



:: salt mark ::
::: open studio :::

december 2020

:: qr.2.vv ::
::: picando portales :::
:: hilvanando terruño ::
::: stitching unearthed moments into place :::



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Romance Studies

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2020

Abstract

A virtual open studio, :: *qr.2.vv* :: *picando portales* :: *hilvanando terruño* :: presents a multi-faceted approach to marking moments of unexpected connection, of pinning down glimpses of unanticipated affinity that arise in the midst of daily interaction, often when attention is focused elsewhere. In Puerto Rico, the saying *joye, hay que hilvanar eso!* draws from multi-generational sewing traditions, and a formerly thriving textile export industry, to acknowledge an idea or point that pops up in conversation which needs noting... deserves its own thread... exhibits some kind of urgency or crucial underpinnings, some mutually-recognized need to revisit a place in time, literally to pick up this thread, that astounding glance, this jarring moment of realization, in the future. While the verb *hilvanar* generally refers to creating a loose, preliminary basting stitch with thread and needle, implying an intention to return and create a finished seam, the term also describes an act, in writing and speaking, of deliberate linking, of piecing together words and concepts. Using both these meanings, :: *qr.2.vv* :: *stitching unearthed moments into place* :: locates a space for the creation of machine-stitched fabric pieces along with quick response (QR) codes to mark ongoing investigative dialogues. Inspired by uncanny threads emerging from the artist's lived experience, vivid dreamscapes, and previous performance work, this open studio (both in-person and virtual presentations), delves into archival cartographic research and contemporary mapping of intangible cultural heritage to link ephemeral elements and ritual gestures found in traditional knowledge systems throughout Indian Ocean and Black Atlantic diasporas. Making space for speculative meanderings to percolate and connect with sources beyond institutional inscription, the work offers alternate methods for being a visual scribe, for existing in a global moment whose contours for grounding have shifted. It explores potential for reframing elements that could populate a visual or gestural body of knowledge, in the same way a network analysis or data visualization techniques offer ways to discover previously overlooked, perhaps subtly erased, relationships among names or numerals.

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Hyperlinks

Dynamic Quick Response (QR) hyperlinks embedded in virtual open studio web pages:

QRCode Studio

<https://qrstud.io/ljbq0u3>

links to

<https://saltmark.com/>

<https://qrstud.io/qnuwlsj>

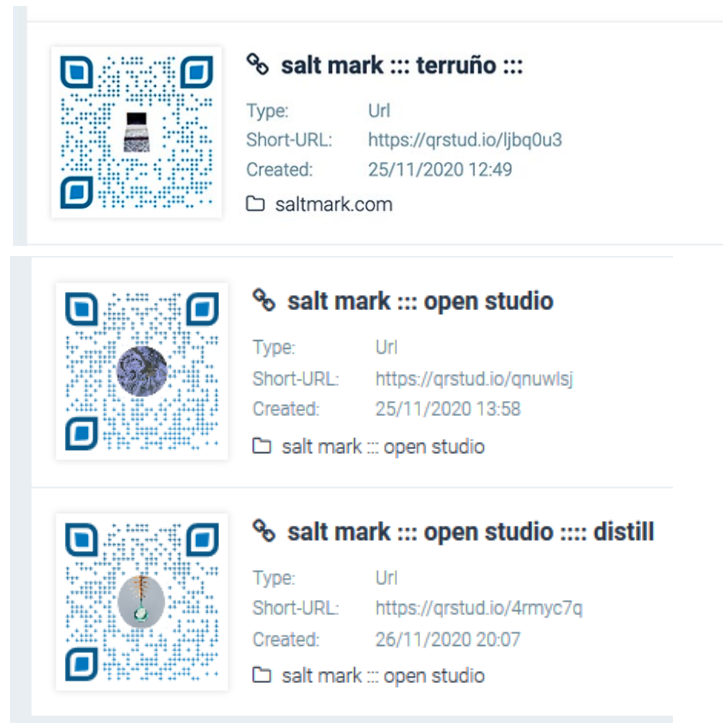
links to

<https://saltmark.com/home/open-studio/>

<https://qrstud.io/4rmyc7q>

links to

<https://saltmark.com/home/open-studio/open-studio-distill/>



The screenshot displays three QR codes generated by QRCode Studio, each with associated metadata. The first QR code is titled "salt mark ::: terruño :::", the second is "salt mark ::: open studio", and the third is "salt mark ::: open studio ::: distill". Each entry includes the QR code image, a key icon, the title, the type (all are "Url"), the short-URL, the creation date, and the domain (all are "saltmark.com").

QR Code Title	Type	Short-URL	Created	Domain
salt mark ::: terruño :::	Url	https://qrstud.io/ljbq0u3	25/11/2020 12:49	saltmark.com
salt mark ::: open studio	Url	https://qrstud.io/qnuwlsj	25/11/2020 13:58	salt mark ::: open studio
salt mark ::: open studio ::: distill	Url	https://qrstud.io/4rmyc7q	26/11/2020 20:07	salt mark ::: open studio

Web pages containing individual hyperlinks to original video work, via *Vimeo* platform:

<https://saltmark.com/home/coser-al-agua-hilar/>

<https://saltmark.com/home/break-bread-preparing-ground/>


<https://saltmark.com/home/seiva/>


<https://saltmark.com/home/bajo-agua/>













<https://saltmark.com/home/coser-al-agua-zurcir/>

Static QR hyperlinks to individual video clips embedded in virtual open studio web pages:

QR Codes

[+ Create QR Code](#) 

↓ Updated 

	<p> :: qr.2.vv :: dec 2020 ::</p> <p>Type: Url Created: 13/12/2020 20:49 salt mark :: open studio</p>	Static
	<p> :: depth soundings for orixa ::</p> <p>Type: Url Created: 14/12/2020 20:24 salt mark :: open studio</p>	Static
	<p> :: break bread :: preparing ground :: unearthing + unetching ::</p> <p>Type: Url Created: 14/12/2020 20:18 salt mark :: open studio</p>	Static
	<p> :: break bread :: preparing ground :: yard work :: morning snip + rip ::</p> <p>Type: Url Created: 14/12/2020 19:13 salt mark :: open studio</p>	Static
	<p> :: break bread :: preparing ground :: yard work :: warning :: alt native ::</p> <p>Type: Url Created: 14/12/2020 20:13 salt mark :: open studio</p>	Static
	<p> :: break bread :: preparing ground :: alt native :: diamond cutters ::</p> <p>Type: Url Created: 14/12/2020 21:14 salt mark :: open studio</p>	Static



