

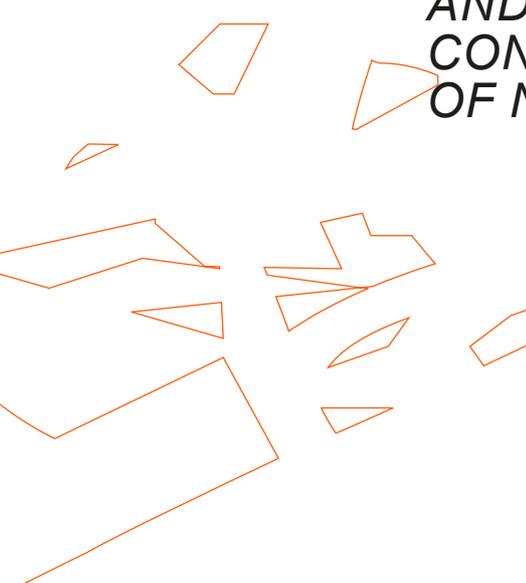
EURAFRICA A CONVERSATION WITH STEFAN JONSSON AND PEO HANSEN



EURO—VISION is an art-led enquiry that explores the extractivist gaze of European institutions and its policies. The relationship between international relations, trade, economic policy and military operations come into focus through the lens of Critical Raw Materials. In 2008, the European Commission adopted the Critical Raw Materials Initiative, which defined a strategy for accessing resources viewed as imperative to the EU's subsistence. The criticality of resources is measured according to supply risk and economic importance. Policies are drawn up to ensure the continued availability of materials deemed critical. Such policies have led to agreements guiding the biological and geological exhaustion of the Global South. The **current list**, revised in 2020, includes 30 materials, including Silica, Cobalt Natural Rubber, Phosphate rock, and the newly added Lithium and Titanium.



HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND EXTRACTION BEYOND THE REMOVAL AND DISPLACEMENT OF MINERALS—TO ENCOMPASS POLICIES, INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND REGULATIONS THAT IMPOSE CONTROVERSIAL FORMS OF STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES ON COMMUNITIES?



EURO—VISION focuses on the inscriptive operations of initiatives such as the establishment of Free Trade Zones (FTZs), fisheries partnerships agreements (FPAs), and de-risking investment tools like public-private partnerships (PPPs). In doing so, FRAUD proposes to consider these agreements through the lens of Critical Raw Materials, as well as to incorporate a wider set of 'materials', such as labour and fish(eries). We argue that the latter are managed as resources to be extracted, and that understanding them as critical raw materials as defined by governmental bodies helps to understand how their plunder is mobilised and institutionalised. More importantly, this framework enables us to look beyond these practices to the possibility of thinking and doing otherwise.

The following text is based on a conversation with Professor Stefan Jonsson and Professor Peo Hansen in the EURO—VISION podcast series.

In the previous episode, we considered the importance of the Berlin Conference in the genealogy of extraction between the European and the African continent with Prof. Adebajo.¹ In the following, we consider how the very foundation of the EU was predicated upon this extractivist model. In their book ‘Eurafrica, the Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism’, Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson debunk the theory of what they refer to as the Immaculate Conception of the European Union formation, one where a group of benevolent Western European leaders chose to set aside nationalist rivalries to unite for peace, democracy and freedom, to one where the cooperation of European states to no little extent was predicated upon the exploitation of African resources, which could be better accomplished through a coordinated effort. Thus, according to Hansen and Jonsson, the concept of uniting the original six western European states was itself predicated upon the extraction of resources across the African continent, and “indispensable for Europe’s geopolitical and economic survival”.² It was in the context of a devastated post-war Europe, at a time when colonial ontologies were being challenged, that this concept gained traction. In short, central to the definition of Eurafrica was the full incorporation of French Algeria and the association of Belgium’s, France’s and the Netherlands’ colonies to the European Economic Community, when it was founded in 1957. This institutionalised the colonies’ role as purveyors of raw materials. Hansen and Jonsson have summarised it as follows: “Eurafrica is able to make sense both of *the political and discursive discontinuity* and *the infrastructural or economic continuity* between the late colonial period and an emerging Neo-colonial globalisation.”³ This is supported by archival research, foremost into the inter-governmental negotiations that led up to the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, and numerous other sources. As one analyst put it in 1957: “It is in Africa that Europe will be made”.⁴ The book also posits the European Economic Community’s (EEC) true historical function “to adjust international relations, economic extraction, and means of production to a world order with nominally independent African states, while retaining control of the continents resources.”⁵ We believe that the genealogy of

