

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

Press kit of the exhibition

*"healing.  
Life in Balance"*

2 November 2022 to 3 September 2023

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Accompanying Publication  
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WELTKULTUREN NEWS

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM



## PRESS RELEASE

**New exhibition "*healing. Life in Balance*" opened  
2 November 2022 to 3 September 2023**

How to live? In one's own body with its personal and collective history? With the environment, the spiritual world, in global togetherness? How can crises be overcome? And can balance be found? How to stay or become healthy? And how to be content? How can *healing* succeed?

For many, the fragility of living conditions was apparent long before the COVID-19 pandemic. This fragility did and does affect almost all areas of life – health, work, politics, the economy, social cohesion. The global crisis and the associated search for balance is common to people around the world. Many established views are now being questioned. Indigenous minorities, activists, environmental organisations, and the younger generation everywhere find that their ideas, expectations and critiques of contemporary living are increasingly converging. The exhibition "*healing. Life in Balance*" presents multi-perspective narratives as well as works (of art) with transformative power. In these poetic, philosophical, and multimedia artistic works, international partners from the arts, sciences and medicine present their own, personal stories, as well as their perspectives and strategies for resolving crises, establishing new equilibriums, and finding answers for a future of global coexistence.

### **The artists**

Marina Abramović, La Vaughn Belle, Elena Bernabè, Roberta Carvalho, Alejandro Durán, Marco Del Fiol, Ayrson Heráclito, Feliciano Lana, Naziha Mestaoui, Michael O'Neill, Roldán Pinedo

### **Further participants**

Pablo César Amaringo, Giminez Menezes Basilio, Karin Bervoets, Coral Gardeners, Magnus Døvigen, Kerstin Kleemann, Marion Marquardt, Elena Mori, Thiago Lopes da Costa Oliveira, Harry Pinedo, Andrea Scholz, Ingo Schulz, Felix Schwarz, Valdetto Ribeiro da Silva, Zu Campos sowie weitere, namentlich nicht bekannte Künstler\*innen aus Indigenen Gemeinschaften

**Curatored by** Dr. Mona B. Suhrbier (Curator, Americas and Deputy Director) and Alice Pawlik (Curator, Visual Anthropology)

hessische  
kultur  
stiftung

STADT  FRANKFURT AM MAIN

**MU**  
MUSEUMS  
UFER

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29, 60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Admission fees:  
€7 / reduced €3.50, Free admission for children and young adults up to 18 years of age.  
Opening hours:  
Wed: 11am-8pm, Thur-Sun: 11am-6pm

#### **PRESS CONTACT**

Christine Sturm  
[christine.sturm@stadt-frankfurt.de](mailto:christine.sturm@stadt-frankfurt.de)  
T + 49 (0) 069 212 71276

Julia Rajkovic-Kamara  
[julia.rajkovic-kamara@stadt-frankfurt.de](mailto:julia.rajkovic-kamara@stadt-frankfurt.de)  
T + 49 (0) 069 212 45115

Weltkulturen Museum  
Schaumainkai 29-37  
60594 Frankfurt am Main  
[www.weltkulturenmuseum.de](http://www.weltkulturenmuseum.de)  
Folgen Sie uns unter @weltkulturen.museum

WELTKULTUREN  
MUSEUM

# healing.

Exhibition  
November 02, 2022  
— September 03, 2023

Life  
in —  
Balance

curated by  
Mona Suhrbier and Alice Pawlik

## Weltkulturen Museum

The Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt am Main is the only ethnological museum in Hesse. Its collection comprises approx. 70,000 objects from Africa, North and South America, Oceania, Southeast Asia and Europe as well as contemporary non-European art. As a museum of the city of Frankfurt, it connects the local and global levels and seeks to contribute to processes of decolonisation and anti-racism. It is engaged in an active process of international exchange with partners from Indigenous cultures and non-European societies and operates at the intersection of ethnology and art. As a forum for transcultural exchange the museum promotes the diverse spectrum of worldviews, historiographies, religions and aesthetics, as well as an acceptance and appreciation of the same. In post-colonial global togetherness, the museum promotes dialogue with Indigenous communities and interdisciplinary collaboration with artists and scholars worldwide.

### INTRODUCTION

For many, the fragility of living conditions was apparent long before the COVID-19 pandemic began. This fragility did and does affect almost all areas of life – health, work, politics, the economy, and social cohesion. The global crisis and the associated search for balance is common to people around the world. Many established views and the global power of the ‘grand narrative’ of the so-called western world are now being questioned. Indigenous societies, activists, environmental organisations, and the younger generation everywhere find that their ideas, expectations and critiques of contemporary living are increasingly converging based on experiences of imbalance, violations, or one-sided claims to dominance and power.

The exhibition **healing. Life in Balance** disrupts the one powerful narrative of globalisation, replacing it with multi-perspectival narratives and (art) works with transformative power. These divert attention to the significance of people, places, spaces and local cultures, where individual artistic works can transform the past, direct new questions at the present and supply answers for the future.

The international and local exhibition project is a polyphonic exploration of healing, transformation and balance told through narratives, perspectives and experiences.

How to live? In one's own body with its personal and collective history? With the environment, the spiritual world, in global togetherness? How can crises be overcome? And can balance be found? How to stay or become healthy? And how to be content? How can **healing** succeed?

In poetic, philosophical, and multimedia artistic works, international partners from the arts, sciences and medicine present their own, personal stories, as well as their perspectives and strategies for resolving crises, establishing new equilibriums, and finding answers for a future of global coexistence.

## ELENA BERNABÈ

As an introduction, the exhibition presents the poem *Grandmother, How Can I Live this Quarantine?*

Author **Elena Bernabè** wrote the poem in April 2020, as Italy found itself in lockdown to counter the spread of COVID-19. A still quite unknown virus was rapidly spreading across the globe, and the fragility of life became palpable. A fragility revealed everywhere in crises and borderline experiences, in conflicts, in social injustice and oppression, in the exploitation of resources, in the destruction of nature. Bernabè suggests seeing the crisis as an opportunity to rethink structures, to find new equilibriums, and to assume joint responsibility.

The narrative motif of outer and inner withdrawal refers to ritualised ways throughout the world of dealing with crises and life crises, including phases of seclusion. Emotional, sensitive, knowing and instructive, this poem opens the way for the following contributions and multilayered perspectives on how to overcome crises and shape new beginnings at all times and in all places.

## FELICIANO LANA

Creating an identity as the prerequisite for balance depends on stories and narratives. Western epistemologies and world-views, narratives, and thought structures continue to dominate the discourses. As fantastic stories with powerful symbolic significance and as providers of meaning, myths give order to the world. They convey identity and provide comprehensive explanations and spiritual orientation. They structure the past, and they influence the present and future. They often show a deep connection to mythical ancestors and to nature. Through myths, communities share their imagination. Yet common to these different narratives are the questions of where from, where to, and why. Although there are numerous different answers, people orient themselves and locate their place in the world through these narratives about the structure of reality.

