

**reuse >> refuse**

**An audiovisual  
series with  
works by**

**Lamin Fofana  
KMRU  
Moor Mother  
Sarvenaz Mostofey**

# REUSE >> REFUSE

An audiovisual series with commissioned works  
by Lamin Fofana, KMRU, Moor Mother, and Sarvenaz  
Mostofey

Concept and idea by Mara-Johanna Kölmel  
and Rafael Schacter

Curated by Thomas Dumke, Mara-Johanna Kölmel,  
Rafael Schacter, and Denise Helene Sumi

Presented by Akademie Schloss Solitude x NTS Radio  
x depart.one in cooperation with transmediale and  
SHAPE Platform

REUSE >> REFUSE will be released by transmediale's  
Almanac for Refusal and NTS Radio on September 21,  
2021, and will be on view until December 31, 2021.

## Find more information here:

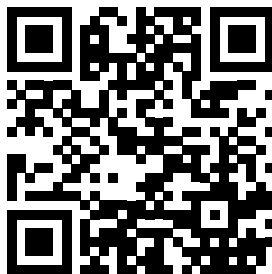
[akademie-solitude.de](http://akademie-solitude.de) | [transmediale.de](http://transmediale.de) | [nts.live](http://nts.live)

To stream the audiovisual works on your mobile  
device please visit either the transmediale Almanac  
or the website of NTS Radio.

Almanac



NTS Radio



**REUSE >> REFUSE** is an audiovisual series bringing the dimension of sound into the discourse on refusal. The series invites four artists Lamin Fofana, KMRU, Moor Mother, and Sarvenaz Mostofey from the NTS Radio, depart.one (SHAPE platform) and Akademie Schloss Solitude networks to activate the disregarded, unproductive, and leftover in order to assert the value of what is often seen as waste. Each of the contributors has been asked to **REUSE >> REFUSE**, to produce something new out of what was previously rejected or left on the cutting-room floor. This can include disregarded sequences, fragments, or elements excluded from previous works.

Refuse and refusal converge in that they both are situated outside of what is considered productive or generative. If refusal traditionally marks a break from an existing status quo through individual or collective acts of withdrawal, *refuse* is normally considered the residue of, or the leftover from, an act of transformation. They are thus both used to describe acts of rejection, avoidance, negation, yet insist on an alternative or a demand for reform.

