



LA SANGRE LLAMA

ARTIST MARCIA X

TUTOR/A: ALEX ARTEAGA, LAURA VILLAR
MASTERS DEGREE IN RESEARCH IN ART & DESIGN
(MURAD)
2018-2019

EI
NA

EINA Centre Universitari
de Disseny i Art de Barcelona.
Adscrit a la UAB



LA SANGRE LLAMA

ABSTRACT

This research project primarily focuses on how to confront architectural and colonial symbols of the state's power through Afro-Indigenous spiritual markers and performance. This essay begins with questions about my own reality in the Diaspora and the existential, cultural crisis that arises in myself due to structural racism and misogyny. Moving forward, an effort in understanding how this crisis comes to fruition, I contextualize race from a primarily Latin American and Hispano-Caribbean perspective, then to an understanding of the controlling images that affect the material reality of Black women's lives in the present day. Subsequently, I reference Black women's artistic practice across material and form from varying geographical locations in the diaspora in order to understand how to develop my own practice within these themes. Their works are analyzed through a hermeneutic circle that centers intersectionality in order to be precise about race, gender and ethnicity and how these factors affect the readings and histories behind the works. Lastly, my own practice and questions are documented, all which lead to my own performance work in direct response to a monument building with a direct history to Puerto Rico's colonial history.

Acknowledgements

The process of researching Black women's representation, Caribbean colonial history and Barcelona's various monuments and sites has been difficult and heavy at many times, and without the support of friends and family, it would have been nearly impossible. I would like to thank my Mother for her constant support, love and reciting to me family oral histories, which always inspire to investigate our history more. I'Nasah Crockett, for her generous time and efforts in assisting me throughout the writing process with her unmatched wisdom and words of encouragement. Keyla for sharing with me so much knowledge and history regarding Caribbean Afro-Indigenous spirituality and culture. A special note to her extended family for believing in me through their support and prayers through out the research process. To my tutors, Alex Arteaga and Laura Villar for their patience, time and assistance in helping me to understand and development my research topic, despite my own uncertainty at times. Lastly, I would like to thank the Caribbean and its diaspora, for being the only home I truly understand and know.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Structure of Text	3
Chapter One:.....	6
The Rupture.....	6
The Existential, Cultural Crisis of the Diaspora.....	8
The Fissure: Whose Black womanhood are we talking?	14
New Allegories, Same Bodies	23
Conclusion	30
Chapter Two:.....	32
Methodology.....	32
Phenomenology and Hermeneutics.....	33
A Final Methodology.....	39
Chapter Three:.....	41
Bodies that Talk Back	41
Introducing the Artists	42
Calls, Responses and Agency through Dress & Afro-Religiosity.....	44
Awilda Sterling-Duprey	45
Simone Leigh	50
Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons.....	54
Conclusion	56
Photographing Fragmented Bodies in a Scattered Landscape	58
Ingrid Pollard	59
Nona Faustine	63
Carrie Mae Weems	66
Conclusion	68
Chapter Four:.....	70
Development of the performance La Sangre Llama.....	70
Documentation/Artistic Journal	71
Conclusion:.....	86
Implementing Lessons Learned from Black Women Artists	86
La Sangre Llama, La Llotja & Lopez y Lopez	87

Table of Images

Figure 1, Las Castas, artist unknown, 18th century, oil on canvas, 148 cm x 104 cm, Museo Nacional del Vicerreinato	17
Figure 2, Woman and Child of African descent, Albert Eckhout, 1641, oil on canvas, 282 cm x 180 cm, Nationalmuseum Copenhagen	22
Figure 3, Portrait d'une Negresse, Marie-Guillemine Benoist, 1800, oil on canvas, 81 cm x 65 cm, Louvre Museum.....	25
Figure 4, Mercado de Artesanías, 2014, Angel Xavier Viera, www.flickr.com	46
Figure 5, Vejigante Decrépito, 2013, Awilda Sterling-Duprey, found material and radio, Essex Collection of Art from Latin America.....	47
Figure 6, Baianas na Lavagem da Esquina do Padre, festa típica, 2007, André Koehne, Caetité, Brazil.....	52
Figure 7, image of personal documentation journal	72
Figure 8, film still, Experiment #1, personal archive	82
Figure 9, image of personal documentation journal	83
Figure 10, La Sangre Llama, La Llotja, digital photograph	89
Figure 11, La Sangre Llama, Lopez y Lopez, digital photograph	90
Figure 12, La Sangre Llama, Lopez y Lopez, digital photograph	91
Figure 13, La Sangre Llama, La Llotja collaboration with Ximena Araujo, digital photograph	92
Figure 14, La Sangre Llama, Lopez y Lopez, digital photograph	94

Introduction

“A society is what it remembers; we are what we remember; I am what I remember; the self is a trick of memory (Wendt, 1987: 79). And while he is surely aware of the class or elite manipulation of tradition, [Samoan Poet Albert Wendt] has made the strategic decision to take this up on his own ground. For Wendt, the problem is how to extricate oneself from the field of discourse of a dominant other. One has been described, characterized and represented to the world - some world at least - a world that exists as an image, an imaginary world of information or misinformation that returns home with a vengeance and stereotypically forces issues that may have never before existed in such terms...” (Friedman 1994)

There was a moment in my life when I began to truly process the after-effects of colonialism, in other words, I began to unlearn any internalized racialized misogyny. This process is not easy and nor was it comfortable, but what makes this process easier is the artistic production and texts from Black writers and writers of color. Wendt’s quote “The self is a trick of memory” changed me the first time I read it. It encouraged me to go beyond the accepted imagery and representations of Black/Indigenous people and to investigate the artistic production of Black artists beyond the conventional superficial readings of their works as angry outbursts. Also, my own artistic practice needed to function beyond responding to colonial imagery and turn inward towards my community, so that I myself could be participatory in the discourse of Black/Indigenous/Caribbean art.

When I initially began to draft ideas for my TFM and research, I was focused on the monument of Christopher Columbus at the base of Las Ramblas; it was such an overbearing statue that I could not ignore it, and felt it was the proper point to which I began to research monuments, their power and their relationships to the works of Afro-

diasporic artists. What started to unfold in my research was the various sites and monuments around the city of Barcelona that had their own direct relationship to the island where my family resides, Puerto Rico. I also was introduced to works by Black women from across the African diaspora that had their own wide spread artistic conversation about Black women's fractured bodies, the power of the state that monuments represent, and their use of Afro-spirituality and cultural markers that act as tools of resistance and tools of agency within a body that has been fractured by the memory of slavery. These works and new methods of interpreting such art, provided me with excellent examples and historical contexts so that I could come to my own form of responding to these locations and the tools that I wanted to use in order to do so.

Fundamentally, I wanted to be able to interpret what I felt and experienced in my everyday life living in Barcelona, with the tools and cultural markers from the homeland of Puerto Rico and the Afro-Indigenous community that I am a part of. Maintaining close dialogues with Taino and African American friends regarding symbols, ceremonies, oral histories and more, I was able to develop ideas on what symbols and tools to use and how to use them appropriately, and do so in regard to the Afro-Indigenous body against the backdrop of the symbols, sites and monuments which are representative of power of the state and colonialism's memory.

I decided that performance was going to be the central artistic method of my work. Then the use of culturally specific tools, such as a vejigante¹ mask and white clothing and head-wrap. Signifying both African and Indigenous presence in Puerto Rican culture would then assist me in creating a performance in where two things should happen: regeneration of a fractured Afro-Indigenous body through Afro-spirituality and its instruments and a confrontation of the unseen qualities and truths embedded in architecture. The primary concept for my performance, titled *La Sangre Llama*, is as follows: Through my Afro-Indigenous body in Barcelona, I experience heightened racialized misogyny, therefore I turn to Afro-spirituality as a tool to confront architectural symbols of the power of the state. Utilizing a vejigante mask and having been

¹ Vejigante masks are a part of a carnival celebration in Puerto Rico. Depending on what city you're from, the masks can be made of either carved coconut husks or papier maché, and the over all styles vary as well (to explored further in Chapter 3).

developing a relationship with Santería² and its practices, I locate and attempt to open up a conversation about the unseen qualities of the sites as symbols of power and their relationship to Puerto Rico's early colonial history.

"The visual culture surrounding the racialized female body, understood to be one of the most pernicious examples of masculinist colonial imagination, also tells alternate stories about the intersection of power, shame, and exhibition." (Cheng 2011) "This 'telling' is the place to 'locate these alternate stories by attending to the utterances left on the surfaces of black bodies and white buildings.' The echoes of a racialized haunting permeate every stone and concrete structure in every major city in Europe and throughout the Americas." (Benitez-Rojo 1996, Brown 2015)

Structure of Text

Chapter one begins with an understanding of my everyday life living in the diaspora, what I call an existential, cultural crisis. This experience has informed much of my artistic practice to date and here I provide the historical and contextual development and the definition of the term existential, cultural crisis. In my opinion, I arrived into the world marked with the aftermath of colonialism, as are the Black women artists that I researched. In order to historically contextualize my experience with race and gender, an analysis of the controlling images and the development of Black womanhood within the eyes of the Euro-American imagination is completed.

In order to combat these images and structures, or to understand why I am experiencing racism and misogyny, I must turn backwards before I can move forward. The historical implications of white supremacy via artistic practice are a large part of the foundation in which the Black women artists and myself create work that responds

² Santería is an Afro-Caribbean syncretic religion with its basis in Yoruban religion merged with Roman Catholicism. Practitioners use Roman Catholic saints that have been syncretized with Orishas (deities) so as to be able to preserve their prayers and rituals whilst under the watchful eye of colonizers.

to the messages they convey. Furthermore, I found it necessary to investigate the Spanish colonial project considering that I am not only currently residing in Barcelona, but also experiencing the Spanish mode of xenophobia and racism (versus my previous dealings with American and British modes). It was also important to make connections to art works produced in other European locations and their development over time, so as to signify there was similarities in the discourse regarding Black women's bodies that affected Black women no matter their regional setting.

Chapter two outlines a methodology appropriate for the development of the analysis of Black women's artistic production. I firstly ask and answer questions regarding phenomenology and how it is used by Black/Latinx theorists and how suitable of a framework it is for my research. I also explore hermeneutics and intersectionality, both independently and also how intersectionality fits within the hermeneutic circle of interpretation. What I come away with is that gender, race, location and material (in regards to Black women's artistic production when they center their own experience) can always be explored further. Also, phenomenology informed my artistic production more so than the way in which I interpreted and understood the work of the Black women artists. Hermeneutics and intersectionality, I determined, were better suited for the type of analysis I wanted to create.

In chapter three, I initially provide brief introductions to six Black women artists whose work I thought most appropriate to investigate. What initially drew me to their work was their unashamed focus on Black womanhood. As I went further in the investigations, I found that I was able to separate them into two groups based on material and concept; the first group of artists all use Afro-spirituality through performance, cloth and cultural markers that work together to create regeneration and agency, but also resistance to dominant social and racial power structures. The second group used their bodies to confront and reconfigure our relationships to historical sites and urban/rural landscapes, both known and unknown for their colonial histories but also the Black bodies relationship to them, though the medium of photography. What follows is an analysis and a connection of the themes and materials, where I focus particularly on the tools that I myself want to use in my works, and therefore my aim is to understand how they as well use their Black bodies, landscapes and spirituality throughout their practices.

The final chapter is a transcript of my art/documentation journal, which I view as my studio space. In this book is to be found the conceptual development of TFM,

where I asked questions regarding philosophy, the locations, the materials and also developed some of the writing for other essays I needed to submit through out the school year. I have chosen to transcribe the most relevant information only from the original journal and feel that the bulk of my artistic practice and development lies in what I wrote in my journal.

In the conclusion of this paper are my own ideas regarding the outcome of the philosophies, artists and the materials I have researched, and also what I felt throughout the process of my investigation.

Chapter One:

The Rupture

“Indigenous people have emerged from history’s blind spot. No longer pathetic victims or noble messengers from lost worlds; they are visible actors in local, national, and global arenas. On every continent, survivors of colonial invasions and forced assimilation renew their cultural heritage and reconnect with lost lands. They struggle within dominant regimes that continue to belittle and misunderstand them, their very survival a form of resistance.” (Clifford 2013)

As a student doing compulsory lessons of United States history, I remember the moment of contact between Europe and her soon to be colonies being framed as the beginning of “America’s” history. This of course was common from elementary school to my first years at college. As a country, we are taught to have a conception of “America” (meaning North, Central, South and the Caribbean) as having no historical significance until the colonization of the continents and islands. It is important that we frame the moment of contact between Europe and the Taino people as a traumatic fissure in the islands’ story, and today is only one of many days when its people are mending it back together. This fissure forced upon the colonial subjects of the Caribbean and the rest of the Americas, in particular with Indigenous and African women, created the means in which we view these bodies even today. Used for labor, reproduction, entertainment, and fetishized sexual arousal, African and Indigenous women became the vessels in which violent patriarchal ideas of submission and sexuality were carried through.

Thus, bodies racialized as oppositional to whiteness within Latin America and the Caribbean bear the mark of colonialism on the flesh. The countries and islands exist and are maintained within an ever-expanding aftermath of occupation. These specific bodies are torn asunder within the imagination of the contemporary world. Black and Indigenous women who are writers, theorists and artists have long created

works that speak to name and mend the colonial condition. From the center of this fissured matrix, I cultivate my artistic practice and research. This first chapter will explore the way in which I have come to understand my place in society as a person of Afro-Indigenous decent in the diaspora, and subsequently how colonial Latin American and European art was the tool that created dominating and controlling images of Black women.

Kimberly Juanita Brown in 2015 speaking on the reality of existing as a contemporary black woman, states that:

“The residue of sexual exploitation on slave women’s bodies is the after- image of the black diaspora, the puncture of the past materializing in the present. It is an insistently visual spectacle— racial coding wrapped in the chromosomal legacy of the black Atlantic, and it is no accident that the projections of slave memory manifest themselves onto black women’s resistant flesh.” (Brown 2015)

Like the contemporary women Brown speaks of, I carry with me the unseen, yet understood, the memory of slavery and colonialism through the corporeal site of what is a simple existence; moreover, I struggle to protect myself from the violence my body often invites. The becoming of an Afro-Indigenous Puerto Rican woman is thrust upon me, and I am forced to navigate through this lens, for how I am read by the society around me informs my sense of self or being as much as how I believe myself to truly be. My material reality has been Afro-Indigenous from Puerto Rico, anything stated to me to the contrary is a lie. I cannot un-racialize myself when this racialization was not my choice to begin with. As our EINA lecturer Luis Guerra stated during one of his classes, we must name things for what they are³. There is a burden placed upon me as a person of color, but there is also a triumph to be celebrated. This celebration is based on what has been lost and found, and what has never been forgotten in the first place.

Furthermore, as art historian Charmaine Nelson states in *The Color of Stone* “Vision and the visual are western tools of social ordering. Identity is unstable and

³ This was discussed in class with lecturer Luis Guerra

unfixed. The process of identification is the site of struggle and contestation [sic].” (Nelson 2007) Within a Western postcolonial context⁴, this is how I am racialized, and consequently this racialization determines the manner in which society and I interact. Although my geographic locations may have changed over the years, the racism and misogyny have operated the same throughout. “They meant what they said when they called America a New World, new for both colonists and colonized: A Spaniard crossed the Atlantic precisely in order to become a new person, while indigenous people had no choice but to become different from whom they had been—they became ‘Indians’.” (Carrera 2003) Once this process of naming and categorization via race began, the psychology of the colonial was forced to change and adapt.

What does being “Indian” or Afro-Indigenous mean? How do we take pride and live freely within the racial, ethnic and cultural terms conquerors created? As people of color living in the aftermath of colonialism, how do we grapple with hyphenated identities that are both present and undetermined? These are not questions that I can always answer, because they are lived through cultural experiences, confined within the home and communal spaces, they are experienced and protected and they are as real and true as anything that can be physically or numerically quantified. I can say that racism and misogyny are real, that they permeate through the streets of metropolitan cities, and are echoed in government policy, but that is not enough. The violence that is perpetuated is more visceral than any word I put to paper. Racialized misogyny and sexism, determined by white supremacy, dictate my color to be pathological and an infringement upon the true human condition.

The Existential, Cultural Crisis of the Diaspora

In Western society, Women of Color live in a perpetual crisis. I assert this claim because we live in a Western post-colonial society which, despite its various civil and human rights movements, it has maintained a tradition and legacy of institutionalized racism. If I think back to my primary school education in the United States and my university experience in the United Kingdom, I can give various examples of explicit institutionalized racism and how this form of racism permeates into housing,

⁴ Which is a term that is precarious at best due the continuous state of colonialism in the present day i.e. Puerto Rico under the rule of the United States.

healthcare, popular culture and general access to products on the market. Racism, as much as misogyny and class, has affected my every movement, from personal relationships through to working as a professional in artistic fields.

As the African-American philosopher W.E.B. DuBois has proposed, racism is an “irreducible dimension of social, cultural and political relations in the modern world.” (DuBois 2007) DuBois also presents the notion of “double consciousness”, where oppressed members of society embody more than one social identity, thereby making it difficult to develop a sense of self. (DuBois 2007) From this scholarship and others in relation to race and gender combined with my own attempts to theorize terms that accurately represent my relationship in public Western society, I assert that to be a Woman of Color in the diaspora is to exist in an existential, cultural crisis. I define this as a daily inability to live freely in an acceptance and understanding of oneself within the dominant white supremacist, colonial and patriarchal society that is the Western world. Additionally, since they are women and/or femmes⁵, they are unable to inhabit their worlds without ruptures, or a thick sense of not-being-at-ease, for not only must they be a Woman of Color, they must be so *in relation to* hetero-sexual white men and white women. “Even though all of us are multiplicitous selves, our experiences are greatly affected by relations of power influencing the construction, understanding and regulation of our various social identities.” (Ortega 2016)

To provide personal historical context with supportive critical text for a definition of the existential, cultural crisis. I will describe how I came to this term starting in 2013, during my final year as an undergraduate. For my thesis in Fine Art, I began to explore for a term that would encompass my experience across the matrix of ethnic, racial and regional displacements, in which I was also able to identify power dynamics. One day when I was organizing clothes that I had wished to donate, I came across a shirt that I wore often during my late teenage and early adult years; it was a bright yellow cotton tee, and screen printed in red were the words “Everybody loves a Spicy Latina” and placed perfectly above the words were a couple of brightly colored green jalapeños. Looking at the t-shirt, and thinking back to the person I was when I thought the shirt

⁵ Femme: A gender identity in which someone (female, male or other) has an awareness of cultural standards of femininity and actively embodies a feminine appearance, role, or archetype. It is usually—but not always—associated with a gay or queer sexual identity/sexuality. It is usually more accentuated and intentional than a straight female gender identity or gender presentation and often challenges standards of femininity through exaggeration, parody or transgression of gender norms.

was appropriate, and perhaps even humorous, opened a floodgate of emotion and memory that I had up to that point, locked away. It was here that I re-contextualized my relationship to society through the lens of female Latinidad.

What is a “spicy Latina”? Did I truly believe I was one? What was the history of this term and the image it elicited? It quickly became clear to me in that moment of retrospection, that the purchase and subsequent wearing of the shirt was an act of literally buying into and performing white supremacist and patriarchal notions of female Latinidad. “Spicy Latina” is an historical and popular cinematic and television trope within the American consciousness, and especially as a pornographic genre. It creates an ambiguous image of not only what a Latina should look like (olive skinned, ravened hair and curvaceous but still very petite) but also outlines in clear terms the sexuality of the Latina: hyper-sexual and always a willing participant eager to please a male partner, since Latinas are almost never represented as queer and with interests that serve any one other than her male partner or children.

This image coupled with common notions of young urban Puerto Ricans, for example they were involved in violent gang activity, fuelled the manner in which educators and neighbors therefore interacted with me as a student who clearly spoke two languages and whose family was not European descent, in either how often I was severely punished for “bad” behaviour or in how vitriolic the racism would flatly and clearly be carried out. Additionally, the more Other-ed (i.e. Black) I appeared, for instance having braided hair, furthered how severe the control and incidents of racism would be (school administrators forcing strict hair rules for me alone and students yelling racial slurs at me). At every turn and almost all my engagements with children who were of any European descent, I was told and treated as if I was an illegal immigrant that was imposing themselves within the society as a non-citizen⁶. I was not a part of the consciousness of America unless it was a negative representation, but more often than not we were just non-existent. Simultaneously is the phenomena of being invisible and hyper-visible.

If I looked to the Latin American media available in the USA at the time of my childhood, Indigenous and African Latinx's were in no shape or form better

⁶ The way whiteness as a social construction operates is that European ethnicities are forgotten and traded in for the social and political position of whiteness. That is not to say that those of, for example, Italian heritage do not embrace their ancestors, American's of Italian descent are able to take pride in their heritage because what is still more present and has more social power, is their *whiteness*.

represented at all. They were either slaves, mammies, or poor idiot drunks that were often in abusive relationships with their partners and with many children. Their homes were shacks and their skin buried in dirt; there was no solace in Latin American representations either for me, racially speaking, as *Latinidad* as an ethnic marker was not created for Africans nor Indigenous people. Also, the celebrations and statues left to Christopher Columbus and Ponce De Leon and other Spanish conquistadors in Puerto Rico, the USA and beyond, served to suggest that our history began with colonialism, and not our indigeneity⁷. It is then that early within my development, a kind of racial dysphoria⁸ began to form in my own consciousness, and through personal conversation with my peers and colleagues as an adult, I certainly was not the only one to experience this.