EURO—VISION partially stems from Eurafrica, which is why this work has been so important to our project. We are therefore very happy to have the opportunity to discuss these questions with the authors directly.

FRAUD In your book, you outline how the Eurafrican project is about association with the member states’ colonies, rather than inclusion, which is exemplified in how Eurafrica extracts resources from Africa while blocking freedom of movement for Africans. In other words, resources flow into the European continent while people cannot. Can you explain certain examples where elements to impede migration were specifically discussed and implemented in the European Integration negotiations, and how this important distinction between association and inclusion is perpetuated in Europe today?

PROF. JONSSON France’s and Belgium’s colonies were associated to the EEC in 1957, and, with the exception of Guinea, their association would continue also after their independence, as agreed in the 1963 Yaoundé Convention between the EEC and 18 newly independent African countries. Association, whether colonial or post-colonial/neo-colonial, mainly involved matters of trade and investment. And there is widespread agreement among researchers that the EEC’s (and subsequently the EU’s) association regime with Africa has worked in favour of European interests. In short, it has perpetuated relations of dependency and African states’ role as producers of raw materials. Development scholars noticed these problems already in the 1960s, and those African leaders and activists who advocated Pan-African post-colonial cooperation—as a means to challenge European dependency—had of course addressed the problems all along.

As to the question of full inclusion of the French and Belgium colonies into the EEC, whereby colonial subjects would attain equal status with the metropolises and the colonial subjects equal treatment, this was never seriously considered. And it was impossible for the simple fact that they were colonies—rather than independent states—and thus had no influence whatsoever on the negotiations that led up to their associations with the EEC in 1957. As long as their populations were colonial subjects and not equal citizens, inclusion could not be a realistic question.

¹ Samson and Gallardo, *Adekeye Adebajo: The Curse of Berlin*.

² Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, p. 8.

³ Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, p. 257.

⁴ Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, p. 107.

⁵ Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, p. 16.

PROF. HANSEN But there was one crucial exception to this: Algeria, or the Algerian *départements* of France. For France, Algeria (together with a few other places) was not a colony but an integral part of the republic. Consequently, France made sure to include, rather than associate, Algeria in the EEC. And this, of course, raised all sorts of problems related to what we just mentioned. Because, as established by the French constitution of 1946 (the Fourth Republic), all Algerians were, formally speaking, French citizens. A full inclusion into the EEC thus struck right at the heart of the issue of full equal treatment for the Algerians within the EEC. This would include Algerians' right to free movement in the EEC and hence their right to work and receive equal rights and treatment in any of the six member states. As we show in our book, however, the realization of such a scenario was never contemplated amongst the six; instead the consensus was that Algerians should be excluded from equal treatment and free movement. Nevertheless, to stipulate the outright exclusion of Algerians in the EEC treaty was a sensitive matter for France and so the Treaty of Rome had to be phrased in a way that did not make this too apparent. An explicit exclusion would have necessitated what France refused—namely, to have the treaty establish an equally explicit differentiation between French citizens in the metropole and those residing in Algeria. If undertaken candidly, a discriminatory differentiation of this type would have been in obvious contradiction with French colonial myth and ideology, and it would have been particularly contradictory, we may add, at a time when the French government (falsely) claimed to be doing its utmost *not* to exclude or discriminate, but rather to include and ensure the full equality of the 'Muslim French citizens from Algeria', which was a new legal category created in 1956 specifically for the alleged purpose of rectifying the inequalities faced by Algeria's Muslims. This formed part of Paris' strategy to win the war in Algeria and thus preserve Algeria's status as an integral part of France. Even though nominally French citizens, 'Muslim' or non-European Algerians were still formally excluded from several political rights, not to speak of the many forms of harsh racist discrimination and social deprivation that they were subjected to, and which thus made a mockery of their formal French citizenship.