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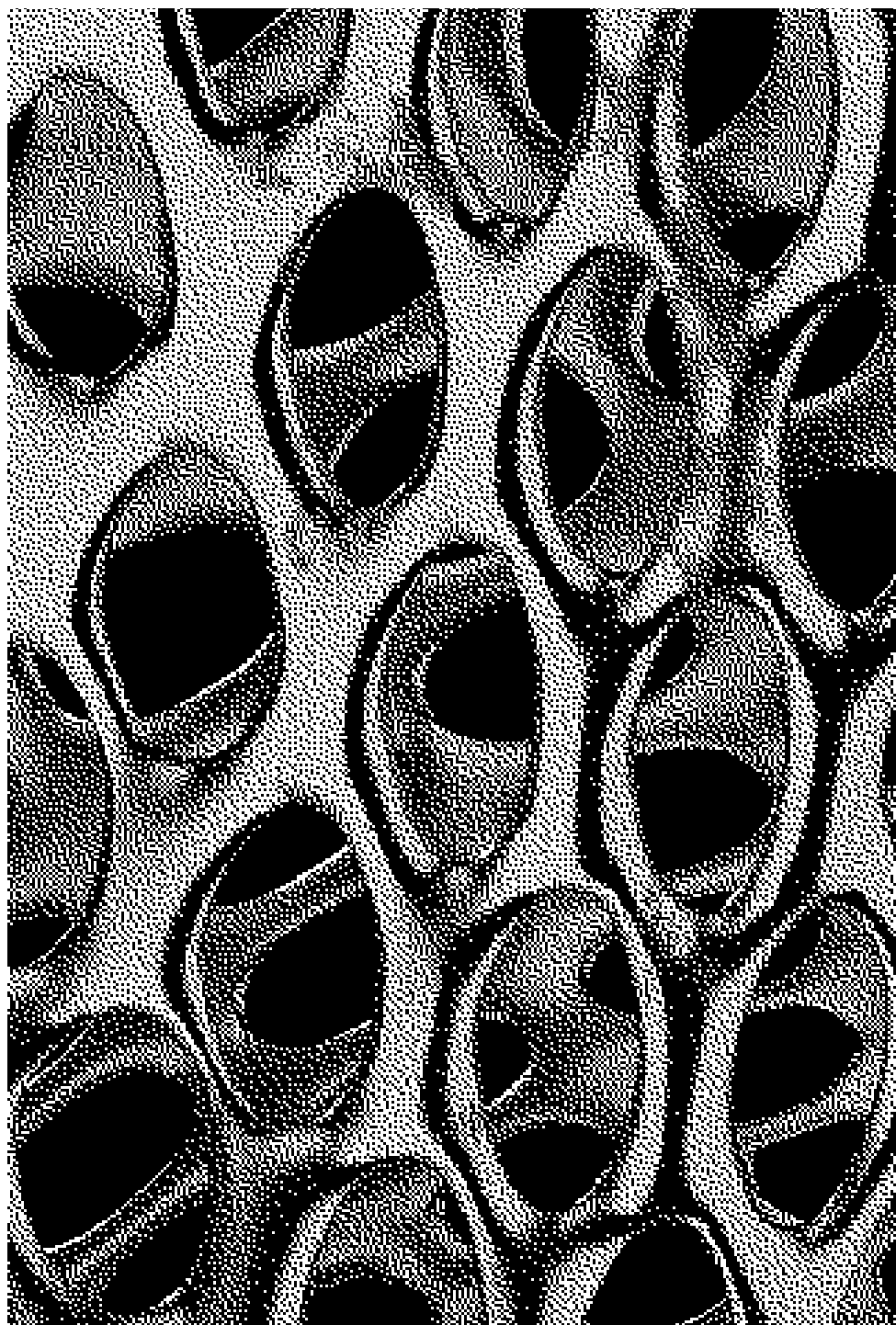
**KMRU** recontextualizes field recordings of waste(d) spaces. Electromagnetic sounds of perusing social media sites, and digital debris of trashed and recycled audio fragments are collaged and transformed into new compositions that relate to landfill sites in Kibera, Nairobi.

**Moor Mother's** two works utilize an experimental model in which glitches and the discordant are brought into focus. Using sound as a space of revelation, resistance, and reclamation, both her pieces interweave images and sounds from previous works with new visual and audio material.

The sound artist **Sarvenaz Mostofey** retells the story of a man who acoustically resists the omnipresent and all-dominating sounds of male groups performing martial arts by means of louder hits, using sound poetry and original field recordings.

As such, moving past the mere reuse of sonic leftovers, the works in **REUSE >> REFUSE** seek to reflect on the current urgency to resist violent systems of oppression and exploitation, addressing repressed societies, racial and economic inequality, and tangible effects of the climate catastrophe.

In revisiting artistic refuse and its legacy, this series aims to open entryways to new imaginaries and mobilize tactics of refusal. As refusal can be seen as a demand for an alternative, for new possibilities, can what has been deemed as refuse hold those possibilities within it, too?



## Lamin Fofana

*A Symbol of the Withdrawn God*

2016/2021, 20:21 min.

Revisiting and extending a previous composition with unvoiced fragments, shards, and utterances, Lamin Fofana's experimental electronica casts light on the devastating impacts of climate change and its violent implications for Black life. In Fofana's sonic cosmos, organ tones permeate sounds of abstract electric guitars, while distant piano melodies fuse with accents of cello and violin. His piece is marked by a recurring muffled sound – the stroke of a clock, perhaps? Whose time is up?

During the creation process of his work, Fofana read the science fiction novel *2312* by Kim Stanley Robinson, set in a time when much of humanity has fled an overheated, uninhabitable Earth. The first iteration of *A Symbol of the Withdrawn God* was first released in November 2016 as a track from the album *Doubleworld* on the SCI-FI & FANTASY imprint. The track appeared in a sequence, next to another on the album titled *The Dithering*, in a section of the album titled »These Are Wasted Years.« Fofana's revisited piece is a meditation on our current climate emergency disproportionately affecting people of colour. From hurricanes in the Caribbean and mudslides in West Africa to the spread of Ebola and Covid-19, Fofana sees Black life as inextricably linked to ever-present death. The red, mesmerizing background against which Fofana's piece unfolds marks a critical posture. It acts as a warning as well as a radical means to redirect our attention toward the auditive dimension.

