

A black and white photograph of a massive crowd of people, primarily men, gathered in what appears to be a public square or street. Many individuals are smiling and have their hands raised in the air, suggesting a moment of celebration, protest, or a large-scale performance. The crowd is dense, filling the frame from the foreground to the background. In the background, some buildings and structures are visible, including what looks like a large archway or bridge in the distance. The overall atmosphere is one of high energy and collective participation.

Yara Mekawei

sound artist

<https://yaramekawei.wixsite.com/yaramekawei>

About me

Yara Mekawei is a Cairo-based electronic music composer and sound artist. A prolific artist and scholar, Mekawei's sonic bricolages draw inspiration from the flow of urban centers and the infrastructure of cities. Interested in the philosophy of architecture, history and literature. Mekawei used the optical transfer from the musical conversation and transferring the sound waves to a visual forms. Her work is based on sound as a tool of vision, the philosophy of composition is shaped by sophisticated practices that convey messages of conceptual dimension to the public. Mekawei using the research literature specializing in the social ideologies in her concepts. She follows her projects through a research point of unite between work and the other, whose work shows an intangible aspect of her personality, and being feminine in an East African society.

Portfolio

Work samples



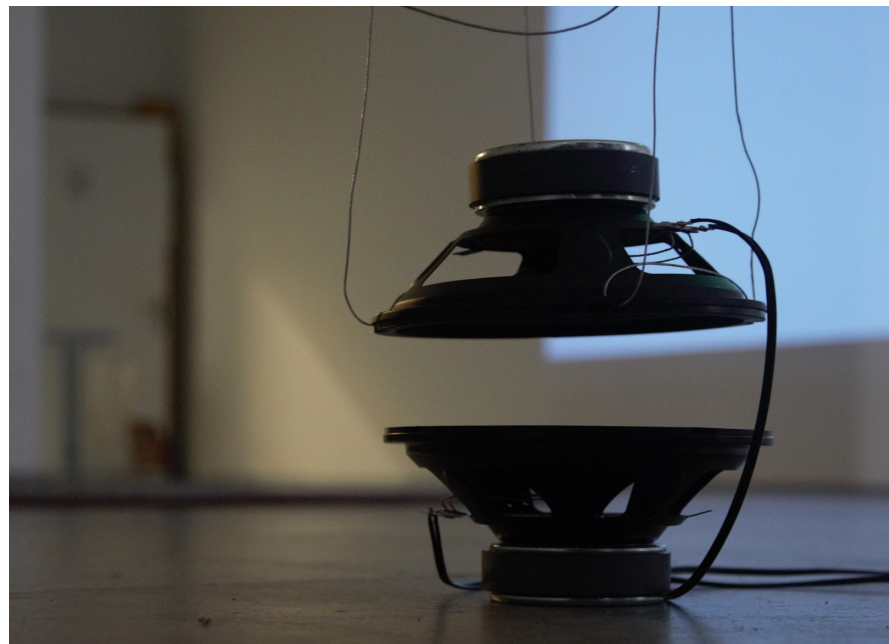
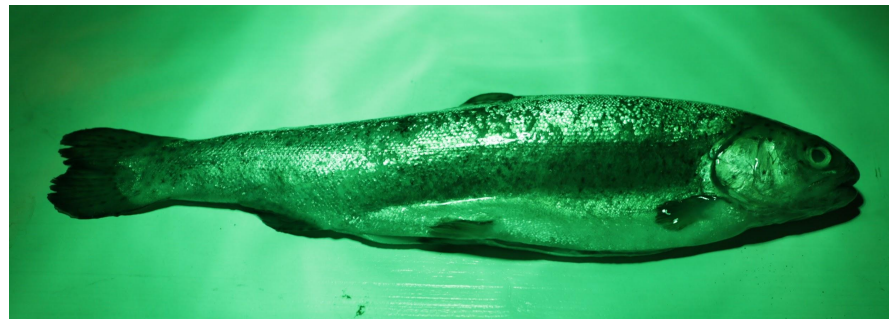
The Junction of the two seas

