

The Lynden Sculpture Garden's Call and Response Program

To wonder, encounter and emplace through the radical Black imagination

Rina Little and Portia Cobb

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7.1 An introduction

The processes, materials and embodiments by which place is enacted and performed shape experiences related to place. The stories we tell about these places also provide a framework by which to experience the world and craft conditions to know differently. This chapter tells a story that attends to the matter and materiality of the

Lynden's Sculpture Garden's Call and Response Program (CRP), a museum programme enabling emplacement, experienced by one author, Rina Little, and imagined by the other author, Portia Cobb. "Call and response" is itself a format originating from many African traditions and present in the African diaspora, including that which was shaped by the slave trade. Often thought of as a pattern where one phrase is heard as commentary in response to another, here it is a programme that calls out to artists to co-create in response to artwork made, performances enacted and materials displayed at the Lynden. Through this programme and a variety of strategies, place is altered and connected to sites of struggle and to larger social, historical and political processes that (re)configure Black lives and presence in the city of Milwaukee.

Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on how as a process of creative inquiry the CRP does not separate researchers from research participants because we are part of the site's configuration. In our movement through and with the production and consumption of artworks, performances and material matters, we are part of and altered by the site. According to Barad (2007), the "apparatuses become the material conditions of possibility and impossibility of mattering" (148). Methods and outcomes inter-act. As Barad (2007) notes, researchers are

not uncovering pre-existing facts about independently existing things as they

exist frozen in time like little statues positioned in the world. Rather, we learn about phenomena – about specific material configurations of the world's becoming. The point is not simply to put the observer or knower back in the world (as if the world were a container and we needed merely to acknowledge our situatedness in it) but to understand and take account of the fact that we too are part of the world's differential becoming. (90–91)

Moreover, we write together as women of colour because we want to affirm a particular kind of politics in process, an alternative imagining. It is our job to do so because, as Toni Morrison (1995) has said, it is "critical for any person who is black, or who belongs to any marginalized category, for historically, we were seldom invited to participate in the discourse even when we were its topic" (91). We write to enact an imaginary excised through relation and affect, as a "communal process of becoming" that includes witnessing, testifying, conversation and exchange (Sweet et al. 2020, 391). Since life exceeds representation, we must be attuned to a range of modalities that include affecting sensation and emotion to describe how we are involved and intertwined. These affective encounters are a crucial part of our knowledge production because they highlight the feelings of the other and for the other.

7.2 Racialization of spaces and a Black sense of place

As Lipsitz (2007) notes,

The lived experience of race has a spatial dimension, and the lived experience of space has a racial dimension. People of different races in the United States are relegated to different physical locations by housing and lending discrimination, by school district boundaries, by policing practices, by zoning regulations, and by the design of transit systems. The racial demography of the places where people live, work, play, shop, and travel exposes them to a socially-shared system of exclusion and inclusion.

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In this chapter and through the use of art and social practice, we enact what a Black sense of place can be in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the lived experience of race and space are connected. An analysis of US census data by the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit think tank, named Milwaukee the most segregated city in the nation (Spicuzza 2019). Black–White segregation is higher in Milwaukee than the national average, and affluent neighbourhoods sit next to the poorest

neighbourhoods. In the midst of such an environment, the Lynden Sculpture Garden created a programme in 2016 called the CRP. The CRP forges a Black sense of place with artists in a segregated city.

As McKittrick (2006) contends, approaching space and place as “merely containers for human complexities and social relations is terribly seductive” for it “seemingly calibrates and normalizes where and therefore who, we are” (xi), displacing difference and erasing bodies. But we do not think spaces and places are containers; they are produced through social and material practices that organize, build and imagine our surroundings. We were drawn to the CRP because it also conceptualizes place as a location through which movements, interactions, materials, communications and affects create knowing. By learning in and through art as material matter in the CRP, place is produced specifically to challenge traditional ways of knowing, to render places and histories tangible and to provide spaces where cultures can meet and exchange multiple and contested stories. The programme offers a way of being political through the affective.

Being political through the affective envisions and mobilizes micropolitical acts that enhance and intensify the relational capacities among bodies, places, stories and things. In the CRP, these things included buildings, objects, foods and indigo ink to catalyze a new imagination of place where Black spatial relations and embodiments are at its centre. As Bennett (2010) has noted, such a vision of affective politics

involves not only paying attention to hard political principles and moral mandates that “risk just being a bunch of words” (xii) but underexplored ethical sensibilities and affective atmospheres, and how they are also agentive in (re)forming social relations. The identities of Blacks in the US and the Caribbean are dramatically grounded to the land through labour but also through song, art and the imagination, a relation that has continued over time as a nurturance of legacy and cultivation. However, as Finney (2014) has argued, the ways land and the experience of environment has been conceptualized in the US as national discourse is informed by White European values around conservation and revitalization that reflects little on issues of access, privilege and other material and environmental experiences of Black Americans and their connections to land. This means that building a Black sense of place involves an engagement with a recognition of the erasure created by current spatial arrangements and creative practices involving Black modes of place-making and place-imagining, “open(ing) up the possibilities of thinking collectively about the production of space as unfinished” (McKittrick 2006, xiii).