In a world in which Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted, Fofana's piece instigates a hymn to the possibility of refusal through art – here, through a sense of singing while running for one's life. By creating a temporary space and place to contemplate and perhaps even think the impossible, his work for **REUSE >> REFUSE** carries the

glimpse and glimmer toward another style of proceeding. It opens up, lets us enter into and perhaps even lets us move through the thickets and breathy lights of an alternative path. How do we go from here?

Text by Mara-Johanna Kölmel

**Lamin Fofana** is an artist and musician currently located in Berlin. His music contrasts the reality of our world with what's beyond, and explores questions of movement, migration, alienation, and belonging. Fofana's overlapping interests in history and the present, and his practice of transmuting text into the affective medium of sound, manifests in multisensory live performances and installations featuring original music compositions, field recordings, and archival material. His latest releases include *Black Metamorphosis*, *Darkwater*, and *Blues* (an album trilogy). Recent exhibitions include *BLUES* at Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College, City University of New York (2020); *Refracted Gazes/Fugitive Dreams* at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany (2019); *WITNESS* at the 57th Venice Biennale, Italy (2017); and performances at Documenta 14, Kassel, Germany and Athens, Greece (2017). In 2021 Fofana was awarded a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists.

[laminfofana.com](http://laminfofana.com)

## KMRU

*waste(s)*

2021, 15:48 min.

Visuals by Kevin Karanja

»Waste,« writes KMRU, »is fundamentally crucial to environmental discourse both in physical and digital domains. It contains the value, usage, and temporality of things, although many are unaware of how much these phygital wastes contribute to the climate catastrophe. Just from our daily lives, we are in situations that contribute to carbon emissions generated through our devices and internet include.« In contrast, other parts of the world, such as Nairobi, the subject of KMRU's piece, are battling with tactile wastes surrounded by landfills affecting communities and human life. *waste(s)* seeks to reflect on the concept of waste, how waste is created, and means that it offers an intrinsic solution for the problem. Can waste be a source?

For the series **REUSE >> REFUSE**, KMRU recontextualizes field recordings of waste(d) spaces. Electromagnetic sounds of perusing social media sites, and digital debris of trashed and recycled audio fragments are collaged and transformed into new compositions. A juxtaposition between the digital-physical concept of waste is recontextualized as an artistic resource for real and imagined wastes. Archival material and field recordings that the artist has been collecting in Kibera, one of the most densely populated places in Nairobi, had become a sonification of data of emitted carbon from digital devices. The piece *waste(s)* is characterized by a whirring momentum, in that the sonification of garbage and (digital) leftovers, including the invisible electromagnetic radiations do not take place as something alienated from humans, and other species, or apart from everyday life. In *waste(s)*, Kibera's garbage dumps become audible and imaginable. In fact, life is never away from the spilling dumpsites, one can hear coughing, children sifting through electric waste, swarms of flies buzzing around them, and



cables hissing. How do we come to terms with the scale and inhumanism of the global garbage »crisis,« especially in the Global South? How can systems thinking and local politics be mobilized to these ends? KMRU relocates the discourse around transnational economies of waste by including those on-site, those who are most directly affected by global waste production and its politics, physically and in their daily lives. What was described in a review of KMRU's latest album also applies to the piece *waste(s)*: »... it lifts back the veil of the corporal world.« The slowly building up compositions form an almost tangible and deep layer of reality.

The accompanying visual part by Nairobi-based artist and KMRU's friend Kevin Karanja builds off of KMRU's experiences where metal waste would be collected and passed on for monetary value in Nairobi landfills. »This same waste,« he says, »is also being repurposed by visual artists to create intricate works of sculptural art out of the discarded elements.« Likewise the visual part pursues generative visual experiments and fragments, using already existing visual material and putting it through a transformation process using visual effects and techniques to generate complex organic-like structures and motions. Karanja creates new digital sculptures, rendering pulsating forms, and capturing and amplifying the whirring and depth of the piece. If not for this project, the audio and visual fragments used by KMRU and Karanja would otherwise be forgotten or declinated as useless but through artistic processing and creative insight, they gain new life and meaning through REUSE >> REFUSE. It is almost as if the audiovisual piece is able to swallow, and process the dwellings' dumpsites and transform them into a new environment.