So, indeed, the migration and free movement issues were very much discussed when the EEC was founded in the 1950s and it was discussed in a similar way as it is today. Now as then, the EU is reaping the benefits of its favourable and unequal access to African resources; and now as then it wants to ensure control of migration from Africa. But

this does not mean, as is commonly assumed, that the EU wants to stop African labour migration; what it wants to ensure is unequal treatment. Hence, to study today's EU migration policy is also, in part, to study Eurafrica's colonial legacy of unequal relations between the European Union and African countries.

FRAUD According to you, how is the notion of Eurafrica still relevant today, and how are economic developments and political negotiation further strengthening this legacy of African states as raw material providers?

PROF. HANSEN Yes, as already noted, Eurafrica is still very relevant today. The structure of Eurafrican association that was erected by the EEC's colonial association in 1957 is still partly in place, and if we are to grasp today's unequal relations, we need to know how things started off in the 1950s, an era of explicit colonial domination. To be sure, EU leaders do talk a lot about a "partnership of equals", the importance of African development and all the aid- and investment-related EU initiatives in place to facilitate this process. Yet, the asymmetric and unequal division of labour, production and trade is still the most distinctive and resilient aspect of the current relationship between the EU and Africa.

Also, the EU's global aspirations vis-à-vis Africa remain vigorous. In 2018 the European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker launched the new "Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs", focusing on a range of economic issues but also on security and, as always, on measures to prevent irregular migration.⁶

The new European Commission that took office in December 2019 followed suit and pledged to make the EU's partnership with Africa its number one global priority. The new Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, wasted no time in going to work. Before her first hundred days in office had come to an end, she had not only visited the African Union's headquarters in Addis Ababa twice; she had also presented a brand new "Comprehensive Strategy with Africa".⁷ The strategy document was prepared jointly with Josep Borrell, the EU's new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. As Borrell emphasized when presenting the new Strategy with Africa in 2020: "A part of Europe's future is at stake

⁶ European Commission, 2018.

⁷ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2020.

in Africa. To face our common challenges, we need a strong Africa, and Africa needs a strong Europe”.⁸

It is this precise rhetoric of mutuality and interdependence between the two continents that permeates the EU’s current relations with Africa, and, as we show in our book, the same rhetoric was omnipresent in the discourse on Eurafrica from the 1920s to the 1950s, as it captured one of the key reasons adduced by the EU’s founders for their decision to annex colonial Africa to the European project in the Treaty of Rome. What is good for Africa is good for the EU and vice versa. To be sure, the current strategy acknowledges that “Africa’s potential attracts increased interest from many players on the world scene.”⁹ But it also highlights that China and the US continue to be minor players in Africa compared to the EU. Although the past decade’s news reporting on China’s role in Africa may have given the impression to the contrary, China still trails far behind the EU when it comes to African trade and investment, and the same applies to the U.S.