Racism and xenophobia of course continued after my teenage years and into adulthood, especially in what is understood as normal social interactions in the public sphere and whilst developing a career; in other words, it was part and parcel to my every day existence, and every space that I entered I was conscious of the possibility that a racist and misogynistic interaction could and conceivably would, occur. Put simply, throughout my professional career, I had to be mindful of being Afro-Indigenous and “foreign”. Furthermore, to have any chance of evading vitriolic racialized misogyny at work or university, I had to strip away as much of my mannerisms, clothing, hair and more in order to begin the process of assimilation into dominant American and British society. But, when I attempted to assimilate into dominant culture in order to feel less alienated, there was a constant sense of dissatisfaction.

The goal of what is essentially internalized racialized misogyny is to be understood and treated as white with the same access to a quality of life that whiteness seemingly affords, and that can never be achieved in a white supremacist society, because despite the efforts one will inevitably be reminded in one fashion or another, they are not white. This constant action of existing within a minefield of possible racialized aggression becomes everyday and pushes one to believe “if I just change my voice, if I delete my accent, if I straighten hair...” etc, becomes a part of one’s

⁷ Statues and their functions in the America’s and the Caribbean are to be further examined.

⁸ Term coined by Maira Enesi Caixeta- “racialized dysphoria (colonial detachment) describe the disconnection to my own blackness due to racism and colorism. Dysphoria describes a state of unease, and also a feeling of not being comfortable in one’s body, a term often used in transgender contexts. I use the term to describe how racism affects the way I felt in my own body.”

coping mechanism. Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of *la facultad* describes this clearly, since it is "a warning system to protect oneself from outside threats, psychological or physical." (Anzaldúa 1987) *In Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity and the Self*, Marianna Ortega further defines it as "an ability that is honed by marginalized selves given the continuous experience of fear, danger, and what [Anzaldúa] calls tears in the fabric of the everyday mode of consciousness that threaten one's freedom and resistance. [sic]...it can also lead to a more reflective everyday existence due to these everyday tears or ruptures of norms and practices." (Ortega 2016) She further notes a key difference in Heideggerian description of *Daesin* and a Latina's experience: "The ruptures in her everyday experience, given her multiple social, cultural, and spatial locations, prompt her to become more reflective of her activities and her existence, what we may describe as a life of not being-at-ease. While all selves may experience not being-at-ease occasionally, multiplicitous selves at the margins experience it continuously." (Ortega 2016)

A final layer to this anxiety includes colorism, as it relates both to Latin, Caribbean and US African-American communities. Wherein the darker your skin, the kinkier your hair, and the more West African your facial features are, the more systemic and more violent your treatment becomes. One's proximity to whiteness means that despite being a Person of Color or being mixed-race, there is an ability to be structurally better off and able to gain access, platforms, wealth and career opportunities that are not afforded to those of darker skin. This is also evident in common representations of angry aggressive dark skinned Black women that are the side kick to the prettier and calmer light skinned woman in film and television.

Being that I am mixed race, I have both Black and Indigenous features and medium toned skin, but what I can not deny is during the summer months where the sun is brighter and stronger, thus making me much darker, the worst the treatment in public spaces becomes⁹. The gaze of whiteness and male dominance becomes even more apparent to me, as I then witness myself being seen and read as Other-ed woman; as DuBois states "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always *looking at one's self through the eyes of others*, of measuring one's

⁹ This is not to suggest that I experience structural colorism like the darker skinned members of the Diaspora, but my time in Barcelona during the summer months as I write this text, I have experienced on a near daily basis racial and sexual harassment in public spaces such as shops, the beach and walking in the streets at any given time of the day in ways that I did not experience when I was lighter during the winter months.

soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.” (DuBois 2007) For women and femmes, there is an added layer when this looking is compounded through sexual objectification that manifests through fetishization because of ethnic and racial differences. Maira Enesi Caixeta observed in 2010 that “everything that is constructed to be the ‘other’, or the ‘exotic’ tends to often be sexualized (ergo: desired), and everything sexualized tends to often be demonized (tempting, something “forbidden”, something that is actually not meant to be.) This shows how little desire is actually linked to love, and fetishism has nothing to do with love at all.” (Caixeta 2010)

For me, being followed closely in stores by an undeterred watchful eye, hostile physical pushing out of a space on public transport or having a white German man yell at me from down the street “I LOVE YOUR COLOR!” are tools of white supremacist, colonial and patriarchal violence that force me to view my body and its skin tone not as my own, but as someone else’s playground or problem. My own long personal history with this neo-colonial violence is echoed when I speak with other Women/Femmes of Color in our private, sacred moments together, where there is no fear that we will not be believed, understood or gas-lighted. There can be a moment of paranoia, that it is all ‘in my head’, it’s not real, etc., but the reality is that I am not alone in experiencing gendered and racialized terror, be it a micro-aggression of physical violence. It is so common, that it can be a passing topic of discussion amongst a group of women.

To return to the purchase of the “Spicy Latina” shirt, this action was an effort on my part to submit to what I believed about people such as myself, the acceptance of white supremacist colonial violence and imagery without question. In order to fully achieve safety when in professional settings, I had to move away from the “Spicy Latina” trope and attempt to achieve some sort of state of being accepted as ‘one of the good Latinas’, or some proximity to whiteness, but that also had greatly failed me. After years of trial and extreme error and an inability to ever be without racism, I resigned to the idea that I would ever escape racialized misogyny in any social, personal or professional setting; there was no assimilation possible for me in any shape or form. Caixeta, looking back on her own experiences with racism and misogyny, outlines the heightened moment when one is defeated by the existential, cultural crisis; “I was in a state of complete detachment from my body. I did not see my body as my own; I saw it as something I had to modify, as a battlefield, as

something that belonged to those looking at it, as something to be judged and defined by others, the predominately white gaze.” (Caixeta 2010)

The existential, cultural crisis does not truly cease to be for me, even though I no longer strive for acceptance from dominant society, nor participate in any sort of racial performance for the white male gaze. Not surrendering to its affects is a daily act resistance, since strangers attempt to remind me of my place nearly everyday, and my mental health can be severely affected. It is important to put into focus the lens in which I create and develop my artistic research and practice. Firstly, we need to understand and historically contextualize the foundation of colonial racial categories, imagery and allegories that were used against African and Indigenous people during the colonial project.

The Fissure: Whose Black womanhood are we talking?

“While the question of identity may appear to be an intrinsically personal inquiry, it carries a political dimension that relates directly to the nature of Iberian imperialism. [sic] ...the Iberian project in the Americas rested on the presumption of a long-term, discernible boundary between the colonizers and the colonized that reflected a sliding scale of inferiority among subsets of the Crown’s vassals.”(Fisher and O’Hara 2009)

“Whereas the term becoming indicates the body’s or subject’s process of materialization, narration indexes the socially, historically, geographically, and politically specific context that a body was allowed to inhabit and ultimately the body’s *raison d’être* within nineteenth-century visual culture. Narration indicates the stories that artists and audiences told themselves to facilitate the process of viewership, achieve a suitably moral interpretation, and legitimize visual representations as “high” art. But if a body’s social status, as revealed by its physical

assumption of space, is understood to correspond with that body's identification, then narration is also indicative of the very subjectivity of the body itself." (Nelson 2007)

These citations help me open the doors to the historical establishment of racialized subjects, particularly that of Black womanhood in the Euro-American imagination. This action "[sic] requires a return to and engagement with painful places, worlds where black people were denied humanity, belonging, and formal citizenship." (Brown 2015) In order to complete it, a consideration and analysis of the transatlantic slave trade and its settler colonies is necessary in order to recognize Black and Indigenous women's position with these landscapes. The following section provides the underpinnings of the images of Black women today; if we now understand what racism as a systemic institution does to the individual, an example of the weapons used against women are established here.

The need to create races within the Iberian tradition resembles that of Spain's British and French neighbors. This was the beginning of the European project of developing white supremacy through colonization. "Administrators in Spain and Spain's colonies used a particular race thinking notion to shape and calibrate the "natural order" of political life." (Fisher and O'Hara 2009) Out of religious wars a defense against stained blood was generated, initially designed to separate Muslims and Jews from the Christians and from those who converted to Christianity for their blood was not 'pure'. Naturally, conquistadores retained this idea of racial purity when dealing with the Indigenous population of the New World, and also with the Africans they took as slaves. "Authorities in the Americas were vexed by such blood-related questions as, was the blood stain of Europe's New Christians the same as the blood stain of Indians or blacks?" (Fisher and O'Hara 2009)

What is different in the Iberian tradition of slavery was that they initially tolerated racial mixing. "That is, [sic] it has long been asserted that Spanish and Portuguese colonization tolerated racial miscegenation to a degree unimaginable in the British (and to a lesser extent, French) worlds..."(Fisher and O'Hara 2009) The manner in which this racial mixing began, however, requires a discussion on sexual assault and the forced marriages of women and children to men in positions of power. What is relevant here is the chain reaction these unions set off as centuries passed. "In time, however, new intermediate categories (for example, mestizo and mulatto)

emerged to address the liminal status of interracial children. The elite viewed these groups with suspicion and distaste, especially as their numbers grew.” (Fisher and O’Hara 2009)

“Blanquimiento” of the blood of Africans and Indigenous people was a war tool used to exterminate their existence, root and stem, despite the fact that as slaves, Africans and Indians provided free labor for the growing empires. (Carrera 2003) When binary names for race in the new world such as Black and White were no longer sufficient, a thorough system of classification began. This became the foundation for the ways in which Latinx’s classify themselves to this day.



Figure 1, *Las Castas*, artist unknown, 18th century, oil on canvas, 148 cm x 104 cm, Museo Nacional del Vicerreinato

“Within the nineteenth-century hegemonic viewing practices, people’s social status, particularly their class, and their very identity were often ascertained from their corporeal and visceral reaction or response to an artwork. There is no one gaze, no singular universal way of seeing. The process of vision, of viewing, is classed, raced, and

sexed, and the way one sees and what one sees are both products of that person's identification and location and a part of what confirms and reinstates both. Viewers do not merely see what is. Rather, vision must be addressed not as a process of objective reading but as a process through which identifications are imagined and assigned." (Nelson 2007)

Casta paintings, such as Fig 1, are a visual tool that provide context to the racialization and mixing in Latin America. A genre that emerged in the 18th century, "Casta, the Spanish word for caste, referred to New Spain's mixed-race people and the hierarchical system whereby socioeconomic status was tied to race." (Lesser 2018) Often constructed as a set of 16 individual paintings, or one painting partitioned in 16 ways to accommodate all the classifications, they were collected and commissioned by various members of the aristocracy of Spanish society to be displayed in both the private and public space, in and outside of Spain. (Lugo-Ortiz and Rosenthal 2013) There was text with each accompanying visual example of sexual or marital unions between different races and what they would produce, for example between Spaniard and India, India and Mulatto, Mulatto and Negro and so on.

"...Diagnostic of casta paintings maps imperfectly onto the terminology more commonly employed in the archival record [sic]". (Lugo-Ortiz and Rosenthal 2013) There are unions that become classified as 'torna atrás', translated to 'turn back', a further indication of the idea of blood purity and blanquimiento and how certain unions were unable to produce good offspring. Furthermore, there was reported anxiety by some members of the upper classed criollos (American born, Spanish descent) in Mexico about their own reception in Spain as a result of the Casta paintings, that would suggest to those outside of Latin America that the white descendants of Spaniards were equal to the racialized lower classes, insinuating there were nearly no class lines within society. Nonetheless, the Casta paintings stayed popular until the independence of countries throughout the southern American continent.

These paintings serve their purpose in my research as their promulgation fundamentally helped to facilitate scientific racism as a colonial tool for justification of European colonialism. The Casta paintings were created as a means of mapping the

new colonial reality. "This similarity between the languages of scientific classification and colonial control is not coincidental, since neither natural history nor the power dynamics shaping New World colonialism operated in a vacuum. The classifications that underpinned early modern systems of knowledge in the Atlantic world embraced both plants and people and reflected a yearning for order that transcended any division between science and statecraft." (Earle 2010) This classification, evident in the text of the paintings, "indicates that these works are self-conscious products of Enlightenment-period systems of human classifications." (Earle 2010) From here, we can begin to process the symbiotic relationship between scientific racism and the development of allegories created within the Euro-American imagination of, specifically, Black women's bodies.

Sander L. Gilman in his essay *Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine, and Literature* notes that icons do not present the world: they represent it. When an individual is shown in a work of art, "the ideologically charged iconographic nature of the representation dominates." (Gilman, 223) In other words, the presentation of the image dominates our perception and guides us towards classifying the depicted individual, and in the case of Black womanhood I will expand upon, that class is "Other" than human. As Gilman further summarizes, "These classes in turn are characterized by the use of a model which synthesizes on the perception of the uniformity of the groups into a convincingly homogenous image." (Gilman 1985) And as James Smalls postulates, "Allegory is a part of semiology which approaches paintings and prints as a system of signs and not perception." (Small 2004)

In order to justify the enslavement of Black women, Europeans invented a variety of explanations that were fundamentally based in the dehumanization of Black womanhood; all of these justifications made Black women vulnerable to unspeakable violence at the hands of her master, including torture and sexual assault. Black women were seen as property, therefore they were never recognized as victims, and instead the violence they endured was seen as the natural order of colonial society.

"As Andrea Smith puts it, colonial relationships are themselves racialized and sexualized. Colonial relationships are marked by power relations which reflect a desire to dominate. Knowledge production becomes crucial to maintaining the power structures that necessitate social, economic and political domination of colonizers over the colonized." (Chaudhuri 2012, Smith 2005) A key part of the dehumanization Black

women experienced was facilitated by these paintings, which employed a slave master logic in how Black women were depicted, and these images helped to essentialize the idea of a debased Black womanhood in viewer's minds.¹⁰ Since Spanish men were the center of what it meant to be truly human, and not in a philosophical sense but in a biological basis. Spanish men¹¹ were therefore superior and to some degree in charge of controlling female sexuality not just within their own racial group, but the Women of Color as well.

In Pooja Chaudhuri's essay *Methodologies of Socio-Cultural Classification/Contextualizing the Casta Painting (1710- 1800) as a Product of Time*, she observes that African women were often depicted in scenes with domestic violence, which was often thematically absent from paintings with women of Spanish, mixed or Amerindian decent. This contrasting portrayal of Black womanhood versus non-black women of color and white women was key to not only the abuse and enslavement of black women but of black bodies as a whole.

“Casta paintings that depict domestic violence map onto the bodies of Black women, the physical implications of ‘Blackness.’ In casta paintings for example, the violence particular to Black women is usually juxtaposed with the tranquility and passivity of her partner, a Spanish man. Such characteristics and traits become racialized and abstracted to represent the relative hyper masculinity of Black women in comparison to women, and, to an extent, men of other races. In addition, characteristics like violence, which are associated with ‘Blackness’ facilitate the construction of ‘Whiteness’ as an uniquely Spanish attribute.” (Chaudhuri 2012)

From Casta paintings emerged ethnographic portraits such as those by Albert Eckhout. Eckhout was one of many artists sent to the colonies to document the emerging populace on behalf of institutions, companies or the aristocratic elite of Europe.

¹⁰ From personal conversation with independent scholar and African-American Historian of anti-blackness l’Nasah Crockett.

¹¹ The concept of patriarchal superiority was not limited to Spanish men, as all European men considered themselves to be superior to their respective colonial subjects globally.

Eckhout's portraits are within the same as Casta paintings, but differ in their medium and method. Unlike print making, in which there were many difficulties in reproducing the color of skin of African and Indigenous subjects, Eckhout's large scaled paintings such as Fig. 2, were able to focus on phenotype, thus underlying the most important and obvious marker of racial difference.

“In spite of the specificity of detail that Eckhout's paintings display, it is always essential for the viewer to remember what is a central, but unstated, characteristic of such representations: the fact that the people or groups depicted in them did not create, commission, or in any way control their appearance in these works of art. This is not an example of “ethnic self-ascription”; paintings like these were made for the visual consumption of someone else, generally a white male European subject. As such these paintings testify to the imbalance of power between the maker of the image, his patron, and the person depicted, something that has also been noted by scholars of nineteenth-century anthropological photography.” (Lugo-Ortiz and Brethenal 2013)



Figure 2, *Woman and Child of African descent*, Albert Eckhout, 1641, oil on canvas, 282 cm x 180 cm, Nationalmuseet Copenhagen

My purpose in introducing this analysis is to demonstrate the inception of these controlling images and fables in relation to Black women's bodies, and what these creations meant to Euro-American and European society in their role as enslavers, and how these creations impacted Black womanhood as a whole. Through this analysis, we can understand how miscegenation, a fear born out of the whites mating with the "Other", and specifically Iberian fears of "fear of 'Blackness'" as a condition was articulated in tropes that drew from concepts of *limpieza de sangre* or purity of blood. Black blood was thought to be so strong and resilient that it could not be absorbed by the purity of Spanish blood." (Chaudhuri 2012) This ties directly to the naming of these offspring groups, dependent upon who mated with whom, as discussed earlier. The results and the supposed concrete pathology of Black women and their 'Otherness' would permeate into the fine art of the time and in the following eras. This exploration allows us to understand in short how Europe began to see itself

as binarily opposed to its subjects of color. Moreover, the foundation in which Black womanhood begins to manifest in art provides for me as an artist an understanding of one part of the fissure of agency of Black women in society had, and also its contemporary forms.

“To sustain this power and absolve it of guilt, the slaveocracy established a set rhetoric, which delineated the purpose and position of slave women’s unfree bodies.” (Brown 2015) This environment created a template and a scale in which colonized people would be studied and measured, a hierarchy of humanity that was created in order to understand the supposed differences between these new races. The Amerindians, Africans and their offspring were always placed in varying degrees (dependent upon specifically on their African ancestry and their own proximity to it) as opposed to Europeans and Euro-Americans. This also led to Black women being placed as the total antithesis of whiteness. There is no greater example of this than that of Saartjie Baartman; the South African woman is most commonly recognized as the Hottentot Venus. Saartjie Baartman’s physicality was the center piece in human zoos and theatrical shows in major European cities. Her body would function as a corporeal site wherein Black women’s sexuality would become pathology. According to the colonial scale of humanity, the antithesis to European beauty and morality lies within the bodies of Black people, and the lowest rung on the ladder of humanity was the Hottentot Venus and her physiognomy and genitalia. Again, Black women were the bearers of the stigmata of sexual difference and thus pathology. Furthermore, as shown in the Casta paintings, the hetero-sexual economy, women were regarded as both biological and social reproducers. “In other words, women are held responsible for physically bringing more members of a community into existence and inculcating in them, the beliefs valued within a particular group.” (Chaudhuri 2012)

New Allegories, Same Bodies

Tethered with the legacy of the history that came before it, Modernism was participatory in the controlling colonial imagery of Black women and Indigenous women from all parts of the globe. Its beliefs concerning Black women’s bodies and pathology spanned borders across Europe and the Americas, thus exporting anti-

blackness¹² into a global capitalist operation and social order, with whiteness becoming the metric to which all things in society, culture, beauty, religion are more were, and still are, measured. "...the hierarchy of the light/dark opposition, which throughout the eighteenth century was crucial in normative discourses about female virtue and desire, and negotiated in portrait-painting in 1800." (Schmidt-Linsehoff 2013) Racialized misogyny is clear in how it functions: women of color's sexuality are stained and animalistic, and as established earlier the antithesis of white womanhood's virtuous nature. "The whiteness of the body was understood as an index for female virtue, conceptualized as paradoxical reconciliation of pure chastity and seductive beauty." (Schmidt-Linsehoff 2013)¹³

A question of agency occurs to me in evaluations of the works of Eckhout's in particular, and its parallels to Marie-Guilhelmine Benoist's (b.1768) most famous work *Portrait d'une Nègresse* (1800). In similar fashion to the ethnographic works by Eckhout, there is a deafening silence of the sitter despite her chaotic relationship to the society and furthermore the power dynamics between artist and subject. *Portrait d'une Nègresse*, (Fig. 3) is much more still and calm, there is a moment of peace to be found within the soft warmth of the linens of the dress and the airy white of her perfectly done marètèt¹⁴. On a technical point, truly brings the sitter to life before our eyes as spectator lies in the realistic depiction of her skin tone.

¹² The personal, cultural, social, legal, and structural attacks on people of African descent; racism specifically targeted towards Black people.

¹³ Furthermore, if the white woman has deviated from her piety and for example, she became a sex worker; instead of prompting questions about the culture that created instability for women's socio-economic status in the world, she was classified as having the same pathology as African women, which is to say, her problem was one of nature and not the volatility of society.

