

Frida Robles and Nisrine Boukhari

Outskirts of Care

April 17–June 1, 2024

Artistic practices are a long-held tool to break the language barriers and communication obstacles with one another as well as within ourselves. Participatory art and co-creation have a long history of bringing together communities and helping them to openly speak about the issues, look for solutions, perform healing rituals or even address authorities and make tangible changes. In this spirit, the exhibition *Outskirts of Care*, organized in relation to Mental Health Awareness Month, departs from institutional settings and explores the supporting activities performed within the community instead.

The exhibition presents two works—a participatory project, *Fanonian Quilts*, by artist and curator Frida Robles and a composition of three artworks, *Whispers of living in a collapsing world*, *Magical World Globe*, and *Breathing Manuscripts for Peace*, by artist-theorist Nisrine Boukhari.

Centered around the teaching of the revolutionary thinker, militant and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, Robles's *Fanonian Quilts* brought together Vienna-based individuals affected by racism who shared time and space in weekly sessions in the past three months, stitching together an open-ended quilt while listening to fragments of Fanon's books with the aim to create a space of togetherness without the need of communicating in a performative way with the quilt itself serving as a canvas for sharing ideas and imagery within the group. In addition to the showcased result, the artist shares her own experience of the project in a poetic text on the following pages.

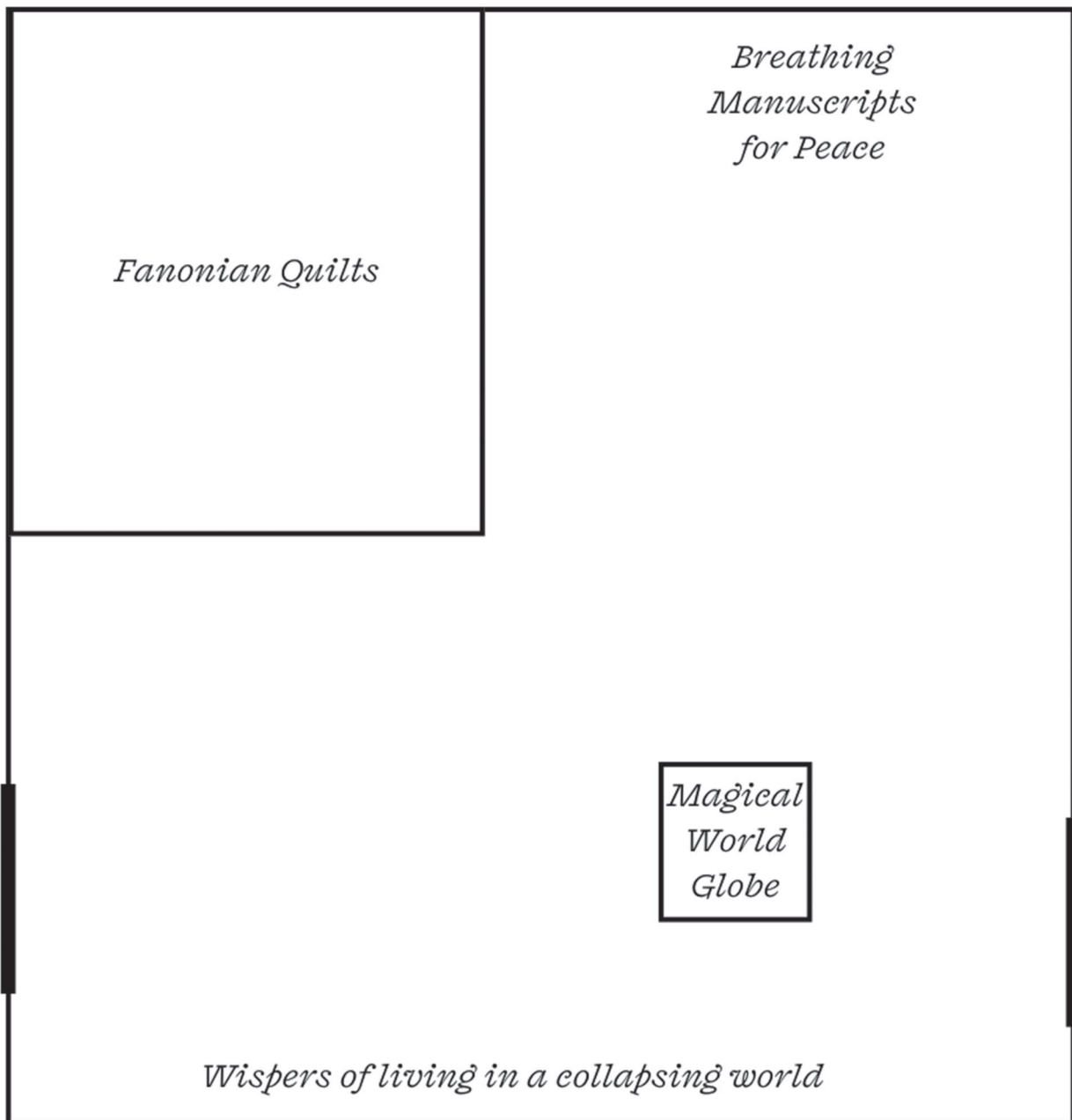
While *Fanonian Quilts* were co-created with a group of participants (Joy Apata, Jasmin Behnawa, ujjwal kanishka utkarsh, Óscar Cueto, Vrishali Purandare, Ritchie Nuryanto Traag and others) before the exhibition, Boukhari's work requires from the audience an active spectatorship. The *Whispers of living in a collapsing world* offers not only the artist's strategies for maintaining hope and sanity when faced with the crumbling world but also contains multitudes of interpretations and hidden riddles, inviting the audience to revisit and rethink the meaning of presented writings.