sound installation

Zurich, Switzerland 2019

The "Junction of the two seas" project deals with the audio and visual symbols that have occurred in the Prophet and the good servant. It's a simulation for deconstructing the symbols into elements, arranging it within a concrete framework, making a composition that I read about and did not see. This project is based on musical adaptations inspired by the story, the voices of the Prophet and the good servant, the place of the story and the junction of two seas; its passage in 3 groups of different people in the way of life and human qualities, the sounds that I hear from reading the story are voices of the fourth dimension, Not by people and nature, but rather by these sounds from an unknown source, obscure mysteries of Sufi mysticism. I felt that I was in a dark room where I did not see anything. I have to switch on the light. I tried to decipher this story. I took it from text to elements and sounds. I worked with contemporary compositions to understand the secrets and mysteries of the story. Sufis have the ability to fly and to see the truth.

<https://yamekaweixsite.com/yamekaweix/the-junction-of-the-two-seas>

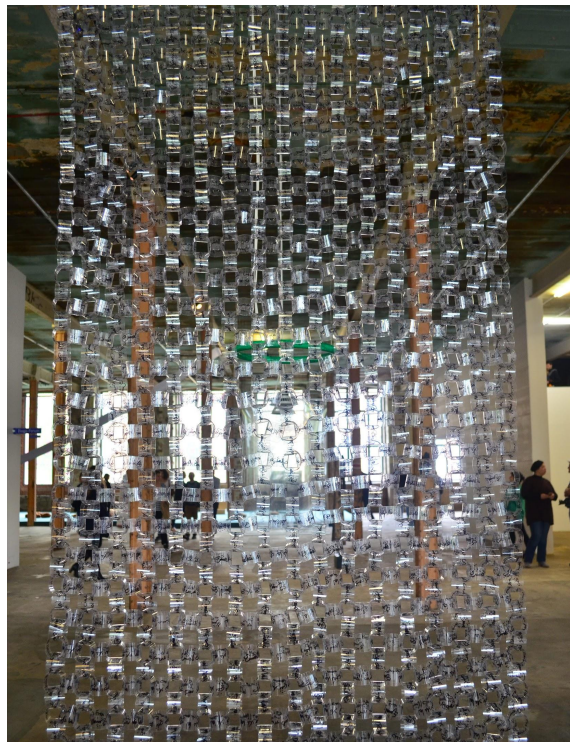




Mercury on Wednesday sound installation Zurich, Switzerland 2019

Mercury on Wednesday is a simulation space based on an old paper founded in the book 'The Sun of a Great Knowledge' by Al'ama Abi El-Abas Al-Bony on the 13th century AD. What is really interesting is the contents of the drawings about the Angel Michael who responsible for the discharge of wind directions and the plants on the earth, he is the king of Mercury and Wednesday day, people who want to call him and his followers should follow some instructions. In this project, I represent the instructions in a contemporary theory based on that papers with composing a soundtrack based on the Arabic vocabulary reputation of the text into a MIDI and sound waves.

<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/mercury-on-wednesday>



El Sheikh Al Rayees

Sound installation

Leipzig, Germany 2019

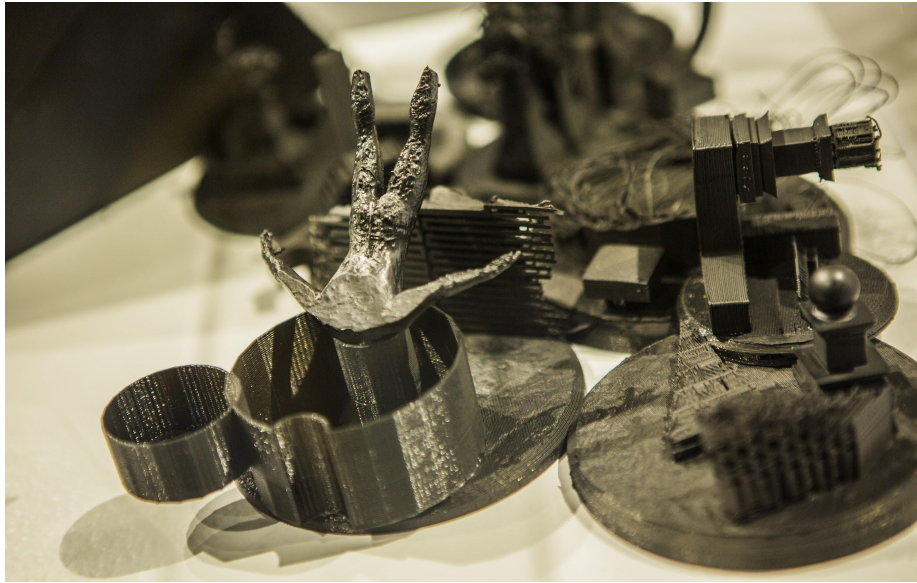
<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/el-sheikh-al-rayees>

