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Pase Perdido
Missing Pass

by
Larissa García

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS, SCULPTURE + EXTENDED MEDIA

at

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

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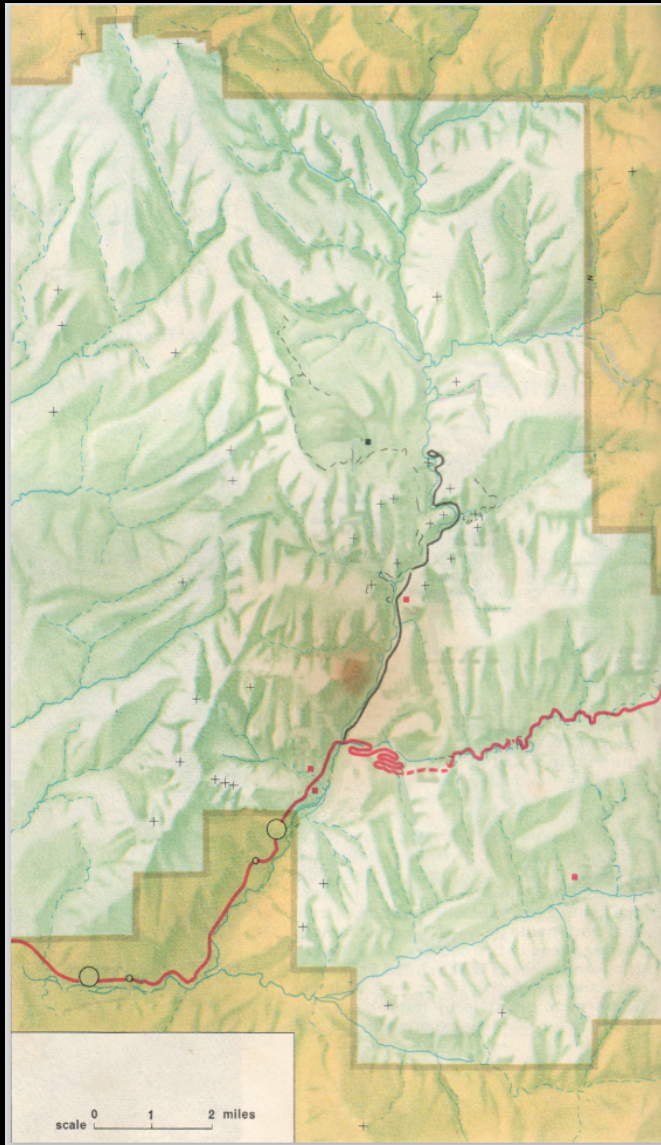
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Abstract

This paper contains the following terms:

colonialism, ghost populations, natural occurrences, global positioning, poetic relation, confrontation/vengeance, mapping, graphs, models, warfare, bio warfare, magic, mystery, migration, memory, mutation, ghosts, and esoteric systems



Country of the Blind, 2020

My identity is as complicated as any Dominican. The theoretical term “dominicanidad” was coined by Lorgia García-Peña as “..people who embrace the label ‘Dominican’ whether or not they are considered Dominican by the state and the history, cultures, and institutions associated with them” (García-Peña ix). The term is not to be confused with the capitalization of Dominicanidad which is associated with hegemonic institutions of state control. The identity is a mixture of Spanish colonials, indigenous people, emancipated slaves of the 17th century, Haitian black and the descendents of the slaves of French colonization. Historically, blackness in the Dominican Republic is veiled as a disputed element of diversity. So in a social construct many shades of “brown” are easier to embrace (Nicholasen 7). My mother and her family were brought up as working class through the caste system from indigenous and black ancestry. But through her interracial relationship with my father, she was able enter a new class status through marriage. My father, a refugee from Operation Peter Pan¹ in Cuba, spent his teenage and adult years in Santo Domingo. Because of this, I situate my story in the Dominican Republic. Both countries have a complicated history with spirituality and religion. My mother’s side has a performance of a Dominican Vodou branch mutated by Roman Catholicism. My father’s side has a performance of santeros and the society of jesuits. Through immigration and the social powers that come with it, spirituality and religion is a practice that isn’t left at home.

