the Zapatistas, for example, are internationalist in outlook, but are not premised on movement, rather an idea of international solidarity that have a shared, emancipatory horizon. It is these shared emancipatory horizons – and the role art / artistic strategies play that I personally, am keen to explore. Whilst this distinction is helpful, as Nav pointed out the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. So called 'world music' is an example of how forms of music that were locally rooted circulated through concerts and the circulation of vinyl, cds etc.

Nav begun by raising reservations about the case study of InIVA within this context, commenting on the fact that by the time of its founding many of the practices associated with it that came to the fore in the 80s, arose out of a different set of conditions that felt less relevant by the 90s. At the same time, echoing Rasheed Araeen InIVA allowed other institutions to 'get off the hook' when it came to presenting diverse practices. It's important to reiterate here that InIVA and the Gate were both starting points for me precisely because of the contradictions and problems they posed. The proposition of New Internationalism, however, rather than the institutional history of InIVA is I think a clear example of the different guises internationalism took on in the 90s and, for this reason, feels like a jumping off point rather than as a case study in and of itself. Nav brought up the example of Gasworks

and the Triangle network (<https://www.trianglenetwork.org/>) of smaller institutions and residencies (also good for the 90s institutions epub actually) as a more relevant example of an internationalist project that foregrounded 'conditions of practice' rather than the rhetoric of a perceived internationalism or 'consensus internationalism' posited by the biennial format. Looking to artists and practices coming out of places like the Bag Factory in Johannesburg in the 90s for example, could be something to pursue.

Nav then went on to reflect on the limited vocabularies we have and that for him reverberate around different curatorial / institutional contexts. East and West / North and South even L'Internationale feel outdated. How could we think of an alternative set of vocabularies to point to different characteristics of society and the role of art / culture in evoking or sitting alongside these terms. One example was M HKA's use of 'mutuality' that is being used in the forthcoming Eurasia show (of which a joint research fellowship will take place in the context of the show and Rewinding Internationalism).

In the closing discussion Hiuwai asked how I envisioned contributions to the show and how possible threads might emerge. Here I pointed to the fact that I could imagine a range of contributions that could include drawing on examples from collections or archives in the institutions, furthering existing research (Bojana's Non Aligned research or the work begun in Sebastian's conference into the trajectory of anti-globalisation movements), to working on some form of glossary of terms for example around sets of vocabularies. I think what is important for me, is that this shared process and the eventual exhibition should feed into and further existing work everyone is doing. Or more simply put that it should be relevant and generative for us. So Sebastian's 'second job' of spending time on the streets in solidarity with the different forms of resistance against Poland's ultra-conservative government becomes a lens through which to trace back the trajectory of where ethno-nationalism took over an anti-globalisation project and how that might speak to or reconnect with different feminist or ecological movements of the 90s. Or what might we learn from a movement like ACT UP in the face of another global pandemic and how it disproportionately impacts different parts of society. Or how the emergence of different artists from Kurdistan on the international scene as defined by their 'Turkishness' might speak back to the way 'Turkishness' is projected by Erdogan. And from these different entry points a set of approaches to - and understanding of - internationalism emerges.

In terms of identifying threads, it still feels too early to point to these. Already from these discussions thought I can see different, but overlapping clusters emerging that relate to forms of trans-national / institutional solidarity (Arte Contre Apartheid, Living with Genocide for example), examples of how different internationalist political projects mobilised artistic strategies (Zapatistas, Act Up, Anti-globalisation movements) and looking to specific practices that would offer a counter position to the 90s as the 'consensus of internationalism' proffered by the biennial model.

The conversation I am really looking forward to having with you, but one that will need to come a bit later – is think through how the exhibition might be a place to manifest research around these projects in different ways.

We closed by suggesting that the form for the discussions to continue would be to set up a shared folder where we could feed in relevant documents / images / texts to share. In the next meeting we could go to these informally, talking through them as means to further understand our different understandings of – and relationship to – the construct of internationalism.

## **February 2021:**

We began by welcoming Paulina Varas to the group. Paulina is based in Valparaíso in Chile and is part of Red Conceptualismos del Sur, who have a long term collaboration with Reina Sofia.