Compound sounds for Ibn Sina (Avicenna) c.980

I complain to God of time so he dismissed it ... He cast out my new strength while it is new

Distress has come to me and it is as if...I have become a magnet, and she is iron

I retell what I've read in the format of music. I am working on a music piece for the images I have seen of Ibn Sina, to be played alongside the text of one of his famous poems "When my price became high, there was no buyer."



You can't merge the color with the sun

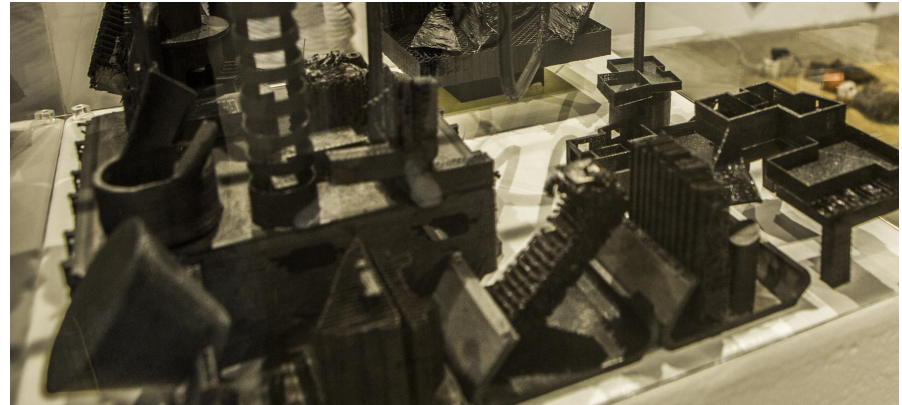
3D Sculpture

Johannesburg, South Africa 2018



By recording 16 hours of 3 towns in South Africa; Johannesburg central, Chinatowns and Soweto and unpacking various sounds of the city such as the sounds of markets, the bustling streets, the sounds of different languages being spoken as well as transportation. In 3 different areas, I reforming the sound records into its final format, as a 3D sculptural object – thus making the sound of the city visible in a single identifiable object.

<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/you-can-not-merge-the-color-with-th>





Al Mujahid sound installation Dakar, Senegal 2018

In between Sufism and the African sound history, I composed the music. By recording filed records from the Sufi celebration in Cairo and Dakar, I had the basic line of the similarities and the common signs within two different societies and the same religion. In that journey of research, I was inspired by El Dabh, who guided me to places, people, and markets to find the sound of the Al Mujahid, who is striving for the truth, I was looking for him, I am striving to find the soul of the Sufi community, despite the different language, but the music has the same spirit. I draw my inspiration from one of the biggest giants of contemporary music and sound arts of the century from the African continent: Halim El Dabh, to pay homage to his legacy and reference his locality and regionality in producing my project.