🔗 :: bajo agua :: constellation ::

Static

Type: Url
Created: 14/12/2020 19:05
📁 salt mark :: open studio



🔗 :: ceiba + seiva :: cicatriz ::

Static

Type: Url
Created: 14/12/2020 01:28
📁 salt mark :: open studio



🔗 :: hilar :: coser al agua :: ayizan ::

Static

Type: Url
Created: 14/12/2020 01:03
📁 salt mark :: open studio



🔗 :: zurcir :: coser al agua :: distill ::

Static

Type: Url
Created: 14/12/2020 10:22
📁 salt mark :: open studio



🔗 :: hilar :: to spin :: qr2vv ::

Static

Type: Url
Created: 14/12/2020 00:24
📁 salt mark :: open studio



:: bajo agua :: constellation ::

<https://vimeo.com/478742423/d045258d55>



:: break bread :: preparing ground :: alt native :: diamond cutters ::

<https://vimeo.com/479092771/4ec8fd1ecd>



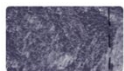
:: break bread :: preparing ground :: unearth + unetch ::

<https://vimeo.com/479091241/47b45531b4>



:: break bread :: preparing ground :: yard work :: morning snip + rip ::

<https://vimeo.com/478743282/287c53d17b>



:: break bread :: preparing ground :: yard work :: warning :: alt native ::

<https://vimeo.com/479151282/81c57097aa>



:: ceiba + seiva :: cicatriz ::

<https://vimeo.com/479097619/9b9115c07e>



:: depth soundings for Orixá ::

<https://vimeo.com/481830302/4f3c3390f8>



:: hilar :: coser al agua :: Ayizan ::

<https://vimeo.com/479100207/40c728e744>



:: zurcir :: coser al agua :: destilar ::

<https://vimeo.com/479091661/74dbfd0be>

Acknowledgements

:: dedicated to the inspirational lives and after lives of ::

my father, Charles Coit Almy, Jr
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and her mother, Teresa Julia Miranda Núñez

**:: in honor of three gorgeous souls
who breathe and radiate the epitome of love
each and every day ::**

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my husband, Sidy Lamine Touré
my co-conjurer, Ava LaVonne Vinesett

:: with absolute gratitude and adoration ::

Caroline Almy for sharing your vision through a camera lens
Lisa Werness for your enlightening attunement
... and pond, so full of peace!

Introduction



:: salt mark ::
::: open studio :::

:: qr.2.vv ::
::: picando portales :::
:: hilvanando terruño ::

::: stitching unearthed moments into place :::



Deciding where to drop in...

※※※※※※※※※※

Any other year, a typical question upon receiving an invitation to an **open studio** event might be when to stop by, to drop in... instead of how. As December 2020 approaches, I face a choice I never would have imagined ten months ago: I need to choose the best *way* to invite people remotely. To drop my needle. To select the precise speed and groove, to begin spinning a brief written analysis to accompany my final project for the Graduate Liberal Studies Program: a **virtual open studio**. I will begin by defining this mode of sharing and experiencing creative work, noting how an open studio approach differs from presenting work in an exhibition or performance. In response to current pandemic-induced parameters requiring physical distancing, rather than convening a public gathering for a particular date, time, and place, I will share a virtual version of selected glimpses from my studio, on 12/18/2020.

I have created a constellation of videos that feature machine-stitched fabric pieces; both these elements will be a core part of upcoming presentations in 2021. For the current screen shot, or snapshot in time, this virtual open studio iteration, I have interlinked the videos with quick response (QR) codes, metaphorically mirroring a kind of portal function that emerges as a key subject connecting over two

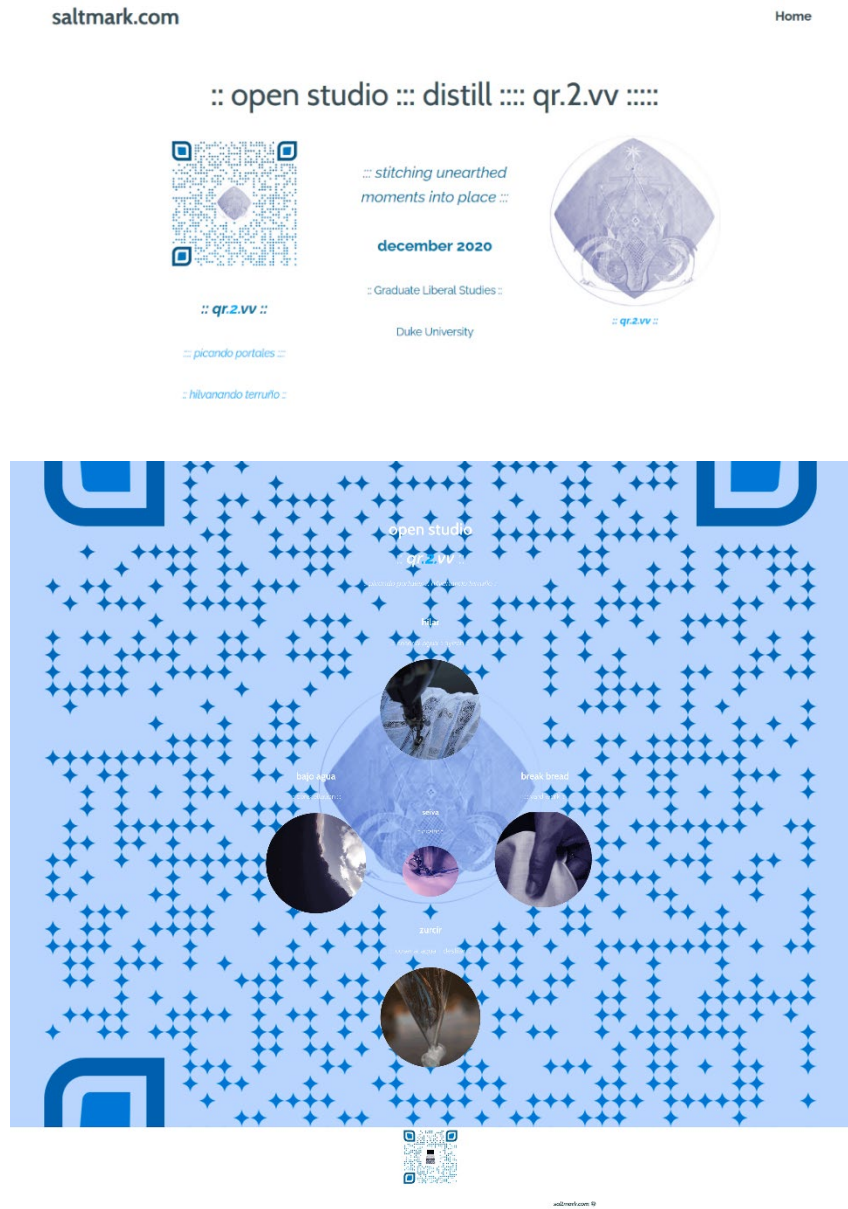
decades of research throughout Black Atlantic and Indian Ocean diaspora cultural practice. By relating QR code functionality to *yantra*, a centuries-old visual meditation technology in Tantric philosophy (Khanna, 1994) or to *vèvè*, “*ground-blazons that summon the vodun deities of Haiti from the island beneath the sea...*” (Thompson, 1997), a contemporary digital tool emerges; a concise, illustrative example for locating and convening dynamic lines of energy, whether ancestral voices or binary code.

