

ARTWORKS

Connecting to the perfoCraZe International Artist Residency (piAR), a self-organized safer space for the LGBTQIA+ community in Kumasi, Ghana, this exhibition opens its temporary satellite space in Berlin. The exhibited artists are involved with piAR in different capacities. As an introduction into its practice, visitors can enter the nGbK's event space — becoming a dedicated cinema space — which is screening a documentary from 2024. *Home is Resistance* showcases archival footage and intimate interviews, offering a glimpse into the residency's daily life and history as a sanctuary for queer artists.

A Portal to piAR

Through a tunnel installation leading to the main exhibition space, visitors are immersed in **Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi's** (crazinisT artisT) *Monument of Second Skin* (ongoing). Since 2012, Va-Bene, piAR's founder, has been collecting used clothing identified as feminine and non-binary for her rituals, installations, and performances prior to her transition. In her studio in Kumasi, she built a vast, intimate installation as a sanctuary, wardrobe, and monument of second skin. The work was reimagined for the Berlin exhibition's opening piece as a significant archive of piAR. The installation features Va-Bene's *Ritual of Becoming*, from the *froZen* series where she photographically documented her daily cleansing rituals, dressing, and putting on makeup.

The open doors on the left from the entrance invite visitors into the studio space, hosting an immersive textile and sound installation by artist **Marcella "Naa" Nuerkie Akuetteh**. *TIME BOMB* (2025) combines left-over fabric and scraps of diverse colours, patterns and shapes collected in Kumasi and Berlin. The entangled pieces form the shape of a tree branching out, a strong yet delicate organism that slowly grew over time, representing the manyfold relations between piAR and the residency's many collaborators and beneficiaries. The accompanying audio installation features voices from piAR. They highlight the threats and potential consequences of the pending anti-LGBTQIA+ bill in Ghana—a ticking time bomb.

Portraits of Care and Resilience

Moving forward, visitors encounter **Sarah Ama Duah's** *MOTHER OF MANY* (2025), a portrait of Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi: Embodying piAR as a space for community, as a supportive and nurturing environment beyond biological ties, she is portrayed as a mother of many. Sarah Ama Duah is a German-Ghanaian artist based in Berlin, interested in the relationship between history and its manifestation in artifacts of cultural memory. She practices sculptural appreciation as a gesture, performance, and a form of sharing Afro-diasporic experience and perspective. **Rüzgâr Buşki & Mawuenya Amudzi** expand on the theme of queer resilience. A print installation honors activists and figures from the Ghanaian queer communities. Rüzgâr Buşki, born in Istanbul, is a Berlin-based artist and activist whose practice focuses on printmaking, video, and performance. The series of prints relates to protest banners

that Rüzgâr Buşki created during a protest against the anti-LGBTQIA+ bill in front of the Ghanaian embassy in Berlin. Mawuenya Amudzi, an artist and printmaker, was one of the pioneer residents of piAR and now serves as an advisory board member. His image transfer technique bridges past and present, emphasizing the layered nature of memory.

To the rear of the space, visitors are drawn into an intimate space featuring **Martin Toloku's** *Yali* (2024). A sculptural and sound installation invites viewers into a ritual of storytelling. Seven human heads, buried in the ground, embody a shared narrative of piAR as the artist's second home. Martin Toloku, whose work centers around the theme of decay, is a Ghanaian-born artist currently based in Amsterdam. He is fascinated by the sometimes mysterious relationship between time and material, and how stories are hidden in objects.

Choreographies of Connection

Choreographer **Julius Yaw Quansah** and composer **Anthony R. Green** weave movement, sound, and text into a multimedia installation inspired by the Adinkra symbol "Hye Anhye" (that, which does not burn). *Na wo pe se me hye, na nso me nhye da* (*You wished me burnt, but I will never burn*) is all at once an affirmation of queer and Black care, and a prayer for strength, resistance, and solidarity amongst Africans everywhere, standing up against systems of racism, classism, capitalism, and colonialism that have attempted to burn the existence of Blackness, African-ness, and queerness. The artists' dancing embodies a conversation across the UK and Ghana. The presence of batik fabrics, a symbol of Ghanaian tradition and craft shared through generations, grounds the work in a tactile sense of belonging, asking: How do we honor what flows through us?