<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/al-mujahid>

Sea Sound

Sound installation

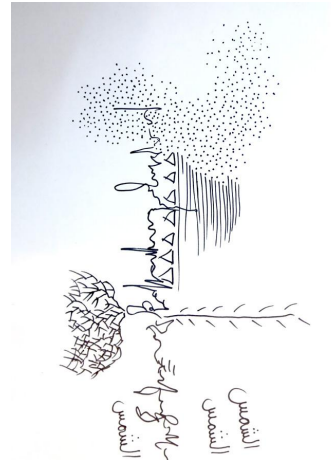
Zurich, Switzerland 2018

In this project, I work on transfer the Sufi poems of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, to soundwaves, inspired by his meaning of love; love GOD, how he describes his lover, the sea, sun, air, flowers and the beauty of the universal; I convert the text into sound and drawing, based on the visual imaginations the poems gives you. Using some of the original poems in the soundtrack with my voice, and write it in my drawings.

Describing worship in love, communicating with the sky with lust, I had a romantic poetic entry to search in the Sufism, it is much deeper than it has many sailors. But he has a simple style and an easy way to express the method of the Sufi and the way to reach happiness.

This project is the first execution of the Journey, the diving in the seas of the Sufi, not only; but also its the professional step in my career to transfer the text into sound. Compose the sound of history, recall the voice of someone has no records.

<https://yamekaweixsite.com/yamekaweix/sea-sound>



Scratching

performance
Lagos, Nigeria 2017

<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/scratching>



“Scratching” is a sound art project that has two phases, this point in my research was a step after collaboration with “Kwasi Ohene-Ayeh” visual artist and curator from Ghana, we collaborate in Lagos; 2017 Lagos Biennale, in this project I was discovering an integrated approach between the sound of old architecture building in the city with the sound of the human body.

By recording the frequency of the soundwave into the concrete of an “Ilukwe” house in Lagos city, which has a historical background and stamping in the social memory of the country; merging and played live with the sound of the Blood pressure circuit; I asked Kwasi to perform his mental state in the meantime, I amplified his blood flow and his heartbeat, maximize the sound of the body through sensitive microphones.

No One Is Illegal

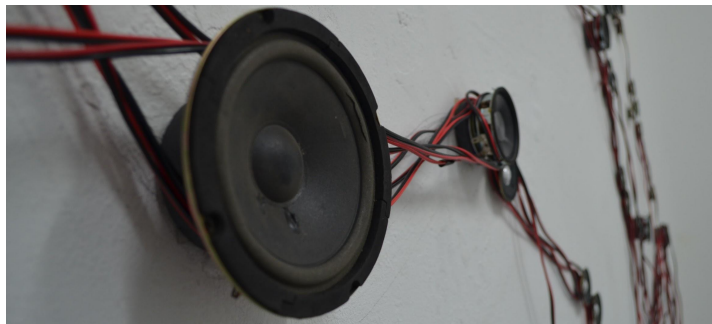
installation

Bayreuth, Germany 2016

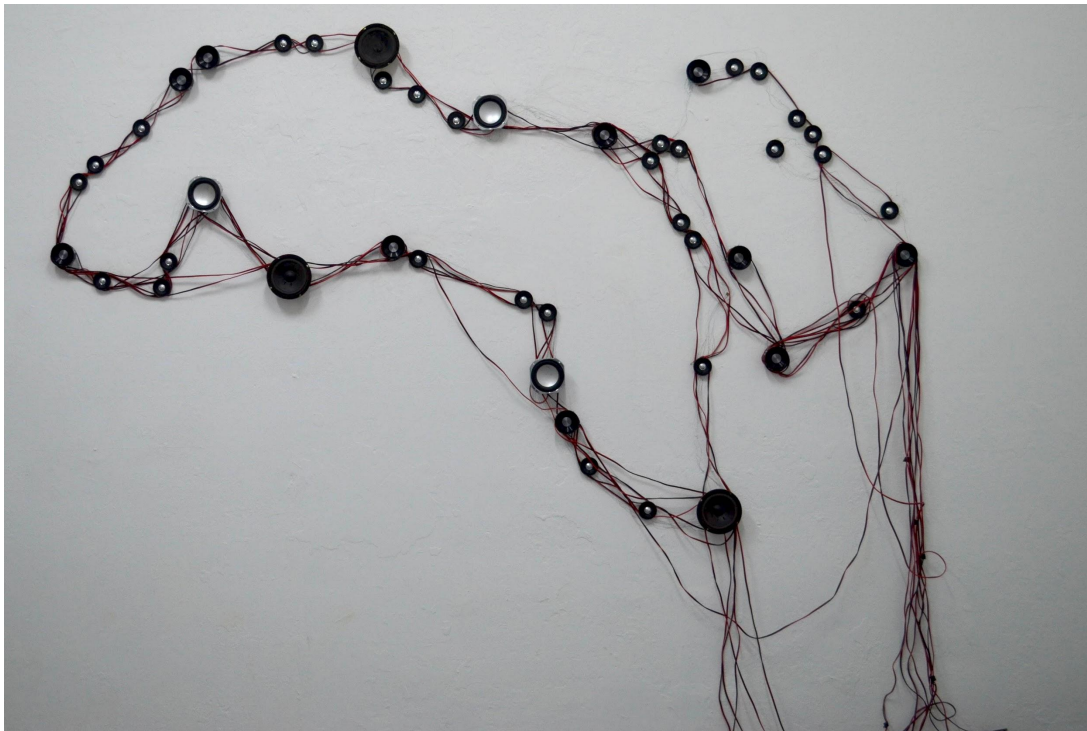
This project is working and aims to clarify and introduced the concept of "illegal" human beings, full differences, and put in the foreground relationship between the Holocaust memorial in Berlin, the city of Death in Cairo and the Syrian war, backgrounded with who are suffering in wars and persecution. This is a personal perspective of a lot of stories with highlight the voices that Thoth dead, static in the architecture, how people lying in it in peace, and everyone is legal

