

Spring 2024

# Measuring & Travelling

What methods of spatial valuation undergird the disciplines of architecture and urban design? How are these systems of measurement entangled with discursive and material regimes of racialization, ecological degradation, and coloniality? This course considers sites and practices that travel beyond disciplinary rubrics of measurement.

We will examine tactics of opacity, occlusion, and abstraction, in the visual and conceptual arts; paying special attention to nonwestern concepts and sites that are illegible to the ethnographic gaze. Thinking and working against epistemologies of measurement, classification, and bordering, requires developing transdisciplinary knowledge of black studies, decoloniality, contemporary art, and cultural geography. Each week's readings will be split in half between practices of measurement that have been central to the discipline of architecture and extra-disciplinary concepts of immeasurability.

# IMMEASURABLE SITES

Instructor:  
Emanuel Admassu

1/24 - Nomadic Images  
1/31 - Ideas Travel  
2/7 - Archives of Animism  
2/14 - Who is Ordinary?  
3/20 - (Il)legible Form  
3/27 - Measuring Images  
4/3 - Beyond Measure

Columbia University  
GSAPP | A4047-1





## Measuring

Foucault, Michel, "Classifying," in *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), pp. 125-162.

Foucault, Michel, "Docile Bodies," in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Westminster, MD: Vintage, 1995), pp. 135 – 169.

Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.

## Travelling

Glissant, Édouard, 1928-2011. *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 183-209.

Anthony Bogues. Interview by Emanuel Admassu and Anita N. Bateman, in *Where is Africa* (New York: Center for Art Research and Alliances (CARA), [forthcoming]), pp. 36-60.

Said, Edward. "Identity, Authority, and Freedom: The Potentate and the Traveler," in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 214-228.

## 1/24 – Nomadic Images

### TAXONOMY

noun: the practice and science of categorization or classification

Natural history was conceived by the classical thought of the seventeenth century, when a new curiosity arose, that of the sciences of life. The new episteme, which emerged in the following centuries, sought to analyze the living by means of observations, measurements and classification. Foucault explains that the identification of objects was realized when one could describe their visual distinctions merely with words. Language, therefore, became a representational tool to describe a signified object.

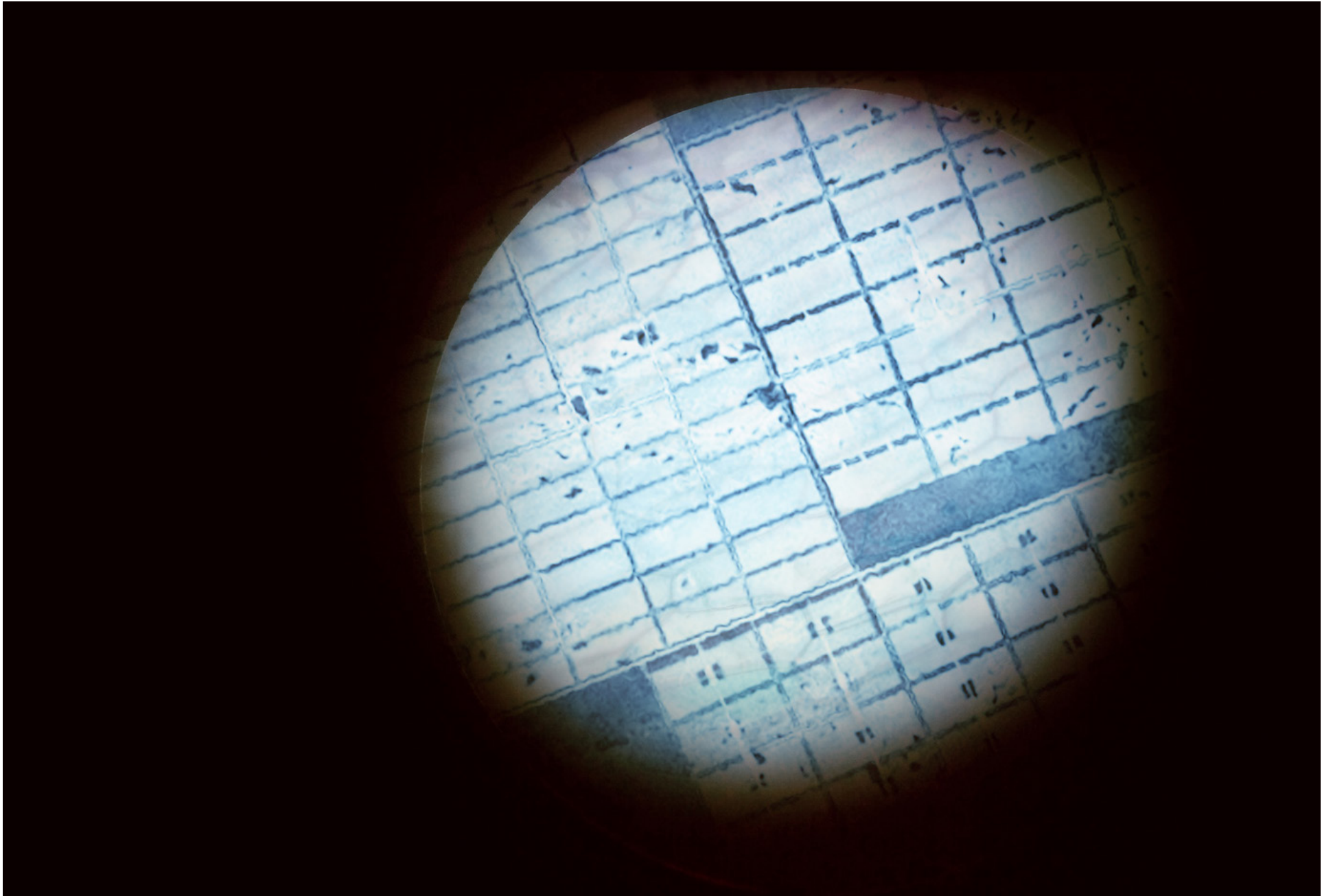
However, the limitations of this knowledge, Foucault argued, lay perpetually in “the area of visibility in which observation is able to assume its powers” (p. 133). Natural history therefore, could not classify what it cannot see. It is a temporal index in which language is interwoven with taxonomy, and from which all uncertainty is excluded.

Hadass Rozental

“What came surreptitiously into being between the age of the theatre and that of the catalogue was not the desire for knowledge, but a new way of connecting things both to the eye and to discourse. A new way of making history.” — Michel Foucault

In his critique, Foucault identifies the monsters - the creatures that are unseen and therefore remain unidentified, and the fossils - of which their continued resemblance prevents their own distinction, as imperative to this configuration. What is then, the epistemology of those monsters and fossils, the knowledge of the unclassified? What is the practice of acquiring such knowledge? Is it within the power of the architectural realm, as one where both the visual and literal are intertwined into a grid of knowledge (and of praxis), to create, or at least identify, these new epistemologies?

System  
Organization  
Taxonomy  
Epistemology  
Visibility



Hadass Rozental

self, *taxonomies of Gran Chaco*

## 1/24 - Nomadic Images

### DISCIPLINE

transitive verb: to use tactics of power to create order and obedience within bodies

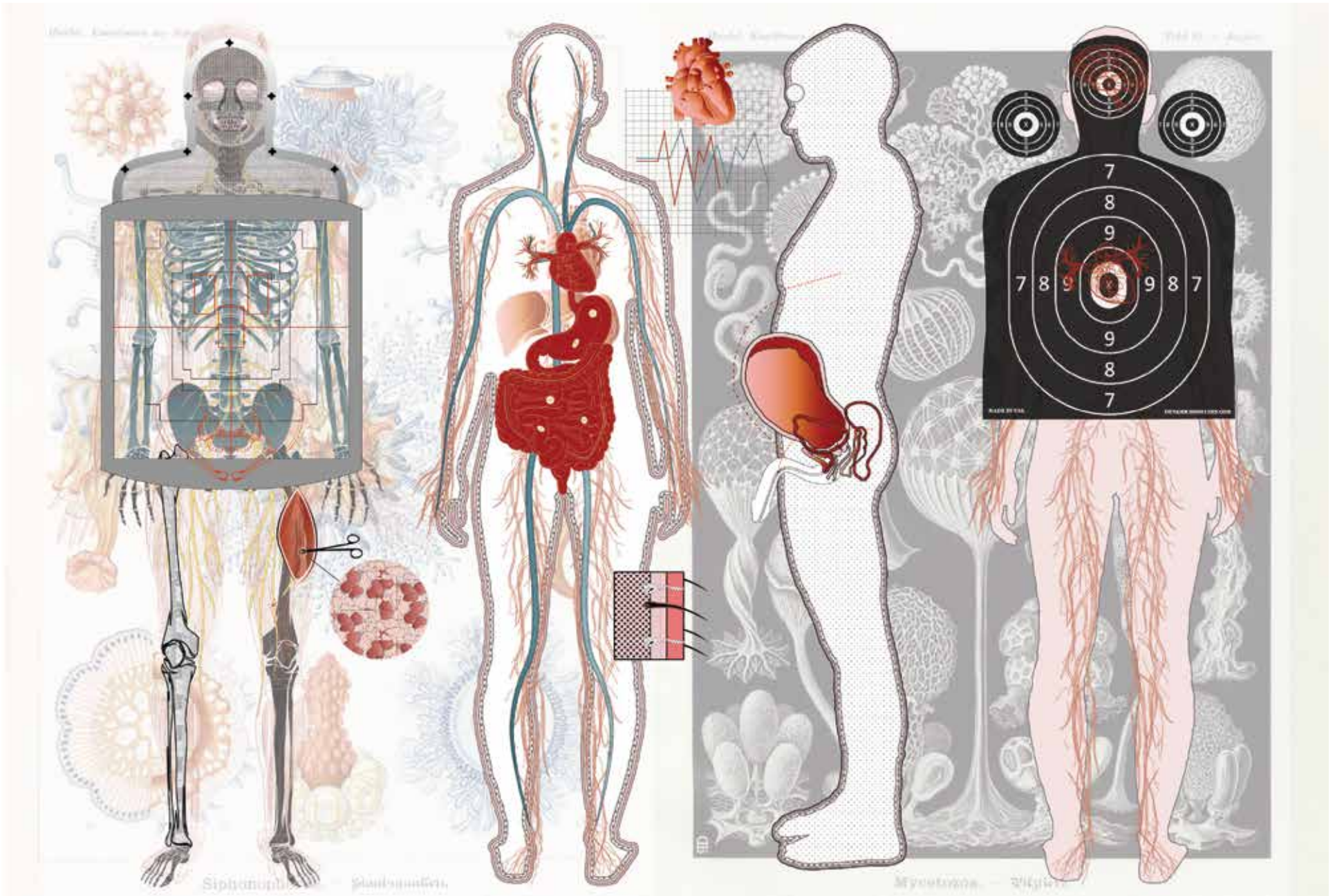
Michel Foucault situates discipline within the larger discourse of body politics suggesting that the primary goal of disciplinary methods was to expand the 'mastery of each individual over his own body.' The body becomes both the mechanism of obedience and subject of control. The body politic of the eighteenth century was divided into two ideological practices: the anatomico-metaphysical register and the technico-political register. Infiltrating their way across disciplinary practices, these ideologies came to realize what Foucault refers to as the docile body, a manipulatable subject. Conclusively discipline, in its many forms and praxis, comes to dominate four aspects of individuality: spatially cellular in nature (seen in institutional organization), organically coded, temporally genetic, and operable as an accumulation of forces. Which can be understood as the four tools of measurement between the docile body and institutional

"There was the scale of the control: it question not of treating the body, en masse, as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself - movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body."  
— Michel Foucault

tactics of high specificity (mastery). One example of this is in Foucault's description of shooting a gun, whereas he refers to the relationship between the body and this object as a unified body-weapon complex, suggesting that the behaviors and gestures practiced between the body and the object produces power, thereby creating an inseparable spatial apparatus.

This question of mastery of one's own body in a contemporary technological and meta-political context offers an interesting reimagining of discipline for those situated at the periphery of institutionalism.

Discipline  
Non-idleness  
Enclosure  
Tabulation  
Tactics



Amora McConnell

self, *body metrics* \*using Ernst Haeckel's biological classification drawings

## 1/24 - Nomadic Images

### ARCHIVE

noun: a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people

Torkwase Dyson's Black compositional thought theorizes the spatial condition of the hold as the first architectural condition of the becoming of blackness - an architecture where "people plotted, made conversation, and where there were different tiers of time." The term considers how "paths... waterways, architecture, objects, geographies are composed by black kbodies, and then how additional properties of energy, space, scale, and sound work together in networks of liberation." I wonder if Dyson's formulation might help us find a way out of Hartman's limitation with the reproducing the violence of the archive in an attempt to narrate histories of Venus.

I am thinking here of the "limit" (the unspeakable, the unknown) as surface: a place where time becomes material space (Guiliana Bruno). If surface is the site of

Anoushka Mariwala

"If we are to understand water as a geographic site, then we can also understand the ships that were built to enslave and transport people as a kind of architecture, and that ship architecture then evolved over the years specifically to house black bodies." — Torkwase Dyson

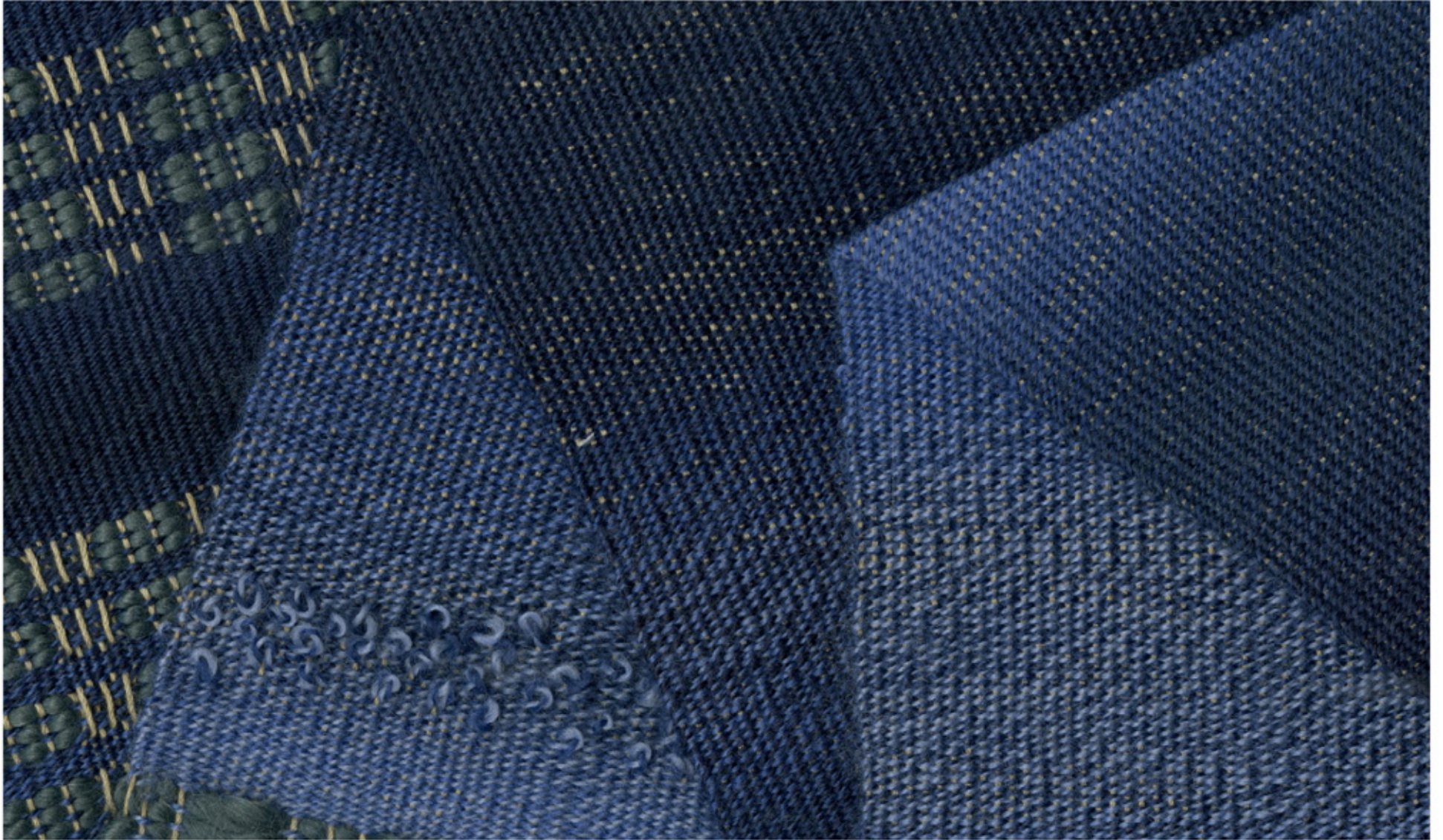
inscription, and so archive, the task Hartman demands is to fold it over itself to create depth. The ocean and the hold (within it) are devices that permit the conversion of pure surface into project of liberation.

The potential of the hold as architectural device (following Dyson) is that it offers itself as container, the first cultural device, the place that contains what is sacred (Ursula K Le Guin, Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction). The cultural carrier bag circumvents the surface (that which is linear, progressive) in favour of creating "room enough" and "time enough." So fiction offers a mode for Hartman to "revisit the scene of subjection without replicating the grammar of violence.

Finally, is acknowledgement of an absence or a negation presence enough?

Surface  
Underground  
Archive  
Body  
Fictions





Anoushka Mariwala

self, *Surface* (cotton yarn)

## 1/24 - Nomadic Images

### SILENCE

noun: the avoidance of mentioning or discussing something

There is a silencing around the representation of the Black woman in the archive that Hartman aims to give life to. Venus in *Two Acts* invites us to a funeral of two black girls who died on the slave ship *Recovery*. Hartman aims to deconstruct and illuminate the Venus trope of the enslaved African woman as she wrestles with the erasure of their murders on a slave ship crossing the Middle Passage. This making visible of what was meant to be disposed of, reconstructs what could have been.

I believe Hartman looks to liberate Venus from this nomadic lifestyle that was imparted on her by the oppressor. Venus has no permanent abode. She resides where violence and desire meet, “the barracoon, the hollow of a slave ship, the pest-house, the brothel, the cage, the surgeon’s laboratory, the prison, the can-field, the kitchen, the master’s bedroom.” The hold,

Syedda Simmons

“The intention here isn’t anything as miraculous as recovering the lives of the enslaved or redeeming the dead, but rather laboring to paint as full a picture of the lives of the captives as possible.”

— Saidiya Hartman

the slave ship, bonds Venus to the Atlantic world, yet through narrative, the bridging of past and present through critical fabulation, Venus is acknowledged, humanized and mourned.

What happens when one sets out to recover and repair stories that were never entirely told due to the lack of archival material or witnesses?

Disposable  
Disappearance  
Silence  
Relic  
Loss



Syeda Simmons

self, *Relics of the trans-Atlantic*

## 1/24 – Nomadic Images

### INCARNATION

noun: a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or abstract quality

Venus is not a woman. She is a symbol of temporary circumstance. Her presence is the illumination of a woman perpetually depicted as exploited and violated, stuck within the confines of enslavement.

Venus is rendered speechless by her perpetrators. We are rendered speechless by the glimpse of her story. These past, present, and future violations resurrect when described, so they are often left unaddressed. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, Van Der Kolk iterates, “even if [traumatized people] speak of the experience, it is often just the cover story”. The word “Venus” is a “safe” word for the complexity behind Venus’s inability to speak, and our inability to act as witness. Venus is a symbol for transgenerational trauma that persists.

Saidiya Hartman grapples with addressing this allegorical woman in the *Venus in Two*

“The necessity of recounting Venus’s death is overshadowed by the inevitable failure of any attempt to represent her.”

— Saidiya Hartman

Acts. Hartman describes the impossible decision of perpetuating, ignoring, or romanticizing violence. None of these options are complete; none of them are correct. Critical fabulation (in the footsteps of Octavia Butler) affords Hartman more optimism.

For my own practice, I followed Hartman’s reference to “acuity of regard”. This phrase explains what Raven Chacon identifies as “witness” in *Dispatch*. I wrote the word “Venus” over 800 times using a graphite pencil. It was a meditation on the failure of text to transpose bodily understanding. As I wrote graphite would smear, the word lost meaning, and I lost the grid. The words lifted off the page when soaked in water. The letters pixelated when scanned.

My witnessing is far from complete. My understanding is dwarfed by uncertainty.

Critical Fabulation  
Restraint  
Incarnation  
Impossible Writings  
Obscured



Maura Costello

*Self, You Failed to Recall Her Name*

## 1/24 - Nomadic Images

### OPACITY:

the quality of lacking full transparency, clarity, perceptibility, or intelligibility.

Identity - much like annotated literature - is the result of layers and layers of projected ideals onto an existing timeline. A page out of a book, one part of an ancestral story, a product - at times imperceptible - of working and reworking, listening and unlearning, hiding then highlighting, underlining then undoing.

Glissant's text offers a framework for a new worldview. Broadly, for one to untangle their complex identity in a postcolonial world, it is perhaps more effective to embrace the relation to the unknown, the opposite, the foreign, or the Other.

This may not be easily done without acknowledging the layered and interwoven histories that connect each of us, but it is the layering and layering of information that creates opacity, and it is the same action that makes the Poetic framework powerful.

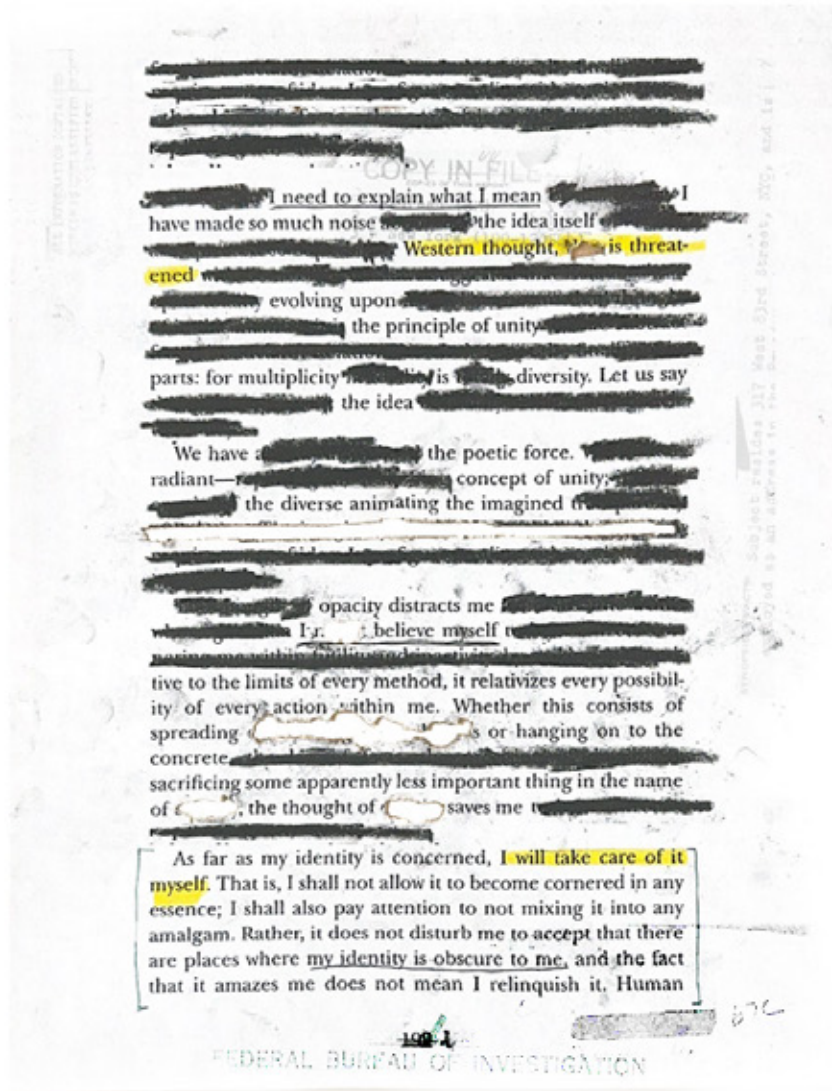
Eric Julian Hagerman

" Rather, it does not disturb me to accept that there are places where my identity is obscure to me, and the fact that it amazes me does not mean I relinquish it."  
— Edouard Glissant

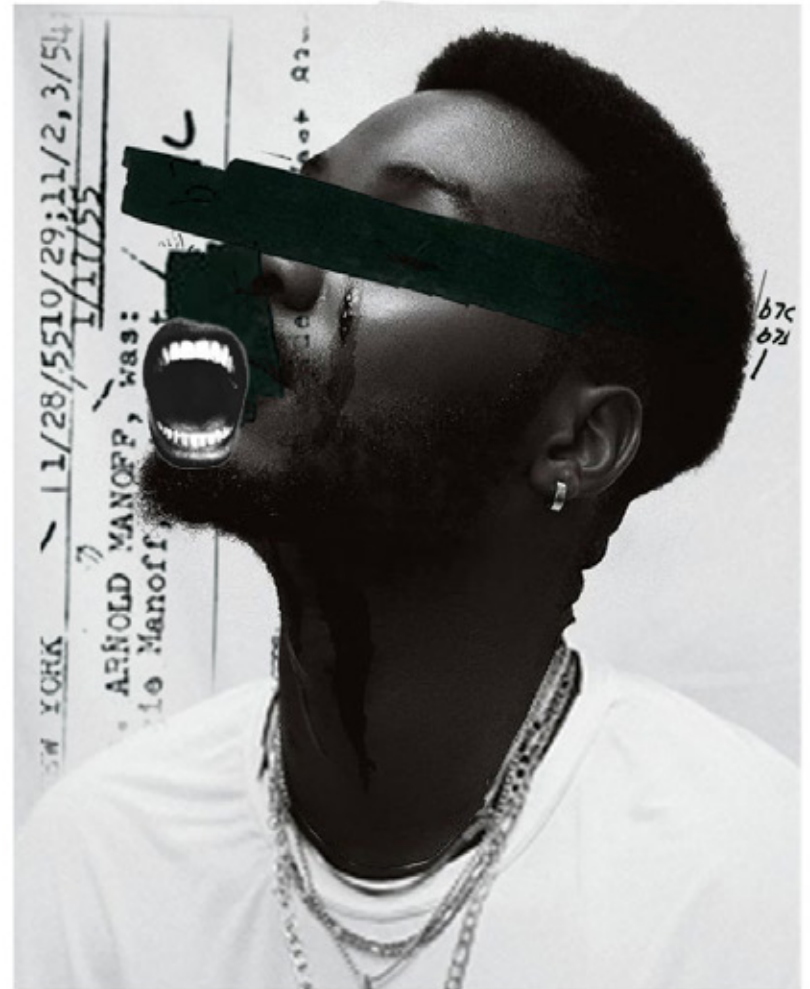
Shedding the Western ideal, unlocking rigid definitions, and embracing subjectivity is what allows for understanding despite opacity. Though seemingly paradoxical, the understanding of Self is thus only as effective as the understanding of Other.

Agency is a key part of this puzzle. Glissant makes clear that no matter how opaque the identity is, it is not to be amalgamated, relinquished, or relegated to one experience.

Text  
Poetics  
Decipher  
Identity  
Opacity



Eric Julian Hagerman



self, *Guided Reading* (paper, charcoal, collage)

## 1/24 - Nomadic Images

### CONVERGENT

adjective: tending to move toward one point or to approach each other

Through Glissant's investigations of the relation between beings, a fixation over circular clarity, or transparency, emerges. If the search for understanding between cultures is as present as Glissant describes, how might one separate the convergent circularities of influence from existing in hierarchy?

There is something both simultaneously grim yet optimistic in the ways that Glissant maps the relationships between reactivations of tragedies, such as "catastrophic fires reactivate[ing] the work of genocides" (196). Optimism only in the sense that perhaps "no specific history" is isolated without influence and that every occurrence, positive or negative, may be linked to one another. In this framework, it is curious then how different cultures might act in reverence towards another, particularly to the West as written by Glissant.

"What we call the world today is not only the convergence of the histories of peoples that has swept away the claims of philosophies of History but also the encounters (in consciousness) among these histories and materialities of the planet." — Édouard Glissant

This cycle points to the potential for an exit from circular convergence. Perhaps through a combination of the imaginary and chaos described by Glissant as "new linear projections" (199), one could create a fresh form of cultural relation to the West but more so between all beings. Coupled with cultural and relational insertions to the opaque chaos of current societal normativity, perhaps the hierarchy could be flattened.

Transparency  
Chaos  
Convergent  
Defolkloration  
Imaginary





Kelvin Lee

Members of the Kiki House of Kawakubo (photo: Jia-rong Lan);  
Christine Sun Kim, *Upside Down Midnight*, 2014

## 1/24 – Nomadic Images

Opacity: Individuals and cultures, suggesting that understanding and relating to others does not require full transparency or assimilation.

In “Poetics of Relation,” Édouard Glissant elevates “opacity” to a pivotal principle, urging us to embrace the inherent mysteries and complexities of others. This concept defies the traditional insistence on transparency in understanding, suggesting instead that true connection flourishes in the acceptance of what remains unknown or unknowable. Glissant prompts us to ponder: How do we cultivate deep relationships while recognizing the limits of our understanding? He posits that acknowledging opacity can lead to more authentic connections, valuing the intricate and nuanced over the clear-cut and simplified.

Glissant’s emphasis on opacity challenges us to navigate the world with a renewed perspective, where the unexplored aspects of others are not barriers but opportunities for enrichment and growth. By advocating for this nuanced engagement with the world,

“Relation struggles and states itself in opacity. It deters self-importance. Whatever daims to preexist it is insufficient, that is self~importance for itself.” — EDOUARD GLISSANT

Glissant not only critiques the superficiality of transparent interactions but also celebrates the diversity of human experience. Thus, he abstractly guides us toward a more inclusive and understanding coexistence, highlighting the paradox that in accepting opacity, we might find clearer pathways to mutual respect and understanding.

Video  
Drawings  
Decipher  
Technology  
Obscured



Jisoo

Gervais Marsh, *Banjee #2*

## 2/24 - Nomadic Images

### DIASPORA

noun: people settled far from their ancestral homelands, the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland

Anthony Bogues describes himself as a writer, a curator, an academic, a “critical intellectual—each of these titles brings his work together around various aspects of African/African Diasporic studies. He is not just a writer, for writing is a medium to share his research and make it transferable to others. He is not just a curator because he not only organizes the work for artists of the diaspora but works to understand how the legacies of colonialism transfer into their work. Bogues uses the term “critical intellectual” to fabulate the mirage of disciplines and practices he engages with that are all looking at or are products of the diaspora. This could arguably stem from the interviewee’s own identity, as Bogues describes himself as someone born and raised in Jamaica who then spent a long time in London, then moved to the US and lived in South Africa for a period of time. Just as “critical intellectual”

“For me, ideas travel...The question is always, what happens when ideas land?”  
— Anthony Bogues (47)

describes his professional identity, Bogues uses “international person of color” to describe his “diasporic locations.” By this, he is not defined by any one identity, even if certain ones play a heavier role in how he approaches his work (ex: Julius Nyerere being a point of discussion in Bogues work because of his upbringing in Jamaica). Western thought and society tends to conflate Blackness as a linear experience amongst the various diasporic experiences held across the world. Bogues acknowledges this gap in knowledge on the African/African diasporic experiences since the dawn of colonialism, thus his work as a “critical intellectual,” in turn uses Critical Fabulation to better understand this gap and translate it across to a wider audience.

Critical Intellectual  
African Diaspora  
Black Internationalism  
Legacies of  
Colonialism  
Postcolonial State



## 1/24 – Nomadic Images

### CURATORIAL WORK

noun phrase: encompassing the key responsibilities of a curator in a clear and accurate manner

Anthony Bogues, a multifaceted intellectual at Brown University, focuses on representing the intricate narratives of slavery and colonialism, mainly through his roles in academia, writing, and curating. His work critically explores African and African Diaspora intellectual history, art, and political thought. He identifies as an “International Person of Color,” reflecting his diverse global experiences and perspectives, which underline the interconnectedness and global influence of the African diaspora. This identity is crucial in understanding the fluid nature of culture and history, especially as they evolve across various geographies and times.

Bogues emphasizes the significant role of museums in accurately and ethically representing African and diasporic art. He critiques the historical practices of Western museums in misrepresenting or unethically

Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

“There’s the ethnographic museum in the West, which is the previous colonial museum; this museum has all these material objects, dioramas, and all these things that they took from different colonies. What do you do with those things?” — Anthony Bogues

acquiring art from colonized regions, advocating for a revision of curatorial practices. This includes addressing the ethical implications of art repatriation and ensuring that museums engage deeply with the narratives and contexts of the artworks. His views highlight the importance of respecting and accurately portraying the histories and cultures associated with these art pieces, fostering a more inclusive and truthful representation in global cultural institutions.

The two art collections under consideration here include a series of works often referred to as “Primitive Picasso,” and a selection of Picasso’s well-known paintings. Intriguingly, Picasso was significantly influenced by the art of the African diaspora, particularly in his use of African figuration. However, it appears that the inspiration drawn from African art is often overlooked, with the spotlight instead falling on the Western interpretations created by Picasso.

Decolonization  
Diasporic  
Curatorial Work  
Racial Slavery  
Representation

1/24-Nomadic Images



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

Wooden Dan face mask and Mbanga mask 19th-mid 20th  
Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, 1907 and Bust of a Woman by Pablo  
Picasso, 1932

## 1/24 – Nomad Images

### DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE The Insights of Anthony Bogues

In this engaging discourse, Anthony Bogues, a distinguished scholar in African and African Diaspora studies, challenges the prevailing Eurocentric perspectives in history and knowledge. His incisive critique sheds light on how colonial histories have shaped academic and cultural narratives. Bogues argues for a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive and truthful representation of global histories.

Beyond the realms of academia, Bogues' expertise extends to teaching, authorship, editing, and exhibition curation. He is a staunch advocate for comprehensive decolonization, which entails a reevaluation of historical accounts and active involvement in current societal structures. His concept of 'reframing' transcends mere correction of historical inaccuracies; it is a call to fundamentally transform our understanding and interaction with the

"Decolonization is not just a physical liberation but an intellectual and cultural emancipation." — Anthony Bogues

This shift is crucial for acknowledging the diverse and complex stories of the African diaspora, challenging existing power structures, and enhancing our appreciation of global cultural interconnections. Bogues' insights are instrumental in ongoing debates about race, culture, and history, underscoring the necessity for equitable and accurate representation of the diverse narratives from around the world.

Decolonization  
Epistemology  
African Diaspora  
Critical Theory  
Cultural -  
- Representation  
Historical Reframe  
Intellectual -  
Emancipation  
Global Narratives  
Post-coloniality  
Cultural -  
Curatorship





Angel Langumas

Posthumous portrait by Sebastiano del Piombo, 1519

manipulated to have the eyes, nose, and mouth of Nelson Mandelo and 3rd eye of Ghandi

## 01/24 - Nomadic Images

### REFRAMING

verb: to frame (something) again and often in a different way

In the interview conducted by Emanuel Admassu titled "Decolonization, Epistemologies, History," Anthony Bogues motivates us to reflect on established frameworks and how there is a process of critical rethinking within curatorial practices.

Questions about the decolonization of museums are raised. Anthony puts into discussion the different aspects it would require, such as re-education, reframing ways of thinking, thoughts on repatriation, and how to choose what to display. He emphasizes that when attempting this, we must not look at the past, but at the present.

