

T ~ Thyssen-Bornemisza
B Art Contemporary
- A Academy



THE CURRENT V

ancestral ocean CONVENING #1

Marine Intersections and Coastlines as Webs

25 - 27 January 2026 / Colombo, Sri Lanka

Radicle Gallery, Soul Studio, Arka Kinari,
Barefoot Gallery and Musicmatters Soundroom

Jointly organized by Colomboscope and TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary as part of *The Current V: Ancestral Ocean*, an initiative by TBA21—Academy.

Curated by Natasha Ginwala.

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Marine Intersections and Coastlines as Webs

The inaugural convening of *The Current V: Ancestral Ocean*, led by curator **Natasha Ginwala**, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is a coming together of artists, Indian Ocean thinkers, as well as conservationists, dynamically engaged in the historical crossings, Afrasian cultural confluences, and maritime stories formed and held in these waters.

Several of the islands of the Indian Ocean World have remained crossroads of maritime traffic, sustaining the movement of monsoon winds and waterways for the oldest trading routes. Here, polyphous identities across language, cuisine, and sacred and built heritage coalesce, and significant marine species cohabitate. The sessions held between **25 - 27 January 2026**, chronicle oral histories, inventive artistic forms, sonic records, and conservation research charting ancient cosmopolitanisms, stories of mobility and labor, oceanic kinships, wetland ecosystems, as well as ecological threats to the hydrosphere.

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In commencement, Ginwala returns to this reflection by Audre Lorde: “But when the sea turns back, it will leave my shape behind.” Thus, coastal webs are respun and navigated as a planetary commons, to know that salt water runs deep as an ancestor, sustaining multitudinous pasts, inviting return, and the swell of future imaginaries.

Sri Lanka remains one such remarkably diverse island geography—a portal and meeting point from which the journey of this fellowship cycle, *Ancestral Ocean*, begins. Through thinkers and artists’ dialogues, workshops, screenings, a performance, and a walk, timely and spirited inquiries from this island perspective will be mapped while situating ourselves amidst the festival flows of **Colomboscope’s** ninth edition, *Rhythm Alliances*.

The Current V: Ancestral Ocean is set to cultivate site-responsive artistic and conservation practices across island and coastal nodes, fostering situated learning and creative exchange. Supporting engagements within culturally rooted contexts that encourage slow, conscious mobility and deep listening, *The Current V* aims to cultivate long-term relationships across the Indian Ocean basin, expanding TBA21’s long-standing commitment to pan-oceanic alliances.

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Program Overview

DAY 1 - Radicle Gallery

DAY 2 - Various Locations

DAY 3 - Wetland Walk

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DAY 1: Sunday, 25 January 2026

Free admission until full capacity is reached.

11.10 - 11.30 am

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Markus Reymann (Co-director TBA21)

and **Eduardo Castillo Vinuesa** (Director TBA21—Academy)

11.30 - 11.50 am

COMMENCEMENT AND FILM SCREENING

Natasha Ginwala (Curatorial Fellow, *The Current V, Ancestral Ocean*)

Including a screening of nesting by **Fana Fraser**

12.00 - 1.00 pm

VESSEL AS MEMORY. RETURN AS METHOD

Conversation with **Brook Garru Andrew** and **Anna Arabindan-Kesson**

Moderated by **Natasha Ginwala**

2.00 - 3.00 pm

BLUE RESOURCES TRUST:

FROM FISHERY LANDING SITES TO POLICY CHANGE

Presentation by **Daniel Fernando** (Blue Resources Trust)

3.00 - 4.00 pm

ON PORTS AS PORTALS, COASTS AS COMPANIONS

Conversation with **Laleh Khalili** and **Neelima Jeychandran**

Moderated by **Setareh Noorani**

4.30 - 5.30 pm

ARTIST ENCOUNTERS ACROSS COASTAL SPHERES

Conversation with **Charwei Tsai** and **Naiza Khan**

Moderated by **Hajra Haider Karrar**

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DAY 2: Monday, 26 January 2026

Limited Capacity. Registration required.

10.00 - 11.30 am

ARKA KINARI: LABORATORY OF SUSTAINABILITY

Workshop by **Raka Ibrahim, Grey Filastine, and Nova Ruth**
at **Sail Lanka Pier, Colombo Port City,**
Only for registered professionals.

3.00 - 5.00 pm

ROTATIONS OF BISMILLAH by **Atiyyah Khan**

Workshop at **Soul Studio**

Limited capacity. [Registration required.](#)

6.00 - 7.00 pm

L25 by **KMRU**

Performance at **Musicmatters Soundroom**

Limited capacity. [Registration required.](#)

7.30 pm

EVENING RECEPTION at **Barefoot Cafe and Gallery**

Only for registered professionals.

DAY 3: Tuesday 27 January 2026

6.30 - 9.00 am

GUIDED WETLAND WALK

Conceived by biologists **Anjallee Prabhakaran**
and **Anya Ratnayaka** (Small Cat Advocacy and Research, SCAR)
Only for registered professionals.

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Program Activities

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Sunday, 25 January 2026 / 11.30 - 11.50 am

COMMENCEMENT AND FILM SCREENING

Natasha Ginwala (Curatorial Fellow, *The Current V: Ancestral Ocean*)
Including a screening of ***nesting*** by **Fana Fraser**

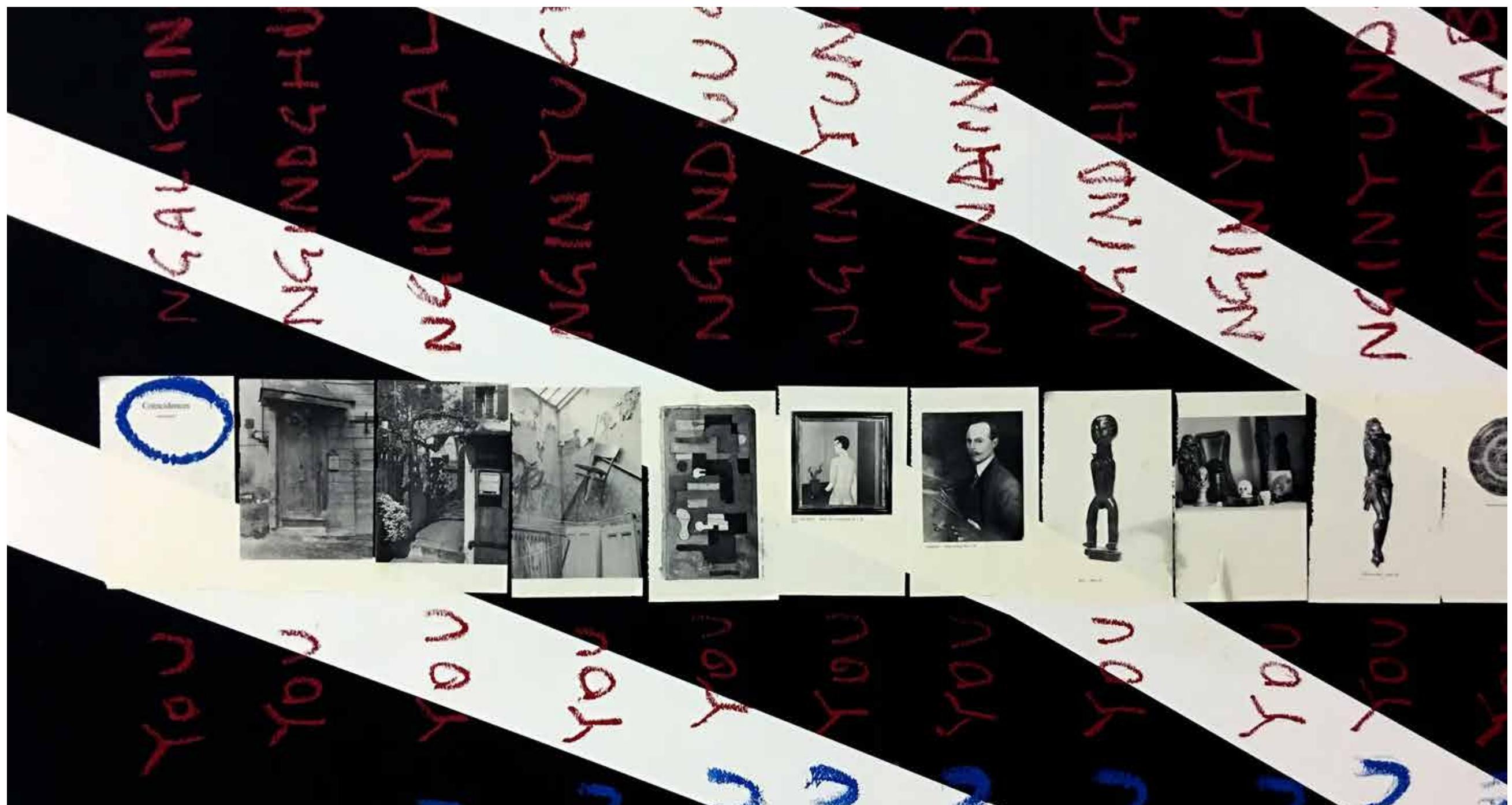
nesting

A choreography made for the camera, the first video work by Trinidad & Tobago-USA-based artist and performer **Fana Fraser** incarnates the forces of the Yoruba Orishas, Oya and Oshun in her journey to 'beaching'. Connecting to the lifecycle of the leatherback sea turtle, one of the oldest amphibians still alive, and its hatching patterns along Trinidad and Tobago's coastline, Fraser mobilizes connections between multispecies pathways and historical experiences of displacement, dispossession, and empowerment during the Middle Passage, centering Black femme presence, African-Caribbean ancestral knowledge, and Yoruba cosmology.

Commissioned by TBA21—Academy for st_age.

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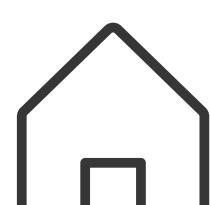
Sunday, 25 January 2026 / 12.00 - 1.00 pm

VESSEL AS MEMORY. RETURN AS METHOD

Conversation with **Brook Garru Andrew** and **Anna Arabindan-Kesson**
Moderated by **Natasha Ginwala**

Artist, researcher, and curator **Brook Garru Andrew** and author and art historian **Anna Arabindan-Kesson** will converse with curator **Natasha Ginwala**. Garru Andrew will address First Nations methodologies and coastal relationalities among the Yolngu and Makassar peoples, as well as other water-bound historical trade routes that connect the cultural links, seafaring histories, and contemporary cultural collaborations of the Australasian/Pacific World. Arabindan-Kesson will draw upon the thinking of political theorist and activist Françoise Vergès on colonial forgetfulness and oceanic archives, elaborating from material culture to visual representation, whose forms of historical 'detournement' model a re-routing that returns to disrupt, hijack, and reformat the way things are, to move us towards more tender and sustainable collective futures.

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Sunday, 25 January 2026 / 2.00 - 3.00 pm

BLUE RESOURCES TRUST: FROM FISHERY LANDING SITES TO POLICY CHANGE

Presentation by **Daniel Fernando** (Blue Resources Trust)

Daniel Fernando, a marine biologist, co-founder of Blue Resources Trust, and co-author of *Guide to the Manta and Devil Rays of the World*, will present insights from over a decade of systematic research on sharks and rays in Sri Lanka. His talk will highlight how long-term fisheries monitoring and species identification at landing sites can directly inform national and international policy processes, including conservation resolutions, cooperative management initiatives, and pathways toward more sustainable fisheries.

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Sunday, 25 January 2026 / 3.00 - 4.00 pm

ON PORTS AS PORTALS, COASTS AS COMPANIONS

Conversation with **Laleh Khalili** and **Neelima Jeychandran**

Moderated by **Setareh Noorani**

Addressing the transoceanic heritage and contemporary challenges of Indian Ocean world scholarship, amidst pressures like militarization, global debt, lost archives, and logistical burdens, authors **Laleh Khalili** and **Neelima Jeychandran** will converse with Architecture Researcher and curator **Setareh Noorani** on a rhizomatic study of the 'Oceanic South.' They will align interdisciplinary approaches to chronicle Afrasian shared histories of migration, indenture, cultural affinities, and devotional bonds along the Malabar coast (via Jeychandran's work). Khalili will discuss maritime economies and labour networks of ports, drawing on her publication, *The Corporeal Life of Seafaring*. Noorani will frame the discussion drawing from the inquiry 'New Currents: Indian Ocean Futures' at Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam.