We then turned to the shared material on the drop box folder, which we talked through. Bojana begun by looking at the two projects she had proposed – the 1995 Jakarta Exhibition organised under the auspices of the Non-Aligned Movement and the accompanying conference. Bojana turned to the map which appears in the catalogue of the exhibition. It's a strange map – Africa, Europe, Asia all appear as one continent and the names are largely wrong. Bojana explained the difficulties of the exhibition – that was politically charged (both marking Indonesian independence and within the frame of the Non-Aligned). Many participants were not comfortable with their involvement given the nature of the Suharto regime. In the folder is a short text by Nado Bero, the curator of the Croatian contribution to the show. In the text Bero explains how Croatia was the only country from former Yugoslavia to receive an invitation to contribute. She describes the awkward groupings of works and the motivation for inviting former members of Gorgona.

We discussed how the case study of the 1995 Jakarta exhibition and conference exemplifies two different forms of internationalism - two trajectories meeting in a way as well as its relevance for today.

Since the meeting, Bojana has also added a fascinating interview with the curator and art historian T K Sabapathy and a series of images of works by the painter Sesma Siahian from the exhibition. The interview with the Sabapathy is particularly illuminating in hi-lighting the double nature of the exhibition and the conference, which feels particularly relevant within the context of 'Rewinding': the wish form Suharto to demonstrate the strength of the Non-Aligned Movement and to somehow return, 40 years on, to the spirit of Bandung, through a lavish exhibition, with very disparate contributions. On the other there is the presence of an emergent set of figures and discourse within the art system, its introduction that is at odds with the different state apparatus of the contributing countries.

Following Bojana's introduction of this material and a subsequent meeting we have reached out to the researcher / art historian Vera Mey (who spoke at the Considering Monoculture conference), a specialist in the region, to see if she may be interested in conducting some research there. Charles has also put me in touch with the researcher Agung Jennong based in Bandung who could help. Finding material on the project will be difficult but, according to the Sabapathy interview there is material in the Non Aligned archive in Jakarta so that seems to be the lace to start.

The second folder Bojana looked at was the 'Living with Genocide' conference at Moderna Galerija that connected international actors, artists (from former Yugoslavia) within the context of the Bosnian War. The conference is a striking example of international solidarity within the context of ethno-nationalism. In the documents that Bojana uploaded is a striking quote by Susan Sontag, who visited Sarajevo in 1995 lamenting the demise of internationalist solidarity within the field of culture. At this stage, however, I am struggling to think how best it might feature or be represented in the exhibition.

Amira then went on to introduce two exhibitions that she felt were significant for the context of Turkey and its complicated relationship with internationalism in the 1990s – both in

relation to its own inter-nationalism (Kurdistan and Turkey) and in relation to the international art system: I'm Too sad to kill you, 2003 and 'Free Kick' form 2005-06, both curated by Halil Altendere. Beside commenting on the male, macho element of the work. What is significant about this group of artists, Amira explained, is the way in which the question of Kurdish / Turkish and even regional identity play out. There is a selection of works uploaded in the drop box which included stills form what Amira and Farah called the 'low quality' period in Turkish video art due to the low tech nature of the films, handheld cameras etc. Farah commented how you will often see empty land in the film– the evocation of 'nowhere to go'. It also has a slightly touristic nature of the work. One of the most well known works is Fikrit Atay's 'Rebels of the dance' (2002) shot in his native Mardim where two boys enter an ATM and they start to dance. Its now in the Tae collection . Also 'Road to Tate Modern' is a good shortcut to how artists in the periphery of the Turkey saw their way to the European art scene.

Whilst many Kurdish artists were trying to define themselves there is a big question in the 1990s around what the Turkish republic is. A painting by Vahap Avsar shows Attaturk's bust with Turkish alphabet. Its ending with Q even though there there is no Q in the Turkish alphabet. The painting invites a consideration on what constitutes Turkish identity – is it the Turkish alphabet? The work points to the huge rupture from the Ottoman past with Attaturk. Farah noted how important it is to think what that means both in the context of the 1990s and today.

We then turned to the upcoming research / exhibiton project 'When Are We European' that will happen in SALT. The project was discussed in the mid-term meeting in the confederation and it seems there could be very generative cross over with this project. The process for Turkey joining the EU begun n the early 1990s. I would be very keen to pursue this line of research as I think it can firstly move away from re-presenting the question of Turkish identity that seems to define a lot of what I have seen form the 1990s. Secondly, within the context of the confederation I think it can arguably more generative for the research to speak across the two contexts.