Through his writing, Anthony makes interventions aiming to persuade us to rethink

Adriana Castro Lizarbe

"... How do you understand African and African diaspora human experience as a slice of human experience on this planet? How do you understand it from the inside out, not from the outside in? That's the question of intellectual decolonization. From that understanding of the inside out, you can begin to develop categories of thought and ways of thinking that emerge out of that human experience." — Anthony Bogues

and reframe discussions and questions about Black intellectual traditions.

Overall, Anthony Bogues puts on the table the importance of decolonization and how, through letting go of our established ways of thinking, we can create a "more humane world".

Rethinking  
Intervention  
Reframing  
Contribute  
Reflecting



Adriana Castro Lizarbe

John Vanderlyn, *Landing of Columbus at the Island of Guanahani, West Indies*, 1846

## 1/24 – Nomadic Images

### CANON

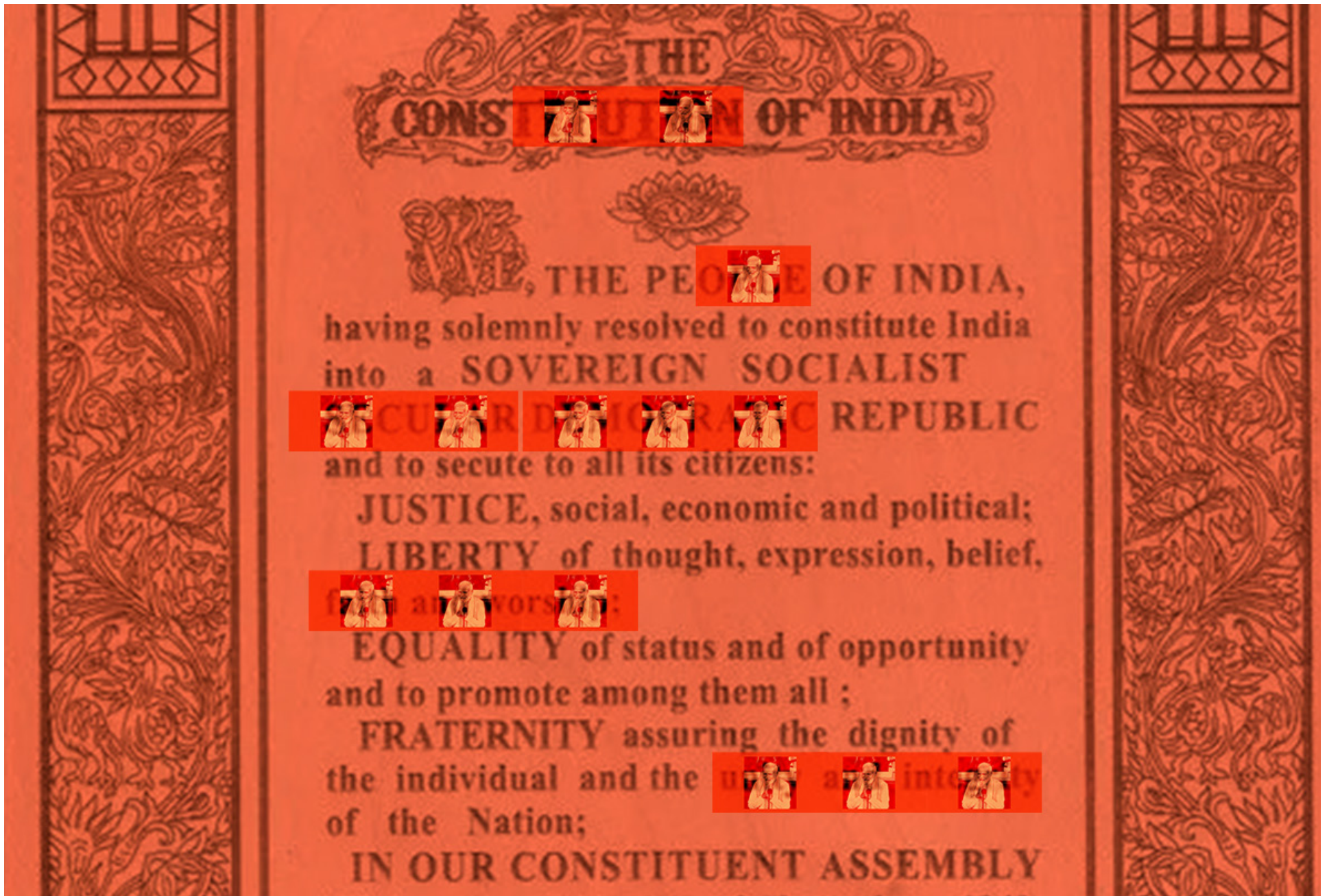
noun: an accepted principle or rule; a criterion or standard of judgment.

Academia possesses a paradoxical power. It is honored for its superiority while dismissed for its lack of practicality. When entangled with political realities, it is either interpreted to align with individual agendas or hypothetically forced to support them, resulting in the creation of false truths. This is the downside of academic freedom and, by extension, freedom itself. It is used as a tool to disguise the very evils that are being debated. The powerful promote their idea of 'right' (according to their own definition) until it becomes a 'preconceived truth'. As of today (January 2024), we are witnessing the Indian prime minister pushing forward an image of national identity based on religion, using spirituality, faith, fear, and admiration to rally a successful election. The campaign justifies mythology by superimposing 'human-defined' rules to drive and create unquestionable situations. Despite having access to the same information, both the

"To assume that the ends of education are best advanced by focusing principally on *our own* separateness, our own ethnic identity, culture, and traditions, ironically places us where as subaltern, inferior, or lesser races we had been placed by nineteenth century racial theory." — Edward W. Said

educated and the general public show ignorance towards the facts. Resistance is more of an inherent response rather than a logical one. Overcoming this will require more than just academic freedom among the 'intellectuals'; it will require a willingness to critically (re)think among those who have the knowledge but are motivated by indifference and non-participation.

Relevance  
Identity  
Canon  
Conformity  
Suggestion



## 1/24 - Nomadic Images

### Criticism

noun: the analysis of advantages and disadvantages of one thing or object

Academic freedom means the pursuit of truth, tolerance of a wide variety of opinions and cultures, non-inclination to power and interests, and criticism of any point of view. For example, during the period of the Republic of China, there was freedom of speech in Peking University in China. Students marched and protested to express their views, and many of them sacrificed their lives for truth and freedom, just like Archimedes.

A country's education often supports and embraces its own culture, regime, history, and values. This is understandable and helpful for national development and social cohesion, but the objective facts and truth cannot be changed. For example, Chinese and Japanese history textbooks on the Nanjing Massacre from 1937 to 1937 are completely different, so Iris Chang spent her whole life collecting evidence in order

Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

"Criticism is intellectual life and, while the academic precinct contains a great deal in it, its spirit is intellectual and critical, and neither reverential nor patriotic." — Edward

to bring the historical truth to the public, and she also gave her precious life for this. It is these people who defend the truth with their lives that allow academic freedom to develop.

Privilege  
Freedom  
Criticism  
Authority  
Truth



Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

Thomas DeGeorge, 1815, *Freedom Drawings: The Death of Archimedes Swimming*







## Measuring

Ockman, Joan, "Bestride the World like a Colossus: The Architect and the Traveler," in *Architourism: Authentic, Escapist, Exotic, Spectacular*, edited by Joan Ockman and Salomon Frausto, (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2007), 154-185.

Siddiqi, Anooradha Iyer, "Writing With: Togethering, Difference, and Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration," in *e-flux Architecture, Structural Instabilities*, edited by Daniel Barber and Eduardo Rega (2018), <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/structural-instability/208707/writing-with/>

Azoulay, Ariella Aïsha, "Imperial Desert Effect—Palestine is There, Where it Has Always Been," in *Deserts Are Not Empty*, edited by Samia Henni (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2022), pp. 108-141.

## Travelling

Ahmed, Sara. "Home and Away Narratives of Migration and Estrangement." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (December 1999): 329-347.

Shezad Dawood, "Kodwo Eshun, Shezad Dawood & Gerrie Van Noord in Conversation," in *Black Sun: Alchemy, Diaspora and Heterotopia* (London: Ridinghouse in association with Devi Art Foundation and Arnolfini, 2013), pp. 81-97.

Oguibe, Olu, "Photography and the Substance of the Image," in *In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present*, eds. Okwui Enwezor, Olu Oguibe, and Octavia Zay. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1996, pp. 231-250.

SPECTACLE

noun: an object of curiosity or contempt

“In Bestride The World Like A Colossus: The Architect as Tourist,” delves into the complex interplay between architects and the global landscapes they seek to shape. The metaphor of the architect as a tourist is particularly provocative, suggesting a superficial engagement with foreign environments. This comparison raises questions about the depth of cultural and social understanding architects bring to their projects, especially when located in or inspired by regions with rich and diverse histories like Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Ockman compares the methods of critical tourism by Koohaus, Le Corbusier, Mendelsohn, van Eyck, Rudofsky, Venturi, Scott Brown, and Lynch. Regardless of their method, these people often see themselves as central to the environments they engage with, aiming to “absorb, possess,

“[Architects] thus differ from their fellow travelers by being... observers for whom the consumption of places has a direct or indirect link to future production.”

— Joan Ockman

and ultimately transform” these spaces according to their visions. If they do not seek to transform the places they visit, they hope to transmute their newly absorbed knowledge into their teaching.

This article challenges architects to be empathetic observers and listeners who are deeply attuned to the nuances of the places they impact. But there is a tension between global architectural practices and local contexts which raises important ethical considerations. In an era when modernization, globalization, and neoliberalism have only become more deeply entrenched and interconnected, who can discern the true nature of their surroundings? Should architects travel? If so, how can architects foster a deeper connection with place, and what changes in education, practice, and mindset are necessary to support this shift?

Investigate  
Transfigure  
Spectacle  
Tourist  
Critical Lens



Maura Costello

New York Times, Photograph, *Le Corbusier Looks - Critically*  
Bernard Rudofsky, Photograph, *Moving Day in Guinea*  
Photograph, *Caryatids of the Acropolis*

## 1/31 – Ideas Travel

### OBSERVE

verb: notice or perceive (something) and register it as being significant.

In “Bestride the World Like a Colossus: The Architect as Tourist,” Joan Ockman delves into the historical context of observation within the architectural realm. Architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Le Corbusier, Aldo van Eyck, Rudofsky, Robert Venturi, and Blake are highlighted as they embark on a journey of observation, drawing inspiration from diverse cultures and places scattered across the globe.

Through the lens of the observer, each architect adopts a unique approach, resorting to different mediums to document and interpret the “non-pedigreed” realities they encounter. This hands-on engagement with untouched realities allows them to personally connect with the real-life aspects of the world. This becomes particularly significant as these environments grapple with the challenges of decolonization. The architect, armed with a keen sense of obser-

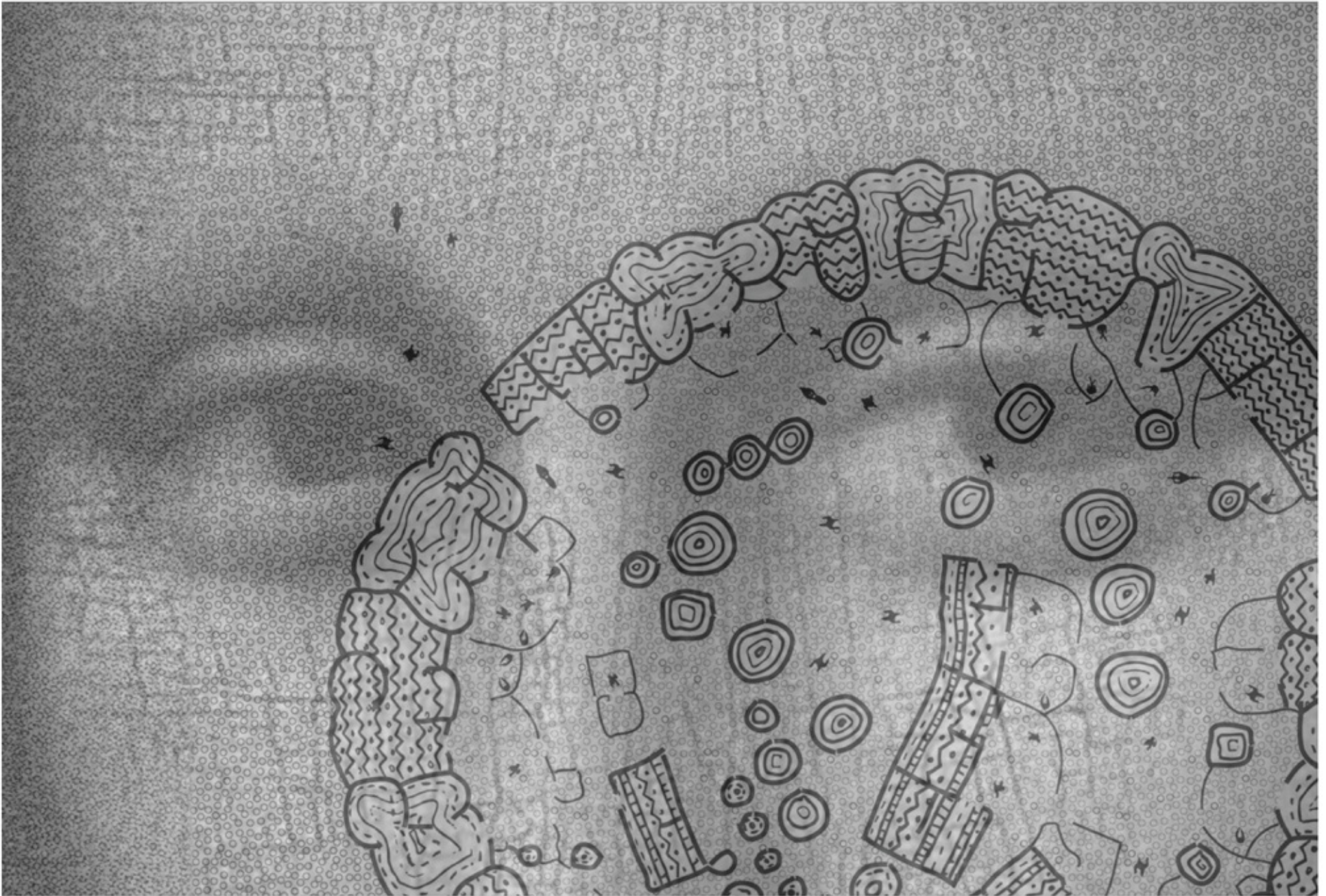
Adriana Castro Lizarbe

“Drawing became the plane of intersection between the world as found and its transformation into his vision.” — Joan Ockman

vation, navigates the complexities of these untouched landscapes, analyzing them at different scales.

This observation is recorded differently by each one of them, through methods such as drawings and photography. Using distinct methodologies, each architect’s journey contributes to their own way of designing architecture.

Quest  
Drawings  
Observe  
Gaze  
Non-pedigreed



Adriana Castro Lizarbe

Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, 1503

Adriana Castro Lizarbe, *Gurunsi compound*, 2020

## HOMEMAKING

verb: objectively, the maintaining of a home, however, in the context of Siddiqi's work, the labor, often genderized, exerted into maintaining social, emotional connections to the idea of home in the midst of violent displacement and living in unwilling transience.

I must admit that I'm skeptical, critical actually, of exhibitions that put on display the vulnerabilities of people who do not give their permission and are ignored of their agency; then posit solutions that never leave the realm of theory. Such has been seen in the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, and many other spaces that so boldly intellectualize the hierarchies rampant in architectural accessibility. Where a prioritization of the conceptual abilities among the architectural elite live, focusing on imagining a dismantling the challenge, not dismantling the challenge.

In Siddiqi's statement-from-the-curator for MoMA's "Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter" exhibition, she advocates for a more subversive engagement that

"What if difference were instrumentalized not in a process of othering, but instead in a process of togetherness? To me, this would mean privileging the labor constituted in the process of writing with"  
— Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi

challenges the museum as a site of knowledge production. Through directing a sensory experience, admission and recognition of the temporality of utilitarian aid material (artifacts) within a gallery space, blunt presence of datafied evidence of forced migration and its violence, Siddiqi is acutely aware of what a museum can and cannot do.

Siddiqi, in "Writing With" offers a process, and what could be a response, that bridges black-and-white interaction with vulnerabilities from which we feel removed and togetherness. Writing with involves a labor of intimate learning and knowing, a shedding of intellectual hierarchy, and respect for the viability and creativity of what dominant systems consider informal.

Homemaking  
Migration  
Power  
Togetherness  
Labor/Cultural Production  
Organic Intellectual



Atsede Assayehgen



Woman in Dadaab Refugee Camp builds urqaal-formed shelter, UNHCR  
Beauty salon in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Oxfam  
Overlaid aerial images of Dadaab's five sub-camps, Google Maps



“Going on strike against partition today means dwelling in this repressed struggle that precedes the state of Israel’s Creation.” -140

Sovereignty  
Militant  
Expel  
Return  
Violence

“Deserts Are Not Empty” presents a critical examination of the colonial mindset that portrays arid lands as vacant and ripe for exploitation. The text challenges this narrative by exploring the rich complexities of desert landscapes, which are teeming with diverse forms of life and ecological processes. Through a multidisciplinary approach encompassing poetry, conversations with collectives, and scholarly essays, the volume seeks to dismantle the “regime of emptiness” that has long dominated perceptions of deserts. By foregrounding voices from architecture, literature, film, and other fields, the text advocates for a decolonial framework that unsettles conventional understandings of deserts and opens up new possibilities for imagining and engaging with these environments.

The concept of the “Imperial Desert Effect: Palestine Is There, Where It Had Always Been” offers a lens through which to analyze

the intersection of geopolitics and the built environment in the context of Palestine. This framing suggests that the desert landscape of Palestine has been consistently overlooked or marginalized in favor of imperial agendas, perpetuating a narrative of dispossession and erasure of indigenous Palestinian identities and histories. From an architectural perspective, this notion prompts a reevaluation of how the built environment reflects and reinforces power dynamics in contested territories. It invites consideration of how urban planning, infrastructure development, and spatial segregation contribute to the perpetuation of colonial narratives and the suppression of Palestinian voices. By examining the ways in which the built environment in Palestine has been shaped by imperialist forces, this concept underscores the urgent need for decolonial approaches to design and planning that center the experiences and aspirations of marginalized communities.





Angel Langumas

Photograph, Digital Collage Hybrid

## COLONIALISM

noun: the act of acquiring political control over another country -- occupying and exploiting its economy -- most often through genocide.

It feels oftentimes as if we speak of colonialism as happening in the past. It took three years of higher education before finally hearing the word coloniality, a term used by Anooradha Siddiqi to describe the prevailing effects of traces of colonialism that are felt in our spatial realities of today. Undoubtedly in many cases it seems as though the literal act of colonization is complete. The project of mass displacement, 'development' and geocultural extraction has bled through the networks of every corner of this planet. But is it possible to claim that the colonial project continues in parts of the world? That the British and the U.S. continue to enable the exploration and creation of arid landscapes. In Ariella Azoulay's text, *Imperial Desert Effect - "Palestine is There, Where it had Always Been"*, theatrical figures are formulated to tell the story of illegal and inhumane settlement in occupied Palestine. This methodology demonstrates

"They refuse to allow for Palestine to disappear from the photographic record, challenging the desert effect that was produced to do exactly this." — Ariella Aïsha Azoulay

the plot of settler colonial justifications, a familiar story in a highly geopolitical local. So what of the landscapes? The deserts, in their fabricated 'emptiness', become something to explore, to conquer, to manipulate. Israel needed to create an image of vastness, of emptiness, for the US colonial investments and world powers to gain interest. In other words, Israel promised a continuation of the colonial project. I suppose this image is a promise to remember all that was there 'where it has always been'. To tell the story of Palestine as what it was, is, could have been and can still be.

Desert / (to) Desert  
Bloom  
Emptiness  
Palestine  
Colonialism



Amora McConnell

*Palestine Remembered, Family Trees, Olive Trees and Palestine Pre-Nakba*

## MIGRATION

noun: The movement of a person or people from one country, locality, place of residence, etc., to settle in another

What is the first thought that arises when asked about one's home? Is it perceived by the spatial configuration; confined to four walls? Or is it governed by temporal and intangible attributes of comfort, familiarity, and security?

The author through this well-crafted piece challenges the notion of migration, identity, and one's place of inhabitation - 'home'

Migration is often theorized through the lens of transgression, dislocation, and the eventual loss of identity. The conventional terminology limits identity to one's place of inhabitation. The author on the other hand argues against this notion and proposes an alternative exploration where 'home' is the immersion of oneself in a locality.

"The lived experience of being at home hence involves the enveloping of objects in a space which is simple outside them: being at home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each

Gokul Nair

The gap between memory and place is the very dislocation of migration allows communities to be formed: the gap becomes reworked as a site of bodily transformation, the potential to remake one's relation to that which appears as unfamiliar, to reinhabit spaces and places.— Sara Ahmed

other"  
(Ahmed,1999)

The constant reconfiguration of identity through lived experiences serves as a crucial attribute of migration. This however is not enough, it also encompasses 'generational acts of storytelling' and remembrance. It is then we start to understand the analogy that ties memory and place. The failure of memory associated with a place develops a sense of discomfort and estrangement in the migrant bodies. It is here where the act of collective memory starts to take shape. The absence of memory and commonality results in the creation of new social constructs, new identities, and a new sense of belonging amongst these contested bodies.

Enstrangment  
Migration  
Identity  
Home  
Memory



Gokul Nair

Self, Migration through aerial portraits of varying landscapes

## DESIRE

noun: a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen

The intertwined ideals of identity, home, and belonging are stretched further in the context of migration and desire. If ‘homes’ involve “encounters between those who stay, those who arrive, and those who leave” (340), what happens to those who are simultaneously maneuvering between one or more of these actions? How does a potentially transient body navigate itself and its identity?

The discussion of the home as skin sheds some light on this uncertainty. If the “boundary between self and home is permeable” (341) then perhaps a body can exist in multiple versions of belonging. If the home requires the absence of desire as is proposed in the text, however, then the body itself may emerge as the actual home for a person with or in a situation necessitating multiple identities.

Kelvin Lee

“To be at home is the absence of desire, and the absence of an engagement with others through which desire engenders movement across boundaries.” — Sara Ahmed

The example of Pnina Werbner’s work on Asian migrants in Britain adds an important layer to this investigation; the ability for strangers to transcend unfamiliarity through the “collective act of remembering in the absence of a common terrain” (344) is evocative of the realities of “chosen family” in marginalized communities. People who have left home or have been forced to migrate ultimately tap into shared experiences, able to ideally form community and perhaps overcome desire, even momentarily, through the creation or inhabitation of supportive spaces. These moments might serve as respite for transient bodies undulating between staying, arriving, and leaving.

Interval  
Collective Memory  
Desire  
Dislocation  
Skin



Kelvin Lee

self, *Belongings* (digital photograph);  
Wendy Park, *Heart Apples and Hangers*, 2022

## 1/31 – Ideas Travel

### Nomad

A person with no fixed home, travelling from one destination to another.

“Real Home” carries a heavy weight when it becomes fixed to a certain place, a place of permanent and never-ending journey of departure and return. The notion of “Real Home” becomes heavy when it is imposed upon us, hindering the possibility of cultivating our own sense of home. When fixated on a particular plot of land, the meaning of home carries within it a sense of weight, responsibility, obligation, and at times, a forced sense of belonging and claim.

In the reading, the writer attempts to distinguish between the “real” home from which we originate and the feeling of home. However, this notion of the “real” home as a permanent place of living can become overwhelming when one feels a sense of homelessness within the confines of their own dwelling.

“Home is here, not a specific place that one simply inhabits, but more than one place: there are too many homes to allow a place to secure

Manar Alrougi

“It is the “real” home, the very space in which one imagines oneself to have originated, and in which one projects the self as both homely and original, that is the most unfamiliar.” — Sara Ahmed

the roots or routes of one’s destination.” The idea of home beyond our assigned place aligns closely with the concept of nomadism, where the meaning of home is constantly shifting and never fixed. Here, home becomes an ongoing journey that could result in creating more than one home. It keeps us moving.

Home

Boundaries

Homelessness

Nomad

Identity





Zhang Huan, Family Tree, 2001

### EXILE

noun: the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons

A person who lives away from their native country, either from choice or compulsion

Ahmed's article is an invitation to think about those who do not move by choice, who long for a homeland they cannot return to, who are not welcomed where they arrive, and for whom space, even in their own homeland, is not made. There are sociological realities that allow us to theorize the lived politics of home, belonging and identity. Ahmed poses the argument that transnational journeys of subjects and others, both in the present, as well as the narrated past, invites us to consider what it means to be at home, to inhabit a particular place, and to question the relationship between identity and home. The construct of 'home' is always an encounter between those who stay, those who arrive, and those who leave. Furthermore, Avtar Brah presents an elaboration on the notion of 'diasporic space' where the native encounters the stranger and different strangers encounter each other. A space in which movement and dislocation forms 'home' as complex spaces grappling and shifting the dichotomies of private and public, familiar and strange, us and them, here and there, belonging and unbelonging, and home and away.

In the 1960's, the Hotel Chelsea was a place where artists, such as Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) found new life and a new 'home'. Although a legendary hotel today, at the time, Hotel Chelsea was most likely an uncomfortable location. A place where one in exile from their own country "ended

Syeeda Simmons

"I don't know how to explain what exile can do," he said, quietly considering his words. "You dream you are at home. You're meeting old friends and the joy, and you wake up to reality. There is this blurred line between the known and the unknown, the seen and unseen. For us, we cross over. When you wake up, you have to deal with the reality that you're not there."— Abdullah Ibrahim

up" and found refuge. It wasn't the luxurious destination that it's made out to be now, it was an infrastructure for survival. It became a place for storytelling as individuals searched for self-understanding and identity. Subjects of different diasporas come together, questioning the aforementioned dichotomies as they negotiate and navigate public space in their new 'homes' and carry with them the stories of their own varied journeys, lived embodiments, and homelands. "Migration is not only felt at the level of lived embodiment. Migration is also a matter of generational acts of storytelling about prior histories of movement and dislocation" (342).

For Ibrahim, he carried home with him through his music. Music is the vessel to discover self understanding and identity. In his song 'Mannenberg', he encapsulates the mood of the people that were forcibly removed from their homes, watching their homes being destroyed in front of them. When speaking of his song 'Mannenberg' in the film "A Brother with Perfect Timing", Abdullah Ibrahim states: "Being separated from loved ones, but maintaining the spirit of togetherness. So the song itself, or the sound of the song, serves like a link between the people who leave or were forced into exile and those within the country. And that hopefully inshallah, after the revolution, the song will serve as a rallying point." Although it was a war-zone in apartheid South Africa, his music was pure joy, a celebration, proud music.

Migrant  
Estrangement  
Exile  
Displacement  
Reinhabit



Syedda Simmons

self, *Layered Narratives*

## ALCHEMY

noun: a seemingly magical process of transformation, creation, or combination. The medieval forerunner of chemistry.

What is my black moon? When does my eclipse occur? Does anybody see it? Do I need to share it in order for it to have happened? Am I friends with my black moon? Do I play with it? Who taught me to look for the eclipse? What conditions are generated from the eclipse? What does it let me do? Does it feel the same every time? Does the black moon look the same from wherever I am? I am interested in loneliness, that the experience of witnessing and remembering a black moon is an inherently lonely thing. If diaspora collects, the black moon disperses.

"You calculate how much you need to translate in order to make yourself understood." (Kodwo Eshun). Can we use language to choose our interlocutors? Is it our obligation to curate, contribute to, or respond to an archive of ways of being understood? Is legibility a responsibility?

Anoushka Mariwala

"What I like is the antisocial, aocial, nature of the occult... They don't want any of those conditions that make an event happen... The artist does not repair or construct a social bond. The artist is not the host. The artist is not doing acts of friendships." — Kodwo Eshun

What is the difference between understanding and empathizing? When does the withdrawal begin to eclipse the generosity of sharing? I am wary of the selfishness of this instinct: that hermeticism can slow down an urgent political project. Siddiqi's "writing with" uses strategies of co-opting structures into your eclipse. Dawood moves past them obliquely.

Algorithmic associativeness and non-linearity are anti-archival projects (and so have liberatory potential for Eshun), but I also hesitate to lean into an attitude that demands high resolution, and the internet's crumbling architecture.

My black moon is in my kitchen: I can taste and feel it, but I cannot grasp it. Removed from it, the kitchen is a shadow of itself. I like the objectness of the black moon -- a thing whose extents are not fully understood (perhaps they just cannot be) but is still material.

Kinship  
Memory  
Alchemy  
Play  
Fictions



Anoushka Mariwala

self, *Black Moon* (digital photograph)

## 1/31 – Ideas Travel

### Diaspora

noun: the scattering of peoples. trying to disturb certain taken-for-granted positions in terms of the majority of the art-historical canon

The Black Sun is described as a simultaneous and incomprehensible presence. It is considered a mystical symbol, representing hidden knowledge and the pursuit of secret societies.

Artists use references and summonses to create different artistic effects. They use the methods of mysticism and occultism in order to add power and meaning to their works. This way of creation is antithetical to social relations and individual creativity. Artists express hostility to relationships and communication through the construction of secret societies and an unwillingness to share or convey meaning. In this way, they try to establish a non-traditional relationship with the audience, provoking the audience's curiosity and thinking. This way of creation is also similar to the way capitalism is constructed, by keeping certain information secret and hidden, to increase its appeal and value. This method of creation is also similar

Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

“There is a de-subjectivising quality, which is extremely powerful and attractive and compelling. The image has a certain agency of its own, which draws you towards it and summons you continually. You can't fathom it.” — Kodwo Eshun

to the practice of occultism, in which occultism texts can be understood and interpreted in different ways by different people, and this ambiguity adds to the mystery and appeal of the work. In general, by invoking and summoning the symbols and methods of occultism.

For example, two paintings by the artist Magritte increase the appeal and value by keeping certain information secret. These two paintings have been interpreted in many different ways by people. Desiderius Erasmus once said, “Love is blind; that is why it is always done by touch.” The painting, a couple made of masked two people, seems to confirm the “blind love”; Others believe that the painting shows that two people cover up the dark side of each other's hearts and become lovers, because they do not know each other and hide each other's ugly side behind the cloth. But Magritte did not solve the mystery.

Alchemy  
Attractive  
Diaspora  
Hegemonic  
Summon



Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

René François Ghislain Magritte, 1928, *Attractive Drawings: The Lovers 1, The Lovers 2*

## TRANSMUTABILITY

noun: The quality of being transmutable; susceptibility of being changed into something else.

Black sun and diaspora. Both have the ability to simultaneously explicate but also to occlude language and image. Dawood's and Eshun's idea of an illegibility that the occluded sun and diaspora share is compelling. They see the diasporic figure as a mutable one, that would shift between the different modes of their personalities, with a perpetual illegibility that isn't only due to the uncuriosity of their host, but rather also because they are untranslatable, to themselves and to their interlocutors.

"The diaspora", Dawood argues, "was internal always and forever: internal to us in terms of our very awkward coming to terms with our own subjecthood, or the loss of it". However, It is not characterized by multiple identities, but rather self-identified as containing multitudes and opacities. For Dawood, the condition of being diasporic is mostly associated with the Jewish people.

Hadass Rozental

"I see black sun as a device -it can be many things. Black sun as something that's both present and illegible and occluded. Simultaneously. It's not one or the other. It's both."  
— Shezad Dawood

What are, therefore, the aesthetics of diaspora? Or rather, what is a diasporic aesthetic? They are the inherent transmutability that remain unread. What is that sort of extra-dimension that operates on top of associativity? Dawood suggests naming Eshun's certain kind of aesthetic, a kind of surfing, as "Google shamanism" – the sobriety of starting with a modest thing and keeping reiterating over and over.

Eclipse  
Occlusion  
Transmutability  
Opacity  
Diaspora  
Subjecthood





Hadass Rozental

*self, total eclipse*

## 1/31 – Ideas Travels

### Diaspora

noun: discursive bodies in the process of making of the space under condition of 'Guest'.

The hermeticism of Diaspora - the double-faced-ness nature of certain conceptual practices can invites initiation into a mystery that can be decoded, which in this case is the conceptualization and the practicing of diaspora as artistic practice.

The interview opens up a discussion by first pointing out the term 'Diaspora' has a certain narrative of an apology, Then, a literal defining of the historical heritages of the term, being initially a description of the scattering of people, the Judaic. And it migrates to the context of describing a particular kind of condition in modernity, a colonial diasporas. Its potential towards a sophisticated aethetical analysis of diaspora would, perhaps disturb the art-historical canon.