Pase Pedido Missing Pass examines a complicated social and political history through the various thresholds of spirituality. This is seen clearly through the practices of superstition in the Caribbean. In the processes of migration and absence of people, practices of protective superstition have lingered in spaces of the inbetween. These practices I am referring to are navigational tools as well as objects of protection and traps. In migration you are placed in the wasteland, no longer having access to resources of support or community. This condition mutates tradition, as it comes from living in the margin, it keeping intact one’s shifting and multiple identity. Superstitious objects are neither alive nor dead. Superstition is outside of the system of dividing and classifying. It is part of bridge-weaving. These relations turn the divide of the living and dead to produce an effect in thinking and feeling. A secular example would be mathematician Alfred North Whitehead’s writing in which he wrote that Plato’s writing could be felt through his footnotes. In the book, *Process and Reality* he is quoted saying, “The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them(Whitehead 39),” implying that the footnote had an animating power (Stengers 1). A footnote can be a bridge to the past and give ideas to power the present. When researchers review

¹ Operation Peter Pan (Operación Pedro Pan) was a clandestine mass exodus of over 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban minors to the U.S. over a two year span, 1960 - 1962. The operation was created from rumors that the Communist Party were planning on terminating parental rights and placing minors in communist indoctrination centers. The program was led by Father Bryan O. Walsh of the Catholic Welfare Bureau in Miami, FL.

animism and superstition, it is often in reflection to a dead tradition in concepts used to justify colonization and divide which gives freedom to the researcher to study and categorize others. However, American philosophers like David Abram use animist techniques to enable modes of experience, awareness, and knowledge into an intensely powerful bridge-making tool. My own practice and tradition situates me as an animist. While the other accepts the truth that we are alone, mute, blind in a yet knowable world. One is left motivated on the task to appropriate. I nurture animism and superstition through ethnologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's "decolonization of thought"² which is an attempt to resist a colonizing power by looking closer at the action of throwing salt over one's shoulder, it analyzes society's understanding of that action being tolerated but never taken seriously (Skafish 9). I place these actions and beliefs back on a space of value and power. The feeling of resistance to colonizing powers stems from my interest in merit and my correlative disgust with how institutions translate it into the epic story of disenchanting the world.

Missing Pass, in the exhibition, is a narrative story of searching for my missing mother. Through the last conversation I had with her before she went missing, I was able to speculate that she traveled to the Appalachian mountain range. This range has similarities to the Baoruco Mountain Range she grew up in along the border of Haiti and Dominican Republic. The story is revealed through the four geological formations: Topsoil, Subsoil, Parent Material, and Caverns. These layers were a retelling of the memory of a mass disappearance of indigenous bodies in the Appalachian region. This mass disappearance was similar to the Taino population on the island of Hispaniola during the 16th century. Both groups of indigenous people saw the violence that was brought into their livelihoods and escaped through the cave systems of these mountains. To scale it further back to my own narration, she followed the same pattern of these indigenous masses into the threshold of the cave. This threshold was a space that changes with time. The opening sweats and expands.

² In the book, *Cannibal Metaphysics* (page 10), Eduardo Viveiros de Castro invents the conditions for a thought cognizant, as the first use of the term is used "Cannibal Metaphysics is...indispensable to answering it, to defining, that is, the problems, terms, methods, political situation, and intellectual disposition of a thinking no longer complacently satisfied with neglecting concepts external to the West and thereby conceptually mimicking the moderns' violent absorption of other peoples, by presuming that such ideas can always be reduced back to their own...the theoretical imaginations of all peoples and to thereby contribute to the 'permanent decolonization of thought'..."



I watched you wait at the threshold's edge

Still from Missing Pass, 2021

“How do you come back from
that
for which there are no words”

- *Thresholds*, Lara Mimoso Montes (pg 40)

My mother disappeared in mid-April of 2020. I moved down to Miami to help her after she lost her job and filed a restraining order against my father. We were living in temporary housing my aunt was able to provide for us. When I arrived, the place was in shambles with weeks of rotting food filling tables. My mother’s behavior was erratic and aggressive. I assumed the role of a caretaker. She would leave the apartment without notice, and wouldn’t answer my calls or texts to verify her location. She would leave before I woke up and would arrive around 11 pm every night. Every conversation we had was a barrage of arguments about location, where she had been, and why she wasn’t responding. She shrugged off my feelings of neglect, worry and sadness of her distance. One day she left and I presumed that she would arrive later in the day but she never came back. My heart broke. I worried that something might have happened. An accident? An altercation with my father? She wouldn’t answer me or any other family members. I waited for her and imagined her walking through the door. I couldn’t sleep. To keep my mind busy, I would watch movies late at night and text her long paragraphs of how much I