¹⁴ Marètèt- Guadeloupean word for headwrap



Figure 3, *Portrait d'une Negresse*, Marie-Guillemine Benoist, 1800, oil on canvas, 81 cm x 65 cm, Louvre Museum

In Viktoria Schmidt-Linsehoff's essay "Who is the Subject?" she asks of *Portrait d'une Négrresse*, "But if not a portrait, what sort of painting is it—an academy of a half-naked, black model, an allegorical body-image referring vaguely to slavery and liberty, or an erotic genre painting showing a modern Black Venus? What exactly is the subject matter, and who is the subject depicted?" (Schmidt-Linsehoff 2013) There was and is evidently different readings and understandings of this work, and while the portrait can be framed apart from the genre of ethnographic portraiture, the issue lies in what it represents for the white gaze. The context of this painting is summarized well in James Smalls' essay titled "Slavery is a Woman", in which he reminds us that "The most prominent racial sign is that of a dark skin pigmentation set off against a blank background and white fabric. Paintings such as Benoist's support the belief that the black subject is powerless before the "fact" of race, even though race was and remains a culturally constructed fiction in which "'Blackness' is a structure of racist inscription, not a color." (Smalls 2004)

Despite differing opinions on how *Portrait d'une Negresse* should be read, the painting is foundational in understanding the gaze in which works concerning Black

women were produced and subsequently received in the years following. Smalls states "Portrait d'une Nègresse is less a portrait of a black woman and more a portrait of Benoist herself. And in this respect, it is a typical colonialist picture in that the artist who created it made use of the racialized Other to define and empower the colonizing Self." (Smalls 2004) That is to say, the painting is not a portrait in the classical Salon-esque sensibility of the time, which was meant to be representative. Instead the work functions as a self-portrait due to the projection of white womanhood's colonial psyche. Schmidt-Linsehoff's opinion of the work differs in that she believes that the function of *Portrait d'une Nègresse* "stresses the difference of appearance not as biological race-category, but as a social experience related to the production of visual meaning, which depends on the white beholder." (Schmidt-Linsehoff, 325)

I understand this to mean the formation of Black womanhood specifically in the West can only be constructed via the white gaze, totally erasing agency of the subject represented, particularly in how the production of their bodies are represented visually. As the writer bell hooks¹⁵ states concerning subjectivity and objectivity and representation, "As objects, one's reality is defined by others, one's identity created by others, one's history named only in ways that define one's relationship to those who are subject." (hooks 1981)

There is no better way to understand this relationship and use of emergent allegories regarding Black women in art and of object to subject than in two famous works: *Olympia* by Édouard Manet (b.1832) and *Les Femmes d'Alger* by Pablo Picasso (b.1881). In order to understand these paintings as implicitly depicting controlling images of Black women, not only must we take into account the previous analysis of how Black womanhood was created, but also take into account its evolution after the 17th & 18th centuries. Patricia Hill Collins categorizes and analyzes the controlling images of Black women, specifically within the context of the United States, but these stereotypes and icons transcend borders. "Because the authority to define societal values is a major instrument of power, elite groups, in exercising power, manipulate ideas about Black womanhood." (Collins 1990) After Casta paintings,

¹⁵ "In not capitalizing the letters of her name, bell hooks attempts to subvert grammar prescriptivism. Language itself is a construct that supports racism and sexism, and the status-quo in general. Dismantling language and eliminating linguistic and grammatical gatekeepers is crucial to mental and physical liberation."
<https://www.quora.com/Why-doesnt-bell-hooks-capitalize-the-letters-in-her-name>

ethnographic portraiture and the projection of the white psyche via black bodies in art came art works of the aristocracy not only with their Black servants, but Black women serving a specific sexual function in art.

Manet's *Olympia* (1863) is very well known for many reasons, mostly related with the young sex worker and her piercing gaze to the viewer. What is less spoken about, is Laura, the black servant who is holding the flowers the white sex worker is presumably rejecting. Laura, in many ways, is another example of the white colonial psyche being projected upon a Black woman figure. One of the many controlling images Collins outlines is that of the Mammy and Jezebel. Collins defines Mammy as being "created to justify the economic exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women's long-standing restriction to domestic service, the mammy image represents the normative yardstick used to evaluate all Black women's behavior." (Collins 1990) Mammy figures are often large plump, dark skinned Black women. Unequivocally Black. Hair, eyes, nose and lips are all the Blackest features one can have, completely dressed with no nudity about to be present in the scene she is in; she is asexual, and only serves her master as a docile domestic. In this way, especially in the physical representation, Laura exemplifies the Mammy.

The Jezebel, although a contrasting image, is as potent as her asexual counterpart. "Jezebel's function was to relegate all Black women to the category of sexually aggressive women, thus providing a powerful rationale for the widespread sexual assaults by white men typically reported by Black slave women." (Collins 1990) As West Indian-American artist Lorraine O'Grady notes in her essay *Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity*, "We know what she is meant for: she is Jezebel and Mammy, prostitute and female eunuch, the two-in-one...And best of all, she is not a real person, only a robotic servant who is not permitted to make feel guilty..." (O'Grady 1992, 1994) O'Grady continues to remind us that Laura's asexuality and hyper-sexuality occurs at once; she is outside of what is considered woman and yet her hypersexual Black nature is embedded especially into the white flesh of the young white mistress for whom Laura serves. The chaos that Laura represents renders her invisible and yet her hyper-visibility designates allegory only in that she is the binary of *Olympia*.

As Gilman scrutinizes, "...for it is the physiognomy of the black which points to her own sexuality and to that of the white female presented to the viewer unclothed but with he genitalia demurely covered." (Gilman 1985) The cat is often associated

with the genitalia of the white female, but what Gilman states is that the cat is not itself what tells the viewer anything about the sexuality of *Olympia*, it is the Laura, the Mammy Jezebel maid, that is the signifier of this perverse sexuality, because Laura is Black.

Picasso's work has long been contextualized with the primitive and African art within the speculation of whether or not he was inspired by the genre, which leads him to Cubism. This debate is no longer necessary in my opinion, and I wish to utilize what can only be understood as a colonial mind-set, which I deem to be par for the course in the male European artists of the time. The painting *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) is no exception this, and I wish to engage with the work in a manner that does not focus on Picasso and any intellectual theft that has long been spoken, but that provides with perhaps a deeper and more honest reading of the work through a Black Feminist lens.

“Whatever experiences fueled Picasso's personal and artistic needs and revelations that spring and summer [1907]- be it his break-up with his lover Fernande Olivier, his morbid fear of syphilis, African sculpture encountered at the Trocadéro, colonial photographs, Manet's *Olympia* and Ingres's *Grand Odalisque* exhibited side-by-side at the Louvre (both nudes gazing brazenly at the viewer), news of colonial abuses in the Belgian Congo still reverberating from the previous year, African women performing at Les Folies Bergère or on exhibit in “Native Villages”, or other visual stimuli and life experiences-his alterations to the canvas radically transformed the painting. He masked three of the demoiselles, introducing Africa into the painting. By wrenching the pose of the seated figure on the right so that her head spun around to face us, he dramatically altered the dynamic of the composition, placing the power of the gaze within the painting.” (Cohen 2015)

The Black woman as carrier of the disease, the creator of the sexualized white

woman, the incubator of sexuality, and the power of the gaze places the white male European as a viewer and victim. Essentially, this positioning Black women as the seducers, instead of vulnerable victims of sexual assault within the power dynamics of colonial rule, evades the long task of responsibility by patriarchal and racial domination. Kimberly Juanita Brown notes this accepted understanding of Black women's sexuality in the construction of Brazilian slave and historical figure Xica da Silva's memory within Brazilian popular culture, stating "Historical memory concerning Silva is fickle, culturally self-conscious, and inventive, crediting the former slave woman with possessing other-worldly mystical powers of seduction. In this narrative, João Fernandes [her master] is the one without the power to control his body and becomes a slave in his own home as Silva is remembered as a woman who cast her sexual spell on everyone she encountered." (Brown 2015)

In this quote, it is made clear that the burden of responsibility is placed upon Black women during and within the aftermath of slavery for white men's sexual deviancy. But as Janie Cohen notes "The forced nudity and prescribed poses of subjects in colonial photographs, particularly women, strips them of their agency. Picasso's demoiselles are of a different world; their agency is palpable, and it is reflected in the rabid responses of his artistic circle. It is critical to note, however, that the power with which he invested them was intended to serve him alone" (Cohen 2015)

Cohen connects Picasso's figures to anthropometric African colonial photography, both in theme and in the compositions of the photographs and of the painting itself. Compositionally, the description of the photographs and the painting are almost identical. "...the formal and informal juxtaposition of frontal, profile, rear, and squatting or seated poses became a common trope used in *group* photographs by colonial photographers working both in the field and in the studio." (Cohen 2015) Their distribution was popularized quickly through the development of the market of photographic postcards and the increasing photography industry in Europe's colonies, much like the *Casta* paintings a couple centuries prior. Like the *Casta* paintings sponsored by the European elite and produced by others in the colonies, these photographs were manufactured and disseminated by colonial officers, photographers, missionary workers, field anthropologists, all working together to create a new lucrative product in European capitals. (Cohen 2015)

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon was produced within an era where the dominant ideology of the slave era cultivated the establishment of controlling imagery of Black

women, and like the anthropometric African colonial photography, these works served to further indulge the racist ideologies of the colonial enterprise. Born out of colonial erotica, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* cannot escape racialized misogyny as the context for how it's read. "Discussions within Picasso literature focusing on the Africanization of his prostitutes began with Leo Steinberg (1972), who posited, in language that still range of colonialism, that Picasso's "reason for making them savage was the same as his reason ... for making them whores"; in order to "project sexuality divested of all accretion of culture." (Cohen 2015)

Beyond the angular and flat planes of the women's faces, the dead pan black inkiness of the eyes, and the presupposed sexual agency of their existence, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* becomes more and more about using Black women's bodies to become the reservoir for Western society's fear about Black women, female sexuality and at the heart of controlling Black women, is controlling their sexuality. I am of the opinion that simply attesting the faces on the right of the painting are simply fashioned out of innocent and innocuous love of ancient Iberian and African art¹⁶. To me, this expunges Picasso of any responsibility for his perpetuation and participation in colonial visual productions of the time.

Conclusion

The aesthetics of empire are imprinted within the consciousness of the many who live in it. "The rupturing of linearity with regard to slave women's bodies and the contemporary insistence on reinterpreting the historical offenses against the flesh all signal a circular recognition of the wounds the body may carry." (Brown 2015) From the need to create justifications for slavery and genocide came lucrative art and racial categories, and thus a legacy of anti-black misogyny in society and culture, was born. This history leads us to today, in where the aftermath of colonialism is present upon my own skin, and I too carry this legacy as I cross borders. This colonial, white supremacist history, despite differences in language, culture and region lines come

¹⁶ "The masks in the painting reflect Picasso's obsession with primitive art, not only of African origin but also the art of ancient Iberia, or modern-day Spain and Portugal. The simple forms, angular planes and bold shapes used in primitive art were instrumental in the artist's restructuring of artistic conventions." <https://www.pablopicasso.org/avignon.jsp>

La Sangre Llama

together to put Women/Femmes of Color in an existential, cultural crisis within their respective location.

Chapter Two:

Methodology

In chapter one, my aim was to provide an understanding of racialized misogyny and its moment of inception caused by European colonialism in the Americas. I delivered a brief outline on the creation of Black womanhood in the Americas via the European male gaze and its manifestations in artistic visual production. I show how across various fields, including science and art, Women of Color and Black women live perpetually in an existential, cultural crisis in the diaspora. From the manufacturing of Casta paintings through Neo-classical salon-esque portraiture, all forms of visual production popular within their respective times, came about imagery that functioned as the informant of what a colonial subject's place in society should be. Our understandings of Black women's art, histories, aesthetics and modes of creation depend on us obtaining the appropriate frameworks to do so accurately and through a non-racist and misogynist lens. On this basis, this chapter will explore a methodology for the analysis of the works of Black women artists that I have chosen to investigate and use as reference for my own emerging artistic practice. Hermeneutics and intersectionality will be assessed and discussed so that a development of a framework that is best for the understanding and contextualization of Black women's artistic production.

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Firstly, I seek to understand a methodology that holistically addresses Black women's artistic production beyond the superficial linking of aesthetic and race to Black women's history. Phenomenology and hermeneutics are intriguing modes of study, yet I question their ability to be sufficient for studying Black women's art, including my own practice which deals in issues of race and gender. As it is noted by Mariana Ortega, the difference between the philosophy of, for example Martin Heidegger and the philosophy of Latina's lies in that Heidegger does not account consider the multiplicity of particular histories; "Heidegger discusses the importance of Daesin being a historical being that interprets itself in specific environments, but he does not describe or engage with those environments." (Ortega 2016) It is through the writings of People of Color and more explicitly, in Black scholarly writing, wherein I am exposed to the ways in which these philosophies are used when discussing the experience of performing in a Black body. For example, in his essay *Nonbeing and Thingness: A Fanonmenological Essay on Ontology*, Mark A. De Young is able to summarize Frantz Fanon's use of phenomenology through the lens of Blackness and post-colonialism. This format is relevant to my own considerations regarding Black women's existential cultural crisis, although gender as much as race is of concern for me in ways that vary from Fanon's application. "Fanon takes on the task of describing the interiority of one whose interiority has been negated or denied. In his case, the phenomenological reduction, the bracketing operation which forms the occasion for this description, was not something he performed willingly; it was thrust upon him from the outside." (De Young 2016)

There is also the question of how culturally conditioned is the knowledge produced by phenomenology. That is to say, do the concerns of natural and human sciences in the Husserlian tradition differ from what Paget Henry coins the "Africana Phenomenology" which responds to a crisis of colonialism and racialized oppression? (De Young 2016, Henry 2000)

The impact of colonization had at least three important consequences for African discourses. First was the devaluation and rejection of their truth claims by Europeans and European-educated Africans. Second was their

hybridization as they absorbed European contents and adopted European languages as media of expression. Third, in addition to the Arabic languages, African discourses developed writing capabilities in European languages. In the colonial cultural systems that emerged, African and European cultural practices were locked into Nettleford's "battle for space," with European practices expanding at the expense of African ones. (Henry 2000)

The difficulty for Afro-Diasporic philosophers lay in that the Euro-American convention of "'universal' concepts take on a problematically imperialistic resonance when one particular sector of humanity (white European men) has historically created the concept of *the* human as such in its own image." (De Young 2016) What De Young aims to illustrate is the difficulty in Fanon's quest to separate 'human' from solely meaning "white European man", which are hard fused together within the philosophies.

It is here at this junction wherein I encounter the first of many gaps in the epistemology of these Afro-Diasporic philosophers. Although gender is undoubtedly a part of Fanon's theory evidenced within his own writing, his ideas about Black Caribbean women are explicitly patriarchal. Lane Madhi, author of *Fanon Revisited: Race, Gender and Coloniality Vis-à-Vis Skin Color*, explains how Fanon treats his subject and the fellow Black people of his country and of Europe, as if they are medical subjects suffering from racism, which he understands as a psychological disease. I am in agreement with how Fanon approaches racism, as the effects of external racism manifest within; internalized racism becomes self-hatred etc., as discussed previously in chapter one regarding the Black woman's existential cultural crisis. What Fanon does, however, ultimately mimics the very same colonial mechanism used by European race scientists in regards to Black women and the nature of their very being. Fanon uses a few examples of Black women's representation within Caribbean literature and applies it as concrete qualitative data to all Black women and Women of Color in the Caribbean, such as the classic Tragic Mulatto Girl trope and her white male sexual partners. This generalization of Black women and their choices in sexual partners and husbands, for example, is done so in a manner that is not applied Men of Color, most notably where interracial relationships are concerned. (Fanon 1952)

“It is not the sickness as such that is at issue, and the source to which the sickness is attributed. The disease could be a general affliction of all colonized peoples or only black or coloureds [sic]. However, in our reading of Fanon’s specific context, it was about a neurotic condition suffered by Black women. While, in a similar disease suffered by black men [sic] colour is incidental to the affliction.” (Lane 2013) Although Fanon has been able to address race and oppression saliently through a phenomenological lens in which care and nuance is key, when it comes to Black *women*, his regard for their actions and choices born out of living through racism are drawn from the very colonial ideals that Fanon himself speaks against.

In order to understand the internal experience of being reduced to a *thing* via racism and specifically white supremacy, Fanon metaphorically steps outside of his own body and attempts to objectively gaze upon himself, the thing, the Black. “Of course, the very performance of describing this experience contradicts the ascription of thingness; but it will also become clear this act of negation marks the start of a long and painful process rather than a resolution.” (De Young 2016) Despite the explicit gendered bias Fanon holds, this articulation of first experiencing objecthood in direct correlation to the skin color of the body is nearly complete for the purposes of my research. It is at this moment that new questions arise such as: As Black women and Women of Color, do we choose race first, gender second in our analysis? Or are there possibilities beyond a framework that still is inherently white supremacist and misogynistic even if a man of color wrote it? Finally, and more aptly, should we even force ourselves to choose? Why can it not be both at the same time?

Further, is phenomenology at all useful to Black women, especially in regards to artistic production? My initial trepidations with phenomenology and hermeneutics stem from their seeming inability to precisely analyze the complex layers of racialized misogyny. Given that the original texts offer me insufficient clarity on this question, I will use Scott Davidson and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson’s essay *Hermeneutics of a Subtlety: Paul Ricoeur, Kara Walker, and Intersectional Hermeneutics*. The essay itself focuses on a specific installation by African-American Kara Walker (b. 1969). The full title of the work is as follows:

A Subtlety: or the *Marvellous Sugar Baby*, an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Planet.”

Thoroughly exploring the work and its nuance is not my primary goal at this point in the chapter, but it is through this work in which Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson enable the reader to understand a merging of hermeneutics and Intersectionality. Firstly, we must understand Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, defined as the science of interpretation. Mohaddeseh Taghinejad notes that it is "the site of what Ricoeur calls "the conflict interpretation and the problem of domination of interpretations." (Taghinejad 2017) She further explains that whereas Heidegger asked, "what kind of being is it who's being consisted of understanding?" (Ricoeur 1975), Ricoeur goes further in asking "'through what means is textual understanding possible?' In this endeavor he sought to reunite truth, the characteristic of understanding, with the method, the operation through which understanding occurs." (Taghinejad 2017)

As Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson also note, self-understanding "must pass through entities that are external to oneself, such as signs, symbols, texts, cultural artefacts, or monuments." (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) Both Taghinejad and Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson go on to explain what closes the hermeneutic circle: the concept of appropriation, or making something one's own. (Taghinejad 2017). From here, is where Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson begin to call to attention what they believe to be the limitations of Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle by stating that he uses a single axis mode of explanation. "Explanation, we contend, ought to proceed in a multi-axis and multi-layered way." (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) Since Ricoeur's hermeneutics rely on structuralism, and thus the analysis of a work of art can be highly reductive, there needs to space ample for more than a single issue to be identified and discussed.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a concept was developed by Kimberle Crenshaw in the late 1980's, and is primarily the praxis in which a researcher develops their analysis within feminism. Misunderstood and misused presently as another term for identity politics, intersectionality "holds that individual categories of oppression, such as racism sexism or able-ism, are not sufficient on their own to account for the differentiated levels of oppression experienced by the various members of a group. Instead of treating different types of oppression in isolation, intersectionality points to the need to examine the effects of oppression along multiple axes." (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) The framework was created because, as Crenshaw saw it, there was, and arguably still is, a "tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis." (Crenshaw 1989)

Crenshaw further points out the same issues within the realm of feminist theory and antiracist politics that Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson see in hermeneutics, namely that the problematic tendency is perpetuated by a single-axis framework. (Crenshaw 1989, Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) "What intersectionality offers is the insight that no single approach can fulfil the role of explanation on its own, stead the complex phenomena interpreted in hermeneutics require multiple levels of explanation." (Davidson and Del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) When discussing these practices, Crenshaw notes that the "focus on the most privileged group members marginalizes those who are multiply-burdened and obscures claims that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination. [She] suggests further that this focus on otherwise-privileged group members creates a distorted analysis of racism and sexism because the operative conceptions of race and sex become grounded in experience that actually represent only a subset of a much more complex phenomenon." (Crenshaw 1989)

Discrimination against a white female is thus the standard sex discrimination claim; claims that diverge from this standard appear to present some sort of hybrid claim. More significantly, because Black females' claims are seen as hybrid, they sometimes cannot represent those who may have "pure" claims of sex discrimination. The effect of this

approach is that even though a challenged policy or practice may clearly discriminate against all females, the fact that it has particularly harsh consequences for Black females places Black female plaintiffs at odds with white females. (Crenshaw 1989)

Intersectionality, developed by a Black woman for Black women, becomes the approach in which I analyze the works of Black women artists due to its ability to center the most disadvantaged people in society. There has been criticism launched against intersectionality, as briefly mentioned by Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson. The criticism mainly stated that intersectionality was ambiguous due to the fact there was very little scholarship on "...*how to study intersectionality.*" (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) To put it succinctly, it is my understanding through reading Crenshaw's work that intersectionality is not something one studies; it is a framework in which one studies *through*. Intersectionality, used as a central framework but merged with hermeneutics to investigate other phenomenon in addition to oppression, such as art for example, allow us as emerging researchers in Black women's artistic production, to have deeper understandings of interpretations of art works as well as our own art practices.

Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson approach their analysis of Walker's *A Subtlety* by venturing beyond a simple review of the work itself, along with its themes, contexts, and materials. To say *A Subtlety* is about Black women, colonialism and the abuses unleashed upon their bodies is insufficient, especially given the audience reaction on social media, where audience photographed themselves participating in lewd behavior towards the work. Although these are points that should be addressed within the critic of this specific work of art, the manner in which it is done must centralize Black women's history in the America's, their relation to the economic development of the countries and their relationship to the land, for example, to ensures that a holistic understanding of race, gender and its colonial history. This is essential in the framing of the material to the theme.

