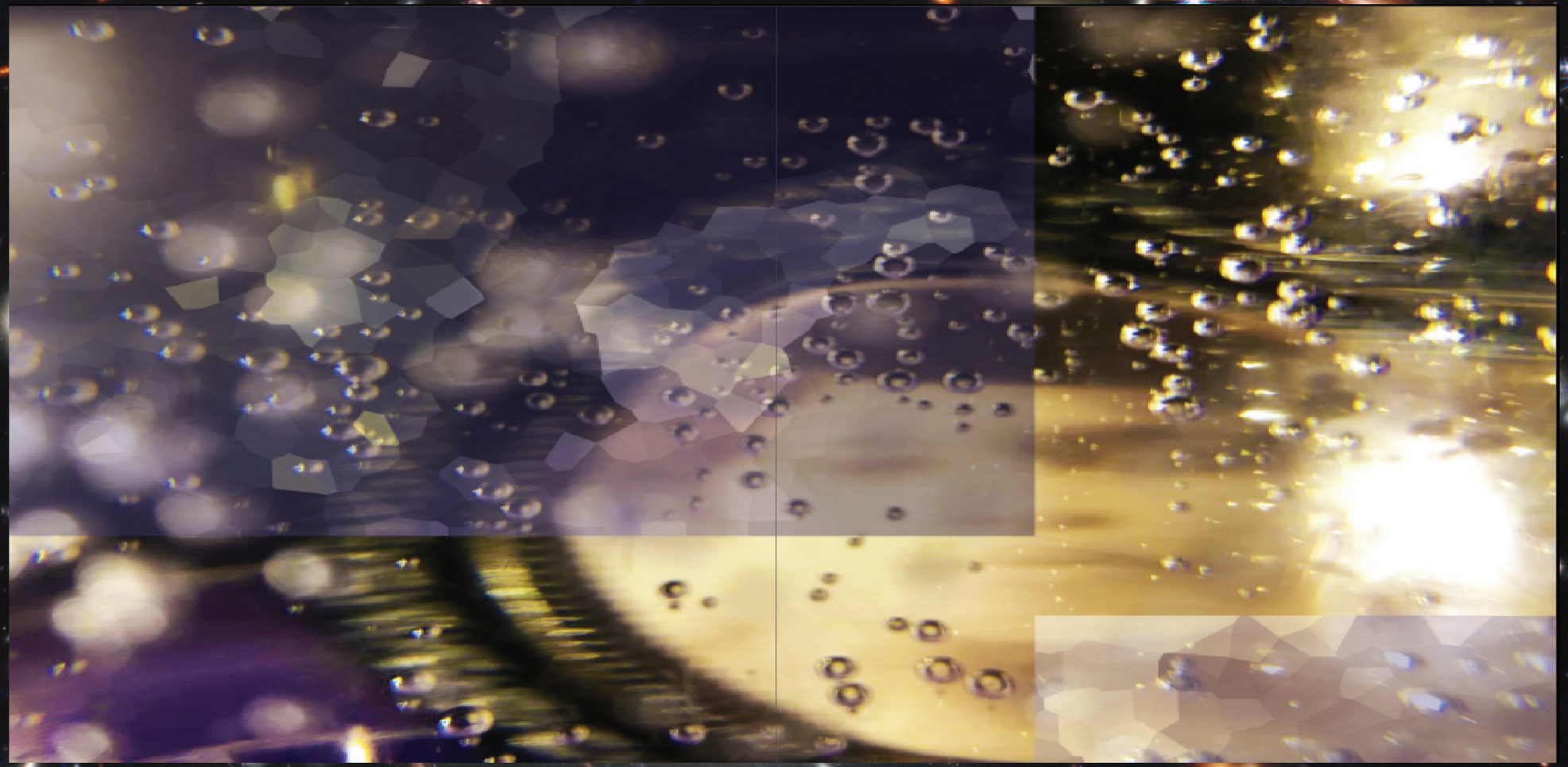
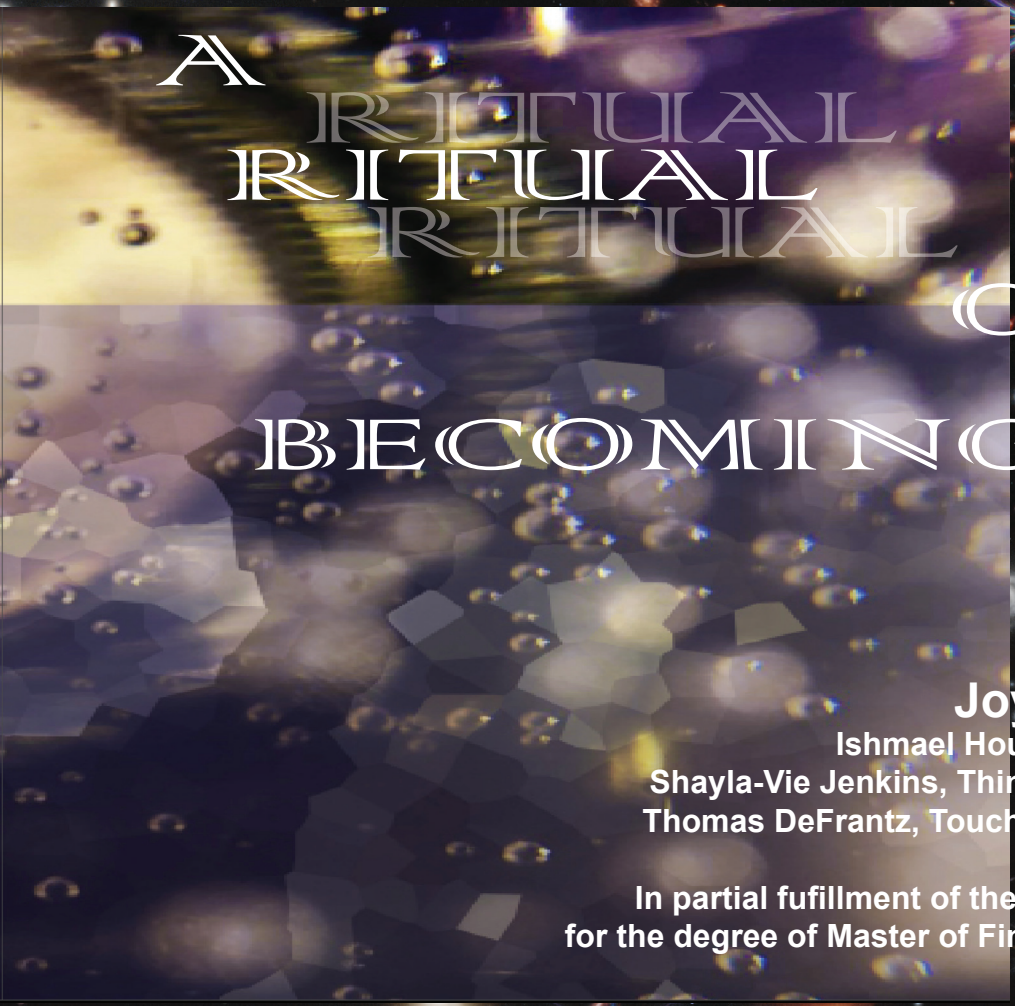


UArts
SCHOOL
OF DANCE

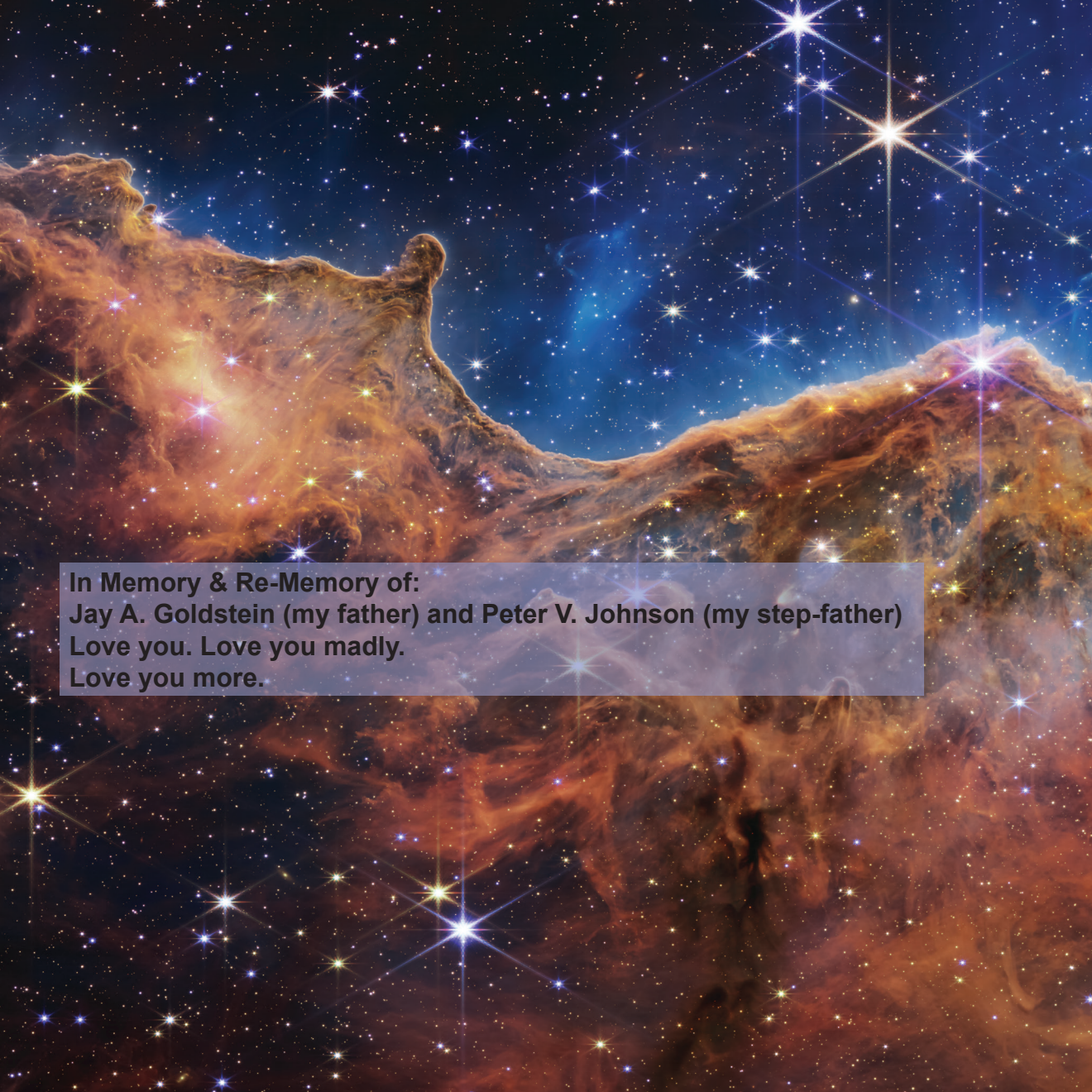


# A RITUAL RITUAL RITUAL OF BECOMING

**Joya Powell**
Ishmael Houston-Jones &
Shayla-Vie Jenkins, Thinking Partners
Thomas DeFrantz, Touchstone Partner

In partial fufillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts, Dance

2022
The University of the Arts


In Memory & Re-Memory of:
Jay A. Goldstein (my father) and Peter V. Johnson (my step-father)
Love you. Love you madly.
Love you more.