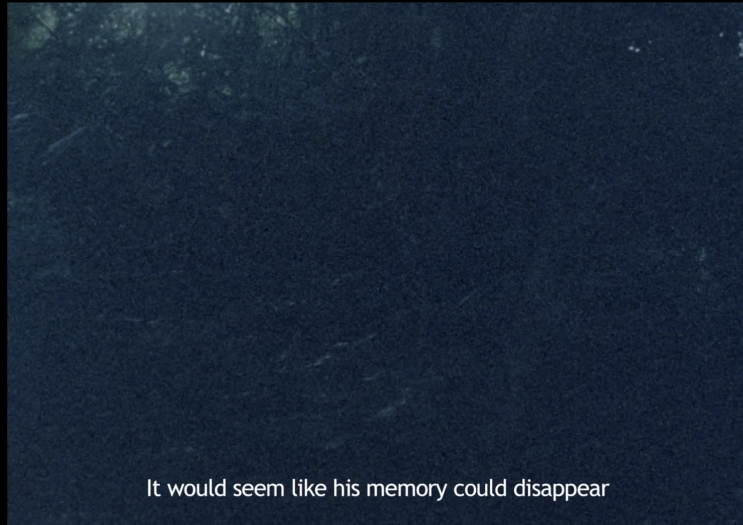
loved her and wished her to be okay. I tried to envision where she could have been, what she could have been doing, what could have happened. One week passed, then another. I did the same ritual every night, I started watching the movie, *The Alchemist Cookbook*³ from 2016. While replaying the last conversation we had in my head. *The Alchemist Cookbook*, features a person in isolation following an old alchemy cookbook in order to unlock secrets of the natural world. But as the film continues he starts to call on an ancient demon in the forest. The film is less about the supernatural elements but more about the mental degradation of someone in isolation. There is a scene in the movie where Sean, lead protagonist, submerges himself into a lake with a large rock to confront a demon. This scene is a pivoting point. A space to approach a larger issue of a situation outside of your skill set to see if you could overcome.



Still from The Alchemist Cookbook, 2016

³ *The Alchemist Cookbook*. Directed by Joel Potrykus, Oscilloscope Laboratories. 2016.

During this time, I watched the movie, *Voices of Kidnapping*⁴. A film that features ghostly images of Colombia's jungle landscapes set to radio transmissions sent by family members to their kidnapped loved ones. Messages included grief, support, and against all odds hope.



Still from Voices of Kidnapping, 2017

The Alchemist Cookbook offered an insight on the closely related worlds and perspectives of mental illness and the supernatural, while *Voices of Kidnapping* created the visual sensation of the void in which life takes lives. I imagine this void of what I couldn't see swallowing my mother. During the events, I wrote a poem later published through the gallery Solo Show, which highlighted these sensations called *Night Sun*.

“She felt a trace and moved closer into a recess. She felt a dizziness and sensation of being pulled from inside out. Without consciousness, she took off her dress encountering a hole in space. She reached out with her right hand into hot air and suddenly it closed (García 1).”

Missing Pass ends at the thres-hole of a cave which holds a cultural significance in communities in the Caribbean and Latin America at large. In popular culture, it is depicted as a rip in our time or world into another. The film, *?e?anx (The Cave)*⁵, is a narrated traditional Tsilhqot'in story. Which stars a colonized tribe member living in western Canada searching for a bear. Upon finding a track, he is led to believe that the bear may be hibernating or feasting inside a cave. He crawls into the opening with a gun in his right hand, sliding deeper into the cave on his belly. A bright light appears, his nose bleeds and he falls into the same world he entered the

⁴ *Voices of Kidnapping*. Directed by Ryan McKenna, La Distributrice de Films. 2017.

⁵ *?e?anx (The Cave)*. Directed by Helen Haig-Brown, Rugged Media. 2009.

cave in. But this world has no sun although it is completely daylight, the sounds he hears reverberate. As he approaches a river bank, members of his tribe in traditional garb living uncontacted and free from colonization are bathing without acknowledging him. This afterlife is a common depiction among these narratives.



