

# Libraries in Practice: Tending Toward Liberation



May 18, 2023  
6:30–8:00 pm

Social Justice Hub, University Center  
The New School, 63 5th Avenue, 5th Floor  
Presented by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics

# Exhibition Information

The Vera List Center for Art and Politics and multimedia platform Contemporary And (C&) present *C& Center of Unfinished Business* at The New School, a roving reading room that speaks to the persistence and presence of colonialism in contemporary life. Conceived by C& Co-founders and Artistic Directors Julia Grosse and Yvette Mutumba, the project offers a selection of key, and, at times, unexpected texts that spark discourse on the enduring structures that continuously undergird colonial legacies in modern society. “Unfinished,” here, subtly echoes the “post” in postcolonial—hinting at an incomplete reckoning with colonialism and its evident and insidious aftermaths.

The Vera List Center iteration of the reading room features a curated selection of books, including titles from The New School faculty, alumni, and the VLC Fellows Library. Inaugurated during the VLC Forum 2022 and 30th anniversary celebration, the VLC Fellows Library is a collection of publications by each of the forty-four fellows the Vera List Center has hosted over its thirty-year history, celebrating and making available their research and work.

Both the installation and accompanying broadsheet publication are designed by New School students. As with previous iterations, the reading room upends traditional forms of display in both content and form. Books meander through angular shelves next to, above, and across from each other in challenging, experimental, unconventional ways to mirror the tension and discomfort historically embedded in discussions on colonization. To this end, the C& Center of Unfinished Business occupies The New School’s Social Justice Hub, an interstitial space designed and designated for conversations on equity and solidarity across communities.

The reading room plays host to public programs that inscribe the VLC’s 2022–2024 Focus Theme *Correction\** into colonial legacies and postcolonial realities. Conversations with local and international libraries as well as a public reading series explore libraries as sites of intervention, liberation, and repair.

This iteration of the *C& Center of Unfinished Business* (conceived by Contemporary And’s Julia Grosse, Yvette Mutumba, and Mearg Negusse) at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School is co-curated with Eriola Pira, Curator and Director of Programs. It is presented with the support of the Daisy Schapiro Lectureship Fund.

*C& Center of Unfinished Business*. Installation views.  
Social Justice Hub, University Center, The New School,  
April 1–May 26, 2023. Photo by Argenis Apolinario,  
courtesy Vera List Center for Art and Politics.

# Program

*Libraries in Practice: Tending Toward Liberation* explores the unequivocal relationship between books, libraries, freedom, and liberation. Hosted within the *C& Center of Unfinished Business* library and exhibition at The New School’s Social Justice Hub, this program follows *New School New Books*, a reading and celebration of new publications by faculty from across the university, and *Libraries as Correctives*, an online program featuring Contemporary And (C&) in conversation with international libraries: Keleketla! Library in Johannesburg, Sister Library in Mumbai, and Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong.

Bringing together organizers from local independent artist-run libraries, non-circulating collections, archives, reading rooms, and small presses, *Libraries in Practice* considers the role of libraries in making space for freedom-work. At a time when libraries in the United States are under threat by right-wing legislation, the program explores the crucial ways in which these spaces shore up education and literacy and expand personal and collective narratives toward liberation.

## PARTICIPANTS

Emmy Catedral, Pilipinx American Library

Julia Grosse, Contemporary And/C& Center of Unfinished Business

Yusuf Hassan, BlackMass Publishing

## Moderator

Re’al Christian, Assistant Director of Editorial Initiatives, Vera List Center

## Host

Eriola Pira, Curator and Director of Public Programs, Vera List Center

*This event is being recorded and will be available at [www.veralistcenter.org](http://www.veralistcenter.org).*

## Participant Biographies

Emmy Catedral is a Butuan born and Queens and East Harlem raised artist, educator, and curator. Through multi-form installation, performance, and texts, she has shown work under institutional personas The Explorers Club of Enrique de Malacca, The Amateur Astronomers Society of Voorhees (AASV), and as herself. Her work has been presented at Queens Museum, The New York Historical Society, LaMama Experimental Theater Club, Columbia University's Wallach Art Gallery and Department of Astronomy, Center for Book Arts, and other sites without names. Catedral is co-librarian of the Pilipinx American Library, and is Curator of Public Programs at Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA).

Re'al Christian is a writer, editor, and researcher based in Queens. She is the Assistant Director of Editorial Initiatives at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. VLC publications comprise anthologies, artist books, exhibition booklets, and *Post/doc*, a newly launched digital series. Christian's criticism, exhibition and book reviews, essays, and interviews have appeared in numerous publications, including *ART PAPERS* where she is a Contributing Editor.

Julia Grosse is co-founder and artistic director of the platform Contemporary And (C&). She is a lecturer at the Institute for Art in Context at the University of the Arts in Berlin and since June, associate curator at Gropius Bau. Grosse studied art history and worked as a columnist and arts journalist in London for *Taz*, *FAZ*, and *AD Magazine*. She has written and co-edited books, such as *Ein Leben lang* in 2018 (Hoffman und Campe). In 2020 she was (together with Yvette Mutumba) winner of the prize "European Cultural Manager of the Year."

