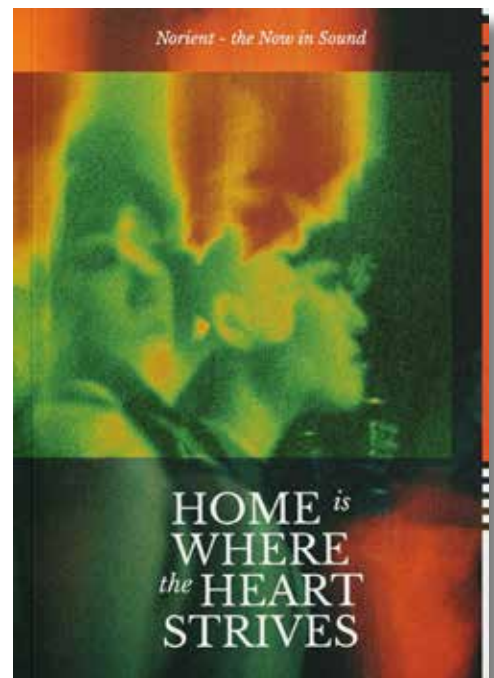


HOME IS WHERE THE HEART STRIVES

out
now



*How does listening shape a place –
and how does a place shape listening?*

*How do global nationalism, politics
and wars influence music and art?*

*How can unbearable living conditions
inspire ideas of unactualized places?*

—

The new Norient book *Home is Where the Heart Strives* explores what place means in relation to music and sound. 85 contributors from 38 countries map their sonic landscapes of migration, war, queerness, and home through essays, poems, articles, artworks, photos, and sound pieces.. From a metalhead smuggling banned tapes across the Syrian border to an oasis in the mountains of Bogotá where people gather to vogue, we are looking for places where differences don't dissolve but resonate.

Home is Where the Heart Strives
edited by Philipp Rhensius, Janina
Neustupny, Thomas Burkhalter, Hannes
Liechti, and Vinzent Maria Preuß

with contributions by
Sally Garama, Faravaz Farvardin, McKenzie
Wark, Ronja Falkenbach, Tanasgol
Sabbagh, Majd Shidiac, Raphael Kariuki
aka DJ Raph, Sergio Salazar, Suvani
Suri, Gisela Swaragita, Rehab Hazgui,
Kadallah Burrowes, Thasil Suhara Backer,
and more thinkers and artists worldwide.

Four colors, softback
16,5 × 23,5 cm, 312 pages
ISBN 9783952544464
DOI: doi.org/10.56513/VLGZ1905
EUR 29.– (Print)

Release
published by Norient Books
Bern, Switzerland
June 12, 2025
norient.com/books



BOOKS



Order your
copy now
by scanning
the QR code!

As I write this, bombs are stealing
people from houses
As I write this, ghosts of forgotten
dreams are waiting to surprise me
As I write this, the bass transforms
dread into pleasure
As I write this, Bell Hooks calls out
the crowned fools on X
As I write this, my skin is longing for
the breeze of your breath
As I write this, a jazz band is playing
6 milliseconds off the beat
As I write this, coherence is exposed
as a lie from the 90s when everyone
wore jeans and a T-shirt
As I write this, the moon isn't shining
until it's reflected in broken glass
As I write this, the sound is
listening to you
it hears all these feelings
without words
all the resentments you were taught
and now turn against yourself
and the quiet thrill of staying
with the dissonance
I swear

Home is where the heart is, but
place is where the heart strives.
A place – like this book,
perhaps – where writers and
artists worldwide explore
meanings of place through
queerness, connection, sorrow,
dancing, exile, love, and
resistance. Where differences
don't dissolve but resonate.

Philipp Rhensius

NORIENT
BOOKS

ISBN 9783952544464



9 783952 544464 >

NORIENT

HOME is WHERE the HEART STRIVES

Norient - the Now in Sound

HOME is WHERE the HEART STRIVES

FROM SHAMISEN TO KAYAMBA



Artwork: dudusquad

SALLY GARAMA

ESSAY

26

After growing up in Japan, Sally, a Kenyan teenager, wanted to reconnect with Kenyan music upon returning home, while dealing with the meaning of that term, «home». In the process, she came to terms with her multicultural experience and identity.