Still from ?e?anx (The Cave), 2009

A cave being a desolate place. I revisit the thres-hole of the cave as a recurring image; to seek further answers or understandings of the passage it should contain. The ephemeral and temporary holdings of the sculptures speak more about time than the material. I believe it reveals states of how most systems are fragile and can be broken or torn apart at any moment. A continual material I seem to come to a lot in my practice is mud. Sand mud, wood mud, graphite mud. Mud is used as an encasing or shells for objects. Mud could be a metaphor for how human social relations can be imagined. Human relations in this perspective are constantly shifting, eroding and resurfacing. In the book, *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennet states that “mud is an agentic substance capable of articulating meanings in between solid and liquid” (Bennett 65). In the Oxford English dictionary, mud is a “soft moist glutinous material made of a combination of things”. Both Mary Douglas and Julia Kristeva state that mud defies order. It becomes a threat or a site of danger. “Mud contains a troubling opacity and an uncomfortable fleshiness” Sara Ahmed writes, “what sticks shows us where objects have gathered onto the surface becoming part object and emotion, all to question the integrity of an object” (Ahmed 11). Mud is haunted. Avery Gorden states that “ghosts are never innocent” (Gorden 22). As mud, they cause trouble. “They stick, sucking us inexorably into glutinous, complicated, uncomfortable webs of remembering” (Tuck and Ree 643). Mud has many stories and worlds. Mud threatens the imagined borderland and its boundary as understood by becoming a “vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition” (Anzaldúa 3). Mud is churning and moving together with us alongside the sands it

contains. Human sediments of lives that are lived and lost like bones, plastic, fishing lines (Sonja 36). Irit Rogoff coined “Terra infirma meaning of unstable, shifting geographies, gathering histories into itself even as sediment swirls through the water, resurfacing itself with every new layer of sedimentation” (Rogoff 2). In this it contains visceral pleasures and delights of this formless intimate stickiness we embrace. Mud can be a provocation to intimacy, resistance, imagination, inspiration and play. Both as sediment and fragment, mud lies in both the past and present. Mudplay is part of the systemic sculptures I create to engage in living with our hauntings as a way to access the future through the past. Another metaphor for mud could be the spaces of transition for movement and migration. In being both haunted and haunting this is a site of memory and remembering.

Ecstatic Encounter

In the event of a natural phenomena we experience an awe of the temporal. In 2010, I remember going to Miami Beach with my parents in late July. We were rushing to get there after finishing a work day to swim in the ocean before dusk. About ten other people were at the beach which was unusual. When we arrived, the water was placid like a reflection pool. We entered the warm water and waded in silence as we absorbed the beauty around us. The ecstatic encounter is the experience of a memory, feeling, and sensation of an event that can not be recreated.

Observing a conversation with Cauleen Smith and Amber Esseiva, I understood what it meant to occupy this space, to manifest the beauty and resistance within this stillness. Objects, associations and destabilization in these moments are about making and undoing by how much an ordinary object like a glass of water does. This extends to the possibilities of associations and memories within the moment. In hope that a single odd element arrests you long enough is a kind of recognition close to something you don't recognize or don't have access to the narrative. But there is enough to make you understand there is something reflected back at you, so it can make its own time in its own way. This encounter does not enter a sanctified space or isn't formerly one. The ecstatic encounter is more like a surreal landscape or a moment you have at a dance party. There is no way to fabricate or re-make these moments. But there is a sense in how it can occur like an equation. As my research has been diving deeper into divinity practices among Caribbean sorcerers and Latinx shamans, there is a confusion about whether or not the practices are magic or a trick that we can't explain or a procedure that arrived at certain results. It is a combination of these elements. But within this realm, I am interested in my own combination of these ontological moments.



