

William Cordova is an interdisciplinary cultural practitioner born in Lima, Peru. He lives and works between Lima, Miami, and New York City. Cordova's work addresses the metaphysics of space and time and how objects change and perception changes when we move around in space. He received his BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1996 and his MFA from Yale University in 2004. He has been an A-I-R at The Studio Museum in Harlem, American Academy in Berlin, Germany, Museum of Fine Art in Houston's CORE

program, Headlands Center for the Arts, and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. His work is included in public collections at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY among others. Cordova was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial and the 13th Havana Biennial, Cuba in 2019. He is co-organizer of the 2021 Greenwood Centennial, Tulsa, Oklahoma; co-curator of the 2020 Prizm Art Fair, a non-profit project focused on African Diaspora artists; and founder of the Miami AIM Biennial (2020).

01. **Bat Macumba**, Gilberto Gil, Os Mutantes, Caetano Velosa, and Gal Costa, June 1968

The composition "Bat Macumba" is the syncretism of Afro Brazilian religions and Pop Culture. The song was released on the album *Tropicália: ou Panis et Circencis*, which was a collaborative effort by various Brazilian artists who were part of the Tropicália movement. Music scholar Charles A. Perrone, in his article "Nationalism, Dissension, and Politics in Contemporary Brazilian Popular Music," suggests that the persecution of the Tropicalists "demonstrated the regime's generalized mistrust of popular music, regardless of its explicit political intentions, as a mobilizing force, as an instrument of resistance, or simply as an embodiment of difference. That Veloso and Gil were assailed by supporters of MPB [Música Popular Brasileira] and radical commentators, as well as by the agents of military control, suggests something about the multi-colored fabric of the Tropicalist enterprise."

02. **Think**, Aretha Franklin (written by Aretha Franklin and Ted White), 1968

"Think" is an Aretha Franklin hit song that was written and released less than a month after Reverend Martin Luther King's assassination (April 4th). It focuses on perspective, liberation and respect for women. Franklin's family had been close to King's, and Franklin attended his funeral. The song is often misinterpreted as a couple's turbulent relationship, but the lyrics "give me some freedom, oh, oh, freedom, right now," make more of an allusion to the urban uprisings that took place in almost every major city in the US after MLK's assassination. Subsequent politically charged songs that gained public appeal but were equally misinterpreted were "Buffalo Stance" (1988) by Neneh Cherry, Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" (1984), Crystal Waters' "Gypsy Woman (la da dee la da da)" (1991), and "Avalanche" (2002) by Prince, to name a few.

03. **Umoya**, Miriam Makeba (written by Miriam Makeba), 1968

Umoya, a word that resonated much throughout the world in the year 1968. Umoya, a Swahili word meaning "spirit, the wind, temper, climate, soul." Not to be confused with Umoja, meaning "unity." The title song of the censored and exiled South African singer, Miriam Makeba's

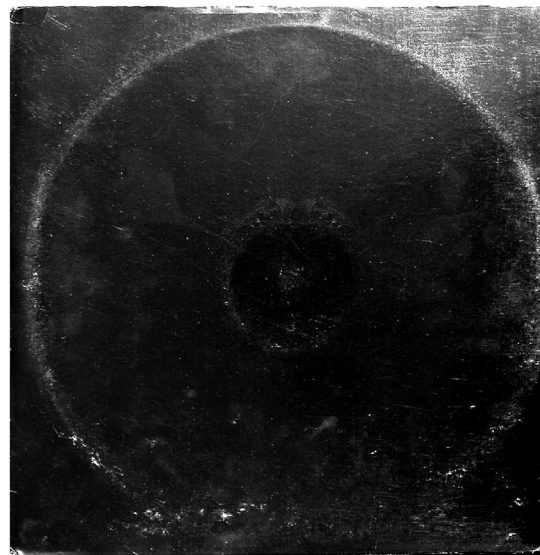
song transcends many intersecting narratives. Umoya was released during an already extreme climate of oppression in apartheid-governed South Africa. Struggling for multiracial rights, the lone Liberal Party of South Africa was finally banned by the Government in 1968.