**In Gratitude to...**

**My Dad for continually pointing out the constellations in front of me – lighting the way on this journey… "Golden Slumber" by The Beatles. Peter for anchoring the axis of the spiral. My Grandmas Eula and Claire for sharing the ever-present magic embedded in ritual. My family, and especially my Mom who is the rock that grounds time and space and my siblings Zenzele, Rachel and Ari for their encouragement. M. for slipping through the spiral with me. Megan and Rainy for their daily affirmations, memes, and TikToks. Julie, Ni'Ja, MOPDC Fam and Wes Fam for supporting with laughter and love. Co-conjuring Queensborough Community College students Dominic, Jade, Brook Lyn, Andre and Philip with MOPDC co-conjurers Melissa, Megan and Britt for uplifting that the way back, is through joy. Ishmael and Shayla-Vie for helping me sift through this cosmos. DFaye and Tommy for opening and nourishing portals of possibilities. Ben for sharing the travel guide, bit by bit, with patience. Emily and Buck for their attention to detail. Courtney for co-spiraling with me in an embodied magical manifestation of our research as action. All of the incredibly inspirational and generous humans I have had the immense honor to study and time travel with in the MFA program. Those who have paved multiple ways. And my ancestors – always.**

## A Compass for Our Spiraling

- 6.10.2022 She Remembers
- 4.1.2022 QCC in Process: Past. Present. Future.
- 2.27.2022 Ritual of Rememory
- 3.27.2022 I asked myself
- 5.7.2022 Memories that aren't mine
- 3.4.2022 QCC in Process: Day 1 in-person
- 12.14.2021 A Practice of Ritual in the Studio
- 7.13.2022 Echoes
- 3.14.2022ish Towards his apartment
- 11.25.2021 Of Giving Thanks
- 4.3.2022 QCC in Process: notes by Brittany Grier
- 1.15.2022 QCC in Process: Journal
- 4.1.2022 QCC in Process: House
- 3.13.2022 What makes a Ritual
- 3.18.2022 In Conversation with *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Peroid Room*
- 6.28.2022 Through
- 12.14.2021 Transference. Improvisation. Listening.
- 1.16.2022 Ritual of Beyonding
- 3.14.2022 or an adjacent day *Songs About Trains* rehearsal
- 6.22.2020 Ancestral
- 3.13.2022 Sand + 6.1.2020 Days
- 7.19.2022 Images Re-Imagined - from "outside" to "inside"
- 7.18.2022, 9:02am Living in Conversation as Performative Witnessing
- 7.18.2022, 9:10am Living in Conversation With

Dear Traveler: welcome to this offering. Recycled vibrations channeled through musings and ponderings. A response to a call. A calling in of themes grounded in ritual, time travel, Afro-futurism, spacetime continuum, rooted in the natural world of the spiral.

The work is a journey, which may start with the end, the beginning, or the middle. There is no specific directionality of engagement.

In conversation with time as spiral, wherever one arrives, present, future, and past simultaneously exist. A sankofic multidisciplinary gathering of poetics, journals, rituals, photos, art, music, and rehearsal notes. Ancestral and futural presences steer the unfolding of pages. Fractals of experiences that echo off of paper, fingers, eyes, ink and skin.

The book asks the witness to travel alongside it. Turning the book to meet the self, or the self to meet the book, perhaps traversing to different locations. It is always good measure to have drinkable water nearby. Thank you for engaging in these moments. Take what is needed and leave the rest.

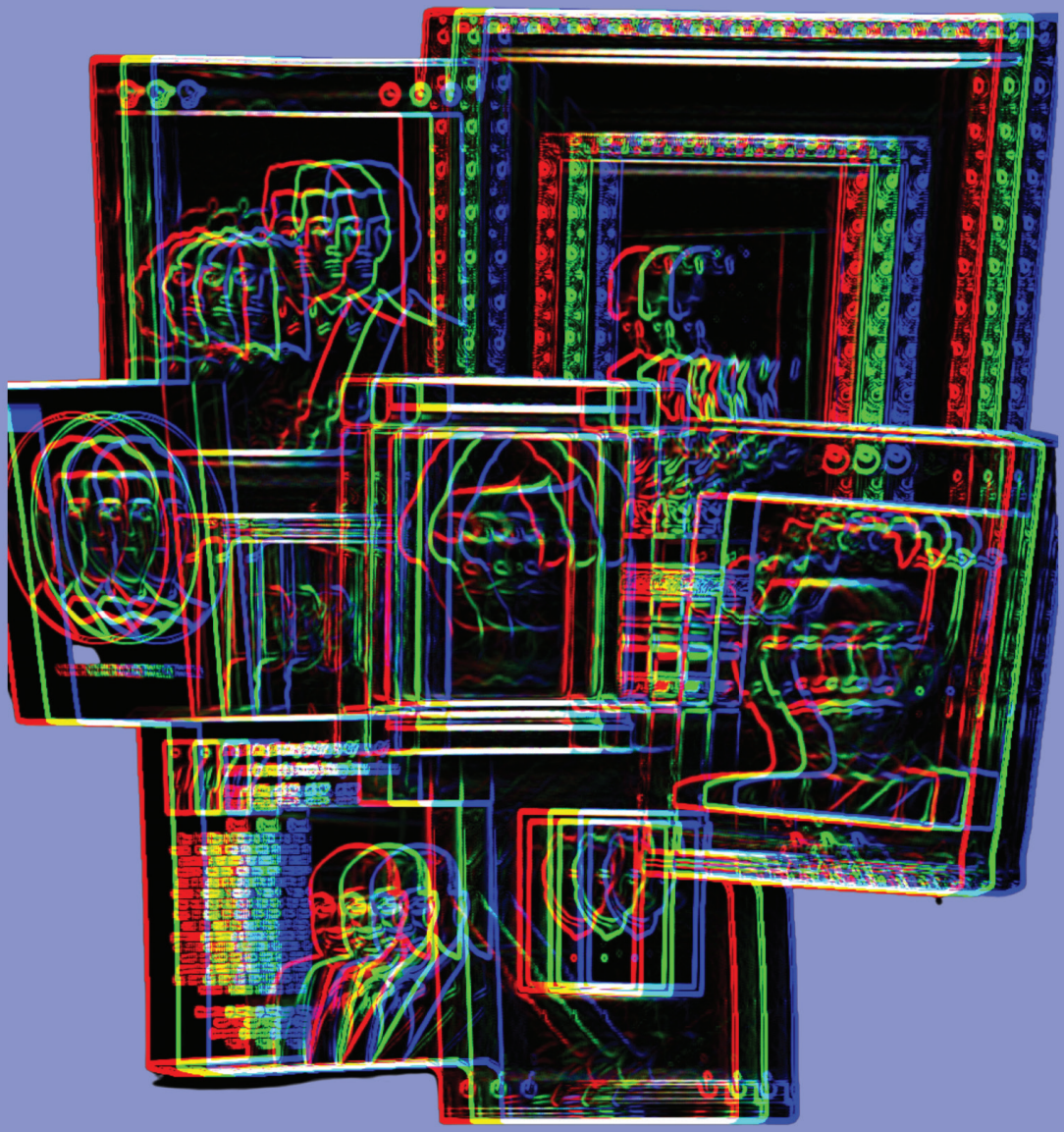
Safe and magical journey,

- Joya

# The Journey Within the Journey...

***U.F.O.*** **(entire album) UFlyMother-Ship with Tendayi Kuumba and Greg Purnell**
**“Window Seat” Erykah Badu**
**“Virtual Insanity” Jamiroquai**
**“Temazcal: Sweat, Song & Spiritual Rebirth,” *Roots & Ritual*, Yasmin Shahmir & Robyn Landau**
**“Light Years” Jamiroquai**
**“Stillness in Time” Jamiroquai**
**“Time After Time” Cassandra Wilson**
**“Sankofa” Cassandra Wilson**
**“Cosmic Queries - Native Sky-watchers with Dr. Annette Lee,” *StarTalk Radio*, Neil deGrasse Tyson & Negin Farsad**
**“Fly Like an Eagle” Steve Miller Band**
**“Next Lifetime” Erykah Badu**
**“Time Moves Slow” BADBADNOTGOOD, Samuel T. Herring**
**“Cosmic Queries - Multiverse Madness with Max Tegmark,” *StarTalk Radio*, Neil deGrasse Tyson & Negin Farsad**
**“Galang (Trio Riot Version)” Vijay Iyer, Stephan Crump, Marcus Gilmore**
**“The Sweetest Meditation” Lord Echo, Mara TK**
**“Malunguinho” Abayomy Afrobeat Orquestra**
**“The Life and Death of Stars with Jackie Faherty,” *StarTalk Radio*, Neil deGrasse Tyson & Negin Farsad**
**“Embodied Astrology: Our Bodies in Orbit,” *rituals, remedies & alchemy*, Renee Sills**
**“Bica” Teto Preto**
**“Nightclubbing” Grace Jones**
**“Get Over It” Bucie**
**“Yeanoh (Powe’hande Binga’dbe)” Kondi Band**
**“Free” Deniece Williams**
**“Yemaya – John Beltran Vocal” Osunlade**
**“Dambala – Live at Philharmonic Hall, NYC – July 1973” Nina Simone**
**“Days Like This (Spinna & Ticklah Mix)” Shaun Escoffery**
**“Paid” Sudan Archives**
**“Brighter Days – Dajae – Underground Mix ‘93” Cajmere**
**“Ancestors” Bjork**
**“Searching” Roy Ayers**
**“Shinrin Yoku: Japanese Forest Bathing,” *Roots & Ritual*, Yasmin Shahmir & Robyn Landau**
**“(No One Knows Me) Like the Piano” Sampha**
**“Living Like I Do” SBTRKT, Sampha**

**“Transformational Frequencies,” *rituals, remedies & alchemy*, Renee Sills**
**“To Te Querendo” Omulu, Luedji Luna, ÀTTØØXXÀ**
**“Earth” Joe Henderson, Alice Coltrane**
**“Everybody Loves The Sunshine” Roy Ayers Ubiquity**
**“Journey in Satchidananda” Alice Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders**
**“Episode 7: The Jewish Space-Time Continuum (with Yoshi Silverstein),” *The Light Lab Podcast*, Eliana Light**
**“We Travel the Spaceways” Sun Ra**
**“Moon Dance” Sun Ra**
**“The Cosmos: Wisdom in the Stars,” *Roots & Ritual*, Yasmin Shahmir & Robyn Landau**
**“I Am A Perfect Being” Beautiful Chorus**
**“Mama Clo” Thornato, Benjamin Vanegas**
**“Semai Thaqil” Karl Hector & The Malcouns**
***If You Look Far Enough*** **(entire album) Arild Anderson, Ralph Towner, Naná Vasconcelos**
**“Another Star” Stevie Wonder**
**“1999” Prince**
**“Freedom Sound” The Skatalites**
**“Goldren Slumbers” The Beatles**



She remembers
Momentos

Traveling miles each night
Permeating into time
Held
In unplanted seeds
An echo that brushes past the cheek
And tangles in hair
Silver and falling out
The journey awaits

**6.10.2022**

"Where there is a woman there is magic. If there is a moon falling from her mouth she is a woman who knows her magic, who can share or not share her powers. A woman with a moon falling from her mouth, roses between her legs and tiaras of Spanish moss, this woman is a consort of the spirits."

- Ntozake Shange[1]

there are secrets logged in betwen eyelashes, things seen and unseen. where skin meets air and air covers breathless pauses winged with brightly pixelated gemstones shining answers to questions written in the sand many many moons ago, the waxing and waning of sand between toes, dust on tongues.
- JPG

ANCESTORS
SHE REMEMBERS
Roses Ritual
2/27
IT'S BEEN FOREVER!
SONGS ABOUT TRAI
Journal
PAST/PRESE
TOWARDS HIS ART
SPIRAL HYPNOSIS
Journal 3/31
I AM STARTING TO
HAVE MEMORIES

Improvisation
is acknowledging the new ritual is rooting in the old.

## In practice with QCC Rehearsal Notes...[2]

What levels does PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE occupy

Levels space vs levels energy (Philip interpretation)

Placed dancers in

Asked them to situate themselves as to what is facing outward, then what was facing inward. Asked to face outward then turn over right shoulder to face right then went around in 4 directions. Stated outward location represents the past, turn right present, turn right future - worked in these 3 facings. Asked what level high (but placed my hand low! Freudian slip of the body) medium or low comes to mind when think of the past? The present? The future? Each person came up with a different answer. Then turned on music and called out different locations of time.

Noticed not everyone who said a particular moment in time was a low level actually went low.

Philip -
Try to stay in level but it was hard because I like to fluctuate

Dominic -
In the various levels it was hard to stay stationary while trying to stay in the spiral

Then explored Philips understanding of levels of energy.

The ritual of praxis becomes time space and energy.