In 1977, Indigenous artist, philosopher and storyteller **Feliciano Pimentel Lana** created a mythical narrative about the origin of the Desâna in the upper Rio Negro region of the Brazilian Amazon. That narrative in images and words, which he named *O Começo antes do Começo* (The Beginning Before the Beginning), was Lana's first work as an artist. Lana had his 99 original drawings made into a slide show with accompanying text. It is part of the Frankfurt museum collection. Lana's narrative emerged in a neocolonial context, with the missionisation and marginalisation of Indigenous people in the Brazilian nation-state. It is written in the style of a 'classical' myth. Yet it simultaneously, and indirectly, criticises hegemonic memories



### Feliciano Lana

The Grandmother in her imaginary world with stool, cigar holder and cigar and a bowl with *ipadu* (coca), surrounded by the houses of the Thunder Brothers

From the series *O começo antes do começo* (The Beginning Before the Beginning), 1977

São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Brazil

Collected by Mark Münzel and Berta Ribeiro, 1988

Collection Weltkulturen Museum

and their interpretations of the past – interpretations that continue to shape the present. Through his art, Lana participates in postcolonial discourse, procuring interpretive sovereignty over the neocolonial history of the Indigenous communities on the upper Rio Negro, and rewriting history from an Indigenous perspective. In this sense, his work is a 'counter-history'.

Lana's works from the collection of the Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt have been reinterpreted as a partially animated film. This is in line with one of Lana's aims – to always present his work in a contemporary format. The material culture of the Desâna plays an exceptional, meaning-giving role in the sense of an 'order of things'. As such, objects in the museum collection from Indigenous production from the border area of Brazil and Columbia are also presented. The installation of the objects in the exhibition is based on Lana's drawings, so that he indirectly acts as curator. The interplay of analogue and digital materials offers a new perspective on Lana's creation narratives on the one hand, and the conquest and partial destruction of his world on the other.

## ROBERTA CARVALHO

Indigenous communities are often at the centre of debate about the protection and conservation of the Amazon. There is a reason for that: For the most part, forest cover in Indigenous territories is well preserved, whereas neighbouring, privately-owned lands have been extensively cleared and used as long-term pastures for cattle and for monocultures.

In the project *Symbiosis*, multimedia artist **Roberta Carvalho** takes up the relationship between people and trees of the rainforest. Her video and photo projections show large-scale portraits of Indigenous people on treetops and green spaces. Her interventions take place in Amazonian riverside communities, such as the islands of Combú and Murutucu, in the state of Pará.

Coming from biology, the term symbiosis refers to interdependent, mutually beneficial and supportive relationships between living organisms of different species. Carvalho's project reflects symbiotic connections on different levels. In bringing the technological means of photography and video mapping together with the natural environment of trees as living organisms, she creates a new entity – a sculpture of light. Through this relationship between portrait and tree, a tree that observes emerges. But the idea of the project goes far beyond simply using trees as projection surfaces. The human faces projected onto the trees blend into and ultimately subordinate themselves to their structure. Branches, twigs and leaves become noses, mouths and eye sockets, and provide light and shadow, geometry and colours. With her tree-faces, Carvalho establishes a formal relationship between the bodies depicted and nature as a body. It is the human being who adapts to natural space, forming a single organism with it in a caring symbiotic and symbolic relationship.



**Roberta Carvalho**

Nr. 1, 2011

From the series *Symbiosis – Arte e Natureza na Amazônia* (Art and Nature in Amazonia)

Ilha do Combú, Belém, Pará, Brazil

Projection onto vegetation

Courtesy of the artist



**Roberta Carvalho**

Submersa (Submerged), 2019

From the series *Symbiosis – Arte e Natureza na Amazônia* (Art and Nature in Amazonia)

Ilha do Combú, Belém, Pará, Brazil

Projection onto vegetation

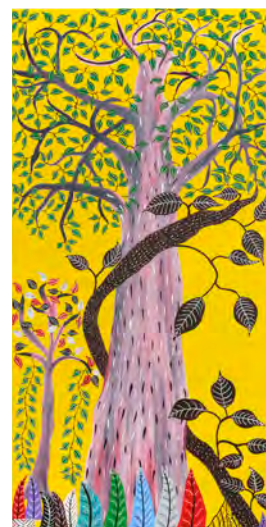
Courtesy of the artist



Carvalho's projection of the symbiotic connection between Indigenous people and nature invites us to profoundly reflect on the relationship between humans and nature. In public opinion, Indigenous people are seen as guardians of the Amazon forests. And, on the one hand, Carvalho's work is an appreciation of Indigenous people's close and caring relationship with the rainforest. But on the other, the artist exposes the interest of the Western world in putting the protection of Indigenous people at the service of the preservation of the forests. The protection of Indigenous territories from encroachment by gold prospectors, cattle ranchers and the timber industry should not be linked to making Indigenous people solely responsible for saving the forests. Rather, ensuring the survival of the rainforests is a global obligation, it is the responsibility of all of us.

## ROLDÁN PINEDO

Shipibo artist **Roldán Pinedo**, who lives in Lima, depicts the idea of the interconnectedness of humans and nature in his visionary, large-format paintings. The central focus of his paintings is the idea of the power and healing properties of the 'sacred' trees of the rainforest. Pinedo's spiritual vision is based on Indigenous knowledge of an animate nature that is closely connected to human beings. Rooted in the ground and towering into the sky, trees connect the spheres of the underworld, the human world, and the heavenly world. His works open up evocative access to Indigenous ideas about trees as powerful auxiliary spirits of the shamans and as suppliers of raw materials and remedies. Pinedo's work ***Solo Árboles*** (Only Trees) acts as a powerful reminder to protect and preserve the rainforest ecosystem.



### Roldán Pinedo – Shoyan Shéca

Cedro, Huangana Caspi, Copaiba, Cashimbo (from left)

From the series *Solo Árboles* (Only Trees), 2020

Shipibo, Ucayali and Lima, Peru

Collected by Mona Suhrbier, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

Commissioned work for the Weltkulturen Museum collection

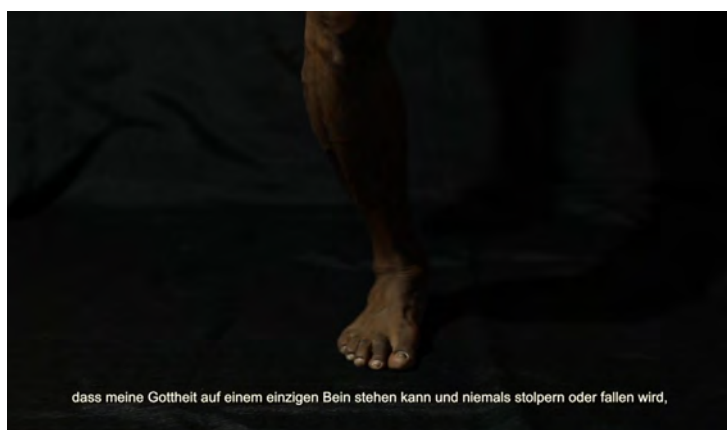
Photo: Wolfgang Günzel



## AYRSON HERÁCLITO

The interconnectedness – even unity – of people and nature is the foundation of the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. The *Orixás* (gods) of Candomblé have homes in nature. They rule over the sea, the rivers and waterfalls, and the wind, lightning and thunder. The forest is ruled by the *Orixá* of the forest *Oxóssi*, and by the *Orixá* of medicinal plants, *Ossaim* (also called *Agué*).

