

Encounter

by Ade Tugbiyele Sedita and Noelle Lorraine Williams

Encounter | Project Notes and Journal
Afushion| Brennan Courthouse
Curators Mike Markman and Ibou Ndoeye
February 6 - 28, 2008

Afushion

Ade Tugbiyele Sedita and Noelle Lorraine Williams

Encounter – Project Notes and Journal

Noelle – Journal 1

Meditation

Often when we see each other – our bodies are flooded in wind and water of reflections. The passing of time and memories, sweet and suffocating are reflected in the image of the other. When I encounter you, my sister, my brother I am ashamed because I do not feel so strong – ashamed because you are my hyphenated American self and today, myself before. I am something so new yet so old. You are something so new yet so old. We stand in the crosswinds.

Often though we will not consciously admit it - we see ourselves as the cosmic self. When we evoke shame because of someone's behavior or joy and a collective upsurge that is the cosmic consciousness – if not then we would stand our faces masked not feeling the waves of emotion and energy engulfing, multiplying outward.

But the problem of our cosmic self, is that of the other self, the bad self, the good self, the best of self, the weak self, the groveling self, the confused self, the soaring self, the broken self and in that process we wander through a purposeful journey –gorged with wanderlust.

Material

Meeting 1

The Encounter or Meeting

In our initial discussion we talked about the Encounter. This space of meeting and understanding – flooded with the chatter of words and affirmations that feed the emotions. In a room we stood seeing each other assessing our identity, nationality and ethnicity. Will you hurt me? I am happy to see you.

Words as Art

We discussed the phrases of words as art – as portraying the image of our interiors,

Maze + Labryinth

After drawing up phrases and thinking of a maze then a labyrinth. We looked at the images.

Noelle

I *feel*/the labyrinth. I *feel*/the path, the insurmountable and mounting it – the calmness in walking. I began to dream last night of the character boards at the circus. Where each person goes to it and sticks their head through. I began to see three with holes – one with the hole covered. What happens when you can't see the face? What happens when you can't see the face? What if one of the characters was someone afraid?

Adejoke

My thoughts...

It is possible there are no other two peoples with such a shared history, yet so thoroughly separated psychologically in time and space. The social construction of time and space make us think of each other as "**the other**" while others look at us as fundamentally the same. This is one of many sources of our shared frustration - not knowing How to Act. How to Act when we are alone. How to Act when in our communities. How to Act within the communities of others. When a political decision is to be made when to act and why we should act become equally critical questions.

How to Act presumes we know What to Say. I see this exhibition as the beginning of conversation - dialogue- that may help shape or influence How to Act. Given we are still individuals, with our own fears, joys and pains that we negotiate everyday. The task is very challenging indeed. It may involve the dissolving (and/or redefining) of time and space to the greatest extent possible.

The labyrinth helps us to rethink time and space in individual terms, thereby allowing us the freedom to reconnect -in truth - with each other.

Ade

Noelle

"The social construction of time and space make us think of each other as "**the other**" while others look at us as fundamentally the same. " – Adejoke

"my negritude is not a stone
nor a deafness flung against the clamor of the day
my negritude is not a white speck of dead water
on the dead eye of the earth
my negritude is neither tower nor cathedral
it plunges into the red flesh of the soil
it plunges into the blaxing flesh of the sky

my negritude riddles with holes
the dense affliction of its worthy patience.”
Aime Cesaire

Time and space are socially constructed. Western/Darwinian thought demands a linear or even apocalyptic sense of identity and history. Discussions and thought patterns are dominated from nothing to something, from evil to good and from seed to plant. But the failure in this dichotomous thinking is that the plant “dies” is absorbed and simultaneously disperses seeds in the process.

As international beings and offshoots of a British (and secondary French, Dutch and local) colonial, post colonial and neo- colonial history both Africans and African Americans occupy a space that Dubois, Fanon, Cesaire and Hine all qualify as existing in a double and multiple consciousness simultaneously.

So knowing “How to Act” is knowing often which “self” or consciousness is “acting” or performing.