Pase Pedido Missing Pass exhibition detail, 2021

In the exhibition, the room is hued with a terracotta light. The color creates an atmosphere of dryness and warmth, resembling colors that may appear at dusk, dawn, and before a storm. This colored space can create the ecstatic encounter. As the light throughout the day strengthens and wanes, there are moments of highlighted segments of the room or a difference in coloration with an object. The light gel color is also in reference to film tinting especially in its sepia capabilities. Originally used as a copy guard against film pirates, it is also a safelight against film printers. Tinting became a mood setter in films of the early 20's depicting a scene emotionally through color. The common theme for a warm amber was used in moments of daylight interiors. One film that comes to mind is *Greed* (1924)⁶ considered a Greek tragedy in which the environment and heredity controlled the character's fates and reduced them to beasts. The film is considered lost and only twelve people have seen the film in full length. The uncut version has been deemed the "holy grail" for many film archivists. The film is set in Death Valley. Outlaw McTeague teams up with a prospector named Cribbens to find a large quantity of quartz to become millionaires. As they begin to mine, McTeague senses danger and flees into the desert with a single horse, the remaining money and one water jug. Marshals pursue him, joined by Schouler, a marshal with a personal vengeance towards McTeague and rides into Death Valley alone. The heat starts to slow McTeague's progress. While Schouler's progress also starts to

⁶ *Greed*, Directed by Erich von Stroheim, The Goldwyn Company–Metro–Goldwyn, 194.

wane he spies on McTeague and moves in to arrest him. During the confrontation, McTeague's horse bolts and Schouler shoots it, puncturing the water container. The water is sucked into the desert floor. In the last fight, McTeague wins and handcuffs himself to Schouler. The film ends with McTeague left in the desert with no horse or water, handcuffed to a corpse unable to reach the remaining money.



Still from *Greed*, 1924

A dimension of the 'sacred' within decolonial theory lies between spiritual expression and literary historical interpretation. The combination of lyrical and narrative telling of history gives meditation to voices that aren't heard. Manifestation of the decolonial spirit is the lyric interruption of Europeanized public and nationalistic retellings of history taught inside the educational institution and outside of it. The spirit appears in images, sounds, and value facilitated by the preservation of pre-colonial history.

The preservation of this history, under western anthropological studies, can dilute a society in order to be accepted. Under the American Anthropological Association, methods of entry are subjugated to transparency. In *Poetics of Relation*, Glissant's defines the western perspective of "understanding" person(s) is reduced to transparency to measure ideal scales of comparisons or judgements (Glissant 190). Accepting difference interrupts this hierarchy. The right to opacity establishes a foundation of relation. Opacity⁷ exposes the limits of schemas of visibility, representation and identity that prevent sufficient understanding of multiple perspectives of the world and its people. In 1919, the corpse of Victor Segalen⁸ was found sticky with blood in a French forest. His death was filed under mysterious circumstances but Glissant was convinced the death stemmed from a lethal dose of ethnocentrism (Buruma; Glissant 194). Curiously enough, Paul Gauguin died the same way in Polynesia.

The decolonial spirit is a revisitation of memory. In Mati Diop's short film, *Atlantiques*⁹, a group of young men contemplate making a treacherous journey by sea from Senegal to Europe. This short film preludes the feature *Atlantics*¹⁰, which follows the aftermath of the migrant men as tragedy occurs. Their spirits retreat back to Dakar seeking redress financially and spiritually. A process that inhabits past lovers to seek the vengeance indebted to them. In both films the cinematography focuses on a fog hovering over the ocean. The horizon disappears completely exchanging the sky and sea, alluding to other-worldliness. The water's horizon becomes a potent site for spiritual possibility, potential, and dreaming. The water shapes memory, dreams and history.

⁷ *Poetics of Relation*, Chapter: For Opacity (pg.220) "1. Comprehension could, of course, be translated as "comprehension" to point out the root connection with the French word *comprendre*, which I have earlier rendered as "to grasp" or, when the sense is mechanical, as "to comprehend" (and once, at Glissant's behest, as "to integrate"). In American English, however, the controlling attitude implied in this particular instance, vis-à-vis other people or cultures, is more apparent in understanding than in comprehension. Trans."

⁸ Victor Segalen (14 January 1878 – 21 May 1919) was a French naval doctor, ethnographer, archeologist, writer, poet, explorer, art-theorist, linguist and literary critic.

⁹ *Atlantiques*. Directed by Mati Diop, 2009.