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Sunday, 25 January 2026 / 4.30 - 5.30 pm

ARTIST ENCOUNTERS ACROSS COASTAL SPHERES

Conversation with **Charwei Tsai** and **Naiza Khan**

Moderated by **Hajra Haider Karrar** (Guest curator, Colomboscope 2026)

Artists **Charwei Tsai** and **Naiza Khan** will converse with curator Hajra Haider Karrar on charting Indigenous relations to coastlines, rituals of departure and waiting by shores, as well as address fluid cartographies and climate injustice from the perspective of Manora Island at the Karachi Peninsula and Taiwan's Lanyu Island. Through a range of media, they have forayed into community-focused engagements that resonate with cultural congruence and dispossession, truly mapping dispersed yet connective marine intersections in creative processes taking up the 'ocean as method.'

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Monday, 26 January 2026 / 10.00 - 11.00 am

ARKA KINARI: LABORATORY OF SUSTAINABILITY

Workshop by **Raka Ibrahim, Grey Filastine, and Nova Ruth**
at **Sail Lanka Pier, Colombo Port City**,

A ship is the world in a microcosmos. But how can we sustain life in a tiny floating world? For the *Laboratory of Sustainability and the Sea*, visitors are welcomed on a guided tour on board Arka Kinari to peek behind the curtain. Together with the crew, visitors will learn how Arka Kinari travels on the wind, makes electricity from the sun, desalinates water, manages food, and reduces waste. Some of these solutions can be scaled up for life on spaceship Earth. In fact, the future demands it.

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Monday, 26 January 2026 / 3.00 - 5.00 pm

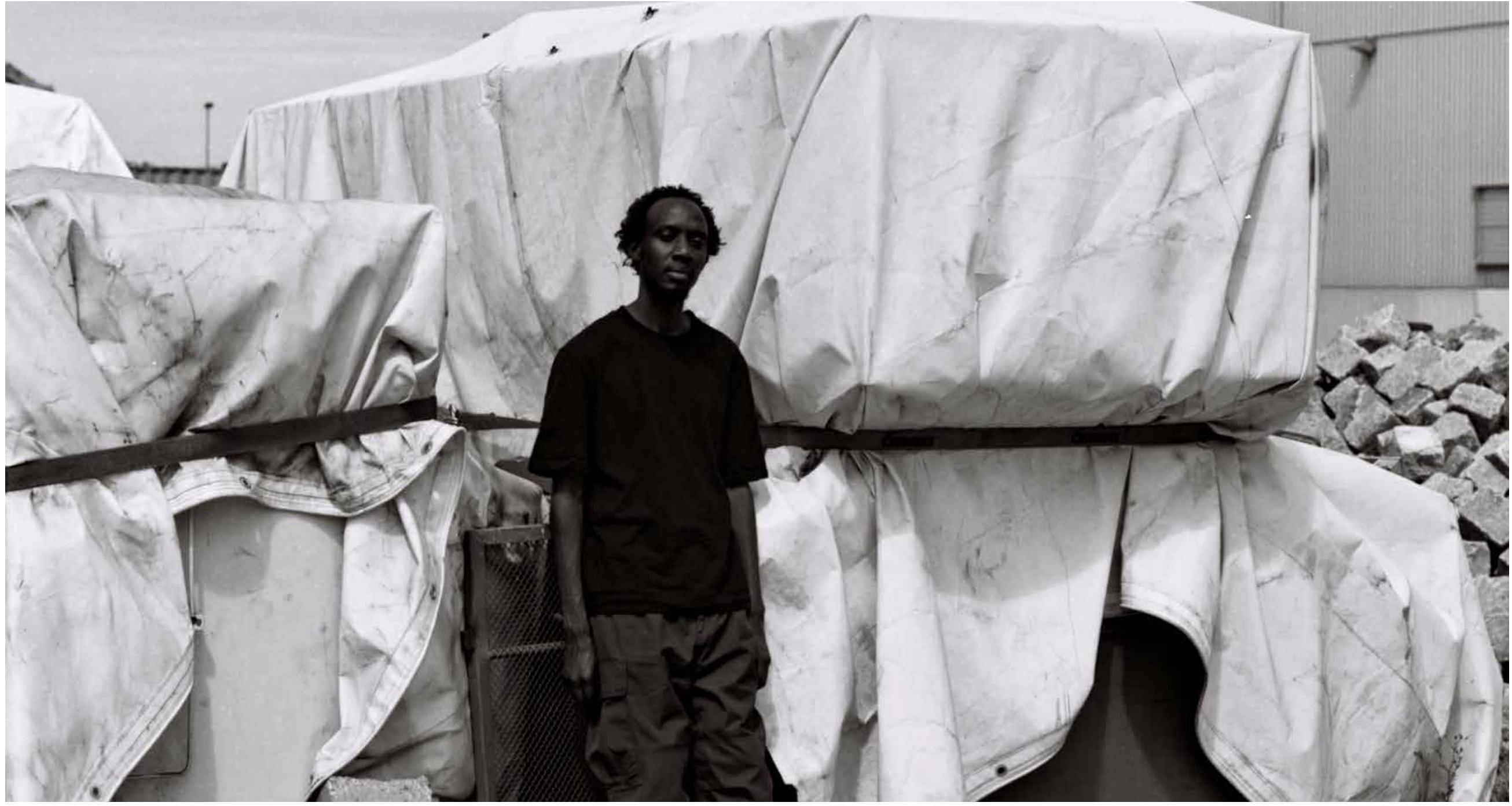
ROTATIONS OF BISMILLAH

Workshop by **Atiyyah Khan** at **Soul Studio**
Limited capacity. [Registration required.](#)

A part-listening session, part-workshop around the creation of 'Bismillah', an award-winning 2019 zine created by South African sound scholar and DJ **Atiyyah Khan**, accompanied and inspired by Sufi sonics, field recordings, and library records from Africa. This workshop will include a breakdown of DIY methods behind the creation of the zine, using sound and visual materials. It will also reflect on her ongoing research of Islamic practices in Africa, where music has been an integral part of rituals and spiritual cosmology; examining colonial legacies of field recordings, understanding digging as an archival practice, but also visually decentralizing what we mean when we speak of the continent by embracing oceanic and acoustic currents.

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Monday, 26 January 2026 / 6.00 - 7.00 pm

L25

Performance by **KMRU** at **Musicmatters Soundroom**
Limited capacity. [Registration required.](#)

L25 functions as an étude of space and time. It is a speculative sonic journal of social architectures and environments traversed throughout 2025 from Indian Ocean archipelagos to Highlands in Oceania and beyond. The performance unfolds between live improvisation, modulating textures, drone, and field recordings. Sonic passages here are arguably abstracted in ways that exceed a mode of representation that cannot be grasped immediately, but as a wilful tool for obscurity.

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Tuesday, 27 January 2026 / 6.30 - 9.00 am

GUIDED WETLAND WALK

Conceived by biologists **Anjallee Prabhakaran** and **Anya Ratnayaka** (Small Cat Advocacy and Research, SCAR)
Only for registered professionals.

The Urban Fishing Cat Conservation Project is an initiative by the local non-profit organization **Small Cat Advocacy and Research (SCAR)**. With over 277 species of fauna and 250 floral species, Colombo's urban wetlands are diverse and thriving ecosystems that act as the beating heart of this ever-changing urban landscape. From resident and migratory species of birds such as Pheasant-tailed jacana (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*), elusive mammals such as the European Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and the fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*), to the prehistoric giants such as the Asian water monitor (*Varanus salvator*), and the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) basking amongst the vegetation, Colombo bursts at the seams with a presence of urban wildlife that cities around the world can only

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Program Venues



Radicle Gallery

De Mel building, Chatham Street, Colombo 3



Arka Kinari

Sail Lanka Pier, Colombo Port City



Musicmatters Soundroom

141/6A Vauxhall Street, Colombo 2



Soul Studio

22 Buthgamuwa Road, Rajagiriya



Barefoot Cafe and Gallery

704 Galle Road, Colombo 4



Contributors

Brook Andrew

Eduardo Castillo Vinuesa

Daniel Fernando

Fana Fraser

Natasha Ginwala

Hajra Haider Karrar

Neelima Jeychandran

Anna Arabindan-Kesson

Arka Kinari

Laleh Khalili

Atiyyah Khan

Naiza Khan

Joseph Kamaru aka KMRU

Setareh Noorani

Markus Reymann

Small Cat Advocacy and Research (SCAR)

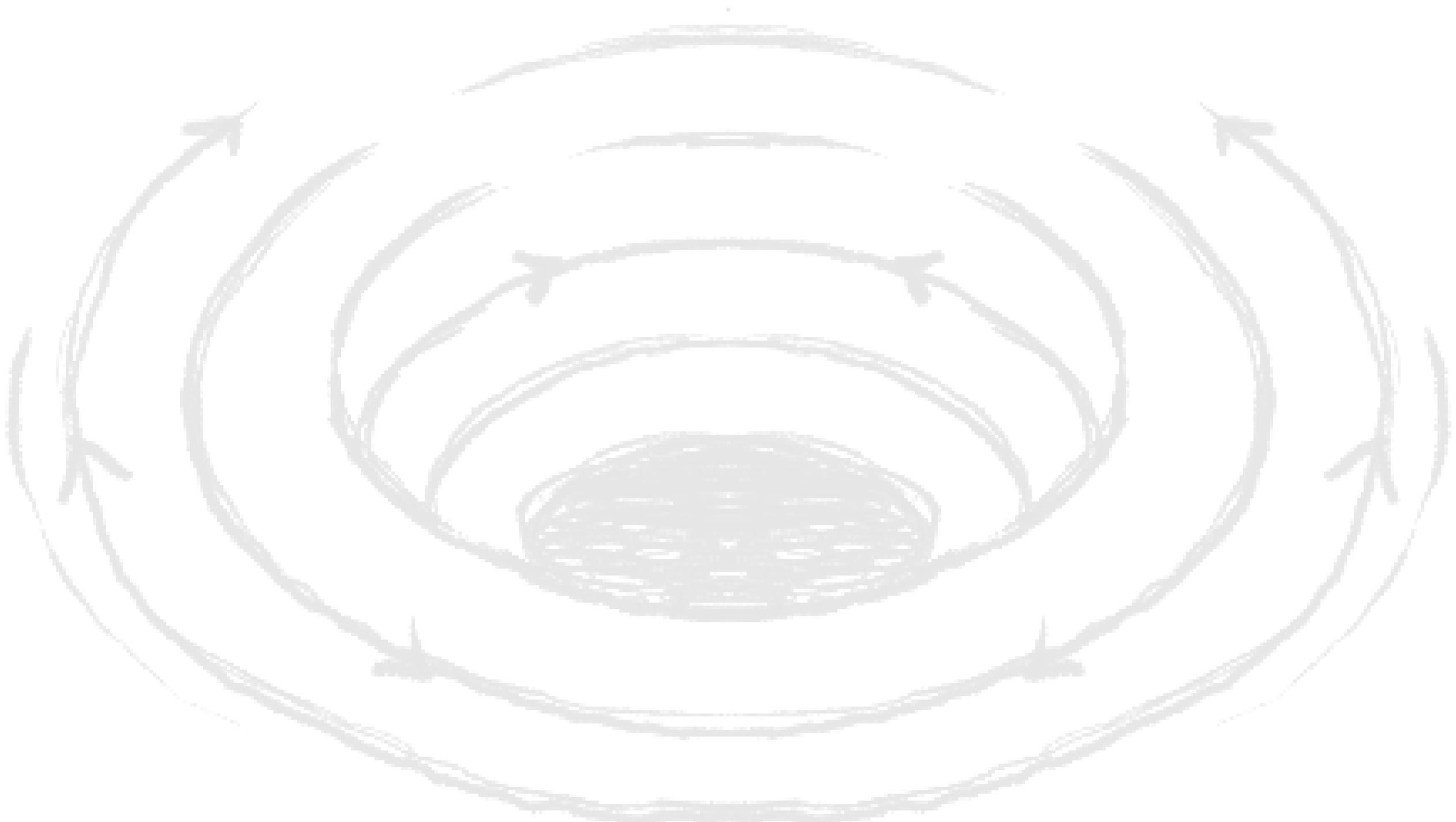
Charwei Tsai

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Brook Andrew

Brook Andrew is a Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal artist, writer, and curator whose practice confronts colonial legacies through museum intervention, public art, and community-driven research. He is Curator of First Peoples at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Director of Reimagining Museums and Collections at the University of Melbourne, where he founded BLAK C.O.R.E. He also runs the publishing imprint Garru Editions.