Artist **Ayrson Heráclito's** video work *A Floresta em Transe* (The Forest in Trance) is developed on this complex of ideas. Through calm images and poetic texts, he transforms the forest into a place of divine energy and creates metaphors for the interrelationship between people and nature postulated in Candomblé. As upside-down people, trees have an abstracted human equivalent. In trance, which is a state of 'surrender', believers connect with the gods of nature in a sense of union with the divine. This temporary 'becoming one' brings about lasting inner satisfaction and security, and it enables healing of body, soul and spirit. Heráclito's video is a homage to the forest ecosystem and its inherent sacred power, *Axé*. *Axé* mediates between trees and people and enables healing moments in trance; moments that take place through transformation and sacrality.



**Ayrson Heráclito**

*A Floresta em Transe* (The Forest in Trance), 2018

Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

Film still

Courtesy of the artist

## ALEJANDRO DURÁN

Human health depends on well-functioning ecosystems and on human activities to maintain ecosystems in good condition. Damage to air, water and soil, combined with a significant loss of biodiversity, have a substantial impact on human health. So, now more than ever, it is crucial to protect endangered ecosystems.

The work by the artist **Alejandro Durán**, which brings to mind *Spurensicherung*<sup>1</sup> – the securing of evidence in a kind of conceptual art – addresses the ecological emergency of the oceans due to plastic waste pollution.

***Washed Up: Transforming a Trashed Landscape*** is an environmental installation that documents, in both an aesthetic and disturbing form, how international rubbish constantly washes up on Mexico's Caribbean coast. Along the coast of Sian Ka'an, one of Mexico's largest nature reserves and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Durán identified plastic waste from 58 nations and from all continents. His installation of a surreal and fantastical landscape reflects the current ecological plight of the world's oceans. It becomes apparent that even undeveloped or unused landscapes are massively affected by the far-reaching impacts of the economies of throwaway societies. As political art, Durán's work confronts consumerism, a new, powerful form of global colonisation, and raises awareness to radically change our relationship to consumption and waste.

<sup>1</sup> *Spurensicherung* is the German term for securing evidence, typically in criminal forensic investigations. Since the 1970s, it has also been a term for a specific position in conceptual art. *Spurensicherung* borrows working methods used in archaeological excavations and secures objects found in selected geographical locations – stones, photographs, clothing, toys, plastic waste – as material evidence.



**Alejandro Durán**

*Washed Up: Transforming a Trashed Landscape*, 2013

Sian Ka'an, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Print on canvas

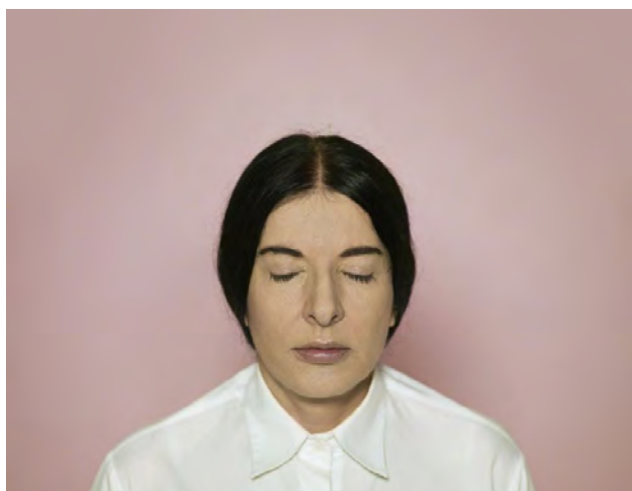
Courtesy of the artists



## MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ AND MARCO DEL FIOI

Transformation – as movement, development, change or as transition from one state to another –, motivates the artistic work of **Marina Abramović**. In her art, which is for the most part performative, her body is the medium. Radical, and occasionally self-destructive, Abramović subjects herself to pain, exercises self-discipline and control, and explores limits. In this performative exploration of the body, she overcomes outer and inner limitations, and finds paths to spiritual enrichment. During her performances, ordinary time is interrupted and the transformative power of ‘the space in-between’ – a space open to extra-ordinary or supernormal influences – is activated. Devotion to the state of ‘being in-between’, which is significant in rituals and on shamanic journeys, enables transitions between states of being and sets transformation processes in motion.

In search of personal healing and spiritual inspiration artist Marina Abramović travels through Brazil and participate in healing sessions and spiritual rituals. In doing so, she explores the boundaries between the physical, the spiritual, and art. Produced in 2016 the film *The Space in Between. Marina Abramović and Brazil* directed by **Marco Del Fiol** documents her experiences. In 2017, these experiences gave rise to the artwork *Standing Structures for Human Use* from the series *Transitory Objects for Human Use*, a series of wooden steles embedded with quartz crystals that Abramović collected in Brazilian mines. Standing in front of the installation, one can feel the energy emanating from the crystals.



### Marco Del Fiol

*The Space in Between – Marina Abramović and Brazil*  
(Espaço Além – Marina Abramović e o Brasil), 2016  
Brazil

Film still

Produced by Casa Redonda, Mão Direita  
Courtesy of Elo Company  
(Above left)

### Marina Abramović

*Standing Structure for Human Use*, 2015  
From the series *Transitory Objects for Human Use*  
Wood, clear quartz  
Photo: Hick Duarte  
Courtesy of the Marina Abramović Archives  
(and SESC, São Paulo)

## SHAMANISM

In the Amazon region, Indigenous shamans are mediators between the worlds. On spiritual journeys through non-human spheres, they communicate with powerful natural spirits and gods who they ask for assistance as and when required. To strengthen their visions, increase their strength, and to protect themselves from negative influences, shamans carry sacred objects with them, compose poems, sing, shake rattles, smoke tobacco, and occasionally consume consciousness-expanding herbal medicines. Each shamanic journey serves a specific purpose, such as remedying problems or healing illnesses.

An installation in the exhibition with objects by the Kamayurá from Brazil and by Shipibo from Peru opens up associative access to diverse ideas within shamanism. The wooden stools placed in a circle symbolise both the religious and political institution of the shamans' smoking circle. Above the stools are rattles – powerful instruments used by shamans to summon helping spirits. Spirits with whom shamans communicate for healings, are seen in visions and materialised in masks made by Kamayurá. Large cassava beer pots with complex patterns made by Shipibo-women are organised in a row, as if in a ritual. The patterning on the pots symbolises the threefold division of the world into the underworld, the human world and the heavenly world. At the same time, the patterns themselves, applied by the women, symbolise shamanic chants. In their visions, Shipibo shamans see such patterns on human bodies. If the patterns are intact, the person is healthy; if they are disconnected, an illness can be localised. The variety and diversity of the material equipment required in shamanism not only underlines its complexity, but also illustrates visually and materially how shamanism is integrated in different ways into the respective symbolic contexts of Indigenous communities. In paintings that capture a specific moment of union, Indigenous artists **Harry Pinedo** and **Pablo Cesar Amaringo** thematise and visualise spiritual aspects and mythical backgrounds of shamanic healing.

In the documentary *Inti Wasi* (House of the Sun), ethnologist and filmmaker **Magnus Døvingen** shows an Indigenous family in the Andes in Ecuador in the process of reinterpreting precolonial spiritual and religious content. For the community, the active resumption of Indigenous healing practices means the restoration of a lost equilibrium.