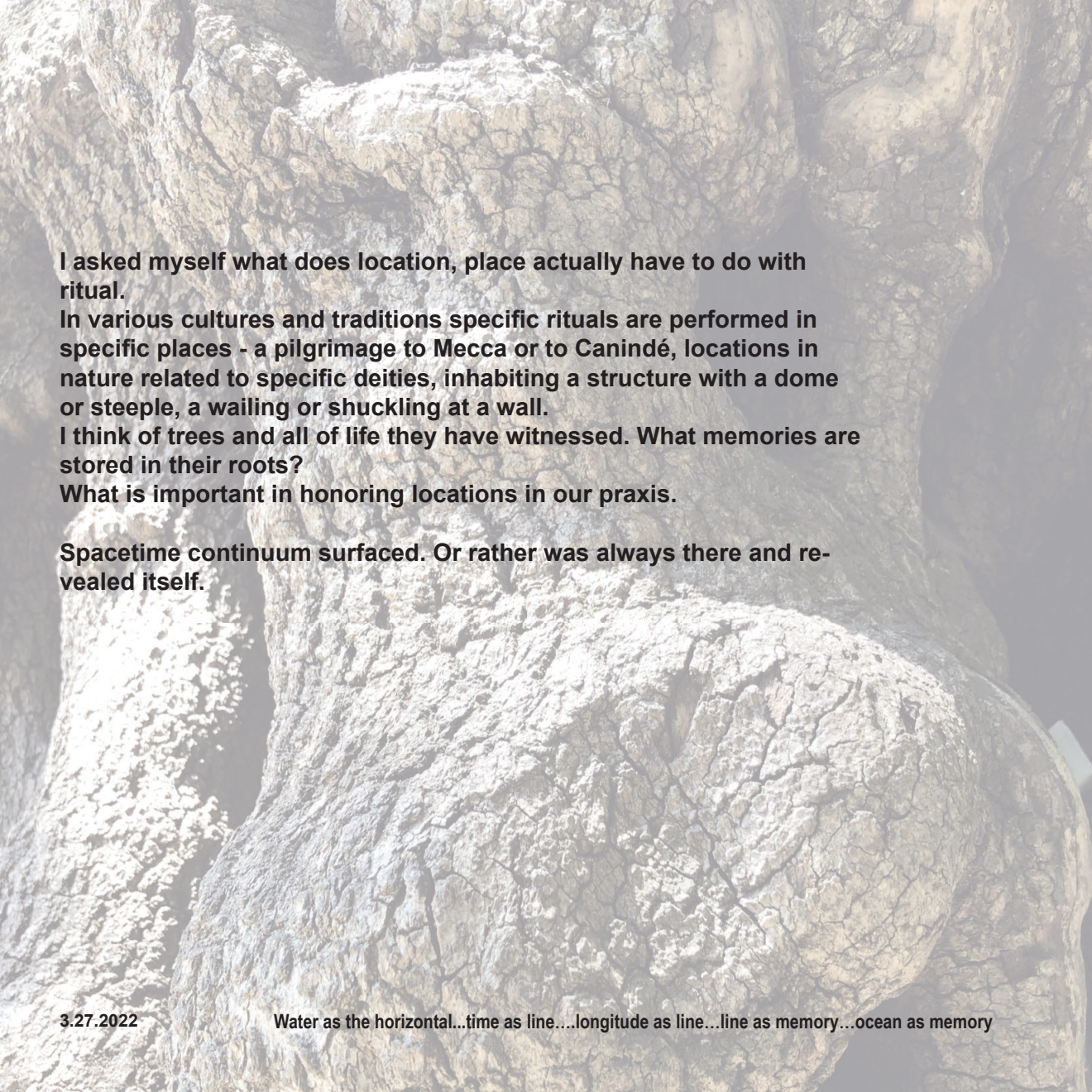
The spiral is the path of time travel.

**2.27.2022**

# RITUAL OF REMEMORY...

An offering of what seems to have passed to the knowing of its futuring. To life.

Place 18 dried roses in a line on icy grounds near a stream in a forest. Move through the roses. Find the spiral through what seems like a straight path. Lay intention - a curiosity of possibility. Re-memoring change, seasons, transitions. Pay attention to the journey of your body. Take photos of the roses. Return to the site every few weeks, and repeate the embodied practice and archiving. What is there? What has changed? Re-meet the offering until life embraces.

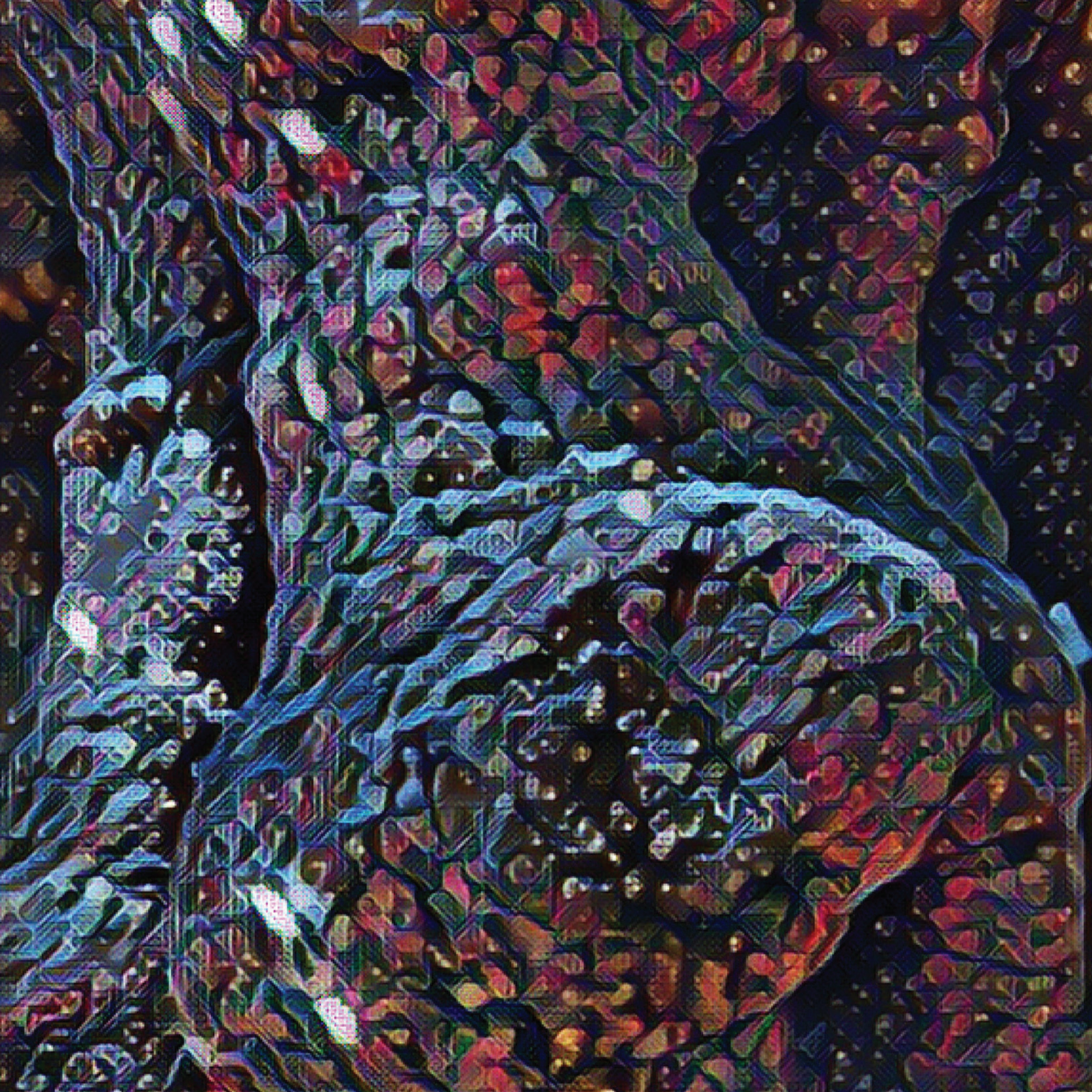


**I asked myself what does location, place actually have to do with ritual.**
**In various cultures and traditions specific rituals are performed in specific places - a pilgrimage to Mecca or to Canindé, locations in nature related to specific deities, inhabiting a structure with a dome or steeple, a wailing or shuckling at a wall.**
**I think of trees and all of life they have witnessed. What memories are stored in their roots?**
**What is important in honoring locations in our praxis.**

**Spacetime continuum surfaced. Or rather was always there and revealed itself.**

**3.27.2022**

**Water as the horizontal...time as line….longitude as line…line as memory…ocean as memory**



I am starting to have memories

That are not mine.

Images of times

Past that never were.

Clear recollections.

An unfolding.

Of me

In space,

Of those who've passed

And us together.

A fissure.

Have I stepped though?

Am I mirroring?

An offering to hold onto.

Reconciliation for stones unturned.

Site inverted

Sight inverted

Witnessing regret alter the past tense.

**5.7.2022**

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."
– Maya Angelou[3]

“The present was an egg laid by the past
that has the future inside its shell.”
– Zora Neale Hurston[4]

## In practice with QCC Rehearsal Notes...[5]

Day 1 in-person

A seeing
Resonate
Reverb
Grab
Hold
Ancestors
Vibrate
Around me
Through me
Roots and leaves
Leaves as roots
Proximal
Spatial
Carve
Commitment
Sapient

Andre -
Uninterrupted piece
No boundaries mother nature - people other species nature
Place everyone needed to be at - the top of hill

Philip -
Path ways of constellations
Parthenon
What do we sacrifice for joy

Day or not can connect

Dominic -
Feel balanced area tranquility
Not going with path
Elevate self

Jade -
Kept coming towards the middle
Home peaceful
At end of tunnel there's a light
Purple woman statue
Feet out statue
Gymnastics one - unity
What if I am the light at the end of the tunnel?

Brook Lyn -
Taking in in environment
Peacefulness
In the middle of the beginning of winter
Ritual of peacefulness in this location
Thinking witnesses could stand in gazebo

Melissa -
Calling of water
Twisty statue

Each folk different path
The sun shines here no other way it does on campus

Asked how do we approach the space? What is the difference between the manmade paths what are the natural ones? On the top of a hill maybe not everyone could get here? Sacred? What does the land have to say?

Circle warmup - used Dunham technique playlist Adia Whitaker, joy and exuberance! Connecting across the circle, seeing and feeling each other, communal holding and listening, Melissa said felt like the celebratory peek of communing on the top of the hill, trusting, and allowing.

Solos, duet trio entire group improv based on experiences from the site…. not sure if the site influenced or the music - trusting that the residue was guiding regardless,

It was magical

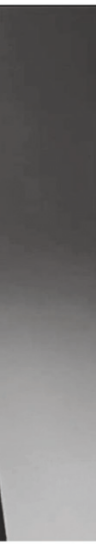
In process deep listening. Though some questions of who really connecting with who or the mirrors

Energy of the circle became side to side AND front to back!!! Based on what people put in the circle / Dominic even did a move like the avanhia!!!!

# A Practice of Ritual
# in the studio

- take off shoes, set up camera/sound, lights off, turn on sound, stand in center of studio facing north, close eyes, listen to the space, start to move in what feels necessary.

at times it has been walking paths activating corners, either in a circular spiral walk/movement around the space or axial line formations stemming from the center moving both forward and backward patterns or grounding in center spiraling the body around its spoke.



- start to "dance," or remain still in a call and response with the space.

- take into account the self within the space that is shared. or pay attention to the shadows created and dance with them.

on reflection my focus became either outward…needing to situate myself in front of the windows, a calling back to pandemic improv practices, or in front of the mirrors as both inward and outward exploration.

- record self for a couple of songs.

- recenter in the middle of the space. eyes closed and listen.

- pack up the things brought into the space, put shoes on and "leave."

**Side reflection….I am having a very hard time being, being in the studio. Recalling practices that have changed dramatically - or what feels like dramatically right now. I have also lost over 40 pounds since my father passed. I don't know the body I see in the dance studio mirror.**

**12.14.2021**

RITUAL AS REPETITION
AS A RETURNING
THE INTENTIONALITY OF TIME IN A SPACE
A CALLING FORTH
BECKONING BACK

RITUAL AS REPETITION
AS A RETURNING
THE INTENTIONALITY OF TIME IN A SPACE
A CALLING FORTH
BECKONING BACK

A CALLING FORTH
BECKONING BACK
RITUAL AS REPETITION
AS A RETURNING
THE INTENTIONALITY OF TIME IN A SPACE

**A QUESTION TO THE ANCESTORS...**
**How many sunsets have you seen?**

**ANSWER WISPERED THROUGH THE WIND...**
**Them all.**

**11.25.2021**

The past looking back at the future.