On a circular pedestal, visitors then encounter **Akpene Akosua Deku's** *LJL* (*Love in Ewe*) (2025). One side of the installation flourishes with vibrancy, while the other bears the scars of neglect. The installation explores the complexity of human bonds and the barriers that society creates to separate people. The artist, based in Kumasi, speaks to the longing for connection and challenges the audience to dismantle the invisible walls we erect. In a world marked by division, this installation serves as a reminder of love and community's healing potential.

Routes of Rest and Resistance

Rebecca Pokua Korang & Efia Serwah's *On Murmurs and Mouthfuls* (2025) unfolds as a textile and sound installation. The artists collaborate between Berlin and Kumasi by means of collage and storytelling. Their installation explores the intersections of food, colonialism, and queer intimacy. Drifting between visibility and obscurity, the installation queers the act of storytelling, inviting visitors to step inside. Inspired by the market as a site of hidden intimacies, colonial ties, and rupture, this work looks at the dynamics of soft power and cultural amnesia — where mouths declare queerness un-African, while Maggi cubes become the taste of culture. What is taste but another

kind of history? What is history but another kind of hunger?

Near the window, looking toward Alexanderplatz, visitors find **Chie Marquart-Tabel & Austin Nortey's** *Defining Survival* (*Queer Everexistence in Motion*) (2025). The artists consider "survival" as an enduring, creative force that resists human and, above all, white, Western, and colonial dominance and regimentation as a connection across places and times, leaving traces and spores, becoming part of a cycle. Austin Nortey's work combines second-hand textiles and corroded metal scrap traces, while Chie Marquart-Tabel's semi-figurative, mystical formal language runs through cardboard sculptures and the quilt. By inviting viewers to lie on a quilt in the exhibition space, observe the movements of the sculptures, and follow the poetic sound installation by **Bodi Babatola**, the work offers a place of arrival and rest.

FLOOR PLAN

- 1 **Home is Resistance**
(event and cinema space)
- 2 **Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi**
(crazinisT artisT)
- 3 **Marcella Nuerkie Akuetteh**
- 4 **Sarah Ama Duah**
- 5 **Rüzgâr Buşki & Mawuenya Amudzi**
- 6 **Martin Toloku**
- 7 **Anthony R. Green & Julius Yaw Quansah**
- 8 **Akpene Akosua Deku**
- 9 **Rebecca Pokua Korang & Efia Serwah**
- 10 **Chie Marquart-Tabel & Austin Nortey**

Funded by



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für bildende Kunst

Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 11/13
1st floor (via escalator)
10178 Berlin

Barrier-free access
via elevator
(Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 11,
at TEDi)

Tue–Sun
12:00–18:00

Fri
12:00–20:00

www.ngbk.de

29 March –
1 June 2025

Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi
Martin Toloku
Sarah Ama Duah
Anthony R. Green
& **Julius Yaw Quansah**
Rüzgâr Buşki
& **Mawuenya Amudzi**
Marcella Nuerkie Akuetteh
Rebecca Pokua Korang
& **Efia Serwah**
Akpene Akosua Deku
Chie Marquart-Tabel
& **Austin Nortey**
Angel Maxine
Isabel Kwarteng-Acheampong
Audrey Obuobisa-Darko
Baahwa
Damien Kwadjo
Efua Osei
Kobena Ampofo
Kwame Boateng
Nenyi Ato Bentum
Bodi Babatola
Otis Mensah
Kwame Brenyah
and the **K+ +V Performance Swarm**

ngbk

nGbK work group
Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi (crazinisT artisT), hn. lyonga,
Sunny Pfalzer, Malte Pieper, Maj Smoszna

ARTISTS

CALENDAR

Friday, 28 March, 19:00 (de/en)
Exhibition opening

Exhibition space, 1st floor
with the performance "TIME BOMB"
by Marcella Nuerkie Akuetteh and
a concert performance by Anthony
R. Green & Julius Yaw Quansah, a.o.

