Ceremonies of Oneness

Saturday 28 January
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INTRODUCTION

Inspired by the artist’s work and its relationship to spirituality, kinship and our connections with the natural world, Ceremonies of Oneness takes place on the last weekend of the exhibition Kamala Ibrahim Ishag: States of Oneness.

Ceremonies of Oneness builds on notions of collaboration and openness between disciplines, individuals and communities that are integral to Ishag’s practice, as well as art’s potential to inspire change across generations.

In this publication, we have invited our participants to share more of their practice in whatever ways resonate with them, whether that means opening up further mediums that connect with their work or capturing the words they spoke during the evening.

Art can give us a new sensitivity to life. That’s what we need: for people to feel each other. That’s also an art. That’s what we wish for.*

PROGRAMME
Saturday 28 January 2023

CEREMONIES OF ONENESS

Basma Osman
*Khartoum Arrivals*

Kostas Stasinopoulos and Sarah Hamed
*Introduction*

K. Eltinaé
*The Moral Judgement of Butterflies*  
(pre-recorded reading)

Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi
*Some of Them Live with You, Traces of an Unknown Woman, Prayer*

Omer Eltigani
*The Sudanese Kitchen*, in conversation with Sarah Hamed and Kostas Stasinopoulos

Riwa Saab with Ola Elhassan, Adam Dean and Andres Pascua
*something about the sea*

Ola Elhassan with Riwa Saab, Adam Dean and Andres Pascua
*connected at the tangent*

Basma Osman
*Khartoum Arrivals*
Some of Them Live with You

Some of them meet you
in the dark corners of the world
Some remain hidden

Some harbour revenge
or plot their escape
as they gallop down the valley of the wind

Some linger at the foot of a mountain
exposed to the elements

Some owned your heart
Some slaughtered it
Some stripped you naked

Some: me and you
بعضهن يعيش معك
بعضهنّ يلتقيّن بك
في زوايا الوجود الفخمة
بعضهنّ لا يضئن لي
بعضهنّ يحملن تأراب ويهزّلن
فُضَاطقَات بأودية الروح
بعضهنّ تحت وطء الجبل
لا يحتمين بشيء
بعضهنّ فلكل قلبك
بعضهنّ دينك
بعضهنّ كشفن عزيك
بعضهنّ: أنا وأنت
Traces of an Unknown Woman

1

The watchman cleaves to his lantern
The knight clings to the neck of his horse
My name was passed down from mother to daughter -
Like the songs sung by caravans to bolster their courage
My name is the gleam of a golden scarab

The tribe is both sustenance and a finely-wrought necklace
The journey is like a tattoo
Survival is balanced on the point of a spear

2

Each millennium a woman journeyed along Darb āl Ārbaïen
Richly attired as she travelled the road back and forth
She may not return
Each millennium she starts out once more

... ... ...

1 This group of Nubian pottery and beads is from a burial of a woman, recorded by archaeologist Guy Brunton as no.1989 in his publication of cemeteries on the east bank of the Nile between Qau and Āsyt in Middle Egypt. Here, desert roads connect the river valley, west to the oases, east towards the Red Sea, and on both sides onward south to Sudan; the most famous of these routes is Darb al Ārbain 'Road of Forty Days', leading from Darfur in western Sudan to the Kharga Oasis and across to Āsyt. No other Nubian burial is recorded in this or the nearest cemeteries, but the desert foothills in the area sheltered some small, perhaps seasonal settlements of desert Nubians. The other grave goods were leather sandals (Egyptian burials of this date avoid animal skins), a bone awl, two Spatha shells from the Red Sea, and a north Egyptian scarab. The body of the woman was not recorded in detail, so her precise age and ethnicity are unknown, but those who buried her were following desert Nubian customs.
What remains: a ladle that keeps its own counsel
A clay pot punctured by millennia
A necklace of shells from distant seas, of shells gleaned from a far-off riverbed - pottery stained with the patina of copper - the blown egg of an ostrich, etc, etc
What remains: revelation

3

The found of wisdom is pierced by the point of a dagger

... ... ...

An epoch of atrocities witnessed by the diggers of graves. Temples razed to the ground. Tales told by men whose fingers fire flames. Violated women branded by poverty, scorned with shame. Then came the discourse of separation and selection. Then came camp followers, wielding division, corrupt catalogues of sins straddled on camels, difference decreed by the naked eye. Numberless tongues were ripped out to be trammelled under the hooves of horses.

The end of a tribe is a tribe.

Two Nubian pottery vessels, and string of beads placed in the isolated burial of a woman near village cemeteries north of Qau, in Middle Egypt: highly polished black slit scoop, of a form known from central Sudan uc17888; black-topped bowl with hole punched through wall, perhaps to avoid recycling by the living uc17889; beads uc26013 (and see ‘The Golden Scarab Necklace’) -1800 1600 bc.
أثر امرأة غريبة

1
الحارس يتعلق بالفانوس
الفارس بعنق الجواد
توديت بالأم من كهف نسل بعيٍ
من حداء القوافل أو خوفها
من صمتها برق الجُعرانُ الذهبي

العشيرة زاد وقلادة
المسيرة وشم
وأدب نجاة على سِنُ رحم!