It then addressed the tension inside the choosing of 'emigration' instead of 'migra-

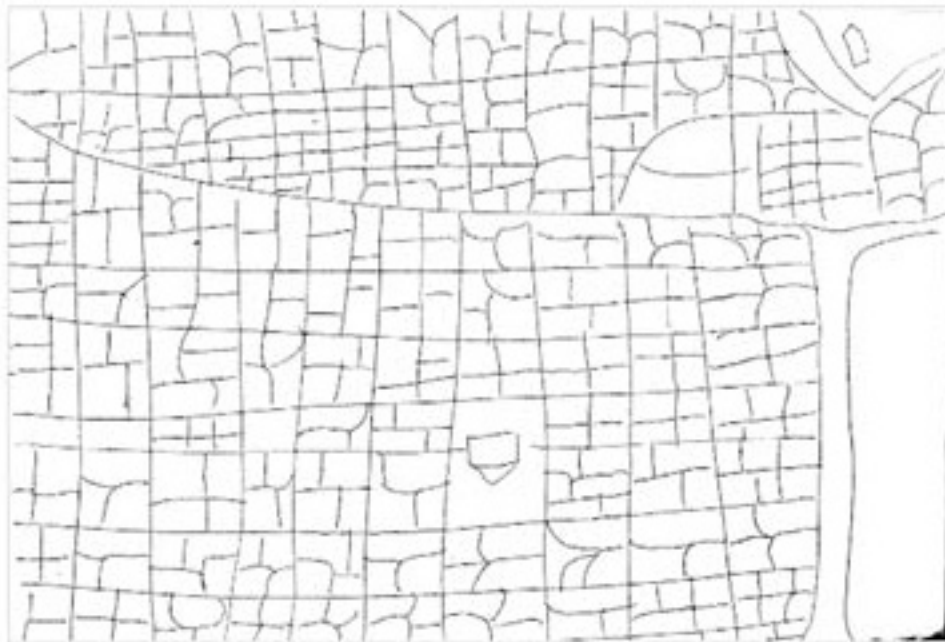
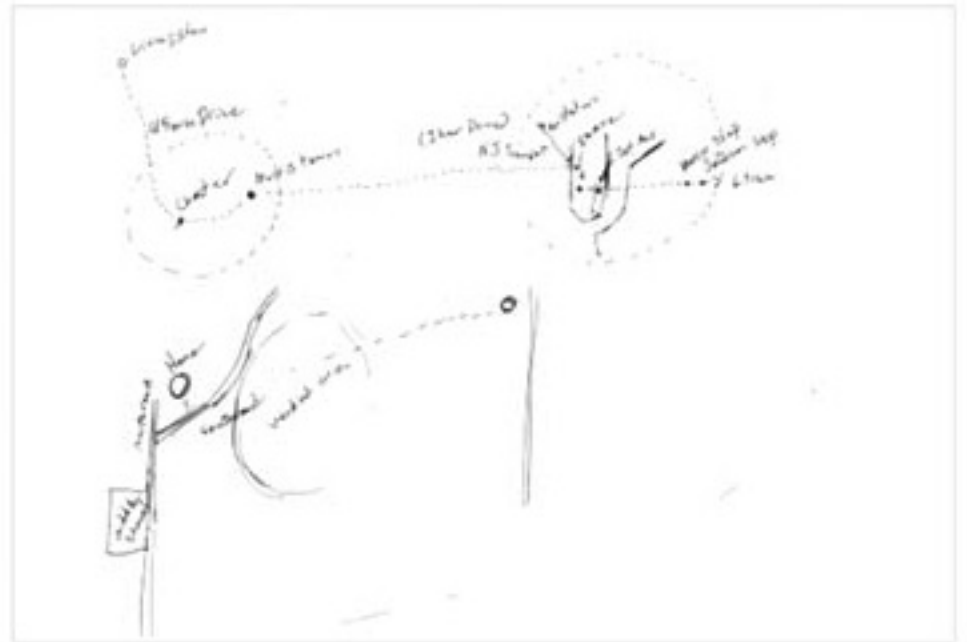
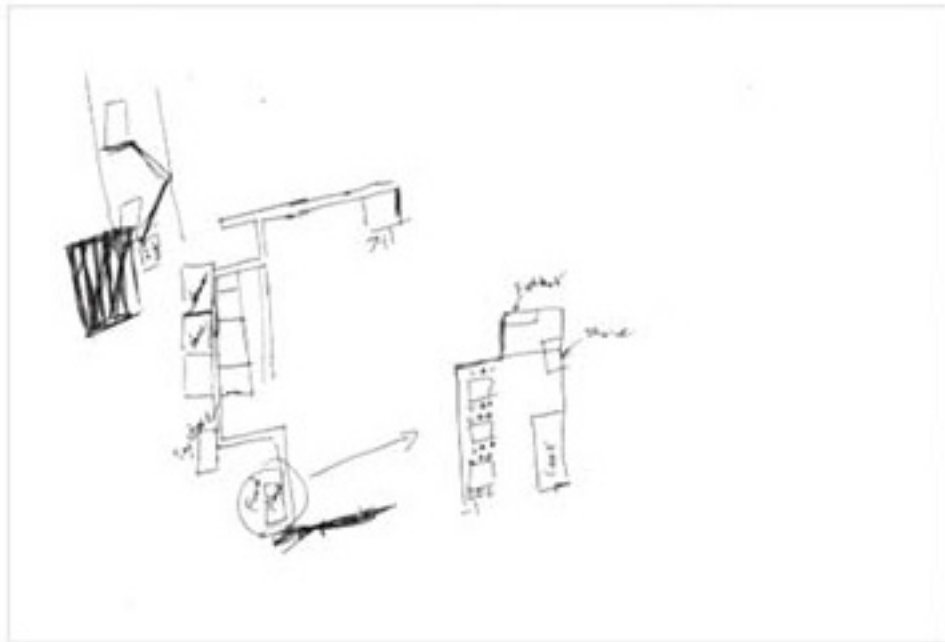
Yueyang Luo

"The condition of the diasporic individual is the writing of symbols, that the host is neither curious about and that the diasporic people wouldn't be able to translate if asked

tion,' is power dynamics at play in the process of constructing of self as Diasporic.

To what extent, then, is the diasporic experience translatable? And the aesthetization of diaspora can be read through the intermeidary domain of public/private, which is the un-/translatability of subjectivity. This analysis is considered as hermetic approach to fully unravel the static, seriousness of Diaspora. Through the production of futurity, a transformative practice of language, diaspora doesn't always become a question of memory and archives. As the oralizing of speech, the act of 'making' of secret societies through formula (fluxus artists), the ritualistic gather of invocation, the occultism.

Alchemy  
Occultism  
Diaspora  
Non-Transmission  
Invocation



## 1/31 – Ideas Travel

PARADOX: a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true

To be present, yet illegible.

To be boundless, yet clearly defined by what you are not.

To be massive enough to absorb all around you, but concurrently deflecting everything in your path.

The paradox of the diasporic experience is that it is simultaneously transparent to you, but constantly having to be figured out and reimagined. What does my Blackness mean? What does it not mean? (At times, it's easier to answer the latter.)

But this is something I lean into. That precarious gray area is where the most profound observations are made. It forces you to call on the ancestors and find your way back.

Eric Julian Hagerman

Sankofa: it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.

-Ghanaian Proverb from the Akan Tribe

This process - of learning, unlearning, redefining - reaches far beyond race or creed, despite being impacted by at times. But that in itself can also be freeing, and I relish in this too. The diasporic experience, in its simplest form, is the recognition that you are a product of multiplicity; you are the exponential form of each one of your ancestors, and your offspring will be the same. And the energy that this gives you is massive enough to move mountains, absorb planets, and birth new realities.

Kodwo Eshun notes that the Black Sun has a way of desubjectivizing in a meaningful way. Along these lines, I think of Sankofa, but in a somewhat backwards sense: the realization that I exist through and by the light and shadow of the Black Sun - which is a collective ancestral knowledge - and that I too will one day be a Black Sun for the generations to come.

Identity  
Diaspora  
Ancestral  
Paradox  
Unlearning



Eric Julian Hagerman

self, *Paradox*, 2023.

- *When I Get Home* by Solange Knowles

- *The Mesmerizing Animation of Sinusoidal Waves* in GIFs by Étienne Jacob

## 1/31 – Ideas Travel

### ERE IBEJI

[Yoruba] - ibi=born and eji=two, ere= sacred image; Twin Images, sacred wood sculpture or photograph used to commemorate a deceased twin(s) through ritual

Since our last discussion, I've continued to think about Bogues' quote questioning what happens when ideas land. The Ere Ibeji practice in Yoruba culture in Nigeria is an example of how ideas can be adapted and stolen when they travel. The tradition to commemorate a deceased twin used to be done through sculpture, creating wooden figurines of the twin in their adult state. However the arrival of photography to Africa—namely in Nigeria which is where the geographic focus of the essay—was met by a means of adapting the medium to more realistically represent the absence of a deceased twin. In this case, a surviving twin would dress in clothes gendered to themselves and their twin and the photograph itself would take the form of the wooden Ere Ibeji when used in rituals and commemoration. While one idea (photography to commemorate the dead) was adapted, another idea (the physical

“[For the Yoruba]...photography offers the unique case of combining possibilities of fidelity not readily available to the human agent with those of manipulability requisite to the fulfillment of the essence of the image.”

— Olu Oguibe (p. 247)

Ere Ibeji sculptures) were taken away from their altars and placed far away locked in the cases of museums across the western world. The Museum of Scotland's webpage on the Ere Ibeji notes that women today “use commercially produced plastic dolls in place of the wooden Ere Ibeji.” This has led me to question that if ideas travel, what happens when they are not returned? Contemporary Yoruba Photographers (Rotimi Fani-Kayode 1955-1989, and Stephen Tayo) have introduced the image making processes of Ere Ibeji to the art world in their photographs and fashion photography, giving a new light to this centuries old tradition. How can ideas that are stolen/suppressed be reclaimed or celebrated?

Photography  
Ere Ibeji  
Image-Making  
Peter Obe  
Rotimi Fani-Kayode



Lauren Yvonne Brown

*self, Ere Ibeji: ideas stolen, ideas gazed*

## EVIDENCE

noun: the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.

The fields of art, architecture, and photography, all falling under the umbrella of design, can be broadly categorized as representational fields that heavily rely on visual perception. The subjective and perspective-driven nature of these fields allows for criticism from both experts and non-experts. Unlike academic texts, which require qualifications for credibility, anyone can have an opinion in these fields.

The simplicity of a photograph often masks the complexity it can convey, the “substance” within it. The act of reading *this text* itself exemplifies how knowledge is disseminated to its recipients. Academic readings are often challenging due to complex words, phrasing, and references to multiple sources. However, the same cannot be said about a photograph, as it can convey information in a split second.

“The fundamental requisite for the application as well as the effectiveness of the photographic medium in this tradition is the redefinition of objectivity — from the canonical objective to the photographic objective — and the supremacy of faith over faithfulness.” — Olu Oguibe

This leads to the question of how meaning and intention can be inscribed and imposed in the creation of a photograph, without leaving it open to interpretation. Bazin’s statement about mechanical reproduction creating the illusion of participating in the creation of a photograph can be interpreted in multiple ways. It can refer to merely observing the process externally or creating the necessary conditions for its execution. A photograph has the capacity to favor one approach over the other. But is semantics a necessary complement to achieve the same effect?

Fidelity  
Objective  
Evidence  
Making  
Substance





Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

*self, Visual Semantics : Collage  
(Faith / Oladele Bambgoye & Rotimi Fani-Kayode)*

## SUBJECTIVITY

noun: the quality of being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.

This text from Olu Oguibe’s “Photography and the Substance of the Image” explores the multifaceted impact of photography in Africa. Photography, arriving in Africa in 1839, rapidly became integral to European exploration, culture, and tourism, as it showcased the continent’s landscapes and people. As the 20th century progressed, photography grew into a respected profession, with African photographers gaining prominence. They were better positioned within their cultural contexts than foreigners to utilize photography, creating accessible and affordable services.

Influential figures like Peter Obe, Mohammed Amin, and Seydou Keita utilized the medium to document private and public life, and to express personal and political narratives. By the 1980s and 1990s, artists transcended traditional photography, experimenting with its broader potential.

Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

“Photography overcomes subjectivity in a way undreamed of by painting, one which does not so much defeat the act of painting as escape it altogether: by automatism, by removing the human agent from the act of reproduction. ” — Stanley Cavell (p.237)

The text also delves into the philosophical discourse of photography, suggesting that its power lies in the creation of images that satisfy human desires for realism and illusion, rather than in objectivity. It’s the human element—intent and creativity behind the lens—that imparts true meaning to photographs, shaping how cultures like the Yoruba perceive and utilize photography, often contrasting with Western perspectives.

This approach, resembling an experiment, combines various elements from different photographs to form a new scene, shifting the creator’s role. This process raises questions about the nature of photography and the new meanings that emerge from these composite images.

Identity

Scene

Subjectivity

Authenticity

Photography



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

Self, Reconstructed Identities

Transparency: notion that presupposes photographs can objectively capture reality, overlooking the cultural, subjective, and interpretive layers that infuse images with meaning beyond their visible content.

Olu Oguibe critically examines the concept of “transparency” in photography, arguing against the traditional view that photographs serve as neutral, objective records of reality. He posits that photography, especially within African contexts, transcends mere replication of the visible world, instead embodying cultural essences and interpretive acts that infuse images with deeper meanings. This critique invites a reevaluation of the medium’s role, suggesting that its value lies in its ability to convey cultural truths rather than its fidelity to physical reality.

This perspective raises critical questions: Is any photograph truly capable of capturing the essence of its subject without cultural or personal bias? How do cultural understandings shape our interpretation of photographic images? Oguibe’s discourse implies that the significance of a photograph is less

“The fundamental requisite for the application as well as the effectiveness of the photographic medium in this tradition is the redefinition of objectivity—from the canonical objective to the photographic objective—and the supremacy of faith over faithfulness.” — Olu Oguibe

about the mechanical process of image capture and more about the cultural and human interpretations that define its meaning.

A pivotal quote from the text highlights the tension between photography’s perceived neutrality and its potential for cultural imposition: “Ximenes had ‘too much in his camera already,’ and wondering whether he wanted ‘to take away the whole country.’” This sentiment underscores the power dynamics at play in photography’s ability to “capture” and potentially appropriate subjects, challenging the notion of the camera as an impartial observer.

Oguibe’s analysis compels us to view photography through a lens of cultural specificity and subjectivity, undermining the myth of universal transparency and emphasizing the medium’s role in cultural expression and interpretation.

Video  
Drawings  
Decipher  
Technology  
Obscured



Jisoo

*Self, Transparency versus Cultural Essence*





## Measuring

Matsipa, Mpho. Interview by Emanuel Admassu, in *Where is Africa* (New York: Center for Art Research and Alliances (CARA), [forthcoming]), pp. 36-60.

Adams, Jason. "Occupy Time," in *Radical Philosophy* 171 (January/February 2012), pp. 15-18.

Hartman, Saidiya, "The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner," in *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheavals*, (New York: WW. Norton & Company, 2019), p. 465-490.

## Travelling

Harney, Elizabeth, "Geometries and Geographies: Dawit L. Petros's Expansive Modernist Narratives," in *Dawit L. Petros: Spazio Disponibile*, (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2022), pp. 38-57.

Anderson, Sean, "The Immeasurable and Disappeared," in *Dawit L. Petros: Spazio Disponibile*, (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2022), pp. 58-71.

Black Athena Collective (Heba Y. Amin & Dawit L. Petros), "Migration is at home in mobility" in *ArteEast*, Winter, 2017, pp. 128-137.

## 02/07 – Archives of Animism

### RETHINK

verb: think again about (something such as a policy or course of action), especially in order to make changes to it.

In the interview conducted by Emanuel Admassu titled “Where is Africa,” Mpho Matsipa explores her choice to pursue a career as a researcher, driven by the ambition to broaden the discourse, challenge prevailing notions of urban planning, and confront the lingering colonial-era mentalities within African cities.

Through her work, Matsipa critiques the persistence of colonial and apartheid-era segregation in cities like Johannesburg, emphasizing the imperative for future generations to carve their own paths free from such ingrained perspectives. As articulated in the text, there is a pressing need to “expand our frame of reference for thinking ‘city.’”

The interview prompts contemplation on how we can enrich our vocabularies and resist the perpetuation of these trends among

Adriana Castro Lizarbe

“Our futures could be very different and we need to free our imaginations and our points of reference in order to take into account the complexity of future possibilities.” — Mpho Matsipa

new generations of architecture students, especially given the current predicament of under-resourced institutions. Matsipa addresses these concerns by sharing insights into her own projects, illustrating how, as a Black, female, African, and South African researcher, she navigates and confronts these challenges head-on.

Imagination  
Segregation  
Rethink  
Inequality  
Expand





Adriana Castro Lizarbe

Raphael, *The School of Athens*, 1510

Adriana Castro Lizarbe, *Wak'a a comic based on true stories*, 2023

### ARCHITECT?

(noun) - a person who is qualified to design buildings and to plan and supervise their construction.

When thinking about what it means to study and ultimately practice architecture, Mpho's interview was very relatable in the sense of finding a means to navigate a discipline that 1.) was not designed for someone like me (a black woman) and 2.) still practices on principles that are limited to a western/master understanding of architecture. These ideas go back to our conversations last week around the Siddiqi and Ockman texts on the role of an architect/designer. The more I study architecture, the more I get confused on what it means to be one, and what I feel my ultimate calling is to continue this 'practice.' I've known for awhile that my desire to practice architecture is less in my interest in buildings but in how people occupy space, create memories in that space, and how design built or unbuilt can empower others, recall history, empathize with others, and be a medium to better understand our current place in society.

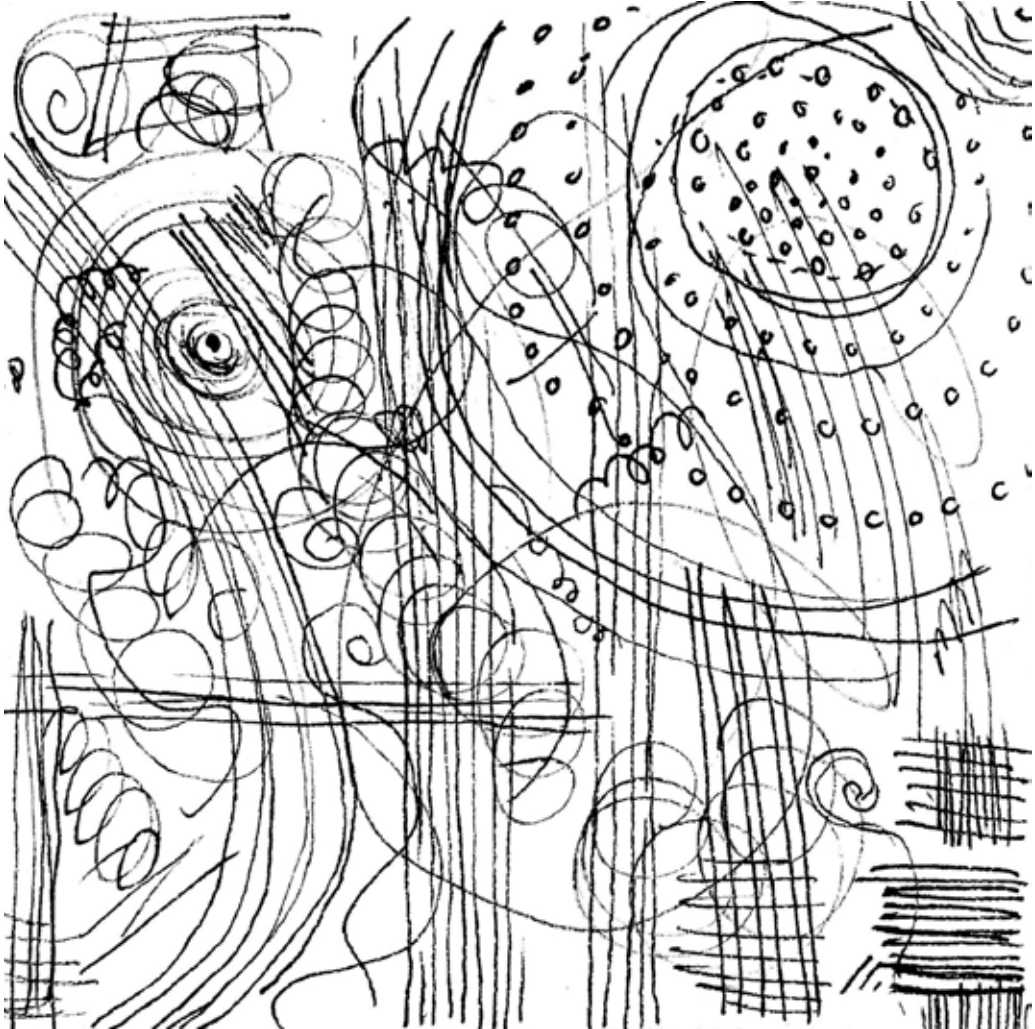
Lauren Yvonne Brown

"...when you inhabit a world or you inhabit a profession that never imagined you occupying any meaningful space within it, then you're forced to be inventive, you're forced to assert yourself and to create space for yourself within and beyond that. For me, it makes me feel that I'm operating from a position of immense strength and insight."

Mpho Matsipa (124)

I look at how Mpho used her graduate studies at Berkeley for research outside of traditional practice or even how designers like Mabel Wilson practiced then pursued a PhD in American Studies—a discipline that is seemingly completely separate from architecture. Is there another practice or discipline I can pair with 'architecture' that best enables me to achieve my goals as a designer? My response this week is me thinking through all of these questions of what I ultimately want to do as a designer—questions that are especially pressing as I decide on where I want to work and the type of work I want to do post-grad. Although there is much uncertainty, I do know that my life experiences and my identity have led me to think about practice outside of the traditional sense, both in my studio work and my own doodles and artwork I do for fun (as pictured this week). Whatever practice ends up meaning for me, I hope it can make someone(s) smile at the end of the day.

Counter-Cartographies  
Alternative modes of  
practice  
Architect?  
Challenging the western  
paradigm  
Opaque / opaque cities



Lauren Yvonne Brown

*self, frustration (2022)*

## REIMAGINE

verb: reinterpret (an event, work of art, etc.)  
imaginatively; rethink

There's a lot to grab onto within this interview, a lot that I can relate to. The issue of a limited imagination struck a note inside of me. There is a reimagining, a rethinking, reshaping that is necessary in order to transform cities that are liberated from the desire for control and ownership of those who do not originate from that place. Mpho discusses how there is a limitation to a "Western industrial city ideal, which is not necessarily the future of where cities in Africa, or elsewhere, are headed." Not that there is a lack of imagination, as she mentions artists and practitioners who are creatively producing work that engages different approaches to reconceptualize and work against this limitation. This challenge to imagine beyond Europe and America is critical and as I prepare to enter into this discipline and practice I find myself grappling with what methodologies and techniques to use to make a meaningful impact.

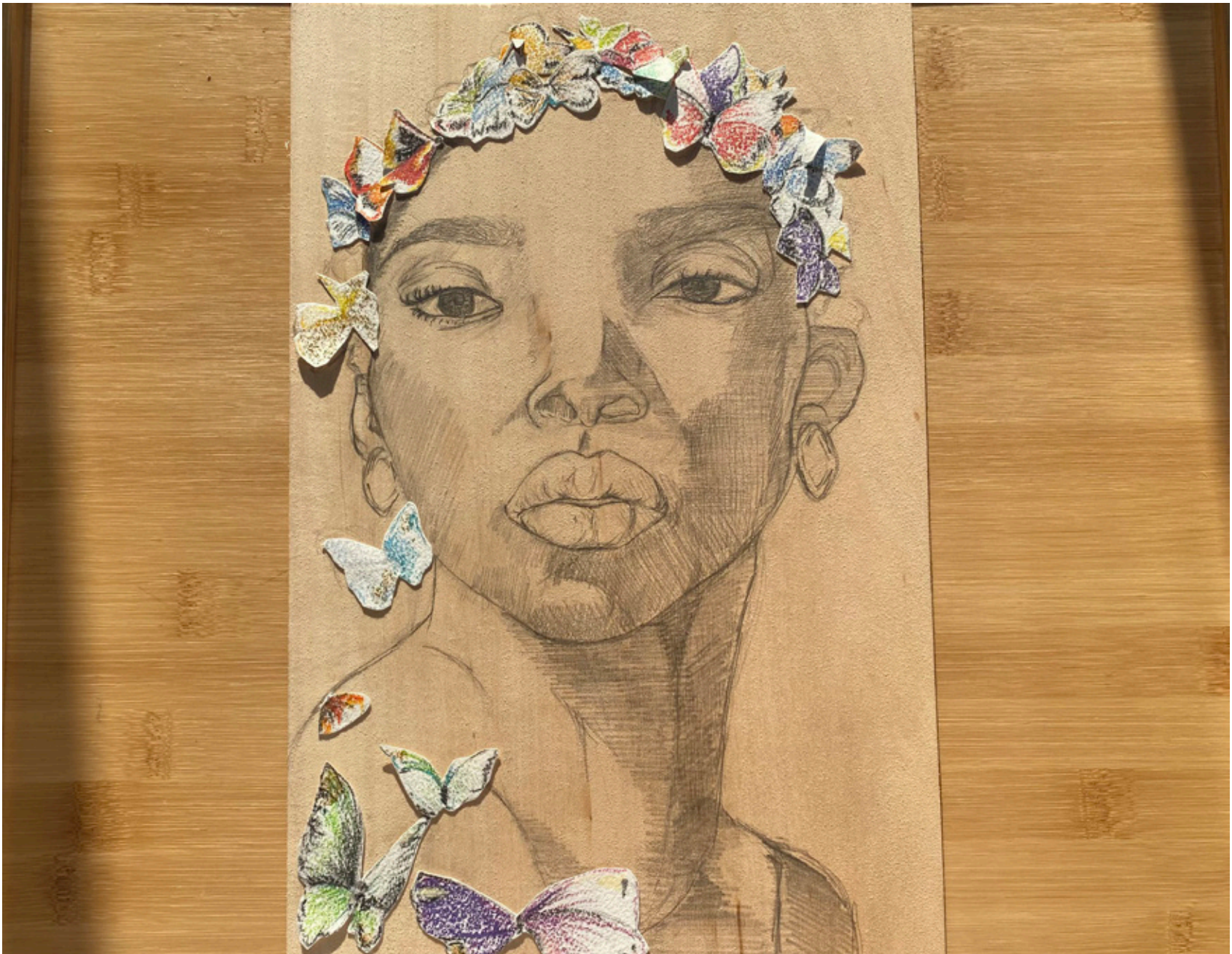
Syeeda Simmons

"... who understand the necessity to produce a language for the transformations that are taking place. We're no longer working within the old stale paradigms. This is a period of intense and creative searching for language, articulation and invention, too"

— Mpho Matsipa

Creating space for myself and other Black women was a pivotal reason I decided to insert myself into a space I rarely feel invited or welcomed into. Mpho ends the interview with her experience of being black, a woman, an African and South African aiming to navigate and "make sense" of this discipline and practice of architecture, research and design. How she had to "live through all these technologies of exclusion and work against them and find creative strategies to overcome them." The responsibility and burden of creating, maintaining and producing these spaces of articulation falls onto us, and by us I mean Black women. What does it look like to reimagine the Black woman as someone who occupies the realm of architecture and design? How can we work towards a sustainable and permanence of these spaces that enable us to "do the work that we want to do, rather than meant to be doing?"

Positioning  
Access  
Reimagine  
Transform  
Invent



Syeeda Simmons

self, *metamorphosis*

## 02/07 - Archives of Animism

POSITIONALITY: a person's standing or identity in relation to others, especially with reference to issues of culture, ethnicity, or gender

Originally built for as a hotel the 1892 World Expo, the Mecca Flats had become a home and cultural hub for upper-middle class families and the Black elite, like poet Gwendolyn Brooks. Similar to the destructive histories of segregation found at the nearby Dan Ryan Expressway and the Bronzeville neighborhood, the ultimate demise of Mecca Flats was precipitated by the expansion of inequitable infrastructure: in this case, the architecture school at the Illinois Institution of Technology. In its place now stands the famed S.R. Crown Hall, designed by Mies Van der Rohe. In each of these examples, the [building, city block, infrastructure] of the city was used as a tool of sociotechnical control, similar to the post-apartheid remnants that Matsipa highlights.

Ironically, most of the Black residents of Mecca Flats would not benefit from the

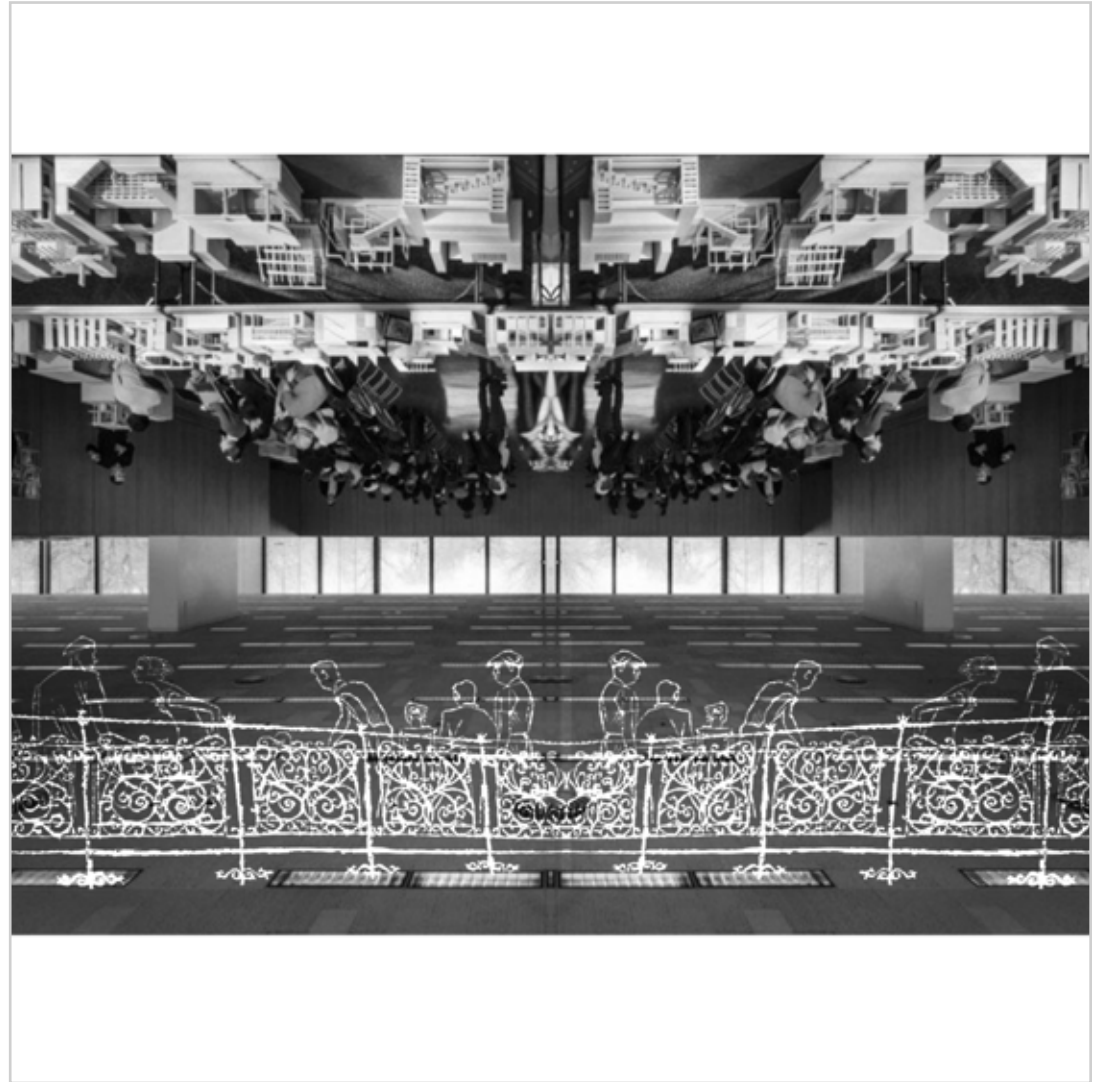
"[if] you inhabit a profession that never imagined you occupying any meaningful space within it, then you're forced to ... create space for yourself within and beyond that." - Mpho Matsipa

construction of S.R. Crown Hall, as the architecture field across the country was still largely white (and male.)

The collage below imagines an architectural review taking place in an inverted and subverted Crown Hall. The superimposed drawing is one of the few images showing Black life in the Mecca Flats; most photographs of the building were taken after the building was vacated. By juxtaposing these (Black) residents with the (white) students who would eventually appropriate their space for architectural discourse, the collage aims to underline Matsipa's idea that these residents would have no choice but to be "inventive," they would have to create other means in order to affirm their (spatial) identity, to break into this profession, or even to build equity.

Control  
Marginalization  
Juxtaposition  
Appropriation  
Representation

Eric Julian Hagerman



Eric Julian Hagerman

self,  $41^{\circ}50'1''N$   $87^{\circ}37'38''W$ , 2024.

- Interior, S.R. Crown Hall by Chicago History Museum

- Drawing of Mecca Flats Tenants on the Balcony by Ben Shahn, 1959.

## 2/07 – Archives of Animism

### MOVEMENT

noun: an act of changing position or of having it changed

In “Occupy Time” Jason Adams examines the implications of temporal versus spatial occupation strategies during the Occupy Movement. Adams suggests that the temporal approach of considering affecting situations allows for a more dynamic and resilient form of protest, which adapts to evictions and suppressions. However, does this temporal strategy meaningfully challenge the existing power structures, or does it merely offer a symbolic gesture of resistance?

The acceleration of time in capitalist societies, as described by Adams, underscores a fundamental aspect of contemporary protest movements. The adoption of technology in accelerating protest actions could be seen as a double-edged sword; while it offers new avenues for organizing and resistance, it also fits within the capitalist framework of speed and

“Movement is not the prefigurative realization of a future ideal. Rather, it is that which sets conditions of possibility for continuing movement, situational bases for new temporalities.”

— Jason Adams

efficiency. One could question, then, if the use of technology in this manner ultimately serves to reinforce the structures that Occupy aims to challenge.

Moreover, the idea that temporal occupation can lead to the creation of new situations “from below” presents an intriguing proposition. Adams implies that this allows the Occupy movement to operate outside the constraints of traditional protest tactics. Does collective affected experience lead to tangible changes or is it as transient as the moments they occupy.

Temporalities  
Occupation  
Movement  
Interruption  
Affected





Maura Costello

Seattle Times, Photograph, *Occupy is in Disarray; Spirit Lives On*  
Self, Edit of Photograph

## 02/07- Archives of Animism

### Temporality

noun: the state of existing within or having some relationship with time.

Growing up, our perception of the physical world is taught in relation to the three-dimensional cartesian space. While it explains the concept of spatial occupation it fails to account for a fourth dimension- time.

Time is often assumed as an attribute running parallel and detached from spatial configuration. The reality, however, is a little more convoluted. Time and the cartesian space are intertwined. A reality that is receptive to the possibility of continuing and constant reconfiguration of the spatial construct.

Author Jason Adams through this piece explores the relevance of time through the lenses of monumental movements captured through static imagery. He reflects on their inability to encapsulate the everchanging temporal quality. The notion of static imagery is analogous to the cartesian product of space.

Gokul Biju Nair

“Movement is not prefigurative realization of a future ideal. Rather, it is that which sets conditions of possibility for continuing movement, situational bases for new temporalities.” — Jason Adams

“Rather than seeing time as existing in the same neutral manner for everyone, multiple temporalities coexist in a stratified manner” (Adams, 2012). The layering of time into the spatial construct alludes to the concept of temporality. It's only once you accept the existence of all events within this matrix (temporal and counter-temporal complex), only then can you truly comprehend the existence of multiple realities and their full extent reverberating through the continuum.

Time  
Spatial  
Temporality  
Capitalism  
Counter Temporality



Gokul Biju Nair

Self; Temporal repercussions

## CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM:

economic system characterized by the dominance of financial markets, global trade, and technological innovation, driving wealth concentration and shaping global socio-economic relations.