## NAZIHA MESTAOUI

Multimedia artist **Naziha Mestaoui** transforms invisible sound into visible forms. The light-and-sound installation ***Sounds of Light*** was created in 2011 in collaboration with shamans from the Indigenous Huni Kuin community. The installation uses modern technology to visualize shamanic chants as acoustic signals which create vibrations in the form of waves and patterns in a bowl filled with water. Auditory sensory experiences become visual. Her installation refers to the healing efficacy of shamanic chants in the human body, which is largely made of fluids.

Huni Kuin and Shipibo artists transform shamanic chants into pictorial representations and patterned art, thereby adding another dimension to shamanic knowledge. What is heard becomes seen.



**Naziha Mestaoui**  
*Sounds of Light*, 2011  
 In collaboration with the Indigenous community Huni Kuin  
 Acre, Amazonia, Brazil  
 Film stills  
 Courtesy of the Mestaoui family

## MICHAEL O'NEILL

Stressful experiences, pain, and the quest for harmony, balance and healing all lead to the desire to enrich urban present-day life with knowledge and practices from other cultures. Asian philosophies, yoga and shamanism, to take just a few examples, are used to indulge western yearnings for healing and inner fulfilment.

Yoga, one of the six classical schools in Indian philosophy, has long been established in western daily life. Although it has been criticised as 'lifestyle optimisation', as a form of physical therapy it is essentially about achieving a state of harmony and balance. Today, the effects of meditation and yoga are being medically researched and integrated into treatment procedures.

After a medical procedure, artist and photographer **Michael O'Neill** suffered from paralysis. But with the help of meditation and yoga, he soon recovered completely. Since then, the photographer has been concerned with the history, the foundations, and the essence of yoga. Over a number of years, O'Neill completing a photographic study of the yoga practice of gurus and masters. To complement his photographic series ***On Yoga. The Architecture of Peace***, a film of the same name was made 2017 in collaboration with Brazilian director Heitor Dhalia.



**Michael O'Neill**  
 Meditation H.H.  
 the 14th Dalai Lama, 1996  
 From the series *On Yoga.*  
*The Architecture of Peace*  
 Bloomington, Indiana, USA  
 Archival Pigment Print  
 Courtesy of the artist

## PRACTITIONERS FROM FRANKFURT

Unlike the classical concepts of western medicine, many Indigenous and non-European medical ideas postulate that the foundation of well-being and health are in bodily and environmental knowledge, as well as spiritual forces. As such, medical systems are based on defined images of the body and human beings, and are part of cultural and social systems.

For a long time, western medicine was oriented towards classical scientific disease theory. Since the Age of Enlightenment at least, the world of things was distinguished from the world of the mind. Humans were thereby separated from nature, and the human body was compared with a functioning machine. Scientific advances at the turn of the century increasingly led to generalised classifications. So the focus was less on the diseased individual than on the diseased organ.

Most non-European traditions deviate from the conception of humans in western medicine. Rather, they focus on the healing of body, soul and spirit, and on knowledge of the environment and the effect of energetic and spiritual influences. Unlike highly specialised western organ medicine, other medical and healing systems follow the idea of a universal force, an underlying life energy in human well-being which has to be kept in balance. In Chinese it is called *qi*, in Japanese *ki*, in Hinduism *prana*, and in Polynesia *mana*.

Such concepts do not fit with the world view of modern physics and orthodox medicine. At the same time, however, approaches and healing methods from other cultures are being integrated into 'holistic' medical treatments. These treatments are turned to, in particular, when conventional medical approaches fail to have the desired result. Experiences of stress, pain and discomfort, and the search for connection, balance and healing lead to the desire to enrich the urban present with knowledge and practices from other cultures. Asian philosophies, yoga, shamanism and much more become projection surfaces for western longings for healing and inner fulfilment.

Medical practitioners from Frankfurt am Main go beyond classical human medicine to integrate treatments from Ayurvedic or Chinese medicine, acupuncture, and yoga into their respective practice. In interviews, they provide insights into the various approaches to healing.





## LA VAUGHN BELLE

In post-colonial cooperation, it is essential to identify the wounds inflicted during the colonial era, to work through them critically and collectively, and to shape future global history respectfully together. Museums can accompany these processes.

The artist **La Vaughn Belle** addresses the question of how (neo)colonial narratives shape identities, memories, and realities in the diaspora. As an artistic interpretation of the branding of slaves, the physical and emotional scars, La Vaughn Belle cut and burned fine patterns into white rolls of paper. Her artistic work ***Cuts and Burns*** pays tribute to colonial resistance, pleads for the preservation of local knowledge, and gives a symbolic voice to the survivors and descendants of slavery.

Museums like Weltkulturen Museum, which have collections from colonial contexts, can accompany these processes and take an active role in coming to terms with the colonial era. To do so, they need to accept and critically examine their own history, and let those who were not heard for a long time speak. Through the process of mutual rapprochement, new ways of living together can emerge. In the best case scenario, repatriations can contribute to the healing of historically inflicted wounds. The ethically and morally motivated repatriation of a historic leather shirt will be seen in the exhibition as an example. The question of whether repatriations also contribute to the healing of museums remains unanswered.



**La Vaughn Belle**  
*Cuts and Burns*, 2016–2022  
 St. Croix, United States Virgin  
 Islands, USA  
 Paper, wood  
 Commissioned work for the  
 Weltkulturen Museum collection  
 Photo: Wolfgang Günzel

## PUBLICATION

The comprehensive publication to accompany the exhibition – also called ***healing. Life in Balance*** – includes a number of illustrations and photographs. The publication deepens and expands on the themes of the exhibition in interdisciplinary articles, and includes personal conversations with the artists on the subject of ***healing***. Further thematic focuses have been developed from the museum's collection. These diverse perspectives are brought together and expanded on with contributions from national and international academics and activists. The publication offers a multi-layered and diverse compilation of possibilities for shaping postcolonial global togetherness and for a healthy life in balance.

The German and the English editions are published by Kerber.



Please do not hesitate to contact us  
if you have any questions.

#### **CURATORS**

**Dr. Mona Suhrbier**

*mona.suhrbier@stadt-frankfurt.de*

**Alice Pawlik**

*alice.pawlik@stadt-frankfurt.de*

#### **PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**Christine Sturm**

*christine.sturm@stadt-frankfurt.de*

**Julia Rajkovic-Kamara**

*julia.rajkovic-kamara@stadt-frankfurt.de*

#### **WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM**

Schaumainkai 29-37

60594 Frankfurt am Main



Neuerscheinungen Herbst 2022

*New Publications Fall 2022*

**KERBER**



## Liebe Buchhändler\*innen, Bücherfreund\*innen und Kunstbegeisterte,

die Herausforderungen der Zeit nehmen nicht ab. Wir sind daher froh, dass zumindest persönliche Kontakte wieder zunehmen und viele Künstler\*innen zum Druck in unsere verlagseigene Druckerei nach Bielefeld reisen, um mit uns vor Ort besondere Publikationen entstehen zu lassen.

In Zeiten der Papierknappheit und steigender Kosten bietet unsere eigene Druckerei das besondere Privileg der Autonomie, mit dem wir größtmögliche Verlässlichkeit und die gewohnt hervorragende Qualität gewährleisten können. Dass unsere Leidenschaft für hochwertige Kunstbücher nun auch mit dem Deutschen Verlagspreis 2022 gewürdigt wurde, erfüllt uns mit Stolz und Dankbarkeit.