With the title referring to the distant, overlooked and inferior position of community strategies within the Western medical system, the exhibition aims to contribute to the discussion concerning the redefinition and understanding of mental health problems by acknowledging the social, historical and political influences on our well-being as well as the power of community care instead of reducing it to an individual's issues caused by chemical imbalance treated primarily in an institutional setting.

Nisrine Boukhari is an artist-theorist who lives between Vienna and Stockholm. In her art-based research projects, she uses language to invoke a distinctive mind's energy on discovering a new terrain of the imagination implicating the body and the mind in an immersive poetic and sensorial experience by using conceptual writing, fragmentation, and deconstructed narrative. She is a PhD candidate at the Artistic Research Department at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Frida Robles is an artist and curator. Her artistic practice has varied from public art installations to performances to textual work. Her most recent performance, "Sessions with Frida. A performance on the possibilities of healing," was constructed around a psychoanalysis session on stage. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and currently teaches at the Theater, Film and Media Studies at the Vienna University.

The exhibition is supported by 15. Bezirk, MA7 and BMKOES. The project "Fanonian Quilts" is organized in collaboration with Fabrikraum and supported by Amaena, Erika Farina and Klasse Für Alle.



Public program

May 4, 1-4 PM

Yourself, Other/s, and Other Other/s - Workshop by Engy Mohsen

May 8, 6 PM

Reading Circle with Frida Robles

May 31

When the bullets took another course. The pedagogy of radical tenderness in contexts of war - lecture by Lia García (La Novia Sirena)

June 1

Small pedagogical and artistic toolbox to heal the heart - pedagogical workshop by Lia García (La Novia Sirena)

Frida Robles

Fanonian Quilts

Installation, quilt, Vienna, 2024

To mention Fanon in the title, to think about Fanon, to allow for our imagination of Fanon to be there, in between the stitches, somewhere. To hear the text written by Fanon when he was 27 years old. To be confronted by his mirroring, to question his position. To admire his auto-analysis, to write about his truth with such tenacity, with such radical honesty. It is not easy to accept the hatred that one has, even against oneself. To scrutinize the complexity of racial hatred for himself, in spite of himself, through himself. To allow for his skin to inform him about the world. To be traversed by history, by ideas, by colonial domination.

We sat here, in this city: the cold Vienna, the rainy Vienna. During the winter months, we would meet, generally on Saturdays, sometimes during the week. Every session was different, or maybe it is my way of observing it from afar, at a distance, already as a narrated event. That is what happens with memory; you structure your remembrance, and I would say to myself: December 20th, two people joined, we drank tea, we listened to the first chapter of "Black Skins, White Masks". Or perhaps, continue to lie and say random dates, like January 11th or February 24th. The dates get blurred. I could search for them in the calendar, but the dates are not the matter. The cloth is not the matter but this heaviness that I feel in my stomach. I repeat, not every session was the same. I was the one to attend them all. I don't know if I was fully there all the time. Some were more challenging than others; some were more crowded than others; in some, I made mistakes, crossed boundaries (perhaps), thought out loud what maybe it is better to keep quiet, is it? Fanon challenges me to speak my truth, the hurtful one, the one you don't want to admit even to yourself. That is the power of Fanon's writings, the fire of this thought.