Firstly, the definitions of both hermeneutics and intersectionality are understood in their independent capacities. Then, Walker's work is analyzed through the framework thoroughly. What follows is a systematic breakdown of the history of the material of *A Subtlety*, which is sugar, and the relationship of this material to Black

women's bodies in relation to sugar as a cash crop in the Caribbean, its economic success associated directly to the labor of enslaved women. Out of the estimated 11 million Africans captured and shipped to the new world, more than half were purchased and shipped because of the sugar industry.

In order to fully understand this work, what is required of the reader is to understand not only how Black women's bodies were used during slavery but also the visual culture during the height of slavery (1700-late 1800's). The Black woman's body in *A Subtlety* was created in the same archetypal depiction as the sphinx. Upon further inspection, there was need of a thorough examination of the history of the sphinx, isolating regional context and how that affected its appearance and meaning as a consequence. In other words, the sphinx within the Greek and Egyptian traditions, the differences and meanings and how Walker utilizes these allegories in her work. Lastly, "Walker's images are not simply stereotypes but [sic] a parody that does not simply repeat the historical past in a naïve or uncritical way...For it is designed to confront and to challenge the forms of oppression that are bound up with these historical images." (Davidson and Del Guadalupe Davidson 2016)

A Final Methodology

In reviewing Franz Fanon's approach to phenomenology and Blackness, I understand his desire to understand humanity outside of whiteness, or more precisely, to pull apart the mutual exclusivity of humanity and blackness. The manifestation of internalized racism forces Black people to battle the external signals and social rules and regulations thrust against their own conceptions of who they themselves are in multiple ways. "[Sic] ...premised upon a desire for a white recognition (in the Hegelian sense) of humanity that disproves or is an exception to the stereotypical connotations of Blackness. Each of these attempts is a "white mask" that succeeds only in deceiving oneself but utterly fails to yield the basic recognition-as-human that is desired." (De Young 2016) Ignoring gender, Fanon's method would be an exceptional example in how I could use phenomenology, but Fanon's version of Blackness is by default a male Blackness, which prevents any discursive space for Black womanhood to be understood as a co-victim within a white supremacist society. Thus, I must go further in my own work, and pull apart Blackness and womanhood in a manner that does not

privilege one issue (i.e. race) at the expense of another (i.e. gender).

In Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson's *Hermeneutics of a Subtlety: Paul Ricoeur, Kara Walker, and Intersectional Hermeneutics*, we can find an appropriate methodology for the analysis of Black women's artistic production that purposefully creates the space for an immersive explanation of a work. The authors developed what they call "intersectional hermeneutics," and used Walker's work as a case study to test their theory's ability to holistically comprehend her work with its multiple layers of meaning. What Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson demonstrate is an addition of intersectionality to improve the hermeneutic method for a contemporary world in which single axis analysis is no longer sufficient. Their framework instead requires multi-layered interpretations to be presented of any given artwork or subject matter. "[The] aim is ultimately to provide a deeper and better understanding of the experiences and phenomena that are in question...to explain more is to understand better." (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson 2016) This methodology will also be taken into account as I develop my own artistic work, ensuring that I am able to properly contextualize the tools and materials in a manner that have total relevancy thematically. In the next chapter, Davidson and del Guadalupe's methodology will inform the manner in which I will examine the work of Black Caribbean and diasporic women artists, especially in terms of how they use their bodies, tools, methods and their experiences within a Black female body, space, Afro-spirituality and more.

Chapter Three:

Bodies that Talk Back

“Part of what makes the black female body uncomfortable for audiences is the fact that it has been over determined for centuries. It carries a long history of abuse, and has been the object of multiple projections. It signifies too much, and audiences are pressed to understand the historical memories that two voices, at least, have inscribed on these bodies; the anthropo-scientific lexicon, and the silent, and at times obsessive, lexicon of desire and lust.” (Kouoh 2015)

Presented in the following chapter are Black women artists from various geographical locations of the African diaspora, staging assorted modes of Black female subjectivity throughout their respective ethnic and cultural approaches. I chose to research Black women artists that incorporate their bodies and the figures of Black women in order to subvert populist white supremacist ideas about their bodies and Black womanhood. The work of Black women often varies from more conventional feminist art regarding the female body, in which Black women (and by extension Women of Color) are often excluded from being framed within the same canon, an act of separation based upon race and gender that suggests the two are mutually exclusive. “I am talking about the body that is marked by racial, sexual, and class configurations. It is this body, this fleshy materiality, that seems to disappear from much of the current proliferations of discourses on the body.” (Bakare-Yusuf, McMillan 2017)

I also choose artists that integrate specific materials and forms that function as cultural markers, so as to inform my own practice. What follows is vejigante, tobacco leaves and raffia, milk and boats, Black women’s bodies and New York City skyscrapers or the English countryside. My quest to understand myself and my Puerto Rican identity within the cityscape of Barcelona and its sites and monuments is investigated through the production of these artists. Firstly, I will provide a brief introduction to each the individual artists, then I will progress to contextualizing their

works thematically and materially within the intersectional hermeneutic framework outlined by Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson.

Introducing the Artists

Awilda Sterling-Duprey (b. 1947 Puerto Rico) is a Puerto Rican dancer, choreographer and artist originally from Santurce, Puerto Rico. Sterling-Duprey's work has focused primarily on Afro-Caribbean subjectivity through dance and performance, including the cross-Caribbean dialogue within her practice. She is regarded as one of the most important and prominent Afro-Boricua artists today, and one of the major figures of performance in the Caribbean. Her particular focus on the body, the use of cultural markers (which I will expand upon within this chapter) and dance, particularly bomba¹⁷, and her work keeping Afro-Boricua culture and memory alive allows me as an artist to have an elder to look to and understand my practice as a younger member of the Puerto Rican diaspora.

Simone Leigh (b 1968, United States) is a sculptor, film and performance artist and is of Jamaican descent. She describes her work as auto-ethnographic mode of visual production of Black female subjectivity. Relating her sculptured forms to black women's bodies and histories, Leigh caters to black women audiences and their histories, utilizing elements of African Diasporic cultural markers and materials. This is evidenced in her production of vases and their history within early African American artistic and artisanal production but also raffia, used in religious ceremonies in various African cultures. She also incorporates forms of domes and skirts, referencing both African architecture, Afro-spirituality and clothing as a method of agency.

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons (b.1959 Cuba) is a multi-disciplinary artist who has worked in film, performance, installation, photography and sculpture. The central themes of her practice concern gender and sexuality, "multicultural identity (especially Cuban, Chinese, and Nigerian), Cuban culture, and religion/spirituality (in particular, Roman Catholicism and Santeria.)" (Bell 1998)

Ingrid Pollard (b.1953 Guyana) is a Guyanese-British photographer and artist. Born in Georgetown, Guyana having immigrated to Britain in her youth, she took an

¹⁷ Traditional Afro-Puerto Rican folkloric music, firstly developed in the predominately Black coastal towns in Puerto Rico.

interest in photography, with her first school project laying the foundations for her focus in examining landscapes. Early in her career, she became focused in political movements in Britain concerning gender and race, and became one of the founding members of Autograph, a center for Black photographers in London. (“Ingrid Pollard,” n.d.)

Nona Faustine (United States) was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Her most well known work to date confronts historically important sites and monuments in New York City as they relate to African American history. “Her work focuses on history, identity, representation, evoking a critical and emotional understanding of the past and proposes a deeper examination of contemporary racial and gender stereotypes.” (“Nona Faustine About” n.d.)

Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953 United States) is an “artist who works with text, fabric, audio, digital images, and installation video, but is best known for her work in the field of photography.” (“Carrie Mae Weems” n.d.) Several of her most well known series include the *Kitchen Table (1989-1990)* and *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried (1995-1996)*, focusing on the representation of African American women, family and power dynamics in contemporary photography.

Calls, Responses and Agency through Dress & Afro-Religiosity

Call and response is a compositional technique that works similarly to a conversation, in which there is a phase of calling and followed by a response. Originating in Sub-Saharan Africa and brought to the New World by enslaved Africans, call and response is found in gospel music, blues, and folk music in the Caribbean, Latin America and the United States. (“What Is Call and Response in Music” n.d.) Call and response is an appropriate metaphor for the art practices of the Black women artists I have researched, as their voices reach out towards one another across material, aesthetic, cultural and ethnic lines. I place the artists and their works into two separate groups: firstly, artists who primarily use Afro-spirituality in both performance and studio-based practices, and secondly, artists who use photography and Black women’s bodies in site-specific locations. In ways that echo my own experience, these artists present a Black woman’s body that is ruptured by our existential crisis; this recognition has pushed me to examine how these artists understand this bodily rupture and how they might suture the body whole again.

In this first segment, the context behind the dance performances of Awilda Sterling-Duprey, the large scale sculptures of Simone Leigh and the performance art of Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons will be shown to weave together different methods of how Black women use Afro-religiosity within their works in order to claim self-possession, and often focusing on dress and its material to propel the meaning forward into action. Maintaining a similar framework to that of Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson, I will contextualize and interpret the meanings of their works, compartmentalizing allegories, themes and forms. Within these analyses of their works, I will note briefly how the works and their themes are relevant to my art practice, but that will be more fully expounded upon in Chapter 3.

Awilda Sterling-Duprey

Call and response is present in bomba, a traditional Afro-Puerto Rican musical genre and dance, in which drummers, led by the principal drummer, and the dancers are in dialogue with one another. It is through bomba and other forms of Afro-Caribbean dance and religion that Awilda Sterling-Duprey creates danced based performances and interventions. Afro-religiosity is historically and culturally tied to anti-colonial resistance, as evidenced in Sterling-Duprey's own words regarding her use of it within her practice: "The vocabulary is not the same as that of other movement forms [African traditional dances]. I want to use the forms to teach and show that there is validation in African culture and religions and to erase all the prejudices that others have written on those forms." ("Sterling.Pdf," n.d.) Similarly to limbo from Trinidad & Tobago or Gwo Ka from Guadeloupe, and candomblé from Brazil, these dances are fundamentally embodied acts of resistance, wherein the Africans from various ethnic tribes and regions together created new forms of release as a subjugated collective. Scholar Dianna M Stewart surmises these dances as a "ritual of boundary crossing that symbolizes an exilic people's desire to go Home...to Africa." (Missouri 2015)

"Informed by her study of African dance, Yoruba traditions, and Santeria, Sterling-Duprey's work became an expression of her commitment to celebrating blackness. Through her religious practice, she aimed to pay homage to African ancestral knowledge. 'It was also out of rebellion,' she said. 'I was tired of Christian precepts, and I didn't want to keep validating histories that only highlight exclusion and marginalization.'" (Reyes Franco 2019) Sterling-Duprey's presence within dance and art has created a pathway in where Afro-Puerto Ricans, particular Afro-Puerto Rican women, find affirmation in centering herself as a break in the politics of mestizaje, which is used a tool of erasure of the racial reality of Puerto Rico. Sterling-Duprey has made this clear; "There is a fallacy that we came from three cultural components: Spanish, always first, Taíno (indigenous Caribbean people), second, and African, always the third and the last." (Estrada 2018) Afro-spirituality through dance and its physical forms function as being a "signifier for a 'gateway between Africa and the Caribbean' that offers a dislocation of the physically bonded self and frees the individual from a 'uniform chain' that is the historical stigma of the Middle Passage." (Missouri 2015) In her work with Afro-Cuban musicians, Sterling-Duprey works through dance and religion as a form of Afro-Caribbean self-possession.

In 1999, Sterling-Duprey created a performance titled *Vejigante Decrepito*, and in 2013, this performance piece was documented when shown at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo en San Juan, Puerto Rico in collaboration with ESCALA at the University of Essex, UK. The invocation and performance of vejigante, in particular, is what drew me to Sterling-Duprey's work, for vejigante and the carnival celebrations they are used in are part of the synchronization of Spanish Catholic traditions and Afro-Indigenous mask making, all of which are elements of my artistic production and investigation of sites and monuments that are directly related with early Spanish colonial history of Puerto Rico. "Two variations exist in Puerto Rico: the *Vejigante* of pre-Lenten Carnival in Ponce, on the south coast, with its *paper-maché* mask, and the *Vejigante* of the Fiestas of Santiago Apóstol (St. James) in Loíza, on the northeast coast, with its mask carved from coconut husks. The colorful billowy costumes used by both appear nearly identical, but the masks reflect different materials, modes of production, and historiographies. Studies ascribe African and European elements to both." (Fiet, n.d.)



Figure 4, Mercado de Artesanías, 2014, Angel Xavier Viera, www.flickr.com

Sterling-Duprey's *Vejigante Decrépito* is not the traditional vejigante mask and costume, often either a brightly colored carved coconut husk or papier-mache mask, worn with an equally colorful costume, trimmed with ribbons and donning bat like wings. Neither is the dance technique she utilizes throughout her performance. Wrapped in plastic decorated with sequins, beads, pinned USA dollar bills, splattered

paint, feathers and other found materials versus the traditional bright ruffled bodysuit, Sterling-Duprey's vejigante costume is heavy and seemingly is dragged along, contradicting the flow like nature of the traditional costume and with the wearer's movements. The artist herself does not dance to bomba, or move her body in such a way that one familiar with vejigante would recognize immediately. Instead, she completes staggering movements and more contemporary dance sequences across the courtyard of MACPR, utilizing the space in its entirety, and in doing so blurs the line between audience and performer. There is a moment in which the audience is not solely on the periphery as stagnant witnesses, they instead become participatory in this evolution of culture, custom, and ritual.

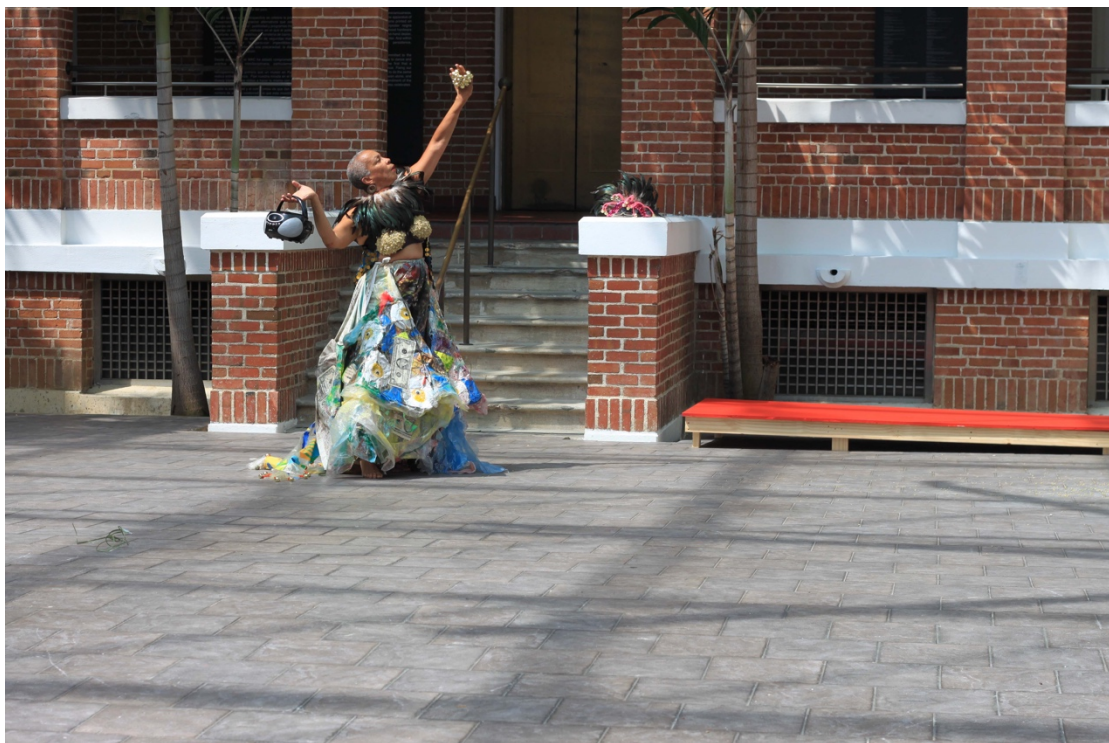


Figure 5, Vejigante Decrépito, 2013, Awilda Sterling-Duprey, found material and radio, Essex Collection of Art from Latin America

Sterling-Duprey stated the performance was conceptualized out of seeing her own personal vejigante sculpture at her home decay and rot as a consequence of Puerto Rico's weather and thought it an allegory for Afro-Puerto Rican culture today: it is breaking down and becoming something nearly unrecognizable to our own eyes. (Fiet, Bethell Bennett, and Rodríguez, n.d.) In the essay "Towards a Better Understanding of Caribbean Culture", Vivian Martínez Tabares reflects on a

performance of *Vejigante Decrépito*, describing it as “drunk with nostalgia and turned into plastic like the infinite numbers of shopping bags of Plaza las Américas...” (Fiet, Bethell Bennett, and Rodríguez, n.d.) How can Puerto Ricans maintain fundamental components of their culture with contemporary modes of expression without losing the essence of who we are? It is an existential question plaguing the island and members of its diaspora at large as a long-term consequence of American imperialism beginning in 1898¹⁸.

Vejigante Decrépito also challenges what a vejigante can do, how it can perform and the established gendered assumptions about its folkloric character. “I want to break the concept of folklore as static...What I can feel is that there are principles that evolve around people, and they change with time, but I am trying to break that space or formation that folklore brings to culture and bring it to a more accessible space. [sic] I was using those elements of the vejigante, but using the female body, breaking gender patterns, bringing all those elements together with my contemporary voice” (Fiet, Bethell Bennett, and Rodríguez, n.d.) In using Afro-religious symbols, characters, and music in a way that serves to evolve culture in order to give it a new voice, Sterling-Duprey shows us how Black women artists embody Trans-Atlantic memory of “home,” but also how we maintain our new traditions whilst also ensuring they grow and flourish in sync with new social and global processes.

Returning to bomba, while dancing the enslaved women utilized their layered, ruffled skirts¹⁹ and petticoats as an extension of their arms; the length of the material, coupled with the flow of the ruffles, created shapes and movements and also signalled commands to the principal drummer, telling him when to emphasize the sound upon his drum. Dancing with their skirts raised, the women used their petticoats sometimes to flirt with the drummers, but also to poke fun at the white plantation mistresses, who often were as violent and vitriolic to the enslaved women as their white male counterparts. Bomba was also a means of story-telling as much as releasing frustrations of daily life. The dance’s gathering in a somewhat private space away from masters and overseers, the music, and along the movements of the skirts together

¹⁸ The islands current struggle in deciding whether it wants independence, US statehood or to maintain its current neo-colonial status.

¹⁹ The clothing worn by enslaved women was similar to that of their Spanish masters of the time. This includes many ruffled layers that mimiced the European style of dress.

cultivated moments in which enslaved Black women could reconnect with each other and their memory of Africa whilst escaping the conditions they were forced into. Sterling-Duprey's work is a lesson for maintaining a connection to traditional Afro-Boricua culture and expression, but understanding that it too must move forward to serve the needs of the community today.

Simone Leigh

“...that alarming building in Mississippi [USA], Mammy’s Cupboard, a white-owned Southern restaurant just outside Natchez. Famous for its blueberry lemonade and down-home fare, this restaurant, serving only lunch (it first opened in 1940) is in the shape of a smiling, eager-to-please Aunt Jemima-esque “mammy” wearing a really big skirt in the shape of a dome; customers dine — astonishingly — under the skirt of this degrading stereotype.” (Volk 2018)

The description and action of how patrons enter this restaurant is an example of one of the mechanisms of the aftermath of slavery, what Kimberly Juanita Brown describes as the “residue of sexual exploitation on slave women’s bodies...” (Brown 2015) Even if Black women are no longer chattel slaves, the imagery and iconography of Black women slaves remain used, such as this restaurant or Golliwogs dolls or other US Antebellum collectibles such as the ‘Jolly N*gger Bank’ in the UK²⁰. With the invocation of this restaurant specifically, Leigh states “I thought the symbolic violence in this gesture of going in to eat in someone’s skirt was really stunning, and that it symbolically tells a larger story about the experience of black women and femmes. I have been interested in the symbolic parts of that building since I encountered it in an Edward Weston photograph.” (Kenney, n.d.) Simone Leigh’s focus on Black female subjectivity proves to counter these narratives and violent images of Black women.