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Eduardo Castillo Vinuesa

Eduardo Castillo Vinuesa is an architect, curator, and educator whose work explores the intersections of climate, technology, and geopolitics. Through a transdisciplinary practice spanning architecture, institutional design, filmmaking, and alternative curatorial strategies, he investigates how spatial and visual cultures shape contemporary forms of governance and ecological transformation. He is an Associate Professor of Architecture at ETSAM—UPM, has curated the Spanish Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, directed Medialab Matadero (2021–2024), and currently serves as Director of TBA21—Academy, the unorthodox research and advocacy branch of TBA21.

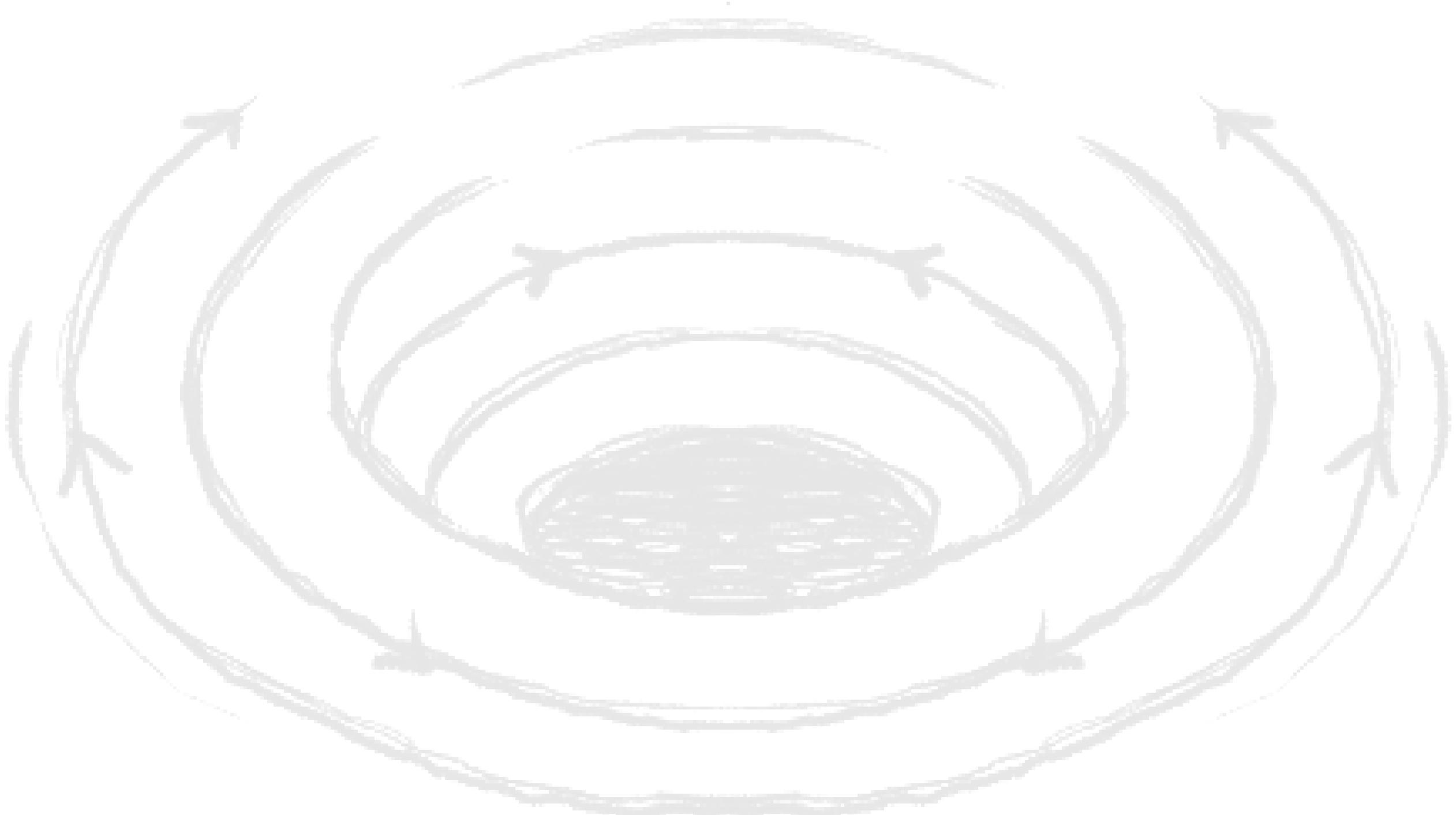


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Daniel Fernando

Daniel Fernando is a marine biologist and co-founder of Blue Resources Trust, a Sri Lankan marine research and conservation organisation, where he leads the Fisheries and Policy Programme. His work focuses on bridging science and policy and advancing sustainable fisheries management. He is currently the Vice Chair of the CMS Scientific Council's Sessional Committee and a Fellow of the New England Aquarium's Marine Conservation Action Fund (MCAF).

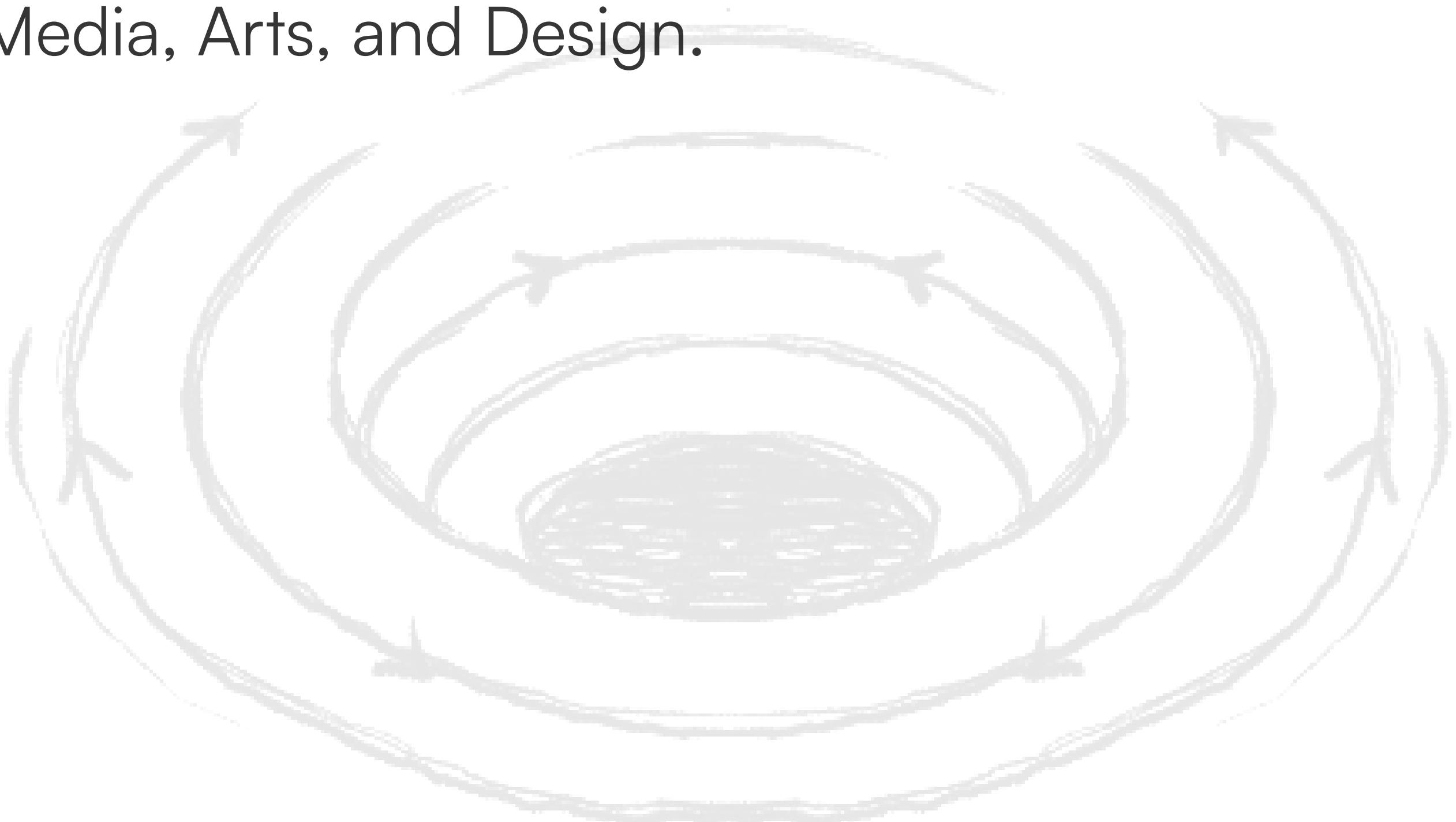


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Fana Fraser

Fana Fraser is an interdisciplinary artist, director, performer, educator, and full-spectrum doula whose work is rooted in expressions of eroticism, power, and compassion. She is interested in the study of behavior and being within and of dance, its performance, embodied and astro-phenomenal creative performance of sound, and singing movement. She is a 2023–2025 Movement Research NYSCA Artist-in-Residence and a Spring 2023 guest at Northeastern University’s College of Media, Arts, and Design.