<https://yaremekawei.wixsite.com/yaremekawei/no-one-is-illegal>





“The Breakfast” audio/visual art project is not restricted to one place, street or city. Instead, this project combines the daily experiences of different artists as well as the experiences of the people they choose to integrate into their works. “The Breakfast” project aims at connecting people all over the world at one time doing the same thing. However, that same act is performed differently either due to different customs or traditions or even the place. Thus, the outcome is an auto utopian mixture that trespasses borders and connects people and their traditions in one simple act. It is the act of sitting down and having a breakfast meal.



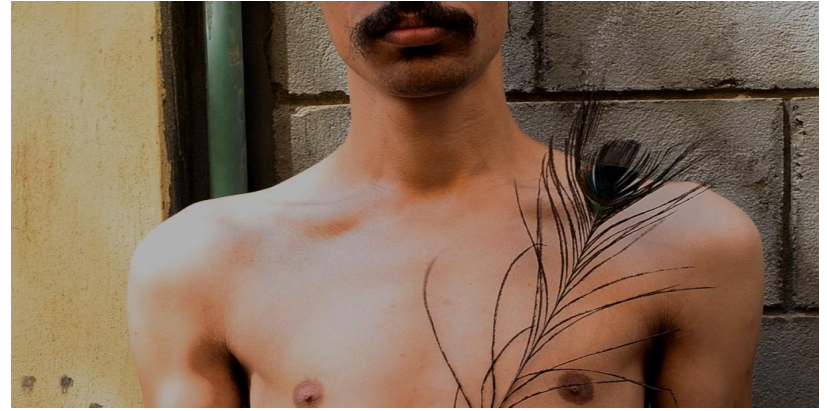
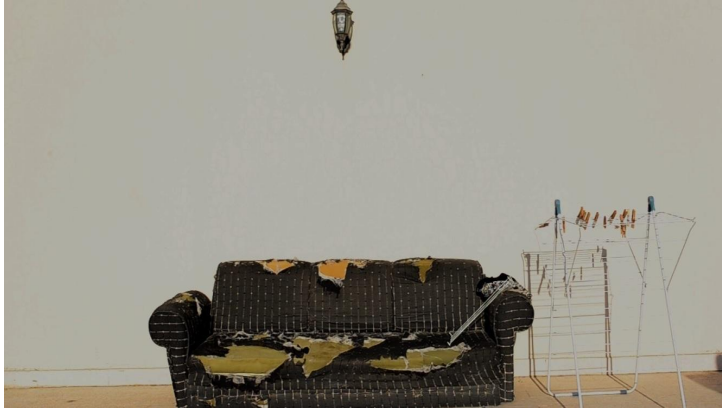
Breakfast sound installation