:: *qr.2.vv* :: can serve as a phonetic shorthand, to parallel QR coding to creating *vèvè* and other traditional knowledge systems, as a tool for invoking a collaborative process as an integral part of any work.

While retracing and juxtaposing a few uncanny, recurring thematic threads in prior bodies of work, through lines that emerged over two decades and led to international artist residencies and research fellowships from the Caribbean to South Asia, I will lean on theoretical investigations from the realms of art history, cultural anthropology, and critical race theory to explore an “unfinished aesthetic” inherent in roadside shrines and altars, opening portals, inviting ancestral “co-presence” to linger, available for re-calling by initiates and non-believers passing by the same location at a future moment. Perhaps most relevant to the choice of presenting my current body of work as an open studio, both virtually and eventually in person, I will address key interactive and conceptual elements this creative format offers to various audiences and makers alike: a tool for reframing and allowing unpredictable juxtapositions to occupy adjacent, intermingled, interpenetrating space; an invitation to reconsider assumed boundaries of individual and shared identities and place; and a poetic lens for reexamining and mapping potential routes for dismantling oppressive systems of power. By presenting an open door to creative processes and collaborative approaches to making work, rich portals of co-discovery often emerge, furthering exploration of transdisciplinary and intersectional frameworks, in turn supporting and enriching future work.

<https://saltmark.com/home/open-studio/open-studio-distill/qv2v/>

As visitors enter the virtual open studio, they can choose when and where to drop in, to enter each portal. I have embedded video glimpses into web pages, ready to be instantly summoned, to be invoked by a mouse click or screen tap, trusting code will align source to embody pixels on a screen, conjuring a moving image to appear co-present through the internet ether... assuming that bandwidth, modem, router signals, and power supplies are all humming in synchronicity on any given day, of course.

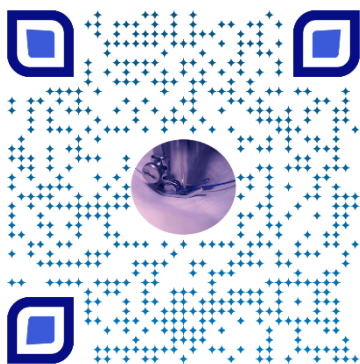


length site-responsive public productions of the Indigo Yard Gals (IYG) creative collective. Repurposed heirlooms, thrift store treasures, and lace remnants inextricably tied to the early twentieth century needlework industry in my mother's home country of Puerto Rico, these modified textiles range from ripped dinner napkins turned mini prayer flags, tea towels transformed into portable altar cloths, and custom-embroidered diamond river maps, tracing natal sources for both IYG dancers and participants. The videos, embedded in objects and vessels in close proximity with the fabric pieces, will deconstruct and create personal and collective "portals", comprising tangible elements for at least three upcoming **open studio** events:

- **Launching Friday, December 18, 2020...** *virtual* visitors can access video clips via <https://saltmark.com> via online *open studio* pages, within a context of broader collaborative and solo work. I will integrate interactive links to public platforms such as <https://padlet.com> that encourage instantaneous group feedback and ongoing exchange
- **Potentially a hybrid showing** (both virtual and a few *in-person* visitors, pending pandemic gathering restrictions) **in February, 2021...** *uncanny oceans* (working title) installation with video & photography
- **Open to the public April 12-16, 2021...** a week-long, hopefully *in-person* installation of collaborative work in progress (fabric pieces + objects embedded with portal videos, featuring choreography by Ava LaVonne Vinesett and dancers) for *Indigo Yard Gals (IYG) / Duke African Repertory Ensemble (DARE)* in the Murthy Agora Studio 129, Rubenstein Arts Center

What is an open studio, and how does it differ from an exhibition, performance, or other mode for presenting creative work? In a traditional sense, when referring to a physical studio space dedicated to creative activity and production, and open studio literally marks a window of time when doors open to invite casual interaction and exchange with a public beyond those involved in a current project. Whether the focus is a single location or a collective of several artists hosting a day for visitors to float among several locations on a map, an unspoken expectation is that the artists will be present, in person, inviting direct interaction and dialogue. Unlike a gallery or museum setting, where a business representative or cultural curator might stand in to interpret meaning or focus on commercial and art

market values of work on behalf of the maker, an open studio mode of presenting and experiencing work is itself an integral element of IYG collective, co-founded with choreographer and scholar Ava Lavonne Vinesett. IYG emphasizes an intentional move away from spectacle, from proscenium or gallery exhibition spaces, and toward participatory, co-creative work, preferencing shared, regenerative experiences over consumerist, transactional relationships with the work. A wide range of visitors might include entire families, so insightful questions from children and elders can cross-pollinate, perhaps spark a twist in thinking, in relating to theoretical concerns that might drive an academic presentation of work. Co-mingling of perspectives is invited and encouraged.