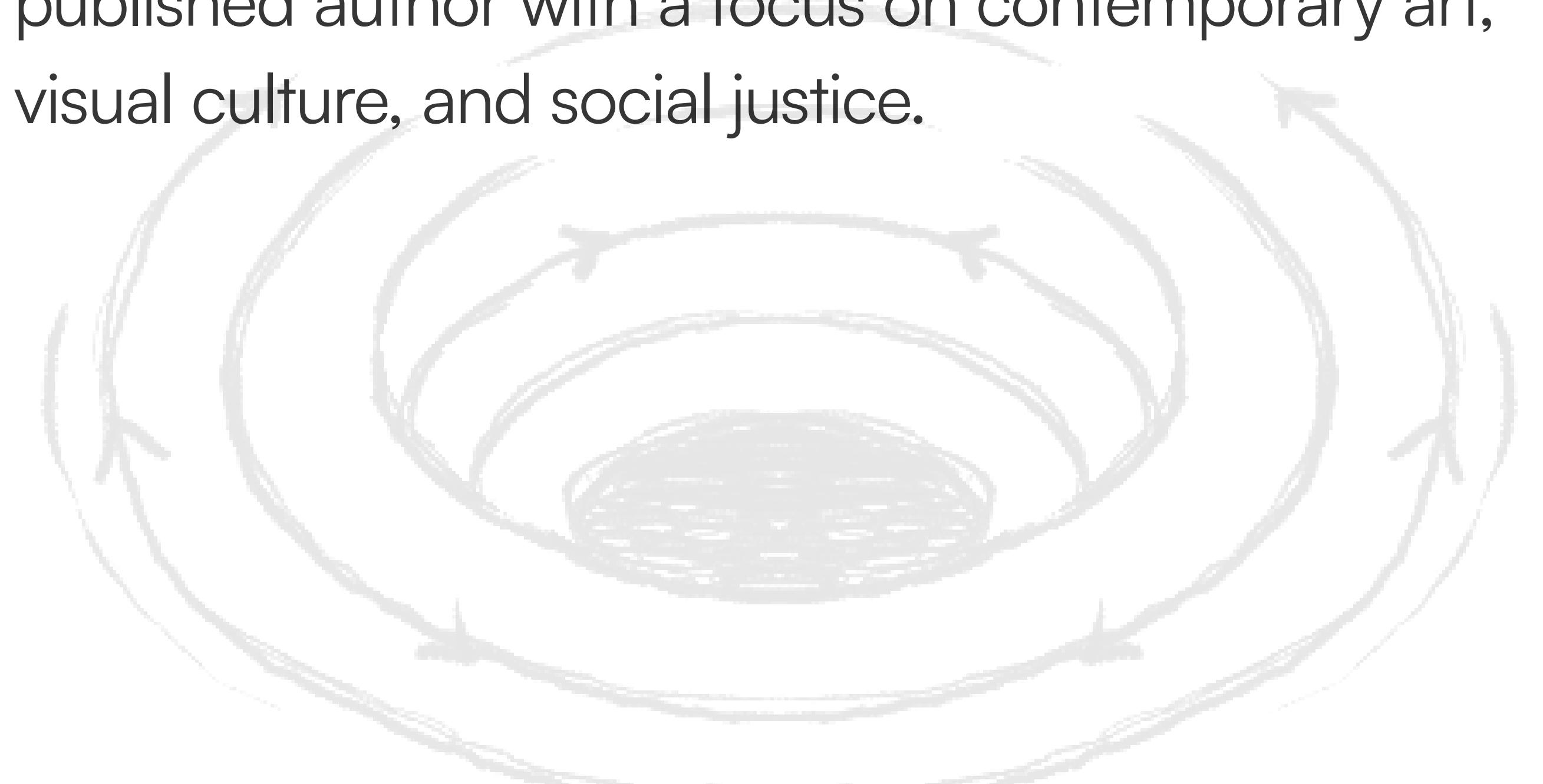


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Natasha Ginwala

Natasha Ginwala is a curator, researcher, and writer, co-curator of Sharjah Biennial 16, artistic director of Colomboscope since 2019, and was Associate Curator at Large for Gropius Bau, Berlin (2018–2024). She also served as the artistic director of the 13th Gwangju Biennale. Ginwala has been part of the curatorial teams for the 8th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Contour Biennale 8, documenta 14, and the Taipei Biennale 2012, and has co-curated several international exhibitions. Ginwala is a widely published author with a focus on contemporary art, visual culture, and social justice.

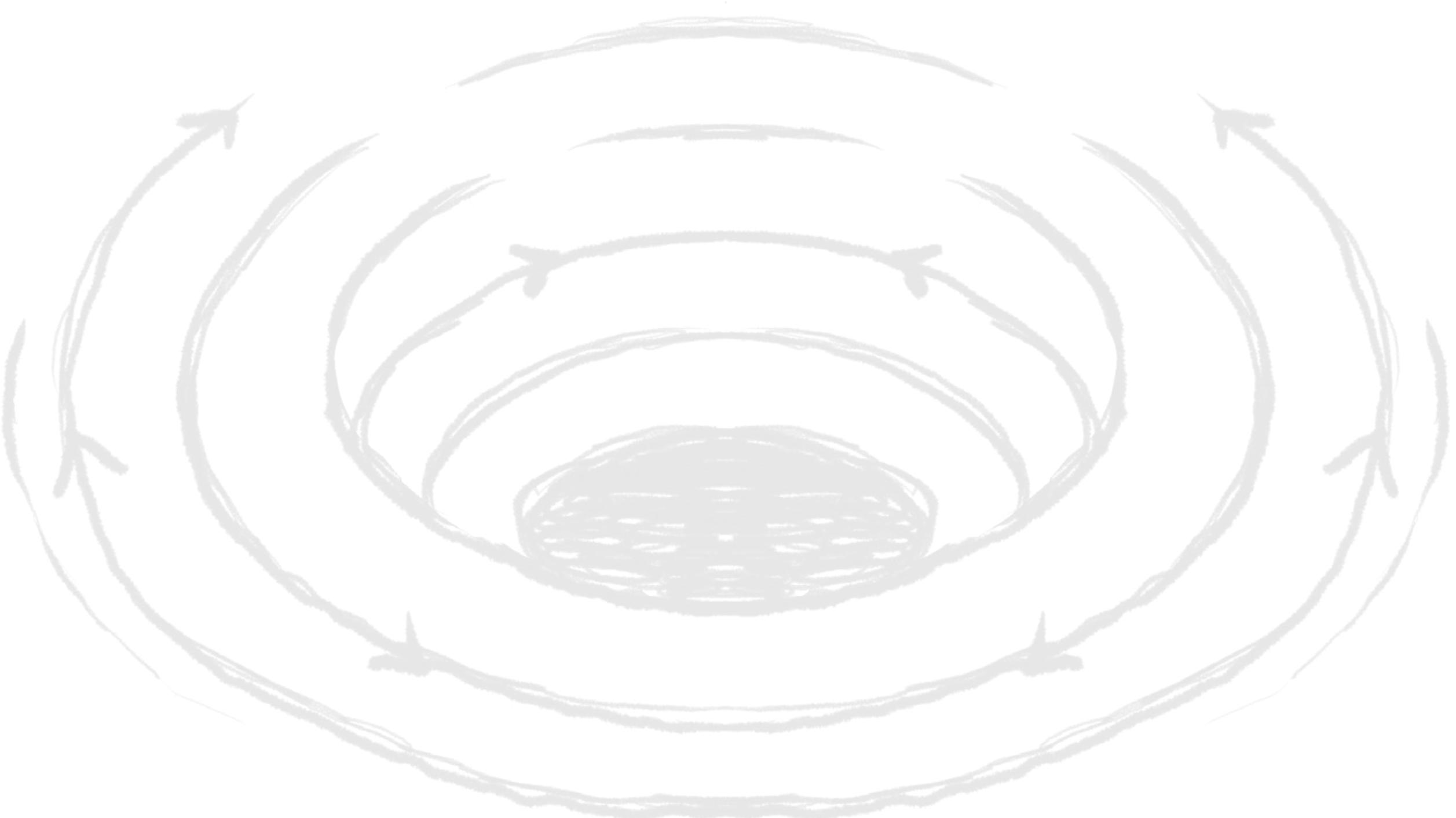


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Hajra Haider Karrar

Hajra Haider Karrar is a curator and writer invested in articulating questions that destabilize and reconfigure colonial and capital paradigms underlying knowledge production through ancestral and affective epistemes. She is a curator at SAVVY Contemporary: The Laboratory of Form-Ideas in Berlin and the guest curator of Colomboscope Edition 9, 2026.

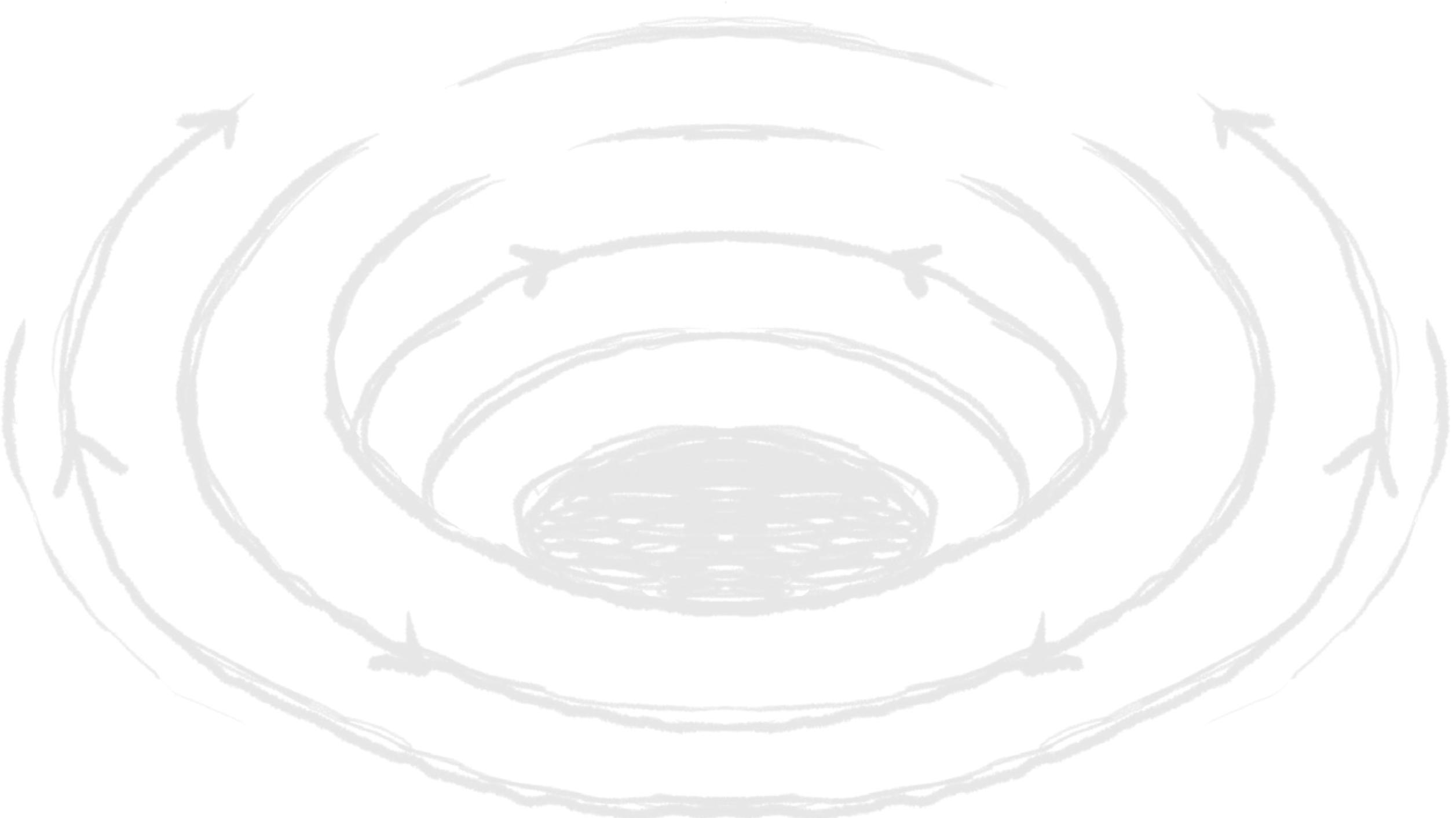


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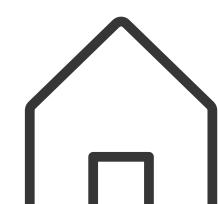


Neelima Jeychandran

Neelima Jeychandran is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar. She is an ethnographer, editor, and scholar who works on oceanic crossovers and material histories of West and East Africa and western India. At VCUarts Qatar, she is the Co-PI of the GA: MA Lab (Global Asia: Mobilities and Arts), a research lab dedicated to studying cultures, arts, and people in transit across the African and Indian Ocean worlds.