As with the work of sculptor Simone Leigh like Sterling-Duprey’s *Vejigante Decréptio*, her practice serves to center Black women within their own Diasporic stories, “their agency and their power to inhabit worlds of their own creation”. (Museum 2019) Leigh “merges the human body with domestic vessels or architectural elements that evoke unacknowledged acts of female labor and care.” (Museum 2019) Whilst Leigh’s material vocabulary ranges from bronze to performance and film, her

²⁰ Through out my 8 years living in the UK, I regularly visited antique stores, where these items were readily available for purchase. In an instance of purchasing a collectible myself for an installation piece I was creating, an older white British gentlemen told me of how jealous he was that I was purchasing the Jolly N*gger Bank, and how he wished he got to it first.

sculptures, varying in size, often incorporate skirts in the form of domes, citing the “dome-shaped dwellings built by the Mousgoum people in Chad and Cameroonin” (Dafoe 2018). The evocation of huts within the work becomes an act of subversion, and as Leigh has stated the huts “have been used to humiliate us for years and years, when they are actually really quite beautiful and sophisticated objects.” These items used to argue that Africans are primitive, proof of their essentialized inferiority to Europeans, is now central to exhibitions at galleries such as the Guggenheim in New York, NY. “Referencing and subverting an egregious building in the American South while evoking architecture with deep cultural and historical roots in West Africa, Leigh has devised sculptural clothing for the ages.” (Volk 2018)

The domed skirts take on a deeper implication both within European art history and Afro-Spirituality, according to Leigh. Firstly, Leigh cites *Las Meninas* by Diego Velázquez (b.1599), and apart from the similarity of the shape of the dresses of the female figures in both the painting and Leigh’s sculptures, is the centralization of the artist in work and the absence of one in the other. The female form that wears the dresses in Leigh’s work are without eyes, only their noses and lips being present. In *Las Meninas*, Velázquez placed himself deliberately within the work, therefore deeply affecting the history of art. “The face without eyes is the opposite of the artist’s direct gaze in *Las Meninas*.” (Castro 2019) Leigh’s reasoning for this choice is simple; “... it’s a way of abstracting the figure because as I work I imagine a kind of experience, a state of being, rather than one person. I toggle back and forth between abstraction and figuration.”(Kenney, n.d.)

Secondly, and a key to my own investigation, is the referencing of skirts worn by practitioners of the Afro-Brazilian religion of Candomblé. Like other Afro-religions in the Caribbean region, Candomblé was born out of resistance of slavery and insistence upon African retentions in Brazil. The Portuguese slavers allowed the enslaved Africans to gather, and perform their songs, dances and religions for a time during the initial period of Brazilian colonization. When the Catholic Church outlawed the religion and subjected priests to the Inquisition in the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century, the religion and its practices went underground. Similarly, to Santería, it is a syncretic religion in which the worshipped African gods were masked with Catholic saints. It was only in the 1970s in which legally, it was permissible to gather and practice religious ceremonies without police permission, allowing for Candomblé to flourish once again and be practiced.



Figure 6, Baianas na Lavagem da Esquina do Padre, festa típica, 2007, André Koehne, Caetité, Brazil

Although recently, a Candomblé place of worship for 18 years was vandalized in late June of 2019 in São Pedro da Aldeia, Brazil. A cursory search on the internet suggests the destruction of Candomblé places of worship is somewhat common. It could be understood then that Afro-Spirituality as not only a means for connection for Black people but as a vessel for resistance of white supremacy, as stated earlier in regards to the use of Afro-Spirituality in Black women's work. As Leigh states regarding her skirts in reference to Candomblé "[there is] agency embodied in those skirts." (Kenney, n.d.)

Embedded into the agency furthermore, is the use of raffia as a material for the skirts. Leigh consistently connects the material to the theme in ways that centers the history of the Black diasporic experience and traditions. Finalizing our research into Leigh's work and visual and cultural vocabulary is the material of the sculptures. Casting clay in bronze for the corporeal forms and vases, Leigh utilizes glazing methods no longer popular with contemporary sculptors, but instead has a long history

in African pottery tradition. Raffia, a palm indigenous to Africa and in only a few locations in Central and South America, are dried and used for weaving, ropes, buildings, textiles and more. They are also common in the creation of masks and clothing worn by dancers in ceremonies. ("Raffia Palm" n.d.) For example, with a long stick protruding from the top, a tall figure made from raffia interacts with the large crowd formed around it. As the raffia covered figure moves about the large space and spins, creating almost a hurricane of shape and energy from the many individual pieces of raffia flowing in the wind, women in the crowd begin to dance closer and respond to the movements.

Described here is a single moment within the festival called *Journées culturelles*, in where the Kumpo, a traditional figure in the mythology of the Diola people in Senegal and Gambia is a central gathering point for the community. ("Kumpo" n.d.) Leigh's sculptures, like the materials she uses and the spirituality she evokes, is a true manifestation of her artistic goals: to center Black female subjectivity and to primarily speak to and connect with, Black women. The *Journées culturelles*, much like Leigh's work "is a stimulus for the social community...Nobody has the right to be lonely." ("Kumpo" n.d.) Leigh's work comes from an auto-ethnographical point of entry but maintains itself within Black female subjectivity through her visual vernacular that speaks to the African diaspora at large. Starting from the cultural points of architecture and spirituality of West Africa, moving towards the Middle Passage through to today, Leigh's work provides Black women with a story and history of their own.

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons' work presents itself as the most unembellished and clear manifestation of Afro-religiosity as a vehicle for Black women's agency. Throughout her career, she has maintained Afro-Cuban culture at the center of her practice across the various methods she utilizes, be it photography, performance, installation or sculpture. Principally Campos-Pons began her career addressing Black artist's representation within the Cuban artistic canon, and throughout her career traced Trans-Atlantic memory in the Caribbean, her own exile in the diaspora and often uses Santería as an anchor in exploring themes relating to Afro-Caribbean women's lives. "As an Afro-Cuban artist interested in the legacy of slavery and removal in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Campos-Pons embodies the fragment and relocates the imagery of the maternal to the center of the black woman's experience." (Brown 2015) Her invocation of the Orisha Yemayá, the subversion of the public space and the transforming of a specific museum into a site of ritual, Campos-Pons' *Habla La Madre* (2014) is where I focus my attention for my own investigation, as this particular performance with all its materials and embedded meanings, concludes this portion of my research into skirts, Afro-religions, and reclamation of agency.

Habla La Madre began with the exiting of Campos-Pons from the front door of the Guggenheim's Sackler Center of Arts Education on E. 88th Street. From there, carrying a bouquet of seven red roses and a white and blue *sopera* (a large lidded porcelain tureen used to house *los otanes* or stones of the Orichas), Campos-Pons walked along 5th Avenue to the beat of *batá* drums and chants of Yemayá *Assessu* and into the Guggenheim's main entrance. Campos-Pons wore a white and blue headwrap and a white cylindrical dress—whose construction mimics the exterior and interior architecture of the museum. The artist began an invocation where she petitioned the seven Santería (Yorùbá) Orichas and invited one of them, Yemayá—mother of all living things as well as the owner of the oceans and seas—to embody the institution by

taking over her body. (Townsend 2016)

Alongside Campos-Pons' were musicians playing traditional Yoruba batá as she sang to Yemayá and performed a ritual dance known as a Bembé using a large wrapping of blue fabric before she poured the sopera containing fish, into the Guggenheim's fountain. After placing ceramic plates on to the gallery floor, she proclaimed "we are here to stay...it took so long to make the wrong right and embody the beauty and the right of the Black body to be on these walls." (Townsend 2016)

To understand Campos-Pons' work, one must first accept the importance of the use of Santería and other Afro-religious ceremonies by Black women in the diaspora. Like Sterling-Duprey, the use of Afro-spirituality and culture is not a mere artistic interest or metaphor, it is a question of life, death, memory and a suturing of fragmented Black identity and corporeality. As Philip A. Townsend observes in *(Re)Framing Resistance and (Re)Forging Solidarity: Negotiating the Politics of Space, Race, and Gender in Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons' Habla La Madre*, "In an effort to caution viewers against naturalizing Campos-Pons' relationship to Santería based on her Blackness, Luis Camnitzer has argued that Campos-Pons' interest in Santería was "coincidental" and "evolved purely from artistic pursuits." (Townsend 2016) This cynicism regarding the use of Santería and Black women's relationship to Afro-spirituality (especially this invocation of a woman orisha, mother of water) is debunked quickly, primarily because *Habla La Madre* is one of many works where Campos-Pons speaks and brings to life Trans-Atlantic memory through the religion, therefore its use as an artistic method is a direct expression of her Afro-Cuban identity.

Habla La Madre as a performance is not merely a reinterpretation of a Santería ritual and appropriated anew, I in agreement with Townsend, believe it to be a proper ritual. Since the use of Afro-spirituality is already a method of resistance, Campos-Pons marks the transformation of the sidewalk leading to the museum, and the Guggenheim itself, into a site of memory and in specific rebellion, since she did not have permission to interact nor place fish or any other object into the museum's fountain. "Like the Atlantic, the sidewalk figures not only as a mechanism of travel but as a landscape that holds history. If the sopera and Batá drums represent cultural components that were retained during the transatlantic slave trade, then *Habla La Madre* became a reflection of a specific African Diasporic experience." (Townsend 2016) The performance is informed by Black Diasporic history and politic, this is

especially true in considering the importance of the Guggenheim Museum as a significant location for artistic culture but also as a hegemonic space, subverted immediately by this act of what some would have considered destabilization.

Like Awilda Sterling-Duprey and Simone Leigh, Campos-Pons' utilizes dress in relation to their significance and use in Afro-spiritual ceremonies. In *Habla La Madre*, designed a dress that would not only adhere to Santería tradition but also to resemble the shape of the Guggenheim itself. The dress was white and cylindrical, from top to bottom each cylinder decreasing with size, ocean blue cloth within each layer, herself almost appearing like a fountain of water. In Townsend's research of *Habla La Madre*, regarding the dress he states he "read the design of the dress as a way for the artist to simultaneously inhabit and embody the Guggenheim. In an interview, the artist said, "I designed the dress to look like the Guggenheim because I wanted people to understand that I was not only inhabiting the building physically, but also metaphorically." (Townsend 2016)

In the same vein of subversion and agency of Sterling-Duprey and Leigh's work, skirts and dresses are archetypes of resistance used as tools through Afro-spirituality, creating a space in which these Black women can actively regain control of their subjectivities, images, and self-definition outside of Euro-American imagination of Black womanhood. Finally, and like with Campos-Pons previous works, the artists' use of the orisha Yemayá, the mother of all living things, especially the oceans and the seas, signposts us as viewers and practitioners of Santería, to focus on Yemayá's power of regeneration as Trans-Atlantic subjects. Campos-Pons work, in the words of art historian Okwui Enwezor, is an "'existential and historical suture,' stitching her lineage with other descendants of transatlantic slavery". (Brown 2015)

Conclusion

The relevancy of the art practices of Awilda Sterling-Duprey, Simone Leigh and Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons lies in their return to Afro-spirituality, as it connects to ruptured, post-colonial identity, Black women's bodies and Trans-Atlantic memory. More over, this section was meant to explore their use of materials rich with saturated meaning that crossed the Atlantic, and that over time developed into tools to gain agency. For example, the raffia Leigh uses to create skirts for her bronze Black female sculptures, signalling back to African architecture, and her understanding of the

agency of Candomblé religious dress. Or providing a space and moment for the evolution of traditional cultural markers in the ways Sterling-Duprey does with her gender bending and alternatively garbed vejigante, using new found materials demonstrating to the audience something is dying and also, something new must live. Lastly, Campos-Pons' unambiguous use of Santería as a tool in her performance work not only for resistance, or the calling of a mother to heal and protect us and as Campos-Pons retraced the Trans-Atlantic slave trade routes, but the subversion of a hegemonic Euro-centric cultural space.

These practices and their tools studied in this section are in direct relation to my own art practice and project, in which I am conceptualizing apparatuses and methods for my own self-renewal and regeneration, a new artistic visual vocabulary for suturing my own body whole. Through a return to Afro-Indigenous cultural markers and performance, part of the goal has been to use this new visual language, and these artists and their works have demonstrated the myriad of ways to do so. These works provided me with an understanding of how Black women artists, despite the difference in geographical regions or ethnic backgrounds, the ways a diasporic community can turn to its past and remember. As the Samoan poet Albert Wendt states regarding rescuing cultural self-respect from amnesia as a repercussion of colonialism, "A society is what it remembers; we are what we remember; I am what I remember; the self is a trick of memory." (Wendt 1987) These artists are calling out to inform the Afro-diasporic zeitgeist how to stitch the self whole again.

Photographing Fragmented Bodies in a Scattered Landscape

In continuation of my research of Black female artists, this section discusses the photographic performance work of Black women, who focus their lens on Black women's bodies in both urban and pastoral landscapes. Their quest for suturing the Black female body whole, the truth of memory and the subversion of space are theoretically similar to the previous artists discussed. Questions regarding a dominating identity, historically important specific sites, barriers, and urban architecture are all questions relevant to my own practice here in Barcelona, and I will demonstrate how these Black women also address these subject matters. Coming from not only different ethnic and regional backgrounds themselves but also in site-specific locations within their own countries and in locations away from their own 'home' countries.

From Ingrid Pollard's lone Black figure peering over an aging wooden fence in the English countryside to Nona Faustine's strategic placement of a Black female's body against historic slave sites in New York City, back to Carrie Mae Weems' questions of her own body's relation to the Roman architecture, the following section will be an analysis into what I consider photographic performances of Black women's bodies and their relation to the world that surrounds them.

Ingrid Pollard

“In *Pastoral Interlude*, the focus is precisely on the impossibility for Black Britons to belong in rural spaces which have always been regarded as the epitome of an unalloyed white Englishness. Ingrid Pollard had to find ways of expressing the feeling of alienation and adversity through visual means. Loneliness is one means.”
(Bertrand 2014)

Upon first glance of the photographic series by Guyanese born Pollard, a familiar sense of un-belonging washed over me. Acquainted with English landscapes, I immediately retraced the first year of my own time living in a small English village in the east of the country, far away from any major urban areas and especially, from any other Black people. A place with no stop-lights, one bus stop, a post office within the village shop, and as was made evident to me, I was the only American and Person of Color. The one and only time I ventured to the local pub, the chatter and pleasant mood of the atmosphere ceased as soon as my body crossed the threshold; it was as if I had rudely entered someone’s living room without invitation.

In this series, Pollard explores concepts of participation, exclusion, representation and multi-cultural identity in post-war Britain through English rural landscapes, and does through photographing herself in the north of the country in the Lake District. Gazing over to the right, wearing a white blouse and hair wrapped in an emerald green cloth, her black face and hands pierce the landscape as she reloads a camera. Seated on seemingly damp rocks, behind her a barbed wire fence held upright by near rotting planks of wood, Pollard’s photograph “[signifies] a ‘geography of exclusion’ and a world of borders not to be crossed.” (Bertrand 2014) Accompanying the photograph, the caption reads:

“‘Pastoral Interlude’...it’s as if the black experience is only ever lived within an urban environment. I thought I liked the Lake District; where I wandered lonely as a black face in a sea of white. A visit to the countryside is always accompanied by a feeling of unease; dread...” (Pollard 1987)

Landscape photography as a genre is subverted through Pollard's Black female and post-colonial subjectivity controlling its focus. As explained thoroughly in Mathilde Betrand's essay *The politics of representation and the subversion of landscape in Ingrid Pollard's Pastoral Interlude (1987)*, the history of English genre of landscape, its aesthetics and method, are born out of a specific Victorian English social desire to honor the land which cultivated the traditional and emerging social values. Pollard's 5 hand-tinted series is a clear gesture to the works of the past, such as the postcards celebrating serene interpretations of the rolling hills and meadows. Placing herself at the periphery, the borders of each enclave of land within the traditional compositional structure of the photograph, Pollard is best positioned to not only question the genre itself, but also the English history of colonialism as it relates characteristically to the whiteness of the nation's countryside.

In the essay, Betrand focuses on the concept and physicality of exclusion in Pollard's work and in British society. Exclusion from mainstream depictions of society outside of urban areas across the country, Black Britons such as Pollard are a disturbance when their bodies are present in images relating to the calm and stillness of the English countryside. "...on the one hand, the images of *Pastoral Interlude* expose the fallacy of the landscape as a value-free mode of representation and therefore indict an entire tradition, and on the other, they deliberately convey a political message which questions the naturalized exclusion of Black subjects from the countryside." (Betrand 2014)

I believe the concept of exclusion can be understood even deeper given British modes of plantation owning in the West Indies. Not only because, as Betrand notes, that as the landscape genre was flourishing Africans were being shipped off en masse to the colonies, but because of absentee slave owning. The English plantation owners were not living in the colonies with their families, as there was limited infrastructure such as schools and hospitals for the emerging colonialists. This is very different to the situation to their American counterparts, with their slaves living in their own quarters on the plantations with the masters. As absentee slave-owners, they made up 10 per cent of the total number of people who feature in the slave compensation process but owned half the enslaved people.

This dynamic was explored in the literature of the time, for example, *Mansfield Park* (1814) by Jane Austen and *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte. These are two

novels in which slavery and its economy are the foundation for the wealth of its characters, but is not spoken of at length in a multi-layered way, much like the dynamic of British slavery itself; affecting the lives of nearly all British citizens but never directly in their own lands like the Americans. Furthermore, at the time Pollard created her images, the British public, both Black and white, unbeknownst to them, were paying (via taxes) the compensation that the British treasury gave to the country's slave owners as a pay off after Britain abolished slavery in 1833; in other words, the descendants of British slavery, by virtue of being the children and grandchildren of the Windrush generation²¹ living in the UK, were putting money back into the crown's pockets for the freedom of their ancestors²². "The descendant of the colonized subject has come to visit the sites and country houses whose wealth was built on colonizing ventures." (Betrand 2015) When I view Pollard's work, it is in this understanding of the English model of the colonial project, the current xenophobic dynamics of small town life and the state of its current economy that I truly understand the function of her photographic series.

Pastoral Interlude encapsulates much of the anxieties and disconnection postcolonial subjects have with wealth and lands they are directly responsible for, but have no means of reaching them. They are cut from their representations and yet are forced to monetarily pay for the maintenance of their beauty. The Black body, fissured as it is from colonial representations rooted in racialized misogyny, becomes an object to be broken by violence by simply appearing in a land where it is said, it does not belong. "...Pollard's postcolonial landscapes interpolate the spectator and lay the ground for the necessary redefinition of a dis-essentialized and much more

²¹ "[After World War II] the British government began to encourage mass immigration from the countries of the British Empire and Commonwealth to fill shortages in the labour market. The British Nationality Act 1948 gave Citizenship of the UK and Colonies to all people living in the United Kingdom and its colonies, and the right of entry and settlement in the UK. Many West Indians were attracted by better prospects in what was often referred to as the mother country." The ship HMT Empire Windrush brought a group of 802 migrants to the port of Tilbury, near London, on June 22 1948, hence 'The Windrush Generation'.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_African_Caribbean_people#The_.22Windrush_generation.22

²² "[Her Majesty's] Treasury tweeted the information after they made the news public. The tweet said: "Here's today's surprising #FridayFact. Millions of you helped end the slave trade through your taxes. The tweet added an infographic which said: "Did you know? In 1833, Britain used £20 million, 40% of its national budget, to buy freedom for all slaves in the Empire. The amount of money borrowed for the Slavery Abolition Act was so large that it wasn't paid off until 2015. Which means that living British citizens helped pay to end the slave trade".
<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/taxpayers-still-paying-british-slave-12019829>

heterogeneous notion of Britishness that does not shy away from question its own past and reconsidering the terms of its inclusiveness.” (Betrand 2015)

Nona Faustine

“...you might see Faustine’s figure as a ghost of the nation’s past, come to hold our first President, and all our brutal history, to account. But Faustine isn’t a ghost, [sic]. She is broad, not slender; dark, not light; alive, not dead; a flesh-and-blood woman looking at America in all its tenses and challenging America to look right back at her where she stands, right in the center of the frame.”
(Schwartz 2016)

What I believe to be most relevant and poignant about African American photographer Nona Faustine’s work is her ability to immaculately confront the unseen qualities and truths of monuments and historical sites in New York City. Faustine’s photos function not as a retelling of colonial America or its slave-owning past, but they pull the wool from the eyes of American society that chooses to keep the truth of America’s slave owning legacy, as a closed curtain. In one photograph titled *Negro Burial Ground*, Faustine wearing only a white skirt and white heels, her Black body the center of the frame stands still in front of a large brick building, in the background, a smokestack punches up into the air.

The photograph, taken at a bus depot in Harlem, was once a burial ground for African Americans. “I live in a city and a country that are filled with monuments and icons of all sorts—mostly to white men,” she says. “They convey their history. It’s a one-sided legacy.” (Kim 2016) Whilst the monuments to the white men are often a theater of colonial power and white supremacist ideology, Faustine’s photography unravels these monuments and historical sites in ways that only a Black woman could do, and that is because she is able to see them for what they truly are. It is this very action of contextualizing the full historical implications of a monument, icon or site that informs my own practice regarding my relationship to the city of Barcelona. Her work is a lesson in how to properly memorialize the lives lost at the foundation of these architectural landscapes built with these colonial implications. She has stated she seeks to make the world in remembrance, new memorials for the Africans enslaved and brought to American shores. “And there’s hardly any places to go to mourn, to reflect about these people. They’ve been buried.” The bodies are quite literally,

cemented in the foundation of the city and the country. (Demie 2016)

Faustine's use of her own nude Black body in these very public locations in these works is very deliberate. In an interview with Pank Magazine, when asked about being nude in public, Faustine commented the following:

“For me, after I had had my baby my whole life and perspective changed about who I was as a woman and my body and my connection to that. And, of course, growing up, as a teenager and as a young woman, you develop these complex issues around the body, and particularly if you're a plus sized woman—and I've always been a big girl—so you are constantly dealing with the messages that society's sending you, that your family's sending you, and there's you and how you feel about it. And then at a certain point, like when I had my baby, it was like I just wanted to celebrate the body, but I also wanted to talk about that thing that has held many of us down and many of us back as women. To hide, to be shamed and be ashamed of your big breasts, your big behind, your big thighs, whatever, and it was like, you know, I just wanted to clapback society, and also talk about how the body has been used. The black female body has been used as a breeder as a work horse, all these things, but we're triumphant, and the body is triumphant, and my body is that. Somehow I connected that and also the beauty.” (Jones 2016)

The Black female body stands defiant against history and current society that desires to erase its historical significance and demonize its appearance in the public sphere; Faustine's work is an apparatus against this act. In indicating to the legacy of Saartje Baartman, the display of Black women's bodies on auction blocks, anthropologic medical study books and traveling colonial shows in the USA and Europe, Faustine subverts the presentation of her body not as any sort of anomaly or freakish display of the 'Other', but as a celebration of her Black womanhood and her own flesh.