Despite the EU’s unbroken economic dominance in Africa, however, the EU’s strategy with Africa leaves no room for complacency. In order to develop and further solidify the economic partnership, Brussels’ new strategy underscores that the “partnership should now also translate into a strong political alliance”. Such a political alliance is “crucial in a multipolar world where collective action is sorely needed. Enhanced cooperation on global and multilateral affairs will be at the heart of our common action.” This is clearly the boldest and most interesting element in the new strategy. Brussels points out that “[t]ogether Africa and Europe form the largest voting bloc in the UN” and that this joint force should be used to push for common causes.¹⁰ Moreover, the EU and Africa should act in unison “on the global scene to strengthen the multilateral rules-based order, promoting universal values, human rights, democracy, rule of law and gender equality.”¹¹

By invoking a “multipolar world”, the strategy also acknowledges that the EU’s strong position in Africa by no means should be taken for granted; hence the need for a *political* alliance with Africa. In January last year, Josep Borrell made this clear in his address to the European Parliament’s plenary debate on the EU’s common foreign and security policy. In pointing to the problems in the EU’s

“Southern neighbourhood”, and Libya in particular, Borrell sounded the alarm over Russia’s and Turkey’s recent inroads into Libya. In direct relation to this, Borrell went on to say: “Africa. Let us talk a lot about Africa. A continent of both promises and challenges.” Borrell did indeed talk a lot about Africa. In the short speech of merely three pages, Africa was mentioned no less than nine times. Whereas Libya and the Sahel were mentioned six and four times respectively, China was only mentioned once in passing, as was India. The U.S. was not mentioned at all. And we should remember that Borrell’s speech was about the EU’s foreign policy *in general*.¹²

The EU’s bid to form a *political* alliance with the African Union is a striking development. Especially when explicitly framed as helping Europe regain her geopolitical stamina and navigate the stormy waters of a “multipolar world”. In 2020, not long before the EU’s Strategy with Africa was presented, Angela Merkel contributed her opinion, saying that “Europe should also develop its own military capability. There may be regions outside Nato’s primary focus where Europe must, if necessary, be prepared to get involved. I see Africa as one example”. Prior to this, Merkel’s had pledged to launch a “Marshall Plan with Africa”—a comprehensive, long-term blueprint for economic development, peace, democracy and migration management in Africa. “Africa and Europe are neighbouring continents”, the plan establishes: “We are bound together by a shared history—and we are responsible for determining the course of our shared future. How successfully we manage the major challenges that lie ahead will decide not only the future and the fate of Africa—both its people and its natural environment—but also the future of Europe”.¹³

PROF. JONSSON As we show in our book, this is not the first time that Germans have proposed a Marshall Plan for Africa. By aligning with Africa, the EU sees itself much better equipped to deal with Russia, Turkey and China. With adversaries to the east in an uncertain multipolar world, the EU’s geopolitical alliance with Africa—“the largest voting bloc in the UN”—invokes an image of an emergent force between east and west, running from north to south.¹⁴ Headline in *The Economist* in 2018 refers

⁸ Herszenhorn, “EU’s Africa strategy stresses climate and digital policies.”

⁹ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2020, p. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹² “Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the European Parliament plenary debate on the annual report on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy”.

¹³ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017, p. 4.

to this as the “Rebirth of Eurafrica”—“Why Europe should focus on its growing interdependence with Africa”. As the re-birth of Eurafrica denotes, *The Economist* argues that Eurafrica was part and parcel of the “Roman, Carthaginian, Moorish and Venetian empires”.¹⁵ Yet, it fails to mention Eurafrica’s most recent historical materialization, namely that of being an integral part of the European Union when it was founded in 1957. As *Le Monde*’s headline put it on February 21, 1957: “*Première étape vers l’Eurafrrique: Accord des Six sur l’association des territoires d’outremer au marché commun*” (First step towards Eurafrica: Agreement of the Six [founding member states] on the association of the overseas territories to the common market).

FRAUD One very tangible example of the Eurafrican extractive gaze comes to life in Atlantropa. This vision put forward by German architect Herman Sörgel between 1928-1952 essentially proposed an enormous land grab in the Mediterranean, by lowering the sea level to create land to be cultivated, as well as huge dams to generate hydroelectricity. Atlantropa is often discussed as a marvel of engineering imagination, or as a delusion of grandeur in terms of ecological impact, however it is rarely put forward as an exemplification of the establishment of infrastructures and epistemologies of extraction with third countries. You use this as a powerful illustration of the concept in your book, along with other architectural visions of the time. Can you say something about the flow of energy and goods in the Atlantropa plan (or others), and also how, despite Atlantropa itself never being built, it has materialised in different modalities throughout the continent?

