

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY FOR THE ARTIST-SCHOLAR

EXPERIENTIAL REPRESENTATION IN A DECENTERED IMPROVISING COMMUNITY

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In Between based on *Non-Places*

The Art: "Reflected Perceptions" are photographs made based on my research. Concepts are represented in a non-documentary manner and ask the viewer to emotionally experience the ideas. This font and color refer to the art.

ABSTRACT:

- * IN DEVELOPING MY MA THESIS, "NEW AMERICANS, NEW YORK, NEW MUSIC: WOMEN IMPROVISING MUSICIANS IN DIASPORA," I HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED TO CREATE AN ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY THAT SERVES THE DUAL FUNCTION OF CREATING A FINE ART PIECE AND AN ACADEMIC TEXT.
- * AS ETHNOGRAPHERS, WE MUST REALIZE THAT OUR METHODS ARE ACTUALLY CREATING THE REALITY THAT WE ARE STUDYING, RATHER THAN ALLOWING THE COLLABORATOR (SUBJECT) TO EXPRESS HIS/HER EXPERIENCE THROUGH HIS/HER OWN LENS.
- * THROUGH A MULTI SENSORY AND REFLEXIVE "METHOD ASSEMBLAGE" A COLLABORATIVE REPRESENTATION THAT HONORS THE EXPERIENCES OF EACH COLLABORATOR (RESEARCHER INCLUDED) CAN BE DESIGNED.
- * THIS POSTER WILL CONSIDER THE ROLE OF IMPROVISATION IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND IN CREATING VISUAL ART.

ETHNOGRAPHY AS COLLABORATIVE IMPROVISATION

- * CONVERSATIONS/ INTERVIEWS BUILD, AS A MUSICAL IMPROVISATION, RELYING ON ONE ANOTHER'S **CALL** TO ENACT A **RESPONSE**.
- * "SO, WHEN YOU DO IMPROVISATION, YOU HAVE TO LISTEN OTHERS MORE THAN YOU CAN PLAY."- JIN HI KIM, KOMUNGO
- * IN SHARING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PAST, I WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER INTO THE **STILLED MOMENTS** PAST, A PLACE I HAVE NOT SEEN, AND TO BE DIRECTED ON ITS MEANING, ITS REALITY FOR THE COLLABORATOR.



- * "THE OTHERS COMMENT AND ENCOURAGE THE STORY AND THE **STORYTELLER**, AND INFLUENCE THE STORY."- ANNE METTE IVERSEN, BASS

- * DIRECTED PHOTOGRAPHY: THE COLLABORATOR WILL **DIRECT ME** IN MAKING IMAGES DESCRIBING THE PRESENT.

- * MAKING MUSIC IN THE GENRE OF THE COLLABORATORS EVEN IF SUCH **INTERACTION** IS ONLY RUDIMENTARY.

- * I WAS LIKE, 'OKAY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.' SO THEN WE STARTED [IMPROVISING] AND IT STARTED WITH SILENCE. AFTERWARDS I WAS LIKE, '**THIS IS WHAT I NEED TO DO.**'- MARIA CHAVEZ, AVANT-TURNTABLIST

Richard Bull was a pioneer in the development of improvisation in dance, requiring his dancers to collaboratively choreograph improvised dances. Through interactive improvisation dancers can elicit history, collective coherence, reflexivity and performative problem solving. In the piece "Making and Doing," dancers "must make decisions about what the dance needs based on their memories." Further, the dancers provided one another with "mutual assistance at remembering" (71).

The two pieces adjacent to this text, *Stationary* and *Sacred Veena* were created through reflecting on an interview. Rather than her words, Nivedita ShivRaj's gestures and spirit, inspired me to create these images. Improvised photographs are "found" by serendipitous circumstance and fit into the context of an interaction. At our next meeting, I will ask her what she feels they are expressing. Based on that conversation, we will decide if they will be a part of our final exhibition.

"Perhaps we [ethnographers] need to know [our collaborators] through 'private emotions that open us up to worlds passions, institutions, fears and betrayals.'" -John Law

De Certeau theorizes about ways in which individuals function within the larger power structures of a community through every day activity. It is the subversive manipulations of those who are subject to the manipulations of the powerful institutions use in order to "make do."

Woven Identity



METHODOLOGY:

PERFORMING METHOD

- * PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION, INTERVIEWS AND OTHER **TRADITIONAL** ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS REMAIN AN IMPORTANT TO THIS METHODOLOGY.
- * THIS METHOD ASSEMBLAGE, ATTEMPTS TO **RID THE HEGEMONIC INFLUENCE** THROUGH **COLLABORATION**.
- * THE COLLABORATORS WILL DRIVE THE COURSE OF THE FIRST INTERVIEW, THUS WIDENING THE ARTISTIC AND ACADEMIC SCOPE. EVENTUALLY, QUESTIONS DEVELOPED THROUGH SCHOLARLY RESEARCH WILL BE INTEGRATED INTO THE CONVERSATIONS, BUT NOT UNTIL THEY CAN BE GAUGED THROUGH THE COLLABORATORS' OWN REALITIES.
- * THROUGH OUR EXCHANGES WE (BOTH COLLABORATOR AND ETHNOGRAPHER) WILL HOPEFULLY COME TO "**ECSTATICALLY IDENTIFY**" WITH ONE ANOTHER, THAT IS, RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER'S ART IN SUCH A PROFOUND WAY THAT WE WILL IDENTIFY WITH IT AS OUR OWN.



WHY PHOTOGRAPHY? WHAT FOLLOWS?

THE **CAMERA** CAPTURES MEMORIES- MEMORIES WHICH BECOME RECONSTITUTED THROUGH THE DOCUMENT. AS **MEMORY** CONSTRUCTS PRESENT REALITY, I SEEK TO UNDERSTAND HOW **IDENTITY IS IMPROVISED**.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS, WORKED AND REWORKED WILL BE RECONTEXTUALIZED AS IMPROVISED MUSIC SOUNDS THROUGH THE EXHIBITION SPACE REFLECTING THE ART, ORAL HISTORIES AND THIS TEXT.

"IT IS REPRESENTATIONALLY AS WELL AS ANALYTICALLY IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER HOW PERCEPTION IN NON-WESTERN SOCIETIES [WESTERN, TOO, I POSIT-] DEVELOVES NOT SIMPLY FROM VISION... BUT ALSO FROM SMELL, TOUCH, TASTE AND HEARING."- Paul Stoller (in Pink)



LAYERS UPON LAYERS

THE MULTIPLE IDENTITIES CREATED DUE TO THE DIASPORIC EXPERIENCE, FORCE ONE TO NEGOTIATE MULTIPLE CULTURES. THIS METHOD ASSEMBLAGE, A MULTILAYERED PROCESS AND REPRESENTATION, ALLOWS FOR THE COMPLEXITIES AND INCONSISTENCIES PRESENT IN AN INDIVIDUAL'S IDENTITY.

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IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT MY WORK, PLEASE SIGN UP TO BE ON MY THE MAILING LIST!

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