Berlin, Germany 2016

<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/the-breakfast-1>

Peacock

Video installation
Cairo, Egypt 2015



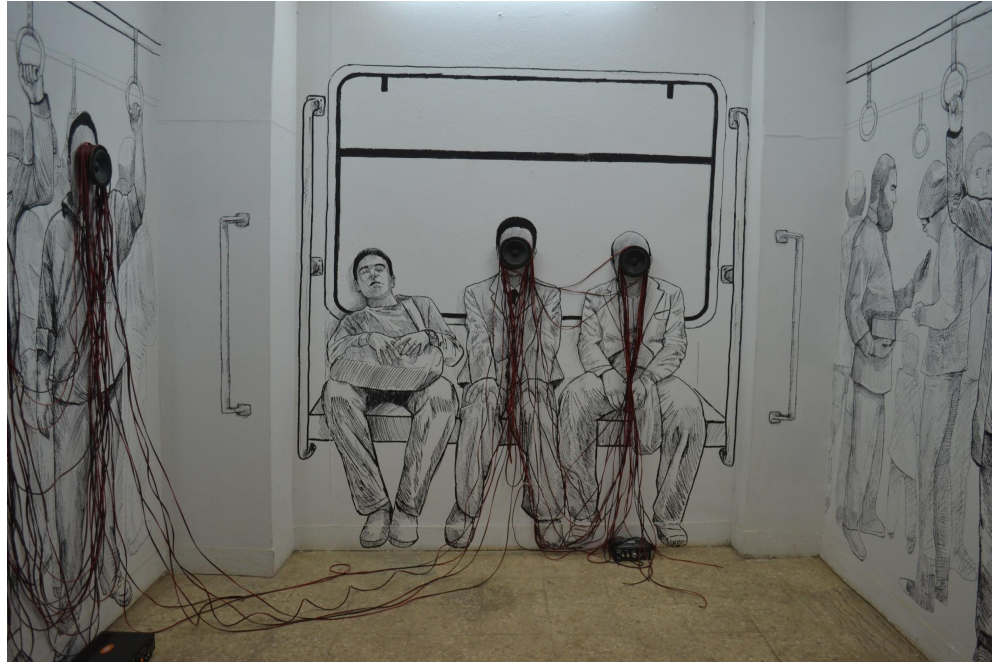
Every one of us has his secret room, a virtual room, where each one of us holds his secret inside this room, this secret room could have memories, scenes with old friends, papers and contracts, hidden elements which everyone wants to make it secret away from the people. In our big secret room, we save all our personal experience which we realized from the outside society, the elements in the secret room it is the outcome of our transactions with the society in which we live in, with some personal relations, old photos and many many of the scenes that we were playing a role in it.

Some of the elements in our secret room we did not like to keep it only in our hearts, sometimes we want to share it with someone without talking about details, or with it, to know more how we can solve our problems, and how we can be stronger more than we are.

Over the changing scenes of the city, inside the secret room, there are a couple living in the heart of the city, have no idea what's going outside! Try to adjust to the conditions the city where is away from the minds thousands of miles.



<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/peac>



Shoubra Line drawing/sound installation

Cairo, Egypt 2012

In collaboration with Mina Nasr



It's just five minutes between one Metro station and the other in Cairo. Five minutes is enough to catch a glimpse of various characters: vendors, workers, travelers, and students. And, to hear the many ambient sounds: discussions between small groups of friends; people debating society and politics; the voices of vendors selling their wares, raising their voices above the sound of the train; sounds we are so accustomed to that we have learned to ignore; the sound of Egyptian pop that you hear sometimes coming from a mobile phone; or, someone sitting or standing next to you, speaking to no one but himself in a loud voice for the whole trip.

If you are a Metro passenger or not, "Shubra Line" invites you into this world, to understand it differently. This exhibition takes you on a transformed path, where you might hear something different along the way.

<https://yamekawei.wixsite.com/yamekawei/shoubra-line>



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