:: ceiba + seiva ::: cicatriz ::

::: birthmarks beget blueprints :::

::: pero oye, ¿y qué pasa cuando el pozo 'ta seco? ::::

:: stitching unearthed moments into place ::

::: chapter 17 :::

note: video titles, writings, and future subthemes, as noted above, will continue to evolve on dynamic hyperlinked web pages

For the current, *virtual* open studio format, work highlights documentation of the labor involved in its making in addition to on-location video featuring fabric pieces and other altered objects.

I intentionally expose the creative process, the work of joining yarn, cord, thread and other fiber to fabric from another era: finely embroidered handkerchiefs, recycled thrift store tea towels, an entire heirloom dining set, passed between generations until winding up tethered to a discounted consignment store price tag, hanging off a slightly rusty safety pin trying desperately to prevent yet another level of familial separation between a twelve-foot linen tablecloth, twenty-four matching napkins, three bread basket liners, and a companion buffet runner. I intentionally expose the moment of deviation from anticipated form. The choice to let a string of words run on and on and on. The syncopated beat, falling out of time, off rhythm, into a parallel present. The process of deciding when to stop a running stitch. To leave a sentence incomplete. Where to pivot everything around a needle still plunged in a bobbin well, to go back, search, retrace. Re-cover. To obscure, protect, overprotect, embalm. To change tenses, acknowledging the temporary safety of cocooning a truth or untruth, another layer of dense thread turning stitches into scarring, skipping to the next generation, gliding over edges taut and tangled, a silent underbelly taught its seams will not be seen :::

cicatriz

Trusting creative medicine to lead.

To make sense of all the marginalia accumulated during racial equity webinars, trying not to take up space alongside meeting minutes, punctuating week upon week of overlapping pandemics.

Both trauma and wisdom live in the body... a workshop facilitator says gently, on Zoom. Notice the difference in calling out, calling in, and calling home... reminds another.



We've been here before.
Know the contours.
The signals.

When to reverse course.

to :: *unearth* :: *unetch*

My choice to drop the needle in the precise moment it centers directly in the swirl of a complex network of ideas and creative projects, as my final project, to present an open studio approach to sharing ongoing, interlinking bodies of work as an artist-scholar in an era of global intersectional reckoning, echoes a trend embraced by cultural institutions across the earth. One very elaborate, interactive example of employing a virtual portal to demonstrate this effective means for visually presenting the interconnected nature and complexity among ever-evolving nodes of work and research, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) invites visitors to [Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) (trailer) in order to experience an intersecting, overlapping network of relationships first-hand. Referring to the overall project as a [Constellation](#), (full portal) the makers describe how:

Using web-semantics and graphic visualization, [Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) proposes a broader conceptual and visual navigation through close to 500 elements inscribed on UNESCO's Lists of the 2003 Convention. It explores the various elements across domains, themes, geography and ecosystems and makes it possible to visualize deep inter-connections among them...

The choice to map elements of open-ended cultural heritage, whose relationships are not dependent on a hierarchy of origins, invites other possibilities for visually demonstrating further interrelated layers of cultural practice, highlighting coexisting and interdependent affinities with surrounding environments, as exemplified in the [Biomes and natural resources](#) tab of the interface.

:: zurcir ::: coser al agua ::

::: distill :: mend :::

::: network connectivity ::: tablets as tools for remote learning :::

::: anchoring Socotra + Pemba :::

::: replenish, regenerate, rejuvenate :::

::: revisiting McElroy's "Hindu, Muslim, Bahian aesthetic" :::

::: inscribe to imbibe :::



Beyond the scope of this writing exist numerous examples of academic researchers embracing a similar network analysis lens, like cultural anthropologists and ethnographers calling for reexaminations of land and maritime routes in the ancient Near East and Indian Ocean World. Transdisciplinary scholar Eivind Heldaas Seland, bridges archaeology, history, cultural studies, and religion to reframe the basis for historical importance of geographical ports of call like the ancient Egyptian port of Berenike, for example. Beyond marking end points along spice, salt, amber, and slave routes passing through the Red Sea, he considers *frequency* of dropping anchor as a source, marking a pause for refueling, refilling stores of fresh water, and less visibly the cultural exchange and regeneration that would accompany a lingering moment. A graphic of Seland's network analysis hangs from studio push pins next to 14th century Portolan Charts, alongside Arabic names on stylized Indian Ocean charts compiled by Tibbets in 1977, marking port cities and coastal zones crossing meridians and languages in the Bay of Bengal, noting the north eastern coastline approaching present day Kolkatta as *Warisa*, a phonetic cousin of the Portuguese *Orixá* coast, a spelling echoed in tomes of nautical charts with marginalia noting maritime shortcuts used by captains sailing for the Dutch East India Company. An entire rolling cart in my studio lies below these and other extracted representatives of atlases, pilot navigation guides, and geographical dictionaries, drawers brimming with photocopies bridging a very particular Pacific and Indian Ocean diaspora ritual practice from the distant coasts of Vanuatu archipelago in the South Pacific to Black Atlantic shores of Salvador in Bahia, Brazil.