04. **I'm Mad Like Eldridge Cleaver**, MC 5 'live' at the Grande Ballroom, Detroit (written by Rob Tyner, from the album *Power Trip*), October 2, 1968

The Detroit rock band known as MC5 have often been associated with proto-punk music. However, the band's actual ideology and political affiliation with the Black Panther Party (BPP) has rarely ever been addressed in contemporary music history. The song draws its title from the late writer Eldridge Cleaver, who at the time was also Minister of the BPP and had just published his captivating memoir *Soul on Ice* earlier that same year. "I'm Mad Like Eldridge Cleaver" was an improvised 18-minute track realized on October 27, 1968 at the Grande Ballroom stage in Detroit, Michigan, for an unsuspecting audience. This seminal, raw concert was recorded and released under the title "Kick Out the Jams" (1969), but the track "I'm Mad Like Eldridge Cleaver" did not see public release until 1995. It is also interesting to know that the MC5 were White Panther Party members and their manager, saxophonist John Sinclair, was the Chairman of the WPP.

05. **What Good Is a Castle**, Joe Bataan (written by Joe Bataan), from *Riot LP*, 1968

Afro-Filipino singer and songwriter Joe Bataan, known for his 1967 Mambo hit "Ordinary Guy," felt the climate of radical changes occurring around him in NY's Spanish Harlem and throughout the US in 1968. His third LP *Riot* included more introspective songs like "What Good Is a Castle," a composition focusing on the double standards of US capitalism and the violence of poverty. 1968 saw the tenor of the times reflected by popular musicians in songs like James Brown's "I'm Black and I'm Proud," Mercedes Sosa's "Zamba de Regreso," The Beatles' "White Power," Willie Colon's "The Hustler," Nicomedes Santa Cruz's "Canto Negro," and more.



Bootleg LP, 1969
Image courtesy William Cordova

06. **Che, Colectivero**, Osvaldo Pugliese (orchestrated by O. Pugliese, sung by Abel Cordoba), 1968

Politically outspoken Argentine Tango orchestra leader Osvaldo Pugliese wrote this composition in 1968, shortly after physician, author, theorist and Marxist revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara was assassinated by the CIA and Bolivian Government. Pugliese was also persecuted, received threats, and was imprisoned in the 1950s for his activism, speaking out against abuses towards Argentine women, union organizing and his membership in the Argentine Communist Party. His recordings and live performances were at times censored in Argentina, but he maintained his values and principles until his passing in 1995.

07. **Aos**, Yoko Ono (composed by Yoko Ono and Ornette Coleman live at Royal Albert Hall), February 29, 1968

“Aos,” from the Japanese word “ao” meaning “blue(s)” and “os” from the English “chaos.” “Blue Chaos” was possibly intended to deviate from Miles Davis’ album title, *Kind of Blue* (1959). AOS is also the title of a short Yoji Kuri film, for which Yoko vocalized on the soundtrack. 1968 started with the Tết Offensive (The General Offensive and Uprising of Tết Mậu Thân 1968), a military campaign launched by the North Vietnamese, Việt Cộng and the North Vietnamese People’s Army of Việt Nam against the South Vietnamese Army and the US Military presence in Việt Nam. Jazz trumpeter and orchestra leader Ornette Coleman invited Yoko Ono to perform at the Royal Albert Hall. “Aos” is an improvised composition both artists created that evening, and echoes the climate in Việt Nam at the time. The following year would see Yoko Ono and John Lennon’s anti-Việt Nam War activism realized in their Bed-In for Peace performances in Europe and Canada.

08. **Canto Coral a Tupac Amaru II**, Edgar Valcárcel (created at Columbia University Computer Music Center), 1968

Although abstract in its sonic presentation, the title “Canto Coral a Tupac Amaru II” references the poem by Alejandro Romualdo written in 1958. The poem speaks of the resistance, execution and transcendence of Tupac Amaru II. Amaru’s rebellion against Spanish rule in Peru set off a ripple effect that prompted Andean and African slaves to take up arms and seek liberation throughout South and Central America. Edgar Valcárcel, a Peruvian music composer, interpreted Romualdo’s poem with experimental electronic musical instruments. 1968 saw the rise of political oppression in Uruguay by then-president Jorge Pacheco, through torture, imprisonment and the removal of all constitutional safeguards. The Tupamaros, activists turned urban guerrilla group, evolved from this repressive climate in Uruguay (the name Tupamaros is derived from Tupac Amaru II). Black Panther Party member Afeni Shakur named her son Tupac Amaru Shakur after the Peruvian guerrilla leader). Nothing is ever really abstract—everything has a root somewhere, it’s just a matter of maintaining awareness.