"Listening is not only about the normative ability to hear, it is a transformative and revolutionary resource that requires quieting down and tuning in."
- Alexis Pauline Gumbs[6]

“Wisdom, however, requests a pause...the Universe will likely give it to us...This is the time of “the pause,” the universal place of stopping. The universal moment of reflection.”
- Alice Walker[7]

# A synonym for community is RING...

How long does it take for ancestral messages
to echo
their vibrations against our cellular
memory

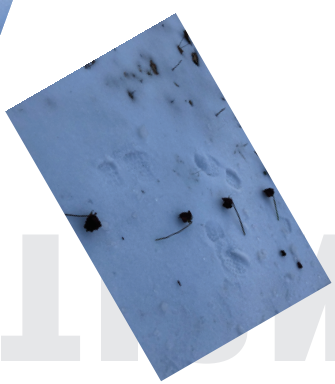
Do we arrive knowing

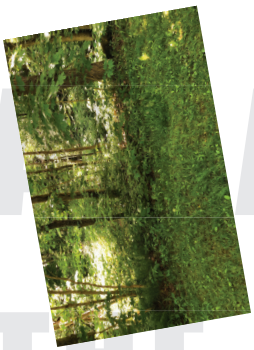
Does our life lived
water seeds they have planted
many light times ago

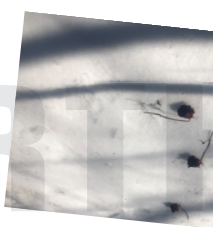
7.13.2022

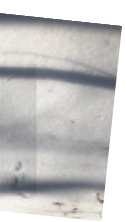
Towards his apartment
A time capsule
A flood of memory
Flood
Water
Engulfed
Water
Memory
Tears
A conversation
Distance as time a numbing of condolences
Memory as consolation

(First time visiting where my father lived for over 20 years before moving to my brother's house, before moving to an elder home, before he passed - now almost 2 years later. I tell his door person of his passing).



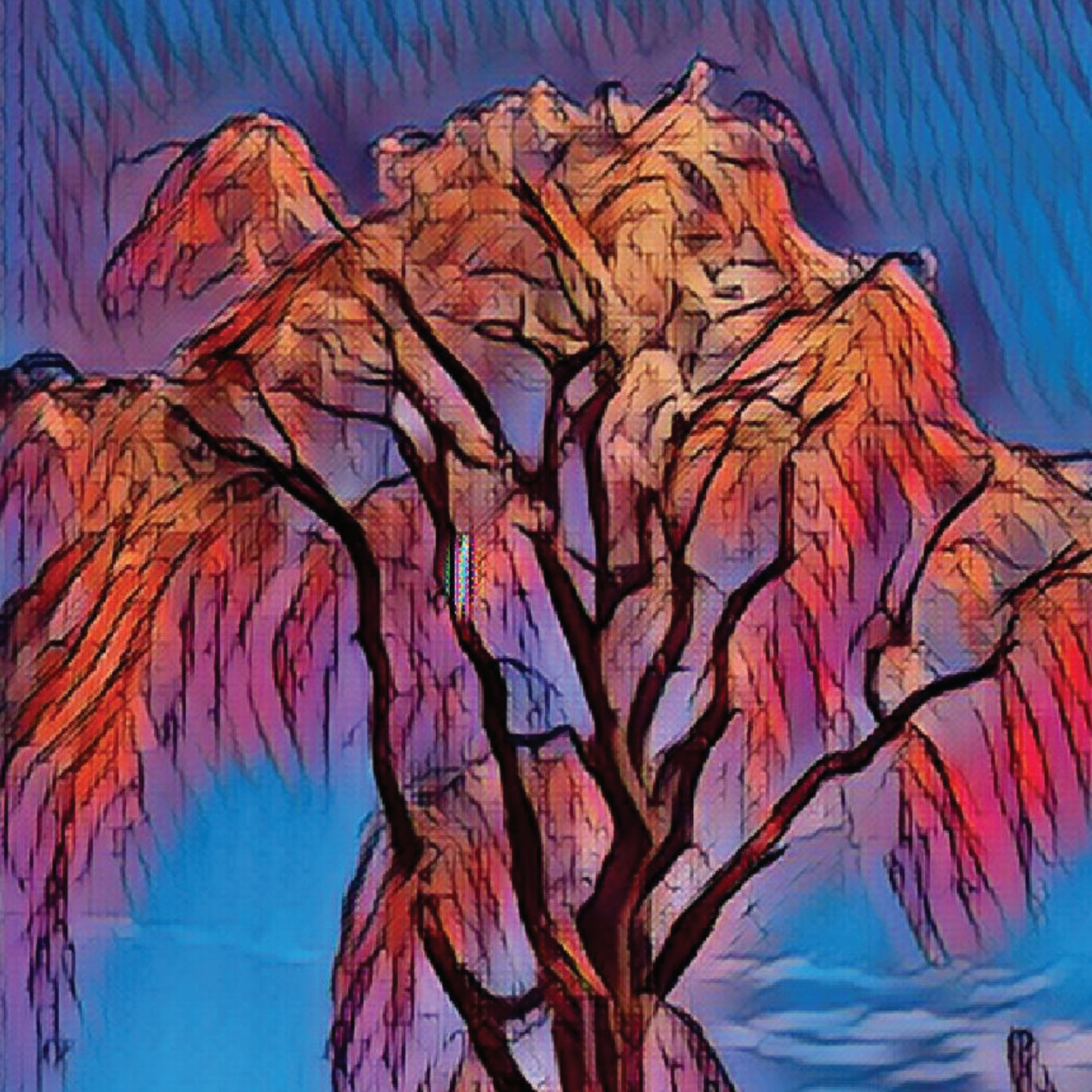






Even my
whine is more
natural
counterclockwise.

#ResearchMusings #MyConjuringPelivs



**11.25.2021**

Of Giving Thanks:

to the earth and those who have taken care and take care of it.

In a location surrounded by nature.

Preferably on a hill.

Arrive alongside sundown. Walk to the top of the hill and find a clear spot. Face the sun and kneel down onto hands and knees. Eyes closed. Give thanks. Breathe into the moment. Name that which and whom gratitude is being offered. When words are no longer needed, rise and witness the sun. Be in embodied conversation with the energy of the space and use movement to language intentions. Before the sun sets completely, verbally give thanks again, the sun cycling through the night, and into the next day.

I arrived at Indian Hill Cemetery in Middletown CT around sundown. I walked to the very top, which has a clear grassy spot. When I got there, I faced the sun and knelt down on my hands and knees, closed my eyes and gave thanks. Breathed into the moment. I gave thanks to the Wangunk, the earth, the water, the replenishing of energy and cycles of a moment. When words were no longer needed, I got up and watched the sun in the clouds. I then started to activate the space with my movement, which created distinct sounds with the crinkle of leaves underfoot. The sun peered out from the clouds to set. Before it did, I thanked the ancestors again and walked towards the exit.

4.3.2022

## In practice with QCC Rehearsal Notes...[8]

(notes by Brittany Grier)
Attendees: Andre, Brittany, Brook Lyn, Dominic, Joya, Phillip

Themes:

- Spiraling (windmills)
- Continuation
- Statues: past, present and future
- If your statue could move or speak, what would it say?
- Journeying: Finding Joy
- Where does it live in the conversation & time?

Score Components:

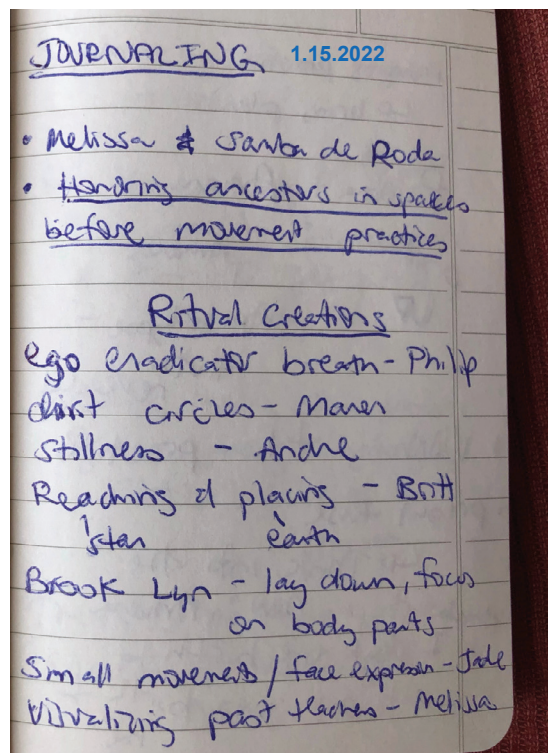
- Statues in conversation with each other
- Gathering section (group phrase)
- What are you gathering or receiving?
- Solos
- Duets
- Structured Improvisation
- Spirals of Time
- House section

Reflections from run:

- Pairings went well, duets are something to hold onto
- Choices were made for what was needed in moment
- Felt like I was in it learning and seeing the statues, you can see it come to life
- There's an awakening, tactile sensation as dancers touch their bodies
- Satisfying choices (as dancers moved faster)
- Laughter, sigh, seeing patterns of relationships

Questions:

- What is the journey you're on?
- As a witness/participant, what's important for me to know?
- What is the difference between watching people witness you moving within your ritual versus internally witnessing what shows up?
- How does what's internal expand?
- Where does the statue take up space?
- How does your trajectory move into space with others
- Internalized space to seeing outward
- How do you modify the movement, so you're not on the floor? (on grass)



**What makes a ritual a ritual… there is repetition, but we come to the ritual as changed people each time. Honoring the change in the continuity. Is the repetition in the intention?**

***What makes a ritual a ritual… there is repetition, but we come to the ritual as changed people each time. Honoring the change in the continuity. Is the repetition in the intention?***

**What makes a ritual a ritual… there is repetition, but we come to the ritual as changed people each time. Honoring the change in the continuity. Is the repetition in the intention?**

**3.13.2022**

In conversation with *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room* exhibit at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC

stories like fabric woven from threads of precious gemstones.
vibrant metallic feathers,
bioluminescent sweat,
beads of glittered breath
slip into rhythms of ancient vibrations

community that had lived
community that lives

on the other side of windows
from the inside looking in

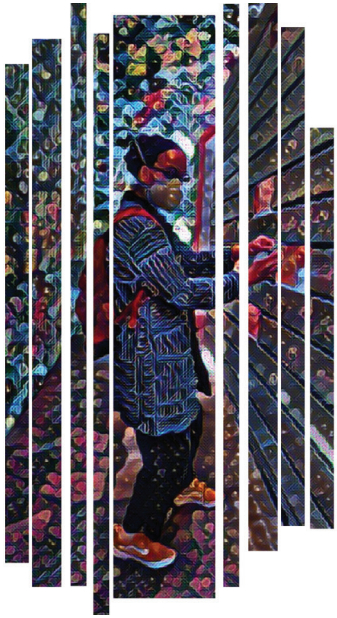
casual glimmer

conjure

magnetic memories

songs that need to be heard
carry like voices of humpback whales
echoing across stars
whispers in raindrops

fractals of mirrored portals
on top, underneath, in between
through all that ever is



**3.18.2022**

# A Practice of Ritual in the studio

RITUAL AS REPETITION

AS A RETURNING

THE INTENTIONALITY OF TIME IN A SPACE

A CALLING FORTH

BECKONING BACK

## In practice with QCC Rehearsal Notes...[9]

House Dance exploration:
moving as slow as possible in juxtaposition with the music, then fast with the music

General:
Dominic -
Forgot choreo, went with music and energy around, discovered different ways, extension of self. Slower changed rate - more pressure on legs, to extend