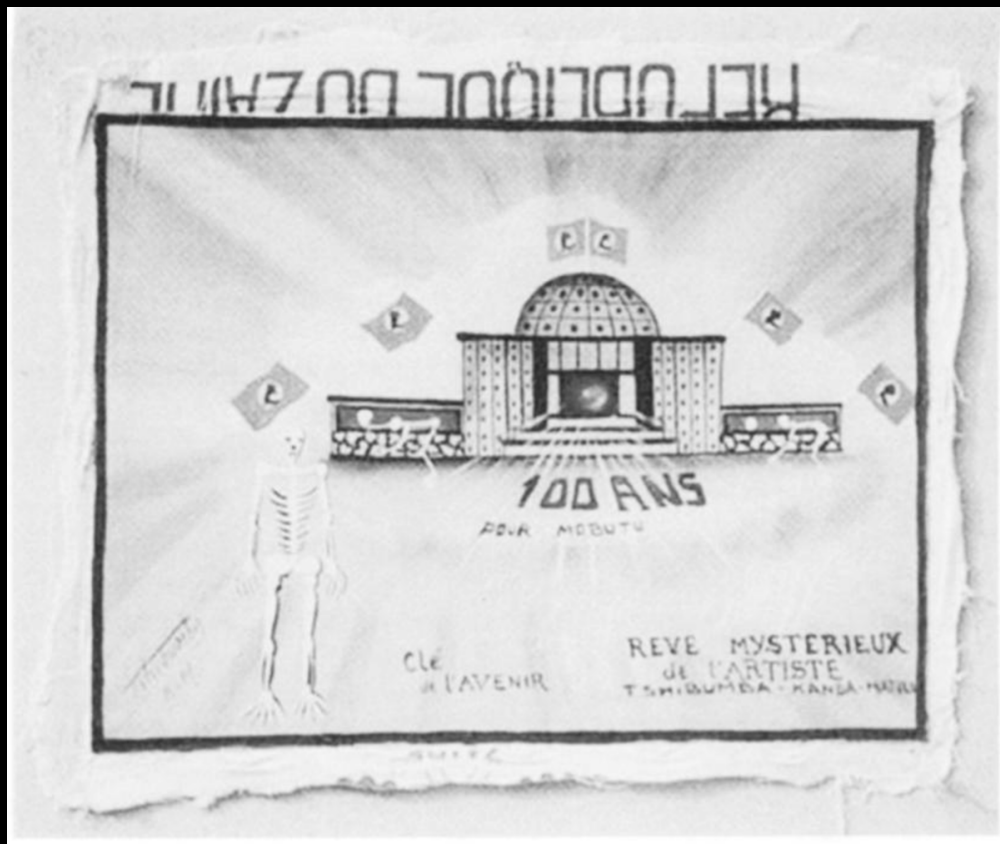
¹⁰ *Atlantics*. Directed by Mati Diop, Ad Vitam, 2019.



Still from Atlantiques, 2009

The decolonial spirit is a lyrical disruption of dialectic meaning. The collaborative relationship between painter Tshibumba Kanda Matulu and anthropologist Johannes Fabian was driven by desire and symbol of Patrice Lumumba's postcolonial future (Moten 127). Lumumba had a significant role leading in the transformation of Congo (Zaire) into an independent colony until his assassination in 1958 by President Mobutu's administration in alliance with forces of imperialism. The retelling of a lyrical history is a desire of free association and total representation. It becomes a remembrance of lost knowledge associated with narrative history. "Unfortunately, historical emotions are narrowly associated with poetry" (Moten 139). Lumumba influenced Tshibumba's lyricism through the spirit and value of a decolonial future. Fabian acted as an ethnographer, informant, and a sponsor to Tshibumba's drive to illustrate colonialism as a contaminate by way of ethnographic encounters (Moten 142-143).

What does it mean to receive the decolonial spirit? The interruption of dreams came into the way of Tshibumba's paintings. At night before bed, he would turn on the radio and fall asleep to songs and political debates (Moten). Eventually he started to develop nightmares of a tall skeleton at the footside of his bed. Waking up in a panic, he shook his wife awake. As these dreams continued, he yearned to paint these skeletons. Until one night, a nightmare including these skeletons chased him as they sang "Kashama, NKoy" by Tabu Ley Rochereau and L'African Fiesta (Moten 144). Nkoy Kashama, the chief advisor of cultural affairs for President Mobutu, devoted his position to gain popular support for the Republic of Congo (Zaire). The lyrics of the song translated from the skeleton jaws' song, "if you were to meet Lumumba right now, what would you say" (Moten 144) ?