Friday, 18 April, 12:00
(Ewe/no language barrier)
Protest performance

Meeting point:
exhibition space, 1st floor
by Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi

Saturday, 19 April, 19:00 (de/en)
Performance Marathon

Event space, 1st floor
by the K++V Swarm (Annika Hausherr,
Cosima Zora, Florin Garzotto, Iris Nufer
und Lucy Stossfellner, Jasmin Rolli,
Kyrillos Nyx, Lis Kleiner, Luis Stadler,
Martina Schädler, Maysam Imran
Alsous and Keone Lee, Meret
Schüpbach, Momo von Hettlingen,
Rahel Hauri, Sara Loosli, Stephanie
Anna Motz – class of Sunny Pfalzer,
University of Applied Arts and Science
Lucerne) and invited guests

Tuesday–Friday, 22–25 April
14:00–18:00 (de/en)
Open studios, screenings,
workshops, readings, discussions
Event space, 1st floor
with pIAR Alumni, Jasmin Rolli, Austin
Nortey, Kwame Brenyah, Mawwenya
Amudzi and guests

Tuesday, 22 April, 19:00 (en)
Screening
Event space, 1st floor
pIAR movie night – short films by
artists and activists affiliated with
pIAR, collective watching and popcorn

Saturday, 26 April, 17:00 (en/de)
Dinner and concert
Stadtwerkstatt, 1st floor
Love fEAST – a celebration with
a concert by Angel Maxine, music
performance by Kwame Brenyah, DJs,
guests, Love and Ghanaian food

Saturday, 3 May
15:00 (de) and 16:00 (en)
Curatorial tour
Exhibition space, 1st floor
on the occasion of Gallery Weekend

Saturday, 17 May
15:00 (de) and 16:00 (en)
Curatorial tour
Exhibition space, 1st floor
on the occasion of International Day
Against Homophobia, Transphobia
and Biphobia

Sunday, 1 June, 11:00–14:00
(no language barrier)
Event for BIPOC
Exhibition space, 1st floor
"Queering Black Church Narratives"
Register via anmeldung@ngbk.de

15:00 (en)
Exhibition closing with
performances, protest, and
readings in public space
Exhibition space, 1st floor and various
locations on Alexanderplatz
Together we walk, protest, and dance
from the exhibition space through
Alexanderplatz to open PRIDE month
in solidarity with the Ghanaian queer
community and LGBTQIA+ all over
the world facing violence and
discrimination through newly
implemented homo and transphobic
legislations, sharing queer black
church narratives and readings of
the "Activist Choreographies of Care"
publication with Angel Maxine, Damien
Kwadjo, hn. lyonga, Isabel Kwarteng-
Acheampong, Kwame Boateng, Otis
Mensah and Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi

Affiliated events:

Friday, 16 May–Monday, 26 May
Exhibition
by iki yos piña, mani tapes, and wat3r
mami (Dont hit a la negrx), curated by
BARAZANI.berlin
Location: BARAZANI.berlin,
Projektraum SPREEUFER,
Spreeufer 6, 10178 Berlin

Detailed and up-to-date
information on all dates
at ngbk.de

ACTIVIST CHOREOGRAPHIES OF CARE

Song to my Mother in Ewe when
distressed, lonely, and hopeless

Naye Naye Naye
Naye Naye yeee
Ne do Agutoa nu de
Ne se gbedidia de,
Nanya be nye le yor wo

Mother, Mother Mother
Mother, Mother Mother
if you reach the peak of Agu
mountain
if you hear any voice,
you should know that I am
the one calling you

Queer voice calling from the far and
near:

"We hear you, we see you,
and we stand in solidarity
with queer voices everywhere!
Together, we rise against
oppression and discrimination,
regardless of borders, cultures,
or identities. Your struggles are
our struggles. Let our collective
voices echo through the margins,
demanding justice, equality,
and love for all. We are queer,
we are proud, and we are
unstoppable!"
Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi

In a world where systems of oppression
continuously reinvent themselves, where
cycles of exclusion and violence extend
across history and geography, **Activist**
Choreographies of Care: perfocraZe
International Artist Residency marks
a critical moment—a space for
solidarity, reflection, and transformation.
Connecting to the perfocraZe
International Artist Residency (pIAR),
a self-organized safer space for people
of the queer community-based in
Kumasi, Ghana, that boldly stands up
against anti-LGBTQIA+ politics and
legislation. *Activist Choreographies*
of Care opens a satellite space of pIAR
in Berlin.