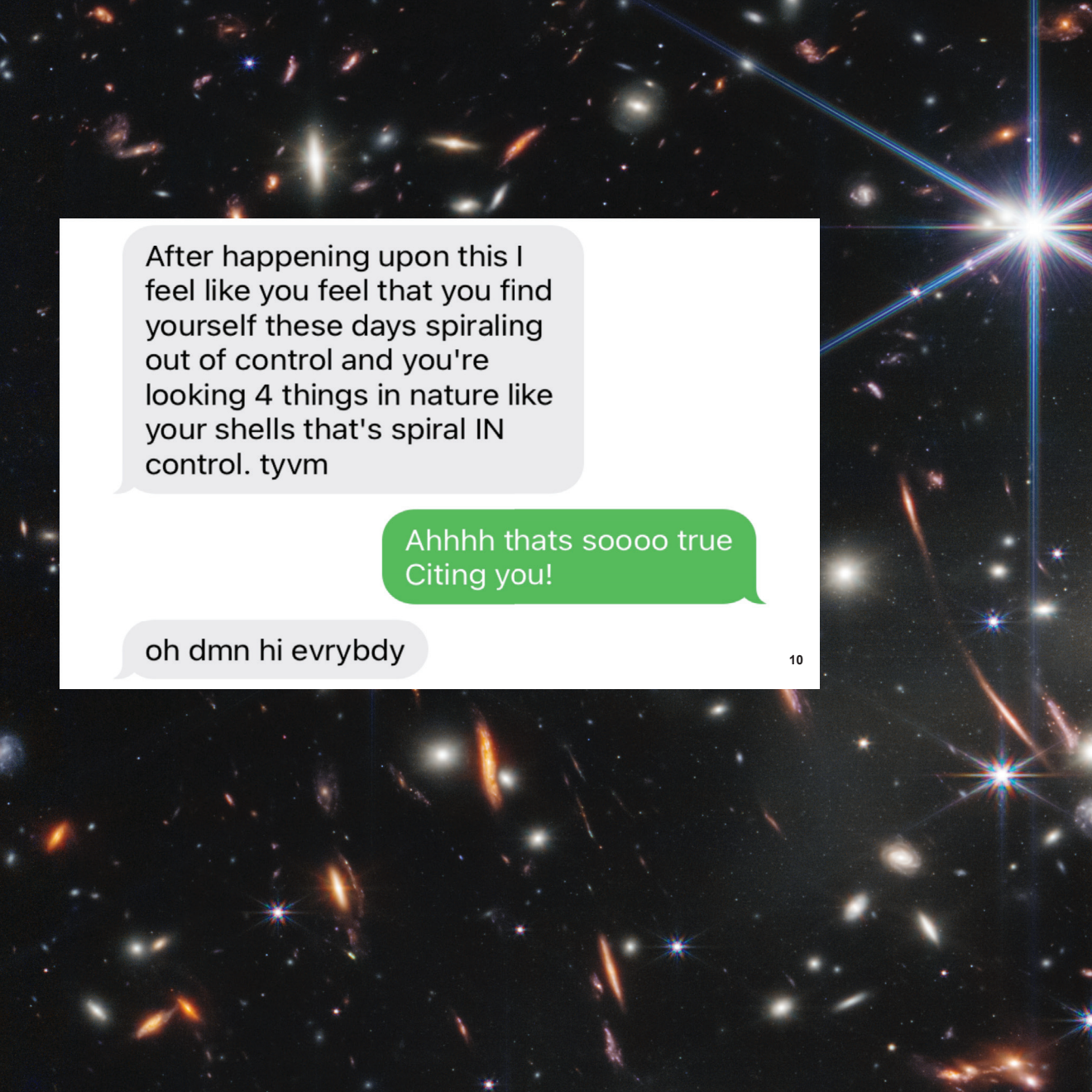
Andre -
The Night at the Museum movie when statues come to life, someone watching keep composure - art doesn't know essence inside of it when moved from still to movement - history inside art, community rejuvenating, healing

Philip -
Slow motion difficult to find nuances of groove, how to reverberate with body, spins, strong muscularly. When going into fast - tension like slingshot release after.

Brook Lyn -
Releaved when said play with

speed. Got to digest what just learned. Then at change in time more confident with movements just learned. Cool score. Just going through the motions - everyday doing same thing, but some days able to do better than others.

Andre -
1 more stillness. Individual cannon into fast.


After happening upon this I feel like you feel that you find yourself these days spiraling out of control and you're looking 4 things in nature like your shells that's spiral IN control. tyvm
Ahhhh thats soooo true Citing you!
oh dmn hi evrybdy
10

“Practicing the courage to be.”
- Amara T. Smith[11]

“Dance lies at the point at which reflection and embodiment meet, at which doing and anticipation are intertwined.”
- Randy Martin[12]

NOT THROUGH

NOT THROUGH

WITH

WITH

THROUGH

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WITH AND

WITH AND

AS

AS

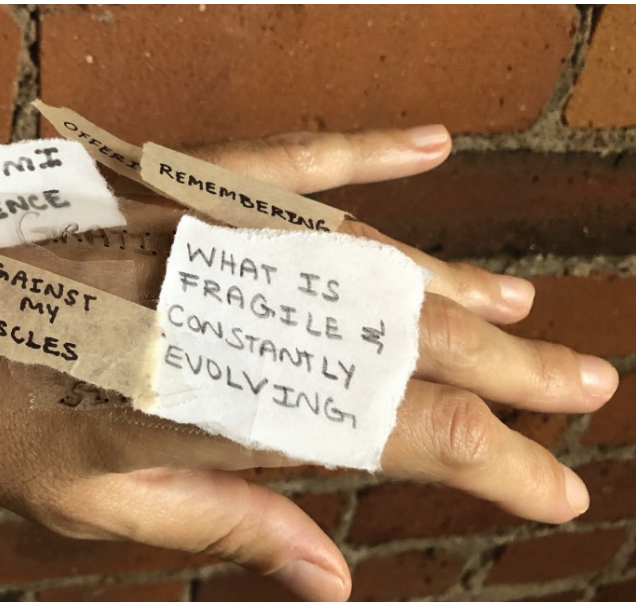
AS YET

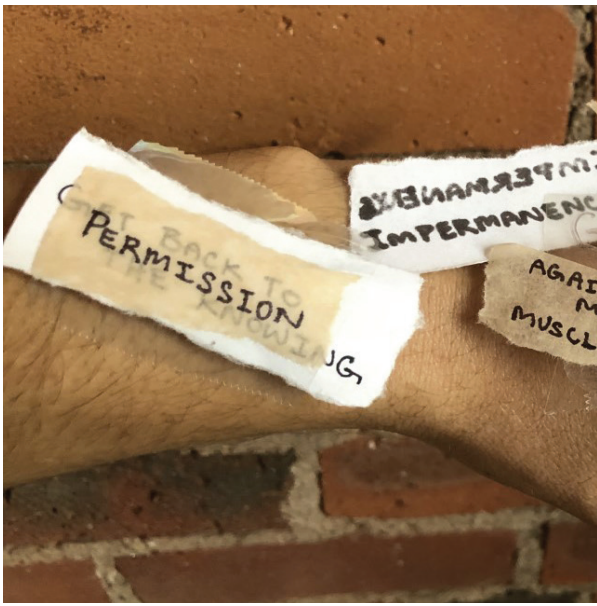
AS YET

# ALONG THE WITHIN

ALONG THE WITHIN

3.28.2022


REMEMBERING
WHAT IS
FRAGILE &
CONSTANTLY
EVOLVING


PERMISSION

REMEMBERING
WHAT IS
FRAGILE
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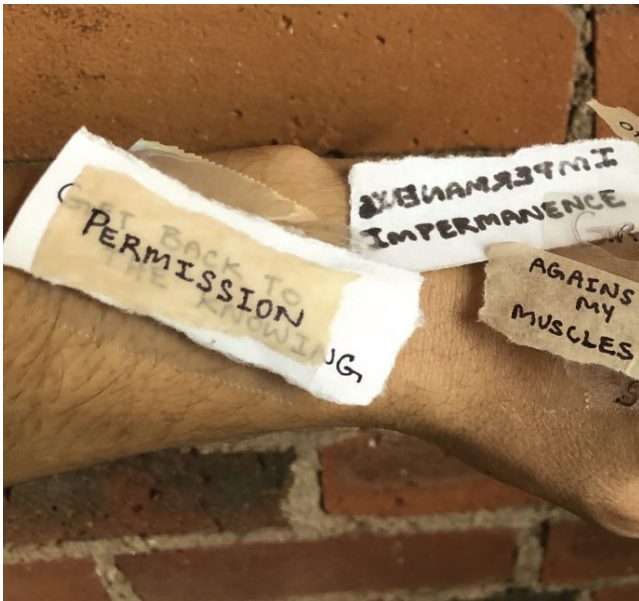
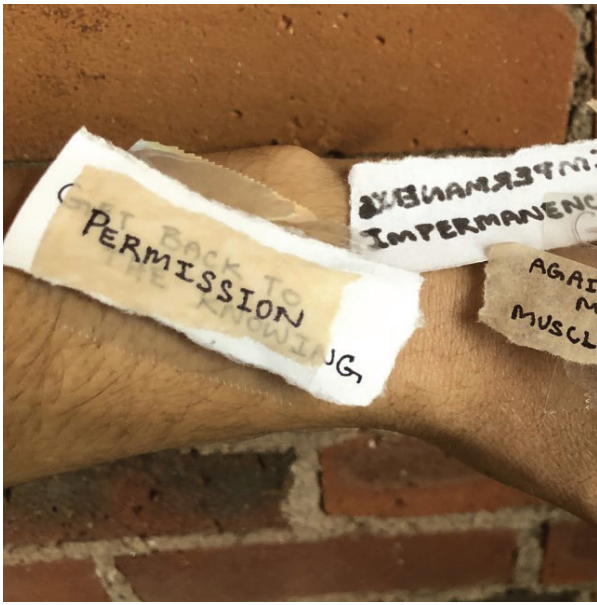

PERMISSION
IMPERMANENCE
AGAINS
MY
MUSCLES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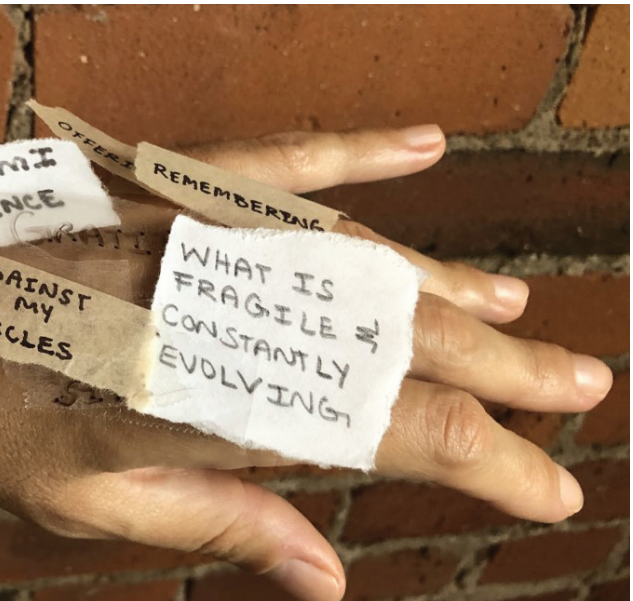
REMEMBERING
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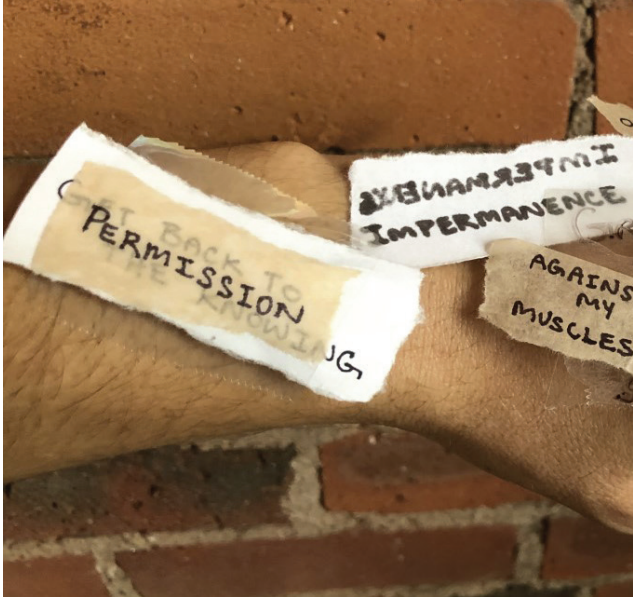

PERMISSION
IMPERMANENCE
AGAINS
MY
MUSCLES

Transference… If no knowledge is new, and everything is known, then are all the things I find new in my thoughts and my relationships to the world, is it about transference? Transference of ancestral knowledge, transference of Natural knowledge of the natural world around me? Is it about creating an adequate vessel for this transference to occur?