Text by Denise Helene Sumi

Currently studying sonic arts in Berlin, **Joseph Kamaru a.k.a. KMRU** is a Nairobi-born, Berlin-based sound artist whose work is grounded on the discourse of field recording, noise, and improvisation. His work posits expanded listening cultures of sonic thoughts and sound practices, a proposition to consider and reflect on auditory cultures beyond the norms, and an awareness of surroundings through creative compositions and installations. His last three albums, 2020's *Peel*, *Opaquere*, and *Jar* received high praise from Resident Advisor, DJ Mag, NPR, and Bandcamp, KMRU is part of SHAPE platform roster of artists for 2021. His works have been presented in NyegeNyege Festival (UG), CTM Festival (DE), GAMMA (RU), and Mutek Montreal (CA) and Barcelona (ES).

[kmru.info](http://kmru.info)

The project by KMRU is supported by the SHAPE Platform and cofunded by the European Union program CREATIVE Europe.

## Moor Mother

*Moor Mother Lost Interview*

2021, 10:13 min.

(Video footage by D1LO)

*Inside the Black Womxn's Temporal Portal*

2021, 4:58 min.

Moor Mother's work uses »sound as a form of resistance,« understanding the sonic realm as a space of »unlimited possibility« in which »we can change anything we want.« Exploring historical injustice, present-day inequity, and the intergenerational trauma that links them, her diverse and multidisciplinary practice (as both musician and activist) finds new ways of unpacking these painful issues from a space of agency and empowerment.

For **REUSE >> REFUSE**, Moor Mother has produced two new scores that interweave images and sounds from previous works with new visual and audio material; taking that which has been set to waste and putting them to use once more.

The first work, *Moor Mother Lost Interview*, intersperses a filmed interview by D1LO with a digital/industrial soundscape that propels, highlights, and diffuses Moor Mother's words. Discussing the way in which sound and sonic energy can become an event in which what is read goes beyond the potential of the spoken, the *Lost Interview* acts through this within the score itself, giving us inklings of key issues (such as the extraordinary number of missing African-American children in the US), whilst letting the sound express her thoughts in a collaborative manner.

The second piece, *Inside the Black Womxn's Temporal Portal*, sets up a haunting, rhythmic loop in which time (as shown visually in material taken from a Black Quantum Futurism installation) moves in an alternating and nonlinear pattern. Tracking backward and forward, fragmenting and multiplying, the work rejects the hegemony and oppression of linear time in an Afrofuturistic turn toward a more pluralist temporal future.

Within both works, however, we find an experimental model in which glitches and the discordant are brought into focus and that which would traditionally be excluded or erased is given space to show its affective beauty. Like Moor Mother's practice as a whole, we find a world in which sound acts as both a »source of power« and an »act of protection,« sound as a space of revelation, resistance, and reclamation.

Text by Rafael Schacter

Camae Ayewa (**Moor Mother**) is a national and international touring musician, poet, visual artist, soundscape artist, professor, and curator. She currently serves as vocalist and musician in three genre-spanning musical groups: Irreversible Entanglements, Moor Jewelry, and 700Bliss, and regularly performs with Art Ensemble of Chicago and UK-based band Zonal. Ayewa is also co-founder of arts collective Black Quantum Futurism. The name Moor Mother derives from Ayewa's desire to honor women, the feminine spirit, as well as women affected by domestic and sexual violence. Her work focuses on the recovery and preservation of communal memories and histories that are often missing from mainstream narratives.

[moormother.net](http://moormother.net)

## Sarvenaz Mostofey

*Drummer on the roof*

2021, 12:13 min.

Drums by Amin Taheri

Visuals by Daniella Domingues

Iranian sound artist Sarvenaz Mostofey relates the tragicomic story of a person frustrated by the noises of a martial arts center located in his rented house and applying an acoustic resistance through sound to reduce the noise. The artist uses original field recordings, and the resonance of the recorded sound expands into a new composition.