Painting 97. The Thought Tshibumba saw: a nightmare vision of "a hundred years for Mobutu." (Moten, Fabian)

A Ventifact Pitted is a sculpture placed on a pedestal southeast of the exhibition. It is a horizontal sand hole with arms reaching over an open mouth. Burnt candles are found at the top side of its horns, the spine of its back and the roof of its mouth. The tongue is a sponge holding a cupped leaf in which its interior is golden. *A Ventifact Pitted* is a reinterpretation of a light tomb and a tradition that occurs at the start of a new time cycle or year, in which you dig a hole in the sand filled with lit candles to create a space for prayer. This ritual of hope and beginnings is dead in the installation. Whether the ritual created the desired result or not, it leaves a sculptural object asking to be activated and expanded upon. The object reminds me of a weaver, creating and manifesting intention and tales.



A Ventifact Pitted (detail), 2021

The Wasteland

A wasteland is defined by a marker of destroyed, barren or undeveloped land (Di Palma 3). In the early 1940's the islands of Vieques eight miles off the coast of Puerto Rico had twenty-six thousand of its acres bought for 1.6 million by the United States Atlantic Fleet Forces. This land was used as training exercises for shore shelling and aerial bomb strikes. In 2003, the navy was forced to vacate the land in ruin. In routine practice of the navy, before evacuating, were to burn acres of land to find munition. This ultimately affected Puerto Rico's health as cancer and disease spread throughout the community due to toxic chemicals in the soil, groundwater, air and fish (Pelet 1).



Source: The Atlantic (A pile of military vehicle parts and mortar shells burns on the former U.S. Naval training range on Vieques Island off Puerto Rico.) AP

The U.S. Department of Interior closed the land to the general public as a wildlife refuge for endangered turtles to lay their eggs. However, the land still contains a large amount of live undetonated bombs. An example of this without significant human destruction is Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, a site dubbed as the nation's most ironic nature park.



Image of Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Restoration

This 'irony' is misplaced because of its lack of their apparent transformations, transformations which are less physical or ecological but conceptual and are dependent on the assumptions embedded when we encounter words like "wilderness" or "wasteland". In 19th century theory, 'wilderness' is described as an area of pristine untouched land while 'wasteland' is defined as derelict or defiled (Di Palma 2). We are always thinking about the binary when we speak about the wasteland. Wasteland becomes a culture's antithesis or a landscape that resists appropriate use.

The first time 'wasteland' appeared was in English versions of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Lives of the Saints used to translate the Latin word *desertus* or *solitudo* (Di Palma 3). Both terms imply emptiness. Like the desert, a wasteland can have mountains, cliffs or caves but are expansive with sand. Sometimes devoid of life, the space becomes a battleground for demons and supernatural creatures. Emptiness as a core characteristic to wasteland gives it the potential of poetics and abstraction, identified for what it isn't.

While living in Miami, I learned the history of the Hispaniola island through my parents and grandparents as well as every time I went back to Dominican Republic. There was a basis to understand that we are from a land of struggle and battle against the state that governs over us. The wasteland appears through omitted history in Dominican education to continue a national

divide in societal issues like drugs, spirituality, and race. As a young child, by my grandmother's wishes, I read Julia Alvarez' books *In the Time of the Butterflies* and *How the García girls Lost their Accent*, both cited the events of a tragedy to acknowledge how history can be falsely portrayed. I have contextualized what it meant to live away from family or home, how it felt to be alienated in a new life and to assimilate.

Beyond the Grasses is a ghost net. The sculpture contains slippages like a mushroom form at the top of a wooden plank resembling an oxidized apple core. These slippages are a component to the wasteland. Through scarcity, there are poetics able to form in replacement and representation. When there is no access to the rites of these rituals an articulation of one's own language starts to develop. In *Beyond the Grasses*, that is shown by the sculpture becoming a dead lighthouse, a beacon, a spirit container, and a navigational device.