Unnamed City, Japan, 2002. Sandwiched between my brother and sister in the back of the family car. I watched my dad sift through a CD album and place his choice in the CD player. A chorus of groans would rise from the back as E-Sir's music began to emanate from the speakers. He was a big deal back home.

I wondered why dad insisted on this ritual because outside of the vehicle and culture festivals held at school, my life did not depend on my knowledge of Swahili musicians, but rather, on how fast I could assimilate into Japanese culture and understand the American education system. Picture it. A Kenyan child with an American accent belting out a Japanese song based on folklore taught earlier that week in preparation for setsubun — a Japanese holiday celebrated at the beginning of Spring.

Back Home: Foreign

Returning to Kenya in 2006, I often spoke with varying levels of fascination at the differences between Japan and Kenya. When I realized we would not return to Japan, I started to adapt. However, in many ways, I was still a foreigner to my classmates and larger family. In those moments when it got to me, I found solace in Linkin Park and Coldplay. From time to time, I stumbled across a song by a local musician playing on the radio. While I understood the language, I would politely request that the station be changed, wondering how the radio hosts would praise what to me sounded like a clumsy imitation of popular music at the time.

Growing up, love and affection were expressed through material possessions and food. When I entered university in Nairobi, peers and

Confirming My Plurality

Ngugi wa Thiong'o said that life was a battle of «...the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it.» Looking back, I can see my father was attempting to renegotiate the domineering presence of Western music in my life. By then I adored how much alternative rock could capture and express my feelings. So much so that the style of metaphors and lyricism would creep into my work and sense of self. For the longest time, «Somewhere I Belong» (Linkin Park 2003) was the embodiment of my teenage years.

27

FROM SHAMISEN TO KAYAMBA

«I'm afraid that we could lose a lot of good people inside our country. Some people just lost themselves. I feel like part of the nation just disappeared.»

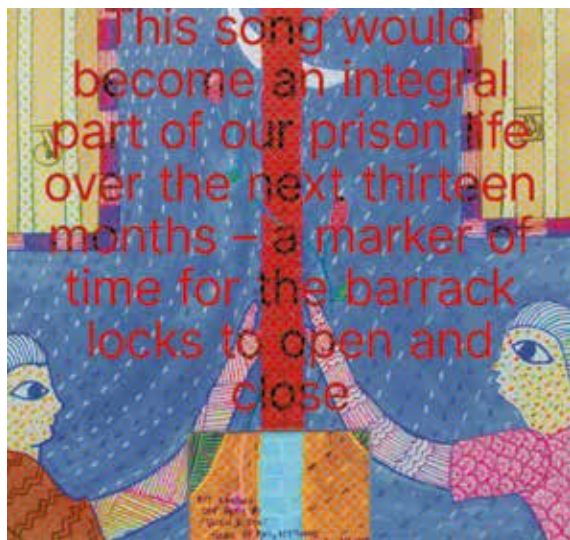
Ujif_notfound, media project of Georgy Potopalsky, new media artist, electronic musician, and composer, based in Kyiv, in the Ukraine episode of the podcast series *TIMEZONES* by Norient and the Goethe-Institut, curated and produced by Dmytro Fedorenko, released on December 29, 2022.

«Thinking about the limitlessness of sound, of space, and when we make a creative world for ourselves to exist in, when we create a context for ourselves, we're really creating an extension of our physical selves.»

Sulentina (Esra Canogullari), Bay Area-based (USA) DJ, producer and interdisciplinary artist, in the Bay Area episode of the podcast series *TIMEZONES* by Norient and the Goethe-Institut, curated and produced by Lara Sarkissian, released on September 30, 2021.