Is the point of improvisation to acknowledge what is fragile and constantly evolving? Do we forget about nature because we are so focused on lasting... self preservation? Is the purpose of ritual to remind ourselves of our impermanence?

The listening allows for the reciprocity. Listening as a reciprocity. Listening to what the spaces give you and what you in turn are giving back. Improvisation as deep listening.

12.14.2021

## Ritual of Beyonding

To bring on the journey: a smartphone with a compass app, or compass, or knowledge of what is North, South, East and West. A map of the area currently in may be necessary. Journal materials nearby. Have water to replenish.

In an inside space. Clear a place to move as freely as possible. Situate in the center of the space. With known knowledge or an above device, determine the directionality of the walls/corners, noting North, West, South, East. Place the device outside of the exploration space once complete

Face each direction and imagine what natural landmarks are beyond the walls, and possibly beyond other walls of other buildings, perhapse a river, a park, mountains. Do this for all 4 directions. Take 3 deep breaths if possible. Eyes closed, if comfortable. Take a moment, rooting. planting, down towards the center of the earth, and lengthening upwards towards the stars above (this may be done at any time, stars are always above us).

When ready move toward the North, thinking of the nature in that direction, offer gesture or dance. Then move back to the center space, embodying what that ele-

1.16.2022

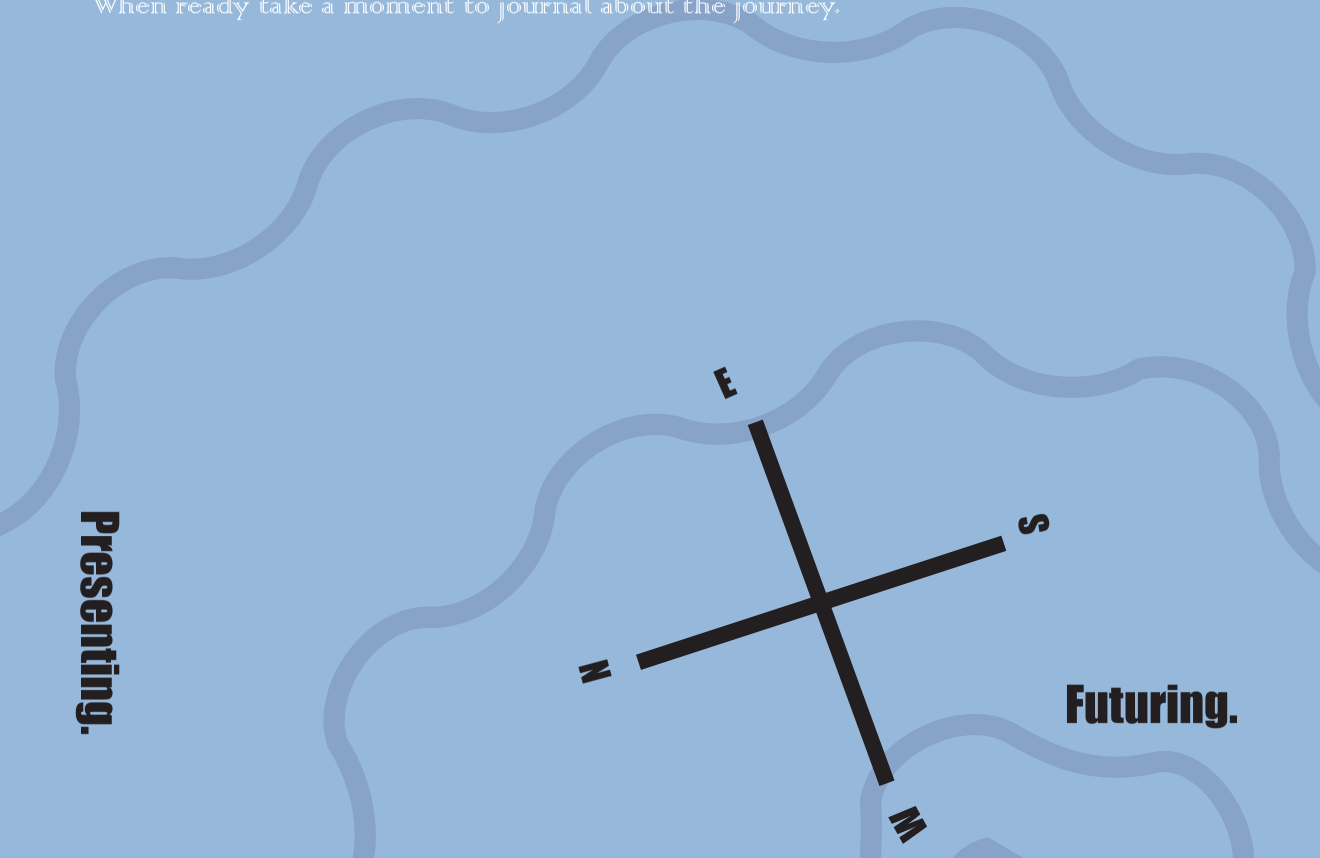
Pasting.

ment of nature offers back. Do this for all 4 directions. Pay attention to breath. Listen to the energy offering towards, and receiving back. How does that live in the body? Take the time that feels necessary and generative.

Repeat each direction 3 times. Ground in the center space for breath or water care throughout the journey.

Once complete, pause in the center, spread the body wide deep breath in, breath out and soften the body. Do this 3 times.

When ready take a moment to journal about the journey.



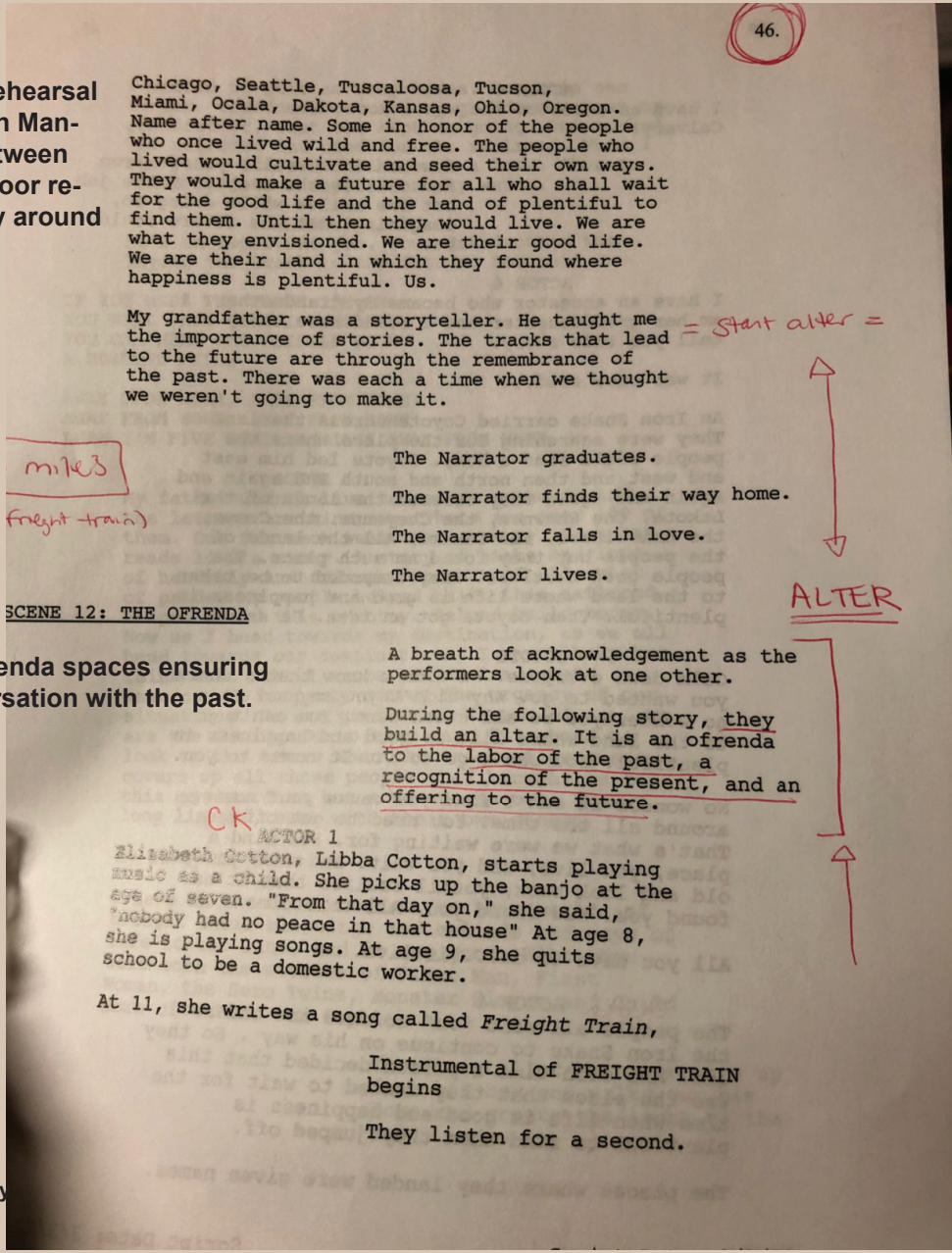
**Songs About Trains rehearsal in Pregones Theater in Manhattan, 47th Street between 8th and 9th Ave, 4th floor rehearsal room possibly around 2:30pm EST[13]**

**An oferenda | An altar**

**Altar spaces and oferenda spaces ensuring the future is in conversation with the past.**

**Honoring the past.**

**3.14.2022 or an adjacent day**



46.

Chicago, Seattle, Tuscaloosa, Tucson, Miami, Ocala, Dakota, Kansas, Ohio, Oregon. Name after name. Some in honor of the people who once lived wild and free. The people who lived would cultivate and seed their own ways. They would make a future for all who shall wait for the good life and the land of plentiful to find them. Until then they would live. We are what they envisioned. We are their good life. We are their land in which they found where happiness is plentiful. Us.

My grandfather was a storyteller. He taught me the importance of stories. The tracks that lead to the future are through the remembrance of the past. There was each a time when we thought we weren't going to make it.

= start alter =

miles

freight train)

The Narrator graduates.

The Narrator finds their way home.

The Narrator falls in love.

The Narrator lives.

ALTER

SCENE 12: THE OFRENDA

A breath of acknowledgement as the performers look at one other.

During the following story, they build an altar. It is an ofrenda to the labor of the past, a recognition of the present, and an offering to the future.

CK

ACTOR 1

Elizabeth Cotton, Libba Cotton, starts playing music as a child. She picks up the banjo at the age of seven. "From that day on," she said, "nobody had no peace in that house" At age 8, she is playing songs. At age 9, she quits school to be a domestic worker.

At 11, she writes a song called *Freight Train*,

Instrumental of FREIGHT TRAIN begins

They listen for a second.

How to keep memory alive.

Actors have read ancestral letters…do they write their own letters to the future and place on the altar?

Reciprocal memory making? Reciprocal memory making. **Reciprocal memory making!**

Taking care of yourself = taking care of your ancestors.
#ResearchMusings #NecessaryReminder
How do we get back to the knowing?

what is your medicine?
How do you heal? What is needed for healing?
→ what does this look like during
this pandemic? What are the new
practices you can hold onto?
→
6/22/20
How do you let/allow/give space...
your ancestors be ancestral?
6.22.2020

"We, Black people, exist in the residence time of the wake, a time in which 'everything is now. It is all now.'"

- Christina Sharpe + Toni Morrison[14]

“i sit here drinkin memories
entertainin ghosts/ longin for arms
no longer warm/ too enchanted
to tend the pulse pushin me on
to go off from you/ my dead & loved ones”
- Ntozake Shange[15]

Thinking of the work or process as...