This action is most apparent in the photograph of a cemetery, where there are three life-size cardboard cut-outs of Faustine among the tombstones, an installation titled *Of My Body I Will Make Monuments In Your Honor* (2014). What is stated to be a Dutch Pre-Revolutionary War cemetery, three slaves are laid to rest here with the first European colonists of the area. Each cut-out presents Faustine facing a different direction to the next, back turned, or the body directly turned towards the view, but in each cut-out is without a face. "Faustine breaks that glass by similarly declaring that she is some body in a new thing, a new dispensation of political and social awareness that makes patriarchal white supremacy (once quite safe and secure in its abstraction of black bodies as property) have continual moments of self discovery." (Rodney 2015)

Like Ingrid Pollard, Faustine's photographs are accompanied by lyrical captions that provide the viewer with further context and depth to the site in focus. They are accompanying commentary, like Pollard, on what cultivated the current society starting from its colonial history. The images in her *White Shoes* series envisage "the cycle of (our country's) birth, (economic) growth, death and rebirth." (Mestrich, 2017) Standing with her back to the camera, wearing a white skirt only, we see Faustine confronting the statue of George Washington, the first president of the United States. "'... a thirst for compleat freedom ... had been her only motive for absconding.' Oney Judge, Federal Hall NYC," ("Nona Faustine White Shoes" n.d.) The caption, however, narrates for us the contradictory nature of his legacy as the first president of a nation founded upon freeing itself from British colonial rule, whilst he himself owned enslaved Africans. Faustine contextualizes the story of one the slaves that ran away, Oney Judge, by placing her own body in front of Washington's statue, daring us as viewers to believe in what American society understands the concept of freedom to mean.

Faustine's work is a testimony to the ancestors and descendants of the builders of America's streets, economy, and present-day culture. Through her work, we can dis-assemble the myths and lies that hide behind iconography scattered across the country, and apply this to the countries that themselves are unable or unwilling to cope with their colonial past and present. Her nude, Black body as a part of the focal point of her photography, in control and agency intact, places the responsibility of placation of racial and historical anxieties not on to other Black bodies, but to those who have not understood their own gaze.

Carrie Mae Weems

The photographic work of legendary artist Carrie Mae Weems has long been the driving force in the shifting of ideas surrounding African-American representation in photography. Her most influential work, *The Kitchen Table Series* (1989-1990) was more of a documentary-like series of images and text portraying family life in a domestic setting, functioning as a “[telling of] the story of a self-possessed woman with a ‘bodacious manner, varied talents, hard laughter, multiple opinions,’ as it reads.” (Stephens 2016) Throughout her career, Weems has crossed boundaries in her work through theme and subject including anthropology, history, architecture, and womanism. Weems has been able to show her audience how photography can situate the Black female body as fractured and a site of violence, but also how to re-focus the lens into an act of self-possession that can disassemble our own preconceptions of Black bodies in art. It is this journey through her work that I finish my research into Black women artists that use performance, photography, space, and dress to understand Black womanhood and gain self-possession and agency.

In order to do so, we must understand the context in which Weems’ discusses Black women’s bodies. “The body represents a conflation of temporality and space, the afterimage of slavery, and the elongation of the residue of empire.” (Brown 2015) This is all too clear in the photographic installation titled *From Here I Saw What Happened . . . And I Cried* (1995-1996). A series containing 28 daguerreotypes of slaves taken in the 1850s originally by anthropologist Louis Agassiz, whose sole purpose in creating these images was to scientifically prove the inferiority of African Americans, and by extension Africans across the continent and diaspora.

Starting with a regal image of an African woman, in which this initial print is tinted in a distinct blue, the following images are tinted a deep blood red. Framed in a black circular matte, the accompanying texts on each photograph guide audiences in our understanding of how photography pushed the downward spiral of dehumanization of Africans in America. I have always understood these captions to be almost prayer-like to those who came before us, an acknowledgment of their actual humanity, presence and importance as ancestors. The following captions “You Became a Scientific Profile.” “A Negroid Type.” “An Anthropological Debate” “And A Photographic Subject” “Born with A Veil You Became Root Worker, Juju Mama, Voodoo Queen, Hoodoo Doctor” are just a fraction of the totality of the series, but in

these texts, we can form lyrics to an incantation. In the artist's own words "“When we're looking at these images, we're looking at the ways in which Anglo America—white America—saw itself in relationship to the black subject. I wanted to intervene in that by giving a voice to a subject that historically has had no voice.” (“MoMA Learning,” n.d.) This re-contextualization of the Black body is what initially drew me to Weems's work, but in her development of the use of Black body in space, without foregoing race as part of the subject matter, is where I take the keenest interest.

In her series *Roaming* (2006), Weems ventures across Rome, situating the audience as spectator through her, as she is the central figure in each of the photographs, forcing us to experience the architecture through her corporeal presence. As Brown has noted, it becomes the responsibility of the viewer to “manage the visual comportment, to complement the sovereignty of the eye with a concomitant negotiation, one that has at its center the machinations of sight (ocularity) and site (location).” (Brown 2015) Weems asks “what is one made to feel?” in various video interviews and lectures about the series, and she answers that it “is the power of the state in relationship to the lower subject.” (Brown 2015) It is this question that I also take into account as I develop my own work regarding monuments.

Her answer is unmistakable when the decaying grand architectural Roman structures engulf our vision, and Weems' Black body, back turned to us, stands still in the center. For Weems, there is no clearer sign of empire, power, and hegemony than Rome. Monuments, buildings constructed with the invisible stain of colonialism and slavery, are heterotopias of crisis and points of hegemony (to be discussed further in the following chapter). Nationalism forged within these monuments and sites, or churches and sculptures, constitute a large heterotopia of crisis that I, like Weems witness as such, but perhaps others do not, for they do not inherit a certain kind of knowledge of the past. Thus, it is in *Roaming* in which preconceived notions of the greatness of colonialism and imperial power can be shattered, via her presence as both object and subject.

This concept is also executed in *The Louisiana Project* (2003), a series of photographs and video installations commissioned by Newcomb Art Gallery at Tulane University at the eve of the bicentennial celebrations of the commemoration of the Louisiana Purchase. Within the series, Weems creates still photographs, placing herself within the gardens, opulent edifices and door frames of a plantation big house, accompanied by shadow-play video vignettes, exploring the relationships between

white men and women and their black slaves. Again, Weems directs us as an audience to experience the plantations *through* her, her presence simultaneously acting as object and subject like in *Roaming*. “Weems’ presence in all of these photographs is a tangible reminder of the countless crimes against, injustices toward, and persistent degradation of African bodies upon this land.” (Fortuné 2015)

A photograph titled *At The Precipice* (2003), Weems, wearing a simple calico dress that serves as an indication to servant clothing, stands directly at the front and center of a majestic plantation house. Its staircases winding from both left and right to reconvene at the center of the first floor porch, the columns soaring high to the top of the second floor, its beauty and craftsmanship is undeniable. Like many buildings born within the colonial project, ostentatious tastes gave way to majestic structures with wealth earned from slave labor.

This is the truth that Weems directs us to, the acceptance of two facts that can be true at once; there is beauty found in both American and European architectural works, and much of it was built with the blood of slaves. “As Weems duplicates her body against slavery’s most visible and enduring remains, the plantation loses something of its own mystery, tethered as it is to the perpetual unfreedom of others.” (Brown 2015)

Conclusion

My first visit to Barcelona in February 2018 was when I first faced the statue of Colon at the foot of Las Ramblas. In negotiating my own feelings with the physical enormity of the statue and the bass reliefs depicting the moment of contact and the bringing of Tainos to Barcelona left me with unease, but also sparked my desire to create work that responded to this storm of emotion within me. The initial question was how do I do this?

The works of Ingrid Pollard, Nona Faustine and Carrie Mae Weems have informed me regarding the multiple ways Black women across the diaspora confront and subvert architectural structures and landscapes. This also includes site-specific locations, and through the use of their bodies within the medium of photography, or what I understand to be performative photography. For me, monuments, sites, and landscapes can be actions despite their stillness, and this lies within what others do not see but as Black women we do; the Trans-Atlantic memory and gaze and its

corporeal presence unearth what is hidden by colonial revisionism cemented through the passage of time.

Through the research of the locations conceptualizing what the artists deemed as their own appropriate responses, I have come to understand how to formulate my ideas concerning monuments in Barcelona through my own physical presence. The use of the Black female body is the mode in which our attention is directed to tackling that which often makes Western society uncomfortable; we, like the women in the photographs, are unable to refuse a confrontation with power and memory within the various site-specific locations, monuments or urban architecture that the artists chose.

My own objective with the finish artistic work encompasses both the utilization of cultural markers and Afro-spirituality as tools in which I confront the unseen qualities of site-specific locations relating to Puerto Rican colonial history. It was important the artists I researched were not just Black women, but Black women from across the diaspora that lent their voices collectively to create a discourse in a language of their own making, an artistic vocabulary that was able to permeate multiple facets of Black women and femme subjectivity and envision ways of confrontation and contemplation. As voices denied for so long any path to an agency, these Black women gave me lessons in how to forge my own map to agency within the monuments and buildings of the city.

Chapter Four:

Development of the performance La Sangre Llama

The following chapter provides the most relevant documentation of the development of my practice and final work for the TFM, therefore it deviates in form and voice from the previous three chapters. In the time throughout the school year of 2018-2019 (though not consistently dated), I maintained a documentation/artistic journal in where I noted questions regarding what I wanted to create, how my ideas functioned theoretically and how they were connected, if at all, to what was discussed during lecture. There is a lot of questioning and answering, and there are many ideas that were not produced, but the point was to dive into any and all possibilities until I decided which was the best. For me as an artist, self-reflexivity is key, the documentation journal serves as a long conversation I have with myself; it is like a studio in written form. There is a linear component, as the journal begins in November of 2018 and ends in August 2019, but not every entrance will be dated and will end rather abruptly, but it is evident the development of new questions and ideas, and attempts to understand theory that became the foundation for the text in the previous three chapters.

The inclusion of my documentation journal is important, since this where the bulk of my artistic practice lies, more so than the performance itself (to be discussed further). The readings on the artists I researched in Chapter Three would not have happened had I not taken into account specific issues I considered in my journal. It is also a record of how I experienced the city and the monuments, which is just as important as the locations themselves. Conversely, the research conducted and the knowledge gained from it assisted me in furthering the development of my practice leading me to the final performance.

Documentation/Artistic Journal

November 14, 2018

At Colon's Statue

What is the purpose of a statue? Why are people suddenly reacting to them in this [protest] way in other places? I'm watching children climb on lions, they are laughing and playing. Their parents are photographing them. Memories for the future. In the background, a humbled pathetic interpretation of a Taino cacique kneels before a friar or a priest. *Come mierda*. I would like to endure this site. It seems like a strange thing, for me to experience it one way, with a bit of difficulty, whilst others are laughing and posing. I would like to respond to this in my own way.

Performance as a response to sites?

Site specific performance as a response to the city.

The street performers in their elaborate customs line the side of the final stretch of Las Ramblas before we see the massive column and state. Is there a way to subvert the space with a public performance but not be blurred in meaning or delivery considering the other performers?

- *Understand public performance of this nature: Read Fusco/Peña

- *Collect information regarding the statue

- *Collect archived information

Dressed in markers of Afro[Indigenous] Diasporic cultures, with a specific movement, perform in the space between hustlers, tourists and the statue itself. I am less interested in subverting the performers space and more interested in subverting what tourists or others think of what they see in certain public sites and monuments. The statue is a grave stone [for me] they give no thought to.

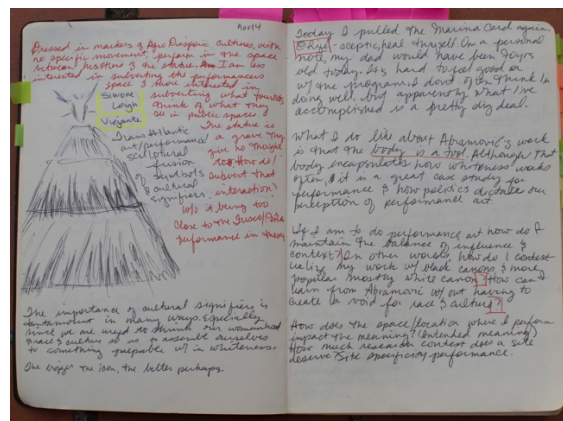


Figure 7, image of personal documentation journal

The importance of cultural signifiers is tantamount in many ways. Especially since we are urged to shrink our womanhood, race and culture so as to assemble ourselves anew into something palpable within the confines of whiteness. The bigger [obvious] the icon, the better perhaps.

The idea of [disrupting] the public performance space lingering in my a bit. But I do think that its not really about the other performers, it's mostly about how the space is used. Obviously it has an important cultural history for Barcelona, but there's also the statue at the center, or the start of it. This looming phallic gesture of immortality [retention of power and identity of Euro-American white supremacy]. It can't be about the subversion of performance in a public space. It needs to be about subverting that public space with this body. So if [this] is the intention, then what is required of the performance? What is it full intention and how do I carry that out? Do I focus solely on my own dimension of diasporic displacement in Barcelona?

Performance art by Black artists are measured against whiteness and Euro-American forms of expression. Also our bodies carry with them a map of histories we can not run from. Even if my performance was only about space, someone woud use gender and color against the performance (I've seen it happen all too often).

We don't need to shy away from race or color in order to maintain or achieve validity as performers of color. This place may be recently coming to terms in new ways with

the mechanics of racism and conquest but those of us from the islands deal with its consequences daily. Especially for myself as a mixed race person, my blood carries memory into the future with a hope that I can heal whatever is within me that is rage.

Does phenomenology offer a sufficient framework for analysis of Black women's performance or being able to understand my own performance work?

Notes on Lorraine O'Grady

*How do these readings inform my own performance practice?

"Self expression is not a stage that can be bypassed."

From the reading on O'Grady, I did not find a concrete way of changing, or truly grasping one's own subjectivity. The problem is so much bigger than art, it weighs on the entire society's shoulders. There is too much time that has yet to be passed in order for post colonial subjects to no longer be seen as such.

Is the statue having a constant conversation with Barcelona independently or is it constant dialogue with its tourists? Does it do more for them versus those that are from Barcelona?

I am not just repeating myself for the sake of it, but I am very interested in what the statue does: the statue itself is almost like an action. It's unwavering position high into the air whilst others play and laugh around the bas reliefs memorializing genocide, is an action.

*Remember to try to create work from these questions through a phenomenological framework

*Does the performance stand alone or does it rely on some sort of documentation?

Two works by Alan Michaelson pull my attention for my own practice titled *Round Dance* and *Historicity*

They are video installations works dealing with native histories and stories but are also very site specific. This is a good example of the what for the why. Same for Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons' works where ancestors lined the wall with the irons at the center, looking like small ships going in different directions. I think I should actually change my focus to site specificity and how statues are an action to inspire my performance.

How is the statue an action?

Could easily say it generates a buzz, and this generation of mass movement of people, there is this creation of joy around a protected truth. The statue reminds me of what I lost, of things I have never had, of emotions and a peace I will also never have. It stands and represents my past, present and future. It creates a hysteria of joy despite memorializing genocide, that fissure of culture that is 'the first contact'. It has a conversation with statues and monuments across Europe and the USA that they are still in power. It tells me am powerless. Funny enough, I'm afraid of heights. It dares me to look it in the eyes. It stands still and strong so that the laughter at its base can be loud enough to reach above him. The statue is an action of violence and how I think about reacting is blood memory.

Why Performance?

The Black body in contemporary art, especially when used by white artists, often is just a mirror to violence, i.e. Brett Bailey. There are Black artists that analyze this representation through a historical lens, but I am very keen on transformative work of the present. There is a way in which we must have a sense of control and lack there of as performers. Especially as performers of color, since depending upon location, Black bodies come with so many meanings but almost always that which has been or will be prey to whiteness in some way, or so as I have experienced it. So what does it really mean when Black women place their bodies at the center of their work?

I'm beginning to think a lot about Dr Browns book and how Black women's slave bodies are denied any sense of vulnerability. I do not believe that vulnerability is bad at all. For myself, there is a certain shift with vulnerable, versus just a simple victim of racism or an assault. Uri McMillian discusses a reclamation of objecthood by Black women performers when they choose to become objects. Performance forces audiences to bear witness to the flesh of the artist, to strip away a vacuum of whiteness but also gain an understanding of the performance of race in everyday life.

Jan 2, 2019

I have been thinking about diasporic aesthetics, which Stuart Hall has written about, and whether or not I am participating in the diasporic conversation sufficiently. I think it is necessary to research artists and materials that are a part of a wider diasporic discourse that I can therefore understand so that my own work is a part of this bigger conversation.

A Taino friend has discussed with me squatting and other important physical movements and poses that should be incorporated into the performance considering the theme. The pose itself was seen by Western society as another sign of the primitive nature of the Other. As was said in the M5 lecture, 'everything begins with the body.' So I need to build the physical representation of the ancestor so I can act through my body and the materials.

Another thought regarding performance; confronting violence. There's been a lot of talk about violence and what it does to our bodies, our mental health, and what violence did to us in the past. (PTSD and generational trauma) The body for me, through art could be the best weapon I have to dealing with racialized misogyny. In particular, the body of black folks in artistic production have been sites of violence (colonial art through to Picasso and in contemporary art). So there is this need for Black women to re claim their bodies and their representation in art.

I have long felt like my body is not my own, especially in public spaces and the older I get the more conscious I become of this, and I mean to try to understand this phenomenon here if possible. In the same vein that performance is about agency, there for me is also the fear of violence. I often think of other feminist performance (everyday social interactions) and what the consequences of that are.

Performing not what is expected of this[my] body, but what the body must do in order to heal. The mask does not shield the face but instead reminds me and my audience of where this body was made, the mask is a part of blood memory, as are the rest of

the materials. {research Simone Leigh and her use of cultural markers in her contemporary works}

Symbolic (dis) possession

An attempt at symbolic reclamation.

Healing of rupture, can do so here with diasporic identity-double displacement

As post colonial subjects with invisible cultural links in multiple locations they possess the potential to unlock multi layered sensibilities and focus that is both local and transnational.

Engage explicitly with the divergent inheritances of empire, race and conquest. The work is self standing in the face of Spanish colonialism un-belonging is marked and mediated. A legacy of slavery and genocide brought me here to this present space, so the body can signal a conflict, but through the mask and materials can stitch the body back together. Uncoupling of seeing and knowing through afro-indigenous practice to charged histories that seem excessively present and unforgettable even if they are not immediately recalled by some. Performance depends the precise nature of witnessing. The body holds blood memory [it calls]. The monuments and the city are visible but are able (as icons) to avoid accountability. The performance works towards completing their action, to be a living Spector, is not to provide the sites with more power but to tell the truth and bring it into focus. {research Carrie Mae Weems *Roaming*}

Essay submitted to Jessica Jacques

Introduction:

What I find that differs in my artistic production this school year from the past (both professionally as a non-student and whilst in university) is that I am speculating internally and theorizing far more than I am actually making. A reason for this, I believe, is the fact I am living within the subject matter of my thesis in a way that I did not before. Of course, being from the United States and moving between Chicago and Puerto Rico throughout my youth had me socially nestled in amid the colonial, the post colonial and neo colonial, simultaneously experiencing these phenomena's all at once.

Barcelona is of course, a different city in different country hundreds of miles away, but its inherent colonial nature in relation to my own culture is very different than anything I have previously experienced. There is a beauty to be found in the edifice of the buildings, or the craftsmanship of a sculpture, but it comes back to haunt me; for I do not exist if there was no violence, and the violence I speak of is etched, carved of stone or cast in bronze, to outlive me in this city¹. These works tell my story but I do not find myself represented wholly within them. This is to say, subject and object, Barcelona and I, co-exist in a fraught and precarious relationship. The lectures of M10 assisted me in conceptualizing ways in which I could perhaps flip the script, so to speak; where I could possibly become subject, and Barcelona my object.

Heterotopias

Up until this lecture, I hadn't considered how the concept heterotopia, created by Michel Foucault, related to my work and my TFM. In reading about the heterotopias of crisis I've come to recognize a potential directly connecting with the ideas of performance I'm generating. The various sites around the city of Barcelona that mark important points in Puerto Rico's early colonial period resonant with me, especially when the stories concern the indigenous Taino people.

In a meeting with my tutor concerning my practice, he asked if I believed the monuments/sites have agency, and if so, would I recognize it? Furthermore, would I perform by or with them? This ignited new questions I needed to ask myself and obviously answer. I believe the Q&A that happened relates directly to heterotopia of crisis.