Beyond the scope of this overview, but still within click range of a few hyperlinks embedded in the web pages of my open studio, exist trails of breadcrumbs, preliminary stitches... core samplings and depth soundings :::



depth soundings for Orixá

*poetic word maps perch alongside artist statements, retracing a journey from **salt mark** to estuary, to marking thresholds, to IOW version of Rosetta Stone: the Degeest tablet unearthed in Hoq cave on Socotra, to 13th century divination device, to nasiji prescriptions for healing: Qur'anic verses inked on wooden tablets, rinsed with water, collected in a bowl.*

*fleeting encounters
internal inscriptions, to imbibe*

Within the context of broader, overlapping lines of inquiry and creative making, past and future comingle, becoming part of a present conversation. Proximity and juxtaposition are key. Objects, historical writings, and maritime charts all pinned to studio walls side by side invite visitors to bridge connections themselves, encouraging their own personal connection to certain lines of thought and insight to have a seat at the table, a pin on the wall. Blurring disciplinary lines between creative practice and scholarship, I carve a home for historian Gwyn Campbell's comprehensive notes, in their entirety, to unpack several layers of complexity involved in attempting to track singular ethnic origins, not to mention the varying natures of "slavery" throughout the Indian Ocean World (IOW):

The IOW slave trade started at least 4,000 years ago, was multidirectional, involved overland and maritime routes, changed over time, and involved many different ethnic groups. In the IOW, 'slave' cannot be equated with 'African' ... [regarding the Eastern IOW:] By the second century CE, demand may have developed in China for skilled African sailors and Alexandrian slave jugglers... From the fourth century a regular market existed there for "K'un-lun ("Black') slaves.., but "K'un-lun" could refer specifically to inhabitants of Pemba, in East Africa, and any dark-skinned person from Africa, Papua New Guinea and Melanesia... By the late ninth century, east African slaves were certainly highly esteemed in China as divers to caulk boat seams with oakum, because of their strength and ability

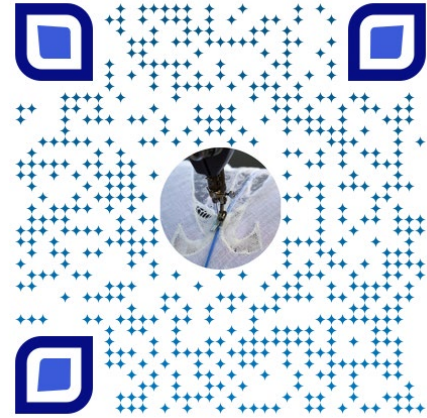
to keep their eyes open underwater. They were also imported as sailors, who possibly helped man the great Chinese navies of the twelfth to early fifteenth centuries... From the tenth century, there were increased references to African slaves. In the 1400s, Malagasy and east African slaves were imported into Aceh (Indonnesia) by Bengali traders and into Melaka (via the Maldives) by Banten merchants... [regarding the Western IOW: South Asia:] Arab merchants in the third century CE possibly shipped the first African slaves to India, to the Sopara, Kalyan, Chaul, and Pal forts in Konkan... With the commercial spread of Islam demand for African slaves increased, and from the tenth century significant numbers of Berbers, Ethiopians, and sub-Saharan Africans... were shipped to South Asia. Michel Bovin claims that the majority of slaves in Sind (present-day Pakistan) were Sidi, of East African origin ..., although Salim Kidwai argues that while African slaves predominated in Bengal and South India, Turks and Slavs comprised the majority of slave imports into medieval South Asia... The Portuguese settlements of Goa, Dui, Daman, and Sri Lanka augmented Indian demand for African slaves, notably from the Mozambique coast... Portuguese and Indian traders initially shared this trade, but it became progressively concentrated in the hands of the Indians. Dutch and British posts in Sri Lanka subsequently imported Malagasy and East African slaves directly and indirectly, via Cape Town, Bombay and Goa... Conventional literature emphasizes Africa as a source of slaves for external markets. However, Africa also proved a market for non-African slaves. For example, from 1658-1807, the Cape imported slaves from Bengal, Coromandel, Malabar, Kerala, Cochin, Sri Lanka, Java Sualwesi, Macassar, Bali, Timor, Ternate, Macao, Madagascar, and the Mascarenes, and probably from Banda and Iran... Moreover, probably the majority of enslaved Africans were retained in Africa, albeit often far from their region of origin. For instance, from the mid-eighteenth century considerable numbers of East Africans were shipped to Zanzibar, Pemba, Somalia, Madagascar, the Mascarenes, ... [regarding gender profiles:] Slavery studies have focused overwhelmingly on male slaves. This largely reflects the scholarly emphasis on the Atlantic system in which predominantly male slaves were shipped to the Americas. By contrast, most slaves traded in the IOW were female, notably girls and young women who generally commanded higher prices than male and older female slaves. The exceptions were eunuchs ("males made female"), who were universally highly prized, and boys in China- where patriarchal ideology restricted the supply of boy slaves, whose prices were often four to five times that of girl slaves... (Campbell 2008: 21-25).



:: distill ::

:: hilar ::: coser al agua ::: Ayizan ::

Rewind. My earliest childhood memories foreground visits to my mother's homeland of Borinquen, the indigenous Taíno name for the unceded territory also known as Puerto Rico, a Caribbean island doubly territorialized by the United States of



America. I am wandering blue cobblestone streets of Old San Juan, en route to or from the mainland, whenever our family could spare an extra half day lingering in the capital city. Stretching tired and tingly legs with my parents and three siblings, these coveted hours delving into a simultaneously historic and contemporary zone marked both comings and goings; we always craved these precious escapes into layered, multi-sensory oases that pierced a midway point in both time and locale. A detour to Viejo San Juan meant we were either arriving from a long flight that departed La Guardia more than four hours prior, or we would soon be airport-bound, having already travelled at least three hours by car or van from the opposite end of the island where most of my mother's immediate family remain rooted to the present day. Our meandering escapes sauntering down narrow, uneven lanes imprinted more than simply an alternate way of living from the more rural pace and patios we knew by heart in the south and west. Blue streets paved in *adoquines*, or eroded blocks of iron slag underfoot in this northern Atlantic port were stunningly beautiful to elementary-age eyes in the 1970's.

With a single blink I could shift from soaking up azure hues beneath my sandals to peering through twelve-foot high colonial doors flung wide open to beckon tropical airflow through wrought iron gates. Mesmerizing, momentary shifts between public and private realms abounded, revealing unexpected openings for intimacy. I always stood transfixed by these extremes of proximity. One doorway could frame a silver-haired elder in a wooden rocker, gently dozing to a radio news broadcast.