Der Herbst hält wieder einmal eine Vielfalt spannender Publikationen bereit. Wir freuen uns auf Ausstellungskataloge zu internationalen Größen wie Maria Lassnig und Frank Stella, auf Publikationen zu etablierten Positionen wie Paweł Althamer und Angela Hampel sowie zu jungen Künstler\*innen wie Sebastian Hosu und Stephie Braun.

Gleich zwei bemerkenswerte Titel unseres Programms kommen in diesem Herbst aus Frankfurt am Main. Das Weltkulturen Museum setzt sich in der ausstellungsbegleitenden Publikation *healing* mit den Möglichkeiten für ein postkoloniales globales Miteinander auseinander – ein hochaktuelles Thema, das künstlerisch wie wissenschaftlich beleuchtet wird. Das Jüdische Museum präsentiert vier jüdische Künstlerinnen, die in Vergessenheit geraten sind und deren Werk nun erstmals wieder der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht wird.

Auch freuen wir uns sehr darauf, unsere erstklassigen Fototitel aus diesem Programm auf der Paris Photo zu präsentieren. Neben dem Jubiläumsband des Aktmagazins *THE OPÉRA* gehören unter anderem die Fotobücher von Frank Schinski, Jason Langer und Catrine Val dazu.

Wir wünschen Ihnen viel Vergnügen bei der Entdeckungsreise durch unser Programm.

## Dear booksellers, friends of books, and art lovers,

the challenges of the time are not decreasing. We are thus glad that at least personal contact is increasing again and that many artists are traveling to Bielefeld for the printing of their books at our in-house printing plant in order to facilitate the production of special publications with us on site.

At a time of paper scarcity and rising costs, our in-house printing plant offers the special privilege of autonomy, with which we are able to provide the greatest possible reliability and the usual excellent quality. The fact that our passion for high-quality art books has now also been recognized with the award of the 2022 Deutscher Verlagspreis (German Publishing Prize) fills us with pride and gratitude.

A diverse range of fascinating publications can once again be found in our fall program. We are looking forward to exhibition catalogues on great international artists such as Maria Lassnig and Frank Stella and publications on established positions such as those of Paweł Althamer and Angela Hampel, as well as on young artists like Sebastian Hosu and Stephie Braun.

Two noteworthy titles in our fall program come from Frankfurt am Main. The Weltkulturen Museum's publication *healing*, which accompanies the exhibition of the same name, examines the possibilities of postcolonial, global coexistence—a highly topical issue, on which light is shed from artistic and scholarly perspectives. The Jüdisches Museum is presenting four Jewish women artists who have been largely forgotten and whose work is now being made accessible to the public for the first time.

We are also very pleased to present our first-class photo books from this program at Paris Photo. Besides the anniversary volume of our magazine on nude photography, *THE OPÉRA*, there are also photo books by Frank Schinski, Jason Langer, and Catrine Val, amongst others.

We hope you enjoy your journey of discovery through our program.

Christof Kerber und | and Team





# HIGHLIGHTS







## Für ein globales Miteinander

## Towards global coexistence

## healing

## Leben im Gleichgewicht

## Life in Balance

Herausgegeben von | Edited by: Alice Pawlik  
und | and Mona Suhrbier, Weltkulturen Museum,  
Frankfurt am Main

Texte von | Texts by: Karin Bervoets, Wade Davis,  
Mariana K. Leal Ferreira, Nildo José Miguel Fontes,  
Margrit Jütte, Kerstin Kleemann, Fenton Lutunatabua,  
Angeline Makore, Marion Marquardt, Larissa Lacerda  
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Ausstellung | Exhibition: *healing. Leben im  
Gleichgewicht*, 2.11.2022–3.9.2023, Weltkulturen  
Museum, Frankfurt am Main



Unter dem Titel *healing. Leben im Gleichgewicht* erscheint begleitend zur Ausstellung im Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt eine umfangreiche Publikation mit zahlreichen Abbildungen. Das Buch präsentiert alle teilnehmenden internationalen Künstler\*innen in persönlichen Gesprächen zum Thema „healing“ und erweitert den ethnologischen Blick, auf Basis der Sammlung des Museums, um interdisziplinäre Perspektiven internationaler Wissenschaftler\*innen und Aktivist\*innen. Das Buch eröffnet einen vielstimmigen Dialog und bietet Möglichkeiten für die Gestaltung eines postkolonialen globalen Miteinanders und für ein gesundes Leben im Gleichgewicht.

An extensive publication with numerous illustrations titled *healing: Life in Balance* is being published to accompany the exhibition at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt. The book presents all the participating international artists in personal conversations on the topic of healing and, based on the museum's collection, expands the ethnological view to include interdisciplinary perspectives by international scholars and activists. The book opens up a polyphonic dialogue and offers possibilities for designing postcolonial, global coexistence and a healthy life in balance.

Künstler\*innen | Artists: Marina Abramović, La Vaughn Belle,  
Elena Bernabè, Roberta Carvalho, Magnus Døvingen, Alejandro Durán,  
Marco del Fiol, Ayron Heráclito, Feliciano Lana, Naziha Mestaoui,  
Michael O'Neill, Roldán Pinedo

Die Ausstellung „Healing – Leben im Gleichgewicht“ wird von der Hessische Kulturstiftung gefördert

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**Eva Claudia Scholtz, Geschäftsführerin der Hessischen Kulturstiftung:** „Ich freue mich, dass die Hessische Kulturstiftung die Ausstellung ‚Healing – Leben im Gleichgewicht‘ mit einer Förderung bedacht hat. Damit erkennen wir auch die stetige Arbeit der Wissenschaftler\*innen des Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt an, uns und unsere Handlungen in globalen Dynamiken zu verorten. Diese Öffnung auf eine gemeinsame Geschichte ermöglicht es uns nicht zuletzt, individuell und als Gemeinschaft Verantwortlichkeiten zu erkennen und annehmen zu können. Das ist ein wichtiger Schritt im Heilungsprozess und auf dem Weg zu einem neuen Gleichgewicht. Dass die Kunst hier einen zentralen Beitrag zu leisten vermag, liegt der Hessischen Kulturstiftung besonders am Herzen.“

**Eva Claudia Scholtz:** “I am delighted that the Hessische Kulturstiftung furthurs and promotes the exhibition 'Healing - Life in Balance' with a grant. We acknowledge hereby the continuous efforts of the department of research at Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt on locating ourselves and our actions within global dynamics. This orientation towards a common history enables us to recognise and accept responsibility, individually as well as on collective scale. This is an important step in the process of healing and on the way to a new balance. Art and artworks as major contributors to health and healing are particularly close to the core of Hessische Kulturstiftung.”

### Hessische Kulturstiftung

Die Hessische Kulturstiftung unterstützt seit ihrer Gründung 1988 durch die hessische Landesregierung landesweit gemeinnützige Institutionen in den Bereichen Kunst und Kultur. In den über drei Jahrzehnten ihres Bestehens hat die Kulturstiftung rund 690 Ankaufs-, Ausstellungs- und Publikationsprojekte mit rund 46 Millionen Euro unterstützt. Sammlungsergänzungen durch historische und zeitgenössische Kunstwerke, Archivalien und Handschriften gehören ebenso wie temporäre Ausstellungen zu kunst- und kulturhistorischen Themen zu einem Schwerpunkt der Stiftungsarbeit.