PROF. JONSSON Yes, Herman Sörgel’s Atlantropa is the most outrageous of all the blueprints for Eurafrica that circulated in the early to mid 1900s. For there were many similar models, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. They all shared at least two traits.

The first was a geopolitical reasoning that called for the resurrection of Europe as a power bloc in a historical situation when Europe saw both its global position threatened by the US and the Soviet Union and its racial superiority challenged by “the rising tide of color”, as one author put it.¹⁶ According to this reasoning, the geopolitical sphere of Eurafrica

would be headed by a united Europe that would be sustainable and prosperous thanks to its incorporation of Africa; and correspondingly, the bonds between once-antagonistic European states would be strengthened by their shared effort to develop—or, rather, exploit—Africa. The unification of Europe and a unified European effort in Africa would thus be processes that mutually presupposed one another. In short, Europe’s unification would start in Africa.

The second trait, indicated by the first, is that Eurafrica would enable large-scale extraction of resources. What distinguishes Sörgel’s Eurafricanist project is therefore not the objective of extraction as such, but that he developed concrete plans for its realization through a daunting mobilization of technology and engineering that would dam the Mediterranean Sea, provide the hydroelectric power to all of Europe and Africa, and bring about the kind of political cooperation that was needed to extract Africa’s subsoil minerals and agricultural produce.

Sörgel saw his own plan as far superior to all Eurafrican projects. The most influential of these were Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi’s idea for what he called Pan-Europe, which was supported by numerous top politicians and leading intellectuals of the era. Arguing for his project in terms of extraction, Coudenhove constantly reminded his audience that Europe must unite in order to more efficiently exploit Africa. As he explained: “Africa could provide Europe with raw materials for its industry, nutrition for its population, land for its overpopulation, labor for its unemployed, and markets for its products.”¹⁷

Extraction has remained a major argument for Eurafrica, from Sörgel’s and Coudenhove-Kalergi’s 1920’s to the Rome Treaty, up until our present. I will mention one example that brings this out. It is a document we found in our research for our book. It is a text from December 1956, or, more specifically, the preamble to a draft of the Rome Treaty articles concerning association of the African colonies. What emerges here, in official language and from the horse’s mouth, is Europe’s politics of extraction:

(PROF. HANSEN) “Economically speaking, the European member states of the common market have an essential need for the cooperation and support that the overseas territories—particularly the African ones—are able to offer in order to establish long-term balance of the European economy. The sources of

¹⁴ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2020, p. 15.

¹⁵ The Economist, “Charlemagne: The rebirth of Eurafrica.”

¹⁶ Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color*.

¹⁷ Coudenhove-Kalergi, “Afrika,” p. 2.

raw material, variegated and abundant, which the overseas territories dispose of are likely to ensure for the entirety of the European economy of common market the indispensable foundation for an expanding economy and present the additional advantage of being situated in countries whose orientation may be influenced by the European countries themselves. In addition to the mineral riches of all kinds and the agricultural and exotic products of the overseas countries, it is fair to mention as a concrete incentive, the results of very recent prospectings in the petroliferous area carried out in connection with the systematic inventorying of the immense African reserves of metals, phosphates, and hydro-power.”¹⁸