Nav had some interesting thoughts on the title of the exhibition. Drawing comparison with the context of Antwerp / Flanders / Benelux / Belgium /low countries European which holds multiple identities and regionalities, he wondered whether something similar was indeed at play in Turkey. Similarly with the context of Russia. As Amira pointed out the question of multi-identity is in the foundation of the republic. Inherited form Ottoman empire which was multi-cultural and multi-religious there was a distinct move to create a more unified, culturally homogenous republic. Imperial Turkey was described as a 'sick man' with too many branches and the solution was the nation state. And during the first 10 years of the republic it lost some of its non muslim population, going from an imperial population, to a nation state population. I have subsequently reached out to Farah and Amira to see if / how to think whether 'When Are We European could feature in the exhibition.

Sebastian uploaded some links to the recent conference 'Internationalism after the end of globalisation' which he described as an attempt to update out internationalist struggles, starting with the 50s. The International festival for youth was held in Warsaw in 1955 with 114 countries participating. It was also the moment when the massive Palace of Culture was constructed. That was the moment when artists were involved in decorating the city. How to reactivate the comraderie?



The background structure for the conference was the anti-fascist year – a very loose coalition of artists, activists, cultural workers with different antifa projects feeding off the resources of artistic institutions. There were three main threads – feminist, ecological, anti-fascist struggle that somehow conflated as one body during the series of so-called black protests. For Sebastian's upcoming exhibition what might be interesting is to focus on the energies of the new collectives and the very history of the anti-abortion moments. Also the successful moments – Ireland, Spain, Argentina ....

Abortion compromise from 1993 enforced by the Roman Catholic Church are what the Polish are living with today. International network of activities were responding to this: 'Women on Waves' - the abortion clinic that operated in international waters and set up by Rebecca Gomperts (part of the Arte utile archive) is one striking example. I wonder if this could be an interesting thread to follow in fact. In 2003 the boat came to Poland (and I believe earlier in 1999). It seems within these visits one can draw a direct line to the current political and biopolitical struggles happening in Poland. Helped Polish women in 1999. And if this is going to be a focus of the upcoming exhibition project is there a way to draw on that research? Again, I am eager that this project is able to pull on either existing or future lines of research.

Something that we did not discuss in this meeting but Sebastian and I have subsequently talked about is the eco-feminist practice of Betsy Damon – on what Sebastian brilliantly described as the inter-species internationalism of Damon. We had a meeting a couple of weeks ago and went through the material in the drop box. What is fascinating about Damon is that she comes out of the context of west coast eco-feminists working in the 70s (with figures like Bonnie Sherk) but in the 1990s we can see it as part of the beginnings of a climate justice movement, anti globalisation etc.. There is a huge amount of material on Damon and the Keepers of the Water project on the [Asisa Art Archive](#). Sebastian is hoping to work with Damon again so it feels like a fitting and logical project to pursue.

Huiwei described how she had moved from thinking about an institutional history of MACBA, to looking at the collection. Relating to Sebastian and activism as a form of internationalism Huiwei introduced the Augustin Parejo School a collective of teachers and practitioners active in Malaga in the early 80s to mid 1990s, the time of transition in Spain following the end of the Franco regime. In many respects similar to Women on Waves this was an anonymous collective who wanted to make a real impact, melding art with life. A lot of their projects took place in public space, combining graffiti, structuralist theory with irony and humour. They often worked in tandem with other groups.

There is a lot of works / material in the MACBA collection, acquired in the 2000s. A key project took place in 1992 around the world expo in Sevilla where APS were in charge of a pavilion. The pavilion showed the work of 'Lenin Cumbe' – a fictitious artist from Ecuador, highlighting the relationship between first and third world contexts and exposing the ongoing legacy of colonial relationships, 500 years on after the conquest of the Americas.

Listening back to the recording, it seems that any 'rewinding of internationalism' in the 1990s needs to acknowledge 1492, the date when decolonial thinkers would argue Eurocentrism was born with Columbus. The Seville expo is a focus of the upcoming Rein Project. I wonder if / how it might feature in Rewinding Internationalism? There is of course also the Coco Fusco [performance](#) with Guillermo Gomez Pena, also from 1992 (but not shown in Seville). Sara has kindly agreed to reach out to colleagues at MNCARS regarding



the upcoming collection display and specifically Seville. Indeed reading the short description of the new collection display it would be interesting to consider the relationship to what the curators of MNCARS describe as 'alterworldism' and the idea of 'rewinding internationalism' (a term for Nav's glossary'?!)