Neben den zentralen Förderaufgaben der Hessischen Kulturstiftung – Kulturgüter in Hessen zu bewahren und zugänglich zu machen – gehört es zu den Zielen der Stiftung, ihre ästhetischen, kulturellen, historischen und finanziellen Entscheidungen transparent und verständlich zu präsentieren. Mit unserem jährlichen Geschäftsbericht und dem vierteljährlichen Rundschreiben *maecenas* erhalten Sie einen Einblick in die Stiftungsarbeit, lernen unsere Förderprojekte und Stipendiat\*innen kennen. Gerne können Sie auch die Arbeit der Stiftung auf facebook oder instagram verfolgen.

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V. i. S. d. P.:

Eva Claudia Scholtz, GF  
Luisenstraße 3 (Hinterhaus)  
65185 Wiesbaden  
www.hkst.de

Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit:

Maike Erdmann  
m +49 173 7209775  
erdmann@hkst.de



WELTKULTUREN  
MUSEUM



# healing.

The Book  
— of the Exhibition

Life  
in —  
Balance

KERBER

*healing* means  
living a good life together,  
even when in pain,  
and forgiving ourselves  
and one another.

—— Mona Suhrbier, 2022

WELTKULTUREN  
MUSEUM

# healing.

The Book  
— of the Exhibition

Life  
in —  
Balance

Edited by  
Alice Pawlik and Mona Suhrbier

**KERBER**



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WELTKULTUREN  
MUSEUM

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# Greeting

# Hessische

# Kulturstiftung

Dear reader,

A refined sense of balance provides stability, security and orientates us in space. In humans, our sense of balance is fed by information from the eye, the ear and the neurons for self-perception – an interplay susceptible to disruption and one which itself requires good balance. If our senses work well together, we can maintain our balance even in dynamic and confusing situations on unknown terrain.

But this sense of balance, unfortunately, cannot be transferred to all areas of life. Psychological processes and emotions, as well as social, economic and ecological systems or interpersonal relations are complex, irrational, confusing, dynamic and contradictory. How easy it is to get out of step, for the system to become corrupted, to misunderstand one another. We have to move, we have work to maintain our balance, and we have to replace old equilibriums with new if we want to avoid injury or hurt.

The publication *healing. Life in Balance*, accompanying the exhibition of the same name, shines a light on the concept of healing from various artistic, philosophic, scientific, poetic, and practice-oriented perspectives. It is an attempt to not only raise awareness of deep-seated personal but also societal or historical injuries that stand in the way of finding a global, intercultural equilibrium. The authors also guide us to spaces for action and sources of strength that can be found in art, in cultural and spiritual practices, and with the help of which we can train our sense of balance.

The Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt has been researching and communicating about diverse cultures and world views for several decades. Its researchers are constantly working to integrate us and our actions into global dynamics. This understanding for the diversity of cultures and a look at our common history enable us, among other things, to recognise and accept responsibility – an important step in the healing process and on the way to finding a new equilibrium. I am delighted that the Hessische Kulturstiftung was able to provide a grant for this publication to accompany the exhibition *healing. Life in Balance*.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

**Eva Claudia Scholtz**

*Executive director, Hessische Kulturstiftung*

## Foreword

# Weltkulturen Museum

When the word *healing* is mentioned, many people immediately think of alternative cures to conventional medicine. They associate the term with the holistic treatment of physical and mental suffering, with healing from within through the activation of spiritual energies. In many cases, this conjures up images of cures from non-European cultures which are often based on a combination of medical practice and spirituality. To heal successfully, one must not only know what medicine to prescribe or what procedures to perform on the body, but also possess exact knowledge of the accompanying rituals. A sick person is cured when not only their body functions again properly, but when they have also regained inner balance. In fact, the term *healing* encompasses much more than simply curing an illness, it is also often used figuratively to refer to interpersonal relationships or social conditions. As such, it crops up time and again in relation to the discussion about the colonial acquisition of collections and the restitution of objects. Many Indigenous communities in Canada, the USA and New Zealand, for example, see the return of objects as part of a social healing process, and accordingly refer to it as *healing*.

One of the three questions the curators of the exhibition posed to the contributors was: “What does *healing* mean for you personally and for your work?” If we apply that same question to the work of ethnological museums, a whole spectrum of answers emerges. In their dialogue with Indigenous people, ethnologists in particular have got to know about life in and for Indigenous societies, and have witnessed how much they have been influenced by processes set in motion by western societies. This is not limited to the European colonial era. It continues today through the exploitation of resources, industrial progress, and consumption – all of which promote poverty, hunger and climate change the world over. It is therefore a personal and emotional concern for many representatives of the field of anthropology to draw attention to this imbalance in the world, and to explore possibilities for redressing it. One task of ethnological outreach work is to emphasise the equal value of cultures, and to point out how much our own society benefits from exchanges with culturally different societies. The use of alternative healing methods is a particularly clear example of this. Another part of everyday museum work is dealing with the possible restitution of collection objects. In ethnology, this is often

linked to the following question: To what extent can repatriation of an especially significant object help reinforce the cultural identity of an Indigenous community which has suffered under colonial structures?

After all, ethnology is an academic discipline dealing with human universals – and the need for inner and outer balance is most certainly one of them. While cultural narratives may differ, the awareness that humans are responsible for imbalances in nature, the environment and in communities, and that humans must therefore work to restore an equilibrium, is present in all societies.

I am especially grateful to the curators Mona Suhrbier and Alice Pawlik, and to project assistant Laura Heidemann, for bringing all these aspects together in a rich and stimulating exhibition. My heartfelt thanks go to all the participating artists, filmmakers, authors, activists and practitioners for their contributions and commitment. I would also like to thank the Hessische Kulturstiftung for supporting the accompanying publication. As such a project can only succeed with the support of a well-functioning museum team, I would also like to thank the entire staff for their dedicated work. Finally, I would like to thank the alma agency for designing the exhibition and publication, and Wolfgang Günzel for his photography.

**Eva Ch. Raabe**

*Director Weltkulturen Museum*

## Introduction

# healing. In Dialogue for Global Togetherness

Mona Suhrbier and Alice Pawlik

For many, the fragility of living conditions was apparent long before the Covid-19 pandemic began. This fragility did and does affect almost all areas of life – health, the environment, work, politics, the economy, and social cohesion. The global crisis has focused attention on the vulnerability and fragility of life and raises questions about how to shape the future.

How to live? In one's own body with its personal and collective history? With the environment, the spiritual world, in global togetherness? How can crises be overcome? Can balance be found? How to stay or become healthy? How to feel content? And how can *healing* succeed?