Collections of sand - accountable for countless

min

isca

le

gra

ins

parts, particles, of possibilities, ingredients - creating a beach...the give way of

sand

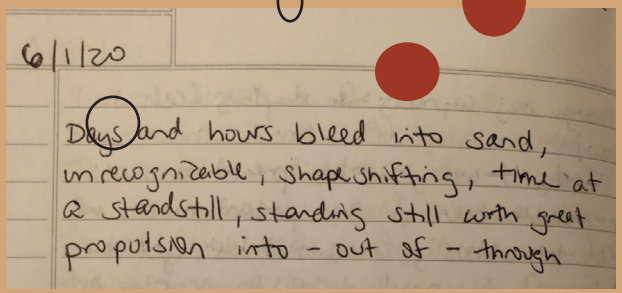
underfoot...

the change of land - pressure - soothing/smoothing of ocean - constant change - moving/removing

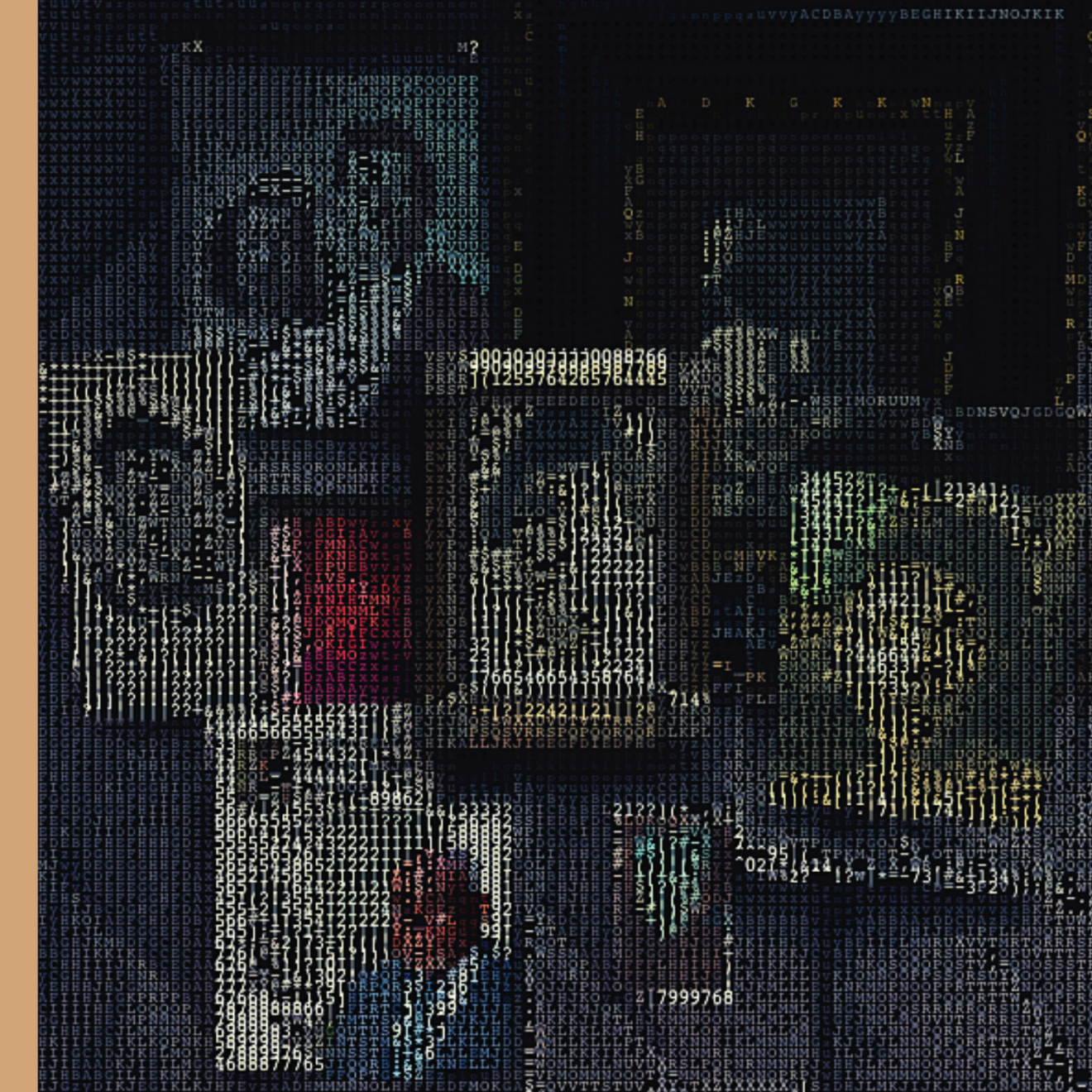
gran

ules

- shifting - seems the same - microscope - reacting, adapting to environment as the environment continues to shift and change and respond.




**3.13.2022 and 6.1.2020**



## The Journey Within the Journey...

*U.F.O.* (entire album) UFlyMother-Ship with Tendayi Kuumba and Greg Purnell
"Window Seat" Erykah Badu
"Virtual Insanity" Jamiroquai
"Temazcal: Sweat, Song & Spiritual Rebirth," *Roots & Ritual*, Yasmin Shahmir & Robyn Landau
"Light Years" Jamiroquai
"Stillness in Time" Jamiroquai
"Time After Time" Cassandra Wilson
"Sankofa" Cassandra Wilson
"Cosmic Queries - Native Skywatchers with Dr. Annette Lee," *StarTalk Radio*, Neil deGrasse Tyson & Negin Farsad
"Fly Like an Eagle" Steve Miller Band
"Next Lifetime" Erykah Badu
"Time Moves Slow" BADBADNOTGOOD, Samuel T. Herring
"Cosmic Queries - Multiverse Madness with Max Tegmark," *StarTalk Radio*, Neil deGrasse Tyson & Negin Farsad
"Galang (Trio Riot Version)" Vijay Iyer, Stephan Crump, Marcus Gilmore
"The Sweetest Meditation" Lord Echo, Mara TK
"Malunguinho" Abayomy Afrobeat Orquestra
"The Life and Death of Stars with Jackie Faherty," *StarTalk Radio*, Neil deGrasse Tyson & Negin Farsad
"Embodied Astrology: Our Bodies in Orbit," *rituals, remedies & alchemy*, Renee Sills
"Bica" Teto Preto
"Nightclubbing" Grace Jones
"Get Over It" Bucie
"Yeanoh (Powe'hande Binga'dbe)" Kondi Band
"Free" Deniece Williams
"Yemaya – John Beltran Vocal" Osunlade
"Dambala – Live at Philharmonic Hall, NYC – July 1973" Nina Simone
"Days Like This (Spinna & Ticklah Mix)" Shaun Escoffery
"Paid" Sudan Archives
"Brighter Days – Dajae – Underground Mix '93" Cajmere
"Ancestors" Bjork
"Searching" Roy Ayers
"Shinrin Yoku: Japanese Forest Bathing," *Roots & Ritual*, Yasmin Shahmir & Robyn Landau
"(No One Knows Me) Like the Piano" Sampha
"Living Like I Do" SBTRKT, Sampha

"Transformational Frequencies," *rituals, remedies & alchemy*, Renee Sills
"To Te Querendo" Omulu, Luedji Luna, ÀTTØØXXÀ
"Earth" Joe Henderson, Alice Coltrane
"Everybody Loves The Sunshine" Roy Ayers Ubiquity
"Journey in Satchidananda" Alice Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders
"Episode 7: The Jewish Space-Time Continuum (with Yoshi Silverstein)," *The Light Lab Podcast*, Eliana Light
"We Travel the Spaceways" Sun Ra
"Moon Dance" Sun Ra
"The Cosmos: Wisdom in the Stars," *Roots & Ritual*, Yasmin Shahmir & Robyn Landau
"I Am A Perfect Being" Beautiful Chorus
"Mama Clo" Thornato, Benjamin Vanegas
"Semai Thaqil" Karl Hector & The Malcouns
*If You Look Far Enough* (entire album) Arild Anderson, Ralph Towner, Naná Vasconcelos
"Another Star" Stevie Wonder
"1999" Prince
"Freedom Sound" The Skatalites
"Golden Slumbers" The Beatles

## Grounding Locations on Our Spiral - from “front” to “back”

1 Ntozake Shange. *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo: A Novel* (New York: Picador, 1982), 1.
2 Queensborough Community College student conjurers: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Jade Medrano-Osorio, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with Movement of the People Dance Company co-conjurer: Joya Powell; rehearsal for *A Return: To Joy.* Notes by Joya Powell, April 1, 2022 - The Spiral.
3 Maya Angelou “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” Quoted in *Words and Worlds of Wisdom (An African Cosmology)*, collected by E.F. Fonkeng (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2018), 3.
4 Zora Neale Hurston “The present was an egg laid by the past that had the future inside its shell.” Quoted in *Words and Worlds of Wisdom (An African Cosmology)*, Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2018), 30.
5 Queensborough Community College student conjurers: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Jade Medrano-Osorio, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with Movement of the People Dance Company co-conjurers: Melissa Escano and Joya Powell; rehearsal for *A Return: To Joy.* Notes by Joya Powell, March 4, 2022.
6 Alexis Pauline Gumbs. *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals* (Chico: AK Press, 2020), 15.
7 Alice Walker. “All Praises to the Pause.” In *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Inner Light in a Time of Darkness* (New York: The New Press, 2006), 49.
8 Queensborough Community College student conjurers: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with Movement of the People Dance Company co-conjurers: Brittany Grier and Joya Powell; rehearsal for *A Return: To Joy.* Notes by Brittany Grier, April 3, 2022.
9 Queensborough Community College student conjurers: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Jade Medrano-Osorio, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with Movement of the People Dance Company co-conjurer: Joya Powell; rehearsal for *A Return: To Joy.* Notes by Joya Powell, April 1, 2022 - House Dance.
10 M., text message to author, March 23, 2022.
11 Paloma McGregor and Amara T. Smith. “Discussion Series: Choreographic Process.” Conversation during M*ovement of the People Dance Company’s annual Winter Intensive: Dance, Choreograph, Envision*, Zoom, January 16, 2022.
12 Randy Martin, C*ritical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 1.
13 *Songs About Trains*, excerpt and rehearsal notes. *Songs About Trains*. Creators Radical Evolution, written by Eugenie, Chan, Reginald Edmund, Rebecca Martinez, Jay Muskett, and Beto O’Byrne (lead author), dir. Rebecca Martinez and Taylor Reynolds, music dir./arranger Julian Mesri, choreo. Joya Powell, artistic producer Meropi Peponides, The New Ohio Theatre, New York, NY, April 5-23, 2022.
14 Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), 198, quoted in Christina Sharpe. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 41.
15 Ntozake Shange, “for all my dead & loved ones,” in *Wild Beauty: New and Collected Poems of Ntozake Shange* (New York: 37 INK, 2017), 13-15.

## A Compass for Our Spiraling

- 6.10.2022 She Remembers
- 4.1.2022 QCC in Process: Past. Present. Future.
- 2.27.2022 Ritual of Rememory
- 3.27.2022 I asked myself
- 5.7.2022 Memories that aren't mine
- 3.4.2022 QCC in Process: Day 1 in-person
- 12.14.2021 A Practice of Ritual in the Studio
- 7.13.2022 Echoes
- 3.14.2022ish Towards his apartment
- 11.25.2021 Of Giving Thanks
- 4.3.2022 QCC in Process: notes by Brittany Grier
- 1.15.2022 QCC in Process: Journal
- 4.1.2022 QCC in Process: House
- 3.13.2022 What makes a Ritual
- 3.18.2022 In Conversation with *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Peroid Room*
- 6.28.2022 Through
- 12.14.2021 Transference. Improvisation. Listening.
- 1.16.2022 Ritual of Beyonding
- 3.14.2022 or an adjacent day *Songs About Trains* rehearsal
- 6.22.2020 Ancestral
- 3.13.2022 Sand + 6.1.2020 Days
- 7.19.2022 Images Re-Imagined - from "outside" to "inside"
- 7.18.2022, 9:02am Living in Conversation as Performative Witnessing
- 7.18.2022, 9:10am Living in Conversation With

Dear Traveler: welcome to this offering. Recycled vibrations channeled through musings and ponderings. A response to a call. A calling in of themes grounded in ritual, time travel, Afro-futurism, spacetime continuum, rooted in the natural world of the spiral.