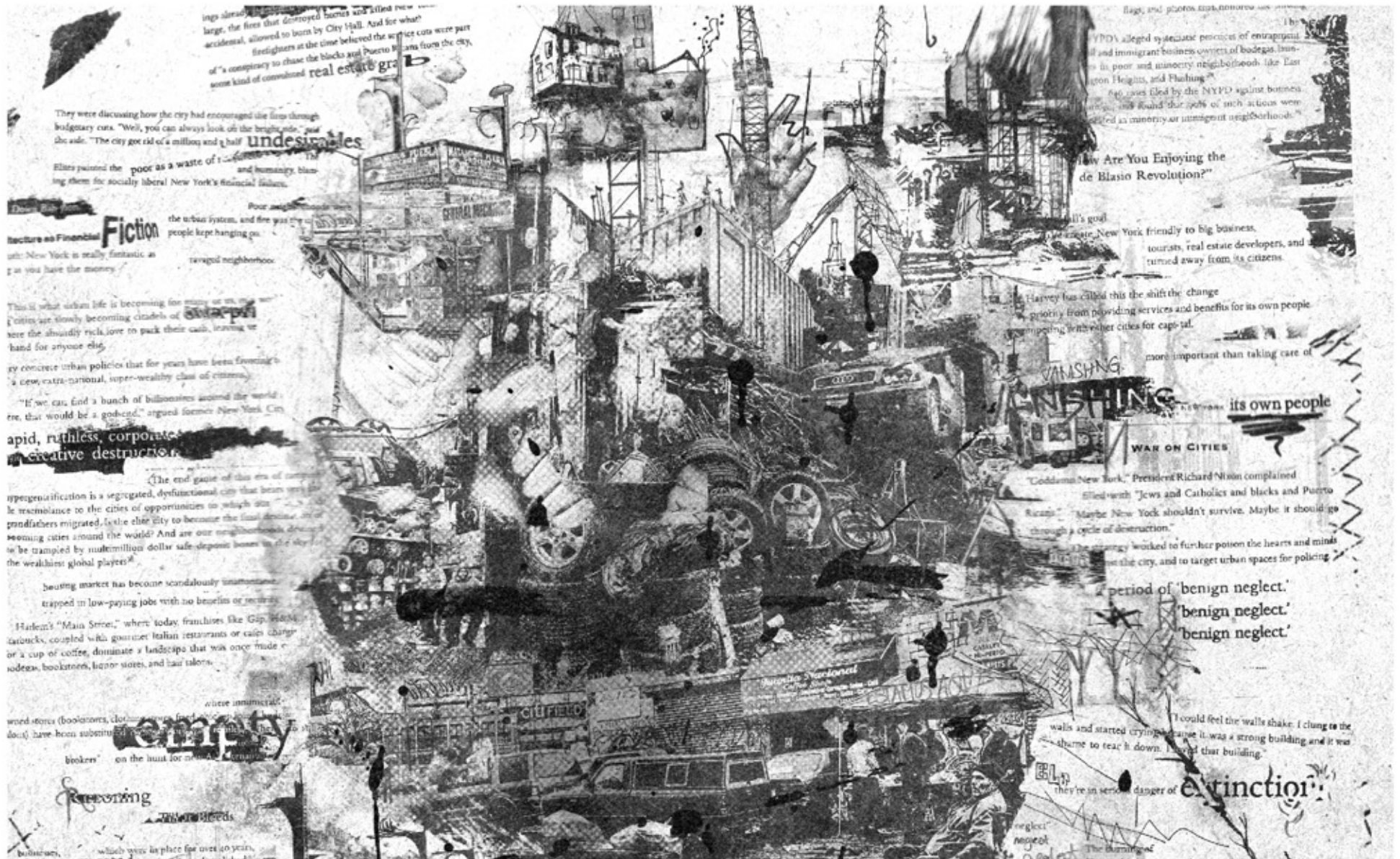
The text “Occupy Time” by Jason Adams explores the evolution of the Occupy movement, emphasizing its shift from a spatially focused protest to one that engages with time as a strategic dimension. Initially, Occupy Wall Street was anchored in occupying public spaces, but this approach faced limitations, including police evictions and the changing seasons. Adams argues that the movement’s strength lies in its temporal strategy—occupying time—which allows for more fluid, adaptable tactics that respond to and create new situations. This shift is seen as a response to the accelerated pace of contemporary capitalism, where time is a critical factor. The text draws parallels between Occupy’s tactics and historical movements, highlighting the importance of creating “situations” and engaging with multiple temporalities. It suggests that by complicating the spatial focus with a

As accelerated capitalism forces its working subjects to spend more and more of their time working, this is subverted constantly. On-the-job chatting, texting, web-surfing and long breaks are all things that are increasingly taken to be in need of monitoring and management.

temporal one, Occupy can resonate more broadly and confront the diverse temporal experiences of its participants, potentially leading to more impactful and sustained forms of resistance.

Analyzing this text, Adams provides a nuanced understanding of the Occupy movement’s evolution and its strategic responses to the challenges posed by modern capitalism and state power. By focusing on time as a critical dimension of protest, Adams illustrates how Occupy adapts and innovates, offering insights into the dynamics of contemporary social movements and their potential to effect change. The text challenges traditional notions of protest and organization, advocating for a more flexible and inclusive approach to resistance that acknowledges the complex, layered experiences of time in a rapidly changing world.

Temporal  
Strategy  
Adaptability  
Resistance  
Evolution



Angel

Langumas, Angel, *The Iron Triangle*

## 2/07 - Archives of Animism

### ANARCHY

noun: a state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority.

When does a tool become a weapon? In Hartman's "The Anarchy of Colored Girls," it is when voice becomes riot, redress, rage. Law is a tool (a weapon) for making anarchy measurable. Is there a right way to perform anarchy? Is the scream its purest form?

In Hartman's chorus of questions, fictions, screams: her self, riotous girls, reading girls, Esther Brown's spectre.

Female refusal is has clumsy, coded, unwieldy definitions that struggle in drawing its contours -- wayward, loose, fast, delirious, idle, indecent, vagrant, mad, in excess. All these words mean different things. The inability to categorize (accurately, at high resolution) troubles the logics of measurability. Hartman's language and tone coopts this spirit of the orderly to undo its own reasoning. This is not a "non-recognition of authority", it is the opposite.

Anoushka Mariwala

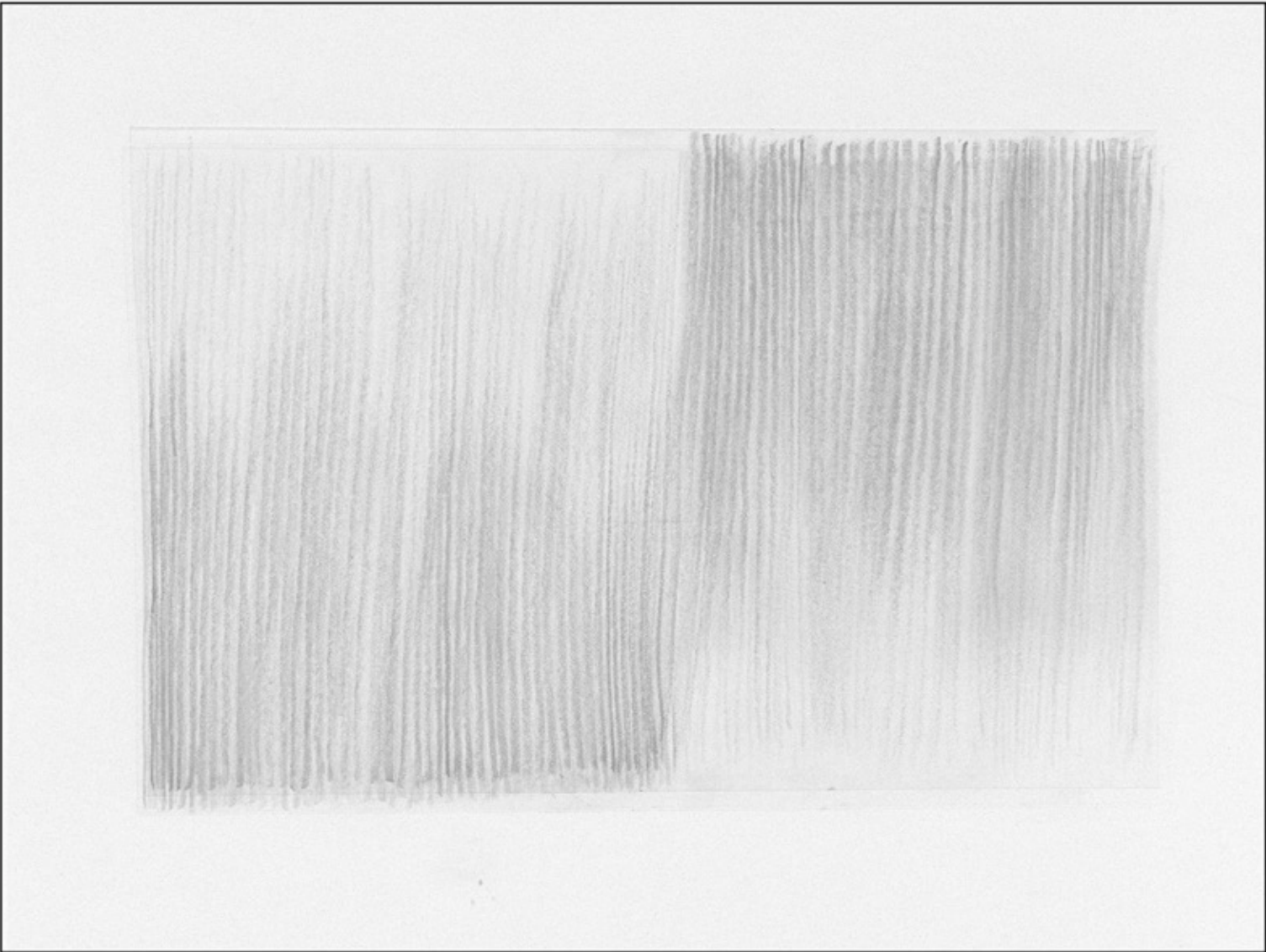
"The narrative emulates the errant path of the wayward and moves from one story to another by way of encounter, chance meeting, proximity, and sociality created by enclosure. It strives to convey the aspiration and longing of the wayward and the tumult and upheaval incited by the chorus." — SH

Should we strive for exactness in our pursuit of liberation?

Anne Carson writes: "Most of us, given a choice between chaos and naming, between catastrophe and cliché, would choose naming. Most of us see this as a zero-sum game, as if there were no third place to be: something without a name is commonly thought not to exist. And here is where we may be able to discern the benevolence of the untranslatable... In the presence of a word that stops itself, in that silence, one has the feeling that something has passed us and kept going, that some possibility has got free."

In the screaming of the chorus, there is the untranslatability, and so there is unknowingness (silence), and so there is briefly freedom.

Catastrophe  
Wake  
Riot  
Chorus  
Anarchy



Anoushka Mariwala

Screaming, graphite on mylar

## 2/07 – Archives of Animism

### LATENT

adjective : present but not visible, apparent, or activated; existing as potential.

Set with the confines of social constructs, redefining spatial constructs of what is allowed and what is not is characteristic of the individual. The latent potential to establish one's own terms continues to be suppressed by the constructs. Hartman alludes to these potentials through the protagonists who she imagines as symbols of subversion and persistence. Containing the agency within the framework of a human body allows command over the extent of the practice. Whether it was through Esther Brown and way of life or Loretta Michie and her voice, the means allowed for the propagation and migration of their desires and identities.

While trying to alter the dispositions of colonial and foisting knowledge structures which is the reason for this discourse, the question becomes - how do we break inherent biases to create space for new (rath-

“In the surreal, utopian nonsense of it all, and at the heart of riot, was the anarchy of colored girls: treason en masse, tumult, gathering together, the mutual collaboration required to confront the prison authorities and the police, the willingness to lose oneself and become something greater — a chorus, a swarm, an ensemble, a mutual aid society.” — Saidiya Hartman

er) *equitable biases*. A paradoxical phrase pointing towards a method of enforced resignation is perhaps the takeaway practice - weathering the disinclination to accept waywardness in order to be able to represent and distinguish the new constructs; appropriating the inappropriate.

Anarchy  
Synonymity  
Latent  
Wayward  
Reform





Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

self, *The Proper Image : Mixed Media*

## 2/7 – Archives of Animism

### AIDE-MÉMOIRE

noun: an aid to the memory, especially a mnemonic device

The question of the archive is presented once more. Harney through Petros asks us to consider the archive and its relationship to physical, temporal, and geometric histories in a condition of abstraction and in fragmentation. The relationship between abstraction and erasure suggests a link between the archive and the self. If abstract notions of color and geometry can be treated as “substance and medium” (44) for the creation of aide-mémoire for “imagining stories lost to the archives but evident in the working spaces of the city,” (45) how does one determine the significance of the abstraction or fragmentation itself? Is the aide-mémoire intensely personal and are histories then dependent on those who retrieve it?

When turning to Petros’ colorscales, “an ability to convert particular locations into poetic gestures, felt through the impact of

Kelvin Lee

“Colour is a wonderfully contingent thing. Its effects are highly provisional and function in direct proportion to that which is beside, on top of, or underneath it, regardless of the system that it points back to.”

— Dawit L. Petros

color on the body;” (56) the notion of erasure as fundamentally abstract emerges as a possible solution. The power of the relational pairings between aide-mémoire and the abstract as in Petros’ “Barelle” series lies perhaps not in the direct linkage of place to memory but instead in the acceptance that a fragment of a history is allowing interpretation. As Harney writes, perhaps the “inability to locate answers in the material archives...has proven to be more important than filling in the erasures of history.” (40)

Orality

Din

Aide-mémoire

Colorscape

Fragment



Kelvin Lee

Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2009

## 2/7 – Archives of Animism

### OSCILLATION

noun: the repetitive or periodic variation of some measure about a central value or between two or more different states

Spazio Disponibile–“available space” in Italian–is the name Dawit L. Petros used to subvert the notion of its original meaning; that is, the “availability” of African lands for exploitation and occupation through the colonial gaze. Spazio Disponibile therefore scrutinizes “the historical gaps in European memory, particularly that of modern Italy”. Revealing the intimate relationship between photography, histories of modern architecture and the Mirage, Sean Anderson questions the ability of architectural photography to ever become postcolonial. For him, however, Petros’ photographic work offers a certain reckoning. A reckoning that is made possible through the transgression and transposition of the colonial lens, as well as through the reciprocity among the bodies that comprise Petros’ work in the exhibition. Those bodies disappear into a precarious landscape, which in turn, reappears as the horizon of a new framework.

Hadass Rozental

“simultaneous occupation of spaces afforded by Petros’s images and the personification, if not indemnification, of a return to and from the colonies for both the artist and viewer,” — Sean Anderson

“The horizon is as possessive as the sea and land are present throughout Petros’s works. A denomination of distance, the horizon is not a limit but a provocation for transgression and movement to and beyond” (Anderson, 68); for Anderson, Petros’ line, is never fixed .

What kind of temporalities does Petros’ work offer then? The suggestive post in post-colonial hints at a possible liberation from–borrowing Anderson’s words–“the binds of subjugation”.

Colonial gaze  
Reckoning  
Optics  
Oscillation  
Transposition



Hadass Rozental

self, *Mediterraneità*

## FORGETTING

verb: to not remember, intentionally or unintentionally, and occasionally under duress of one's environment

Sean Anderson's, "The Immeasurable and Disappeared", presents Anderson's understanding of Dawit Petros' "Spazio Disponibile" within the context of image viewing and making in what feels like a tainted reality - a present day that cannot shed the traces of colonialism permeated through everyday infrastructure we use and inevitably occupy, and in this case, within and of Eritrea.

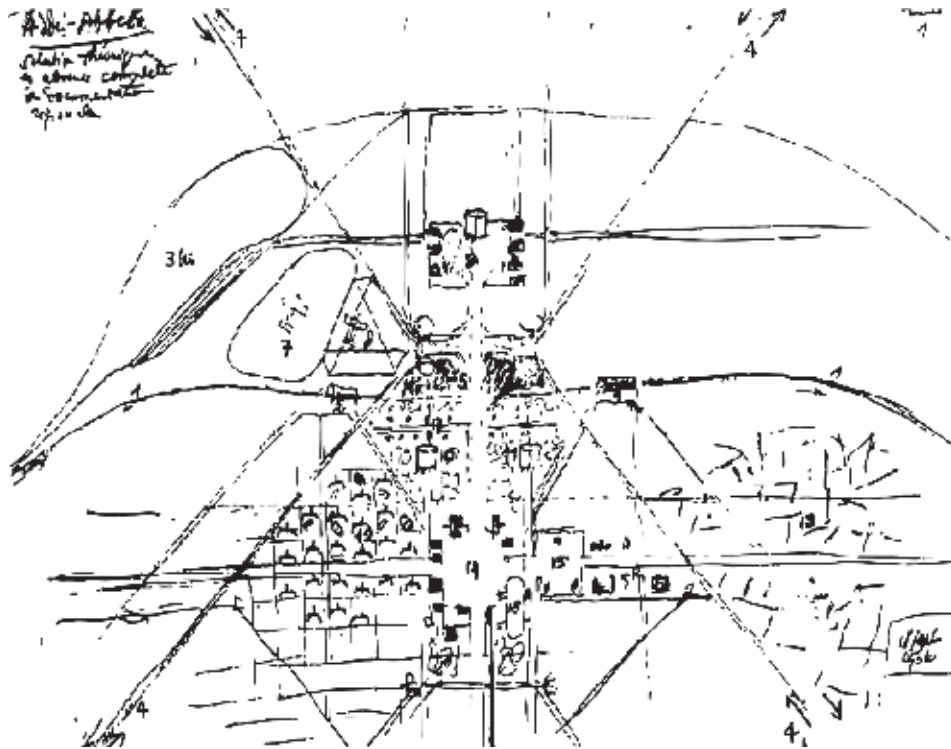
I was reminded of Bruno Latour's "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik". In the text Latour begins with a quote from Ron Suskind, a recounting of a conversation had with a then-aide to George W. Bush, "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality". Latour begins there to propose that our current understanding of politics and political history is a creative narrative told by whoever has some [imaginary] crown of "power". Latour goes to state, "The

"When a colonial aesthetics, and subsequent fascist and modern aesthetic is deployed as a means of repression, can architecture and photography ever become postcolonial?" — Sean Anderson

beautiful word "reality" has been damned by the too many crimes committed in its name". Reality, an obscured sense of the present. Yet, in opposition, Petros' work shows a liveliness in which colonial spaces and landscapes are taken anew through time and guided by the wills of life, resulting in insurgent action.

Further, Anderson speaks on the chasm between the presently valued beauty of modernism and the traces of violence and utter disregard to native and Black life that Italian colonial architecture in Eritrea represents and so carefully balances.

Forgetting  
Measure  
Agency  
Distance  
Mobility  
"Reality"



Sketch for Addis Ababa, Le Corbusier, 1936 (contrasted to show the ignorant violence of treating African urbanism, life, vitality as a tabula rasa

Aerial Image of Addis Ababa, 1934

(source)

## 2/07 – Archives of Animism

غربة Ghurba :

noun : The feeling of being a stranger in a land away from one's homeland.

The process of creating a nation-state meant dismantling what was previously in place. It required people to constrict their sense of belonging in novel ways, learn to forget, dismantle, and reconsider their sense of place in order to fit into the notion of a coherent nation.

Sense of place and belonging are formed through encounters that always involve the question of otherness. The notion of a nation-state imposes limitations on people's sense of place, restricting human movement and manipulating land by adding, removing, and altering it, leaving people to navigate through these unnatural and constructed boundaries.

The Black Athena collective urges us to question and reconsider the predatory view of the landscape from a Eurocentric bias. It reminds us of the various forms of agency and power that come with being a citizen and raises the ques-

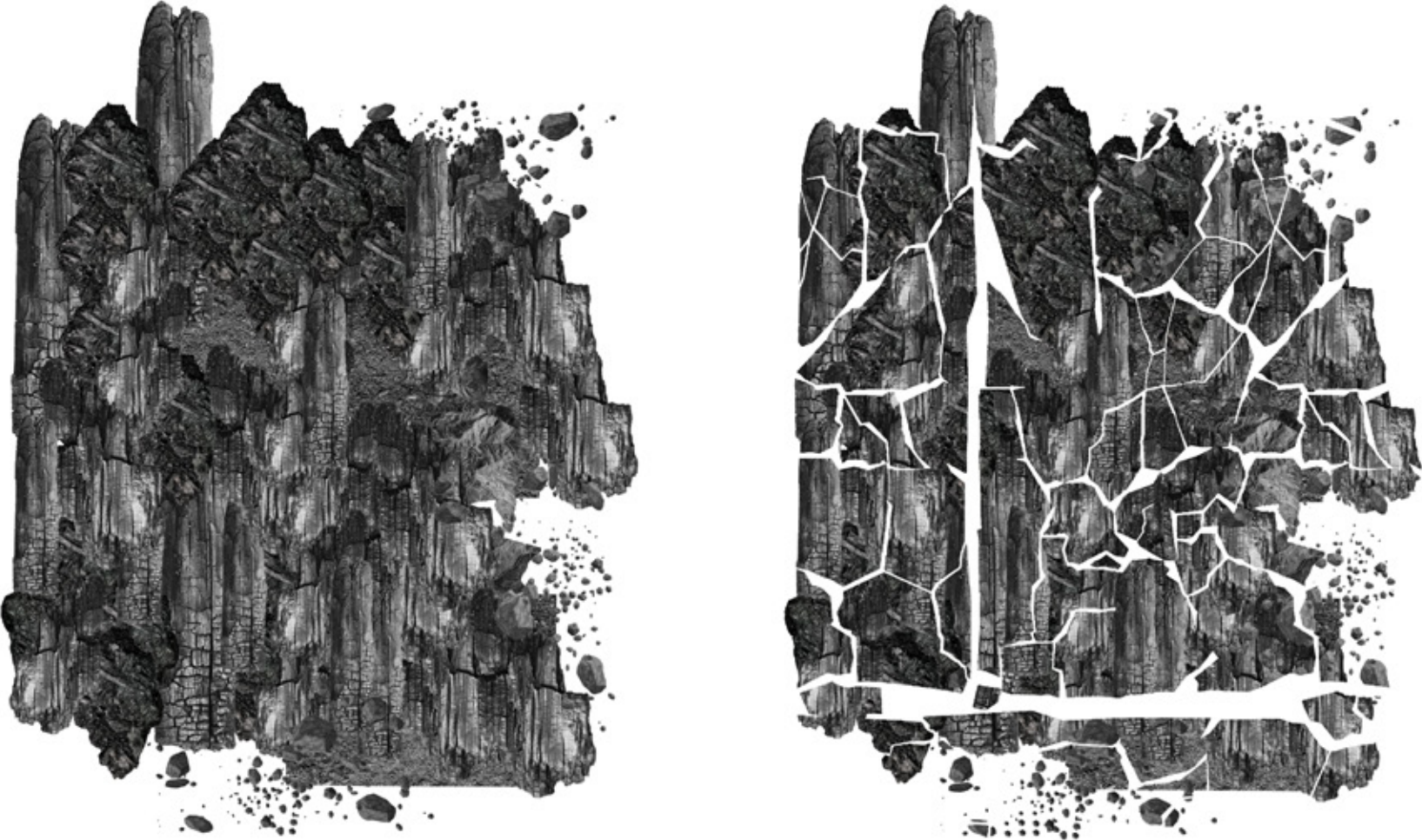
“There is nothing natural or self-evident about attachment to the nation, which is on the contrary established, legitimized, and maintained by complex cultural practices and institutions”. — Aranda, Julieta, Brian Kuan Wood and Anton Vidokle, eds.

tion of whether there is power in not being represented as one.

The collective seeks to question the power interplay between boundaries, belonging, and citizenship. It calls for a shift in thinking and reconstructing concepts to bring about social change.

Boundaries  
Belonging





Self, Constructed Landscape

Manar Alrougi

## 2/07 – Archive of Animism

### Nation

noun: The nation is contrived. There is nothing natural about attachment to the nation, which is established, legitimized, maintained by complex cultural practices & institutions”.

The Black Athena Collective is a research and artistic laboratory for experimentation that engages political discourse and practices of spatial construction connected to the African continent.

Through multi-disciplinary perspectives including geography, sociology and history, they address the dominant territorial logics and constitution of place versus the transience of individuals.

The Euro-centric bias of landscape states: “is it possible that landscape, understood as the historical “invention” of a new visual/pictorial medium, is integrally connected with imperialism?”. BAC’s approach opposes the predatory view of landscape discourse, especially within the context of colonialism on the African continent.

The image is a BAC’s practice called sense

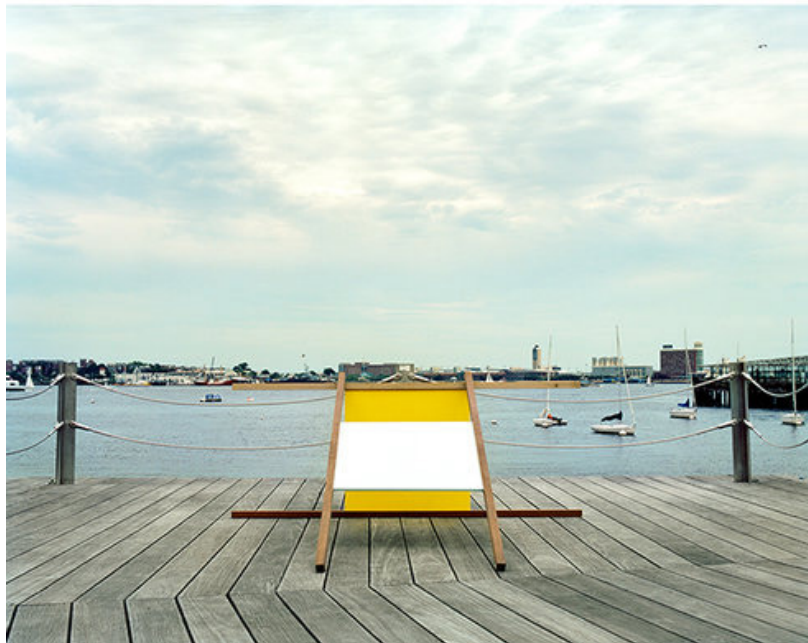
Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

“The collective was born out of a need to address mobility as a crucial principle for structuring new approaches to territorial convention, citizenship and politicization.”  
— Black Athena Collective (Heba Y. Amin & Dawit L. Petros)

of place. The Notations are structured on walks of discovery in which colors and their attendant objects are collected. These colors are then translated into monochromatic fields to create - Social Abstractions - works comprising photography, sculpture and painted wall murals. These Social Abstractions envelop the formal arena while offering an ambivalent reflection on urban African spaces and their historical formation.

Landscape is not just place or site. It has the power to examine political spaces and form new knowledge, history, culture and memory. Therefore, landscape needs to keep the cultural memory for the nation and migration, instead of serving the imperialism.

Framework  
Fantasy  
Nation  
Migration  
Rupture



Heqiao Meng (Lydia) Sense of Place, Black Athena Collective, 2013  
<https://www.dawitlpetros.com/sense-of-place-2013/2018/2/16/87oapj0fbwwl1805i68mi-umtl164eo>

## 2/07 – Archive of Animism

### EPHEMERALITY

noun: the quality or state of lasting only for a short time

The Black Athena Collective, initiated in 2015, delves into the intricacies of migration, belonging, and identity through art and research, with a particular focus on Africa. Their work captures the fluid nature of migration, illustrated through photographic projects that highlight the transient lives of migrants within Morocco's diverse landscapes. These images reveal the ephemeral existence of migrants, using motifs like unfinished structures to symbolize the ongoing journey and the constant state of 'becoming' that defines migrant life.

This collective aims to challenge conventional Western perspectives on African territories and question established notions of citizenship and territorial boundaries. By exploring the intersections of architecture, movement, and cultural narratives across significant Moroccan

Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

“[a]symmetrical sites where real and imaginary identities are located, projected, memorialized and exchanged” — Heba Y. Amin & Dawit L. Petros

locations, they seek to offer a new lens through which to view migration, not as a departure from a fixed point but as an intrinsic part of human mobility and the continuous search for belonging.

In this image, I capture the essence of The Black Athena Collective's work through my lens as a student migrant. I've crafted a small mobile from a sack, a material often used in Thailand for rice bags, to serve as the focal object. For the background, I selected a photo I took during my flight to New York City, symbolizing the profound moment of my migration journey—the flight alone marking the true beginning of my transition, with the sky representing the boundary dividing between my former home and my new one.

Migration  
Identity  
Ephemerality  
Transience  
Belonging



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

*Self, A Migrant's Journey*

## 2/07 – Archives of Animism

Distance: perception and understanding of history, mediating between clarity and obscurity in the stories we construct about our past.

“Distance,” probing how our perception of history and knowledge is influenced by our proximity to, or separation from, the subjects in question. It uses the metaphor of distance to explore the clarity and obscurity inherent in historical narratives, suggesting that our understanding is shaped by the gaps and biases these narratives harbor. By questioning the clarity of historical understanding, the narrative exposes the tension between what is remembered and what is forgotten, highlighting how distance affects our grasp of history. It critiques the selective nature of history-making, emphasizing how distance can both illuminate and veil the truth. The narrative challenges readers to consider the role of distance in modulating visibility, presence, and absence within historical recounting. Through the lens of distance, the essay invites a reflection on how proximity to cultural, geographical, or temporal contexts influences our interpretation

“History is neither the opposite of fiction nor is it simply fictional. History is a method rather than a truth, an institutional formalization of the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of our lives.”

of the past. It suggests that history is not merely a collection of facts but a complex interplay of stories told from varying distances. A key quote from the text posits history as a method rather than a truth, underscoring the constructed nature of historical narratives. This focus on distance not only interrogates the completeness of historical records but also the significance of what is omitted or erased. Ultimately, the narrative beckons us to consider how these conceptual distances shape our understanding of the past and inform our present and future narratives.

Video  
Drawings  
Decipher  
Technology  
Obscured







# 2/14 - Who is Ordinary?



## Measuring

Walker, Enrique, *The Ordinary: Recordings*, (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2018), pp. 9 – 27, 85 – 97.

Matsipa, Mpho, “Urban Mythologies,” in *Fire Walker*, edited by Oliver Barstow and Bronwyn Lawviljoen (Milpark, South Africa: Fourthwall Books, 2012), 61 – 69.

Kajima, Momoyo, Junzo Kuroda, and Yoshiharu Tsukamoto. *Introduction to Made in Tokyo*, (Tokyo: Kajima Institute Publishing Co., 2001), 8 – 39.

## Traveling

Abraham, Miriam Hillawi. *Storytelling, Bias, and Exploitation in Digital Realms; A Conversation with Miriam Hillawi Abraham*. Interview by Naill Patrick Walsh. *Architect*, 24 October 2023. <https://architect.com/features/article/150386570/storytelling-bias-and-exploitation-in-digital-realms-a-conversation-with-miriam-hillawi-abraham>

Abraham, Miriam Hillawi and Nasra Abdullahi, “The Horn of Africa: Fracturing Timelines,” in *The Funambulist*, Issue 36: *They Have Clocks, We Have Time*, June 21, 2021. <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/they-have-clocks-we-have-time/the-horn-of-africa-fracturing-timelines>

Abraham, Miriam Hillawi and Nasra Abdullahi, “The Afro-Cosmologist’s Treatise on The Astrolabe,” in *Cosmic Bulletin 2021*, edited by Hallie Ayres. <https://cosmos.art/cosmic-bulletin/2021/the-afro-cosmologist-s-treatise-on-the-astrolabe>

## 02/14 Who is Ordinary

### URBAN RENEWAL

The process of renovating and improving a district so that it conforms to middle/upper-class taste

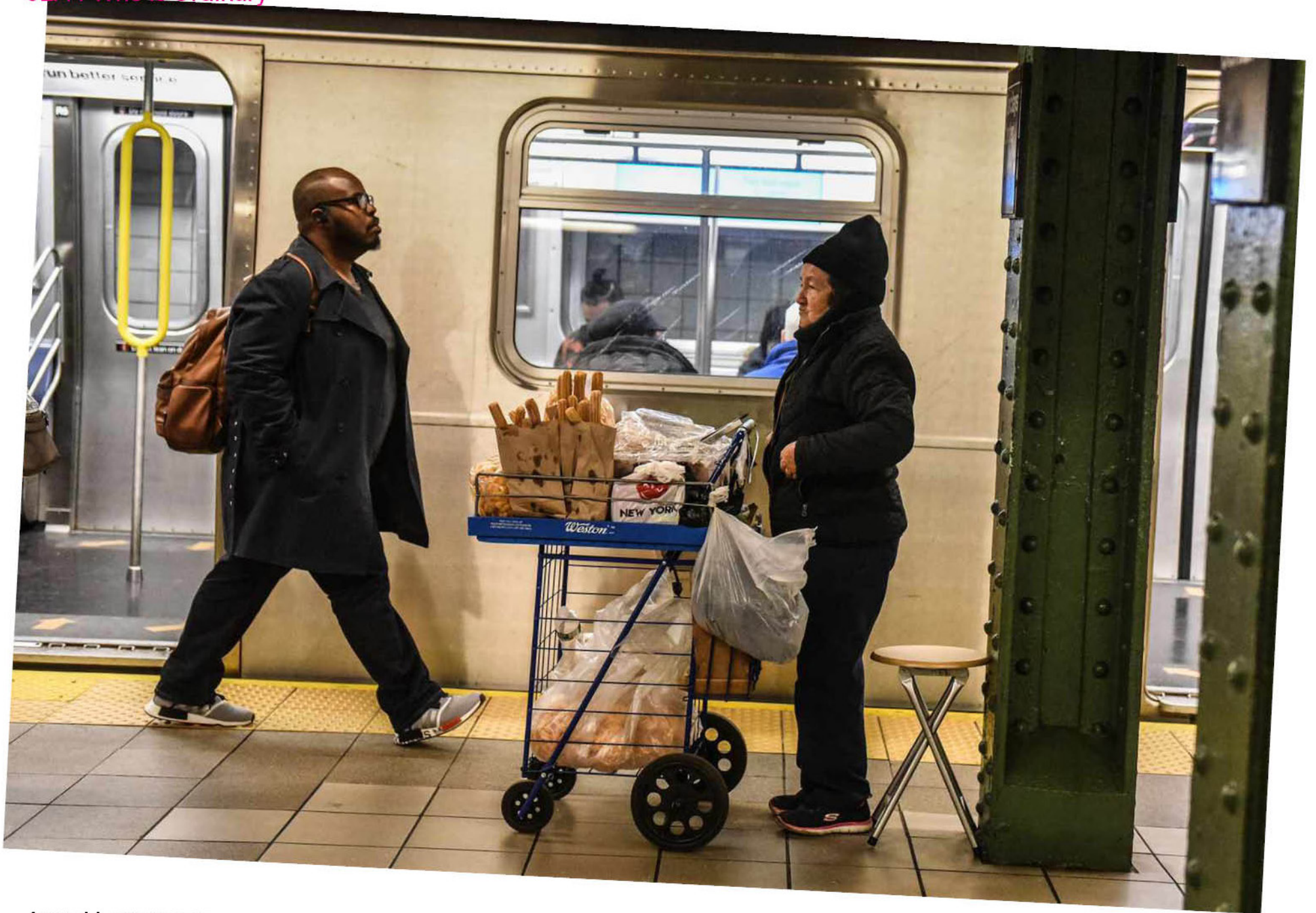
The sculpture “Firewalker” in Johannesburg serves as a powerful emblem of the city’s complex history and contemporary challenges. It emerges from a city once bustling with economic activity, presenting a spectral figure that embodies the haunting presence of black women in the urban landscape. Historically, black women have been cast as both vital and troublesome in the city’s labor market, often relegated to menial domestic tasks. These women, however, resist the narratives that seek to define their place within the city’s spatial and economic hierarchies, asserting themselves as significant figures in the urban environment. The artwork encapsulates the tension between urban renewal and the marginalization of the poor, especially female street vendors. It highlights the regulated exclusion of black women from the sanitized, global aspirations of Johannesburg, while

“on the other hand, the Fire Walker site might also constitute a reconfiguration of the city in a way that heightens an awareness of other fugitive landscapes in the city.”

also gesturing towards the possibility of disrupting the dominant urban order through critical engagement and artistic intervention. The text also reflects on the broader cultural implications of representation, drawing on theories from Njabulo Ndebele and Patricia Williams, and the role of irony and play in public art as a means for deeper engagement with social issues.

Spectral  
Marginalization  
Representation  
Resistance  
Displacement

Angel Langumas



Angel Langumas

## 2/14 – Who is Ordinary?

### INCONVENIENT

adjective: causing trouble, difficulties, or discomfort

The inconvenient body is a necessary monstrosity of the utopian city. Matsipa imagines that the utopian city is not ordinary, and its monsters are not necessary. In the case of Fire Walker, she is a woman who is “a harbinger of crime, immorality, disease, unbridled sexuality and urban disorder”. Her transient existence is not her truth, like Venus, but it is the truth of the colonial institutions that witness her.

Matsipa explains that her image is disturbing because “it occurs along an historical continuum”. The Fire Walker is a timeless figure, constantly pulling from the past and predicting the future.