Across the globe, people suffer from the consequences of political, social and cultural inequality. Traumatic experiences like violence, abuse, displacement, uprooting, slavery, racism and discrimination leave deep wounds. Diseases of civilisation such as diabetes, high blood pressure, depression and burn-out, as well as cancer and other chronic ailments, are constantly rising. The long-term, systematic destruction of unspoilt habitats and deforestation, as well as water and air pollution, have a detrimental impact on people and the environment. There is a great burden

on nature from increasing production and consumption. These result in climate change, mass extinction and resource scarcity. It is obvious that the earth's habitat is endangered. Yet the global power of the so-called western world remains based on the exploitation of people, the environment and resources. Western epistemologies and worldviews, narratives and thought structures continue to dominate discourses; and western thinking remains, to a large extent, shaped by colonial continuities and dualistic 'either-or' conceptions. Long-established attitudes are rightly being questioned and, in the spirit of decolonial practice, new possibilities are being sought to actively shape the way we relate to the self, to nature, and to each other in social and global interaction.

At the same time and across the globe, Indigenous ideas about the interconnectedness of people, animals, plants and the environment not only question western positions, but also offer powerful suggestions to resolve these contradictions. Contrary to western notions of the environment as a resource, these understandings put environmental use at the service of conservation. Through sustainable lifestyles, Indigenous groups contribute to global environmental protection and the conservation of biodiversity in a number of ways. Yet their knowledge is often ignored. With the emerging critique of western-style policies and systems, however, there is also a growing awareness of possible alternatives. In the world, no one lives in general. Local and Indigenous forms of knowledge are becoming increasingly important in regard to the sustainability of the earth's population. This includes a breadth of knowledge about the environment, land planning and use, and about economic practices; and it includes forms of coexistence between people and together with animals, plants, gods, ancestors and mythical beings in different ecosystems, in physical and spiritual communities and, last but not least, life in one's own body. These alternatives are not only made up of knowledge, but also show connections and provide answers to questions about the meaning of life and of living together.

To appreciate and begin to comprehend the imaginations, ideas and concepts which exist in many parts of the world, the hegemonic western epistemology, which is part of culturally shaped and historically evolved systems of knowledge and Eurocentric disciplinary conventions, needs to be broken down, relativised, and thought anew in global dialogue.

This requires a new sensibility and new ways of thinking. This means accepting Indigenous practices – including understandings of the body and humanity, the world, religion, art, economy, and history, as well as medical systems, concepts of nature, use of the environment, and social coexistence – as global knowledge, and bringing them into society with great power. The artistic, scientific and activist contributions in the project *healing* are dedicated to exactly that.

International partners from the arts, sciences, medicine, and Indigenous communities come together in the exhibition and the publication. They present their personal stories of and strategies for overcoming imbalance, inequality, violations, or one-sided claims to dominance and power; and for resolving crises, establishing new equilibriums, and finding answers for a future of global coexistence.

In author **Elena Bernabè's** poem *Nonna, come posso vivere questa quarantena?* (Grandmother, How Can I Live this Quarantine?), a wise grandmother describes how the Covid-19 pandemic can be actively used for a new beginning. The artist and philosopher **Feliciano Pimentel Lana** develops the text and image film *O Começo antes do Começo* (The Beginning Before the Beginning) on the one hand as a mythical narrative of the origins of the Desâna, and on the other hand as 'counter history', a critical Indigenous perspective on missionisation and colonial conditions and thus a corrective to common historiographies. Artists counter the problem of environmental destruction of forests and oceans with ideas and concepts of reciprocal relationships or transformative entities. In her photo and video project *Symbiosis*, multimedia artist **Roberta Carvalho** creates striking images of the symbiotic and symbolic relationship between humans and nature. With his work *Solo Árboles* (Only Trees), which consists of large-format paintings of rainforest trees, painter **Roldán Pinedo** opens up access to Indigenous imaginations of trees as powerful auxiliary spirits of the shamans. In the poetic video *A Floresta em Transe* (The Forest in Trance), artist **Ayrson Heráclito** incorporates Afro-Brazilian ideas of the close bond between humans and the forest and recalls healing moments that can be experienced in trance through transformation and sacrality. Multimedia artist **Alejandro Durán** critically documents the consumerism of throwaway societies in the environmental installation *Washed Up: Transforming a Trashed Landscape*, which shows the extent of the international plastic waste washed up on the coast of Mexico. The starting point for all these works is the artists' realisation that the endangerment of the environment is a genuine crisis, and that the healing of nature is directly related to personal healing.

Many find personal healing in the power of nature. Throughout the world, people visit places of power and perform healing procedures and ceremonies in which plants, earth, fire, smoke and minerals are ritually employed. In the documentary *The Space in Between – Marina Abramović and Brazil*, filmmaker **Marco Del Fiol** accompanies performance artist Abramović on her journey through Brazil in search of transformation and personal healing. **Marina Abramović's** own installation, *Standing Structures for Human Use* from the series *Transformative Objects for Human Use*, also emerged from these experiences. In the series of steles embedded with quartz, and which are accessible, she assembles elements of shamanic healing art into new wholes. On the path to personal healing, her work offers the opportunity to connect with the power of minerals.



In the context of healing and restoring equilibrium, **shamanism** plays a central role. With their unique abilities, shamans are able to mediate between the worlds of humans and spiritual beings, and undertake journeys into extra-human realms where they gain extensive knowledge for the well-being of their communities. These themes are conveyed in installations drawing on the Weltkulturen Museum's collection. These are complemented by ethnologist and filmmaker **Magnus Døvigen's** documentary *Inti Wasi* (House of the Sun) about the reorientation of Indigenous healing practices in Ecuador; and by multimedia artist **Naziha Mestaoui's** installation *Sounds of Light* which uses modern technology to transform shamanic healing chants into visual images of waves and patterns through acoustic vibration.

In a personal health crisis, photographer **Michael O'Neill** turns to the practice of meditation and yoga. In the series *On Yoga. The Architecture of Peace*, O'Neill stages the physical and spiritual practices of gurus and masters. In the photographic portraits, he captures the moment when body and mind meet. In her work *Cuts and Burns*, artist **La Vaughn Belle** develops a critique of slavery and racism, addressing how (neo)colonial narratives shape identity/identities, memory/memories, and reality/realities in the diaspora. In her work, she processes personal and collective traumas from the past.

The exhibition and accompanying publication bring together, in a dialogue-based curatorial collaboration, poetic, philosophical and multimedia artistic contributions. These contributions, which include Indigenous positions, are expanded on by ethnological perspectives based on the collection of the Weltkulturen Museum. In adopting this transcultural approach to the exhibition and publication, a polyphonic discussion emerges in which knowledge from various cultural backgrounds is presented as exemplary and of equal value.

The central moment of this exploration is the emphasis on Indigenous perspectives and art practices. These differ greatly from the historically developed and western-influenced dualism of humans and nature. The exhibition thereby disrupts the one powerful narrative of globalisation, replacing it with multi-perspectival narratives and (art) works with transformative power. It raises awareness about new understandings of humanity and nature, opens up new perspectives on *healing* as a process of restoring collective and personal equilibriums, illustrates alternatives for shaping social and global togetherness, and reminds us of our collective responsibility.

Indigenous and other non-European ideas that simultaneously focus on healing the body, soul and spirit, and incorporate knowledge of the environment and the effect of energetic and spiritual influences differ ostensibly from classical concepts of western human medicine. But the apparent opposition between these medical systems is contrived. There has long been a transcultural exchange of ideas and technologies between healing systems and practices worldwide. Globalisation and

movements of migration mean that local knowledge and world views come together anew in different places. In this global interaction, new, local expressions are constantly emerging. The urban present has become naturally enriched with knowledge and practices from other cultures. And today, Asian philosophies, yoga and shamanism, to name just a few, have developed into more than mere projection surfaces for western longings for healing and inner fulfilment.