[African theorists and artists of the Black Diaspora have prioritized the neo colonial British self as primary (see cesaire *negritude* – but what happens to the people who are Black, African, American and Caribbean who do not read the words of Lorde, subscribe to DNA theories of origin, believe in Dubois double consciousness? What happens to them? What happens?]

African American Encounter

- 1) The African will treat me with disdain as the “white” person does since they are colonized.
- 2) The African will treat me as the cultural caricature as the “white” person does since they are colonized.
- 3) The African will uplift me as the “white” person does since they are colonized.
- 4) I am impressed by the African since they know their own culture.
- 5) I am unimpressed by the African since they do not know their own culture.
- 6) I do not want to be perceived as African because I am more advanced than that.
- 7) I do want to be perceived as African because they know their own culture.
- 8) I am smart
- 9) I am not smart
- 10) I am confused

African Encounter

- 1) The African American will treat me with disdain as the “white” person does since they are colonized.

- 2) The African American will treat me as the cultural caricature as the "white" person does since they are colonized.
- 3) The African will uplift me as the "white" person does since they are colonized.
- 4) I am impressed by the African American since they know their own culture.
- 5) I am unimpressed by the African American since they do not know their own culture.
- 6) I do not want to be perceived as African American because I am more advanced than that.
- 7) I do want to be perceived as African American because they know their own culture.
- 8) I am smart
- 9) I am not smart
- 10) I am confused

Material

Faceboards with conflicting identities, but more so face boards with holes covered by gauze, left open and clear, with an image in them. Faceboards in a box this is what I see now.

Adejoke

Revision...for this part

African Encounter

- 1) The African American will treat me with disdain as the "white" person does since they think I am primitive and uncivilized.
- 2) The African American will treat me as the cultural caricature as the "white" person does since they are westernized.
- 3) The African American will uplift me only as a means to validating him or herself culturally and historically. i.e. egyptian goddess, yoruba princess, etc.
- 4) I am impressed by the African American since they continue to fight the good fight.
- 5) I am unimpressed by the African American since they have NO culture.
- 6) I do not want to be perceived as African American because I have culture and I am more educated.
- 7) I do want to be perceived as African American because I have to in order to survive in the United States of America.
- 8) I am smart
- 9) I am very smart
- 10) I am confused

Noelle

I did this exercise in young leaders diversity and community organizing boot camp training when I was 15 and it was and continues to be most difficult - but most rewarding.

The black group subdivided into African Americans, African Caribbean and Africans and there was much crying and sadness.

Noelle

Material – for the labyrinth and the faceboard I want to impress the feelings of confusion, warmth and connection. The faceboards would be marks on the labyrinth one could peer in or peer through.

I picture peering through one and it is a painting on a mirror, peer into another and it is layers of gauze with distinct patterns, peer into another it is clear. These are the landmarks on the labyrinth.

On Sunday I meditated and walked through labyrinths and I found the most rewarding to be the spins and circles. When you spin and circle it disorients in a pleasant way – to see again. But when I thought of labyrinths and the path we experience confusion, because we once experienced freedom. So if I were to pattern a labyrinth it would be ability to walk, circles, and ability to walk. This is the walk of life and love.

Good meeting.

Things to think about:

What is the height of the cutouts?

I say 5 feet even though they can differ in size.

What material should the labyrinth be made out of?

I like the pebbles but I also think there can be something else that is more static and interesting in multiples. I will look at the dollar store and see what they have. Wouldn't it be grand if they had a whole bunch of Africa medallions from the 80's!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Flowers might be surreal too...I like an element of surrealism and fantasy with the abstract theory. Pencils, erasers paper, cups...

Finally, as I said if you want to use the bike, I am fine even though it may need another coat of paint. The bike is interesting because it is broken and cannot be used in the way we imagine. It becomes a metaphor about life not going as it should, things broken and the will of the imagination in creating new dynamic

ways of transport and psychological travel. It is like my dream when I was younger about losing all my balloons – the broken bike is disappointment at its greatest. I am also engaged in the labyrinth extending outside the circle as well.