In New York we see people who make us uncomfortable all the time. That discomfort is a reflection of our impulse to normalize others, the resistance of non-normative bodies, and the perpetual disagreement

Maura Costello

“While the... fire walker offers... detachment from scenes of... physical violence against street vendors, it is also implicated - and implicates the viewer...”  
— Mpho Matsipa

of these forces. We are implicated in their vulnerability by witnessing them.

Can the image of migrant children selling candy on the subway be a part of an orderly image of New York?

Photographs of migrant children selling candy typically cut off their faces. This protects their identity, and at the same time abstracts and dismembers them. This representation, like Fire Walker, is paradoxical. It represents their precarity while also forcing precarity on them.

Who has the right to represent precarious or inconvenient bodies? What is the path forward from here, if not simply sitting with the reality of historical and future inconvenient bodies? The Fire Walker isn't optimistic. The Fire Walker is an omen.

Precarious  
Inconvenient  
Fractured  
Continuum  
Paradoxical



Maura Costello

*Candy Walkers*, Collage of photographs from New York Magazine

## 02/14 – Who is Ordinary?

### EVERYDAY

adjective: happening or used every day;  
daily, commonplace

As Mpho reflects on *Fire Walker*, a sculpture that was designed by non-black male artists, she both mourns and wrestles with the figure of a black woman street vendor. She is left unsettled with what to make of this public art gesture and finds it to be a contradiction because it highlights “the troubling presence of female vendors in the urban landscapes” (64) and “is both a symbol and a site of remembrance for a figure that is, ironically, not dead in the least, yet not wholly welcome in the city either” (62).

In comparison to *Fire Walker*, *A Subtlety*, or the *Marvelous Sugar Baby* designed by Kara Walker, is/was a public art installation that creates space for us to engage in difficult conversations and be confronted with the aftermath of histories that are so visible in our society, that one wishes was invisible. The installation is a massive sugar covered sphinx-like sculpture that intersects with

Syeeda Simmons

“The mythologisation of the black female figure in public discourse on the city works hand-in-hand with urban nostalgia and the exclusion of black women who are increasingly regulated and pushed to the ever-receding margins”

— Mpho Matsipa

the historical racial caricature of the mammy and a contemporary hyper-sexualized figure of the Black female body. Yet, I also want to draw our attention to the child figurines that surround the sphinx-mammy sculpture. These molasses-coloured candy figurine boys are hauling baskets and bananas. The project encourages us to think of the unpaid and overworked artisans, ordinary individuals, who have laboriously used their bodies to refine our sweet tastes from the cane fields to the kitchens of the new world. Although their labor was valued, their humanity was an inconvenience. The public art installation speaks to those individuals who played a huge role in the economic growth of the Western world we know, yet were marginalized and not even able to consume the very thing they were forced to labor over.

Through public art, how do we make prevalent the complexities of history and begin to unpack the realities of how they have impacted our urban landscapes?

Public Art  
Urban  
Everyday  
Resistance  
Unresolved



Syedda Simmons

self, *Molasses*

## 2/14 – Who is Ordinary?

### Shadow Image of the City

noun: it implies an relationship between urban renewal, new regimes of urban management and displacement of the urban poor

This article discusses FIRE WALKER, a work of art created by William Kentridge and Gerhard Marx, and its significance in the context of the economic hub of Johannesburg. The sculpture creates a perceived distortion and misalignment of the female image, resisting the general perception of a distinctly marginalized black female image. This disturbing image creates a disturbing feeling at the city's gateway, affecting the city's identity. Black women face unfair treatment and restrictions in the cities. They are often subjected to arbitrary treatment by municipal anti-stallholder laws and the Johannesburg City Police and private security companies. This exclusion resulted in a diminished presence for black women in the city and a restricted lifestyle for them. Black women, however, fought against this exclusion through art and other means. This paper takes Johannesburg as an example to discuss the relationship between

Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

“Fire Walker opens up an arena for critical engagement on the role of public open space and public art in the livelihood strategies and lived spatialities of some of the most vulnerable populations in the city.” — Mpho Matsipa

urban fringe groups and contemporary urban planning space. Urban renewal and redevelopment projects often include these marginalised sites in their planning to attract new investment and enhance the city's image. However, this renewal is often accompanied by new management systems and regulations that impose restrictions and controls on marginalized groups. Second, the unequal distribution of cities and the gap between rich and poor have also led to the emergence of marginalized locations, which are often concentrated areas of poverty or informal settlements. Finally, urban management and development can also have an impact on marginalized places and groups, including their eviction, restrictions and control, as well as interference with their livelihoods and way of life. As a result, there are complex interactions between marginalized places and groups and urban development and management.

Edge  
Racism  
Shadow  
Fugitive  
Black Women





Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

Photograph, Homeless people in New York

## 2/14 – Who is Ordinary?

### AGGLOMERATION

noun: a mass or collection of things; an assemblage

The ordinary relies on expectation, on interpretation. What happens when we release ourselves from the normative systems that typically dictate the distinction between function, beauty, and chaos? When we look to Tokyo as a case study of cross-contaminated and unstructured agglomeration, we can begin to detect often obscured forms of beauty emerging from gaps, and more importantly, from overlaps.

These moments of physical and conceptual overlaps through “cross categorical hybrids” are formed out of necessity and “shamelessness.” The interdependence that they create then serves to further social infrastructure and the layered effects of varying opacities. When we consider this “different interpretation of the city” that results from these co-existing layers, what methods or processes are introduced to thinking about the relationship between the

“[Tokyo] resembles the unstructured forms of the rainforest, within which there is in fact many types of creatures co-existing, whilst each constructing their own world.”

— Momoyo Kaijima, Junzo Kuroda, Yoshiharu Tsukamoto

individual and the collective?

If we continue to layer the smallness of Tokyo-like entities that “allows freedom in urban action” between body and place, will the intersections of the worlds each of us is constructing be able to continue to co-exist? Perhaps the hope is that once we are free of the limitations imposed by aesthetics and construction technology which have historically dictated the formation of ‘place,’ the opportunity for the formation of overlapping, cross-categorical community will emerge.

Mongrel  
Interdependence  
Agglomeration  
Release  
Overlap



Kelvin Lee

*self, of an ecology*

## 2/14 – Who is Ordinary

### Building:

a structure with a roof and walls, such as a house, school, store, or factory.

Starting with observations of Tokyo and comparing it with European cities, we witness a landscape of perpetual construction and deconstruction, where hyper-dense buildings intermingle with infrastructure, thus shaping the city. Tokyo reveals its unique ordinariness within the urban context, which simultaneously manages to be extraordinary.

'Da-me Architecture' (no-good architecture), with its anonymity, lack of conventional beauty, and general non-acceptance within the architectural culture, challenges our perceptions of ordinariness. The hierarchy that categorizes buildings into A-grade types, such as libraries and museums, deemed worthy of the label "architecture," versus B-grade types, like parking lots, prompts us to question the value we assign to architectural works. Does A-grade "architecture" truly impact the community? Should architects solely focus on what is conventionally celebrated as "architecture"? Why?

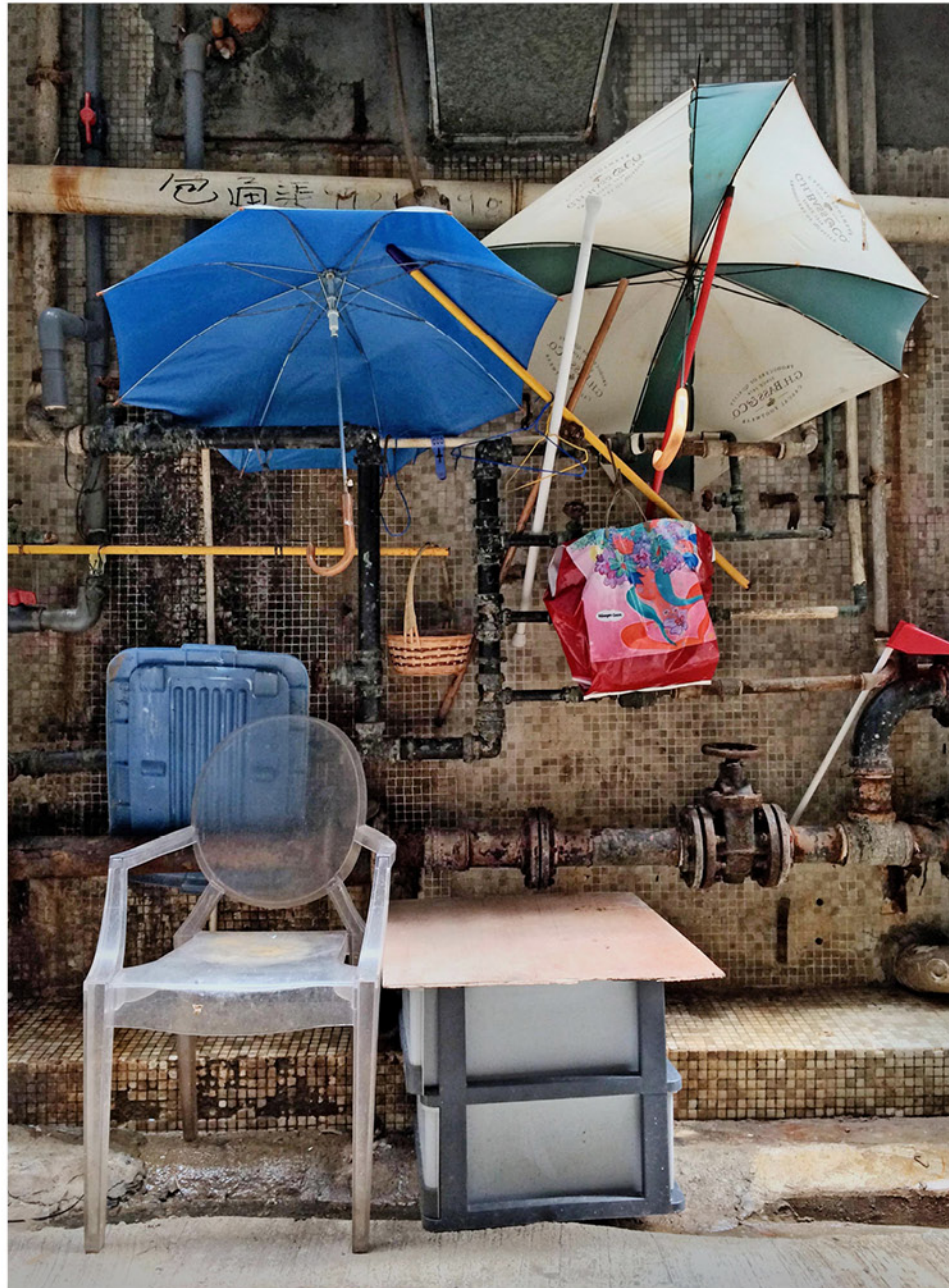
Jisoo Kim

"It releases the architecture of over-definition towards generic 'building'."

Is it actually that impactful? Is "Building" merely an ordinary component of the urban environment?

Da-me Architecture, with its response to real-world demands, offering economically and spatially efficient solutions, creates ordinary spaces that permeate our everyday lives, yet could be deemed extraordinary. This perspective challenges our biases, which often dismiss such architecture as lacking historical or contextual significance. Its adaptability, reusability, and capacity to meet immediate needs that sustain and reflect cultural significance, proving that what is often overlooked in the urban environment might hold extraordinary potential.

Video  
Drawings  
Decipher  
Technology  
Obscured



Jisoo Kim

Michael Wolf, *Video Drawings: From the series Informal Seating, 2003-15*

## 2/14 – Who is Ordinary?

### IRREGULAR

noun: not even or balanced in shape or arrangement.

In “Introduction to Made in Tokyo,” authors Kajima, Momoyo, Junzo Kuroda, and Yoshiharu Tsukamoto explore the concept of “Da-me Architecture,” or “no-good architecture,” which defines much of Tokyo’s urban landscape. This term celebrates the city’s everyday structures that defy traditional architectural norms, emphasizing their eclectic functionality and reflection of the residents’ real-life experiences. The guidebook invites readers to appreciate the unconventional beauty and practicality of these often-overlooked buildings, contributing to a deeper understanding of Tokyo’s architectural diversity.

Inspired by this perspective, there’s a noteworthy project that repurposes unused urban spaces into irregularly-shaped football pitches. This initiative mirrors the ‘ordinariness’ celebrated in Tokyo’s architecture, utilizing land that evolves

“So if we try to collapse da-me architecture into a typology, we will lose the interesting mongrel nature of the differing elements.”  
— Kajima, Momoyo, Junzo Kuroda, and Yoshiharu Tsukamoto

naturally, without detailed planning or design. These spaces, akin to Tokyo’s urban fabric, are transformed into functional, recognizable football pitches, yet retain an element of the ordinary.

However, the project adds an extraordinary layer to these ordinary spaces. The unique shapes and sizes of the pitches require players to adapt their strategies, introducing a new level of challenge to the game. This adaptation, much like navigating the intricate streets of Tokyo, showcases the potential of ordinary spaces to foster creativity and engagement, echoing the themes of adaptability and appreciation for the everyday presented in “Introduction to Made in Tokyo.”

Da-me Architecture  
Hybrid  
Irregular  
Urban ecology  
Superinterior

Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

2/14-Who is Ordinary?



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

Self, *Non-rectangular*

## 02/14- Who is Ordinary

### Hybridisation

noun: the process of an animal or plant breeding with an individual of another species or variety.

Made in Tokyo is a guidebook, a map that enables the users to traverse through the 'mundane' and seemingly unnoticeable interventions of the city. The units documented cannot be categorised under any one typology, they are what people would deem ordinary with a certain defiance to conventional styles or aesthetics.

The reality however if looked at through the commonality of user defined space one would realise that most metropolitans primarily comprise of such units.

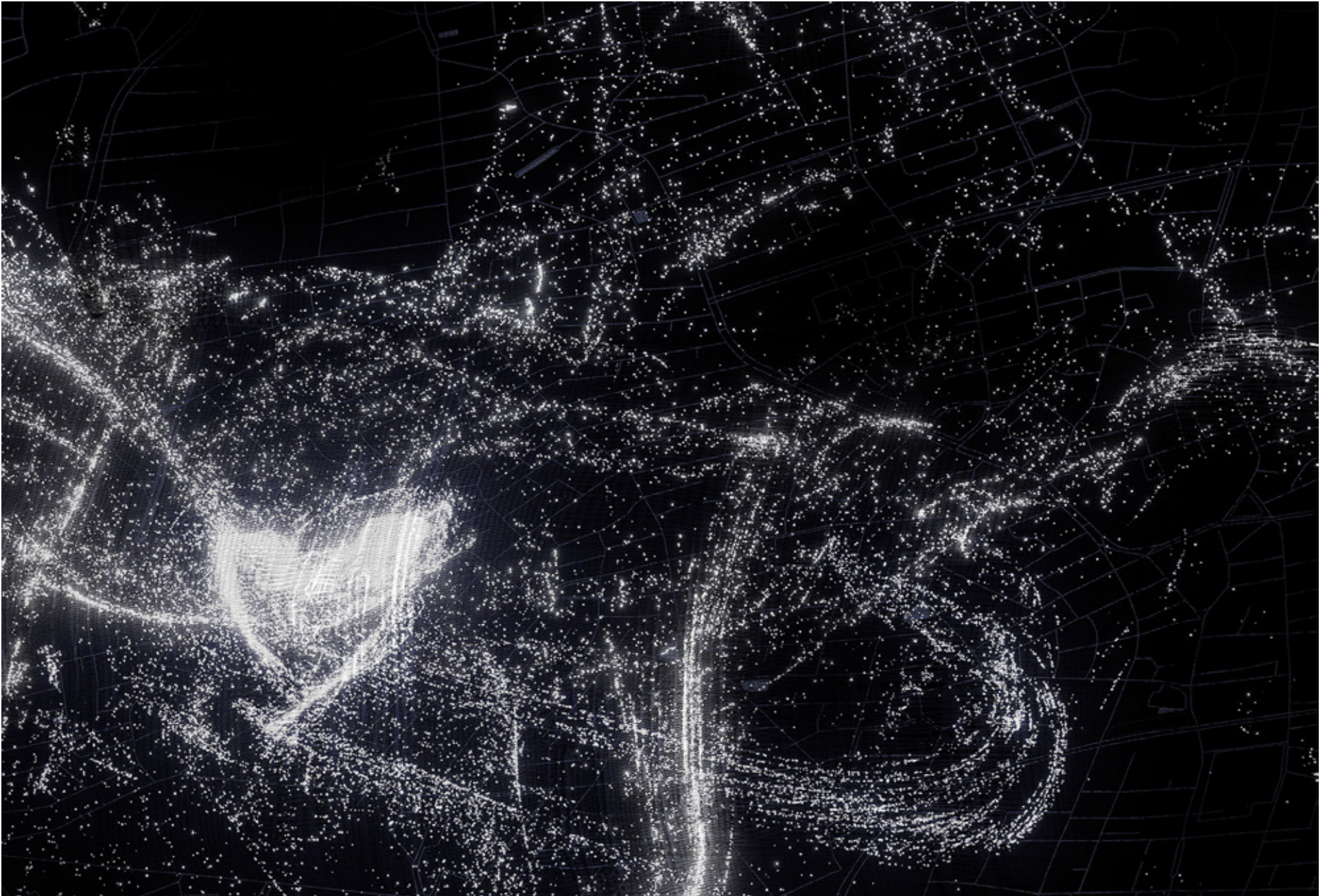
To truly capture the essence of these 'institutions' is to take a step back and chart the cross categorisation of various functions. To realise the fluidic nature of its existence, to experience the creations of this urban ecosystem that plugs into this ever humming and buzzing, machinery i.e 21st century City

"Through walking around the reality of everyday life, we can start to see an urban micro-ecosystem, or theatre of urban dwellers. Then, we can also start to form an image of a city accumulating from these variable happening" — Momoyo Kaijima, Junzo Kuroda, Yoshiharu Tsukamoto

These units are not predesigned, but an 'intricate reporting of the concrete urban situation'. We are often caught in the aesthetics, the historical relevance and predestined purpose of architecture that we often fail to realise the opportunity and potential of these everchanging, adapting ecologies that are manifestations of the present day social systems of urban dwellers. They are a product of survival and efficiency that challenges the hierarchy of the metropolitans of today.

Interdependence  
Da-me Architecture  
Hybridisation  
Voids  
Urban Ecologies





Gokul Biju Nair

Self; *What is a city*, MIT seansable city lab (2024)

## 2/14 - Who is Ordinary?

### Hacking

Verb: An act of disruptive intervention of the canonized history through overlooked perspective, to unsettle the monoculture.

the practice of the artist is undertaking various approach that is highly parallel to some of the post-humanist and feminist agenda in the realm of Media Archaeology. I think it's important that she acknowledges these agenda and embrace her practice around it, since she is using the digital as the tool for art-making.

Both hacking and intervening, as she mentioned in one of the paragraphs, act disruptively to the formal historical and architectural canons, strongly resonates with the circuit-bending practices adopted by media archaeologists, and media artists who embrace post-humanist agenda. By introducing the "otherness" to the canonized stream, it creates a counter-force to resist the dominant perspective. Especially using digital media as artistic practice, like she said, these tools' default is a privileged one, a monoculture that is not justified to be non-ob-

"There is the illusion of completeness in a world that is never complete." — Miriam Hillawi Abraham

jective.

We want to challenge the digital colonialism and question digital sovereignty. By using open-source software, by introducing faulty and fake stories to the supposedly "right" history. This act is extremely interesting since it brings up the concept of replica, another take by media archaeologists when they try to excavate the technology, by producing fake old technology and study the experience. The popular take of the avatar by media artist, which she also used in the Abyssinian Cyber Vernaculus, relates to post-humanist as non-human centric production, but also an act of resurrection? A claim of the sovereignty?

Storytelling  
Digital Colonialism  
Artificial Intelligence  
Hacking  
Embodiment

2/14-Who is Ordinary?



Yueyang Luo

Yueyang Luo, *Civilization VI*

## 2/14 – Who Is Ordinary?

### DIGITAL

(adj.) - relating to, using, or storing data or information in the form of digital signals; involving or relating to the use of computer technology.

I was extremely inspired by Miriam Hillawi Abraham's work both in her methodological approach and the content itself. Similar to Mpho from our discussion last week, Miriam also did not feel that her traditional training in architecture equipped her with what she felt would allow for her to make her most meaningful contribution to the discipline. Looking at Miriam's website shows how her work spans from VR simulations built from 3d model software (like how Blender was her program of choice to best represent the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela) to comic strips that tell fabulated histories of site, to models that use materiality to add an additional layer of analysis to her work. While each of these forms of representation function in different ways, Miriam uses them all to tie to an overarching story of visualizing a histories forgotten and histories stolen—using her craft as an artist and a designer to gives these stories and

“For a continent and a people that have historically been represented as external to modernity, a suite for reckless extraction... these methods can allow us to regain mastery of our own future and authority over our past/heritage.”

— Miriam Hillawi Abraham (Architect)

objects a new life. Miriam inspired me to take a step back and understand what are my modes of practice, and how can I use them to best familiarize myself with my own research? My Image this week looks at how illustration, sketching, and collage can work together to begin to achieve this—using Miriam's work as a case study to explore these different media of work.

Storytelling

VR + AI

Alternative modes of practice

Digital image making

Generative Space

Lauren Yvonne Brown



Lauren Yvonne Brown

*self, Miriam Hillawi Abraham*

## 02/14 - Who is Ordinary

ENACTIVISM: the act of catalyzing cognition through a dynamic interaction between an acting organism and its environment

The body as a site of de-subjectification.  
The city as a site of liberation.

Whereas our ancestors used the crown of our heads to map out territories and routes towards freedom, I imagine the power that we hold internally - the ability to make space [specifically, at a micro scale] and consequently deconstruct hierarchies. Yet, there remains a detachment from and dispossession of the urban space around us. What enactivism would be catalyzed if space-making was a dynamic and diverse process?

Can we treat the design of our cities with the same delicateness of our mother's hands? How do we subvert the top-down approach to spatial design, and allow the ordinary to determine the order? How might [black] residents "de-subjectify" themselves [in megacities like Chicago]?

Eric Julian Hagerman

"...the politics of design and space-making emboldens us to reinforce Black subjectivity and claim uncharted territories, asserting and centering ourselves in multiple futures"  
- Miriam Hillawi Abraham

How can an architectural/spatial practice work towards collapsing the idea of permanence?

Can we unbraid our urban fabric and redo it over and over until it lays correctly?

Top-down  
Enactivism  
Order  
In/completeness  
Impermanence

2/14-Who is Ordinary?



Eric Julian Hagerman

*self, Order and Impermanance.*

## 2/14 – Who is Ordinary?

### IMAGINARY

adjective : existing only in imagination; lacking factual reality.

Miriam's work utilizes digital storytelling as a tool to envision alternative futures by questioning "central normative systems." Her idea emphasizes the use of this method to continue disrupted timelines. When constructing the narrative landscape, it may be helpful to consider the concept of loopholes in narratives. By exploring the gaps in historical storylines, we can contemplate the collective experiences of individuals and elements whose timelines have been severed. This prompts us to bridge those missing links through imagined stories that allow for the existence of parallel realities often absent from colonial histories. The most challenging aspect of this exercise is overcoming our inherent biases that cloud our thinking. To accomplish this, we must deconstruct the colonial and patriarchal constructs embedded within the storylines. Once we have identified these constructs, we can begin reconstructing new imagina-

I would ask: "What aspect of the history are we conserving?" If I stay true to the present, I would be forced to model the horrible interventions that UNESCO installed and forgot about over the past twenty years. What aspect of history was I idealizing? These questions allowed me to liberate myself from the established realities or accuracies, and instead embrace a degree of error. — Miriam Hillawi Abraham

tive narratives. A starting point could be to explore radical and antonymous solutions that challenge the norm. These solutions can then be further refined by incorporating social empathy, values, and other humanistic characteristics that are often absent in digital mediums. While AI models may possess neutrality, it is essential to embed them with emotional intelligence to fully achieve our intended purpose, even if bypassing this neutrality is possible through training. A combination of this and leveraging loopholes story timelines maybe a way to further Miriam's work of digital storytelling

Fictionalization  
Digital  
Imaginary  
Tools  
Ownership





Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

self, *Latent Loopholes : Mixed Media*

## 02/14 - Who is Ordinary?

### EXTRAORDINARY

noun: going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary; exceptional to a very marked extent

Abraham asks, "How can we arrive at various mods of being? Towards self definitions that are both multiplicitous and without form?" I am having a hard time reconciling the dream of the multiplicitness and unfortold in the digital (whose production relies on algorithmic certainty). Do the productions of fiction and imagination require the material and energy of a high-resolution, digitally powered, extra-ordinary dream?

Should we be made to believe that pure, surprising, unpredictable affect and "unfortold potentialities" can emerge from a highly engineered solution? mythmaking as a tool to justify violence expansion and subjunction. competing myths of power unfold.

Rather, what is the potential of the "glitch in our timeline" where "normal

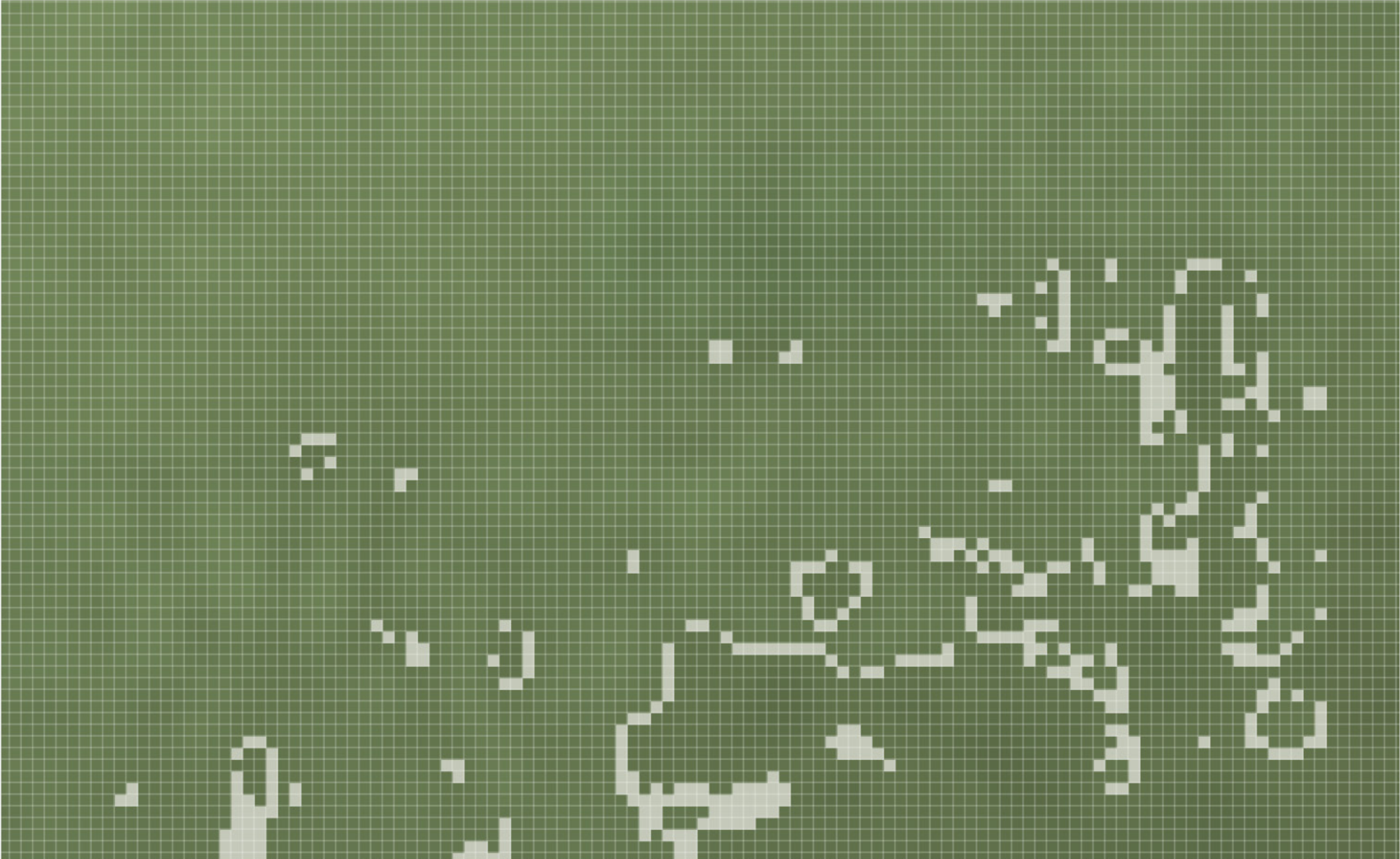
Anoushka Mariwala

"The narrative emulates the errant path of the wayward and moves from one story to another by way of encounter, chance meeting, proximity, and sociality created by enclosure." — Miriam Hillawi Abraham

rules no longer apply"? What can the emergence of interruptions, jumbles, pollution, interruption, and forgery do to produce an anti-metaverse? How can dark sousveillance be a meaningful exercise in working through this world?

Abraham writes: "The land [Djibouti] is not an unliving setting but rather the narator. It not only witnesses but has existed through various epochs as a being with its own rhythms, memorires, and longings." I read this immediately following Eyal Weizman and David Wengrow's Affirmations lecture on their project The Nebelivka Hypothesis. The geophysical survey is a yet another form of mythmaking that dematerializes and displaces violences of cartography and knowledge production with a "forceful imposition of measure." What do we need to know (and what types of images to we need to produce) in order to believe in (and prove?) our cosmological grounding?

Dark sousveillance  
Land  
Cartography  
Extraordinary  
Dream



Anoushka Mariwala

Abraham, pixels

## 2/14 – Who Is Ordinary

### TRAJECTORY

noun: a path, progression, or line of development resembling a physical trajectory

In their story, “The Horn of Africa: Grounds for Unproof”, Abraham and Abdullahi move through different times in a non-linear way, anchored only to the earthly coordinates of what is now La Place Menelik compound in Djibouti City. In doing so, they free themselves from the deterministic notion of a doomed future. Their aim is not to undermine certain human histories in favor of others, but rather “to reassert belonging and approximate realities through fiction.”

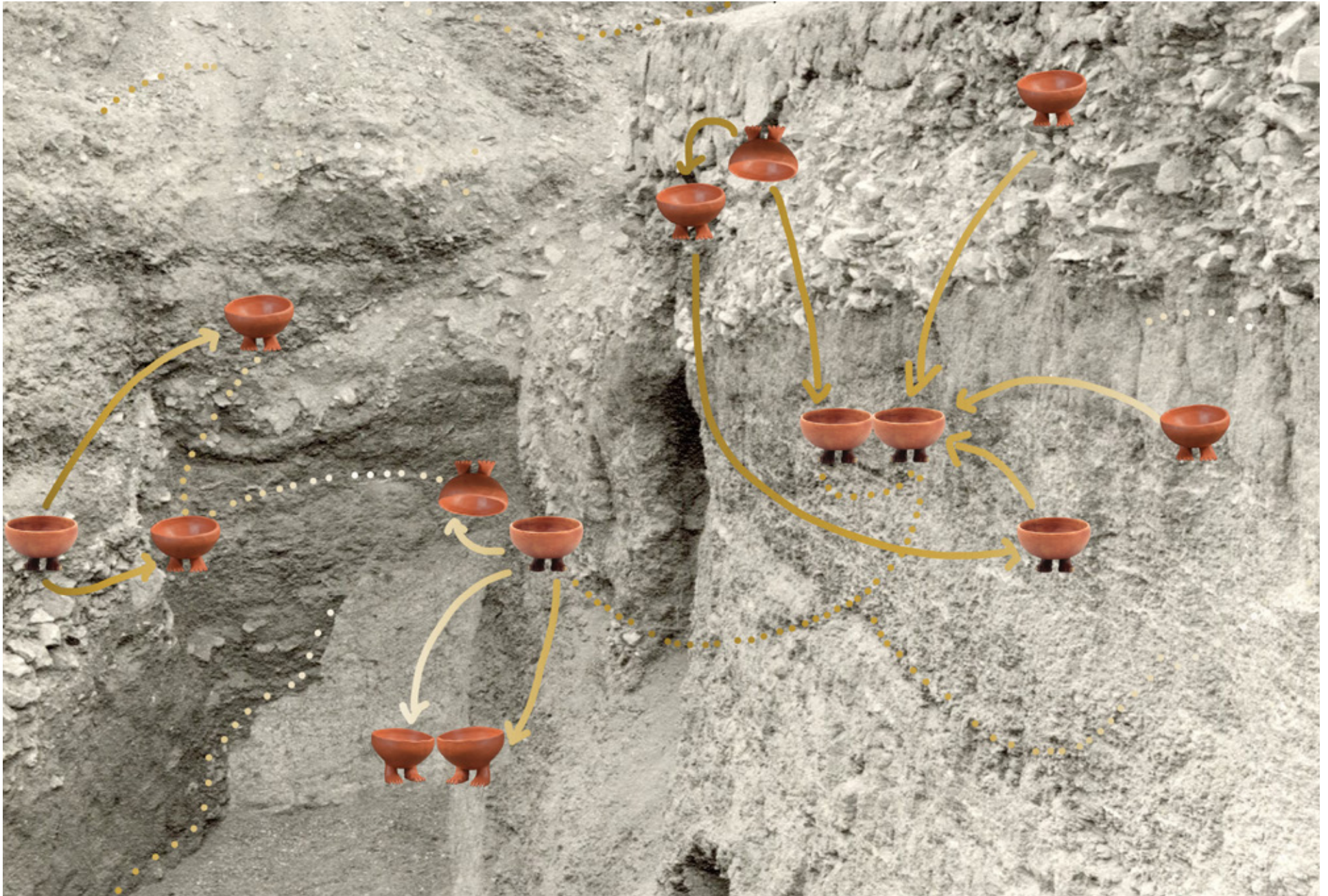
Speculating in that sense can therefore be seen as a “pragmatic optimism”, a genre in which the constructs and limitations of present time are merely just one possibility.

In the story, the architecture is written as a sentient antagonist. What happens if we, as architects, use that same methodology as introduced by Abraham and Abdullahi, to speculate through stationary time travel,

“In our choice to reside in the unforetold, we disobediently liberate ourselves from the dreadful present day that has already predetermined the inevitable demise of our planet.” — Nasra Abdullahi and Miriam Hilla-wi Abraham

where the architecture is itself the protagonist? This idea isn’t too far from Abraham and Abdullahi’s tale, where the main character is the Djiboutian landscape. but as spatial designers, asking this question can perhaps provide us with a framework from which we can imagine a space that subverts the governance of time and rejects the use of it as a measure of control and subjugation.

Speculation  
Territories  
Timeline  
Glitch  
Trajectories



Hadass Rozental

*Self, Trajectories of extraction, 2023*

## 02/14 – Who is Ordinary ?

Power :

noun : an acquired concept and utilized by individuals of groups to influence or control the outcomes of certain situations

In order to combat individuality and recognize the collaborative character of knowledge creation, the text delves into the idea of using the “we-voice” in thought and speech. It stresses that our ideas and concepts do not originate from inside ourselves alone but rather from a larger community.

The “we-voice” symbolizes an approach to a more pluralistic viewpoint by taking a more inclusive posture and embracing our shared experiences and responsibility to one another.