OUR PRISON SOUNDTRACK

by Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal



Artwork: Upendra Vaddadi

DEVANGANA KALITA
AND NATASHA NARWAL

ESSAY

182

Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita are student activists who were arrested in May 2020 and implicated under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for leading peaceful protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act. In June 2021 they were released after 13 months, while many more falsely accused students, activists, and scholars continue to be unjustly held for over three years now.^[1] Here, Devangana and Natasha contemplate the sound of time passing in their prison barracks, and the ways in which listening became a constant companion. Their account underscores the idea that one cannot think about city sounds without taking into account the silences and sounds that have been silenced by the state.

[1] Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima, Khalid Saifi are amongst those who are still unjustly incarcerated and awaiting bail despite repeated appeals and statements from various public, political, and humanitarian fronts to release them. Gulfisha, Natasha, and Devangana were lodged in the same barracks in prison together.

Every morning as the sun rose, the old Bollywood classic «Aae malik tere bande hum» (O Master, We Are Your People) would echo loudly through the corridors of all prison wards. We were lodged in Ward 8 of Jail No. 6 in the Tihar Central Jail, New Delhi—the only women's prison in South Asia's largest prison complex. Lata Mangeshkar's high-pitched voice in this almost hauntingly sad song stirred unexpected emotions on that first morning inside the prison cell. The lyrics felt strangely poignant. We had been falsely framed and imprisoned as «terrorists» under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) by a vindictive regime for participating in peaceful protests for equal citizenship against the CAA-NPR-NRC, protests that stood against a politics of hate to proclaim the power of unity and love.

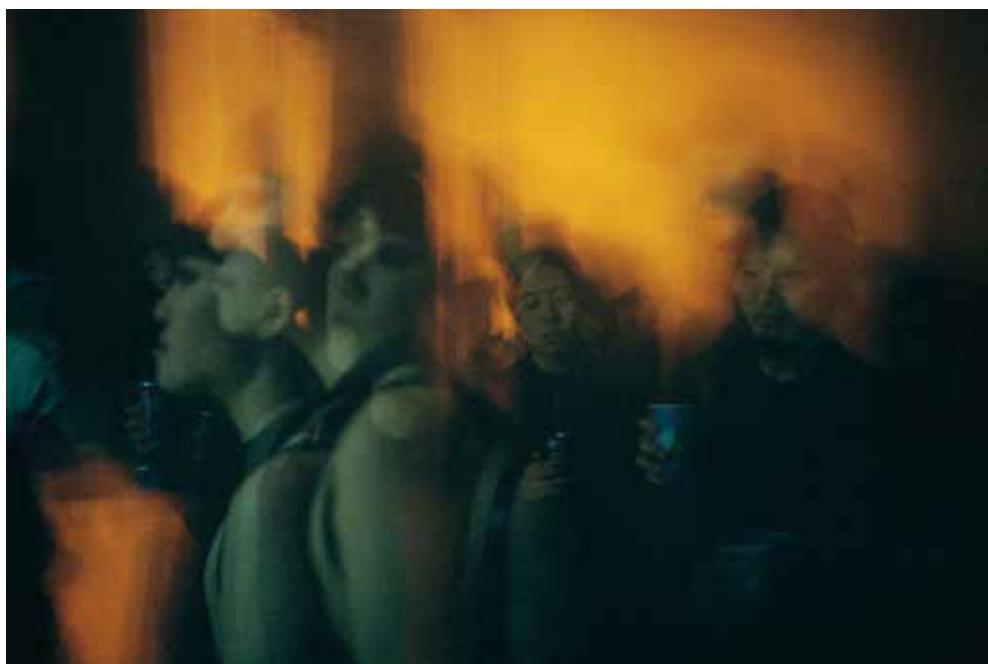
jab zulmon ka ho saamanaa / tab tu hee hamein thamanaa /
woh burayee karein hum bhalayee karein / nahi badle ki ho
kamanaa / badh uthe pyaar ka har kadam / aur mitein baeyr
ka ye bharam

(when faced with injustice, then hold us firm you must, they spread evil, we spread goodness, with no urge for revenge, may every step ahead be filled with love, may every thought of enmity be banished)

This song that played at dawn and dusk everyday without fail would become an integral part of our prison life over the

183

OUR PRISON SOUNDTRACK



The night writes the stories
by itself into the film reel of my camera.

