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I AM A YOUNG BLACK-FEMME TRANSSEXUAL 1ST GENERATION DOMINICAN NEW YORKER FROM AN IMPOVERISHED MIGRANT FAMILY. I AM NOW A RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL ARTIST AND ACTIVIST.

I WORK WITH COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS TO PLANT SEEDS FOR OVERDUE PLATFORMS AND RELATIONSHIPS TO CENTER THE PEOPLE WHO ARE MOST ENDANGERED. I AM CONTINUOUSLY EXPLOITED BY WHITE-LED CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS FOR MY, PALATABLE TO THE WHITE GAZE, BLACK-CENTERED QUEER/ MOVEMENT-BASED WORKS. I DESERVE FOR MY WORK TO NOT BE, FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, CULTURALLY RAPED AND HAVE MY ANCESTRAL WEALTH/INHERITANCES PILLAGED. WHAT ARE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO, UNLIKE MANY, FUCK WITH ME AND MY PERSISTENT CLAPBACK, GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?

THE REASONS WHY CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ARE UNABLE TO HOLISTICALLY HOST MINE AND PEOPLE LIKE ME'S WORK ARE NOT MYTHICAL NOR MYSTIC. I WAKE UP TO EMAILS EVERYDAY TO FIND ENDANGERING CYCLES CONTINUE AND WOULD NOT BE CURVED WITHOUT MY EXPRESSED PAINED WORDS AND NUANCED KNOWLEDGE. ALSO KNOWN AS FREE INDENTURED LABOR. I RECENTLY SAT WITH A CURATOR

FOR THE 1ST-TIME MEETING TO FIND THAT THEY HAD AN ITCHING QUESTION ... “DON’T YOU THINK PEOPLE OF COLOR SHOULD BE OFFERING FREE EDUCATION TO WHITE PEOPLE, I MEAN, HOW ELSE ARE WE GOING TO GET IT?”. TO WHICH I SAID “IT IS YOUR EXPRESSED JOB AS THE LEADER OF A CULTURAL INSTITUTION TO RELENTLESSLY ATTEMPT TO GRASP THE 360 DEGREE PICTURE AND IF YOU WANT TO CONSULT PEOPLE OF COLOR YOU PAY THEM AS A CONSULTANT JUST LIKE YOU WOULD AN ARCHITECTURAL OR DESIGN CONSULTANT”.

WHY DID I HAVE TO SAY THIS? DID THEIR QUESTION NOT MODEL A SETTLER COLONIAL ENTITLEMENT TO MY BLACK TRANS FEMME LABOR? I MEAN THE ENTITLEMENT OF WHAT THEY SAID SHOULD READ VOLUMES. TO BE CLEAR, THIS IS THE BEGINNING AND CERTAINLY NOT THE END OF HOW A COLONIAL PROJECT SUCH AS ART ORGS, MUSEUMS, THEATERS, ETC., ENDANGER MY MENTAL HEALTH AND THEREFORE THE HEALTH OF MY BLACK SELF AND MY BLACK COLLABORATORS. THIS EXAMPLE IS ONE OF THE LEAST HARMFUL I HAVE NAVIGATED WHILE IN CLOSED-DOOR MEETINGS WITH MOSTLY WHITE CIS DIRECTORS.

niv Acosta — Repair/Reparations Part 1;
Cultural Institutions Are
Colonial Projects, Where's the Lie



THINGS I HAVE SAID AT THESE EXCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONAL TABLES: “I EAT WHITE FAGGOTS LIKE YOU FOR BREAKFAST”, “I'M LUCKY TO BE HERE?!”, “YOU NEED TO DO BETTER WHEN HOSTING BLACK TRANS-FEMME FOLK LIKE ME”, “PLEASE REIMBURSE ME FOR THE TICKET I HAD TO PURCHASE MYSELF BECAUSE I MISSED MY TRAIN BECAUSE OF A LIFE-THREATENING TRANS-PHOBIC ATTACK ON MY WAY HOME FROM WORKING AT YOUR INSTITUTION”, “I'M NOT A DIVA, I NEED SAFE TRANSPORTATION”, “ALL MY MUSIC IS ORIGINALLY COMPOSED, THE FUCK YOU THINK THIS IS?!”, AND “YOUR INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES ARE RACIST, IF YOU WANT MY ART, YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE A STRUCTURAL RACISM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE WHERE WE INVITE THE PEOPLE MISSING FROM THIS DIALOG, AKA THE BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITY LEADERS THAT HAVE/HAVE NOT BEEN THRIVING THANKS TO YOU”, AMONG A FEW THINGS.

THE POINT IS **EVERYONE** IS EXPLOITING THE CULTURAL LEADERS WHO RESIST AND PROTEST WHILE BLACK AND FEMME, STRUCTURAL RACISM IS ONE OF THE MOST INSIDIOUSLY FATAL AND YET ARGUABLY “THE MOST ELUSIVE” TO THE WHITE GAZE, WHITE RUN/LEAD CULTURAL

INSTITUTIONS ARE A COLONIAL PROJECT/ STRUCTURALLY RACIST AND DO IMPACT THE LIVES OF MANY. THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING AS THEY SAY... WHO'S SAUCE IS THIS ANYWAY? THE RACIAL DISPARITIES FROM STAFF TO ARTIST PRESENTED ARE ALWAYS PALPABLE AND NOT AS MYSTICAL OR MYTHICAL AS THE WHITE INSTITUTION WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE. IF YOU'RE A DATA MONGER, THE REPORTS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN, DEVOS AND MELLON TO BE EXACT.