A key project within the collection of MACBA by the Augustin Parejo school is Sin Larios, a project also from 1992 that centred on a campaign to remove a monument in the centre of Malaga of Larios, a benefactor of the city, and replace it with a figure of the worker. The project aimed to revive the actual removal of the Larios sculpture in the 1930s. The sculpture was put back in the 1970s. The work of APS turned into a campaign across media, public posters, merchandise and itself transformed into an exploration of media tactics, as much as it was about foregrounding the figure of the worker in the city. What I find interesting about this project in relation to the exhibition and the confederation is the way in which debates on the position of the worker are reawakened within the context of Spain, the 1990s the embrace of neoliberalism, the EU etc. I would be keen to think how this project might feature in a configuration of works that somehow addresses the question of the internationalist through the lens of a socialist trajectory – a trajectory that is encapsulated in the name of the confederation.

Pablo then introduced the material relating to the recent Anarchive of Aids project curated by Aimar Arriola, Nancy Garin and Linda Valdes). The exhibition focused on ACT UP in Barcelona in the 1990s with the exhibition including ephemera and documentation around different campaigns, initiatives, gatherings, performances etc. There was also extensive documentation around the Keith Haring mural which now forms part of the archive at the museum. What Pablo introduced and what I am particularly excited by is thinking how this project could speak to archives / initiatives happening in the Netherlands and Belgium in the 1990s, to start to explore how ACT UP operated as an internationalist network of situated struggles.

Another intriguing inclusion in the AIDS anarchive project which we touched on was the publication 'Inter-galactic meetings' – publication of the Zapatistas from 1996 with a focus on women's sexuality and AIDS. Pablo has previously mentioned the Zapatistas as a stridently internationalist, but situated movement – and one that drew heavily on the tactics of art and collective making. The Zapatistas seem an important reference point in this regard, specifically as their project arises out of a direct response to NAFTA, the shifting dynamics of neoliberalism and globalisation in the 90s and the threats that posed to indigenous knowledge and practices. I am, however, wary of two things. Firstly, that the Zapatistas have a certain presence and visibility in the art world. Any engagement with them needs to be careful not to reproduce what's already out there, whilst being carried out in partnership with situated researchers. Secondly, the formal considerations are for me really important. If the Zapatistas are included in the show the idea is not to 'represent' the movement, but to think carefully about form, to make really deliberate choices about the works and images.

Coincidentally the museum was recently approached by researchers who are keen to organise a coming together of feminist groups from the Zapatista and Kurdish contexts later in the year in Eindhoven. At the same time Pablo has kindly introduced me to Nancy and Aimar and I shall pursue a few further contacts via the decolonial summer school, who have been very connected to the Zapatista movement.

A work that also appears on the shared folder is the Alan Sekula piece 'Waiting for Teargas' from 1999-2000. Having looked closely at the images which Pablo kindly shared I think the piece can play a significant role in the exhibition. Both as a marker of the anti-globalisation movements and, as Pablo described the shifting nature of the status of the image as a challenge to the documentary form.

Paulina introduced what she saw as the fundamental relationship between internationalism and transversality and how this related to thinkers such as Felix Guattari. Guattari came to Chile in 1991 to deliver an essay on The three Ecologies. Within the lecture the idea of ecosophy emerges, where there is a direct call if you like to the micro politica and its entangled relationship, or repercussions on different forms of life. Again this visit of Guattari in 1991 could be interesting to explore further.

Also there is the relationship, as Paulina mentioned between Guattari and figures such as Suely Rolnik in Latin America. Paulina also talked about the importance of Nelly Richard, the feminist and cultural theorist who red conceptualisms have done a lot of work on. I would be excited to try and think through these two figures or moments, Nelly Richard and Guattari's 1991 lecture on the Three Ecologies in Chile.

Nav closed the session by explaining that he was going to do an interview with the founding director of Gasworks, Alessio Antonioli to discuss the beginnings of the organisation. Gasworks and Triangle started in the 1980s but in the 1990s took a solid form. Nav reflected on the role of residencies within the art system in the 1990s had an important bearing on how artists were moving / experiencing / making across different contexts.

Lastly, Nav's reflection on vocabulary and something I would be keen to develop as part of the project. Nav re-stated his frustrations with the current lexicon if you like of words that circulated in the art system ; global north and global south for example. Whilst understanding where it comes from and the need to update outdated terminology ('Third World', 'developing world') as demarcations or divisions, he feels current terms lack imagination and do not reflect the direction in which the world is going. Within the context of the project I would be very interested to invite Nav – or even to work collectively - to think about a set of terms.