PROF. JONSSON Underlying this discourse were myriads of small and large business investments and industrial initiatives. In this respect, the Eurafrican project boiled down to a French and Belgian need for foreign investments in various extractive projects in their respective colonies. This was an attractive opportunity especially for West German companies. It is along this axis of French-Belgian-West German economic cooperation that we find the strongest and most central economic justification for the Eurafrican component of the EEC. Some coincidental events symbolize the high stakes of the Eurafrican project. On the very day of the signing of the Rome Treaty in late March 1957, the world press reported that a delegation of West-German business leaders were invited by the French to look at opportunities in Algeria and French West Africa. A month earlier, the first ingot of aluminium, produced from bauxite mined in Guinea, was tapped from the French aluminium smelter in Edea, Cameroon, thus demonstrating to the world that huge wealth could be reaped through Eurafrican cooperation. We need only to note the aggressive European presence in Libyan oilfields, Ghanaian gold mines, Congolese mines, and elsewhere to understand that the Eurafrican business plan remains in place.

FRAUD With all this compelling research about the foundation of the EU in mind, what lessons do you think we can learn, and how might we be propelled to think and do otherwise?

PROF. HANSEN This brings us back to the myth of the EU’s immaculate conception—the Peace Project! So, most basically, our book calls attention to the fact that also the EU project has a history and that to think of this history in terms of a quest for peace, liberty, freedom, democracy, benevolence and so on is not at all to be thinking historically; rather, it is to be nursing a myth. The scandal, of course, is that such mythical thinking still constitutes the normal approach to the history of the EU.

The official account of the historical EU-Africa relationship—that it is, in the end, reducible to a *post*-colonial affair—is still uncontroversial today among politicians at both EU and national levels, as well as among scholars; the awarding of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the EU organization was ample testimony to this. Of course, the Norwegian Nobel Committee came under harsh fire from the international journalism community for its choice. But the criticism mainly concerned the current state of the EU and no criticism was levelled at the committee’s main purpose: to celebrate and honour the original spirit that went into the founding of today’s EU in the 1950s. A headline in *The Guardian* typified the mood: “The EU’s badly timed prize: The European Union might once have deserved its Nobel, but with the euro it has initiated an era of strife”. The article went on to criticize the committee for being out of touch with today’s realities, yet at the same time it emphasized that the award should be seen as “an important reminder that the European project has always had a strong element of anti-war idealism at its core,” commemorating the “real internationalism among the first European generation.”¹⁹ This kind of disapproval actually had the effect of further solidifying the Brussels-promoted image of the EU’s exceptional historical status and record.

PROF. JONSSON In our book we also explain that the political credibility of such assertions have always presupposed that history is continually and permanently evaded. Historians of Europe and the EU have often contributed to this distortion, as they have held European integration at arm’s length from the dirty business of geopolitics. Scholars have often failed in the historical examination of the global ramifications of European integration and therefore they have also failed to interrogate the role of European integration in global affairs. In part, this can be explained as the outcome of an original and erroneous conception of European integration that we take to task in this book.

¹⁸ Historical Archives of the European Union, “Ad hoc group for the overseas territories.”

¹⁹ Priestland, “The EU’s badly timed prize,” n.p.

PROF. HANSEN After all, the so-called Peace Project commenced in one the postwar era's bloodiest wars: the Algerian war. That war raged on EU soil since the oil and gas rich Algerian *départements* were fully incorporated into the EEC in 1957.²⁰ Yet, did the European "Peace Project" do anything to stop the war, to stop the slaughtering of hundreds of thousands of mostly Algerian people, the systematic torture, the massive forced relocation and concentration camps? No, it did not. By including Algeria into the EEC, the Treaty of Rome also, reinforced Paris' claim that Algeria was an integral part of France and, by the same token, lent legitimacy to France's war. Thus thinking otherwise about the EU and its history should begin with the acknowledgement of the mythical nature of the peaceful unification which underpins the EU.

FRAUD Thank you for detailing the European integration project's roots in extractivism, or *Eurafrique*. We hope that this document will help to elucidate the myth of Europe's peaceful union, and to support thinking otherwise than from the extractivist Eurafrikan model that continues today.