Bike Note

I think I told you about this last year but an organizing group in New York did a campaign to commemorate the bike riders who lose their lives riding – as your friend said. Here is some info on it

Nuckel's group, called Visual Resistance, has set up about 30 ghost bike memorials throughout New York City since 2005. But he and others credit a St. Louis cyclist-mechanic named Patrick Van Der Tuin for coming up with the idea.

In 2002, after seeing a cyclist get hit by a car, Van Der Tuin painted a junk bike white and chained it near the crash site. Through 2004, he installed about 20 others throughout the city, taking a sledgehammer to bikes that were not mangled-looking enough. Others took note of Van Der Tuin's memorials on his Web site, pbase.com/terbo/brokenbikes.

<http://www.transalt.org/press/media/2007/892.html>

Love is real,
Noelle

Noelle

So basically the courthouse space is a multipurpose one. Meaning that for various events they clear out the entire middle space.

I spoke with Meredith this morning. What would happen with the vinyl piece is that it would be there for the opening event and then it will be moved at various periods during the event due to the size (10 x 10).

1) One thing I expressed to you in the meeting is that we may have to think of an alternate labyrinth design due to space. I.e a single circle or a box or several overlapping lines. But you wanted to use the standard design. Would you like to think of another design?

2) Do you still want to do the labyrinth with the mirrors on the vinyl? It will require about 3 hours of work if you come up with design and we can glue on the pieces at the store and allow it to dry overnight/

3) Any other ideas (also she does not want any free movement pieces like pebbles, cup etc.)

Get back to me. I want be able to respond this weekend so if you cant today write me back for Monday .

I can still do it. But I will need to work on it after my Aljira app which is Feb 2. So either the evening of Saturday or Sunday.

Adejoke
Noelle,

An answer to question #2 below:

No. I don't want to the labyrinth with the vinyl and mirrors. I am really not feeling the vinyl and my thoughts have shifted away from the labyrinth in general to other concepts. So I wont be researching any new designs. Hope development on your end is going well.

See you at the opening!

Adejoke
Statement for "Encounter: Dissolved Until Waiting Fills"

In our conversations and relationships with each other (and even in our perceptions of each other) what we truly seek is wholeness. We need the Encounter to make us complete, whether it is spiritually, physically or psychologically. What has taken so much time to dissolve might take an infinite amount to time to become reintegrated. The bicycle, being incomplete as it is, symbolizes this dynamic between Africans and African Americans. There is a psychological break while simultaneously we assume that one day, the rider will return with her missing wheel. Each of us, therefore patiently await, even in death and sorrow, our other half...Until Waiting Fills!

Your name: Noelle Lorraine Williams
Title of work: Encounter: Thirst and Betrayal
Date of work: 2008
Medium: Mixed Media
Dimensions: 2 feet x 2 feet x 5
The name of the gallery that represents you: Not represented by Gallery.
With permission by the artist.
Price Upon Request

Meditation
Often when we see each other – our bodies are flooded in the wind and water of reflections. The passing of time and memories, sweet and suffocating are

reflected in the image of the other. When I encounter you, my sister, my brother I am ashamed because I do not feel so strong – ashamed because you are my hyphenated American self and today, myself before. I am something so new yet so old. You are something so new yet so old. We stand in the crosswinds.

Often though we will not consciously admit it - we see ourselves as the cosmic self. When we evoke shame because of someone's behavior or joy and a collective upsurge that is the cosmic consciousness – if not then we would stand our faces masked not feeling the waves of emotion and energy engulfing, multiplying outward.

But the problem of our cosmic self, is that of the other self, the bad self, the good self, the best of self, the weak self, the groveling self, the confused self, the soaring self, the broken self and in that process we wander through a purposeful journey – gorged with wanderlust.

See me.

Curator's Notes

Makonde Sculptures

Vinyl and Chiffon

Mirrors

Spray Paint

wood

"Prospero, you are the master of illusion.
Lying is your trademark.
And you have lied so much to me
(lied about the world, lied about me)
that you have ended by imposing on me
an image of myself.
underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,
That is the way you have forced me to see myself
I detest that image! What's more, it's a lie!
But now I know you, you old cancer,
and I know myself as well. "
Aime Cesaire | The Tempest

"my negritude riddles with holes
the dense affliction of its worthy patience."
Aime Cesaire