Through installation, film, textiles,
poetry, and performance, the invited
artists engage with the search for
queer ancestries; they explore circular
narrations and speculative futures,
building worlds that hold space
for connection and daily resistance.
Looking at pre-colonial histories,
the project challenges Western
notions of binary genders and
queerness, to raise international
solidarity and build resilience networks.

LGBTQIA+ history Ghana and
current events

Queerness is part of the tradition
of many cultures around the world,
both in many historical and contemporary
communities in Europe and in Africa.
Before colonization, it was a tradition
among the Nzema (a Ghanaian tribe)
for adult men to marry each other;
these marriages were called Agonwole
agyalé, "friendship marriages."
The couple observed all the social
equivalents of a heterosexual marriage,
a bride price was paid and a traditional
wedding ceremony was held. Among
the Nankani, marriages were entered
into between women in order to ensure
the continuity of the family genealogy
or secure autonomy. These woman-to-
woman marriages have been practiced
in West Africa for centuries. The Akan,
Ewe, Ga, and many other Ghanaian
languages also do not differentiate
between male and female pronouns.

Against this flexibility of African gender
systems, European colonial projects
historically erased these customs;
especially the influence of Christian
mission constructed a gender binary
that did not exist before. Thus,
systematic and institutional homophobia
or homophobia can be seen as a
colonial invention.

Prior to Ghana's independence (then
Gold Coast), non-reproductive sexual
practices were first criminalized under
British rule by the Offences Against the
Person Act 1861. However, these laws
have continuously shaped legal systems
even after independence. For instance,
section 104 of the Ghanaian Penal
Code of 1960 criminalizes "unnatural
carnal knowledge." In 2021, the anti-
LGBTQIA+ bill (formally known as
"Promotion of Proper Human Sexual
Rights And Ghanaian Family Values")
was platformed—a bill that aimed to
criminalize members of the LGBTQIA+
community and allies with a penalty of
up to five years in prison. It was passed
by the Ghanaian parliament in February
2024 with cross-party support and
did not come into force only due to the
delay of signing it into law by President
Nana Akufo-Addo before new elections
took place. However, the new
parliament allegedly plans to reclaim
the bill.

Discriminatory laws like these are
rooted in colonial continuities and
continued proselytising by Evangelical
US churches is fuelling homophobia on
the African continent. Institutions like
Family Watch International or the World
Congress of Families, listed as a hate
group by human-rights NGOs, are often
based in the US but hold conferences
across the globe, like in the Ghanaian
capital Accra in 2019. In January 2025,
the newly elected president Donald
Trump signed an executive order
assaulting trans-rights which is called
"Defending Women From Gender
Ideology Extremism and Restoring
Biological Truth to the Federal
Government."

Among the attendees and sponsors
of conferences like the African Family
Policy Conference 2022 in Utah,
one can find not only Trump's advisers
or parliamentarians from Ghana and
other African countries but also
members of the far-right AfD
(Alternative for Germany) political party.

The violence of these legislative
structures is not an isolated
phenomenon—it is interwoven with

global reactionary movements,
evangelical interventions, and nationalist
rhetoric that seek to dictate the
boundaries of identity and belonging.
It is crucial to re-read and re-write these
life-authoring texts, in order to confront,
detect, and re-think languages of
oppression—and to do so within global
structures of international solidarity.

pIAR: A Space of Radical Care

Established in Kumasi, Ghana,
perfocraZe International Artist
Residency (pIAR) is more than an artist
residency; it is a refuge, a hub for
artistic and activist exchange, and a
home. pIAR centers queer performance
art, as well as holding space for
neighborhood encounters between
queer and non-queer people and a safer
home for local young queer people
and women*. pIAR is founded and
directed by a Ghanaian trans-woman,
Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi, a multidisciplinary
activist, curator, philanthropist, and
mentor also known as "crazinisT artisT",
around whom the nGbK work group has
formed itself.