The next, only five steps farther, might show a wedge of light filtering through to the floor, the last syllables of a parental scolding fading into toddler whimpers. A pair of giggling teens wait patiently on a stoop, watching as a third shouts pleas to a balcony three floors above, *baja la canasta... lower the basket, I need the key!* By simply standing in place, I would realize I had just overlapped, completely absorbed a fleeting moment in the universe of a complete stranger's living room, by standing still on a sidewalk, peering past the present.

Fast forward. At age fourteen I was being fitted for my first *real* mask and snorkel. Not the dime store kind, made to last for a week, but a true fit made to last for several years, with beginner fins, from an actual scuba diving shop, where marine biologists cross paths with surfers and geology professors like my father. The mask had to cling with an airtight grip on my young but growing face; we would need to be inseparable when submerged, collecting coral and sediment samples for a geologic study off Isla Magueyes in Lajas, Puerto Rico. Day after day I watched repeating patterns below the waves coming into clear focus. ephemeral lines. sand in motion. shifting. undulating, intersecting offerings of a constantly new delineation between land and sea. Thinking *that* line marks the point... the edge... the moment when terra firma stops and tidal expanse begins... until the next wave circulated a new boundary, only seconds later. I remember floating. Witnessing a zone of flux below the water's surface.

Fast forward. At age nineteen I observe traces of a constant dialogue, an ongoing, never-ending negotiation reappear as tangible texture, as embossment marking blank paper's new memory of pressure from deep grooves it has just met and released on my printing plate in an undergraduate intaglio course.

Fast forward again. Age twenty-four and this texture, this evidence, recalling direct contact, flows through my hands in salt lines I draw on the floor of my home, and out into the sidewalk and street in Viejo San Juan following my grandmother's passing. I am a young artist delineating the first

phase of a year-long fellowship, *the estuary project*, that would eventually lead me across the globe to circulate among women throughout Southern India who maintain centuries-old traditions of drawing lines on their thresholds every day at dawn and at dusk, tracing ephemeral invocations and labyrinths in white rice flour.

Fast forward to thirty-four, and these creative investigations, *the estuary project* along with its twin, *marking thresholds*, led me to delve into archives in Tamil Nadu, India and later into research libraries and cartography collections in Chicago and North Carolina, linking centuries-old maritime contact throughout the Indian Ocean basin with circulation of ongoing ritual drawing traditions and intersecting transoceanic water spirits in circum-Caribbean and African realms as part of *depth soundings for Orixá*.

With 2020 [sic] hindsight, I now realize how the most impactful glimpses turned into repeat visits, casual acquaintances, and eventually into friendships with new neighbors when I decided to relocate to VSJ in my early twenties. I revisited what I had always known to be the front counter of a tiny, local hardware store... and met several universes past those first steps. As I delved farther away from street, discovering rooms and layers of existence not on view to passers-by, no matter how wide open the front door had been flung, I grew to love a common feature of Spanish colonial architecture. In addition to solid stone and brick walls mortared several feet thick, successfully withstanding four centuries of hurricane-force winds, sits a central interior patio. The tropical *outdoors*, natural elements like sun, rain, wind, and moonlight would enter and penetrate hearth and skin directly, from the inside. I discovered that doors were not the only portals.

Elsewhere I have written on both concrete and speculative lines of connection and communication among various traditions of inscribing the earth with white powder that continue to thrive across the globe as a sacred, creative act known by many names and re-shaped by context, place

and maker, including: *yantra* (Tantrism), *mandala* (Tibetan Buddhism), sand painting (Diné- Navajo), *kolam* (pre-vedic Dravidian South India), *alpana* (Bengal), *rangoli* (Parsi-influenced North India), *pontos riscados* (Candomblé and Umbanda), *vèvè* (Haitian vodou/ Benin & Togo vodún), *firmas* (Regla de Ocha), *Òsù nílè* (Bini in Cuba), *pemba* (Palo), *anaforuana* (Abakuá), *sona* (Tchokwe), and *malekula* (Vanuatu), to name a few.

An open studio format serves up space for vibrant juxtapositions to co-exist, pinned next to one another, shoulder to shoulder, belly to nape. An excerpt of a winding river stitched onto a handkerchief becomes a portable map, a way finder to an Eno crossing named for this region’s most revered midwife of the last century, Fannie Breeze, the only black elder allowed burial in an otherwise white cemetery in Pleasant Green. Opening the doors of a studio beckons conversations not likely to transpire any other place. When in person gatherings are safe once again, I look forward to explaining how a *vèvè* functions by way of a QR code to children, while in the same space, only two feet away, referring to footnotes pinned to gypsum with adults. For now, virtual walls will hold space for engagement, added unexpected layers to sensory explorations. I am finding ways with [:: qr.2.vv ::](#) to continue delving into recent scholarship on co-presence, in tandem with earlier investigations of theoretical arguments for an “unfinished” aesthetic in Vodun philosophy [:::](#)

[:: hilar ::](#)