09. **Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)**, Jimi Hendrix (from *Electric Ladyland*), 1968

Guitarist Jimi Hendrix has always been praised for fusing blues, rock, and jazz improvisations and contributing to funk and thrash music. Rarely are his lyrics ever analyzed or their themes truly treated as Bob Dylan or Bruce Springsteen are, however. “Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)” evokes radical sentiments through poetic form: such as “stand up next to a mountain and I chop it down with the edge of my hand,” and “Well, I pick up all the pieces and make an island Might even raise a little sand.” Hendrix lyrics had always been suggestive but coded, from his “I Don’t Live Today” (1967, a song dedicated to his Cherokee ancestry); “Long Hot Summer Night,” about the 1968 MLK rebellions; and “Machine Gun” (1970), about the constant police repression of Black Panther Party members in the US. Hendrix’s version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” has been interpreted as a demonstrative act towards the US government’s stance on Civil Rights and American War in Việt Nam. Hendrix’s reference to Voodoo is equally an acknowledgement and declaration of his awareness and utilization of African diaspora spirituality and religious values. He was interested in rousing the essence of his ancestral ties.

10. **To Love Somebody**, Nina Simone (written by Barry Gibb and Robin Gibb), June 1968

Nina Simone transforms this 1967 Bee Gee’s pop song into a bluesy a cappella-styled composition in this June 1968 live recording in France. Simone, like Hendrix, was able to own the song’s lyrics through passion, and direct the song’s meaning towards the climate of the times. The Paris May Day rebellion had only occurred a month before, when thousands of students led demonstrations against the government’s position on class discrimination and political bureaucracy controlling university funding.

11. **Piggies**, The Beatles (written by George Harrison), 1968

Along with Elaine Brown’s “The Meeting” (1969), Ice-T’s “Cop Killer” (1992), Bob Marley’s “I Shot the Sheriff” (1973), The Equals’ “Police on My Back” (1968), NWA’s “Fuck tha Police” (1988), Young and Restless’ “Broward County Cops” (1992), KRS-1’s “Sound of da Police” (2000),

Pearl Jam's "W.M.A." (1993), etc. The Beatles composed "Piggies" in reference to the police, who were in the late 1960s referred to as "Pigs" by activists. The phrase was coined by the Black Panther Party in 1967. Piggies is a song rarely played on the radio or acknowledged by Beatles fans. The song is usually misinterpreted as a children's tune, and George Harrison, the songwriter, never sang it live.

12. Draft Morning, The Byrds (written by David Crosby, 1967), released January 1968

The fear of war was reserved not for college or university students who were automatically deferred from serving in the military. Instead, the US draft was directed towards working-class people, who could often not afford to attend college and had to serve in the American War in Việt Nam. "Draft Morning" by the folk-rock band The Byrds addressed this classist situation that prompted many to flee and become political exiles in Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico and Europe. It wasn't until President Jimmy Carter's administration that all war draft dodgers were pardoned.

13. Malcolm X Talks to Young People, Malcolm X (original speech December 31, 1965), published 1968

Audio recording of Minister Malcolm X giving a talk to 37 teenagers from McComb, Mississippi, who were on a field trip to New York. This trip was sponsored by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) for students who were activists and committed to the Civil Rights struggle. Various LP's containing Malcolm X's monologues were produced after his assassination in 1965. Audio recordings were also transcribed and published in book format. Malcolm X did not author any audio or books in his lifetime, but many of his speeches and lectures were preserved and became essential educational liberation reading in the US and around the World. His readings and audio recordings also influenced many music genres: Reggae, Hip Hop, Folk and Rock.

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Published on the occasion of the online project, Return to the Source, which launched in Fall 2022, and organized by denisse andrade and Hồng-Ân Trương.

For distribution as digital .pdf or printed document.

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