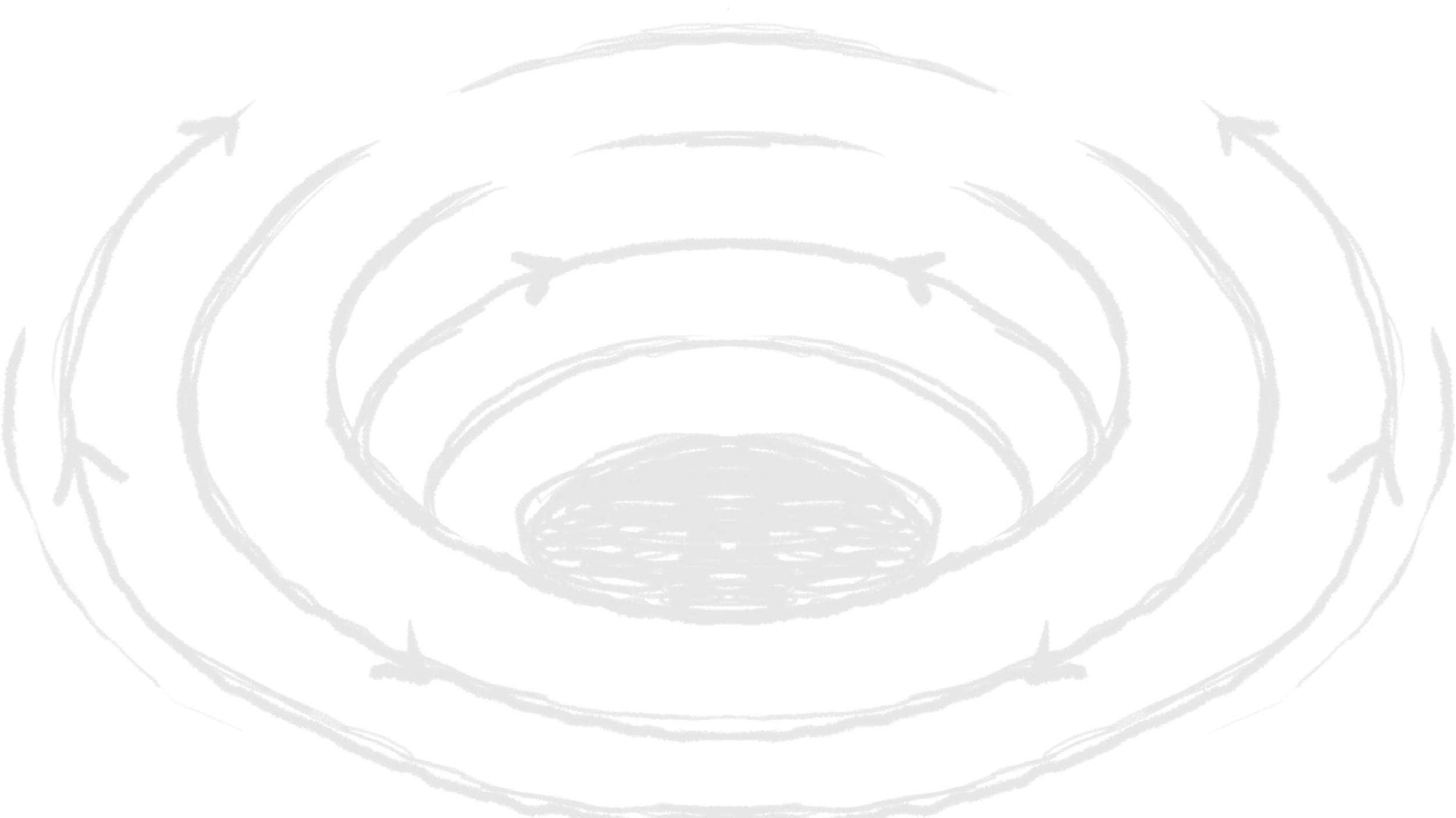


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Anna Arabindan-Kesson

Anna Arabindan-Kesson holds the position of Associate Professor of Black Diaspora Art at Princeton University in the departments of African American Studies and Art and Archaeology. Her books and articles cover the intersections of art, black diaspora history, colonialism, migration, and medicine from the 18th century to the present, and she directs Art Hx, a collaborative research platform that centers art in the exploration of experiences of health.

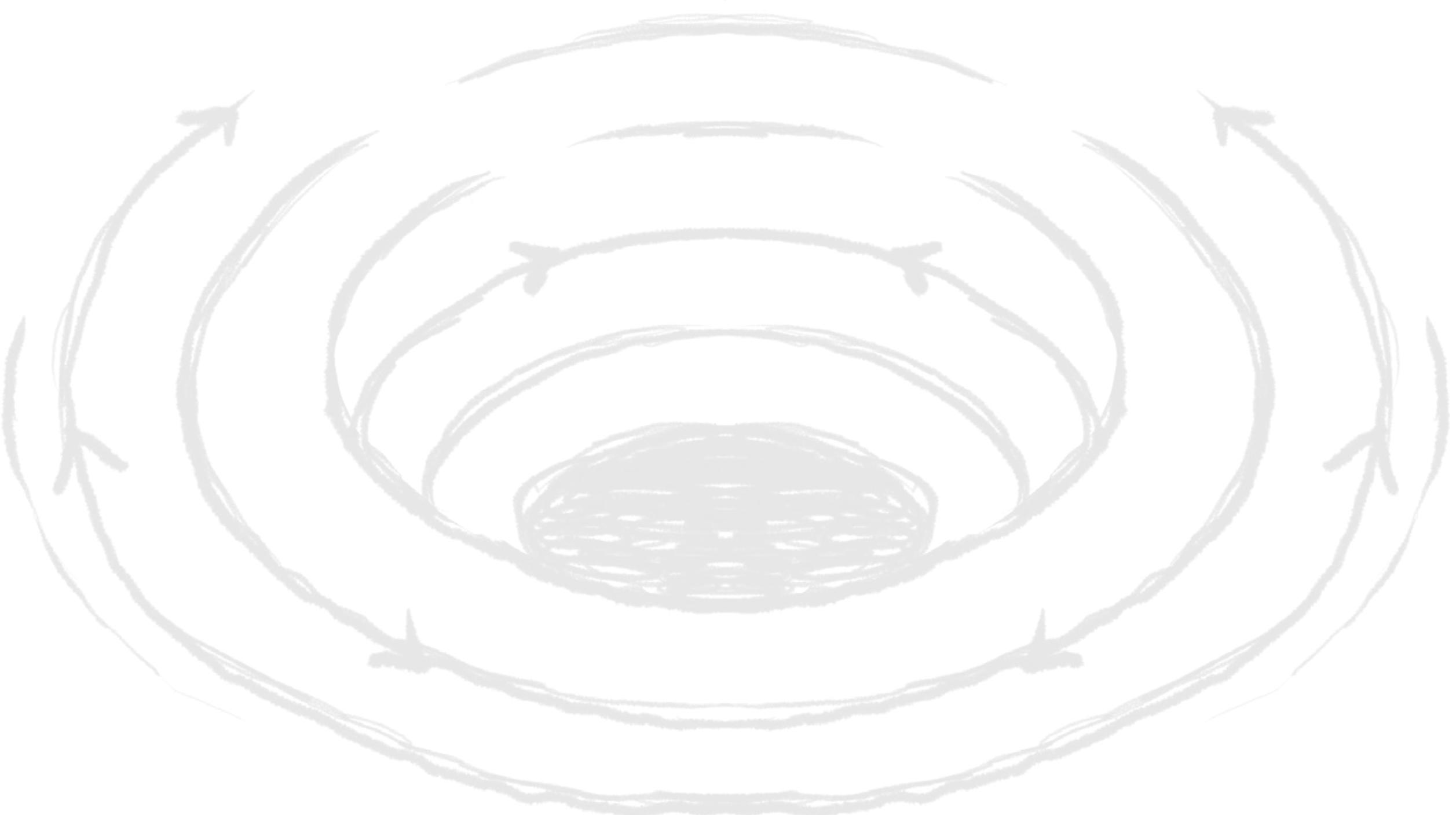


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Arka Kinari

Arka Kinari is a floating cultural platform, an evocative live performance, a sixty-ton sailing ship on a voyage to promote resilience to climate change and re-engagement with the sea. By day, Arka Kinari hosts workshops on environmental sustainability and conversations with local communities. By night, the ship transforms into a stage for a performance by Filastine & Nova, using music to sound the alarm for climate change and cinematic visuals to imagine life beyond fossil capitalism.

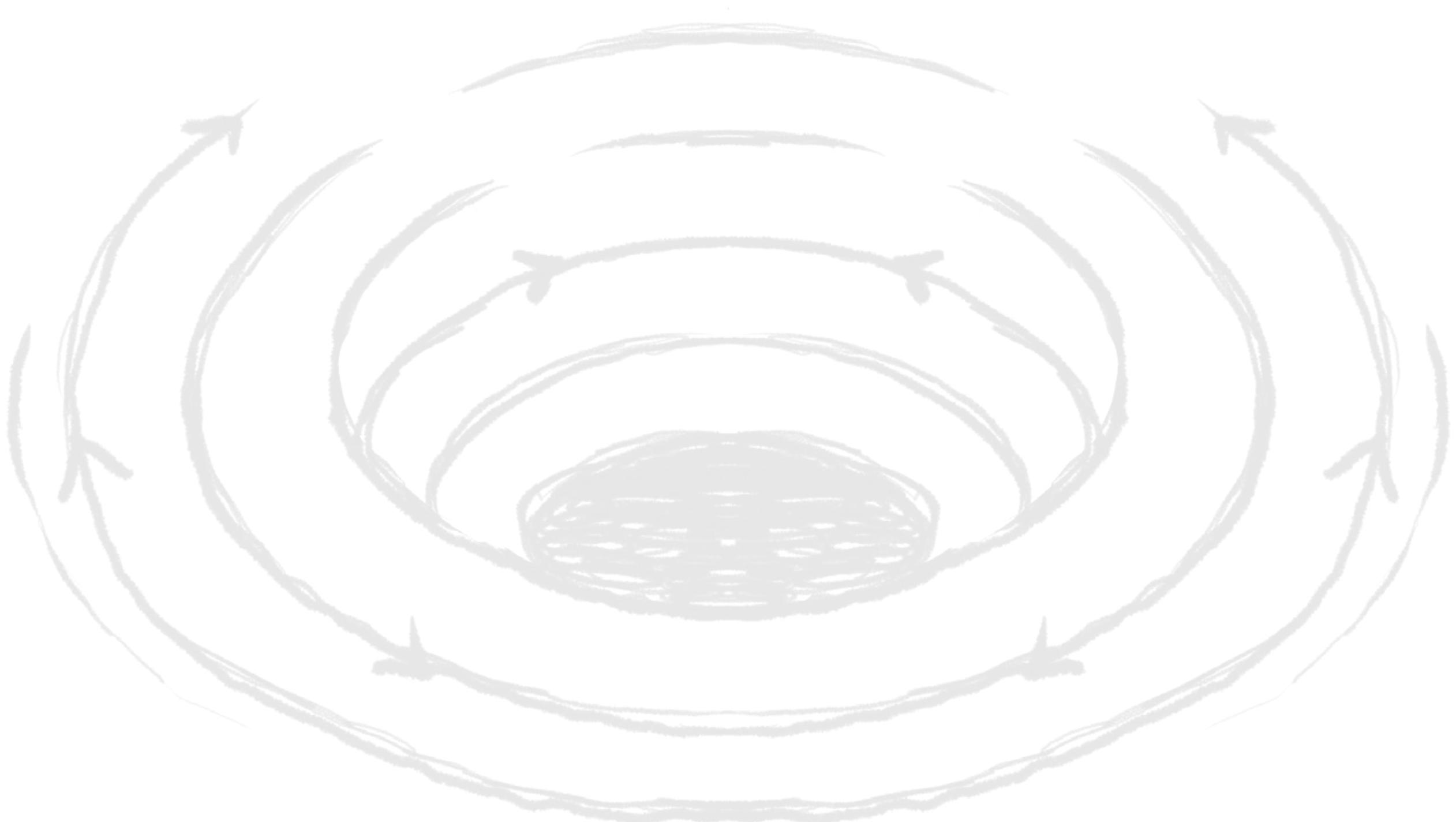


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Laleh Khalili

Laleh Khalili is a professor of Gulf Studies and the author or editor of seven books, including *Sinews of War and Trade: Shipping and Capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula* (Verso, 2020) and *Extractive Capitalism* (Profile Books, 2025).