	<p align="center">Reframing “unfinished aesthetic” as representation of ever-cycling/ composting/ fractal moment (Almy-Pagán 2015)</p>	
<p><i>Five-year-old visitors to this open studio can collect and click on small cards printed with a selection of QR codes connecting them to imagery from global ICH traditions</i></p> <p>...</p> <p><i>a fern leaf</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Ayizan <i>Caribbean Vodun/ Haiti, fern associated with initiates stepping into a new world</i></p> <p><i>Deren 1953</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Aya <i>West Africa Akan/ Ghana, fern as Adinkra symbol for independence, perseverance</i></p> <p><i>Willis 1998</i></p>	<p>Art historian Dana Rush offers a refreshing option for considering Vodun art and philosophy, building on the work of anthropologist Paul Stoller’s “sensuous scholarship” as continued in Drewal’s call for a “sensiotic approach’ to the study of African art and aesthetics” in order “to demonstrate how African artists and audiences employ the senses of sight, taste, hearing, speaking, touch, motion, and extra-sensory perception ‘to create and respond to the affective and aesthetic qualities of art” (26).</p> <p>In addition to echoing calls for scholarship that reaches beyond linguistic representations, valuing polysensory modes and opening possibilities for internalized cross-pollination of experience (reminiscent of Beliso de Jesús’ arguments for including experiences of “copresence” in possession- centered religious dialogues), Rush also presents a framework centered on an “ongoing present,” reasoning that “transatlantic shrines reflect the complicated global histories that surround them. Just as history is ongoing and unfinished, so is the potential of a transatlantic shrine” (33).</p> <p><i>An unfinished aesthetic system disarms standard Cartesian dualities - right/wrong, black/white, complete/incomplete - while suggesting the circular dynamic understood only through an acceptance of a process for which the goal is not completion, but rather continuation and survival. Accepting a shrine’s unfinishedness respects its Opacity. Transatlantic Vodun art and thought are process--driven and unfinished, on the verge of action in response to whatever unknown may present itself (39).</i></p> <p>Citing art historian Suzanne Blier’s reflexive observation of “the problematic nature of an overarching taxonomic system for classifying Vodun,” Rush admits:</p> <p><i>I, too, could attempt to break Vodun down into separate realms based on a variety of diverse criteria. It has, however, been done and redone for close to three hundred years. Because I do not conceptualize Vodun as a system that can be broken down into constituent parts, I am not comfortable listing, categorizing, or compartmentalizing Vodun as separate from each other. There is a crucial relationship lost in categorizing Vodun independently, for Vodun is a whole rhizomatic system that must be understood I terms of integration rather than separation (46-7).</i></p> <p>While I appreciate Rush’s thoughtful approaches for discussing her ethnographic research in conjunction with her experiences in West Africa, I found her discussions in the chapter “India,” Chromolithographs and Vodun to be disappointing, demonstrating the same lacuna of cultural knowledge regarding East Indian traditional beliefs that ruffled Kasfir’s feathers regarding East African cultural heritage. Her insightful conceptual frameworks are weakened by an over-conflation of Dravidian and vedic-inspired Hindu deities. A facile visual opportunity to strengthen her polysensory argument, beyond words, is transoceanic reaction to ubiquitous representations of motion and copresent recognition, perceived in any chromolithograph or sculpture of a South Asian devi appearing to have four, or eight, or any number of extra arms, legs, and heads, signifying cross-pollinating potential in time and space (in addition to localized referents to symbolic threshold moments passed). Cycles of</p>	<p>Vèvè: Love of the gods translated into signatures.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Vèvè are ground-blazons that summon the vodun deities of Haiti from the island beneath the sea where they all reside in glory.</p> <p><i>Thompson 1997</i></p> <p>...</p> <p><i>machine-stitched tea towel fabric pieces hang next to photocopies from several global sources</i></p> <p>...</p> <p><i>pinned to studio wall are no fewer than 12 LOCAL variations of “Aï-zan” in Haiti, an entire chapter of trilingual research</i></p>

<p>∴</p> <p><i>LOCAL connections</i></p> <p>∴</p> <p><i>St. Sya Academy, Stagville presentation of Jonkanu tradition based on Sylvia Wynter research</i></p> <p>∴</p>	<p>creative integration meet cycles of perseverance in centuries-old gestures marking roadside, household, and temple devotional traces. In closing this chapter, Rush recognizes:</p> <p><i>Because India Spirits [in Benin] are not currency they cannot be exchanged, yet they are undeniably the product of exchange. Imported Indian goods... also act as passports for travel to another world because the relationship between these goods and access to the spiritual world is immediate and unquestioned. The sea is eternal, its vastness undeniable, and its power is transferred into Mami Wata temples via mass-produced chromolithographic images which represent at once both India and the sea (109).</i></p> <p>A familiar gesture from afar pulls psyche like a moon draws liquid, raises ridges, making tides. Physics is not the only field to describe electromagnetic boundary conditions. "As a concentration of energy, a shrine is full of vitality, expanding and contracting over time. The meanings and associated powers of a shrine can change based on anything from the efficacy of the shrine itself to a dream or vision had by the shrine's owner" (Rush, 33).</p>	<p><i>Rigaud 1974</i></p> <p>∴</p> <p><i>Lalita Sri Yantra Tantra</i></p> <p><i>Khanna 1994</i></p> <p>∴</p> <p><i>vever for Ayizan</i></p> <p><i>Deren 1953</i></p> <p>∴</p>
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:: zurcir ::

:: break bread :: preparing ground :: yard work :: morning snip + rip ::

- :: the challenge of heirloom linen that sparks nether joy nor neutrality ::
- ::: preparing ground for dismantling white supremacy :::
- :: a single dinner napkin reckons with generational divides ::
- ::: diamond cutters + contemporary prayer flags :::
- :: Benjamin spins on BALM ::
- :: déjà vécu ::: déjà visité ::
- ::: cobblestones beneath my sandals in Cachoeira :::
- :: Irmandade da Boa Morte ::
- ::: making labor visible :::
- ::: unearth + un-etch :::



For now, I will continue to focus on making time, and taking time, to make patterns, erasure of patterns, and stillness both visible and voiced, whether virtually in video, or eventually in shared presence again.

Acknowledging, unearthing, ripping, stitching bridges into place, following the lead of so many before :::

<p><i>Harvard Kennedy Center's symposium "Re-imagining Black Youth-Led Technologies"</i></p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>Race after Technology: The New Jim Code</p> <p>Ruha Benjamin</p> <p><i>(transcript from opening acknowledgements- first 3 minutes of keynote)</i></p> <p>00:04</p> <p>So the title of my comments this morning, you can see here: Pattern Makers: who will define, refine, confine, and design, which is a question posed by one of my favorite writers Octavia E. Butler. If you don't know her work then that's one of your homeworks for today- is to go find out who she is and engage her science fiction which in many ways is prophetic for our current moment. So good morning. Thanks so much to the Carr Center and all of the co-sponsors for convening Mousha Rouhani and Yaleti Hanwana, and the team for getting us all in this room this morning.</p>	<p>Honoring Original Indigenous Inhabitants:</p> <p>Land Acknowledgement https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/land-acknowledgement NK360° Helpful Handouts -discusses land acknowledgement as a dynamic cultural practice rooted in Indigenous traditions</p> <p>:::</p> <p><i>Bringing it LOCAL</i></p> <p>:::</p> <p>Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association Virtual Annual Meeting November 2020</p> <p>:::</p> <p>Native Land Acknowledgement Kaitlin Grable, ECWA Board Member <i>(transcript from opening acknowledgements)</i></p>
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00:48

As we begin, please join me in acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Massachusett.