Since 2011, crazinisT artisT studio has
moved from one location to the other
within Kumasi. It has become an
important art and culture location in the
second largest city in Ghana and the
capital of the Ashanti Kingdom. In 2018,
pIAR was officially launched as an
international residency and has since
hosted hundreds of artists, activists,
researchers, curators, and writers from
near and distant places. Among its
locally and internationally renowned
events, the highlight of the year is its
Love fEAST, an annual dinner and dance
party that bridges the gap between
artists, queer families, and local
communities in Kumasi—a tradition
that will resonate in Berlin.

Activist Choreographies

In solidarity with Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi
and her activism, friendships, and
alliances began to form in Berlin prior
to the promotion of the anti-LGBTQIA+
bill. This opened an opportunity for many
Berlin-based artists that participated in
the residency in Ghana along with many
Ghanaian and other international artists
over the years.

We invited artists and activists from
Ghana, Berlin, and other places,
working with very different media,
to jointly install a temporary pIAR
satellite space in Berlin. Aside from
an exhibition, the program includes
performances, screenings, workshops,
and conversations, culminating in
a publication that seeks to document
and sustain these dialogues. Within the
financial, structural, institutional,
and intellectual means available to us,
we have made an effort to invite
as many local artists from Kumasi and
Ghana as possible—both those who
have been working with the residency
for many years and associated artists
and individuals connected to other
organizations, such as LGBT+ Rights
Ghana. We have also included members
of the queer community to support the
project as editors, authors, and graphic
designers. In this process, our aim is to
not only represent queer and decolonial
politics as curators of an exhibition, but
also deeply implement them on
a structural level: by redistributing
resources, by sharing access to
infrastructure and institutions where we
have the privilege to work and operate.

What does it mean to nurture and
sustain life in the face of systemic
violence? How do practices of care
challenge the structures that seek to
erase us? In bringing together artists
whose works dismantle colonial
histories inscribed upon bodies and
spaces, *Activist Choreographies of*
Care envisions futures rooted in
connection and resilience. It is a living,
breathing space—one that invites
visitors to participate, to share meals,
to witness, to learn, to build community.

We welcome those in Berlin—
pIAR alumni, neighbors, activists,
and artists—to join in this collective
moment of resistance and care.

– the curators

MANIFESTO

This work is an act of resistance.

It does not look away or turn the
other cheek.
It boldly affirms and holds life.
This project blurs the boundaries
that exist, universalizing our issues.
It is a powerful call to action and
a courageous dismantling of
the systems that seek to destroy us.

It is a testimony of and about how
our bodies sought to find freedoms
and the things that hover or stand
in our way to desired liberation.

We are a collective of community
organizers, curators, and artists who
understand distance, nearness,
and care.
We have scooped and carried
ourselves intentionally to this place
from other places and contexts
to do this work.

As activists, writers, artists, and
siblings, we have arrived with
questions, and a deep desire for life
and recipes.
We offer our voices big or small and
our lives to this work so that they
may find another sibling who needs
to hear or sit with them.

We are doing this work;

to bear witness to the violence
of Western colonial legacies and
to show how far-reaching their
consequences are to our lives here,
and the lives of siblings in distant
places to lean into the ceremonious
tradition of being—in ways that are
textual and lived-in, in performances,
or rituals, prescribed or customary,
and crucial for holding narratives that
exist within the neighborhoods
of our lives and the places that hold
us together.

This work allows us to rally, to do,
and undo language, in a manner that
may be the benchmark of our lives.
Here, we look at how we re-write
and write ourselves out of colonial
underpinnings. As the elder Toni
Morrison has taught us, this work is
a facility that allows us to tune out
chaos and routine events. It is a way
of thinking—not just feeling but
thinking about things that are
disparate, unresolved, mysterious,
problematic, or just sweet.

We are here.