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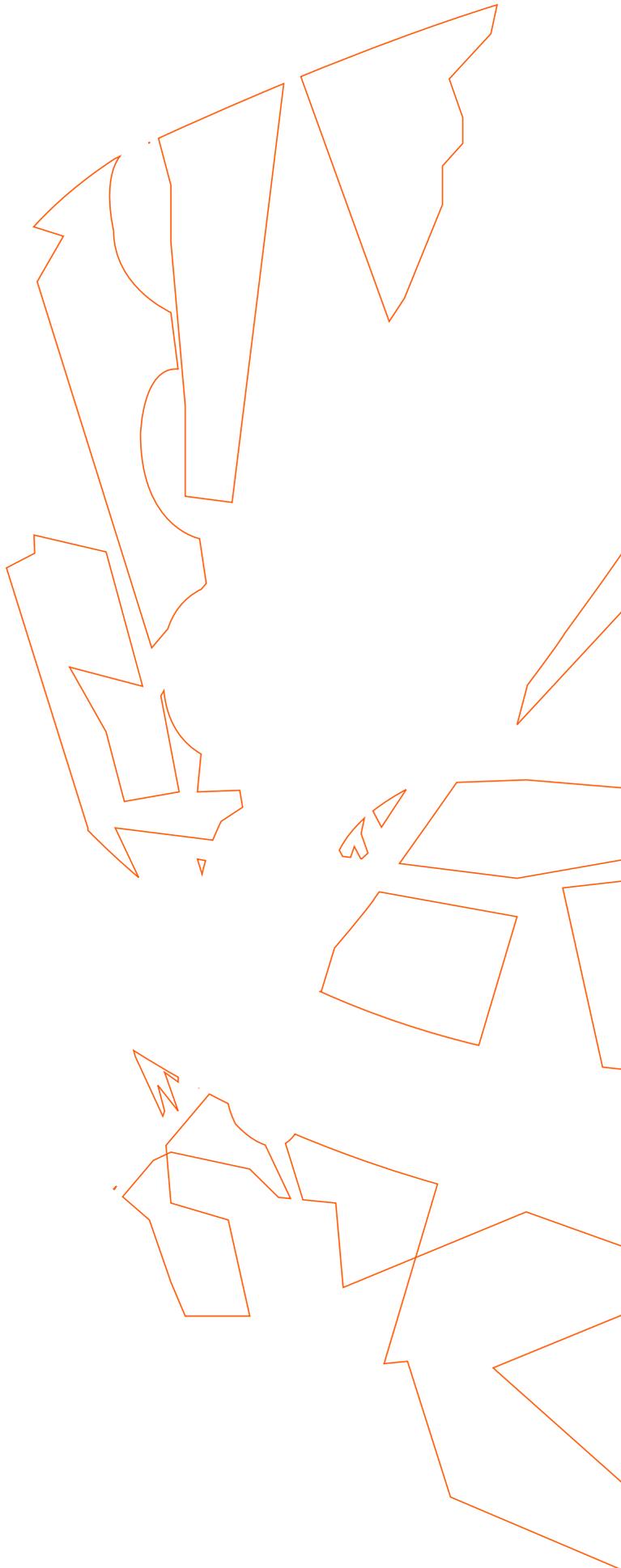
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²⁰ 'Peace Project' refers to the commonly used synonym for the EU project.

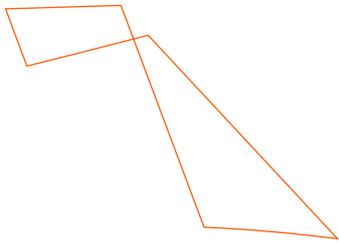


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FRAUD (Audrey Samson & Francisco Gallardo) is a London-based duo of artist/researchers which develop modes of art-led enquiry that examine the extractive gaze of the European Union's institutions and policies. Through their practice, FRAUD cultivate critical spatial literacy and cosmogony building. [@la_fraud](#)

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