If a heterotopia of crisis is privileged or sacred spaces where individuals who are in relation to their society are in crisis, then my practice operates within an entire city that maps out various points of heightened crisis in relation to myself as a post-colonial Caribbean subject. An example of the Q&A I had with myself in my documentation journal is as follows:

Since monuments and the city have agency do I acknowledge it?

I must acknowledge the agency of both in order for my work to conceptually have merit in any way. My work is a reaction to what I see and know about the monuments.

What is the action of the monuments/sites?

To function as a site of violence but to be unseen as such, without self-reflexivity and without responsibility.

Do I perform with the monument/site or by it?

This is dependent upon the site/monument itself, especially when taking into consideration the logistics of each. For example, one of the sites is placed within the cathedral, therefore performing with the site may not be possible, but a public space like stairs outside leading into a building may allow for a more fluid performance with and within the physical space.

Colonialism and its aftermath in the visual pull apart the post-colonial subject. Women of color in the diaspora must contend with this rupture and find ways to stitch the self whole again.

Although I am not sure how relevant this next point is to heterotopia in general, I am reminded of a conversation I had concerning violence. This led to me being told the opinion of how often the work of people of color (when the art is about race and colonialism) is violent in its engagement with specifically, white spectators. Personally, I am not responsible for the racial or the gendered anxieties of anyone from anywhere, particularly white men, may have with my work; that is simply not my calling. As stated in my previous writing concerning alienating audiences (which always read to me as “white” audiences), not only because of the subject matter, but the presentation of the work in it of itself. If an artist shows their anger and the consequence of socio-cultural institutions such as white supremacy and misogyny, then they are ensuring their audiences won’t engage. “If it is too violent, I will simply tune out.” I commend the honesty of the potential white spectator but I reminded myself that I don’t make work for the sole purpose of engaging nor, specially placating (and I cannot stress this enough), the insecurities and anxieties of a protected class of the society.

I address this because I am of the opinion, that the sites and monuments I am researching are a micro network of heterotopia’s of crisis within one city, and individually they are also the sites of violence that operate along with their heterotopic nature. My artwork itself is not violent; if the sites are unseen for what they are, then my aim is to make seen as their true form, which is a heterotopia of a violent crisis. I’ve long worked with the idea that women of color that live in the diaspora, are in a constant, existential cultural crisis, and these physical locations are where new

ruptures of the sites' unseen nature end and where women can sew themselves whole.

Colonialism's screen of greatness is shattered when presented with the physical reminders of its consequence, which I argue are not present, therefore the sites are unseen for how they truly function to the wider society, and especially, tourists. But, I pose the argument to myself that I am once again centering white supremacy, misogyny and capitalism and for some, suggesting that I cannot function without a binary to oppose. I believe I can, but we have to name things for what they are in order to move forward. I don't believe the West has done that yet, despite its bare minimum efforts. Therein lies a couple of points: 1) How can we oppose something if we do not know and understand how it operates? 2) The society that I speak of views itself through a white gaze, therefore I operate within this framework. I am also unable to move beyond the binary since it still exists and controls the way I myself and others navigate society.

I also don't think Foucault meant for something as simple as a statue applies as a heterotopia, but then again, I should think that our individuality and the experience that comes with us as a person is what also aids in naming a location as a heterotopia.

Post thoughts:

In the time after writing originally writing this essay and continuing my research into monuments and performance, colonialism and so forth, a few new points come to mind. In Edit Andrés' essay *Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (2010), they comment about Bolshevik lead "monumental propaganda aimed to fabricate a smooth line of tradition and history by narrowing the various interpretations of the past and the future in to a single-channel conception. That I why nationalism looked (and still looks) for invading the public space excluding all those having different visions and self-perceptions...[sic] a hegemony not only of the political but also of the cultural discourse." (Andrés 2010) And in another essay by Patricia Hill Collins regarding imagery and stereotypes that control Black women, she states: "Domination always involves attempts to objectify the subordinate group." (Hill Collins 1990) Nationalism forged within monuments and sites, churches and sculptures constitute a large heterotopia of crisis that I see as such but perhaps others do not, for they do not experience the crisis as readily as I do, but we live in it together just the same. For one cannot exist with out the other. As bell hooks summaries "As objects, one's reality is

defined by others, one's identity created by others, one's history named only in ways that define one's relationship to those who are subject." (hooks 1985)

In taking into account these quotes regarding nationalism, the public space and objectification, I find myself more confident in viewing the city of Barcelona and her sites as a several heterotopias operating independently and together to make a larger network of heterotopia's of crisis. The 'right' is surging all through out the West again, and therefore there are several crises happening at once.

Iconoclast:

What is the role of a monument? The United States in recent years has been forced to address monuments in various parts of the country due to their powerful influence over white supremacist mass killings recently. It was a collision of opinions regarding whether they should stay or go, and fundamentally forced a few of us who never really paid them too much mind, to really decide what statues/monuments mean? As a person who is perhaps on the periphery of a Eurocentric and patriarchal society, I am just as invested in a way to the maintenance of certain monuments. My desire to remove one only fuels the flames of those that want them to stay.

Barcelona seems to have been having these same debates about various monuments, dedicated either to Franco or perhaps slavers from their colonial past. I understand that Catalanians themselves as a people, are coming to terms with its history and what it wants its future to be. (Side note: It is very interesting for me as an outsider to Catalan culture, to be creating work alongside the same dialogues concerning Catalan independence, whilst also engaging with Puerto Rican Independistas) I know there have been a couple events in recent times where statues/monuments are erected only to be destroyed, or older monuments to slavers have been destroyed by the citizens and then quickly removed. This swiftness of action is not what I am accustomed to, and where I come from people who interact with monuments in any political way are often arrested. The case of the woman that scaled the feet of the Statue of Liberty might very well go to prison for her actions. Certain icons can instil in us the bravery to do what most others wouldn't do; it can also cause us to do great harm to others for the politic; this is a double-edged sword that doesn't get spoken about often until very late.

I'm interested potentially acting as an iconoclast. How does my art practice make at least, attempts to iconoclasm? Is that something important for me? How have

other Black women artists worked within this field? It could be as well that iconoclasm is a by-product of the performance, and not something that one aims for. I return to the monuments and sites, and their status, as I understand them to be. Some notes I have made about them are as follows:

I search to facilitate an attempt at symbolic reclamation and healing of ruptures can potentially happen within this diasporic identity-double displacement. As post-colonial subjects with invisible cultural links in multiple locations they possess the potential to unlock multi layered sensibilities and a focus that is both local and transnational.

How does my work engage explicitly with the divergent inheritance of empire, race and conquest? What is required of it do so? What I will produce during the coming summer months are photographic self-portraits as I take a stance in the face of Spanish colonialism. Un-belonging is marked and mediated. A legacy of slavery has brought me here to this present space, so the body is a signal of a conflict, but through the avatar, a tool or meditation or a prayer, stitch the post-colonial body back together. Uncoupling of seeing and knowing, experiencing and theorizing.

In my film ["Experiment #1"](#), a comment I received was that there was the clear exploration of power dynamics between narrator and the statue/monument (of Columbus). A monument of that size, it is near impossible upon first impression to not feel small. Logistically, simple film-making means that this still be evident in what one produces. Which prompts me to think about Carrie Mae Weems work in her series "Roaming" in which she remarked about her thought process in the development of the series "Thinking about the city, architecture and the way the body is made to feel in relation to it" and this is what I explored in Experiment #1; what happens when we from the Caribbean see this monument for the first time?

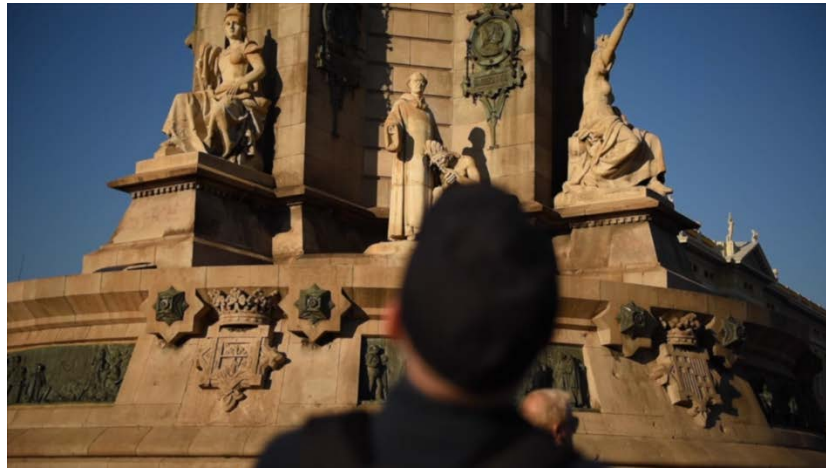


Figure 8, film still, Experiment #1, personal archive

Time slows down for me and one moment is stretched out and I sit with the emotion building within me when I am looking at my history in a way I didn't know could be possible. This is what I feel in the city sometimes. I look at the gorgeous buildings and respect the tenacity of the people that created such beauty and also such architectural masterpieces, but I also know, some of these physical locations are the starting points for genocide. A response to charged histories that seem excessively present and unforgettable but are screened from remembrance or unavailable for complete recall.

Admittedly I feel tremendous pressure to figure out how best to create work that does what I want it to in relation to these buildings, sites and statues that yes have a lot of popularity but also that are connected to me in ways that I am still trying to process and understand. There is also the fear that I will not produce work at the caliber that I desire, due to in part, methodology and space.

Within the center of Barcelona is a map of heterotopias of crisis in which sites and monuments are, too, unseen yet hyper-visible. Their meanings and histories as complex and layered as my own body. My exploration was to understand how my body is meant to feel in relation to the buildings and monuments. Photographed in their presence I am small and overwhelmed by their enormity, not too different than what happens in everyday life. In which my own space is taken over by those who feel I've

either occupied too much space, or I am what I choose to project their sexual desires or hate.

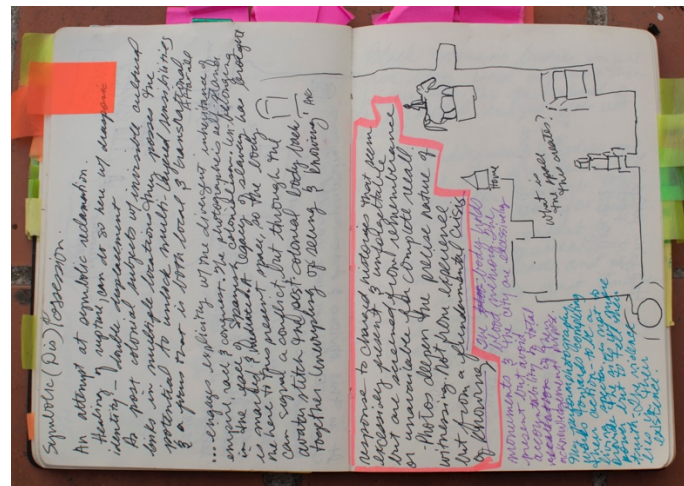


Figure 9, image of personal documentation journal

Public life experienced alone is no longer an option most days at the summer approaches, because the racism and misogyny that I am experiencing from strangers is becoming a near daily experience. I experience my body as my own in private, with friends, in locations where I feel safe. But there are other places in where I have to almost disassociate in order to cope; my body is no longer my own, it is just a body, this is not really happening to me.

Living within the architectural testimonies to colonial powers, I experience these spaces as hyper-visible and invisible at once, and sometimes I am only protected by the white person beside me.

In seeing La Infinita and the work placed on one of the walls (Hay Lugar) I think I will re-perform the work that I do in public in this space. The monument that I will perform at is the Lopez y Lopez monument. I'm intrigued by the remnants of the fake blood left on the stairs, and the fact that the original monument had two enslaved African figures, which were not replicated in its rebuild, and now there is only one black figure. Also, the building next to it as a particular history, and the way the building looks, (unassuming) fits perfectly well within the parameters of unseen qualities of

monuments/sites, their history and connection to the power of the state (in this case the abolishment of slavery in Puerto Rico) and my body and tools being present to open up the dialogue.

Location is Llotja de Mar, Passeig d'Isabel II, 1

"This historic chamber of maritime commerce was also the setting for the creation of the Spanish-Overseas Circle in 1871, which had Joan Güell and Antonio López as president and vice-president, respectively. It was also the founding place in 1873 of the Liga Nacional, a league opposed to the immediate and imminent abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. Its first vice-president was Antonio López, and among its 72 representatives there were Tomás Ribalta and Eusebi Güell." (Memoria bcn)

The public performance will begin in front of the monument where the African figure is. I will build my structure from the ground up. Once the frame is fully assembled, I will add the leaves to complete the dress and then wear my mask. I will then proceed to moving around the monument and performing with it, and then walk down the block to the building itself, stand on the stairs, and perform with the columns and the space available. I have written and sent an abstract to classmates so that there is an audience.

I have also recording video already of what the route will most likely be and other shots of the building and the monument, so that it can be projected on to the wall at La Infinita, so that there's a proper context for this re-performance.

I also feel this is a good moment to keep into mind the writings on racism's gaze. "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects." (Fanon 1952) Fanon's quote on being Black through whiteness reminds me of the very first moment I saw that Colon statue; I'm a displaced Afro-Indigenous through colonialism and whiteness. Thereafter, are the increasing experiences of racist and misogynist actions on the part of others, the prolonged stare with confusion written across the face of the viewer, the forced non-gaze, in where (particularly white women) refuse to look or engage with me (at social events) even

La Sangre Llama

when we are sharing a small space together, and the prolonged and particularly lustful stare of men, that moment of hyper-visibility where I fully see myself being seen, lusted after and even if I acknowledge and attempt to end this engagement the viewer pushes back even harder. I would like to think that the performance allows me to be in control of how my body is engaged with. It is neither a fetishized, hateful or spiteful look upon me.

Studio time is flying by, and experiments are short and simple. The original material to use is not sufficient in strength, and therefore the performance only changes for the on-site aspect, not for L.I.. The on-site aspect will be far simpler, and focusing strictly on the body, less about construction. The demonstration of process aspects of my practice are to be left for L.I..

Performance Abstract:

Through out many cities in Europe are monuments, sites and icons that are legitimized and as of late questioned, in regards to their historical significance and relevancy, especially in regards to their colonial histories. As a member of the Puerto Rican diaspora, my interests lie in locations that are directly related to the island's early colonial history within the city of Barcelona.

La Sangre Llama is a performance work in where Afro-Indigenous spirituality and performance are tools used to confront architectural symbols of the power of the state. I am interested in opening up dialogue between this body [Afro-Indigenous Puerto Rican] and the unseen qualities of a building [where A. Lopez & E. Güell founded an opposition league against the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico], beginning at the monument of Lopez y Lopez [slaver].

#LSL #LaSangreLlama

Conclusion:

Implementing Lessons Learned from Black Women Artists

The initial key focus of my TFM was my Afro-Indigenous body and public monuments, but I quickly realized that I would have to research the history of the representations of Black women in order to understand the work of contemporary Black women artists. Their works were crucial in my efforts to compose a performance and understand the location it should take place in, and why. Understanding the historical context and the unseen implications of colonial history, the monuments and buildings have their own agency, something I came to understand through tutorials and the modules on heterotopias of crisis. With my body present in its space, dressed head to toe in Afro-spiritual connotations, I perform with the sites but also against them in a way, and lastly, I engage with the precise nature of the monument and buildings themselves.

For Chapter One, I precisely defined what I have understood my own condition to be, an existential cultural crisis within the diaspora. Providing the historical context for this term and its definition was very useful for me. I have predominately rooted my understanding of the existential, cultural crisis as solely an experience, and I had not gone into great detail as to what I understood it to mean verbally. This was important to do for me as an artist and researcher, particularly in investigating the formation of Black and Indigenous womanhood through the colonial imagination. The crisis is essentially a situation that I am born into and also struggle against. Contextualizing the development and colonial understanding of race and how it was permeated in art and culture provided me with the ground-work and understanding of how contemporary Black women artists develop work to subvert anti-black misogynistic ideas regarding themselves. It also offered more information for further consideration into how I should subvert spaces with my body at the helm of the work I produce and which materials are best.

In Chapter Two I aimed to have a new understanding of how to use phenomenology as a framework for the analysis of artworks and also for my own artistic development. What I found was a difficulty in being able to fully come to terms with how to use the philosophy in a way that includes gender and race with a direct understanding of how history can affect our understandings of phenomena. In this

negotiation of phenomenology, I did discover how many layers need to be unraveled in discussions of phenomenology, and how race and gender must be understood in sync with the philosophy. There should not be a hierarchy in how we come to understand them within a philosophical framework, for example with Fanon it was very patriarchal, commonly referred to as 'race first' method. With Ortega, it was a homogenous understanding of Latina, centering gender but only within mestizaje, which whitewashes Latinidad and leaves no space for Afro-Latinx subjectivity. Through hermeneutics and the addition of intersectionality within its circle, race, gender, and ethnicity to all be given equal space for exploration and interpretation. Chapter Two was a discursive activity for me to develop a praxis in both art analysis and then production.

My purpose with my own art practice has always been to be a part of the wider dialogue other artists are having. For Chapter Three, I carefully chose the work of Black women across method, material, and the diaspora in order to understand the multi-faceted ways Black women can express themselves and still be in conversation with one another. It also demonstrates that Trans-Atlantic memory lives and breaths in the works of Black women from Puerto Rico to Oregon, USA; they truly are the carriers of culture. The diaspora is wide and vast, our histories and cultures are threads of memory that tug on Africa's shores, binding us into one song. Their works provided me with examples of not only how to gain agency in my body to suture its fractured representations, but also have a relationship with my materials and how to subvert a space with presence.

La Sangre Llama, La Llotja & Lopez y Lopez

In November of 2018, I sat in front of the Colon monument alone with my notebook. I sketched a vejigante, but not robed in the colourful dress adorned with ribbons and bat wings, but in something far earthlier. I thought it would be beautiful to create a structure or dress of banana leaves, mostly for their use in food, their form and also the smell. The potentiality of this new form of vejigante and representing Afro-Puerto Rican culture lead me to the work of Awilda Sterling-Duprey and Simone Leigh. I was particularly inspired by how Leigh uses materials that have wide diasporic

connotations, and since I have used banana leaf in my works in the past, I thought their use as the material for the dress/structure would be appropriate (see Fig. 7).

The history of the vejigante mask in Puerto Rico begins with carnival and retelling (and celebration) of the Spanish banishment of the Moors. Like other locations in the Caribbean and in the American South, Catholic carnivals are bright and exciting revelries, and I found particular relevance in the remnants of Catalan culture in Puerto Rican carnivals that either haven't changed much at all or are totally different, such as the figures with big heads, the vejigante, El Caballero and more. El Vejigante was the antagonist of a story, and the Afro-Puerto Rican's turned him into a local folkloric hero. This subversion and reclamation was the precise action I needed to take myself with the monuments and buildings. Sterling-Duprey demonstrated that the possibilities of retaining cultural memory through new elucidations of tradition are possible if one understands the function and root of the tradition. It is possible to work at formulating an interpretation appropriate for contemporary times in new spaces with new materials.

For the first photographs of this series, I chose to intervene at the Lopez y Lopez monument and the building next to it, La Llotja. Firstly, La Llotja as a building is very unassuming, with its main doors far behind iron bars that prevent entry, it appears to be another older building no longer used as it once was. It is, however, the site where Antonio Lopez 1873 formed the Lliga Nacional to prevent the immediate abolishment of slavery in Puerto Rico, with Eusebi Güell as one of its founding representatives. The acute attention to the details of a location and its historical functions, what I call unseen qualities, are what prompted me to search for sites and their direct connections to Puerto Rico. This is done in order to achieve a proper performative and direct response to a site, as demonstrated by Faustine's photographic performative works in New York City and locations relevant to African Americans.

Using knowledge gained in private discussions with my friend Keyla and both her Taino and Santera family members, I dressed and wrapped my hair accordingly in white linens and brought items from my altar²³. There are rules and forms one follows for the calling of spirits, and the wearing of the vejigante mask is the final step

²³ Altars dedicated to ancestors and orisha's are common practice in many Caribbean syncretic religions, and in order to maintain the root of the Afro-spiritual components of this work, I brought items from my personal altar from my home.

of this process (Fig. 10). Campos-Pons use of Santería in her work has taken shape in a multitude of ways throughout her career, and as explained previously, *Habla La Madre* was than simple incorporation of Santería as metaphor; the performance was a site specific ritual meant to subvert the Guggenheim, both in its capacity as a homogenous, cultural space and its physical composition embodied in Campos-Pons dress.



Figure 10, La Sangre Llama, La Llotja, digital photograph

The Lopez y Lopez monument itself was altered in 2018, due to Lopez's history as a slave owner in the Caribbean. There are stains of fake blood still visible on the stone and in the cracks of the steps, blood that thrown to signify the disgust of the monument of a man that benefited from the murder of many. Although there has been

La Sangre Llama

an intervention at this site already, I believe it is still relevant and important for me to participate in this conversation with this monument. In its original conception, there were two African figures on the plinth below to statue of Lopez. When it was rebuilt, there was only one African figure remaining. Sat beneath the African figure in one of the carvings, I repeat the process performed at La Llotja (Fig. 11 & 12).