Let us also acknowledge the intertwined legacies, the devastation of transatlantic slavery and settler colonialism which contributes to the creation and continued wealth of this institution and of the nation-state itself

-we acknowledge the reparations owed to black and indigenous communities and nations and the impossibilities of return for generations past.

-we are alive today in an era of necessary resistance and awakening to preserve this planet and all the beautiful creation that is no doubt worthy of the struggle and finally

-let us also acknowledge the ancestors in the room today as we fight together for better futures

-please take a moment to call to mind those you know and those you know of

-call their names. Invoke their memories because ancestral co-presence has long fortified struggles for justice and liberation

Mary L Franco. Say her name. Sandra Bland. Say her name. I **dedicate this talk to their memory because *black after lives matter***.

It turns out that Sandra recorded her own arrest and this with the cellphone recording that was made public just a few months ago disputing the official Police Department account in which we now see officer and see no pointing a Taser at Sandra and yelling I will light you up. So this talk is for them and all of those who refuse to submit in the face of violence and indignity and who refuse to be forgotten. Together let us light them up.

Ashé

With that I'm going to ask you now to turn to your neighbor for one minute and introduce yourself. Share something that brings you joy in the face of so much heartache in the world ...

01:20

Ah man tete voh te eh myehbi noh weh

Good greetings from all my relations to all your relations.

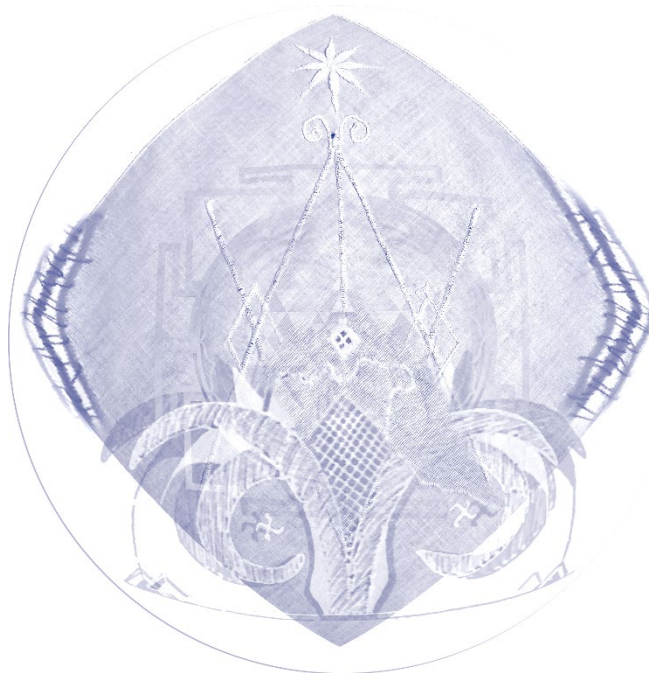
My name is Kate and I'm a board member in ECWA. I'd like to open this meeting by inviting a moment of reflection about these lands and people it belongs to. Long before the settler state, and before this place came to be colonially known as Durham, North Carolina, these were and have always been the lands of the Eno and Okanichi people, in addition to the Catawba, the Saponi, and the Tuscarora peoples, who have inhabited the greater region surrounding us. These peoples have lived with this land since time immemorial and I'm here to pay respect to these people's past present future and continued presence on these lands. I'm here to acknowledge the indigenous people who have and continue to live and work in our communities. I'm here to recognize the historic and continued violence against indigenous people by the state and by this nation, and though colonization has done its best to erase the indigenous legacies

and histories of these lands, we're present in this moment, recognizing that we're guests and settlers on what has always been Eno and Okanichi lands. At ECWA and as environmentalists we have the great responsibility and privilege of supporting and carrying on the stewardship of these native lands.

Thank you.

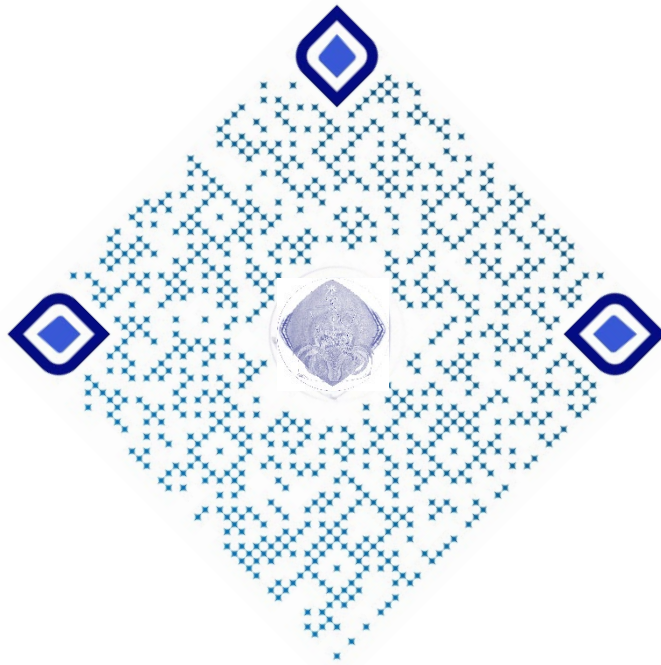


:: bajo agua :: constellation ::



:: distill :: virtual vèvè in progress for :: qr.2.vv ::

Conclusion



:: qr.2.vv :: is designed to continue generating and regenerating a means for co-creating and convening hyperlinks as a home for marginalia. A virtual studio for co-present moments. An open door for transfixing thoughts and revelations emerging in unanticipated tempo. Deserving return.

:: hilvanando portales ::: stitching portals, basting unearthed moments, into place ::
::: picando :: punching, piercing, snipping, puncturing, cutting through :::
:: hilando terruño ::: spinning homeland ::

***As body is to the soul and oil is to the lamp,
a yantra is to the deity***

Kulrava Tantra (Chap. 6, v.86) in Khanna, 1997: 12

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