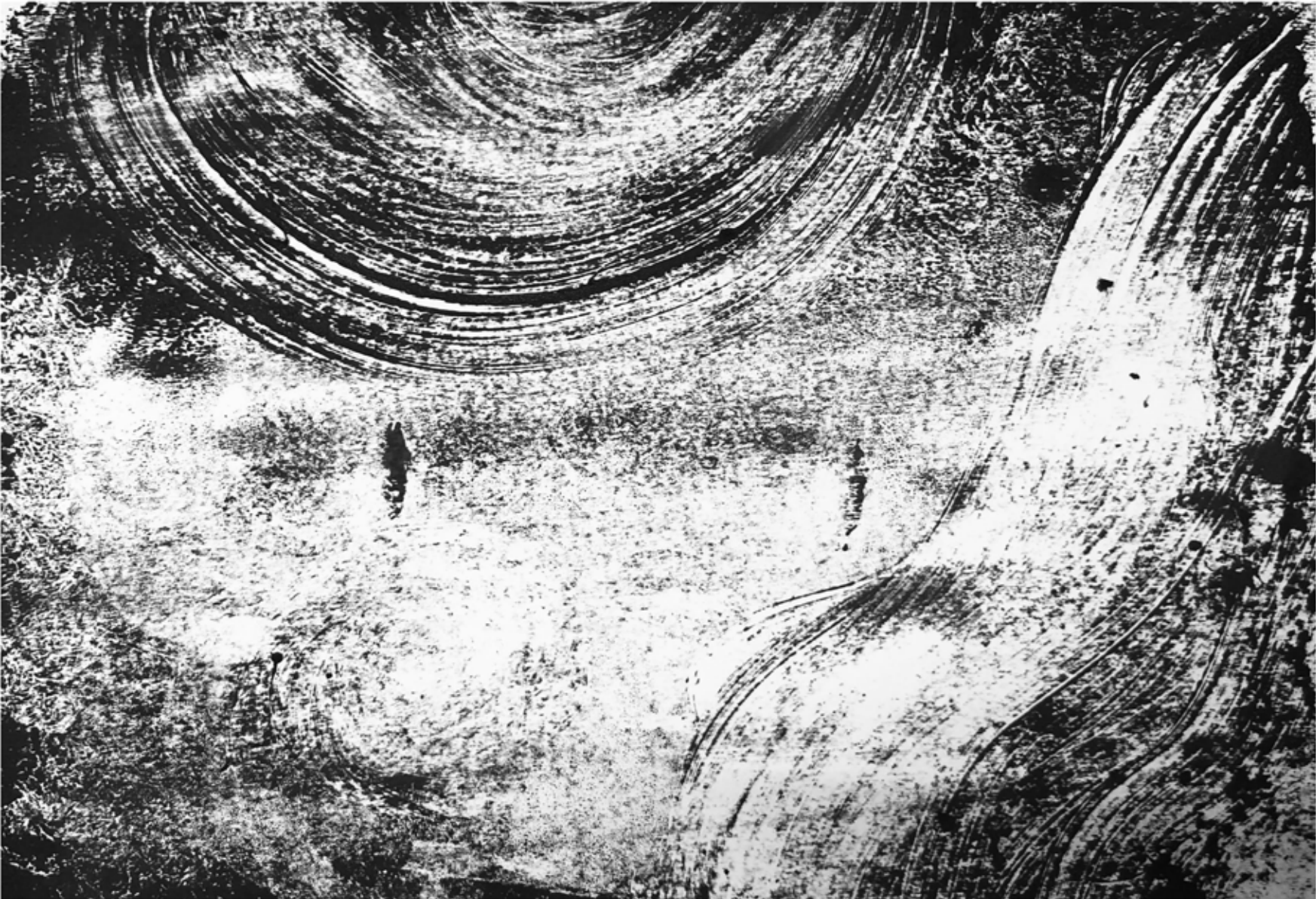
Further exploration of the “we” and the colonial difference is provided in the text, drawing attention to the intricacies of the “we-voice” in connection to the coloniality and the possibility of decoloniality. It goes much further, exploring how the colonial power dynamics have been sustained through the use of representations and images, and how the aesthetics and the gaze fit into this modern or colonial order.

Manar Alrougi

“In our choice to reside in the unforetold, we disobediently liberate ourselves from the dreadful present day that has already predetermined the inevitable demise of our planet. ” — Nasra Abdullahi, Miriam Hillawi Abraham

A critical examination of how our sight is formed and the consequences of appreciating and viewing the world through a colonial perspective have been encouraged by the book. Finally, it presents the idea of decoloniality, an approach to modernism that rejects the limitations imposed by the past in an effort to reverse the wiping out and displacement brought about by colonialism.

Power  
Dynamics  
Community  
Aesthetics



Manar Alrougi

Self, Printmaking

## 02/14 - Who is Ordinary?

### IMAGINATION

noun: the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses.

In "The Horn of Africa: Fracturing Timelines," Nasra Abdullahi and Miriam Hillawi Abraham explore ways of measuring beyond the ordinary. Their perspective transcends the traditional view of land, seeing it not just as inert earth but as a living canvas that preserves and recounts the stories of ages past, echoing events and memories across geological time spans. The unique strategic geography of the Horn of Africa influenced people to inhabit it in different ways.

The truth as we understand it now relies on established and regulated protocols, which often exclude histories and narratives that fall outside their prescribed framework. This realization prompts a profound inquiry: What lies beyond the confines of our current understanding? What truths remain obscured by the limitations of conventional frameworks?

Adriana Castro Lizarbe

"Time has been used as a measure of control and subjugation. We break free from its bonds and sync with the chaos of its absence, revelling in uncertainty. In turn, time in our work becomes a critical method of intervention in normative systems and historic hegemonies." — Nasra Abdullahi and Miriam Hillawi Abraham

Nasra and Miriam, through their innovative approach, challenge the constraints of normative systems. They construct a new reality, a fictional world where the astrolabe becomes a tool to "hijack the reliable," transcending the limitations of conventional timekeeping. Here, time is not merely linear; it is fluid, malleable, and ripe for manipulation. In their narrative, they liberate us from the shackles of the present, inviting us to explore the vast expanse of temporal possibilities.

In crafting this imaginative realm, Abdullahi and Abraham advocate for a reimagining of historical narratives and realities that have been lost to time. Their endeavor serves as a reminder of the prevalence of memocide in the Horn of Africa, where selective memory erases entire chapters of history. Through their work, they endeavor to challenge this narrative suppression, and invite us to embark on a journey of rediscovery and reflection.

Time Travel  
Break-free  
Imagination  
Destabalize  
Worldbuilding



2/14-Who is Ordinary?



Adriana Castro Lizarbe

Self.

## 2/14 - Who is Ordinary?

### COSMOLOGICAL

descriptive adverb: the origins of the universe, alternative and relative timelines.

Miriam Hillawi Abraham imagines technological futurisms for the Horn of Africa by inserting a cosmological epistemology into the narrative of passing time. By 'hijacking technologies' the imaginaries seek to reveal alternatives to cartesian mapping and colonial capital definitions of time. Using the astrolabe as an artifact of evidence, this traveling tool suggests alternative timelines juxtaposed on top of one another. This image speaks to Abraham's conceptualization of space as 'true': true to who? Using virtual realms as a method of creating the illusion of realism is effective insofar as it reveals alternative possibilities of measuring time. A virtual image is capable of reproducing a moment that is abstracted from time itself, existing neither as a photograph of a 'real' moment that occurred, nor an impossible future. The water in this image flows, just as oceans flow now, and as they always have, but this moment is not an occurrence of

"Through the mobilization of emancipatory imagination, through air, radical technocultures can be realized through African subjectivities and rooted in locality. Technodiversity will only be achieved through cosmological diversity."  
— Miriam Hillawi Abraham & Nasra Abdullahi

real tangible water. Instead, it represents all of time from the first wave to the last. It represents the damages of travel across geopolitical timelines that have positioned the water as a site of violence, and yet, a source of all life. Oceans do not measure time as human's do, and yet both could be perceived as existing within some relative time. Cosmology helps map the relativity difference between one reference point and another. Just as time will pass drastically differently on one end of the universe than it does on the other. The astrolabe condenses these timelines into one tool whereby all the parallel timelines exist simultaneously.

Cosmological  
Astrolabe  
(time)traveler  
technoculture  
refusal



Amora McConnell

*self, water bodies* \*image created using animation software





## Measuring

Vasallo, Jesus, "Seamless," in *Seamless: Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture*, (Zurich: Park Books AG, 2016), 165 - 189.

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## Traveling

Kelley, Elleza, "No Man's Land: The Architecture of Abolition," in *Cabinet, Imagination and the Carceral State*, edited by Joshua Bennett, (8 December 2020), [https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/kiosk/miscellaneous/bennett\\_joshua\\_8\\_december\\_2020.php](https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/kiosk/miscellaneous/bennett_joshua_8_december_2020.php)

Kelley, Elleza "'Follow the Tree Flowers': Fugitive Mapping in Beloved," in *Antipode* Vol. 52 No. 1, 2021, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/anti.12679>  
James, Ashley, "Introduction," in *Going Dark: The contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility* (New York: Guggenheim Museum), pp. 16-35.

James, Ashley, "Introduction," in *Going Dark: The contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility* (New York: Guggenheim Museum), pp. 16-35.

## 3/20 – (II) legible Form

### CONTEXTUALIZATION

noun: the fact or process of considering something in its context (= the situation within which it exists or happens), which can help in understanding it

“Seamless” by Jesús Vassallo delves into the transformative intersection of digital technology with architecture and photography. It describes how digital advancements have transcended traditional documentation, becoming a vital part of the design process itself. This digital shift has changed perceptions, making photography a significant part of the architectural narrative, extending beyond mere image capture to influence design and construction.

The reading also introduces the concept of “Dirty Realism,” where the often-overlooked urban complexity becomes the focus of design, challenging pristine architectural norms. It is a call for a design freedom that embraces the chaotic and the real. The culmination of Vassallo’s exploration is the advocacy for “Radical Contextualism,” a foundational principle in design that

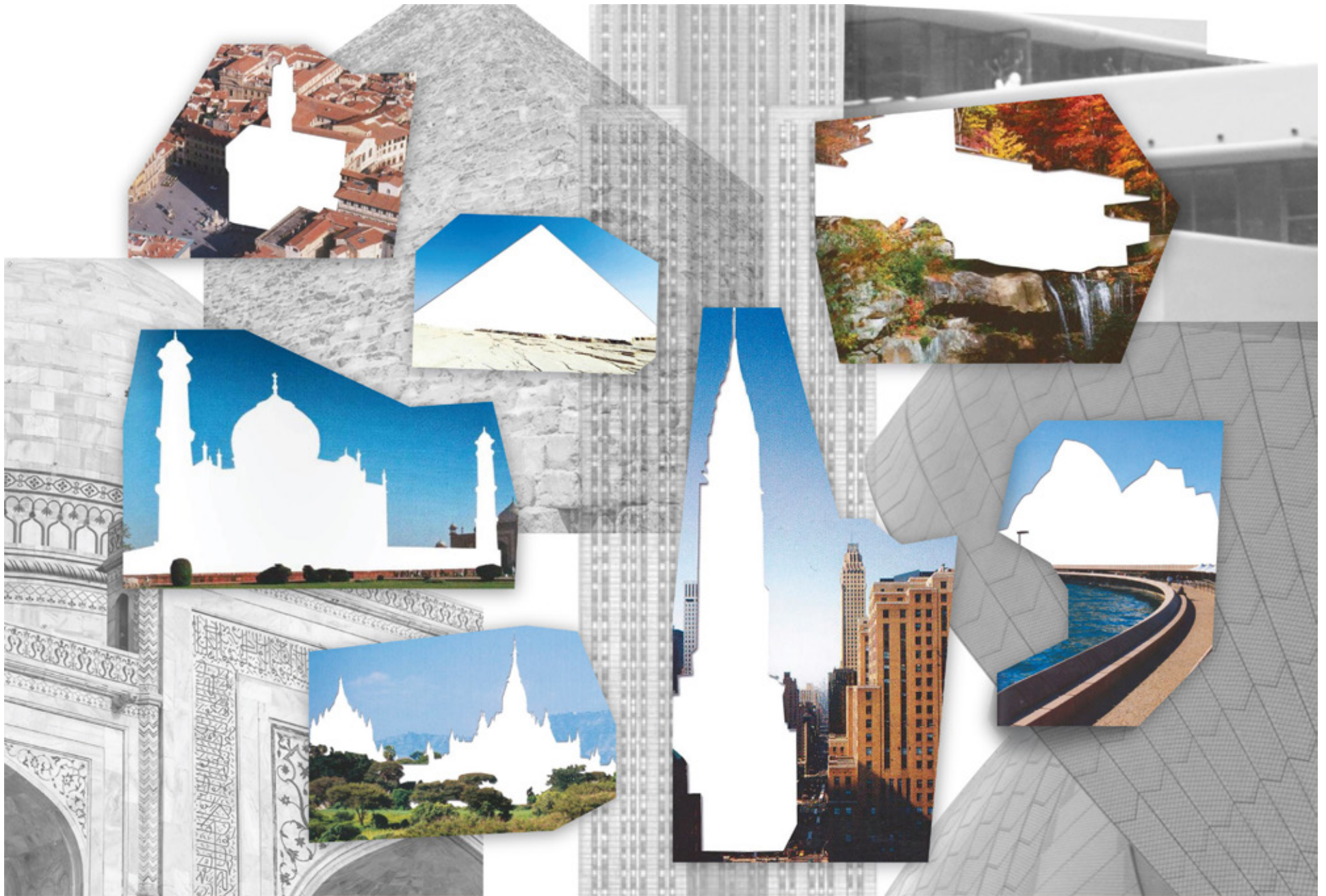
Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

“By establishing such connections between the built environment and life, they open up a new relationship to culture, no longer regarded... but as a repository of things which have their own energy by which depend on us for continuous reactivation.”  
— Jesús Vassallo

demands a harmonious blend of new creations with the rich tapestry of historical and cultural contexts, urging a reevaluation and expansion of traditional architectural boundaries.

In this image, I explore how technology influences photography and architecture, inspired by Jesús Vassallo’s emphasis on context. He highlights how buildings need to blend with their environment, part of a larger story. In my work, I’ve removed the buildings to spotlight the surroundings, showing that architecture’s true value lies in its setting. This approach reveals the stories and connections within the environment, reminding us that architecture without context loses its essence.

Authenticity  
Evolution  
Contextualization  
Digitalization  
Creativity



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

Self, *Context Unveiled*

The text “Seamless Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture” by Vasallo explores the intertwined history and evolution of photography and architecture. It begins by highlighting the historical connection between the two disciplines, as architects utilized photography for documentation and representation purposes. Over time, photography emerged as a preferred medium for capturing and depicting architectural environments.

The relationship between architecture and photography is characterized by a shared condition, with both disciplines influencing each other culturally and aesthetically. This mutual obsession has led to ongoing efforts to interpret and make sense of the world around us.

The text suggests that the advent of digital technology parallels the transformative

effects witnessed during the industrial revolution, affecting both architecture and photography. Digital tools have introduced new possibilities for visual expression and communication, potentially leading to the development of a universal visual language.

One significant consequence of the digital revolution is the weakening of photography’s indexical link with reality. Movements like American Pictorialism and German New Vision expanded the boundaries of photography beyond its traditional role as a recorder of reality.





Angel Langumas

Photograph, Digital Collage Hybrid

## Secrets

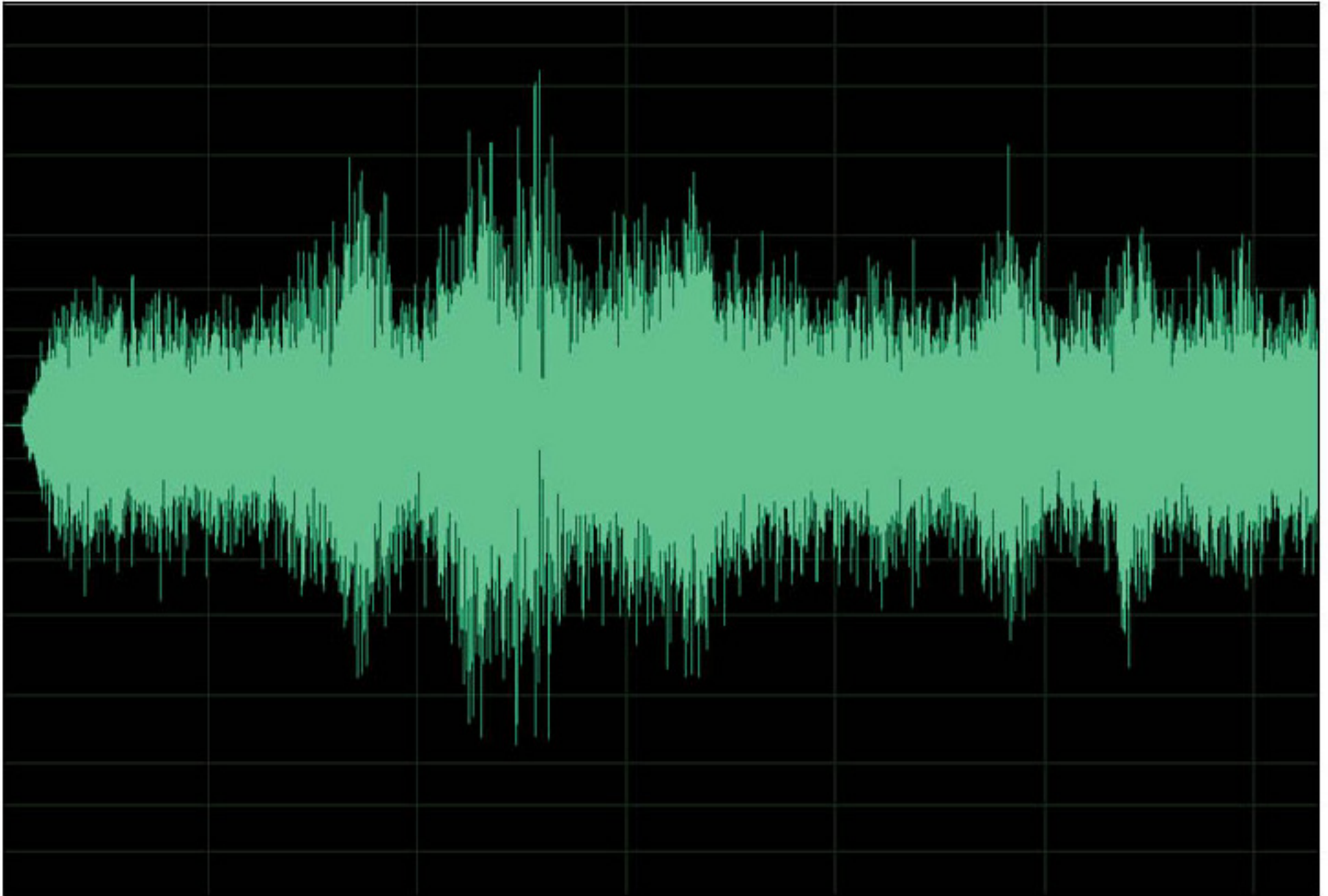
Noun: something that is kept or meant to be kept unknown or unseen by others.

The dilemma posted in the reading is very interesting to think of which give dynamics to the concept of secrecy, and practice of the secret society. And this notion of secret is essentially an extended thinking of architectural practices that both underlined outside/inside, opacity/transparency, measurement as well as representation.

The relation between documentation, as a visual proof, and the spoken words, which not yet possessed a material form, is intriguing to think about in terms with the dichotomy between the canonized social structure and the alternatives. Where on the one hand is seen as the progressive, well-literate western society, and the other hand is the slow-progressed, "primitive" forms of social structure, which is gradually resisted by multiple disciplines of study, but still very present in thinking about the post-colonial societies.

Yueyang Luo

And also to think of this secret knowledge as sound, the oral history that belongs to a group/community that is not "developed" enough to create written languages, which is the core of the western culture of having ideas along with its material forms, the text. Even for music, it has notes and scripts, but for "noise," there is not yet a notation system that can register different noises.



Yueyang Luo

Yueyang Luo, *A Waveform of my voice mixed with white noise*

## 03/20 – (II) legible Form

### Knowledge

noun: facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.

There is a certain level of hypocrisy involved when western practices attempt to impose transparency on to the native practices.

This begs the question; who sets the parameters for creation, regulation and access to knowledge?

The excerpt sheds light on the long running tension between the US Federal government and the indigenous communities. The argument over what information should stay classified and what should be made public has proven to be a contested platform.

The author holds us witness to the various cultural practices embedded within the indigenous truths while simultaneously structuring an argument over the socio political implications associated with knowledge and cultural secrecy within these communities.

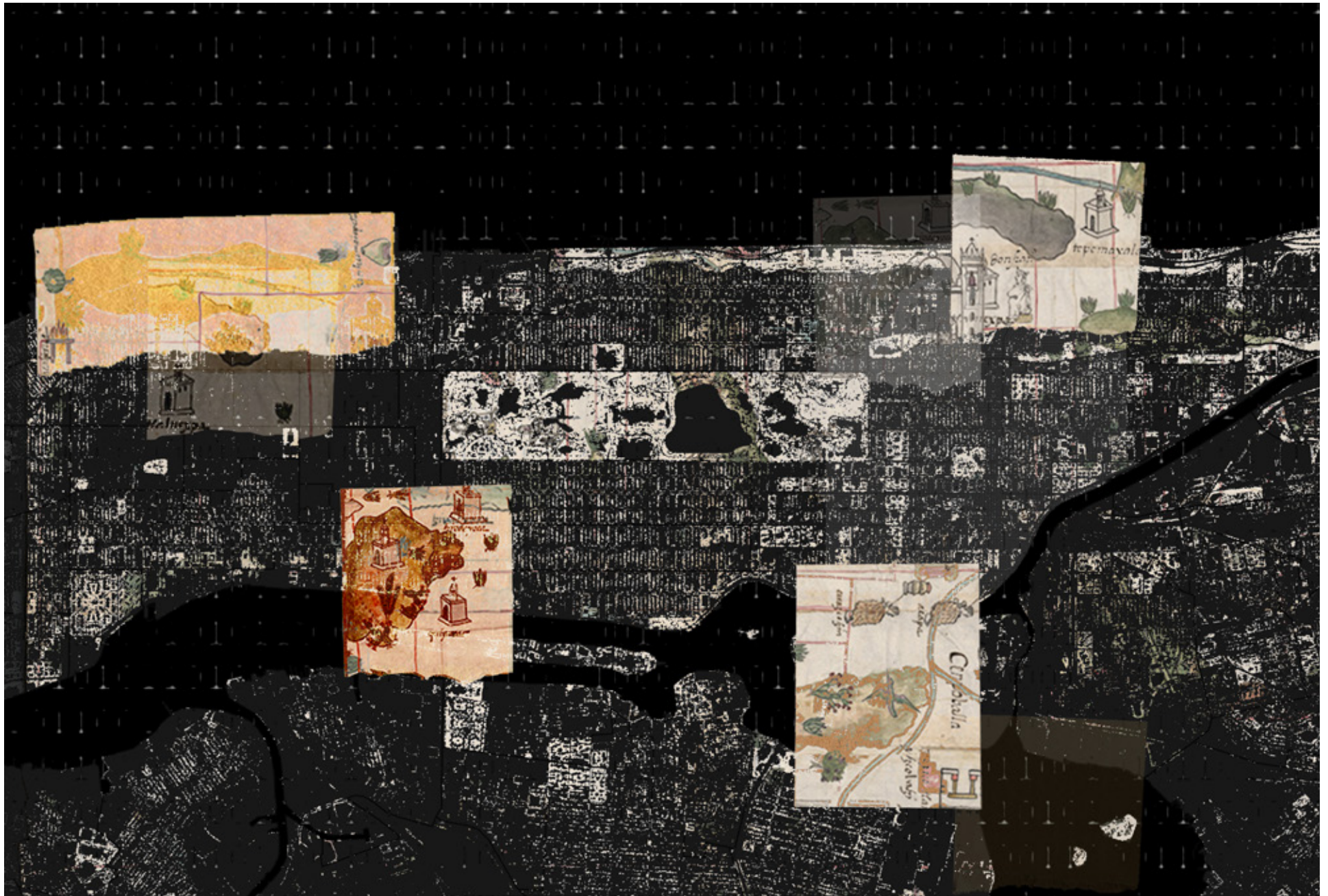
While the western power regime might argue against these native practices. Information sensitivity and acknowledgment towards selective transparency exists in even the most idealistic version of democracy.

Gokul Biju Nair

“Rather than seeing secrecy an impediment to understanding Native societies, we need to accept and value it as an integral part of the organization of power knowledge on which the culture is based” — Nina Valerie Kolowratnik

Additionally, the need to be able to document information is a flawed concept. For instance, in most native traditions Knowledge is created and transmitted through Oral histories. Not all information can be stored in binaries; and acknowledging the limitations of the western archival practices while simultaneously respecting the practices of secrecy and knowledge creation is a crucial step towards the dismantling of the colonial practices embedded in the political institutions even today.

Secrecy  
Oral histories  
Knowledge  
Native  
Democracy



Gokul Biju Nair

*Self; Unknown Cartographies;  
Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection*

## 03/20 – (II) legible Form

### NOTATION

noun: a series or system of symbols (written or spoken) used to represent amounts, numbers, boundaries, or tangible elements. Notation does not have to be measured or represented in a lingua franca; it can be coded to preserve cultural knowledge and autonomy

In “Language of Secret Proof”, Nina Valerie Kolowratnik critiques conventional understanding of fact within the context of Native American history, treatment, and attempts at self-determination within the American legal infrastructure, and legal definitions of evidence.

In many Native American communities secrecy is a vital condition of knowledge preservation. A single, or couple people, are often designated (through initiation, ritual, and intense training) as guardians of tradition and knowledge, and to share that knowledge is to betray a pact with the land and the deities that protect the land, the dieties from whom power is borrowed and can disasterously be taken away. It is a defense mechanism from colonial manipulation and ill will.

Indigenous knowledge creation and transmission have been targeted and structurally dismantled as Native Americans have had to “produce” “evidence” for state and federal government agencies to prove their

### Atsede Assayehgen

“In Pueblo culture external secrecy is maintained to prevent secret information from cycling back into the community from the outside[...]Within Pueblo spiritual belief there is a direct relationship between categories of knowledge and the verbal and visual forms.” — Nina Valerie Kolowratnik

inherent connection and right to land tenureship.

As a student of planning, transparency is so often a part of the conversation of process. But is transparency always correct? And does transparency apply to all cultural contexts?

Maps are one way in which a connection to land can be portrayed. Maps have come to be understood as fact. However, they are a biased social construction just as laws are, and once required an expertise exclusively held by the same types of anthropologists who believed in polygenism. Maps often do not consider representing sites and narratives through symbologies that are codified by experience rather than plain sight.

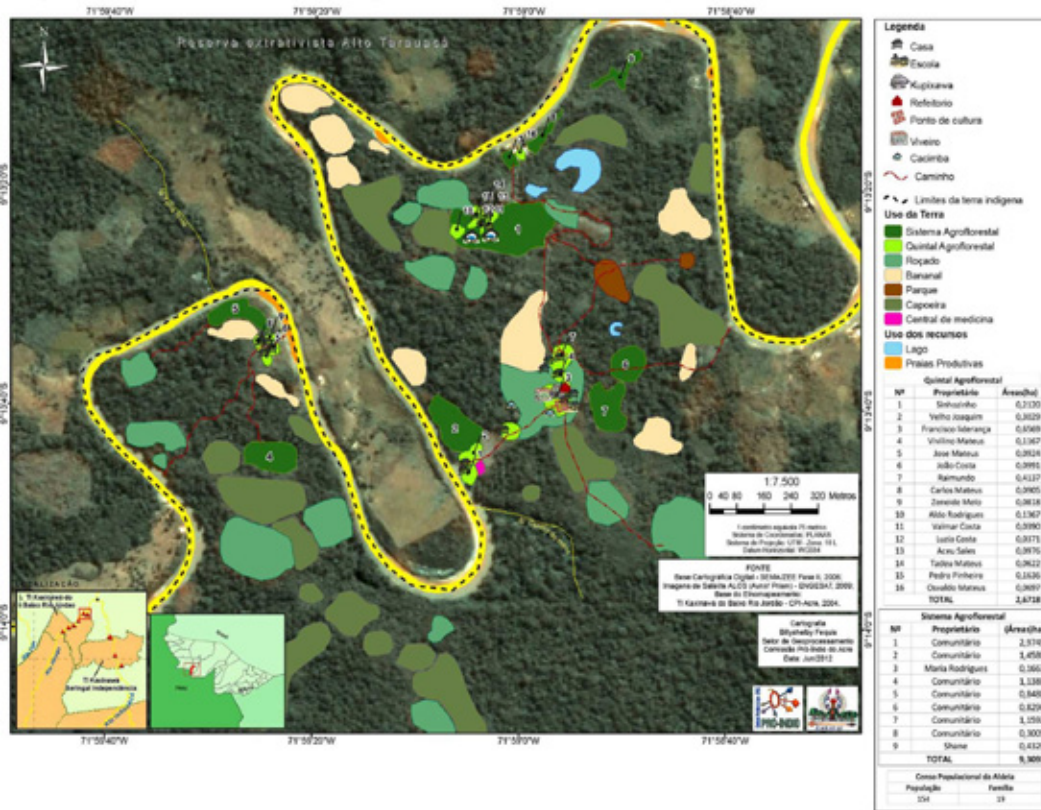
So what might an indigenous codification of spatial orientation look like? WhaAnd, quite frankly, if implicating myself, why would I why need to know? Or even place a label of “countermapping” upon the pratice?

### Notation

Indigenous Knowledge  
Secrecy/Transparency  
Countermapping  
Credibility



Mapa de uso da terra da Aldeia São Joaquim - TI Kaxinawá do Baixo Rio Jordão



Atsede Assayehgen

“Ethnomapping” processes done by Kaxinawá Rio Humaitá of Kampa of the Amonea River Indigenous Territory, in Brazil. (source)

## 03/20 - Illegible Form

### RE-ORIENTATION

noun: the action of changing the focus or direction of something.

In this postface by Rolando Vasquez titled "What does it mean to decolonize?" Rolando elaborates on his understanding of decolonization within academic and cultural institutions. Through a series of thought-provoking questions, he encourages us to reconsider our approaches to representation and to critically examine the roles played by various actors within these institutions.

Rolando supports his insights with a comprehensive array of methodologies and pedagogies, offering practical guidelines for "decolonizing" our practices. His analysis underscores the importance of recognizing modernity within the context of a modern/colonial framework, urging us to transcend this paradigm and to actively challenge the normativity it imposes.

Adriana Castro Lizarbe

"... the movement of decoloniality as the overcoming of the colonial difference, as the delinking from the modern/colonial order." — Rolando Vasquez

At its core, Rolando's discourse invites us to fundamentally re-orient our perspectives and actively participate in the decolonial movement. Embracing this transformative mindset enables us to play a role in shaping a more ethical world, characterized by a profound sense of gratitude and appreciation and consciousness. This endeavor necessitates recognizing and confronting the persistent scars left by colonialism, thereby fostering healing and progress.

Decolonize  
Methodology  
Re-orientation  
Pedagogies  
Movement





Adriana Castro Lizarbe

Self made. New future of gratitude.

## 3/20 - (II) legible Form

### AESTHESIS

noun : an unelaborated elementary awareness of stimulation

Rolando Vazquez employs a systematic breakdown method to introduce fresh perspectives on decolonialism. The term 'aesthesis' is notably intriguing as it symbolizes non-coercion. This methodology appears more natural and inherently contrasts with the stance of colonialism, which imposes canons.

The series of questions he poses at the end of each segment demonstrates a clear understanding of the topics, enabling him to guide his practice in a new direction. Ideally, contemplating one's position with intent would strengthen the 'pedagogies of positionality and relationality' that Vazquez discusses. But in conjuring this world, we mustn't overlook the influence of representation.

Fruitful dialogues creating awareness are the first step in the process, but there is

Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

Decolonial aesthetics has another disposition; it moves away from the paradigm of representation in favor of reception. Its orientation towards Earth, others and time, is a grammar of verballity, of earthing, of worlding, of remembering ourselves in a non-anthropocentric relational precedence.  
— Rolando Vazquez

definitely a need for translations that transcend dialogue. While it is true that representation has been leveraged as a tool in colonialism in the past, it is still a tool that has the potential to proliferate. Dialogue and verballity change with every conversation that iterates it. Through careful representation, one is able to curate schools of thought that can propagate with stability. They can start by addressing the questions raised in this article - the what, who, how, positionality and so on. Through such consistent representations that stem from listening and discussing, is it possible to create relational canons that have the capacity to regenerate instead of stagnating?

Positionality  
Relationality  
Aesthesis  
Verballity  
Colonial Difference



Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

self, *Regenerative Canons : Photographs, Transparencies*

03/20 – (II )legible form

Modern Gaze :

noun : Perceiving and interpreting the world through the lens of colonialism

In this reading, Vasquez urges us to question the dominant narratives, power structures, and ways of perception that shape our understanding of ourselves and the world.

The reading emphasizes the influence of colonial dynamics on our perception and understanding of the world. It highlights the role of aesthetics and the gaze within the modern/ colonial order, prompting us to critically examine how images and representations have been utilized to reinforce power structures and perpetuate colonial ideologies.

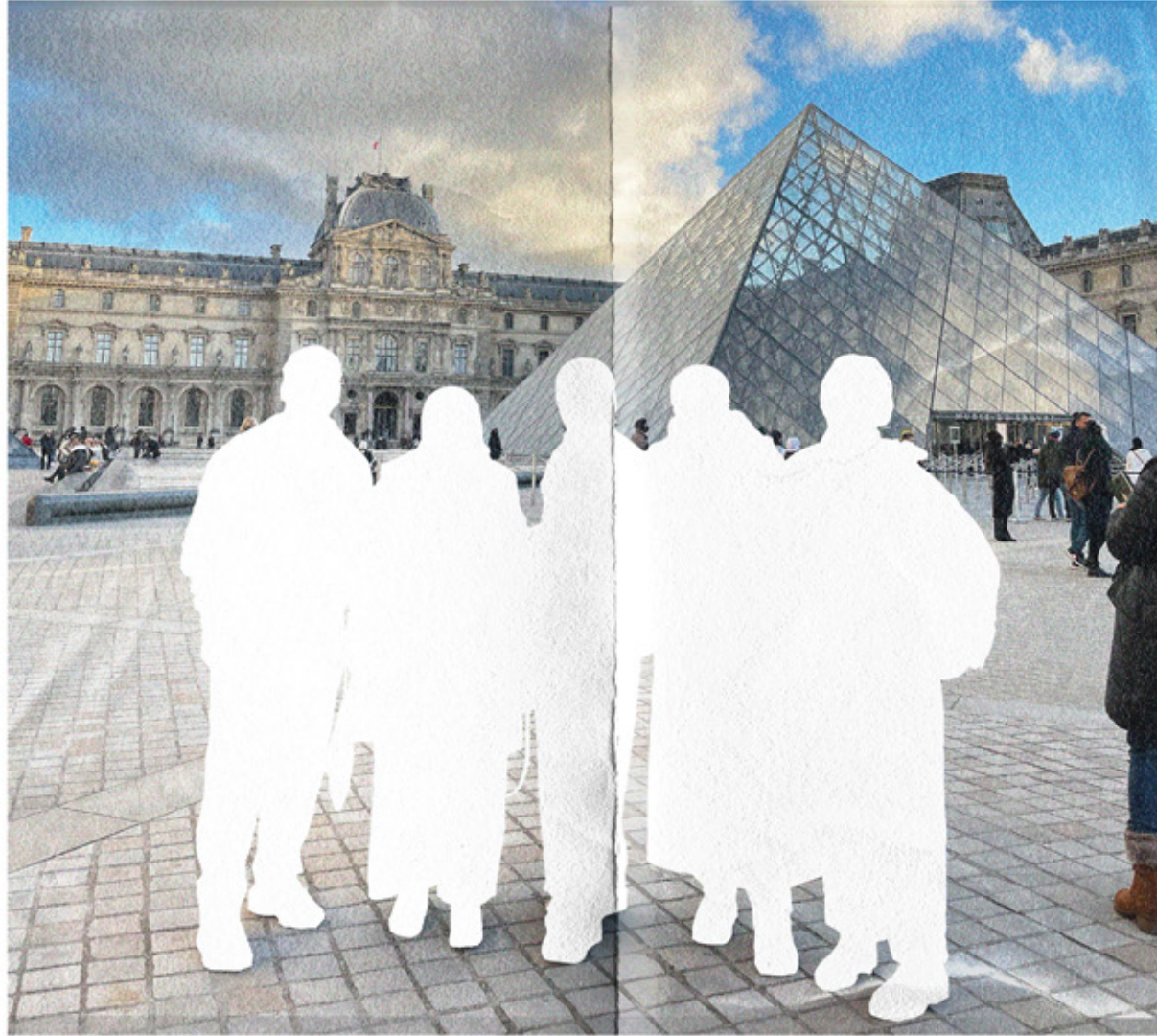
Vasquez delves into the power of aesthetics and images questioning whose eyes dictate what we perceive. It emphasizes the need to critically analyze who benefits from the enforcement, planning, and manipulation of the “we” as a tool to control the gaze and determine aesthetics.