The work is a journey, which may start with the end, the beginning, or the middle. There is no specific directionality of engagement.

In conversation with time as spiral, wherever one arrives, present, future, and past simultaneously exist. A sankofic multidisciplinary gathering of poetics, journals, rituals, photos, art, music, and rehearsal notes. Ancestral and futural presences steer the unfolding of pages. Fractals of experiences that echo off of paper, fingers, eyes, ink and skin.

The book asks the witness to travel alongside it. Turning the book to meet the self, or the self to meet the book, perhaps traversing to different locations. It is always good measure to have drinkable water nearby. Thank you for engaging in these moments. Take what is needed and leave the rest.

Safe and magical journey,

- Joya

**In Gratitude to...**
**My Dad for continually pointing out the constellations in front of me – lighting the way on this journey… "Golden Slumber" by The Beatles. Peter for anchoring the axis of the spiral. My Grandmas Eula and Claire for sharing the ever-present magic embedded in ritual. My family, and especially my Mom who is the rock that grounds time and space and my siblings Zenzele, Rachel and Ari for their encouragement. M. for slipping through the spiral with me. Megan and Rainy for their daily affirmations, memes, and TikToks. Julie, Ni'Ja, MOPDC Fam and Wes Fam for supporting with laughter and love. Co-conjuring Queensborough Community College students Dominic, Jade, Brook Lyn, Andre and Philip with MOPDC co-conjurers Melissa, Megan and Britt for uplifting that the way back, is through joy. Ishmael and Shayla-Vie for helping me sift through this cosmos. DFaye and Tommy for opening and nourishing portals of possibilities. Ben for sharing the travel guide, bit by bit, with patience. Emily and Buck for their attention to detail. Courtney for co-spiraling with me in an embodied magical manifestation of our research as action. All of the incredibly inspirational and generous humans I have had the immense honor to study and time travel with in the MFA program. Those who have paved multiple ways. And my ancestors – always.**

In Memory & Re-Memory of:
Jay A. Goldstein (my father) and Peter V. Johnson (my step-father)
Love you. Love you madly.
Love you more.

# Images Re-Imagined - from “outside” to “inside”

**7.19.2022**

- Cover art by Joya Powell, with photo of her Great Grandmother Agnes Perkins & “Webb’s First Deep Field” (NIRCam Image), photo by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, July 12, 2022. https://webbtelescopre.org/contents/media/images/2022/035/01G7DCWB7137MYJ05CSH1Q5Z1Z.
- “Cosmic Cliffs” in the Carina Nebula (NIRCam Image), photo by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, July 12, 2022. https://webbtelescope.org/media/images/2022/031/01G77PKB8NKR7S8Z6HBXMYATGJ
- Powell-Goldstein ancestor collage by Joya Powell.
- Spiraling into Possibilities by Joya Powell.
- Photos of Queensborough Community College and Movement of the People Dance Company 4.1.2022 rehearsal of *A Return: To Joy*. Conjurers in the photos: Dominic Epps and Joya Powell. Photo taken by Melissa Escano.
- Photos of *Ritual of Rememory* taken by Joya Powell.
- Photo and art of 300 year old tree located in the Jardin des Plantes, Montpellier, France. The tree is filled with notes, letters, wishes from folx who have left them within its nooks and folds. Photo and art by Joya Powell.
- Dancing Transparancies. Collage by Joya Powell, Photos of Joya taken by Jo-Ani Johnson.
- Photos of an empty, broken egg, taken by Joya Powell.
- Photos of Queensborough Community College and Movement of the People Dance Company rehearsals and performance of *A Return: To Joy*. Conjurers in the photos: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Jade Medrano-Osorio, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with audience members. Photos taken by Joya Powell.
- Photos, stills of A Practice of Ritual in the studio taken by Joya Powell.
- Photo of Joya watching the sunrise, photo taken by Jo-Ani Johnson.
- Photos, still of outdoor solo improvisation rituals taken by Joya Powell.
- Photo of The Hudson River in NYC near 59th Street, by Joya Powell.
- The Spiral of Ritual of Rememory. Photos by Joya Powell.
- “Stephan’s Quintet” (MIRI Image), photo by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, July 12, 2022. https://webbtelescope.org/contents/media/images/2022/034/01G7DBCJAIMISSGKDMH7FSXMBE
- Photo and art of a tree in Middletown, Connecticut by Joya Powell.
- Photos of Queensborough Community College and Movement of the People Dance Company rehearsals and performance of *A Return: To Joy*. Conjurers in the photos: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Jade Medrano-Osorio, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with audience members. Photos taken by Joya Powell.
- Stacked rocks photo by Joya Powell.
- Photos of Joya stacking rocks by Zenzele Johnson.
- Photo of Joya at the *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Peroid Room* exhibit curated by Hannah Beachler and Michelle Commander, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo taken by Jo-Ani Johnson.
- Re-imagining collage of photos from the *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Peroid Room* exhibit curated by Hannah Beachler and Michelle Commander, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photos taken by Joya Powell of the following works:
  Andile Dyalvane, *Sandi Conical Vase*, 2020, stoneware, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
  Willie Cole, *Shine*, 2007, shoes, steel wire, monofilament line, washers, and screws, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
  Grassfields artist, *Ceremonial Palm Wine Vessel*, late 19th-mid 20th century, gourd, glass beads, cloth, cane and wood, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
  Cyrus Kabiru, *Miyale Ya Blue*, 2020, steel and found objects, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
  Andile Dyalvane, *Umwonyo*, 2019, glazed stoneware, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
  Njideka Akunyili Crosby, *Thriving and Potential, Displaced (Again and Again and...)*, 2021, wallpaper collage, The

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

- Photos of Queensborough Community College and Movement of the People Dance Company rehearsals and performance of *A Return: To Joy*. Conjurers in the photos: Dominic Epps, Brook Lyn Gonzalez, Jade Medrano-Osorio, Andre Murph, and Phillip Pettiford, with audience members. Photos taken by Joya Powell.
- "Webb's First Deep Field" (NIRCam Image), photo by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, July 12, 2022. https://webbtelescopre.org/contents/media/images/2022/035/01G7DCWB7137MYJ05CSH1Q5Z1Z
- Stcked rocks and Beneath or Above the Skin with Spirals. Collage and photo by Joya Powell.
- Selfie mosaic photo and art by Joya Powell.
- "Southern Ring Nebula" (NIRCam Image), photo by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, July 12, 2022. https://webbtelescope.org/contents/media/images/2022/033/01G70BGTSYBHS69T7K3N3ASSEB
- Photo and art of gemmed stacked rocks by Joya Powell.
- Powell-Goldstein ancestor collage "code dripping" by Joya Powell.
- "Cosmic Cliffs" in the Carina Nebula (NIRCam Image), photo by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, July 12, 2022. https://webbtelescope.org/media/images/2022/031/01G77PKB8NKR7S8Z6HBXMYATGJ

## Living In Conversation as Performative Witnessing and Visceral Re-Generation...

*A Body with Fukushima*: Film and Performance, choreographer Eiko Otake, The Center for the Arts, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, Saturday May 22, 2021

*Storied Places*, choreographer Nicole Stanton, musical director/composer Jay Hoggard, The Center for the Arts, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, February 14, 2020

*Nona Hendryx and Disciples of Sun Ra in the Temple*, artistic director/performer Nona Hendryx, musicians Sun Ra, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, February 29, 2020

*Privy Internet-Mediated Performance Salon*, choreographer Deborah Goffee, in partnership with the Center for Afrofuturist Studies, YouTube, February 7, 2021

**7.18.2022 9:02am**

Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS). *The Book of Symbols. Reflections on Archetypal Images.* Cologne: TASCHEN, 2010.

Beachler, Hannah and Michelle Commander curators. *Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room*. On view at The Met Fifth Avenue, 508, November 5, 2021 - ongoing. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, United States.

brown, adrienne maree. *Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation*. Chico: AK Press, 2021.

brown, adrienne maree. *Emergent Strategy*. Edinburgh: AK Press, 2017.

Butler, Octavia. *Dawn*. New York: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 2012.

Chi, Oxana and Layla Zami. "Contemporary PerforMemory: Antiracist Choreography/Choreographing Antiracism from Black Berlin to Brown Brooklyn." Lecture-demonstration/workshop presented at the annual Dance Studies Association Conference, New Brunswick, NJ/Zoom, October 2021.

Castro, Yanira and Kathy Couch. *Last Audience: a performance manual*. Chicago: The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2020. PDF. https://www.acanarytorsi.org/last-audience/manual/Last_Audience.pdf

Chabikwa, Tawanda, Yinka Esi Graves, Cyrian Reed, and S. Ama Wray. "Improvisation Across the Diaspora." Virtual session presented at The Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, Durham, NC/Zoom, February 2022.

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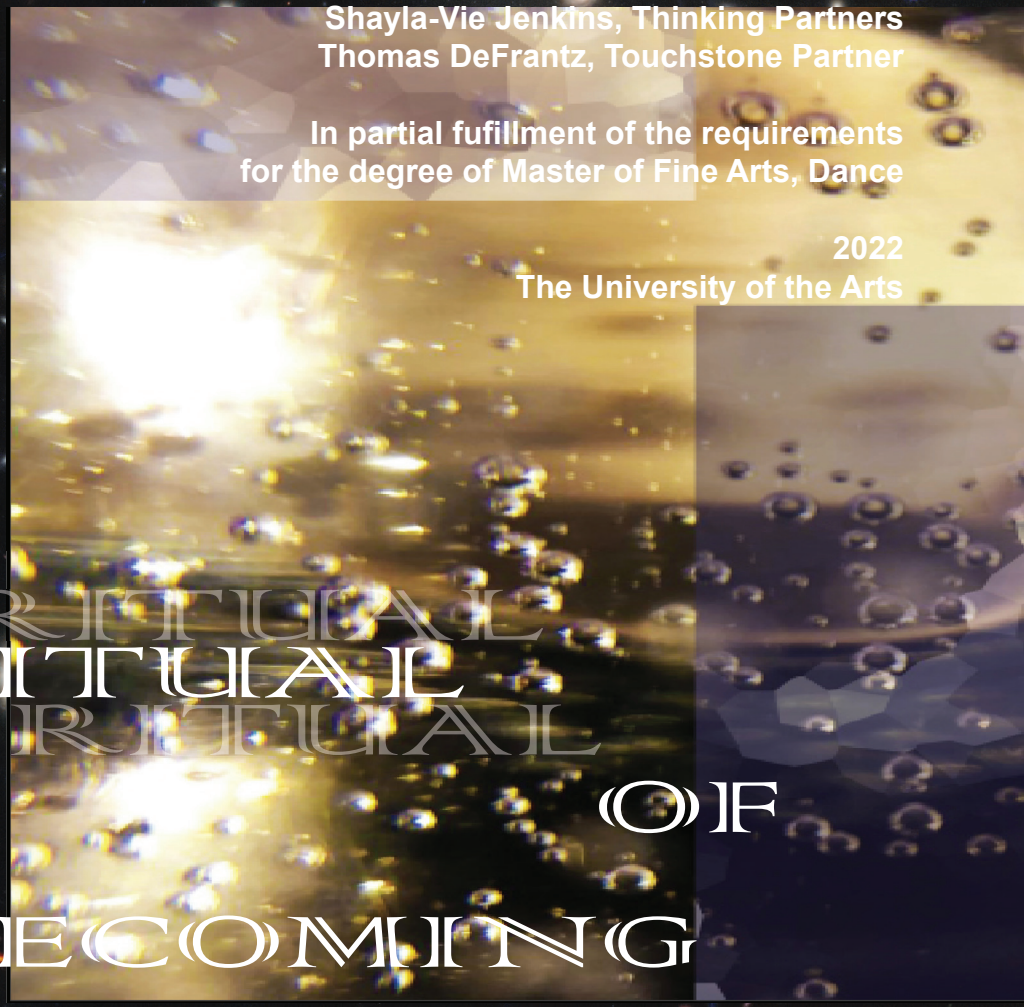

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