Constant Value #27 is an experimental Techno party
series and label in Seoul, South Korea. This photo was
taken in 2018.

HOME IS WHERE
THE HEART STRIVES

POEM

164

165

LIEUX DE VOIX

SASHA LANGFORD

Lieux de Voix

by Sasha Langford

listen closely to my voice:

you will hear a child crawl out
of my mouth.

you will hear a first cry.

you will hear a cut
and what tears,
both perineum and pressure.

my voice –

never not a ledger
of gauze
and daylight
and blood.

never not a document of milk,
and scissors,
and singing.

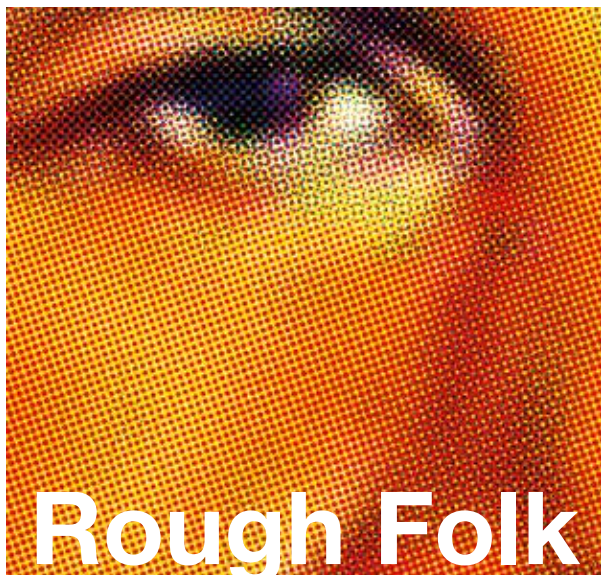
my voice tells me that skin
is the same thing
as listening.

my voice tells me
to forgive my mother:

it's not her fault
she made me audible.

it's not her fault
she made me able
to be alone.

RECOVERING SAMPLE AUTHORSHIP: THE CASE OF SOHAN LAL



Artwork: Studio Flux

CHRIS MCGUINNESS

ESSAY

86

As digital samplers became more prominent during the 1990s, the «soundware» industry grew, providing sample libraries for music producers to use in their derivative works. South Asian sounds have long occupied a place in this market while being advertised as «world» sounds. Here, Chris McGuinness discusses the case of Sohan Lal, a Punjabi singer whose voice ended up in such a sample library and was used in many popular songs. A case study that shows how sampling aesthetics and Lal's anonymity are intertwined, yet also a product of Indian musical lineages.

In 1997, British company Zero-G released *Deepest India*, a three-CD sample library of performances by Indian folk and classical musicians. Library owners are granted permission to use the samples to create new music without owing royalties to neither Zero-G nor the recording artists. While samples from *Deepest India* have contributed to many hip hop and electronic music songs, one sample in particular — that of the voice of Sohan Lal — stands out, having been used for well-known songs spanning decades. Despite the wide reach of Lal's voice, his identity remains largely unknown.

The Sample's History

Lal's voice first gained notoriety in India during 2004 when it was sampled for Shamur's song «Let the Music Play». Lal's rough folk voice was autotuned over up-tempo hip hop beats, and the song was embraced by Indian youths for its timely mixture of tradition and modernity. Yet, few knew that Shamur was not Indian, but rather an Italian group using royalty-free samples.

The story continued further: In 2014, electronic musician Axel Thesleff released the track «Bad Karma», which manipulates the pitch of Lal's voice over synthesizers and beats in the style of the genre trap. «Bad Karma» garnered hundreds of millions of YouTube views, and Shamur's representatives sent legal notice to Thesleff^[1] claiming ownership of the sample, only to find out that the voice belonged to a royalty-free library. Many listeners were also confused about

[1] This claim was made by Thesleff on his own Facebook page in 2015, see Thesleff 2015.