Yusuf Hassan is the founder of BlackMass Publishing. Hassan's work explores the idea of the book. His reductive technique and meditative approach challenge the physical and poetic boundaries of his materials. Canceling the idea of restrictions within his work allows him to analyze it with no limitations. Using printed matter as a physical way of expression Much of Hassan's success is attributed to his unique ability to express dramatic and emotional content through publications and printmaking. Hassan holds publications in the permanent collection of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The Langston Hughes Library, Thomas J. Watson Library, The Houghton Library, and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

## Vera List Center for Art and Politics

The Vera List Center for Art and Politics is a non-profit research center at The New School in New York. Through its dynamic interdisciplinary programs, conferences, artist fellowships, residencies, publications, and exhibitions, and publications, the VLC imagines and supports new forms of politically engaged art, research, public scholarship, and community around the world.

The 2022–2024 Vera List Center Focus Theme *Correction\** and the programs, fellowship projects, publications, and exhibitions dedicated to it explore the tension, discomfort, potential, and sociopolitical implications of "correction."

All programs and events of the Vera List Center are free for all to attend, in person and online.

The New School campus is wheelchair accessible and has elevator access to all floors. Service animals and assistive devices are welcome. If you have specific accommodation questions or needs for future programs, please contact us at least five days prior to the program at [vlc@newschool.edu](mailto:vlc@newschool.edu).

The Spring 2023 programs of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics are generously supported by members of the Vera List Center Board and, members of Vera's Listother individual donors, as well as the following institutional donors:

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts  
The Boris Lurie Art Foundation and the Schaina and  
Josephina Lurje Memorial Foundation  
Bridge Philanthropic Consulting  
The Dayton Foundation  
The Ford Foundation  
Italian Council  
The Kettering Fund  
Mellon Foundation  
The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation  
Pryor Cashman LLP

We also acknowledge the support of The New School, our academic home.

# VLC Fellows Library

# Notes

The VLC Fellows Library is a collection of publications by each of the forty-four fellows the Vera List Center has hosted over its thirty-year history and counting. It celebrates and makes available the rigorous research and wide-ranging work of the Center's fellows including:

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, 2015–2017	Fox Maxy, 2022–2024
Carmen Amengual, 2022–2024	Kobena Mercer, 1999
Maurice Berger, 1994	Omar Mismar, 2022–2024
Carolina Caycedo, 2020–2022	Lorraine O'Grady, 1997–98
Beatriz Cortez, 2022–2024	Olu Oguibe, 2000
Dean Erdmann, 2018–2020	Silvana Paternostro, 1997
Etcétera, 2020–2022	Wendy Perron, 2001
Wendy Ewald, 2000	Rasheedah Phillips, 2020–2022
Andrea Geyer, 2006–2007	Marjetica Potrc, 2007–2008
Margarita Gutman, 2001	Leslie Prosterman, 2001–2004
Susan Hapgood, 1999	Alexander Provan, 2013–2015
Sharon Hayes, 2006–2007	Walid Raad, 2004–2005
Danny Hoch, 2000	Sarah Rothenberg, 1995
Ashley Hunt, 2006–2007	Edward Rothstein, 1999
Maria Hupfield, 2020–2022	Katya Sander, 2006–2007
Adelita Husni Bey, 2020–2022	Robert Sember, 2009–2011
Helene Kazan, 2018–2020	Joshua Simon, 2011–2013
Bouchra Khalili, 2011–2013	Victoria Sobel & Casey Gollan, 2015–2017
Lin + Lam, 2009–2011	Elisabeth Sussman, 1999
Jill Magid, 2013–2015	Jonathan Weinberg, 2002
Anna Martine Whitehead, 2022–2024	

For more information, a complete list of holdings, or to plan a visit to the library, please visit our website [veralistcenter.org](http://veralistcenter.org).

The VLC is entirely self-funded. Join Vera's List, our new membership support group, for as little as \$1/month! For more information, visit our website at [veralistcenter.org/support](http://veralistcenter.org/support). Thank you!

## CURRENT & UPCOMING

---

### EXHIBITION

## C& Center of Unfinished Business

April 1–May 26, 2023

Social Justice Hub, University Center, The New School

---

### PUBLISHING SERIES

## Post/doc

Ari Melenciano and Catalina Ouyang

Spring 2023

---

### PUBLICATION

## Breaking Protocol

Edited by Maria Hupfield

Co-published by the Vera List Center and Inventory Press

in association with the Center for Imagination in the Borderlands

Fall 2023

---

### PUBLICATION

## Maria Thereza Alves: Seeds of Change

Edited by Carin Kuoni and Wilma Lukatsch

Co-published by the Vera List Center and Amherst College Press

April 2023

---

For more information about our work, visit [www.veralistcenter.org](http://www.veralistcenter.org) where you can also find additional information, resource guides, and documentation of all events.