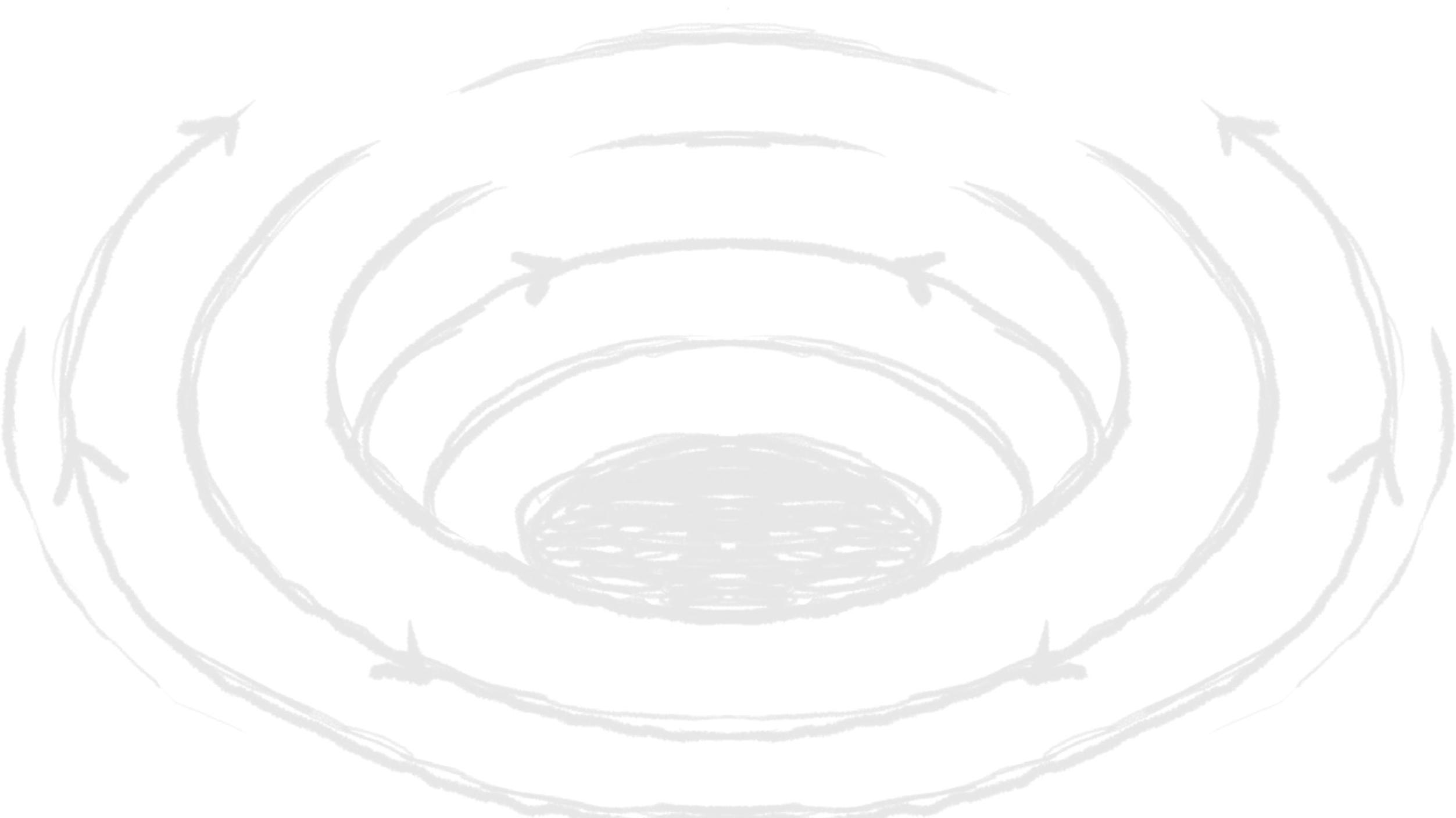


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Atiyyah Khan

Atiyyah Khan is a journalist, cultural worker, sound researcher, DJ, and archivist from Johannesburg, South Africa. Common themes in her work include topics such as spatial injustice, untold stories of apartheid, jazz history, and underground art movements. She is also the co-founder of music collective Future Nostalgia, which hosts listening sessions in Cape Town, and participates regularly in radio, podcasts, archival work, and zines.

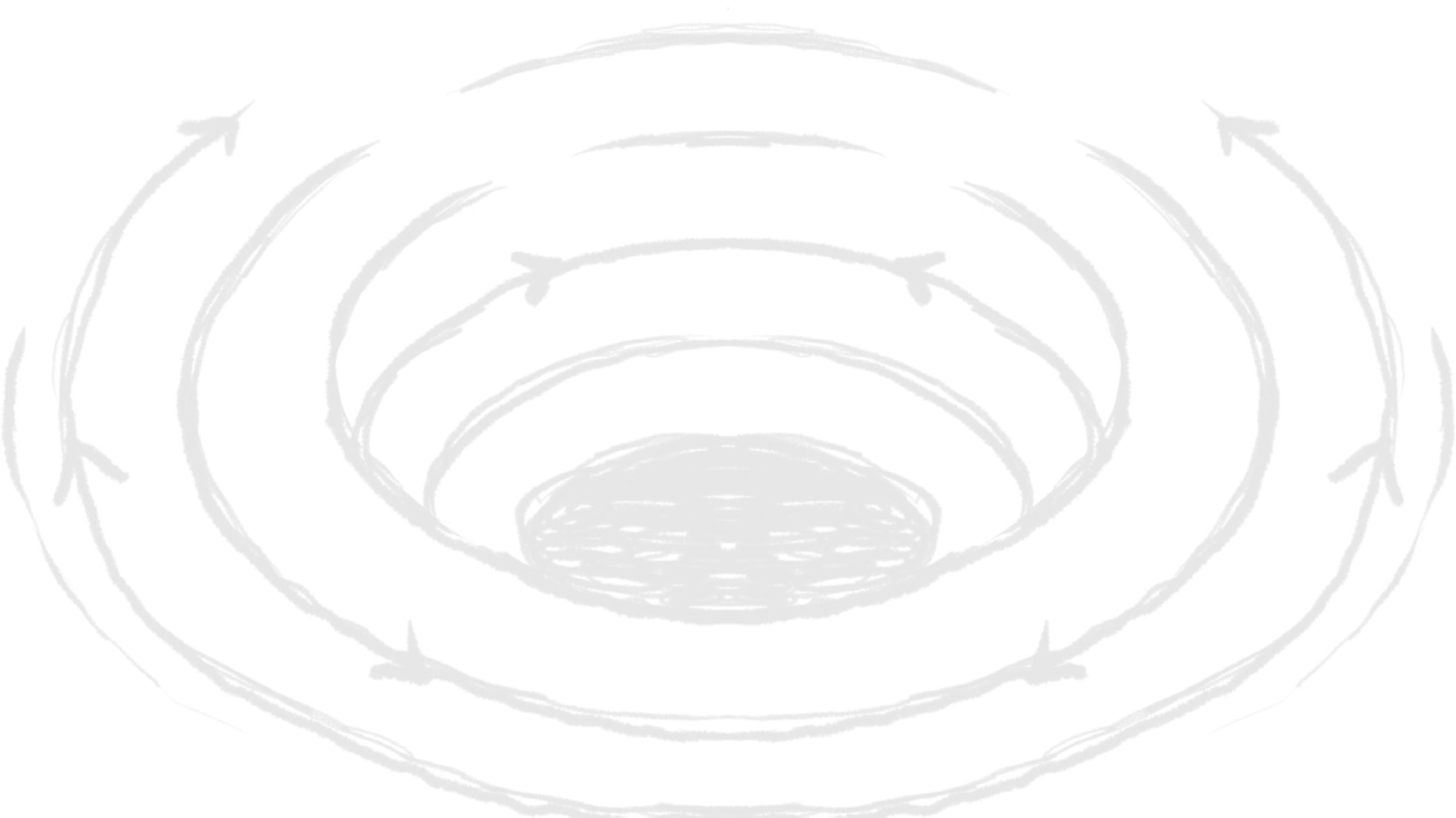


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Naiza Khan

Naiza Khan is an Associate Professor in Painting & Printmaking at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, Qatar. She works across ideas of painting, cartography, and film. In 2000, she co-founded the Vasl Artists' Collective Karachi, working to foster innovative projects in partnership with workshops in the region and beyond.

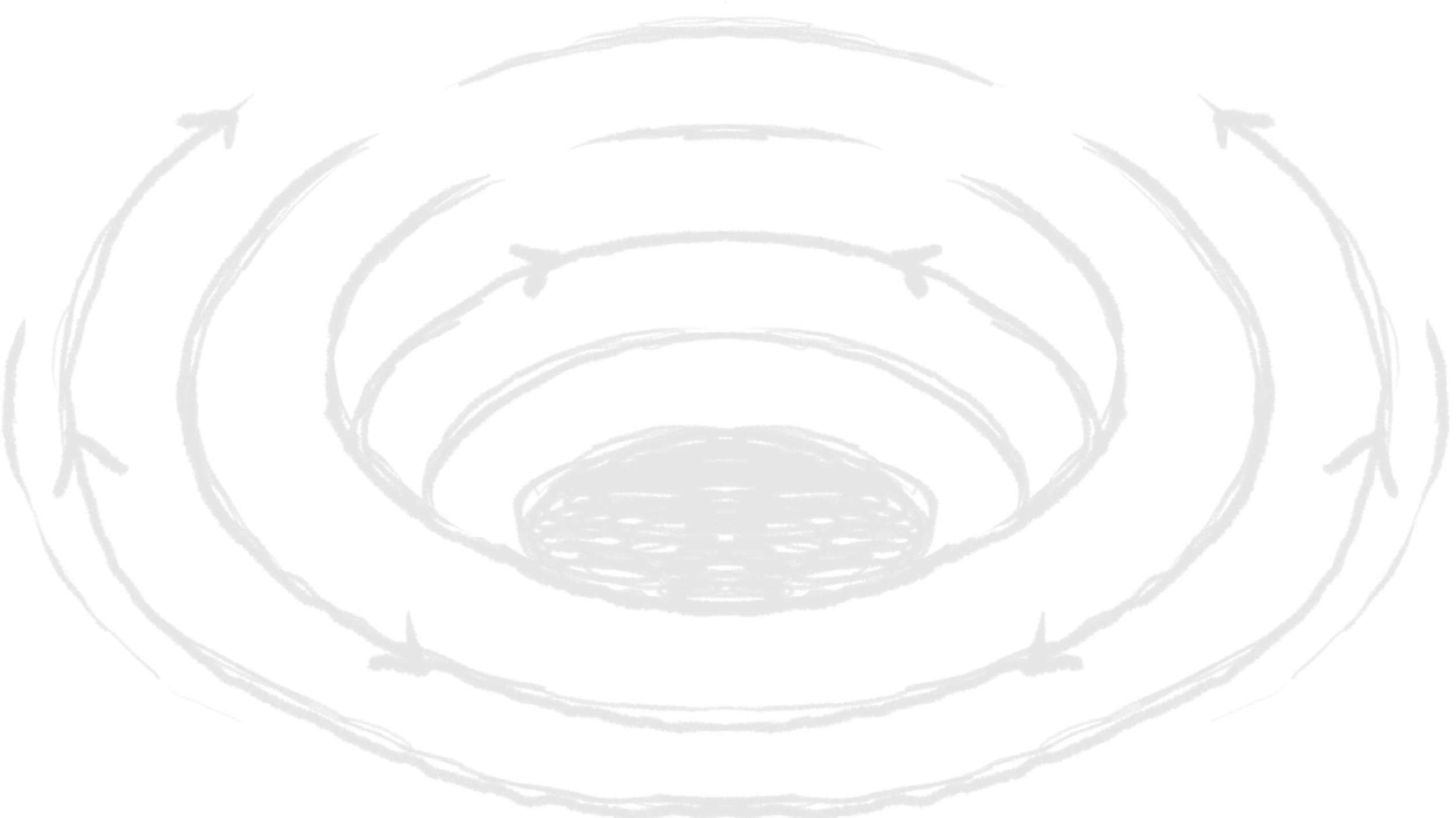


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KMRU

Joseph Kamaru, aka KMRU, is a Nairobi-born, Berlin-based sound artist whose work is grounded in the discourse of field recording, noise, and sound art. His work posits expanded listening cultures of sonic thoughts and sound practices, a proposition to consider and reflect on auditory cultures beyond the norms, and an awareness of surroundings through creative compositions, installations, and performances.