This could be a focus of one of the sessions.

## March 2022

After two sessions with the working group, this document offers a series of reflections. It is structured in two parts. The first being a reflection on the process so far, revisiting the original intentions of the working group. The second turns to content and the research / exhibition project and proposes some possible next steps related to these sites.

The original motivation for setting up the working group within the context of the project was three-fold. Firstly, it stemmed from the simple acknowledgment that any engagement with the construct of internationalism could not be approached from a singular perspective or context. Secondly, and linked to this was the wish to somehow 'operationalise' Internationale, a confederation whose name aligns it with the history of internationalist socialist struggle (to what end we can debate!) within a research project. How might the collections, archives, research and concerns of colleagues within the confederation inform or appear within a research project? With this in mind, it's important to say that the type of collaboration or process I was aiming for was different from the one I engaged in with the exhibition 'The 1980s. Today's Beginnings?' (2016) where we invited members of the confederation to present iterations of existing research exhibitions into distinct chapters). What I am hoping for here is a more entangled, less geographically segregated set of encounters.

After the two working groups these impulses have been reinforced. Proposing different sites, art works, research topics that have emerged within the group, highlights the importance of opening up a research trajectory beyond the perspective of a single curator or institution. Yet within this, it's important to acknowledge that the 'international' group of curators / programmes still speaks (largely, but not entirely) from the context of Europe. Whilst sites of research / case studies have extended beyond Europe (Betsy Damon in China, the Zapatistas or the 1995 Jakarta exhibition), the development of this research will need to be carried out with 'situated' researchers. So, in some instances the work of the working group has been to open up lines / sites of research that need to be taken on by another set of protagonists in different contexts. This is an important realization as it has implications for time / budgets, but more importantly it offers the chance to indeed operationalize a set of networks beyond the confederation itself. In many respects Rein Sofia's decision to invite Paulina to be part of this working group speaks to precisely this process.

Another observation / reflection is the wish for the project and any material to be included within it, to build on / extend what already exists within the confederation. There are two reasons for this. The first is pragmatic in that this project should not be an extra burden on colleagues to produce more content. I am not interested - or comfortable with - asking colleagues simply to feed material into an exhibition project (this was perhaps the case with the 1980s exhibition). Secondly, I think there is an interesting possibility to experiment with research / collections / archives being manifested across the confederation in different ways. An example here would be to think about bringing the research done at MACBA under the AIDS Anarchive project coming into dialogue with related histories in the Netherlands and Belgium. Or Bojana's work on the 1995 exhibition which came out of a long research process on the Non Aligned to be extended and reframed within the context of the shifting dynamics of internationalism in the 1990s. All this to say, that I hope this initiative can be seen as generative for those involved, and the confederation as a whole.

I now want to turn to the sites, artworks and threads proposed in the first two sessions and to start to think about possible dialogues, entanglements, relations. One of the initial assertions for the development of the exhibition was to try and resist having a predetermined (either historical or thematic) narrative and then finding art works / examples to illustrate this narrative. Rather I wanted to place the emphasis on identifying 'sites' (whether they be specific art works, histories, networks) and this being the basis from which a set of ideas or provocations around the construct of internationalism could unfold. Of course, the danger has always been that what emerges is an accumulation of seemingly random histories and encounters. So, a form of contradiction does emerge between wanting to open up the conceptual / contextual framework of the exhibition up and the need to be wary of it becoming illegible or imprecise.

However, in what follows I address as what I see as the concrete sites to develop research and why I think they are significant / relevant.

'Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries. Unity in Diversity in International Art', 1993, Jakarta: A key site to understanding this shifting dynamic between political and cultural internationalism in the 1990s. As Bojana's preliminary research has revealed, the exhibition and concurrent conference offer a way into understanding this shifting dynamic. The exhibition was held to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Indonesian independence. The exhibition, introduced by Bojana in her exhibition 'Southern Constellations. History of the non-Aligned Movement' was ostensibly a strange affair, organised around contributing countries, rather than through a curatorial theme or focus on singular artistic practices. Supported by the Non-Aligned movement, whose first conference was held in Belgrade in 1961 and whose alliance of countries aimed to break the binary of US-Soviet cold war divide, the exhibition's title borrows the mantra of Indonesian president Suharto. Alongside the exhibition, a conference was organised including speakers more readily associated with the art system and its fledgling 'internationalist' discourse such as art historian Geeta Kapur, who also spoke at the 'Global Visions' conference. What appears remarkable about the 'Unity in Diversity' exhibition, therefore as it serves as a meeting point for two trajectories of internationalism: On the one hand it was a carrier for the politics and ideology of the Non-Aligned Movement, dating back to the mid 1960s or Bandung in 1955. On the other, it speaks to the emergent international, or globalised circuits of the art system in the 1990s and the proliferation of discourses such as post-colonialism within that system. What also makes the 'Unity in Diversity' project fascinating is the ways in which the construct of Internationalism was mobilised within the construct of Indonesian independence, placing internationalism within the nationalist agenda of Sukarno's Indonesia. Bojana and I have spoken and agreed to approach researchers in the area to try and develop the research.

Another case study that was brought up by Hiuwei Chei was the practice of Agustin Parejo School, the anonymous collective working in Malaga, Spain in the 1980s and early 1990s. The group, formed by various humanities and Teacher Training students mainly worked through street actions and focused on what they describe as 'conflictive social issues'. In one action they demonstrated in the streets of Malaga with the Asociacon de Vecinos sin Vivienda (Homeless Association), a collective that marched in the streets every Wednesday. Slogans such as 'Malaga, paradigma de la africanidad' (Malaga paradigm of Africanism') was indicative of the manner in which the collective viewed their local struggles through the lens of solidarity with other geographies and struggles. Initial ideas for the exhibition is to present material from the collections of MACBA and to create a series of oral histories around the group's practice – either through its former members or those involved in

the projects. The Augustin Parejo school appear relevant on multiple fronts. Firstly, they speak to a form of internationalist solidarity that is locally situated. Secondly, and related to this the group seems to speak back to the history of socialist, internationalist politics, striking within the context of 1992 and an increasingly neoliberal Spain and Europe, but also within the context of the confederation and its self-understanding (or naming) as coming out of this trajectory. Lastly, it points to a form of 1:1 art practice, that is not interested in representation but operates 'in the real'. Here, I would be keen to think with Hiuwei / MACBA about what / how to present and if it makes sense to supplement the material in the mACBA collection with further materials (oral histories for example), perhaps in relation to the context of Sevilla expo.

Stemming from the Augustin Prejo's project in Seville in 1992, it seems important that the project looks to – or addresses 1492 and what the decolonial thinkers such as Mignolo et al designate as the start of Eurocentrism with the Columbus conquest. As I wrote in the original project description to you last year 'following a decolonial approach that understands the very concept of Eurocentrism as beginning in 1492 with the conquest of Abya Yala (the Americas), L'Internationale's decision to name *Our Many Europes* points precisely to the moment when a *here* or *us* is defined in relation to a *them* or *there*. Within the title of *Our Many Europes* and its focus on the 1990s, therefore is a call to rewind internationalism - to consider its colonial histories and implications.' One way to do this would be via the Seville expo, but I would be keen to think if / how 1492 has been addressed through research / exhibitions in the confederation. I know it is part of the upcoming collection display at Reina but perhaps this is something we could discuss further in the next meeting.

Though only briefly touched on the history of the Zapatistas seems an important site to engage within the frame of the exhibition. Directly responding to the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, itself symptomatic of processes of neoliberalisation, the Zapatistas were similarly fervently internationalist whilst being fiercely local. Vitrally for me I think is the role of art and collective processes in the Zapatista project. The question now is how to go about researching / engaging the context of the Zapatistas. I am wary of their visibility and circulation in the art world. That said, it seems any exhibition addressing the construction of internationalism from the perspective of the 90s needs to think through / with Zapatism. There are a few possible lines to pursue here. Pablo has kindly introduced me to Nancy and Aimar. I would be fascinated to know how the Zapatistas appear in the upcoming Reina collection display. At the same time Charles let me know of a large body of work that the collective Chto Delat did on the Zapatistas which I am keen to look at (I can share this with the group). Finally, there is a delegation of the Zapatistas coming to Europe later in the year and the Van Abbe has been approached to do some form of forum with feminist groups from the Zapatistas and the Kurdish movement. Perhaps this is something to discuss with other colleagues from the confederation (maybe in collaboration with L'I online)

ACT UP – across Barcelona, Amsterdam and potentially Brussels appears as another example of locally situated sites of resistance, collectivity and performativity that is both internationalist in its networks and responding to a global pandemic in AIDS. And without drawing parity, the case of ACT UP seems particularly relevant now in the face of another global pandemic. Again, the question is the formal / spatial / aesthetic ways in which this might be manifested. Here, this is work for me to do in locating archives / figures / materials in relation to these contexts.