Manar Alrougi

“The utopia of progress and Humanity is sustained on an unacknowledged backdrop of subjugation and erasure.”  
— Rolando Vazquez

the formation of our current worldview is complicit with problematic ideologies, particularly colonialism. Vasquez acknowledges fragments of the modern white gaze and advocates for the decolonization of our thoughts and aesthetics.

Aesthetics  
Gaze  
Power Structures  
Colonialism



Self, Family Portrait

### 3/20 - (II) legible Form

#### UTOPIA

noun: (1) a place of ideal perfection (2) an impractical scheme for social improvement (3) an imaginary and indefinitely remote place

I have a love/hate relationship with utopias.

They are often perceived as heavens, as the places and worlds we aspire to and dream of. The physical form of our ethics. I love utopias because they are precisely not that - they are the impossible sublime. I find their impossibility liberating because it frees us from the fantasy of a perfect world in a way that invites a sort of pragmatism to our living. That is to say, it relieves us from the burden of finding a solution, simply because it acknowledges that there might not be one.

I also hate utopias. They are, for me, like those super sticky labels that once attached to a thing or a thought, cannot be removed. Utopia is therefore a marker for that future that cannot happen. And how sad is that?

Kelley's utopia offers us a way out. It is a non-place, an unusable place. "What does

"What if utopia is the place we arrive at when we get rid of place—its markers, its border walls, its statues, its flags, its forts, its pens?" — Elleza Kelley

refusal to reform, to rebuild, to restore allow us to imagine?". It takes advantage of its own impossibility and by doing so—by being so—acts as a means of reparation, of breaking the regimes of property.

Holes  
Infills  
Utopia  
Impossibility  
Unusability

Hadass Rozental



Hadass Rozental

Self, *My favorite sad t-shirt*, 2014-2024

### 3/20 – (II) legible Form

#### FUGITIVE MAPPING

(n.) - geographic or wayfinding methods used by fugitives to reach freedom; challenges traditional western mapping standards and forms.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is an example of critical fabulation, for it fabulates a fictional experience that is informed by the brutal realities of slavery. Morrison in the book delves into various aspects of bondage, but her descriptions of "fugitive mapping," as Kelly discusses in her essay, provide what can be seen as one of the few sources (despite being being a fictional book) on traditional black american wayfinding used to escape to freedom. Traditional map making and navigational tools were not accessible to the enslaved, thus the stars and the "tree flowers" were used to help navigate to the North. Additionally song was used as cartography, for hymns such as *Wade in the Water* directed fugitives to the swamps to keep their scent from being traced by slave catchers. In discussions of what constitutes as a 'map,' it is important to note that way finding is not limited to the master aerial view/birds eye view of a

"...the mapping practices of the black radical tradition do not depend on 'figures of the visible,' or the legibility of 'speech (meaning),' but are often expressed in phonic substance—as we see in the chain-gang's use of song and sound."  
— Elleza Kelley (pg. 189)

place to navigate, but that various cultures use other forms of nature, art, song, and bodily expression (ex hair braiding) as a means of wayfinding. In addition, fugitive mapping particularly called for a language/code that could only be recognizable by other fugitives, making this cartographic form more illegible to the common person. What also emerges from fugitive mapping and how Morrison writes about spaces in *Beloved* is that space and mapping become "tactile" as Kelley describes it. The spaces in the book are never static but always live through song, scent and spirit-speaking to how black culture and identity itself is never stagnant.

Counter  
Cartographies  
*Beloved* (book)  
Fugitive Mapping  
Imaginative Mapping





Lauren Yvonne Brown

*self, Wade in the Water*

### 3/20 – (II) Legible Forms

#### Black Geography

noun: explore the geographic, social, political, racial, ecological, cultural, and economic processes & spatial patterns that constitute the poetics & materialities of Black life.

Using the fugitive map in the novel *Beloved* as an example, the paper demonstrates the valuable interventions that black studies and black creative production can make in the sub-fields of critical cartography and critical geography.

Maps are often used as “tools of power,” but fugitive maps were used for the fugitivity of black slaves. The fugitive map is not an efficient map, but a vague one full of dangers and difficulties. It is not as precise and detailed as ordinary maps, but records the methods and paths of the fugitivity, using the information felt by the senses as the medium. It carries the slaves’ pursuit and struggle for freedom. It is important to archive and preserve these fugitive maps.

The picture on the right shows a forest clearing space, which was used as a ceremonial space by black female slaves to ex-

“Fugitive mapping in *Beloved* expands the possibilities for the political and pedagogical utility of mapping, and demonstrates what geographic readings of fugitivity contribute to black geographies, critical geography, and literary studies.” — Elleza Kelley

press their yearning for hope and freedom. This is an example of black space practice. *Empty Spaces*, bearing the legacy of black women’s radical, utopian mapping. It has both internal and external, public and private, object and subject functions.

Clearing  
Black Life  
Black Geography  
Fugitive Mapping  
Critical Cartography

Heqiao Meng (Lydia)



Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

Self, Glade in the forest as a space of ritual

## 03/20 - (II) legible Form

### BLACK GEOGRAPHY

noun: Black geographic knowledge has often been archived in black cultural production - fiction, poetry, art, dance, music, performance, film, spiritual traditions, and style

Kelley relies on and points to scholars who have “theorized fugitivity both on and, importantly, off the plantation” (184) and encourages us to view fugitive mapping not merely as a “strategy for survival” but “as its own mode of spatial production and representation unique to black diasporic cultures and experiences within the plantation and post-plantation geographies of the Americas” (185). Kelley explores the intersection between blackness and mapping, of fugitivity and freedom, which prompted me to reflect on the ways black geographies are embedded in song and music. As she discussed the ways black resistance has produced its own spatial production that would map “the ‘interstices’ of the plantation - the shadowy recesses, the negative space, the garret, the tunnel, the networks of secret communication and invisible conveyance” I thought of the fugitives that traveled via the secretive network of informal routes, homes and

Syeeda Simmons

“Above all, the map of the fugitive is always the map towards freedom”

— Elleza Kelley

abolitionists, which is formally known as the underground railroad. Songs of freedom such as Wade in the water, Sweet Chariot and Follow the Drinking Gourd encoded messages in their lyrics that spatialized and mapped out a journey of freedom from bondage.

Morrison maps spaces and places through her writing. “Places that can be planted in the flesh of the back, they can be given shape by the scent of cologne or the sound of singing, they can emerge in the taste of berries” (196). As we follow the story of Paul D In Beloved, Morrison describes how the men would communicate with their eyes, as well as, through the narration of distorted songs that began long before they escaped. These geographic traditions embedded in black music are a form of fugitive mapping through coded communication (189). Black geographies and cartographies provide a critique of “capital c” Cartography and establish alternative ways of navigation.

Critical cartography  
Denaturalize  
Black geography  
Kinship  
Fugitive mapping



### 3/20 – (II) legible Form

#### EVASION

noun: an act or instance of escaping, avoiding, or shirking something

In her exhibition “Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility”, Ashley James delves into the nuanced dynamics between being seen and obscured within the contexts of race, surveillance, and societal norms. The artworks displayed both intersect and diverge in their thematic concerns and artistic strategies. This collectively highlights a critical loop of imposed hypervisibility and desired invisibility. Seeing and being seen is fraught with power dynamics and ethical considerations. Visibility or the lack thereof is used for violence, sexualization, and exploitation, but also self-preservation, reclamation, and resurrection.

The work of Kerry James Marshall and David Hammons intimately intersects with my understanding of my home city, Chicago. News headlines about each region of the

“While both invisibility and hypervisibility play out across a spectrum of marginalized identities, hypervisibility is singularly relevant to Black subject formation.”  
— Ashley James

city are driven by the historic segregation of Chicagoans. These headlines also create stereotypical identities within each region. They define what is a “good” and “bad” area – where it’s normal for gun violence to occur and where it’s not.

Isaac Goodlow III was sleeping in his bed on the night of February 3rd, 2024 when the DuPage County police killed him. The police have yet to release the full bodycam footage to the public regardless of the outcry for transparency and culpability from the community and Goodlow’s family. Carol Stream, Goodlow’s hometown, is a “good” neighborhood, on the “edge of visibility” outside the boundaries of the “safety map” that defines neighborhoods by their homicide rate. The “safety map” does not show how these statistics tokenize Black Chicagoans within and far beyond the boundaries of each neighborhood.

Blackout  
Erasure  
Evasion  
Highlighting  
Surveillance

Maura Costello



Maura Costello

*Isaac Goodlow III at Dawn on February 4th 2024*  
"Chicago Rescue on Lake Michigan", Fox59  
"Safety Tracker", ABC7 Chicago

### 3/20 – (II) legible Form

#### MULTIPLICITY

noun: the quality or state of being multiple or various

What happens at the overlaps of the positive and negative impacts of being seen? In contexts of erasure and marginalization, is it possible to simultaneously protect one's self while remaining relentlessly hypervisible? The works in Going Dark as described by its organizer Ashley James have sought to confront "both desired and imposed invisibility, reflecting the persistent tension between invisibility and hypervisibility."

In variations of literal and figurative darkness, the difference between desired and imposed invisibility may become difficult to disentangle. The condition stemming from Kerry James Marshall's work of being both present and absent in the world as a "psychological invisibility" serves an added layer to these multiplicities.

When considering these questions, the art of drag emerges as another method of ex-

"The loop of hypervisibility, imposed invisibility, and desired invisibility is an unending one." — Ashley James

amining the intertwining of hypervisibility with varying forms of invisibility. Drag allows for the possibility of appearing as one wishes to truly appear while still fully or partially concealing a version of self of the present or past. Is this a form of evasion, of going dark? How does one navigate the delicate balance between the duality, or multiplicity, of occlusion and exposure around one's identity, origins, and over time? The challenges and potentialities lie somewhere in the unending cycle of in/visibility.

Amorphous  
Concealment  
Multiplicity  
Evasion  
Semi-visible





Kelvin Lee

Nymphia Wind; map of Taipei



# 3/27 - Measuring Images



## Measuring

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## Travelling

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Wolukau-Wanambwa, Stanley, "Sans Parole: Reflections on Camera Lucinda, Part 2," in *e-flux Journal*, Issue 125, March 2022. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/125/452924/sans-parole-reflections-on-camera-lucida-part-2/>

Wolukau-Wanambwa, Stanley, "Spectacular Opacities," in *e-flux Journal*, Issue 120, September 2021. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/120/416942/spectacular-opacities/>

## 03/27 - Measuring Images

**FORMLESS** noun: Devoid of, or wanting in, form; shapeless; having no determinate or regular form. Said both of material and immaterial things (1591-)

Form, or its lack, is central to Dean's analysis of the archive in *Black Bataille*. Form is in "Bataille's constant tracing of an outside" (61) and in an imagined Moten-ian "collusion of European scientific theory with Black practice." (63) Form is the practice of "making visible that which is outside and irrecoverable," in the "contours of that which is outside but makes the inside." (64) Embedded in the radical form-finding project Dean sets for herself is a more tightly wound project of formulation -- of structuring this long-winded experiment in words.

The "making and unmaking" of rules is in understanding the content of Dean's words in her own voice: the decisive affect that makes room for the slippery, the "goopy" with deep deftness and apparent carelessness. I am interested in this third voice, Dean's voice, that creates form between Krauss's army of Modernists and Afropessimist thought and Bataille's articulated practice, for it is only because of this voice that there is a form whose contours we can trace

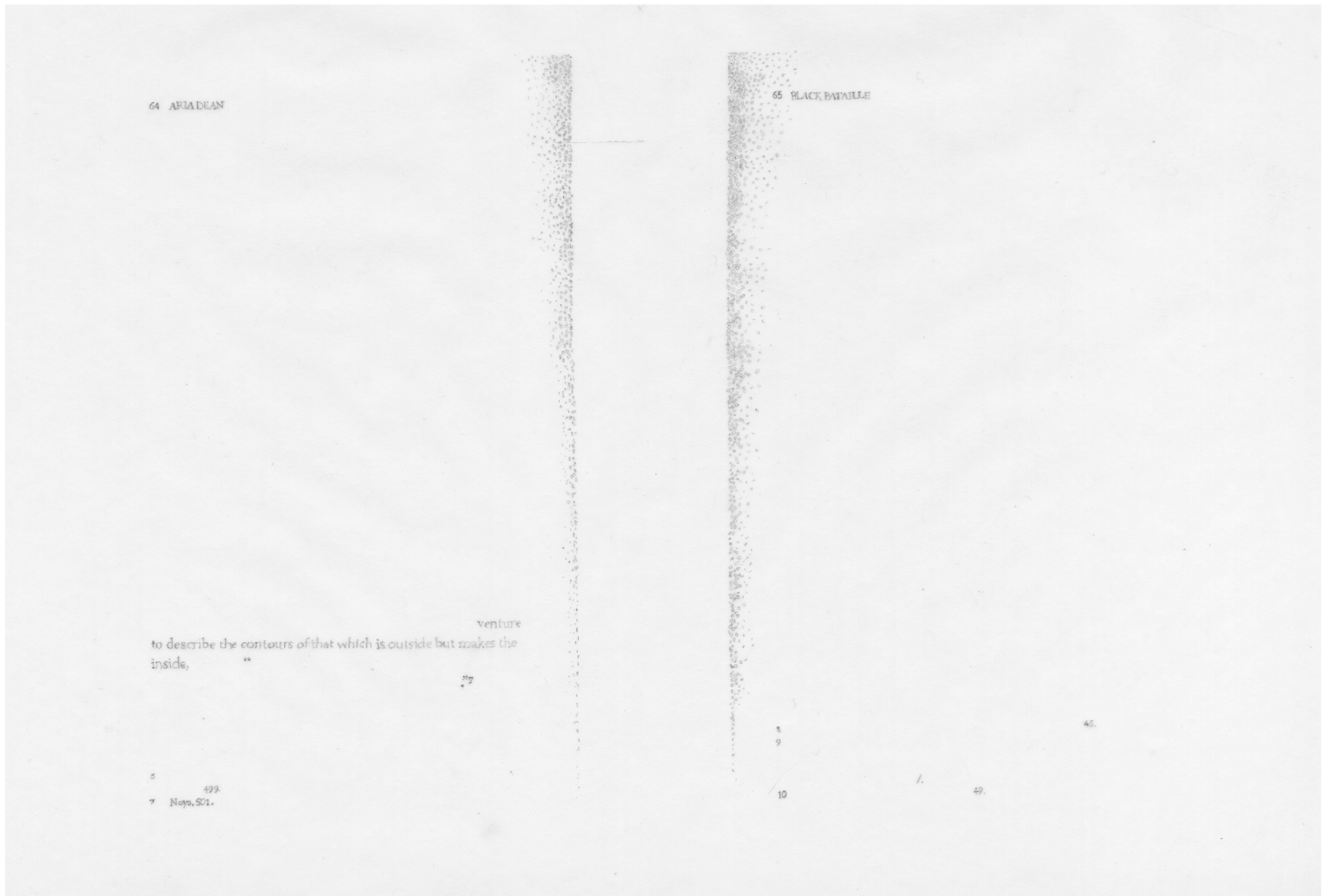
Anoushka Mariwala

"... connected to a "jurisgenerative principle," as named by Fred Moten, Blackness's proclivity for making and unmaking its own rules..." — Aria Dean

between these things. What I have encountered in writing theory as craft is what Dean continues to call practice and only locates outside herself (Why?) That is, the words that she uses to describe a practice are mirrored in her own writing practice: a "near-perfect tautology" that is interested in the lingering on edges (70), finding lines, "bleeding between lines (72), and drawing loops. Yet, "insulting the difference between form and content is [the] challenging project in itself" that Dean demands, constantly, from the reader (71). The writing is self-referential, a "thinking-in-action" (76) that takes seriously a kind of thinking-with the writer. We trail behind Dean's light-footedness, between her "what I just did" and "how obsessed I am" and making form between "this Bataille thing" (77) and "the whole Blackness thing" (61).

This is an essay on an experiment in writing. Does writing make room for the anti-form? How can we talk about, or argue for the goopy with legibility? What is a practice of formless writing?

Formless  
Materialism  
Practice  
Craft  
Goop



Anoushka Mariwala

## 03/27 - Measuring Images

ABJECTION: the state of being cast off and separated from norms and rules, especially on the scale of society and morality

Following up on Dean's reference to Rick Rubin and his role in the production of iconic (Black) art, I began to think about the phenomenon of Blackness existing outside but within - somehow both completely separate but entirely ordinary to the world that we all know. A feedback loop that collapses past into present, and present into future.

Young Thug, Kanye, Chief Keef, Jay-Z, and Beyonce have all played an understated role in the production, representation, and distribution of global media today - yet continue to exist and create (as both an object and an process) almost entirely outside of the mainstream [think: Grammys, leadership roles at conglomerate recording labels, global music festivals, etc.]

I'll concede that utilizing the Black body here as a form of representation undermines the Bataillon l'informe or formlessness that Dean presents to the

Eric Julian Hagerman

"Going against the grain of modernism requires broadening the scope of analysis."

- Aria Dean

reader. However, I think we should instead analyze beyond form, broadly and wholly about the processes, products, and producers shown in these images.

In a lot of ways, the work produced by these artists tend to "make and unmake its own rules" as we as "deconstruct and reconstruct the viewer;" albeit in different ways than what Dean imagines, perhaps. Nonetheless, these works (and their makers) will continue to exist outside of the mainstream, despite their role in defining it.

This is "Black art that luxuriates itself in its outside-the-world-ness."

Base Matter  
Abjection  
Dispossession  
Negative Space  
Formlessness



Eric Julian Hagerman

various sources, Black recording art/ists as classical paintings

## 03/27 – Measuring Images

Outsider : a socially constructed concept where an individual feels like they don't belong.

The reading delves into the parallel between Bataille's concept of base matter and the description of Blackness in Afropessimist theory. The writer argues that both of these theories position the Black as an outsider to civil society and how this is essential for the coherence of "whiteness."

By discussing Bataille's interest in Edouard Manet's painting "Olympia," Dean suggests a reevaluation of art and its relationship to hierarchy. It suggests that figures traditionally marginalized (the sex worker, the Black woman, and the animal) play crucial roles in disrupting the coherence of "whiteness."

The reading emphasizes that Bataille's ideas challenge the foundations of "white" philosophy and art by negating idealism and frustrating the tools of symbolism, representation, and meaning. Dean suggests that revisiting Bataille's concepts, particularly in relation to

Manar Alrougi

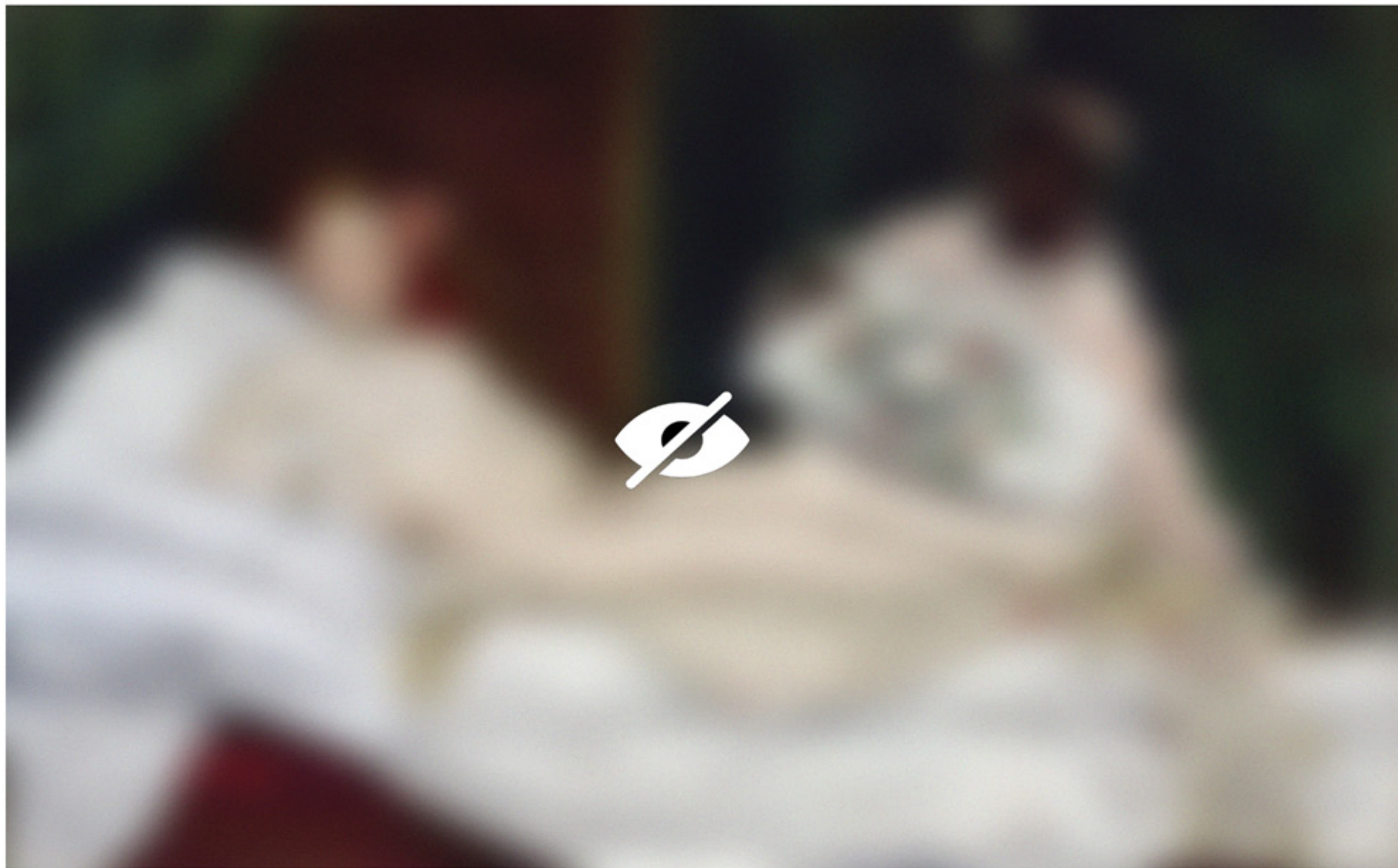
"This line of thinking figures the structural position of the Black as outside of—but originary to—civil society, a necessary sacrifice for "whiteness to gain coherence.""

— Aria Dean

Blackness, can offer new insights.

Outsider  
Formless  
Whiteness





Self, Olympia censored

Manar Alrougi

The text delves into the profound impact of technology on human perception, particularly focusing on images and their role in shaping our understanding of reality. It explores the transformative effects of images on individuals and society, highlighting a shift in the way we interact with and interpret the world. It discusses the complex relationship between technology, memory, and culture, arguing that technical advancements are inseparable from human existence and have significant implications for various fields, including design and architecture. The author introduces three axioms that challenge traditional notions of technology and memory, advocating for a redefinition of visual depiction in architecture culture.



Angel Langumas

Photograph, Digital Collage Hybrid

## 3/27 – Measuring Images

### NONMODERN

adjective: refers to a perspective or approach that neither rejects modern advancements nor wholly embraces traditional or pre-modern practices.

John May's "Signal. Image. Architecture" scrutinizes the profound shift in architectural representation from traditional orthographic methods to digital processes. May suggests that the architectural industry has largely overlooked the extent to which this shift has reshaped our world engagement and comprehension. He points out that an image-saturated culture, bolstered by television and social media, has revolutionized human cognition and perception, fostering a new architectural awareness.

The inaugural chapter, "0 myelectricity," contemplates this transition to an image-centric mindset and its repercussions for architectural practice. Subsequently, May examines the evolution from hand-drawn designs to digital modeling, differentiating between 'Orthographic' and 'Postorthographic' design philosophies

Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

"In the midst of our serene new world of images, a descriptive reevaluation of the conditions of imaging—of its technical basis...So differently that we might soon—very soon—become nonmodern?"

— John May

while presenting axioms that link technology with cognitive and perceptual shifts.

Advocating a critical reassessment of digital imagery's role in architecture, May urges adapting to the nuances of global issues and advancing beyond traditional modernist paradigms. His discourse on transitioning from drawing to digital representation reveals the significant, culture-shaping influence of technological progress.

This piece explores images' role in architectural design, merging historical and modern visual forms against a backdrop of traditional representation techniques. It reflects on John May's 'nonmodern' concept, illustrating a future where past and present coalesce, shaping our understanding and methodology in architecture.

Representation  
Postorthographic  
Nonmodern  
Cognition  
Evolution



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

Self, *Visual Fusion*

### 3/27 - Measuring Image

#### Technics

Noun: technics is constituted not by subjects and objects, but by compositions, in which practical activity is permeated by a mnemotechnical-gestural symbolic register.

John May's text is provocative in trying to address image relating to different kinds of image production, circulation and material. His focus in trying to differentiate technical image, which he refers as computational image, image produced in the present era, a energy exchange within the realm of electronics, is parallel to what Thomas Elsasser refers as operational image. These image, often digitally produced, simulated copy of reality but without an original one, or at least not that is visible to the human eye, is one of the most prevailed image type that circulates right now.

Later in the text, he associate image-making with two dimension, gestural and media. In the first one, he goes back to the concept of techni, and how human always treat image-making, even pre-photo era as always a technical way of producing, and the memory-storage prototype of engaging image-making.

"All memory is technical memory." — John May

For the second one, he takes a step further on the gesture/technics, developed his argument about how image itself is inseparable with its media. The acknowledge of image has a dwelling is where I think this discussion belongs to media studies and image archaeology, because May pointed out that our episteme is strongly influenced by how image is produced and interacted with us.

Orthography  
Technics  
Memory



Yueyang Luo

Yueyang Luo, *Civilization VI*

### 3/27 - Measuring Images

#### AXIOM

noun : is a statement that is taken to be true, to serve as a premise or starting point for further reasoning and arguments.

Relative to time, everyone inserts themselves into a position or a moment. In simple terms, 'signal.image.architecture' tells us about the relevance of the canon. So much of the unlearning and reformatting process is about destabilizing the canon, but in innumerable cases, the axiom that is considered as the fact is not necessarily the cardinal definition. If we are acknowledging a position then it definitely warrants the deconstruction of etymology along with scientific evidence (to a measurable extent).

His thesis, in a way, lies in and questions the pace of time. The lack of an understanding of how an orthographic drawing differs from a photograph, which differs from the image. Interchangeable usage of such terms diminishes the bodies of knowledge that they represent, eventually to a point where you would have a whole generation of people using the terms without questioning it any-

All technicalities are tethered, in some way or another, to the deepest regions of consciousness. Our technicity is not a problem to be solved, but a permanent and originary condition to be continually re-understood.—  
John May

more. It is at that point that the new canon is formed.

There are a myriad of formats to store all forms of knowledge that have accumulated over the years. Then why, in the argument of canons, do we chose to reductive canons (which function by replacing the older bodies of knowledge) instead of cumulative canons?

Format  
Technic  
Axiom  
Medium  
Data



3/27 - Measuring Images



Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

self, *Cumulative Canons : Photograph, Overlays*

## 3/27 - Measuring Forms

### HETERONYM

noun: each of two or more words that are spelled identically but have different sounds and meanings

“(W)hole” references a story and the shadows of that story. No object represents its whole story, beginnings are false, and art is temporal. The rhetorical weight of an image is defined by the embedded social interactions and shared understandings. The act of seeing is underscored by the interconnectedness of individual and communal perceptions.

Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa’s photographs are of static objects and dynamic, indeterminate events. They point to an irrevocable past, suggesting a continuous movement away from their point of origin. This notion of photographs as entities that encapsulate loss while offering themselves as a bridge to the future introduces a contemplation on the nature of memory, time, and the act of preservation through imagery.

Maura Costello

“[Shadows] are pure nonidentity, and they threaten knowledge, if we mistake their ghostliness for the real.”

—Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa

The shadow, as discussed, is both a literal and metaphorical presence that challenges the desire for knowledge and control, particularly in the context of territoriality. This analysis extends to photography’s entanglement with imperial optics. There is an impossibility in photographs fully possessing or claiming what they depict.

In the shadow of a growing tech city are the homes of construction workers. Hidden in an image of a builder is the complexity of their social standing and details of their everyday life. Behind the camera is an alien.

Shadow  
Depiction  
Heteronym  
Sight  
Fugitivity



Maura Costello

*Self, Diptych of a Developing City*

## 3/27 - Measuring Images

### INHERITANCE

noun: something that is or may be derived genetically from one's parents or ancestors; something that is received from a predecessor or former owner

If photographs as beginnings are multitudinous, elliptical, and indeterminate, can (and should) they ever return to a point of origin? Once an image is produced and seen, its confounding of the ordering of time as described by Wolukau-Wanambwa influences its trajectory of both purpose and origin. When I think of desire / love / fear, questions of origination rise to the surface. As these concepts intertwine with images of instantiated moments in time, either personal or of a larger people, the ways in which they evolve with the simultaneous capacity to unravel serve as powerful beacons for nostalgia or even reparation.

If an instantiated shadow of or within an image accompanies the photographic collapse of linear time, what then do we inherit from any attempt to act in illumination? Considering the bursting unseen histories known or unknown from an image or collec-

"Shadows and photographs confound the normative ordering of time: vivid pastness insisting in the present, they mark a future relation to our present place in space and time." — Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa

tion of images, how can we then utilize its elliptical nature to experience shared narratives at points of slippage along parallel and intersecting timelines? This could be a method of contribution to the resistance of hierarchy raised in the text; when the shadows that are formed by a multitude of instantiations continue to compound, they may carry the possibility of enveloping the "normative bastions that now surround us."

Elliptical  
Pastness  
Inheritance  
Heteronym  
Instantiate



Kelvin Lee

self, *Originations* (digital and film photographs)

### 3/27 - Measuring Images

#### Photographs

noun: Photographs are strange entities: they are at once frontal, flat, declarative objects, and yet elliptical and indeterminate events.

The similarity between shadows and photographs is that they are both projections or representations of the real world. A shadow is the shadow produced by an object blocking light, while a photograph presents an image of an object through the recording of light on a light-sensitive material. They are representations of reality, but they are not exactly equivalent to reality itself.

In time, the presence of shadows reminds us of the passage of time and the change of objects. They can be seen as traces of time, marking the existence of the past. Photographs are fixed and recorded in time, allowing us to look back on past moments. They all expand our perception and understanding of time. In terms of space, shadows and photographs are both projections of objects, but they are presented in different ways. Shadows are a presence in real space that can change the appearance and shape

“The image, as a symbolic and rhetorical form, is saturated with origins and with fraught claims to the status of originality.”  
— Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa

of an object. Photographs are flat, and objects are represented by images on a flat surface. They all change our perception and understanding of space to some extent. In general, shadows and photographs are representations of the real world, and they play an important role in understanding time and space.

“Beginning” should not be seen as singular, but as pluralistic. At the social level, “beginnings” are not isolated, they are closely linked to social history, culture, values, and so on. On an individual level, “beginning” is also diverse, and each person’s experience and background will affect their understanding and feelings about “beginning”. Therefore, the meaning and impact of the “beginning” at the social and individual level is varied and requires consideration of multiple factors.

Image  
Shadow  
Photograph  
Fugitive  
Beginnings

Heqiao Meng (Lydia)



Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

Photograph, Ballet dancer and her shadow

## 03/27 – Measuring Images

### ENACT

verb: to put something into action, to put into practice (a belief, idea, or suggestion)

What is enacted by a photograph? In Sans Parole: Reflections on Camera Lucida, Part 2 Wolukau-Wanambwa critiques Barthes' Camera Lucida and insists that at the intersection of Blackness and photography, the photograph refuses to be silent, to be void of movement, and of memory.

A photo from the African National Congress (ANC) Archives emerged from my deep engagement with the history of apartheid in South Africa. It was posted online in September of 2023 during South African 'Heritage Month' to continue to pay homage to their traditions, their beautiful country, and the people living in it. The photo tells a story of South Africa during a time of deep oppression. Any Black South African would hear music pouring out, upon a mere glance of this image. The sound of the hymn, N'kosi Sikelel' i Afrika, fills this image; as it was sung both at the beginning and closing of the gathering of revolutionists during

Syeeda Simmons

"These bonds make matter, they hum, they shout, they repeat and reverberate among peoples and across time"  
— Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa

apartheid. Similar to Tina Campt's work of archiving family photographs, "each print, each face, each pose strikes a note, accumulates into a rhythm, generates a discernibly choral hum" (04). Not only does this image refrain from silence, it enacts and expands memory and lets "their struggles, their passions, their pasts, resonate within one's own past and present, and destabilize them" (07). The raised fist represents the strength, solidarity, and unity of all Black people worldwide, immediately enabling me to resonate with their struggle, even as a Black American. Wolukau-Wanambwa beautifully argues how the photograph demands to be heard, to be felt, to enact a collective remembrance of a moment in time.

Remember  
Listen  
Enact  
Meaning  
Sound





Syedda Simmons

photograph, *Amandla Cultural Ensemble*

### 3/27 - Measuring Images

punctum: interpreted through a lens of white normativity that neglects broader socio-political and historical dimensions.