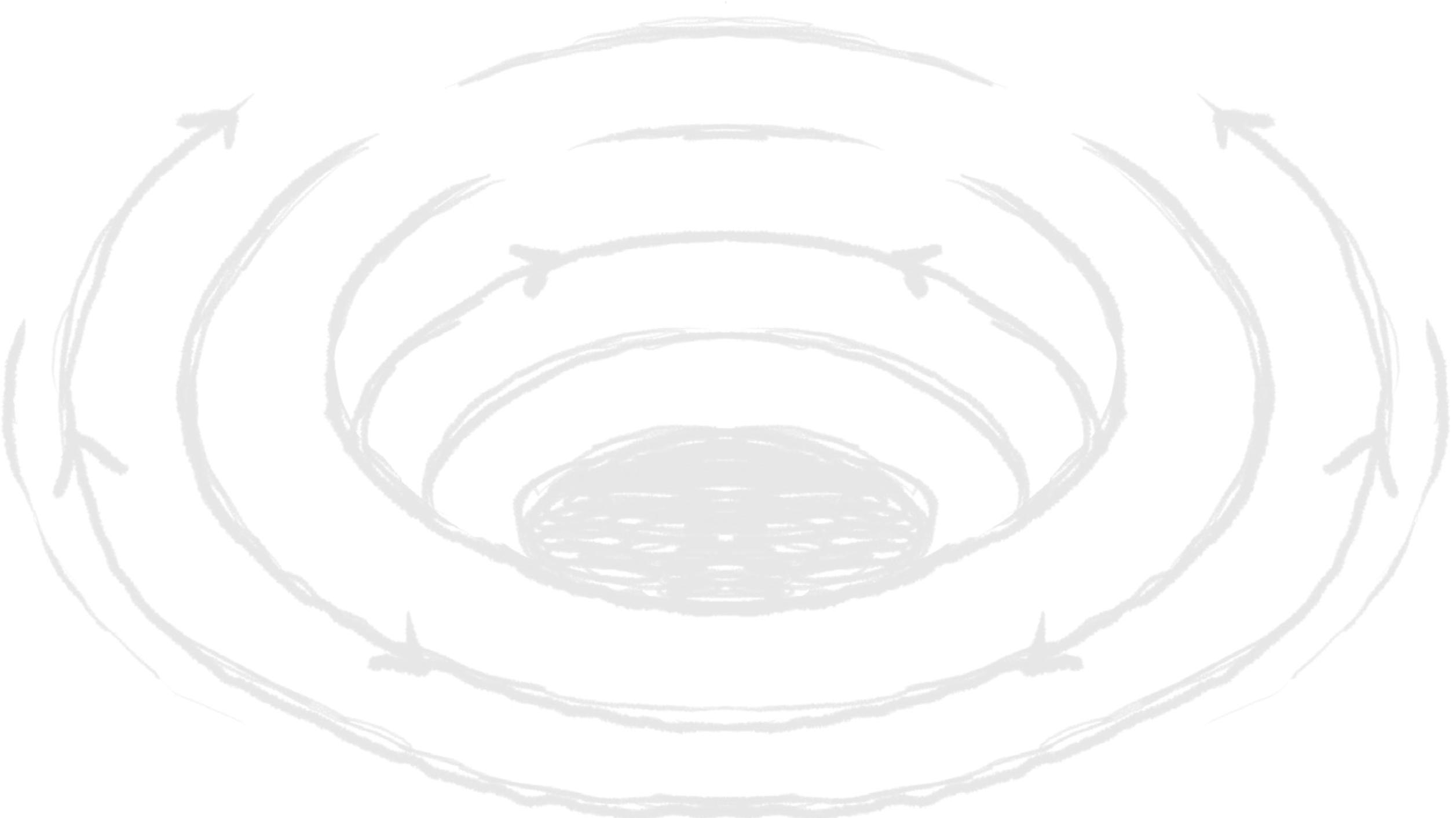


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Setareh Noorani

Setareh Noorani is an architect, researcher, and curator at Nieuwe Instituut whose practice focuses on feminist, decolonial, non-institutional, and more-than-human perspectives in the way we build, remember, and change cities. Setareh argues for alternative futures that foreground underexposed voices and forms of collectivity, translating research into exhibitions, publications, and public programmes. She currently leads the project 'New Currents: Indian Ocean Futures'.

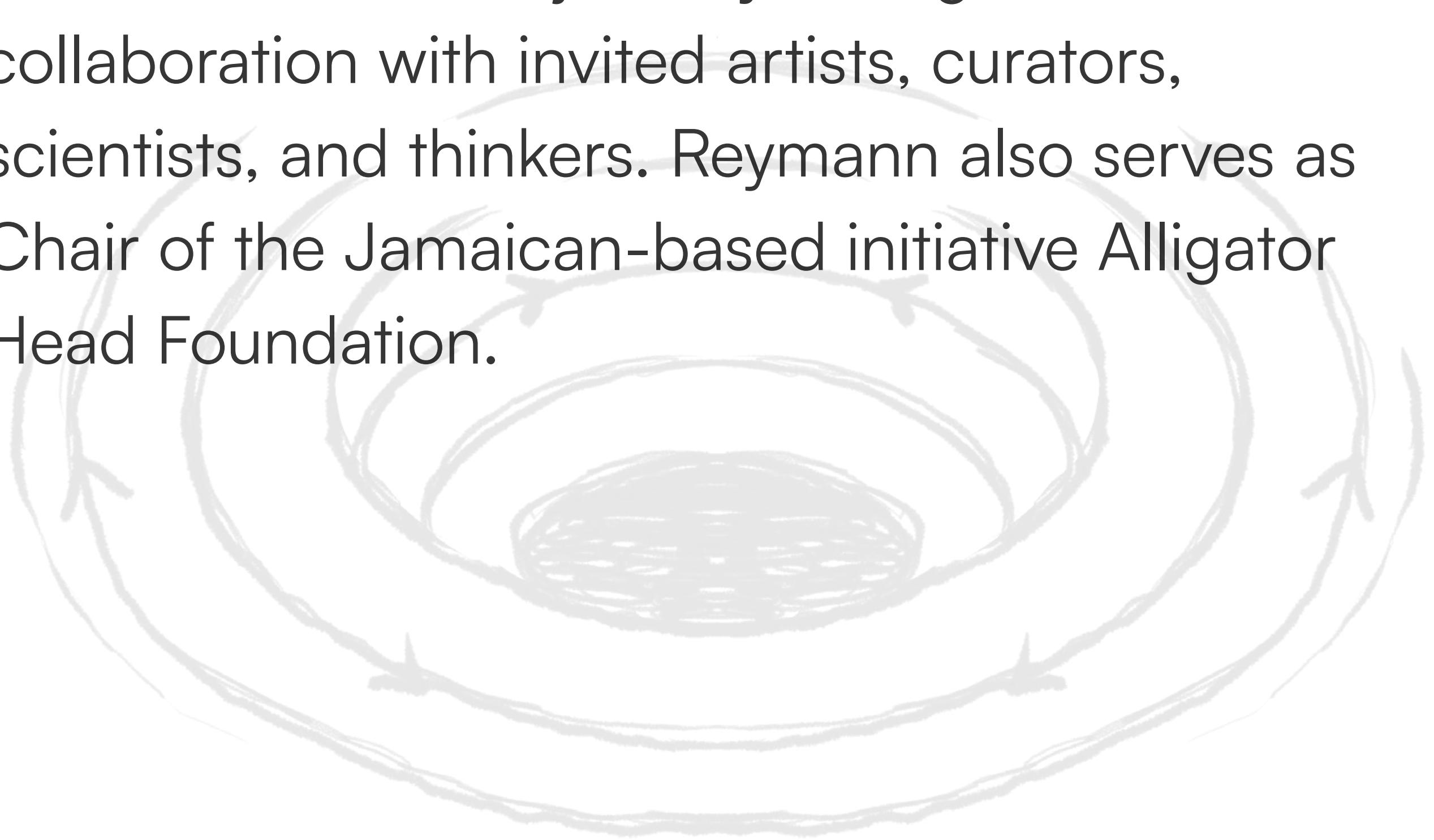


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Markus Reymann

Markus Reymann is Co-Director of TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, leading TBA21's engagement across disciplines, resulting in the creation of new commissions, bodies of knowledge, and policies emerging from the exchanges between art, science, policy, and conservation. In 2011, together with Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, Reymann co-founded TBA21—Academy, for which he conducted numerous research journeys designed in collaboration with invited artists, curators, scientists, and thinkers. Reymann also serves as Chair of the Jamaican-based initiative Alligator Head Foundation.

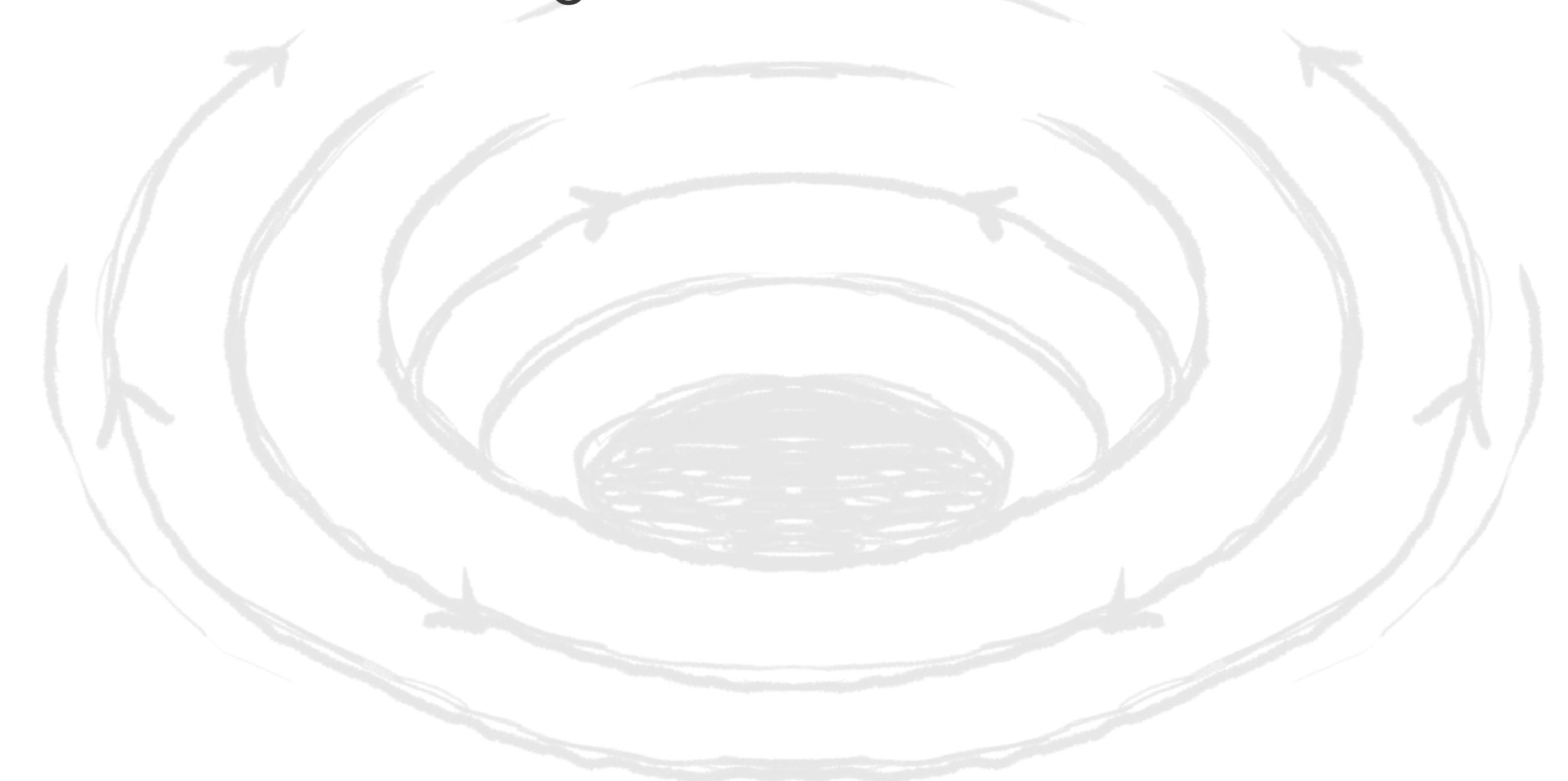


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Small Cat Advocacy and Research (SCAR)

Established in 2017, **Small Cat Advocacy and Research (SCAR)** is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the protection of Sri Lanka's lesser-understood small wild cats and small mammals. Its focus is to gain a better understanding of the three species through conservation and research, and use that knowledge to conserve the species throughout the island by working closely with communities, stakeholders, and government authorities.