Figure 11, La Sangre Llama, Lopez y Lopez, digital photograph



Figure 12, La Sangre Llama, Lopez y Lopez, digital photograph

Ximena Araujo, a classmate, utilized her own camera and method to capture images and video for her own use that subsequently added an extra layer of possibility in my work. Realizing there was potential in her method with my work, we quickly began to collaborate on-site, and we determined there was a need to further explore the possibilities. Since my aim is for *La Sangre Llama* to be a series of performative interventions and photography, she and I will continue to work together on one aspect

of the series whilst I still develop the work independently as well. What I found to be interesting about the image was the element of my presence as a ghostly specter in the space of the building and monument. In viewing the photograph (Fig. 13) I am reminded of Kimberly Juanita Brown's opening words to her discussion on Carrie Mae Weems' photography:

"This body represents a conflation of temporality and space, the after-image of slavery, and the elongation of the residue of empire. History is carved into the flesh of rock and concrete forming a cast out of which the figure emerges repeatedly. Yet, as she duplicates a singular corporeal form, she becomes multiple subjectivities... She provides for the viewer an *archive of time* that at once prefigures future slaughter and conquest, and survives it. [sic] the viewer receives the offering as a figurative temporal artefact, boldly straddling past and present, ethereal and material." (Brown 2015)



Figure 13, *La Sangre Llama*, La Llotja collaboration with Ximena Araujo, digital photograph

A final component to be discussed in my images comes from my investigation into Pollard's landscape photography. Although Pollard inserts her Black body into English landscapes, and I insert my body into urban streets, there is similarity in our conditions of liminality. Multiple selves and layers of history and movement, Pollard's Africa to Guyana, Guyana to Britain, and my own Puerto Rico to the United States, the United States to Spain, in these movements and locations there's an inhabitation of multiple worlds and journey across worlds. As Ortega notes on multiplicitous selfhood, "Like the new mestiza and Dasein, the multiplicitous self is a self in process or in the making. This self is situation in specific material circumstances that include particular histories, occupies multiple positionalities or social identities, [sic] and is an in-between self." (Ortega 2016) This liminal space is heightened by the Black body physically occupying a space that has been designated a no entry zone, and therefore the Black body remains on the periphery. Pollard's work speaks to this movement of worlds and exclusion via purposeful insertion; her body does not fit within the landscapes, it disrupts the element of colonial fantasies that Black bodies have no historical and present ties to European lands. My presence and actions as an Afro-Indigenous spiritual envoy at the monument and the building act as a reminder that their formation could not be possible without the existence of my ancestors, their labor, culture, and death in far-away lands.

La Sangre Llama as a performative photographic series will continue to evolve after the printing of this paper. Initially, for the degree show at the exhibition space La Infinita, I intend to incorporate new elements such as installation and video to this project. Later, the continued development of new works within this series provides opportunities for further artistic research of Afro-spirituality as a tool of resistance within a phenomenological framework. Having now completed this paper and related artworks, I believe my initially stated goals, those being: define the existential cultural crisis, investigate phenomenology's potential for the analysis of Black women's artistic production, holistically analyze Black women's art and incorporate all these lines of research into my practice successfully, have been completed and the process of having done so will continue to influence my work.



Figure 14, La Sangre Llama, Lopez y Lopez, digital photograph

Bibliography

"Art of Africa: The 50 Best African Artists." n.d. Independent.Co.Uk. Accessed June 27, 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/art-of-africa-the-50-best-african-artists-426441.html>.

"[Http://Www.Prfdance.Org/Bomba.Htm.](http://www.prfdance.org/Bomba.htm)" n.d.

"Ingrid Pollard Pl." n.d. Accessed May 2, 2019. <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O107865/pastoral-interludeits-as-if-the-photograph-pollard-ingrid/>.

"Carrie Mae Weems." n.d. *Wikipedia.Org*. Accessed September 20, 2005. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrie_Mae_Weems.

"MoMA Learning." n.d. Moma.Org.

"Towards_a_Phemomenology_of_Blackness." n.d.

"Dennis Waskul, Phillip Vannini - Body Embodiment_ Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body (2006, Ashgate)." n.d.

"Sterling.Pdf." n.d.

"Casta." n.d. Accessed September 20, 2005. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casta>.

"Picasso Lessons 1907." n.d.

Alexander, M. Jacqui. 2005. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Alexander, M. Jacqui. 2006. *[Perverse Modernities Pedagogies of Crossing_ Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred]*. Duke University Press.

Applied, World, and Sciences Journal. 2017. "Ricoeur ' s Theory of Interpretation : A Method for Understanding Text (Course Text) Ricoeur ' s Theory of Interpretation : A Method for Understanding Text (Course Text)," no. July.

Beasley, Myron. 2013. "Each Taking Risk, Performing Self." In *Understanding Blackness through Performance*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137313805.0005>.

Beasley, Myron, and Myron Beasley. 2013. "Each Taking Risk , Performing Self: Theorizing (Dis) Narratives." In *Understanding Blackness through Performance Contemporary Arts and the Representation of Identity*, edited by Xavier Lemoine and Jean-Paul Rocchi, 25–39. New York City: Palgrave Macmillan US.

Beckett, Greg. 2010. *Race, Colonialism, and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean - Edited by Branche, J. Bulletin of Latin American Research*.

Bibliography

- Vol. 29. <http://10.0.4.87/j.1470-9856.2010.00392.x%0Ahttp://ezproxy.biola.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=51126646&login.asp&site=ehost-live>.
- Bell, Lyne. 1998. "History of People Who Were Not Heroes A Conversation with Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons." *Third Text* 12 (43).
- Bellini, Rosanna, Angelika Strohmayr, Patrick Olivier, and Clara Crivellaro. 2019. "Mapping the Margins," 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300352>.
- Bertrand Mathilde. 2008. "The Politics of Representation and Subversion of Landscape in Ingrid Pollard's Pastoral Interlude (1987)," 1–12. https://www.academia.edu/9577794/The_politics_of_representation_and_the_subversion_of_landscape_in_Ingrid_Pollards_Pastoral_Interlude_1987_.
- Bonham-Carter, Charlotte, and Nicola Mann. 2017. "Rhetoric, Social Value and the Arts: But How Does It Work?" *Rhetoric, Social Value and the Arts: But How Does It Work?*, 1–172. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45297-5>.
- Brienen, Rebecca P. 2013. "Albert Eckhout's African Woman and Child (1641)." In *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic Worlds*, edited by Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal, 229–51. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Kimberly Juanita. 2014. "Chaining the Body to the Space: Carrie Mae Weems' 'Roaming Series' and the Architecture of Corporeal Refusal." Internal Paper. 2014. http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/4/1/7/2/3/p417235_index.html.
- Brown, Kimberly Juanita. 2015. *The Repeating Body: Slavery's Visual Resonance in the Contemporary*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Cahill, Spencer E. n.d. "Building Bodily Boundaries: Embodied Enactment and Experience."
- Campbell, Jason J. 2014. "Introduction to Methods of Qualitative Research," 1–14. <http://www.jasonjcampbell.org/blog.php>http://www.youtube.com/%0Ahttp://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLba_fOJviSOJsxiEkXtvEgLp1erzeVBYe.
- Carrera, Magali M. 2003. *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings (Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture)*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Castro, Jan. 2019. "Simone Leigh Wins Hugo Boss Prize: Searing Vision." 2019. <https://whitehotmagazine.com/articles/hugo-boss-prize-searing-vision/4258>.
- Clifford, James. 2013. *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Bibliography

- Cohen, Janie. 2015. "Staring Back: Anthropometric-Style African Colonial Photography and Picasso's *Demoiselles* ." *Photography and Culture* 8 (1): 59–80. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175145215x14244337011162>.
- Dafoe, Taylor. 2018. "Artist Simone Leigh Will Create a Towering Bust for the High Line's First Plinth Commission." 2018. <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/simone-leigh-awarded-inaugural-high-line-plinth-commission-1339736>.
- Dallmayr, Fred. 2009. "Hermeneutics and Inter-Cultural Dialog: Linking Theory and Practice." *Ethics and Global Politics* 2 (1): 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.3402/egp.v2i1.1937>.
- David, Jacques-louis, Marie-guilhelmine Benoist, Anne Vallayer-coster, Elisabeth Vig, The Portrait, and Code Napol. 1855. "Slavery Is a Woman: Race , Gender , and Visuality in Marie Benoist ' s Portrait d ' Une Négrresse (1800) By James Smalls," no. 1800.
- Davidson, Scott, and Maria Del Guadalupe Davidson. 2016. "Hermeneutics of a Subtlety Paul Ricoeur." In *Feminist Explorations of Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy*, edited by Annemie Halsema & Fernanda Henriques, 1st ed., 179–93. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- De Young, Mark A 2016. "Nonbeing and Thingness."
- Demie, Kim. 2016. "New York Artist Nona Faustine Exposes the City's Slaveholding Past." Artsy.Net. 2016. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-new-york-artist-nona-faustine-exposes-city-slaveholding-past>.
- Demoiselles, Les, The Young, and El Greco. 1907. "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon." 1907. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Demoiselles_d'Avignon#Africa.
- Deyoung, Mark A, and Steven Crowell. 2016. "Nonbeing and Thingness A Fanonmenological Essay on Ontology."
- BOIS, W. E. B. DU. 2018. *The Souls of Black Folk. The Souls of Black Folk*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv346v0g>.
- DuBois, WEB. 2007. *The Souls of Black Folk. The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781912282593>.
- Earle, R. 2010. "Race, Colonialism, and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90 (3): 578–79. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-2010-038>.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1952. "Black Skin, White Masks." In *Black Skin, White Masks*.
- Faustine, Nona. n.d. "Nona Faustine About." Accessed August 6, 2019. <http://nonafaustine.virb.com/about>.

Bibliography

- Fiet, Lowell. n.d. "The Vejigante of the Fiestas of Santiago Apóstol in Loíza." *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*.
<https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/masked-enigmas>.
- Fiet, Lowell, Ian Bethell Bennett, and María Cristina Rodríguez, eds. n.d. *Sargasso: Caribbean Theater and Cultural Performance*. unknown.
- Fisher, Andrew B., and Matthew O'Hara, eds. 2009. *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Garcia, Katherine. n.d. "Where the 'Spicy Latina' Stereotype Came From – And Why It's Still Racist Today." *Everyday Feminism*. Accessed July 19, 2019.
<https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/12/spicy-latina-stereotype-bad/>.
- Gaze, Womanist. n.d. "Womanism and Womanist Gaze," 23–48.
- Gilman, Sander L. 1985. "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature." *Critical Inquiry*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448327>.
- Hall, Ronald E. 2013. "The Melanin Millennium: Skin Color as 21st Century International Discourse." *The Melanin Millennium: Skin Color as 21st Century International Discourse*, no. August 2013: 1–348. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4608-4>.
- Hall, Ronald E. 2013. "The Melanin Millennium: Skin Color as 21st Century International Discourse." *The Melanin Millennium: Skin Color as 21st Century International Discourse*, no. January: 1–348. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4608-4>.
- Henry, Paget. 2000. *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro_caribbean Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.
- Henry, Paget. 2000. *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro Caribbaen Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.
- Hill Collins, Patricia. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. Routledge.
- Hobbs, Robert. 2001. "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology and Installation Art." *Installations Mattress Factory, 1990-1999*, 18–23.
- Hogan, Jackie. 2019. *Roots Quest: Inside America's Genealogy Boom*. Landham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Images, Controlling. 1991. "RACE AND ETHNICITY 45 Controlling Images and Black Women ' s Oppression," 266–73.
- Isaac Vt, Henry. n.d. "Mc:Cill Studies in the Hi5tory of Religions, A Series Devoted to International Seholonhttp Katherine K Young. Editor IDENTIFYING SELFHOOD

Bibliography

Imagination, Narrative, and Hermeneutics in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS '."

Jackson, Susan. 2015. "Journal of Arts & Humanities." *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 4 (2): 29–44.

Janer, Marina Barsy. 2018. "TRICKSTERS OF THE SPECTATORIAL The Decolonial Proposals of Performance Activism through the Encounters with La Pocha Nostra and Freddie Mercado."

Jones, Ashley M. 2016. "White Shoes." Pank. 2016. <https://pankmagazine.com/2016/01/09/white-shoes/>.

Katzew, Ilona. 1996. "New World Orders: Casta Painting and Colonial Latin America." New York.

Kenney, Nancy. n.d. "Simone Leigh, Now in the Spotlight, Contemplates the Theme of Invisibility."

Kouoh, Koyo ed. 2015. *Body Talk: Feminism, Sexuality and the Body in the Work of Six African Women Artists*. Edited by Koyo Kouoh. RAW Material, WIELS, & Motto Books.

Lamola, M John, and John Lamola. 2018. "Transformation in Higher Education Affiliation." <https://doi.org/10.4102/the>.

Leigh, Simone. n.d. "THE WAITING ROOM JUNE 22 WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?"

Livholts, Mona. n.d. *Emergent Writing Methodologies in Feminist Studies Emergent Writing Methodologies in Feminist Studies Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality*.

Lugo-Ortiz, Agnes, and Angela Rosenthal, eds. 2013. *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Macias, Kelly. 2015. "Tweeting Away Our Blues: An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach to Exploring Black Women's Use of Social Media to Combat Misogynoir." *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, no. 25: 176. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1720264163?accountid=8144%5Cnhttp://sfx.aub.aau.dk/sfxaub?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:dissertation&genre=dissertations+%26+theses&sid=ProQ:ProQuest+Dissertations+%26+Theses+Global&title=&title=.

Madhi, Lane. 1967. "Malinchismo and Misogyny in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: Reading Fanon from the Hispanic Caribbean."

McMillan, Uri. 2003. *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*. 1st ed. New York: New York.

Bibliography

- McMillan, Uri. 2017. *Embodied Avatars. Embodied Avatars*. NYU Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt15zc7kv>.
- Merritt, Carolyn. 2018. "Eye of the Storm." 2018. <http://thinkingdance.net/articles/2018/10/05/Eye-of-the-Storm>.
- Mestrich, Qiana. 2017. "The Black Female Self in Landscape." Baxterst.Org. 2017. <https://www.baxterst.org/2017/01/12/the-black-female-self-landscape/>.
- Missouri, Montré Aza. 2015. *Black Magic Woman and Narrative Film*. 1st ed. New York City: palgrave macmillan.
- Monaghan, Lee F. n.d. "Corporeal Indeterminacy: The Value of Embodied, Interpretive Sociology."
- Museum, Guggenheim. 2019. "The Hugo Boss Prize 2018 : Simone Leigh , Loophole of Retreat."
- Muteba Rahier, Jean. 2013. *Blackness in the Andes: Ethnographic Vignettes of Cultural Politics in the Time of Multiculturalism*. New York: palgrave macmillan.
- N/a. 2019. "REGIÃO DOS LAGOS Terreiro de Candomblé é Alvo de Vandalismo e Furto Em São Pedro de Aldeia." 2019.
- N/A. n.d. "Ingrid Pollard." Wikipedia.Org.
- N/A. n.d. "Raffia Palm." Accessed July 10, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raffia_palm#Cultivation_and_uses.
- N/A. n.d. "LEGACIES OF BRITISH SLAVE-OWNERSHIP." University College London.
- Nelson, Charmaine A. 2007. *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth-Century America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ngo, Helen. 2012. *The Habits of Racism: Phenomenology of Racism and Racialized Embodiment*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Nielsen, Cynthia R. 2011. "Resistance through Re-Narration: Fanon on de-Constructing Racialized Subjectivities." *African Identities* 9 (4): 363–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2011.614410>.
- Owens, Erica, and Bronwyn Beistle. 1991. "Eating the Black Body : Interracial Desire , Food Metaphor and White Fear."
- Pardo Stein, Lara. 2013. "Artists, Aesthetics, and Migrations: Contemporary Visual Arts and Caribbean Diaspora in Miami, Florida." University of Michigan.
- Pinder, Kymberly N. 2002. *Race-Ing Art History*. Edited by Kymberly N. Pinder. New York City: Routledge. <http://books.google.it/books?id=vk0k8qFPjyC>.

Bibliography

- Reyes Franco, Marina. 2019. "Atlas San Juan: Afro-Caribbean Connection." 2019.
- Reyes Franco, Marina. 2019. "Atlas San Juan : Afro- Caribbean Connection," 1–7. <https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazines/san-juan-afro-caribbean/>.
- Robin Pogrebin and Hilarie M. Sheets. 2018. "An Artist Ascendant: Simone Leigh Moves Into the Mainstream - The New York Times," 1–11. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/29/arts/design/simone-leigh-sculpture-high-line.html>.
- Schmidt-Linsenhof, Viktoria. 2013. "WHO IS THE SUBJECT? MARI E-GUILHELMINE BENOIST'S PORTRAIT D'UNE NÉGRESSE." In *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic Worlds*, edited by Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal, 315–39. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schwartz, Alexandra. 2016. "A Living Monument to the Ghosts of American Slavery." 2016. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/a-living-monument-to-the-ghosts-of-american-slavery>.
- Shohat, Ella, and Ella Shohat. 2013. *Post-Fanon and the Colonial. Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822387961-009>.
- Small, James. 2004. "Slavery Is a Woman : Race , Gender , and Visuality in Marie Benoist ' s Portrait d ' Une Négresse (1800) By James Smalls." *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 3 (1).
- Stanciu, Elena-Iarisa Christensen, Bjorn. 2014. "Controlling Women ' s Bodies : The Black and Veiled Female Body in Western Visual Culture . A Comparative View." *Analyze-Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies*, no. 2: 1–26.
- Stanciu, Elena-Larisa, and Bjørn Christensen. n.d. "Controlling Women's Bodies: The Black and Veiled Female Body in Western Visual Culture. A Comparative View."
- Staudigl, Michael. 2012. "Racism: On the Phenomenology of Embodied Desocialization." *Continental Philosophy Review* 45 (1): 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-011-9206-5>.
- Stein Pardo, Lara C. n.d. "Artists, Aesthetics, and Migrations: Contemporary Visual Arts and Caribbean Diaspora in Miami, Florida."
- Stephens, Christiane. 2016. "Womanism and Black Feminism in the Work of Carrie Mae Weems." <http://www.theartsjournal.org/index.php/site/index>.
- Studies, Feminist. 2010. *Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality*. New York.
- Taghinejad, Mohaddeseh. 2017. "Ricoeur ' s Theory of Interpretation : A Method for Understanding Text (Course Text) Ricoeur ' s Theory of Interpretation : A Method for Understanding Text (Course Text)," no. July.

Bibliography

- Thompson, Lanny. 2013. "Aesthetics and Empire : The Sense of Feminine Beauty in the Making of the US Imperial Archipelago." *Culture & History Digital Journal* 2 (2): e027. <https://doi.org/10.3989/chdj.2013.027>.
- Tillet, Salamishah. 2012. *Sites of Slavery: Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Townsend, Phillip A. 2016. "(Re)Framing Resistance and (Re)Forging Solidarity: Negotiating the Politics of Space, Race, and Gender in Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons' Habla La Madre." The University of Texas at Austin.
- Venema, Henry Issac. 2000. "Imagination, Narrative, and Hermeneutics in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur."
- Verde, Cabo. n.d. "A n I Ntersectional A Nalysis of V Isual M Edia : A C Ase of D Iesel" 29.
- Volk, Gregory. 2018. "The Overdue Skyrocketing of Simone Leigh." 2018. <https://hyperallergic.com/463403/simone-lee-luh-ring-augustine/>.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2005. "Carnal Connections: On Embodiment, Apprenticeship, and Membership." *Qualitative Sociology* 28 (4): 445–74. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-005-8367-0>.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2015. "For a Sociology of Flesh and Blood." *Qualitative Sociology* 38 (1): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-014-9291-y>.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2015. "For a Sociology of Flesh and Blood." *Qualitative Sociology* 38 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-014-9291-y>.
- Wade, Neil M. 1990. "Likelihood of Significant Cost Reductions in Desalination." *Desalination* 78 (2): 147–56. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0011-9164\(90\)80039-E](https://doi.org/10.1016/0011-9164(90)80039-E).
- Wade, Neil M. 1990. "Likelihood of Significant Cost Reductions in Desalination." *Desalination* 78 (2): 147–56. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0011-9164\(90\)80039-E](https://doi.org/10.1016/0011-9164(90)80039-E).
- Waskul, Dennis, and Phillip Vannini, eds. 2006. *Body Embodiment, Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body*. Ashgate.
- Weiss, Gail, ed. 2008. "'Entering the Place We Already Live: A Phenomenology of Female Voice.'" In *Intertwimings: Interdisciplinary Encounters with Merleau-Ponty*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Welten, Ruud. 2015. "Paul Gauguin and the Complexity of the Primitivist Gaze." *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 12: 1–13. https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/1848508415?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo.
- Wen, By Lee. 1960. "Performance Art and the Quest for Authenticity."

Bibliography

Yancy, George. 2012. "Inappropriate Philosophical Subjects?" In *Reframing the Practice of Philosophy Bodies of Color, Bodies of Knowledge*, edited by George Yancy, 1–19. new york: SUNY.

Yancy, George. 2012. "INAPPROPRIATE PHILOSOPHICAL SUBJECTS?"

Zapata-Calle, Ana. n.d. "Respuestas a La Tropicalizacion de La Mujer Negra Por La Afro-Cubana Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons y Por El Colectivo Moriviví Puertorriqueña." *Revista Del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*.

Zeiler, Kristin. 2013. "A Phenomenology of Excorporation, Bodily Alienation, and Resistance: Rethinking Sexed and Racialized Embodiment." *Hypatia* 28 (1): 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2012.01305.x>.