2
كل ألفية، ثمة أنثى تَتَمْبَرُ "مَرَّة الأربعين`
محتفِئة في العدوّ أو الرواه
وقد لا تعود
كل ألفية تَتَنْسَمُ أخرى

... ... ...
ما تبقى: مغرفة لم تبُح بعده باسرارها
إنهاء فخاري - تقبّهُ من أثر ألفية عبرت وتزيد قلادة منظومة من صدف النهر ومن بحار بعيدة - فخار ملون بأكسيد النحاس - قشر بيض النعمان .. إلخ.
ما تبقى يكشف ويكشف!

٣
رأس الحكمة
مزقه رأس الخنجر ..

.. في ذلك العصر جُرَن وقائيم كثيرة كما رأى دفافو مقابر. كُتَّمت معابد. حكى رجال بأصابع يتطاير منها الشجر المحترق. نسوة أيضاً شوهدت أسرارهن لولا ضيق ذات اليد. جاء خطاب العناصر جاء خطاؤون كراريشهم ركبت جملة على ناقة المفسدة. جرى تفحص السلالات بالعين المجردة - مُرّت أئمة أئمها. ألسنة لا تُحصى جعلت تحت حوافر الخيل. بطون نسبت لبطون.
Prayer

Between ink and a tear
The word is prostrated-with its head held high
It evokes its own divinity
It illuminates the page
To respond to Kamala's work is to respond to a universal sense of being connected, beyond what our words have language to name. To me, her paintings are always moving yet frozen in time, and in *Women in Crystal Cubes* I feel permission to affirm my individuality whilst understanding a bigger picture where I am part of something that crosses time and space, part of a world. This is a feeling I explore in an undocked multiverse, a poem about the strength of first borns inspired by nyquist plots, and the painting you see was also an exploration of this using colour and rigid linework. I fell in love with control theory and nyquist plots when studying Electrical Engineering at university, as they help understand the stability - or lack thereof - for certain mathematically non-linear systems, so we can learn to control them.
an undocked multi-verse

is this a feeling we seek
an unclenching of the spine
melting away of a waxy breath
unhitched

the promised warmth from a realisation
dancing orange lines within parallel syllables
inside stories tipped off by laughter at a lyric
we're clicking apart connected at the tangent
a Nyquist spiral or an unwriteable numbered sequence
with assumptions thrown into the mix

a whole lifetime of having to move within a stringed board
taught us tight control muscles accurate to the
nanosecond’s fraction
almost not a reaction

streaming discrete adjustments had us bloom as if
our bedrooms were wide enough for pirouettes
when your body spans space enough to make a statement
of withdrawal or a drawing closer
a shift of a shoulder blade
an infinitesimal wringing of the neck
an incomplete flutter of the eyelid
anything that displaces having
to witness
winter’s sunlight dimming has us shrink inwards
to shriek an implosion of feelings we just don’t have time for
we stretch dance breathe in one go
planning the world and its words at the neck
even if we never speak up again
firstborns with many born first that never gave birth
we reverse time in our heads right by the tangent
stepping closer in the spiral forward
around back just to go ahead
I find a terrace seat at a neighboring cafe, and begin drawing a line of pyramids in gold first, then purple, and black, before a friendly waiter takes my order. When he returns he asks if I’m drawing a fence or a border; I decide it’s best not to tell him I’m drawing home. The classical Arabic word for ‘home’: ls is the same as the Spanish verb for ‘give’: dar. So what exactly has home given me?
Have you ever cried about something so vast, you could not begin to describe it? A looming threat so enveloping, that all you feel is a kind of suffocation, a premonition that at any minute you could be swallowed, forgotten and made invisible by force.
Mullah and asida

*Mullah* and *asida* are quintessential Sudanese foods that are served together in a large dish for a group meal. *Mullah* is a rich viscous gravy, sometimes made with ground meat, often in a spice-infused tomato base and is an umbrella term and has many variations. The recipe I have chosen to include is *mullah tagalia* since it is one of the easiest to prepare. *Asida* is a type of dumpling, made by cooking sorghum or millet flour into a thick porridge that cools into a jelly-like dumpling. These foods exemplify the nature of Sudanese foods as they are often served to a large group who eat from the same serving plate. Sudanese food is often shared and highlights the strong sense of inclusivity and community in our rich food culture.
Mullah Tagalia—Tagalia Stew

Serves 4

100ml vegetable oil, fried
4 tablespoons ground onions
250g finely minced beef
1 tablespoon ground coriander
Salt and pepper, to taste
3 tablespoons tomato paste
1 L passata
100ml water, as needed
2 garlic cloves, pressed
2 tablespoons ground okra

Warm the oil in a large pot on medium heat, add the onions and cook for 1-2 minutes, until sizzling. Stir in the minced beef until browned evenly, 10 mins. Season with coriander, salt and pepper.

Mix in tomato paste, then the passata and bring to a boil. If the mixture is too thick, add 100ml water to loosen slightly.

Reduce the heat until simmering, cover and cook for 20 mins, or until the stew thickens and oils rise to the surface. Stir in the garlic, taste and add more seasoning as needed.