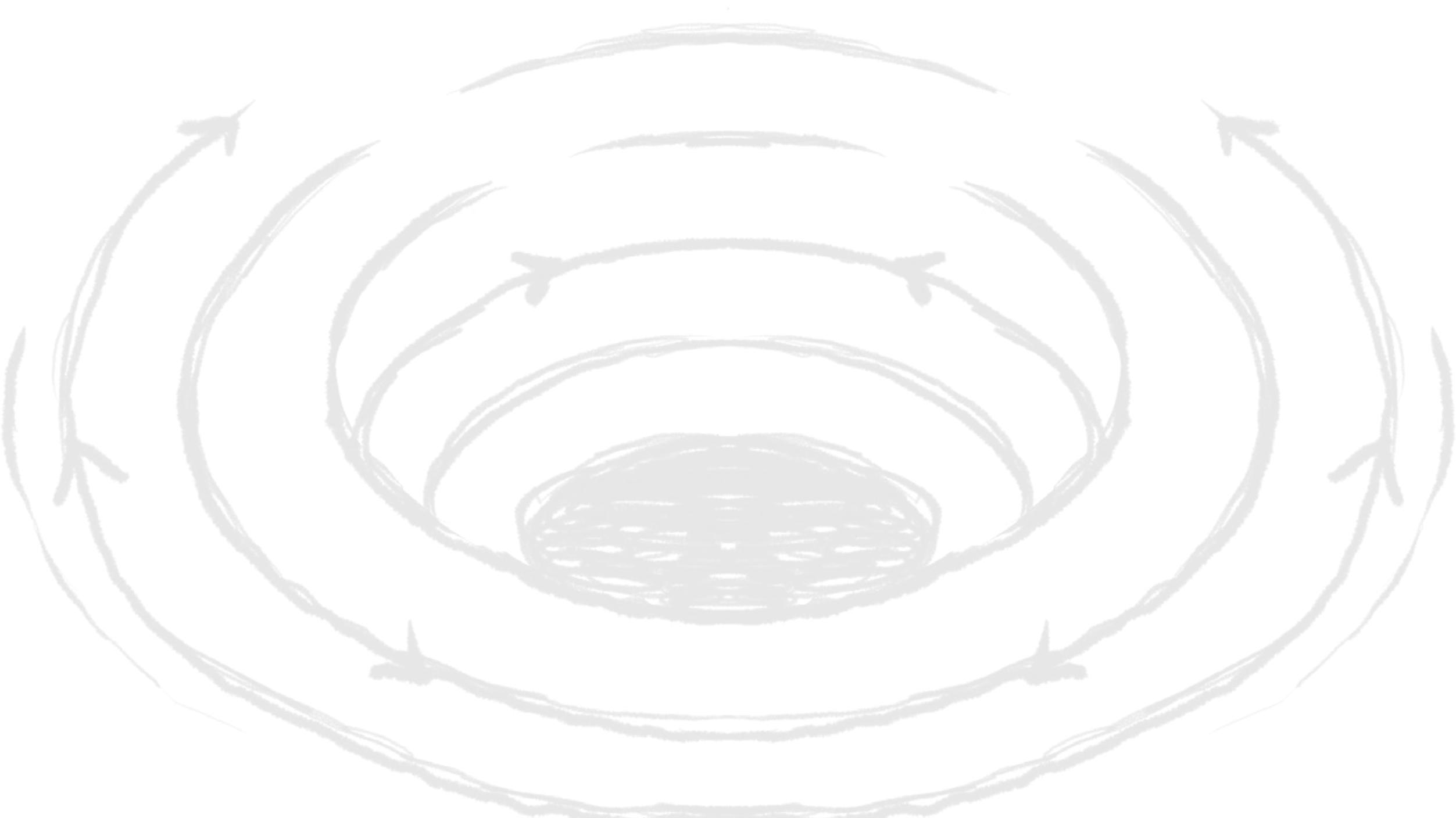


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Charwei Tsai

Charwei Tsai is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the relationship between humans and nature through cultural, spiritual, and ecological perspectives. Tsai has exhibited internationally and participated in major biennials and exhibitions. Since 2005, Tsai has also published the curatorial journal *Lovely Daze*, held in the library collections of Tate Modern, MoMA, and Centre Pompidou.



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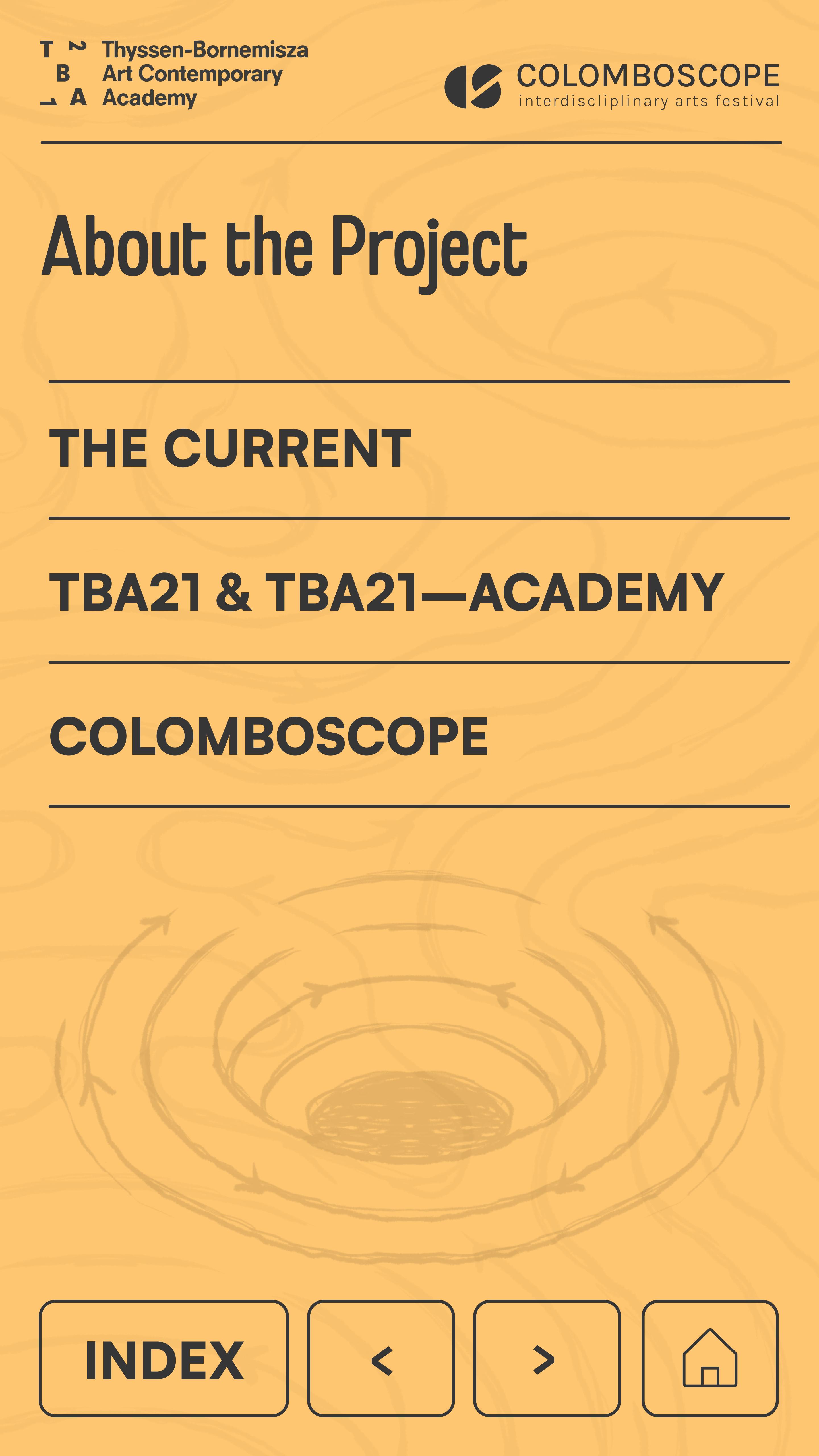


About the Project

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TBA21 & TBA21—ACADEMY

COLOMBOSCOPE



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The Current

Organized as a curatorial fellowship program, *The Current* is TBA21—Academy's pioneering initiative that cultivates transdisciplinary practices and the exchange of ideas around the Ocean and its understanding. It aims to form strong connections to local networks, map the contemporary issues concerning watery worlds, and weave them into an interdisciplinary conversation, embracing the spheres of science, conservation, policy, and education. Each cycle of *The Current* is led by one or more curatorial fellows selected by the Academy, who in turn nominate artists, scientists, environmentalists, and other cultural actors to join a collective research project unfolding over three years. Since its inception in 2015, cycles of the fellowship program have been led by curators Ute Meta Bauer, Barbara Casavecchia, César García, Yina Jiménez Suriel, and Chus Martínez, and the artist group SUPERFLEX.

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TBA21 & TBA21-Academy

TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary is a leading international art and advocacy foundation. Established in 2002 by philanthropist and art patron Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, the foundation stewards the TBA21 Collection and its outreach activities, which include exhibitions as well as educational and public programming. TBA21 is based in Madrid, working in association with the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, and has other important hubs in Venice, Italy, and Portland, Jamaica.

TBA21—Academy is TBA21's research and advocacy arm, fostering deeper relationships with the Earth's hydrosphere and its extended ecologies through the lens of art to activate new forms of care and collective action. Operating as an incubator for collaborative inquiry, research-based artistic production, and environmental advocacy, the Academy works through exhibitions, commissions, fieldwork, residencies, pedagogical programs, and assemblies, and catalyses new forms of knowledge emerging from exchanges between art, science, policy, and civic engagement.

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Colomboscope

Colomboscope is a contemporary arts festival and creative platform for interdisciplinary dialogue that has grown steadily within the cultural landscape of Colombo since 2013.

The festival has worked with a range of intergenerational artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, social theorists, and scientific researchers from Sri Lanka and internationally, delivering a focused programme with each festival edition held at key historic sites in Colombo. Several of the cultural practitioners participating in Colomboscope have gone on to show their work within regional and international exhibitions.

The festival organizers are committed to building a sustainable and context-responsive environment for cultural producers to continue generating path-breaking, collaborative and genre-defying approaches in the field.

colomboscope.lk

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Project Credits

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The Current V: Ancestral Ocean

Convening #1: Marine Intersections and Coastlines as Webs
25 - 27 January 2026 / Colombo, Sri Lanka

Jointly organized by Colomboscope and TBA21 as part of *The Current V: Ancestral Ocean*, an initiative by TBA21—Academy.

Curatorial Fellow (The Current V): **Natasha Ginwala**

TBA21—Academy Director: **Eduardo Castillo Vinuesa**

Project manager (The Current V): **Elisa Cuesta**

Project manager (Colomboscope): **Shahdia Jamaldeen**

Event logistics coordinator: **Tanya Rodrigo**

Communication: **Ricarda Hommann (Colomboscope)**
Cristina Álvarez, Ludovic Assémat, Barbora Horská, Victoria de Gracia, Katarina Rakušček, Leticia G. Vilamea (TBA21)

Graphic design: **Fold Media Collective**

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TBA21

Founder and chairwoman: **Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza**

Directors: **Rosa Ferré and Markus Reymann**

Head of exhibitions: **Marina Avia Estrada**

Head of communications & strategic partnerships: **Ludovic Assémat**

Director TBA21—Academy: **Eduardo Castillo Vinuesa**

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