To gain a practical understanding of these processes, three practitioners of Yoga, Ayurveda and Chinese medicine in Frankfurt am Main – **Kerstin Kleemann**, **Marion Marquardt** and **Karin Bervoets** –, were invited to participate in an interdisciplinary exchange. The Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt is a place that makes these kinds of dialogical encounters possible. The topics were the healing systems of Yoga, Ayurveda and Chinese medicine, and their underlying understandings of the body and humanity. Out of this, a lively discussion about *healing* as a term and what it means unfolded. Here the distinction between treatment (to cure) and healing became evident. Not every medical treatment leads to healing; *healing* is more than just the elimination of symptoms. *Healing* is, for example, increased well-being, inner peace, a strengthening of personal power, and a feeling of connectedness with all living beings.

To explore the numerous and diverse understandings of *healing*, these practitioners from Frankfurt, as well as international artists and human rights and environmental activists were asked what the term means – for them personally and for their work. The life and work of late artist Feliciano Lana is discussed by Indigenous representative **Nildo Fontes** and the ethnologist **Larissa Lacerda Menendez**.

The contributors' highly personal answers confirm the assumption that *healing* is understood as a comprehensive process that establishes a healthy state of body and mind, and a life in inner and outer equilibrium.

The artistic inspirations, activist positions, and curatorial comments are supplemented by a series of interdisciplinary contributions by international scholars.

In *The Eternal Reordering of Things, According to Feliciano Lana*, ethnologists **Mona Suhrbier** and **Mark Münzel** ask about the meaning of things in the work of the Desâna artist. In this dynamic, mythical imagined world, stools, rattle spears, boats and jewellery are also subject to multiple mythical transformations. Suhrbier and Münzel point out that products from Indigenous culture go far beyond things or materials. In order to understand Lana's work, they challenge western viewers in particular to look behind the things.

In *A Thousand Shades of Green*, anthropologist **Wade Davis** recognises the immense biodiversity and complexity of the Amazon region as worthy of protection. Based on his fieldwork among Barasana and Makuna, he highlights Indigenous knowledge and the mythically inspired plan for the use and management of the

land as an intellectual triumph. In a plea for a global dialogue, Davis calls for the preservation of Indigenous cultures as they contribute to the well-being and sustainability of the world community.

In *Water Miracles*, philosopher **Jens Soentgen** uses case studies to reflect on the significance of healing water in the European past and present. Soentgen analyses the chemical properties of healing waters, discusses the concept of the miracle, and engages with both religious-cultural ideas and scientific viewpoints on the healing effects of water.

In the article *Chiga's Solar-hair. Yagé Shamanism and the Worldview of the Cofán (A'i)*, ethnologist **Margrit Jütte** draws on the example of the Cofán in the Amazon region to show a variant of Indigenous shamanism. Here, it goes hand-in-hand with the consumption of the psychoactive *ayahuasca* plant (called *yagé*) which, in the case of illness and other disorders, is used to create a new equilibrium within the community. The article also addresses the contemporary use of *ayahuasca* outside Indigenous communities around the world.

In *Some Historical Reflections on Meditation, Healing, and Science*, neuroscientist **Clifford Saron** examines the effects of meditation on body and mind. The long-term *Shamatha Project*, through research led by the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Mind and Life Institute, has scientifically proven the positive effects of meditation on various aspects of physical, emotional and mental well-being.

Physician **Karin Bervoets** interviews **Volker Scheid**, a leading expert on Chinese medicine in Europe, about its past and present, as well as its fundamentals. Entitled *Chinese Medicine – The Unity of the Cosmos and Human Beings*, the interview focuses on holistic practice and the mutual exchange between western and Chinese medicine.

In *The Return of the Great-Grandfather*, ethnologist **Mona Suhrbier** reports on the repatriation of a historic leather shirt from the collection of the Weltkulturen Museum to the successor of the original owner, Chief Daniel Hollow Horn Bear. The return of culturally significant objects is seen as part of social healing processes and as *healing*.

In *Yurok Emotions and Diabetes Mellitus in Northern California*, anthropologist **Mariana K. Leal Ferreira** shows the connections between (post)colonial trauma and diabetes. Marked by historical trauma, oppression, loss and poverty, Indigenous communities are disproportionately more likely to develop the disease than the rest of US society.

Finally, activists **Fenton Lutunatabua**, **Angelina Markore** and the collective **Justdigg**, who work for human rights, environmental and climate protection, discuss their projects and goals.

These interdisciplinary perspectives and highly personal ideas on *healing* have been brought together in the project *healing. Life in Balance*. The academic reflections and the personal experiences of the participants included broaden the view and understanding of the complexity of the highly individual experiences of *healing* processes.

The question “what does *healing* mean?” cannot be answered definitively or for everyone. Nevertheless, it can be stated that crises are omnipresent and that new crises arise time and again, each requiring new strategies for coping. The prerequisite for finding solutions, either individually or collectively, is first to recognise the crises themselves, and to identify the connections between their origins. For crises are an opportunity to rethink structures, to establish new equilibriums, and to assume joint responsibility. This requires an openness to reconsideration, reflection and reorientation. And it requires recognition, respect and regard for alternatives or new ideas, lifestyles, and forms of living together – and for each and every individual. In this regard, we honour the achievements of societies traumatised by colonial continuities by capitalising the adjectives ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Black’ throughout.

Our special thanks go to our partners for contributing personal stories, artistic works and academic texts in which they outline, from their perspective, ways of overcoming crises that then lead to *healing*. Their works raise awareness of the manifold ways of connecting with the body and in living together with the environment – ways that have so far been largely excluded from European understandings. In so doing, they open up a rich, multi-voiced dialogue for shaping postcolonial global togetherness and for a healthy life in balance.





**Think Tank on *healing. Life in Balance***  
 With Karin Bervoets, Kerstin Kleemann, Marion Marquardt, Alice Pawlik and Mona Suhrbier  
 Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
 Photo: Lea Steinkampf, 2021



**What does *healing* feel like?**  
 Preparations for the exhibition  
 with design agency alma  
 Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
 Photo: Design agency alma, 2021



**Preparations for the exhibition in the collection depot**  
 Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
 Photos: Mona Suhrbier, Sascha Svoboda, 2020/2021





# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Weltkulturen Museum is an ethnological museum which is committed to interdisciplinary cooperation. It operates at the intersection of ethnology and art.

As a museum of the city of Frankfurt, it connects the local and global levels. It is engaged in an active process of international exchange with partners from indigenous cultures and non-European societies.

As a forum for transcultural exchange we promote the diverse spectrum of worldviews, historiographies, religions and aesthetics, as well as an acceptance and appreciation of the same.

We are committed to preserving, looking after and researching the collections in dialogue with their societies of origin, and with artists and scholars.

A key goal is researching provenance and critically reappraising colonial contexts.

The Weltkulturen Museum stands against any kind of exclusion or stigmatisation and seeks to contribute to processes of decolonisation.

We work together as a team to bring our projects to fruition and value the wishes and needs of our visitors.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

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### EXHIBITION

*"healing. Life in Balance "*

2 November 2022 to 3 September 2023

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