Gradually stir in 1 tablespoon ground okra using either a musfaka or wooden stirrer, to bind the gravy and give better hold, until the mullah is thick enough that it doesn’t slide off a spoon. If the gravy is too thin, add the remaining ground okra 1 teaspoon at a time. Serve with asada.
Sliced Bread Asida

I have decided to include this recipe rather than the original because it is far less complicated and time consuming. Look out for the original asida recipe in the upcoming cookbook.  

Serves 4

5 slices of store-bought bread  
300ml water  
1 tablespoon set yoghurt  
½ teaspoon salt, to taste

Remove the crust from the slices of bread, tear into small pieces and soak in 300ml water for 5 minutes.  
Hand blend into a smooth mixture then add 1 tablespoon yoghurt and salt. Either microwave for 3 minutes, or pour into a pot of boiling water (200ml) and stir until thick. Pour into a greased bowl to cool and set into asida. Once cool, turn over onto a serving plate and pour mullah around the edges.
Khartoum Arrivals

Khartoum Arrivals is a monthly radio show where I rediscover and connect with musical memories of my own and of those close to me, but also try to find sonic connections across time and space - from Cote d’Ivoire to China, Mali to Myanmar. Alongside Sudanese songs old and new, I might share poetry, field recordings or photographs from my travels to Sudan and beyond, which all come together as a sound journal of sorts. Here are a few previous episodes which you can access by clicking the accompanying links.
This episode is about long, slow journeys and the sense of peace that comes from stillness in movement, a peace unique to long bus rides and the songs of Mohammed Wardi. I took the picture at a break in the journey across the border from Senegal to Mali in 2019. At the end of the episode you can hear a recording I took on the bus from the border town to Bamako, a sense of arrival that moved me then and still moves me now.
This episode is a celebration of the connections between Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, after the passing of musical icons Alemayehu Eshete and Abu Obaida Hassan. I took the picture in Lalibela, Ethiopia in 2018 while eating breakfast (foul, or broad beans - a welcome taste of home on a long journey!)
This episode explores music from the margins of Sudan - Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains, Darfur, Kordofan, Nubia, Kassala and the Red Sea. I took the picture from inside a deliciously air-conditioned combine harvester during the harvest at my father's Nubian village in eastern Sudan in 2020. I often highlight my Nubian heritage on the show, but it’s also important to me to share music from across the country in its beautifully varied styles and tongues.
This episode focuses on new sounds from Sudan and the Sudanese diaspora, in a break from my usual nostalgia. I took the picture while eating foul after a long and gruelling day at the Foreigner’s Affairs Department in 2022. I could say some words here about the diasporan’s dilemma and other such angstiness but I think the man’s sideways glance says it all!
the sea, it reeks, and all the forests burn
so we follow the migrating birds
and with the flocks we start to disperse
to find the life our parents, too, deserve

following all of those shiny words
“hope” and “freedom” and “a future”
in an affair with hypotheticals
the promise of a somewhat better world
BIOGRAPHIES

Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi is one of the leading African poets writing in Arabic today. He has gained a wide audience in his native Sudan for his imaginative approach to poetry and for the delicacy and emotional frankness of his lyrics. His poetry has always been concerned with the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of Sudan and its complex history. Throughout his career, many of Al-Raddi’s collections have been published and he has performed his work on various international stages.

Ola Elhassan is a Sudanese poet and electrical engineer in London. Sometimes her poetry experiments with and about music, mathematics, physics, and dancing. She is a resident poet and member of the Common Sound collective, who host their improvised live music jams across festivals and homely venues alike.

Basma Osman is the co-host of radio show and record label Hear, Sense and Feel and the host of Khartoum Arrivals on NTS Radio where she enjoys tapping into memories tied to music and sounds from Sudan and beyond.
Omer Eltigani, chef and founder of The Sudanese Kitchen, has spent the last few years compiling traditional recipes for an upcoming cookbook and hosting pop-up events to fill the shortage of Sudanese food in the London food scene. The Sudanese Kitchen is a cookbook project that showcases recipes passed down through generations and shares them with a wider audience. The theme that persists throughout the project is the unique nature of Sudanese cooking as a fusion food at the confluence of converging foodways, which Eltigani shows as full of love, community, and tailored to personal preferences.

K. Eltinaé is a diaspora poet of Sudanese-Nubian and Mediterranean descent, whose work is centred around otherness, cultural/geographic displacement, generational trauma, and exile. His work has appeared in World Literature Today, The Ordinary Chaos of Being Human: Many Muslim Worlds (Penguin), The African American Review, and Michigan Quarterly Review, among others. His debut collection The Moral Judgement of Butterflies won The Beverly Prize for International Literature 2019 (BSPG Press). He is a World Literature lecturer and an Oldies and Classic Afrobeat Disc jockey residing in Granada, Spain.

Riwa Saab is a cross-disciplinary artist who works with space, sound and words. She started writing and performing her original music and poetry while growing up in Beirut, and quickly moved into theatre-making as an embodied way of story-telling.
Ceremonies of Oneness

28 January 2023

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