87

RECOVERING SAMPLE AUTHORSHIP: THE CASE OF SOHAN LAL

How to Get Ready for a Protest

192

193

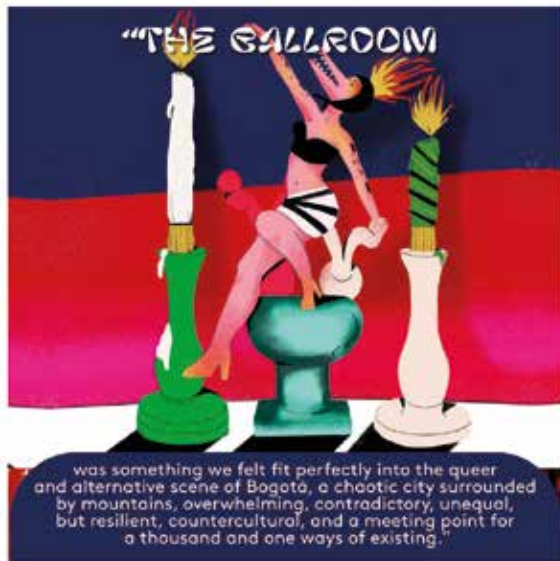
Photo by Thasil Suhara Backer



How to get ready for a protest: Sivasagar, Assam, 2019.

A VOGUING OASIS IN THE MOUNTAINS

by Diana Santos and Vera Fonseca



Artwork: Juliana Cuervo

DIANA SANTOS
AND VERA FONSECA

ESSAY

252

Vera and Diana walk us through their journey with the Ballroom scene in Bogotá, Colombia. As they delve into Bogotá's contradictions of inequality and resilience in diversity, they reveal how a local Ballroom is created adjacent to music genres like merengue and perreo. This essay identifies shared meanings, discontinuities, and local innovations in the Ballroom scenes in New York and Bogotá.

We are an unusual couple in our subdued society. Inhabiting the streets, even the party, is challenging. The looks, whispers, and giggles, among other things, serve as a constant reminder that something, in their eyes, «isn't right» with us. Despite this, we have been walking this path together for nearly eight years, and while diverging from the heteronorm, we have entered into a dreamlike world inhabited by fantastic creatures that, like us, delve into the depths of this mountain in search of the light and warmth of self-celebration. We want to share a part of this voguing oasis that we have known together, to transmit the aesthetic, political, and sound richness being breathed into Bogotá's Ballroom culture.

Ballroom originated in Harlem, New York in the late 1980s as a way for gender and sexual minorities, mainly Black and migrant trans women, to challenge the prevailing framework of racism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. Although it is a space for celebration and fantasy, its structure has institutionalized categories, rules, and customs that have persisted to this day, albeit not without resistance, spreading to new contexts and territories.

Ballroom is often considered a «queer heritage,» where voguing and performance are used as tools to challenge the social and cultural expectations of gender, resist the norms that oppress marginalized bodies, and imagine new ways of existing beyond the usual frameworks of exclusion and violence. It is a space where, as Nicole Flórez Cruz (2023) has suggested, a community of affection can be formed, where marginalized communities, including Black, *cuir* (queer), and impoverished people, can find a sense of belonging and restore dignity to their lives through their chosen families and *casas* (houses).

[1] «Vogue,» or «voguing,» is a highly stylized, modern house dance that evolved out of the Harlem «Ballroom» scene of the 1980s. The Ballroom scene (also known as the Ballroom community, Ballroom culture, or just Ballroom) is an African-American and Latino underground LGBTQIA+ subculture.

Our Body is Our Manifesto

In Bogotá, the ancestral legacy of resistance has been revived to create a new version of Ballroom incorporating different political

253

A VOGUING OASIS IN THE MOUNTAINS