The sound piece combines a maze of ideas and memories, guiding the narrator of the story and the player of the character as if s/he was a cyborg contemplating the realities of social fiction. The story takes place on a very cold night in the winter of 2017, and deals with a working class family living in a small town in the north of Iran. Their house is located by the Caspian Sea, basically the last one before the seashore. The family rents the upper floor of a two-story building. On the first floor there is a gym dedicated to martial arts, mainly karate. Every night, until late, the sounds of Hi-yah!, Aiyah!, Eeee-yah!, or Hyah! of more than twenty men resonated throughout the building and the neighborhood. On some nights its volume exceeded the sound of the rough sea.

On this particular night, the father, who might also be the daughter or any other family member, climbs onto the roof and hits it with an unidentified object as harsh, as hard, and as loud as one can imagine against all the Hi-yah!, Aiyah!, Eeee-yah!, or Hyah that has been experienced in life. Some of the neighbors who witnessed the event describe the drumming so loud they could hear the sound of the sea. What was the drummer trying to convey as a message and did he succeed in silencing the din? The story is about the recording of this live drumming. The composition reenacts

the sounds of contrasting forces within. The Kiai, the sea roar, the roof drum, and the songs lost in time.

Text by the artist and Krzysztof Gutfrański

Sarvenaz Mostofey draws on her experience in Iran for the **REUSE >> REFUSE** project, which is also conveyed by the memories in question: an original recording of a rooftop drummer frustrated by men practicing karate and a photo taken from the nearby rooftop overlooking the Caspian Sea. With *Drummer on the roof*, Mostofey mediatizes the story of an anonymous character who opposes demeaning lease terms and goes into a performative resistance to silence a karate club's noises invading his/her life. These original recordings are complemented by precisely administered, regular thunder-like blows, as well as the improvised percussion of musician Amin Taheri and visual editing by Daniella Domingues – artists invited to collaborate with Mostofey.

Domingues contributes to the visual component of *Drummer on the roof* with two watercolors on paper. They are part of the *Unfinished / Transitory* series, in which Domingues depicts places that lie between incompleteness and ruin and that take on the character of absolute transience. The compositions come from the study of real places that are altered and isolated by drawing operations, through which the artist tries to achieve maximum silence. In *Drummer on the roof*, two-dimensional images are transposed onto a supposedly three-dimensional video plane, acting as a support through which the narrative of the work unfolds.

Amin Taheri elaborates on a three-minute recording of an anonymous percussionist drumming on a rooftop. Amin accompanies the desperate rooftop events with his instrument, as if in an act of improvisation with the past. In this piece, he also sonifies the tap codes that Sarvenaz brings to this composition through the rhythm of his drumming.

Through all these interventions, the listener is confronted with the atmosphere of the Caspian Sea and the life surrounding it, into which »Hi-Yah« calls are woven, interrupted shortly thereafter by the reverberation of a hard beat, and then complemented by improvised percussion. Along with the shouts of the karate crowd, we follow this acoustic play until intermission. At intermission there is a brief silence. As the sound re-enters, we hear modulated electronic effects, but what remains is a loud, regular, precise beat that, in addition to the explosion of feeling and resistance, can resemble a gunshot. In the coupling of feeling and acoustic transmission, the final phase seems to be an outro taken from Sergey Prokofiev's *Dance of the Knights*.

Text by Thomas Dumke

**Sarvenaz Mostofey** is an Iranian sound artist and composer based in Berlin. Her work involves multiple media, approaching the audience through space, sound and music. Her projects incorporate spatiality as an active attribute in the process of creating immersive art, exploring interconnections between modes of sonic attention and concepts of space. She started her artistic activities with photography at an early age and subsequently worked in several feature films, both as an actress and a photographer. She also has worked as sound designer with theaters in Tehran. Sarvenaz holds a master of music in art science from the Royal Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and a bachelor's degree in photography from Tehran University of Art. She was a fellow at the Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart) in 2020. Currently, she is the Shape platform artist for 2021 and a fellow at Slavs and Tatars residency in Berlin.

[depart.one/artists/sarvenaz-mostofey-shape](https://depart.one/artists/sarvenaz-mostofey-shape)  
[soundcloud.com/mona-mostofi](https://soundcloud.com/mona-mostofi)

The project by Sarvenaz Mostofey is supported by the SHAPE Platform and cofunded by the European Union program CREATIVE Europe!





# Imprint

## REUSE >> REFUSE

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