**WHEN WE
ASK FOR
REPARATIONS
IT SHOULD
INCLUDE
EVERYTHING
FROM
ECONOMIC
TO ENERGETIC
REPAIR.**

I AM IMAGINING A WORLD WHERE MARGINAL PEOPLE'S REST/SLEEP/R.E.M CYCLES ARE PRIORITIZED. THERE ARE GREAT RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE SLEEP OF RACIALIZED PEOPLES AND THOSE OF WHITE PEOPLES. I PROPOSE THAT WHITE-LED CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ARE JUST AS CULPABLE IN EFFECTIVELY ENDANGERING AND DISPARAGING COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AS THE CLUB BOUNCERS OF THE WORLD'S IMAGINATION OR WHAT IS LEFT OF OUR PILLAGED IMAGINATIONS. CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE INSTIGATING BETTER REST/SLEEP FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST. HERE'S AN EXTENSIVE (NOT EXHAUSTIVE) LIST OF WHO'S REST NEEDS REPAIRING: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, BLACK DISABLED, BLACK FEMME, BLACK TRANS WOMAN, BLACK IMMIGRANT, ARAB IMMIGRANT, MUSLIM IMMIGRANT, SINGLE BLACK PARENTS, YOUNG BLACK PRECARIOUS AND ALONE ARTISTS AND ACTIVISTS.

ON THE TOPIC OF PILLAGED IMAGINATIONS, DENZEL WASHINGTON PLAYED A COP 7 TIMES ON FILM. THE BLACK MALE COP IS THE WHITE SUPREMACIST DREAM. THIS DREAM IS TO WEAPONIZE OUR CHARACTER AND POLICE OUR PEOPLES BY PUTTING BLACK MEN IN UNIFORM AND PREDOMINANTLY INVESTING

POC NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDING INTO POLICING INSTEAD OF EMPOWERING. EARLIER IN MY CAREER I WAS OBSESSED WITH THE ARCHETYPE OF BLACK MASCULINITY. I WAS COMING INTO MY TRANS IDENTITY AS MORE MASC-CENTERED AND STRUGGLED TO WRAP MY BRAIN AROUND THE VIOLENT DEPICTIONS OF BLACK MASCULINE PEOPLE WHICH DENIED ME, AS I'M SURE MANY OTHERS, OF A POSITIVE REPRESENTATION OF BLACK MEN.

WHAT I MEAN BY POSITIVE IS DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE OF QUEERNESS, FEMININITY AND GENDER NON-CONFORMANCE. IN THE FINAL INSTALLATION OF MY SERIES ENTITLED "I SHOT DENZEL" I WORKED WITH MY MOTHER AND VOGUING AS THE FINAL PUSH FOR GRASPING WHAT WAS EXCLUDING ME FROM THE JUMP... THE SUBSEQUENT OPPRESSION OF MY IMAGINATION. ONCE I SHOT HIM I COULD WALK AWAY WITHOUT REGRET. I HAD MADE AWAY WITH THE DISTORTED NATURE WITHIN THE POPULAR DEPICTIONS OF BLACK MALE-DOM. THE DEPICTIONS WHICH HAVE US ALL PANICKED AROUND BLACK MASCULINITY AND UNABLE TO SEE BEYOND THE MONOLITH.

OUR COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION OF BLACKNESS KILLS BLACK PEOPLE.

UNLIKE WHITE CIS-HETERO MEN I WAS BORN INTO A DEFICIT I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO REPAY. THE DEFICIT WHICH DENIES ME FREE MOVEMENT AND ACCESS TO STANDARDS OF LIVING THAT I HAVE A RIGHT TO, SUCH AS STRUCTURES LIKE SAFE TRANSPORTATION, HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, ETC., YET MORE IMPORTANTLY THE RIGHT TO BE SEEN AS THE EXPERT OF MY OWN EXPERIENCE. AS IN THE RIGHT TO BE BELIEVED IN THE STRUGGLES I, AND MANY OTHERS, FACE AS TRUE AND NOT AN OBSTRUCTION TO THE WHITE CIS-HETERO FICTION BY MERELY EXISTING IN A WORLD THAT REMOVES MY HUMANITY.

OUR REPARATION WILL NOT BE CHEAP, FURTHERMORE NOR WILL IT LINE PRODUCTION-BASED POCKETS. TO CENTER BLACK/INDIGENOUS REST, A DIRECT RESISTANCE TO CAPITALISM MUST

BE MADE. MONEY AND THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH CENTER IT WILL ALWAYS EX-CLUDE AND PUNISH PEOPLE WHO CANNOT ACCESS IT, REMAINING KNOWN TO SUSTAIN STRUCTURAL RACISM.

LIKELY EVEN AFTER READING THIS TEXT YOU ARE STILL AT A LOSS FOR HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO REPAIRING BLACK & INDIGENOUS TIME, REST AND REJUVENATION. YOU CAN HIRE ME. YOU CAN ALSO EMAIL ME WITH QUESTIONS ONCE YOU'VE SENT MONEY TO ME THROUGH PAYPAL.ME/NIVACOSTA. IN FACT, IF YOU THINK READING THIS TEXT, ATTENDING A FEW WORKSHOPS AND OVERBURDENING THE FEW PEOPLE OF COLOR IN YOUR LIFE FOR FREE IS GOING TO BE ENOUGH YOU SEVERELY NEED TO CONTACT ME.