Beyond the Grasses (detail), 2021

Superstition + Mental illness

I understood kinship through the care of my grandparents and cousins when I lived in Santo Domingo. When my parents and I immigrated to Miami, my mother developed powerful superstitious habits as if it were our last connection to the Carribean. The tradition of mediumship in my family was intimidating but a skill my mother possessed passing it onto me. Within my family, there is a sensitivity to this subject matter. On the island itself, time acts differently as well as the ideas of the afterlife.

Jumbies are part of the fabric which makes up most superstitions in Hispaniola and the Carribean at large. They are mythological spirits or demons rooted in folklore. Jumbie is also a generic name for malevolent spirits. There are many types of Jumbies, this reflects the Carribean's complex history and ethnic makeup, drawing on African, Amerindian, East Indian, Dutch, English and Chinese mythology. These cultures have different concepts of what a jumbie is but a unifying trait is the general idea that people who have been evil are destined to become instruments of evil in death. Unlike ghost-folklore representing a wispy fog creature, the jumbie casts a dark shadowy figure. In the french islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, people speak of the Zombi more than the Jumbie to describe ghosts, revenant or supernatural creatures (St. Benoit). The term comes from Haitian folklore and the origin of the word comes from Kongo, commonly compared to the word *vumbi*. A corpse that still retains the soul and *nvumbi*, body without a soul (Christie 57). The original archetype of this derived from Haitian slavery. An example is the Étang Zombi in Guadeloupe, a pond in which owes its name to the wife of a slaver who was killed by her husband for freeing his slaves, haunting the area.



Image of Étang Zombi in Guadeloupe

Superstitions surrounding the Jumbie come from the belief that the spirit separates from the body three days after death, at which point, wreaks havoc. Jumbies' ability to shape-shift usually takes the form of a dog, pig or most likely a cat. There are many recommended ways to avoid or escape encounters with a Jumbie. I will list the most common ways. Upon coming home late at night, walk into your house backwards which prevents a Jumbie from following you inside. If a jumbie chases a person, cross a river, this will stop them because they cannot follow over water. Jumbies contain an obsessive curiosity and can be distracted by a heap of salt or rice by the door compelling them to count every grain until sunrise.

Many origins of malevolent spirits come from the introduction of Catholicism and Christianity through colonialist missionary tours. A direct example of this is the Wekufe, a type of harmful spirit and demon from Mapuche mythology. The word wekufe is attributed to any person that tells lies or is deceptive. The idea is broadened to include meanings as a subject, quality or agent depending on the speaker's reference point or situation used. These ghost-like bodies are characterized by their propensity to disturb and destroy the balance of the world's natural order. Like colonialism, this causes illness, destruction, death, and other calamities. Missionaries who followed the Spanish conquistadors to America incorrectly interpreted the Machupe belief of wekufes. It became a weaponized word regarding devil, demon and other evil forces. This destroyed the original symbolism thus changing the idea of wekufe up to the present day amongst Mapuche people.

Mental illness in Latin American is portrayed as a double reality. The first reality is an unseen wound that never heals, circulating in conversation as a faceless person. The second reality is an unknown opening to visions, premonitions, and wisdom. In both circumstances, the individual is exploited. Depression is one of the most prominent positions affecting the cultural field of global capitalism. While depictions in the media of depression have been more prevalent, it is important to notice how the current moment mimics various problems of depression that affect a citizen subject. In Latin America, depression is gendered (Muñoz 1). The performativity of femme depression is framed as a problem while masc depression is seen as a plague linked to angst or longing described as endemic to post-modernism (Muñoz 1). However, the description of the gendered depression is formatted for a default white subject. Depression is not often talked about in relation to racial formations of critical theory.



Circle Sweat (detail), 2021

Circle Sweat, located in the center of the exhibition, was created from an event of a haunting. The sculpture is a result of a Jumbie making an effort to have a physical body. During a haunting, a spirit lived in my bedroom with me for several weeks. Each night, the spirit steals a bit of my energy to manifest itself. My hair was slowly being pulled out of my scalp as I slept. The hair culminated into a ball tumbling around the room. One morning, my roommate woke up with my hair woven in between his toes. These topics fuel the aesthetics of *Pase Perdido Missing Pass*. How to protect oneself from who or what? How to bring in and what to define as progress? This way of navigating has portrayed itself in the way of routine or ritual actions. Rituals for marriage, death, water to home. By diving deeper into what these rituals are or can be, I am able to look into the past to envision a connected future.

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