And the extreme kindness of the people that came, open-heartedly, to be together, to be raw, to laugh, to eat, to think, to stitch. There was a particular rawness in some of the sessions; the mediator was the words spoken through an electronic speaker, words that confront us, that make us realize how much we carry, how much shit we, our families, others, have had to bear just for the color of our skin. The blatant stupidity of the world. The black phobogenesis. "The oppressed always believe the worst about themselves." The internal structures, the dilemmas, the sadness, the loneliness, the exclusion.

We were sitting, thinking about our childhoods, while being in a city that, for most of us, feels foreign—staring at the window at Fabrikraum while holding fabric. Someone puts the coffee on the stove, Ujjwal brings the Borek, and Joy works on a beautiful tree that resembles a hand or a hand that resembles a tree; they write about the poetry of the world. The surrounding magic, they collect the spiritual of Fanon. With his beautiful smile, Ritchie searches for the notion of belonging and the outsider's dilemma in Fanon's words. Ujjwal insists on the European structure, the sociopolitics of the never-gone colonial world. Whiteness is always a ghost of these sessions. Always a reminder—our relationship to whiteness, our own whiteness. And we questioned ourselves, many times in silence, some out loud. The sporadic coming and goings of Óscar, of Bitá, of Jasmine. Others whose names I cannot mention but who opened many thoughts, their intricate belongings in this world of exclusion.

What stays? Is there something that can still be felt in the cloth? Can you feel my excitement, my sadness, my anxiety? This is our humble offering. This was the space to meet, to find closeness, to find distance. Perhaps it was nothing. Anyway, we give thanks.

"I am black; I am in total fusion with the world, in sympathetic affinity with the earth, losing my identity in the heart of the cosmos and feeling consummated." Frantz Fanon, 1952

Nisrine Boukhari

Whispers of living in a collapsing world

Book installation, 99 books, Vienna, 2024

While scrying with my crystal ball, I observed the shadows and lights it reflected and the words that were generated in my mind; I wrote these observations as aphorisms, predictions, and poetry to create these 99 small books that reflect the time we are living in—the time on the brink of collapse.

Each page contains a fragment of insight into what I saw while reading the now, the future or the past.

As you read the text, you will encounter many riddles and anagrams waiting to be deciphered. If you find any, keep them to yourself as messages whispered through the resonance of the universe.

So, unravel their secrets and reconnect with the new world that is yet to come. In this interchange of art and divination, you may find solace or perhaps a glimpse of hope in a collapsing world.

Magical World Globe

Crystal Ball and photo, Vienna, 2024

The world is crystal clear to look at; there are no maps, no countries, no borders—everything has vanished. All that you see is an upside-down, reflected landscape of the surroundings. Yet, if you linger long enough, you might begin to see shadows, inner reflections or even feel dizzy.

Due to the concentration of the sun's rays, the sphere may act like burning glass, causing burns the same way our world is actually burning outside; therefore, be careful and don't touch it against the sun.

Breathing Manuscripts for Peace, Roll n.01 Peace of mind.

Ink on Chinese rice paper, 45cmx25m, 19 hours breathing, Vienna, 2024

"I would not trust someone whose handwriting slopes in different directions since such a person can vary easily and change his mind according to mood. Note, however, in the case of artists, mood swings and emotional surges are a natural expression of their creative nature." Dr. Dariusz Tarczynski, Psychographology, P.28

In the Breathing Manuscripts project, every line or word is an exhale, a manifestation of the immaterial and invisible body that keeps me alive—hours of contemplative sessions. I transfer the time and space of my breathing self—my life—to expand in the distance; straight lines, shaking lines, disturbing lines, each writing part of life, whether drawn as lines or written as words repetitively.

Breathing Manuscripts is a project I began in 2020, where I draw lines or write words on rolls or in books for extended periods while focusing on my breath. It is related to my Psyche Drawings and forms part of my research into respiratory art. Each piece makes the breath visible and extends the body in space without limits. It also reflects the mental state of the

creator, serving as a form of meditation through drawing or writing, and it reveals precisely how long the person can maintain a single mental state before experiencing mood swings.

Breathing Manuscripts make my life and the time I have spent as a piece of art, embraced by its fragility. "Peace of Mind" is a 25-meter mantra of breathing for 19 hours to achieve this state before it runs again.