Betsy Damon's project 'Keepers of the Water' project is another site / project that I would be keen to go much further into. On the one hand it speaks to what Sebastian describes as a form of 'inter-species internationalism', whilst on the other it alludes to a trajectory that stems back to west coast eco-feminism from the 1970s. Sebastian and MOMA Warsaw have already begun research on this project and continue having a dialogue with Damon so it could be a good opportunity to further this research and relationship. Sebastian and I are discussing how best to do this.

Alan Sekulöa's *Waiting for Teargas* in the MACBA collection is a work that has stayed with me since Pablo first suggested it. As I write in the notes for the last meeting it appears both as a marker of anti-globalisation movements, the evocation of Hardt and Negri's multitude and, as Pablo described the shifting nature of the status of the image as a challenge to the documentary form. I think here, I would be keen to simply put in a loan request to MACBA for the work ....

Alongside these sites – some of which are concrete like Sekula's work, some of which are contexts / histories of dive into (the Zapatistas, Seville 1992) there are other less clearly defined areas I would be keen to explore. As I also wrote in the notes, I am eager to think how the project at SALT 'When are we Europeans?' might speak to or across this project. I feel a slight resistance to the forms of cultural identity that seem to be operative in some of the work that Amira and Farah have put forward and feels prevalent in practices in Turkey in the 90s. I wonder if the question of multiple identities, or what Nav might call mutuality might emerge within the project of 'When are we European?'

Equally, as I write in the notes I would like to think through how the different figures / sites raised by Paulina might enter the project. Guattari's 1991 lecture in Chile on the three ecologies feels relevant here, as does the figure of Nelly Richard, so I hope this is something we can go further into in the next meeting ....

Equally, I think Nav's provocations around vocabularies feels both valid and something I would be really keen to pursue. From the perspective of the project, I am wary of a certain fuzziness in the terms internationalism / internationalist within the project that perhaps speaks to a wider problematic of language when addressing what Said would call 'imaginative geographies'. Something I would like to ask Nav is if he could imagine this project as being a framework to develop a proposal of a set of terms, or challenge to existing terms. I think some of this work has already been done with mutuality and ambiguity for example. Whether this is developed by Nav or as a collective endeavour is something to discuss. It would also seem important to turn to the glossary of common knowledge here. This could be something that sat alongside the exhibition in the form of a handout or epub for example.

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My sense is that already with the above there is a huge amount of work to do to research and to arrive at bodies and forms of material for an exhibition that opens in a little over a year. Coupled with this there are the commissions and existing sites that I have identified.

A central pivot if you like for the exhibition is Didem Pekun's new film 'Disturbed Earth', which takes the transcripts of meetings between US and Nato politicians and leaders prior to the fall of Srebrenica as the script for her film. Withdrawing all references to Bosnia and with actors improvising within a non-descript setting the film becomes a form of choreographed,

abstracted and almost absurdist meditation on the failure of supra-national bodies to confront the crises they have been set up to avoid. Within the context of the Van Abbe's architecture I can imagine the different sites somehow rotating or orbiting around this piece.

Coupled with this I am keen that the exhibition – both in terms of the works it presents and its spatio-experiential arrangement - complicates both forms of representation and a linear reading of the exhibition. Here I can see works such as Derek Jarman's *Blue* or Tony Coakes' brilliant *Microhaus or the Black Atlantic?* playing significant roles. In very different ways these two works trouble the nature of representation that were operative in the 1990s and were being played out in the art system through its 'expanding internationalism'. At the same time they form articulations with both the AIDS pandemic and how cultural studies was engaging with the racial in the 90s (which reappears in the Gate Foundation archive). These works, along with an exhibition design that I could imagine including dead ends that force visitors to double back, gaps or empty spaces will, I hope, encourage a reflection on modes of representation and forms of narrating history – both within specific works, and across the exhibition / institution at large. A key part of this project, then, is going to be the spatial design and articulating the different sites / threads and I hope to be able to work with an architect, either by workshopping ideas or in commissioning someone more extensively as exhibition designer for the project.