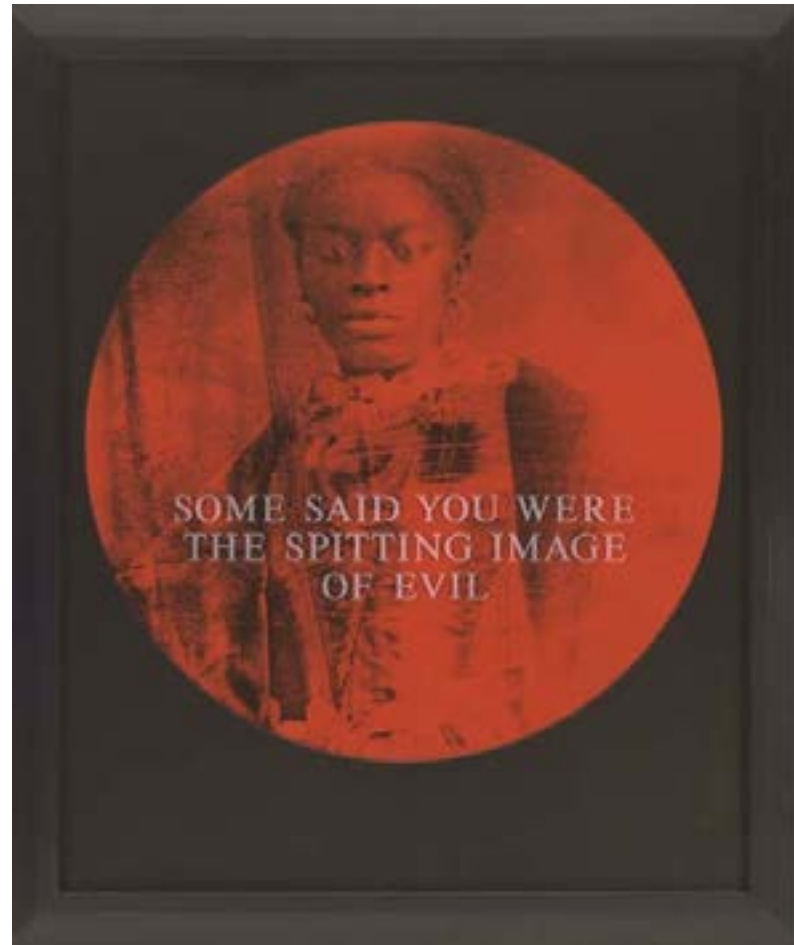
Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa critiques Roland Barthes's concept of the punctum in *Camera Lucida*, arguing it embodies a deeply racialized, gendered, and classed form of white normativity that sidelines the material and historical contexts of photographs. This critique unveils Barthes's approach as one that privileges personal grief and subjectivity, thereby neglecting the broader socio-political realities that shape photographic meanings. Wolukau-Wanambwa prompts us to question whether the punctum can genuinely capture a photograph's essence or if it merely reflects the viewer's biases and historical oversight. The essay challenges us to consider photographs not just as personal artifacts but as complex intersections of history, race, and culture. It calls for a critical engagement with photographs that acknowledges their socio-political dimensions, urging us to look beyond individual

"Could it be that in disavowing any critical engagement with material social history, Barthes can attempt to uncouple his poetic production of meaning from any recognition of the differently subjected matter upon which it depends?"

experiences towards a more inclusive and historically informed interpretation.

A critical question emerges from this reflection: How do we navigate the tension between the intimate, personal resonances of photographs and their broader socio-political contexts? The essay challenges us to think beyond the confines of individual experience and to engage with photographs as complex sites of historical, racial, and cultural significance. A question emerges from this reflection: How do we navigate the tension between the intimate, personal resonances of photographs and their broader socio-political contexts? The essay challenges us to think beyond the confines of individual experience and to engage with photographs as complex sites of historical, racial, and cultural significance.

Video  
Drawings  
Decipher  
Technology  
Obscured



Jisoo

Carrie Mae Weems | From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried

## 3/27 - Measuring Images

### FLASH

(n.) - a sudden brief burst of bright light or a sudden glint from a reflective surface.

This week, I wish to reflect on the use of the flash—particularly in Deana Lawson’s work as described in *Spectacular Opacities*. It is the flash that in part unveils the Black body in Wolukau-wanambwa’s definition of spectacular opacities in the visual arts. Lawson uses the flash to illuminate Blackness while also providing a clear image of the subjects portrayed. It makes me think of times when I bring out my Poloroid camera and my friends joke, “those kinds of cameras are racist to dark skinned people.” Despite its bright flash, it often reduces the black body to a silhouette in its default settings. Lawson’s work also uses a “vintage” camera, but her mode of practice is with a flash (and other studio lights I would assume) to give the illusion of a singular flash that both illuminates and unveils as opposed to darkening and hiding. The essay mentions how the flash further delineates black vs. white in the resulting

Lauren Yvonne Brown

“The sudden and sweeping luminance of the flash hyperbolizes the distance between black and white, revealed and obscured, known and irreversibly opaque.”  
— Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa, 04

image, and Lawson’s work plays gracefully with the by-product of the flash: the shadow. The areas hidden by the flash are cast black, which in pieces like *Nicole* naturally censor the image while in pieces like *Eternity* allow for the figure to mysteriously emerge to the foreground of the image. While the flash accentuates the view seen from behind the camera, its abruptness and intrusiveness both blinds and exposes the subject. When I think of a camera flash I think of the dot(s) that float for moments—sometimes even minutes—after the gaze meets the bright light. When artfully used, the flash can further accentuate the beauty of the subject, however the lack of flash can provide an added layer of the indistinguishable—one could call it a form of fugitive mapping. In this case, the image’s darkness/shadow makes the subject hidden where the actions portrayed are only known to the subject, the photographer, and anyone who can read the distinguishable gestures of the piece.

Opacity  
Deana Lawson  
Flash (camera)  
Photography



Lauren Yvonne Brown

*self, Hair Jewels*

## 03/27 – Measuring Images

### SPECTACULAR OPACITY

noun (condition): a term coined by Daphne Brooks, refers to a method of performance, often ingrained within racialized bodies, where one acts, moves, creates in a way that both reveals and conceals presence, where blackness is rendered visible but also obscured; “to enter into the visible in an exclusionary inclusion”

In Stanley Wolukaku-Wanambwa’s “Spectacular Opacities” I was drawn to the tension between visibility and visibility. Visibility being a straightforward presence within a public sphere, whereas visibility encompasses the tactics and strategies that racialized subjects employ to negotiate their presence within racially charged environments or society at large. By consciously demanding autonomy over one’s own exposure into the visible, or by engaging in “fugitive evasion”, there projects a resistance and power to objectification or stereotypical impositions. It’s a practice of reclamation. This concept of visibility challenges the assumption that visibility is inherently empowering and instead highlights the ways in which they (I) negotiate presence in the public sphere. Through this exploration, I imagined Wolukaku-Wanambwa presenting a

Atsede Assayehgen

“[Fascination] facilitates empathy for the imagined pleasure of self-objectification: the relished slide from me to it. The evacuation of inner subjectivity from the person or figure by whom we are fascinated occasions a profoundly generative opportunity for the extension of the self through the ‘imagined pleasure of self-objectification’”

— Stanley Wolukaku-Wanambwa

quadrant or cartesian-format scale of opacity, that ranges from unintentional to intentional self-, and from self-erasure to complete visibility.

I’ve been asking myself what kind of morphologies and obscure figurations can be explored via the body, particularly, autonomous black bodies to further disrupt and find power in these negotiations? How much can shadow distort? How much can flash distort? Until when is a subject unrecognizable? Can unrecognizability feel familiar? And to whom?

## Spectacular Opacity

Visibility vs. Visibility

Blackness

Illuminance

Subject/Object

Self-Erasure



Atsede Assayehgen



Untitled photographs (formerly "Shadow play"), Self

## 03/27 - Measuring Images

### DECOLONAZATION

noun: the act or practice of decolonizing, to free from the dominating influence of a colonizing power.

I interpreted "Spectacular Opacities" as a journey through various instances of injustice towards Black people, and I aimed to contextualize this concept within my homeland. Specifically, I sought to depict a Peruvian narrative intertwined with the themes of land and gold. Gold, historically exploited by Spaniards at the expense of native peoples, represents a centuries-long commodity fraught with exploitation.

The insatiable greed for this precious mineral led to abhorrent scenes of suffering. Conditions within the mines were so dire that indigenous women resorted to infanticide to spare their offspring from the bleak fate awaiting them. This legacy of gold-driven oppression continues to permeate Peruvian society today, shaping

Adriana Castro Lizarbe

"Blackness, which is to say, black radicalism, is not the property of black people. All that we have (and are) is what we hold in our outstretched hands. This open collective being is blackness - (racial) difference mobilized against the racist determination it calls into existence in every moment of the ongoing endangerment of 'actual being', of subjects who are supposed to know and own." — Fred Moten

the collective character of its people. This brings me to the present day, where the Peruvian saying "the Peruvian is a beggar seated on a stool of gold" holds significant resonance. It encapsulates the paradox of a nation abundant in resources yet plagued by inequity. While mining drives the economy, much of the wealth generated escapes the country's borders, leaving the majority of the population mired in poverty.

Through my imagery, I aim to highlight this ongoing injustice, shedding light on the stark disparity between Peru's riches and the harsh realities faced by its people

Negation  
Subprime  
Decolonization





Adriana Castro Lizarbe

Self made.





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## 04/03 – Beyond Measure

### Slave Trade

noun: the process of capturing, transporting, and selling human beings into chattel slavery, especially Black Africans brought to the New World prior to the mid-19th century.

Author Cameron Rowlands crafts a harrowing tale of the colonial world through the lens of slavery and the early stages of global trade market.

The extract sheds light on the harsh realities of slave establishments and the rather convoluted mechanism created for profit generation through human exploitation.

The physical and social construct of these slave establishments draw out the commodification of human life.

While these instruments worked in favor of the colonial entities, the systems (forts, confinements, Slave Acts) reflected on the instability of the slave ownership model. “The refusal existed in collective, escape and the elimination of property” Rowland

Despite the constant subjugation to the various forms of resistance and the varying landscape of economic reforms these nations always found ways to generate revenue using slaves as leverage.

Gokul Biju Nair

“As real estate, people who were enslaved enhanced the value of the land they were legally rendered art of. The plantation’s value was determined in part by the efficacy of its confinement” — Cameron Rowlands

“These credit markets developed continue to define contemporary processes of accumulation” - Rowland

The crude reality is recognizing patterns of the colonial model embedded in the macro-economics of the present day world.

First world nations have deployed a similar system of loan and credit system, eventually crippling the developing countries with long term debt burdens. It should be noted that while the capitalist model of economy generates profit, it does so at the expense of other entities. Dismantling this systems requires a careful understanding and retelling of our histories to comprehend and draw out these flawed systems embedded deep within the current institutions

Abolition  
Commodity  
Slave Trade  
Credit  
Mortgage



Gokul Biju Nair

*Self; Commodification*

## 4/3 – Beyond Measure

### HUMAN COST

noun: refers to the loss and suffering people endure due to certain actions or policies, affecting individuals and communities emotionally, socially, and economically.

The reading delves into the historical intricacies of slavery, particularly focusing on the Royal African Company's pivotal role in the transatlantic slave trade and the subsequent legal and economic frameworks that both sustained and were shaped by this inhumane institution. It discusses the abolition of slavery in the British colonies in 1833, highlighting the paradox where slave owners received compensation, leaving the true victims, the enslaved individuals and their descendants, grappling with the legacy of their forebears' suffering and exploitation.

Extracted from the text are seven key points that resonate with the theme "Beyond Measure," illustrating the profound and immeasurable impact of slavery on human lives, economies, legal systems, and societal structures. These include the immeasurable human cost, the complex

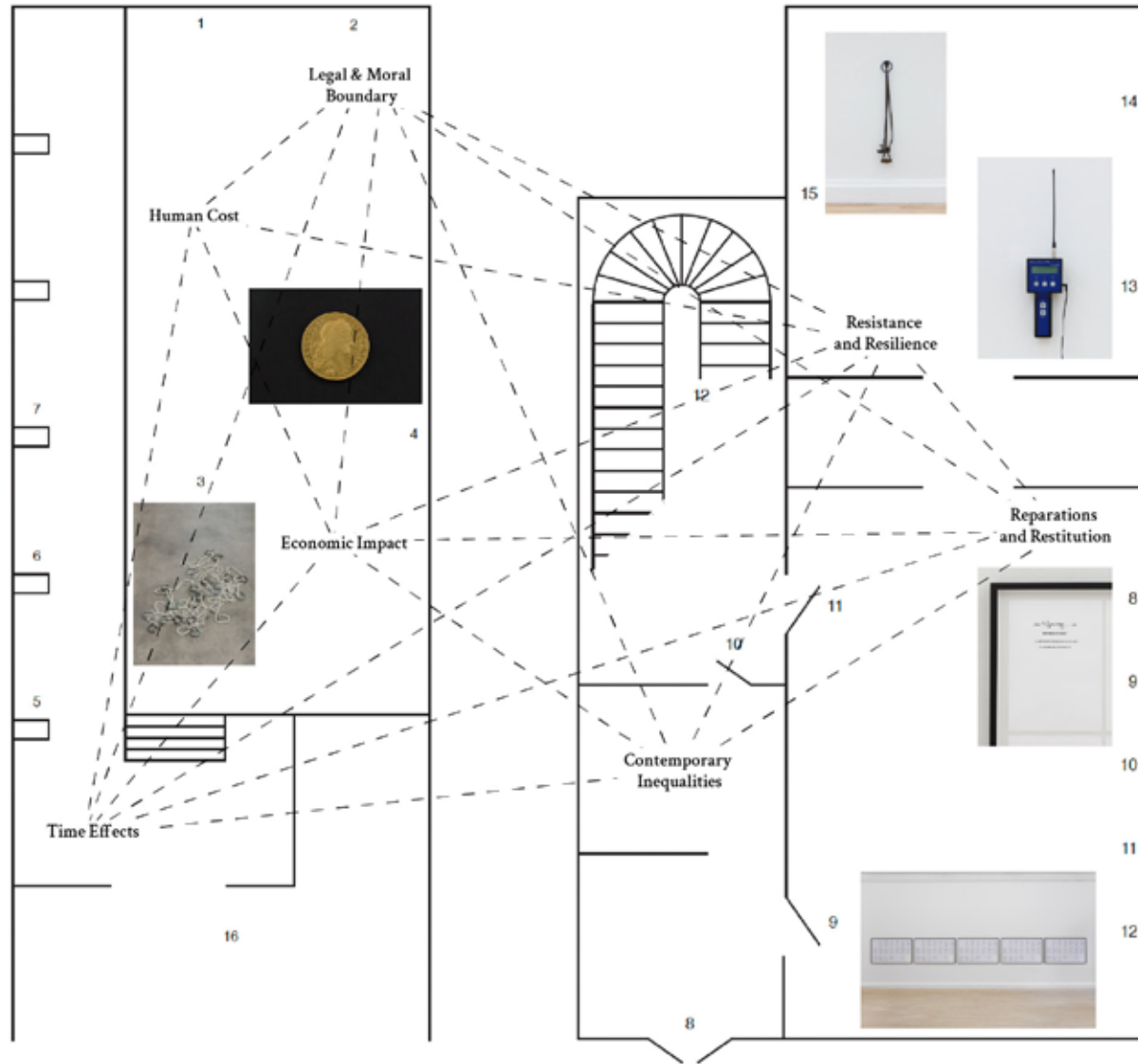
Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

"In the midst of our serene new world of images, a descriptive reevaluation of the conditions of imaging—of its technical basis...So differently that we might soon—very soon—become nonmodern?  
— Cameron Rowlands

economic underpinnings of slavery, the moral abyss crossed by legal codifications like the Barbadian Slave Code, the enduring effects of colonialism and slavery, the indomitable spirit of resistance among the enslaved, the deep-rooted contemporary issues stemming from this history, and the contentious debate over reparations. Each point underscores the vast, often incalculable consequences of slavery, challenging us to confront and address this dark chapter of human history in our ongoing quest for justice and equality.

This exhibition, set to the theme "Beyond Measure," transforms the infamous triangular slave trade into a representation of slavery's profound, immeasurable impact on human lives through its displayed artifacts and stories.

Equality  
Slave trade  
Human cost  
Abolition  
Injustice



Kanchaporn Kieatkhajornrit (PoomPoom)

Self, *The Invisible Trade*

## 4/03 – Beyond Measure

“he colonial trade transplanted exotic flowers like orchids to the cities, the project of Empire transplanted people— White settlers and Africans—and plants to colonial territories in the New World”

They Once Were Somewhere Else: The Transplantations of The Histories (Le Mancenillier) Mabel O. Wilson

Migration  
Transformation  
Identity  
Trans-plant  
'Exotic'

In “They Once Were Somewhere Else: The Transplantations of The Histories” by Mabel O. Wilson, the narrative navigates through the intertwining stories of migration and transformation. Through the lens of artist David Hartt’s installation, “The Histories (Le Mancenillier),” set within the Beth Sholom Synagogue, the text explores the migration of orchids, cultures, and peoples. Hartt’s placement of tropical flora within the sanctuary, alongside video installations and live musical performances, creates a dynamic interplay between past and present, nature and technology. The text delves into the historical contexts of migration, from the transportation of exotic plants during colonial expansion to the forced migration of enslaved Africans, highlighting the complex intersections of race, culture, and architecture. As the installation temporally transforms the synagogue, it prompts reflection on the fluidity of history and the enduring

impact of migration on architectural spaces. Furthermore, the text examines the significance of botanical migration as a metaphor for larger historical processes. Through the transplantation of orchids from tropical climates to the synagogue’s sanctuary, Hartt evokes themes of displacement, adaptation, and resilience. The narrative traces the historical roots of botanical exploration and colonialism, revealing the entangled histories of plants, people, and power dynamics. By juxtaposing live plants with video projections of distant landscapes, the installation blurs the boundaries between nature and artifice, inviting viewers to reflect on the interconnectedness of ecological and human systems.

Angel Langumas





Angel Langumas

Photograph, Digital Collage Hybrid

## 4/3 – Beyond Measure

### VESSEL

noun: a typically hollow container for holding something, especially one used to hold liquid; a person into whom some quality is infused; a ship or large boat

What is implied by the variety of distances carried / endured / achieved between past and present? Objects that are found or grown, that serve as ornamentation or essential, contain these distances that reveal themselves through histories, long or short. Hartt's transplantations of orchids around the Beth Shalom Synagogue raised questions of such histories and relational narratives of what they represented as ornamentations but also as vessels of cultural concept. In a similar vein, the objects that surround us or that we take with us contain traces of many other transplantations from the past.

Powerful systems emerge from the direct interface between suppressed histories and presentness. As Wilson describes with the hybridization of African cultural practices and refuge through the transformation of cultivating plantations, these systems

Kelvin Lee

“What is the distance traveled between inception point and its present state?”

— David Hartt (quoted by Mabel O. Wilson)

carry with them physical traces of survival and cultural narratives. The discovery then becomes the mobilization of such systems through methods of survival integrated into the hybridity of ecologies surrounding people in places, times, and states of violence.

Like the Phalaenopsis orchid from Hartt's work, how might oral tradition or even sonic traces from recordings or snippets of observation and memory interact with spatial boundaries to evoke moments of collective remembering or measuring? What is carried by a certain medium?

Transgress  
Survival  
Vessel  
Pastness  
Trace



Kelvin Lee

John Outterbridge, *Broken Dance*, c. 1978-82

## 04/03 – Beyond Measure

### CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Sharing different ideas, traditions, and knowledge with someone who may be coming from a completely different background than your own.

Drawing from Mabel Wilson's work, "They Once Were Somewhere Else: The Transplantations of The Histories (Le Mancenillier)," I discern the profound significance of interwoven cultural narratives through the lens of migration, particularly the African migration to the Americas.

Upon closer examination of contemporary realities, one can discern remnants of the enduring consequences of this historical event. In Peru, many culinary traditions, architecture and cultural practices today bear the indelible imprint of these legacies. Notably, architecture carries the Spaniard influence in South America.

Similarly, the rhythms of "Criollo music"

Adriana Castro Lizarbe

"The migratory histories of plants, culture, and congregations animate The Histories (Le Mancenillier). Transplantations of people, plants, and ideas between different regions and cultures have shaped and influenced the development of new cultural practices, religious ceremonies, and artistic expressions." —Mabel Wilson

resonate with echoes of African legacies, underscoring the enduring influence of these transplantations on cultural expression.

Indeed, these narratives of transplantation form an integral part of our everyday reality, shaping the fabric of our lives in profound ways.

Transplantation  
Colonialism  
Cultural exchange  
Evolution



Adriana Castro Lizarbe

Self made.

## 04/03 – Beyond Measure

### EXTERIORITY

noun: describing a characteristic of being outside of something; speaking to an alienation even when within [some bounds of space, environment, physiology]; philosophically speaking to a separation between inner life (self-perception) and outer representation

In the format of Bonaventure's curatorial methodology, which values vignettes, anecdotes, and stories within context over linear order, I think it would be appropriate to face my own memories through the lens of exteriority.

Exteriority is a feeling that feels natural to me, to the Black person (Bonaventure, Fanon), and to the indigenous person (Wynter), and to all persons who have structural oppression intertwined within their cultural lineages. It is a feeling that creeps up under one's skin (Fanon), settles within the folds, and infiltrates one's way of sight. It can create a paranoia, and particular out-of-body gaze where you are watching yourself as you are living, thus simply acting as though you are naturally living.

I suppose that before I could place words on the feeling of exteriority I felt it as a child. That may be why I began to refuse to speak Amharic, trading in my first and most familiar spoken language for the communicative form that felt polished and cool, and which was spoken by

Atsede Assayehgen

"Pidgin cannibalizes the language of the colonizer [...] a cue to plant and let germinate collective identities whose codings and significations lie outside of dominant and dominating ideologies"  
— Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

the majority in school. Amharic existed on the exterior, American English on the interior, and a pidgin, which could have lived within the liminal space and offered a form of freedom, did not really exist, at least not in my environments or imagination at the time. This negotiation is something I think about often, and now even feel embarrassed by. In the time since, I've forgotten and relearned so much Amharic, and re-negotiated my orientation of what is exterior versus interior.

An image flashing in mind is a still from Steve McQueen's, "Five Easy Pieces". The still displays five people hula-hopping in a street, an innocent childhood trigger. The plan view instinctively communicates a power dynamic between the watcher and the watched. It also creates shadowed extensions of self that appear larger than the body yet vulnerably positioned, additionally distorted by the grain, feeling simultaneously disconnected and tethered in an orbiting (boundary) of personal space.

Exteriority  
Fragmentation &  
Collision  
Disalienation  
Value (Use-, Exchange-)  
Adaptation



Atsede Assayehgen

Still from "Five Easy Pieces", Steven McQueen, 1995

## 04/03 - Beyond Measure

STORY noun: an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment; an account of past events in someone's life or in the evolution of something.

"It is clear, then, that it is only when the society, or elements of the society rise up in rebellion against its external authors and manipulators that our prolonged fiction becomes temporary fact."

I have been thinking about time in the context of a studio project for some months now. How long does an act take? When does it start, and when will it be over? Yet, now I wonder if establishing the event as discrete and in linear time is only an attempt to locate and make an imagined thing real. That is, to pre-empt its historicization, and so put it into the world, albeit as "temporary fact".

"The writer, the artist, is by the very nature of his craft linked to the structure of use-value statements, the impulse of creation thus being directed by human needs, he remains a hangover in the new (exchange-value) form of societies. The writer has neither purpose, nor source material, nor view of the world nor audience.

When we present our work, what tense feels

Anoushka Mariwala

"History, then, these things that happen, is, in the plantation context, itself, fiction; a fiction written, dominated, controlled by forces external to itself." — Sylvia Wynter

right? I had a conversation about my studio partner yesterday. Is our project located in the imperative, in the past, in the future tense? Is it first person plural? Is it our responsibility to deliver or establishing an imagination of the project that makes it "real"? History is a fiction, Wynter tells us. If plot and plantation are modes of understanding use and exchange value, I want to frame the granularity of syntax: the way we talk about a thing in determining how we think about it.

"What, in our context, is the novel?"

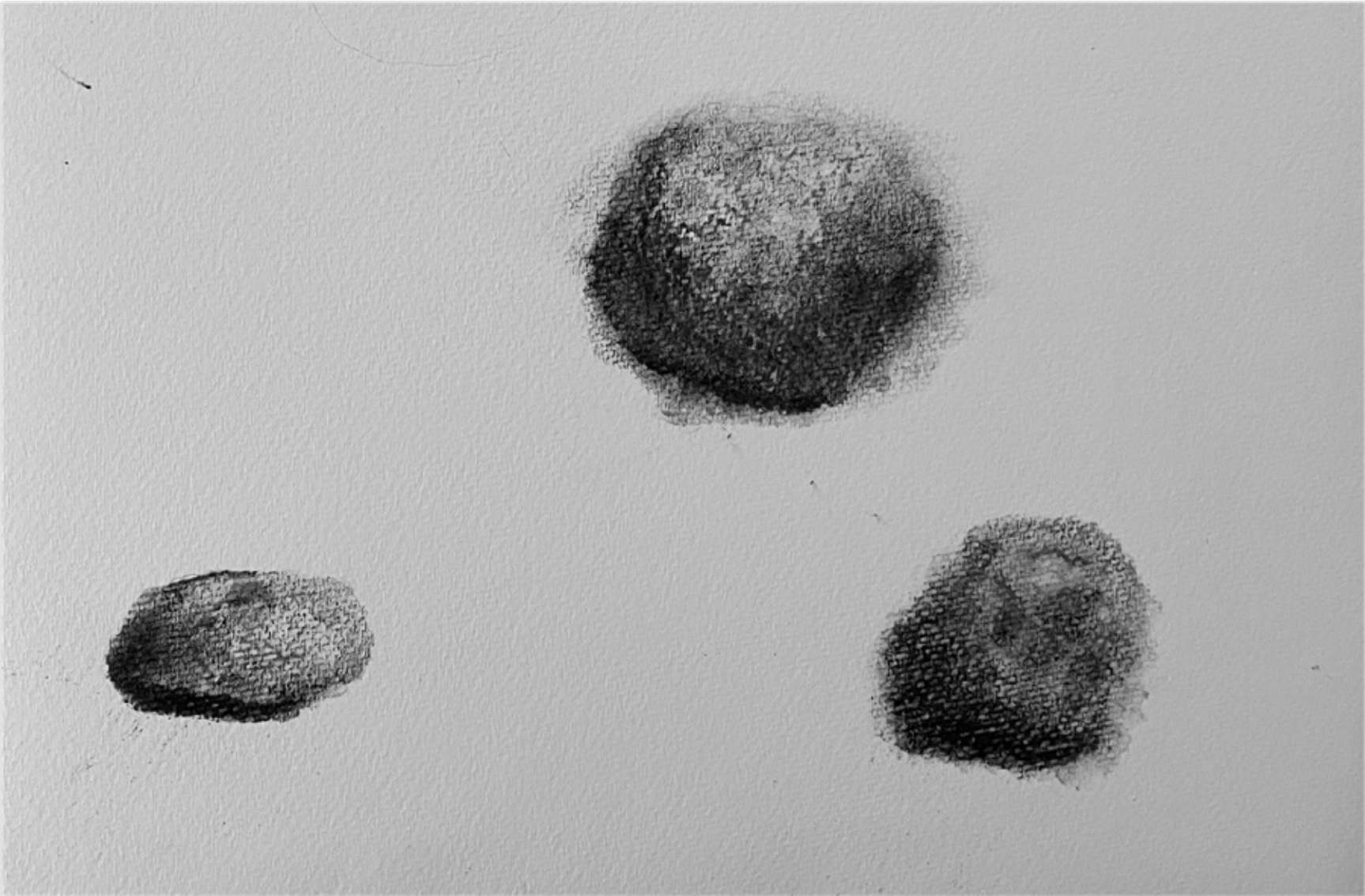
The novel is not any less real than anything else. Myth is not a false narrative. The novel is the effort to make myth alive. Is the review a form of novel, with words and image?

"... we are all, without exception still "enchanted", imprisoned, deformed and schizophrenic in its [the market economy's] bewitched reality."

Are stories the way out?

History  
Story  
Syntax  
Time  
Real





Anoushka Mariwala

## 4/3 – Beyond Measure

### FICTION

noun: (1) literature in the form of prose that describes imaginary events and people.  
(2) something that is invented or untrue.

That the plot and plantation, just like other colonial projects and systems of governance, are embodiments of market economy is not necessarily new. But Wynter's argument that the novel form and our societies are "twin children of the same parents," offers us a lot more than an analogy to understand those market economies, societal structures and external forces. She proposes a way—not in the realm of methodologies per se, but rather of analyzing—to read a novel (form) and a market (economy) through the lens of each other. This two-ends reading of histories is also a tool to expose erased, unheard, deformed narratives. It's a powerful tool that allows us to historicize "fiction" but also dehistoricize "facts".

This reading sends me back to Elizabeth Povinelli's talk in, where she recalled an anecdotal story about the use of the word "myth". A myth, in that context, is also a way of gov-

"The man involved in a structure of exchange value — which is all of us. Our place in the confrontation is largely determined by whether we accept or reject this structure."  
— Sylvia Wynter

erning, framing narratives and dictating how they should be read. It is so because under that label of myth, are stories and narratives that, unlike novels, "should not" be historicized. Fictions that does not become a temporary fact.

So If the novel form is a product of the market economy, what do we make of tales? Of myths?

### Fiction

The Question

The Hero

The Villain

Use Value

Exchange Value



Hadass Rozental

Karrabing Film Collective, Still from *The Jealous One*, 2017

## 04/03 – Beyond Measure

### REVALUATION

noun: the action of assessing the value of something again, to increase the value of

In her 1971 essay *Novel and History, Plot and Plantation*, Wynter outlines the relationship between history and fiction in the Caribbean through the relationship of Caribbean modernity and the rise of the novel. There is a paradoxical effect of the novel form. It is inherently a product of the market economy, yet can be developed as a form of resistance to the market society. “The novel form and the novel is the critique of the very historical process which has brought it to such heights of fulfillment” (97). Through writing, Wynter critiques the way history is generated, told and trusted.

Within the essay, she utilizes a fictional story to illustrate her ideas of use value and exchange value, of plot and plantation. She is ultimately discussing colonial dynamics and empire in the way that it is constructed through economy and market. Wynter complicates the notion of fact and fiction and implies that fiction is more valid as a

Syedda Simmons

“For we accept folk culture as a point outside the system where the traditional values can give us a focus of criticism against the impossible reality in which we are enmeshed”  
— Sylvia Wynter

mode of articulating history than the discipline of history itself.

I began to contemplate storytelling and oral history. In African culture, oral history through the practice of storytelling is an important part of Africa’s heritage to enhance identity and self-esteem while entertaining and educating. The mastering of the language of storytelling begins at a young age. The Xhosa storyteller examines tradition, explores the past and connects it to the present. Blending fiction and fact. Wynter’s efforts of confronting history and the novel dismantles the conceptual foundations of the West. The West traps “others” within an ordained logic of cultural, political and economic marginality, yet there is credibility to storytelling. It is a form of resistance, of liberation.

Fact  
Fiction  
Revaluation  
Resistance  
Confrontation



Syeeda Simmons

self, *Xhosa Storyteller*

## 4/03 – Beyond Measure

### DISALIENATION

noun: a philosophical rejection of the state of being isolated from a group to which one should belong

Disalienation offers you freedom from restrictive labels. The concept, conceived by Fanon, reminds us of the invention of the racial binary as a tool for conquering and subjugation. If the invention of the bourgeois relies on the production of alienation, we must reject both simultaneously. As Fanon notes, “There is no black mission; there is no white burden.”

While writing this, Fanon lived in a world frantically caught between “defeat or victory”. The concept of the racial binary has evolved since 1952, but for many people this “defeat or victory” binary persists. The intensity of this reality relies on your psychological and sociological place.

Fanon died in '61, unable to witness the racial politics and philosophies of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement to the BLM protests.

Maura Costello

“It is the past transmuted into a thing of value. But I can also revise my past, prize it, or condemn it, depending on what I choose.”  
—Frantz Fanon

I wonder what Fanon would think of our world now? We live in a world that created Rachel Dolezal, where “I don’t see color” is not an uncommon phrase, and where books that simply recognize race are subject to banning.

Fanon was a doctor, providing his patients with a tool to overcome crippling physiological effects of colonization. His words were complicated but clear, “moral law has doubts about itself.”

Solidarity  
Justification  
Disalienation  
Duty  
Freedom



Maura Costello

*Frantz Fanon et son équipe, Photograph, 1953-1956*

## 04/03 - Beyond Measure

### Alienation

noun: Intellectual alienation is a creation of bourgeois society.

The author believes that we should fight for the equality of the present and the future, and should not argue for the past. White people today are not responsible for the enslavement of black people hundreds of years ago. We are not prisoners of history. We should not look in that direction to find the meaning of life, like the following diagram shows.

Retrospective compensation is meaningless. We should stand in the perspective of the present and think about how to achieve fairness in the future, which requires us to fight. Both the Negro and the white must be far removed from the inhuman voice of each of their ancestors, so that there can be true communion. Society should promote the development of the idea of racial equality, there is no superior civilization and inferior civilization. Every time a person brings victory for the respect of the Spirit, every time

Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

"I find myself one day in a world where things are hurtful; a world where I am required to fight; a world where it is always a question of defeat or victory." — Frantz Fanon

a person says no to the plan of the slave fellow, I feel a sense of unity and unity in his actions.

Superior  
Plantation  
Alienation  
Fight  
Dignity



HISTORY

PRESENT

FUTURE



Heqiao Meng (Lydia)

Self, Thinking and Fighting for the Present and the Future

## 04/03 – Beyond Measure

Mission : The notion of a specific purpose assigned to a particular group or individual.

“I can also revise my past, prize it or condemn it, depending on what I choose.”  
— Fanon

Value  
Mission  
Skin  
Revolution

“I am not a prisoner of history. I must not look for the meaning of my destiny in that direction”

In this reading, Fanon argues that revolution should not draw its inspiration from the past but rather the future. To him, the former limits, and the latter liberates us. He rejects the notion of a black mission or a white burden. He discusses the challenges he faces in a world where he is required to fight and where words are often met with silence, expressing his commitment to his existence and freedom.

He rejects the notion that the discovery of black civilizations in the past should define his identity or guide his actions

Fanon criticizes intellectual alienation as a creation of bourgeois society and expresses his belief that a man who stands against this living death is a revolutionary.

Manar Alrougi



Self, Concrete Models

## 4/03 – Beyond Measure

### DISALIENATION

noun : process by which race relations might become obsolete and whereby man will instead focus on the understanding of another man

As we conclude our series of readings that explore various approaches to dealing with our histories, Fanon's theory of disalienation emerges as an almost transcendent, yet seemingly unattainable, endpoint. Key terms evoked by this piece include 'acceptance', 'shedding', and 'progression', which could be viewed as stages in this process of dealing with histories.

While Fanon critiques irrational and violent histories, he emphasizes the need to release the weighted aspects that impede progress. This notion requires acknowledging the past while incorporating reparative measures into our practices. The act itself is paramount.

The act has the ability to paint, cast, rephrase, frame, portray, decide and tell the story in the way that gives the individual the power to do so. Very specifically, this

In order to find their own content, the revolutions of the nineteenth century have to let the dead bury the dead.— Karl Marx

must not be confused with starting on a blank slate, but rather an act of first rejecting norms that have been coerced into our instincts. The act then transitions into action—choosing the format one deems most effective for conveying their thoughts.

The act will continue to evolve over time with changing positions. Most importantly, it *must* continue to evolve. The format will tell us how to convey our positions but presenting the act by mobilizing the format is most important. (*To be evolved in the next iteration*).

Humanity  
Solidarity  
Disalienation  
Freedom  
Imposition



Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

self, *Shedding : Photograph, Color Manipulations*



# Immeasurable Sites

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