Building on these ideas, we articulate our understanding of arts-based inquiry in connection to histories and aesthetic practices connected to the Black diaspora, and we reflect on them as a series of material, aesthetic and social acts of place-making constructed through the CRP, of which we are a part. Rina is an educator in relation to the programme, and Portia is an artist in the programme. The Lynden Sculpture

Garden is situated in the north of Milwaukee, and it houses a collection of sculptures, trees and vegetation on the grounds of what was once the estate of industrialist Harry Bradley and his wife Margaret Bradley. The Bradley home opened to the public in 2010 as a museum and staff began to work towards place-conscious programming under the leadership of Polly Morris. The central goals of the space are to act as laboratory and resource for artists, to forge dialogues and partnerships between artists and communities, to integrate sculpture with the ecology of the land and to reframe the permanent collection through contemporary work and issues. Institutionally, the programming of the CRP has significantly engaged in a decolonization of Lynden as a place and as land. Initially attached to White philanthropist values of conservation and beautification by the Bradleys, who collected both trees and sculptures from all over the world and placed them on their private estate, the CRP has resonated with the land differently. It permits experiences with the space through material and social practices that are speculatively in tune with a Black presence not recognized before (Nxumalo 2018). This is an important political gesture in a city like Milwaukee where Blackness and space can be easily connected to dispossession.

The CRP is a space and practice that gathers together a community of artists working across disciplines who are committed to the radical Black imagination. Black radical thought seeks to claim and reimagine the city by creating alternative social and spatial transformations through progressive action to meet the needs of Black people

(Tyner 2006). This is a space of wonder, of cultivation, of healing, of collective freedom, where the imagination is understood as something that can transform the world and produce conditions that support it. The programme is a means to re-examine the past and propose a future that actively addresses citizenship and belonging using form and content (Lynden Sculpture Garden n.d.-a, "Call and Response"). It fits the Lynden's goals of acting as a laboratory and resource, forging dialogue with the community and reframing its collection with contemporary work and issues.

7.3 Utilizing Black geographies

As Nxumalo (2016) proposes, it is important to critically consider the worldviews and ontologies that we use to think, approach and involve others in research about place. With this in mind, in this chapter, we engage with the field of Black geographies because the field proposes interrelations between geography, Black studies and the arts, as ways of generating "contestations of place in view" (8).

Traditional geographies believe that space is transparent and knowable in geometric terms, but some scholars have challenged that. Massey (2005) suggests that space should be understood as contingent, active and under construction through social and

material relations and practices. According to her, places are not things but events involving humans, nonhumans, materials and matters that are thrown together. Ingold (2000) goes on to propose that a place is not surroundings but a zone of entanglement produced from movements with varying intensities. Space is produced through interactions.

Many believe that traditional geographies cannot do emancipatory work because those involved embrace positivist philosophy and universal spatial laws, marginalizing, dismissing and erasing others and their epistemologies through displacement and ignoring the material realities of differential embodiments. McKittrick (2006) states:

while the power of transparent space works to hierarchically position individuals, communities, regions, and nations, it is also contestable—the subject interprets, and ruptures, the knowability of our surroundings. What this contestation makes possible are “black geographies,” which I want to identify as “the terrain of political struggle itself,” or where the imperative of a perspective of struggle takes place.

(6)

She goes on to explain how the discourse of transparent space has also excluded Blackness or has subordinated this knowledge and experience in a deliberate attempt

to destroy a Black sense of place.

In examining the production of space in the CRP, we utilize Black geographies and Black ontologies, where race, gender, sexuality and class are understood to determine inhabitation and re-inhabitation (McKittrick 2011). Black geographies emerge partly from Black radical thought (Moten 2003) and use Blackness and race to critically contribute to geography. Black radicalism refers to militant politics and thought that challenge exploitation, the archive, structural and material dispossession, social inequality, marginalization, and private and state-sanctioned anti-Blackness and rethinks histories and afterlives of Middle Passage, racial capitalism and settler colonialism. Black geographies expose the limitations of understanding space as transparent and tap into the material, the imaginary, the philosophical and the representational to produce alternative patterns of knowing (McKittrick 2006). Black geographies acknowledge that social identities of bodies operate spatially, providing insight into how people have had to negotiate places, spaces and themselves (Gilmore 2005; Pulido 2006; Schein 2006; Lipsitz 2011; Shabazz 2015).

Furthermore, discussions of the ontologies of Blackness have reshaped our consideration of what it means to be human, exposing its fragility as a concept. According to Fredrickson (2002), race has always distorted the concept of human separating some from others. This difference provides a motive for treating some as less than human, or nonhuman. Moreover, spatial practices within racism keep Black

cultures in place often fixing them to particular spaces and times and defining them as placeless and nonhuman (McKittrick 2011). In doing so, Eaves (2017) warns, "the study of racialized others and their habitats, social relationships, and economic contributions become merely sites of containment, rather than sources of important geographic information" (84).

As a source of geographic information, Black geographies also offer alternative tellings and different spatial imaginaries of the world expanding how space can be produced (McKittrick and Woods 2007; Eaves 2017). Black people who have been abducted through transatlantic slavery and made part of the plantation economy have always contributed to the production of space not only through their labour, but also through song, storytelling and the imagination (Finney 2014). McKittrick (2011) discusses how various practices through history erased a Black sense of place so that Black bodies could be targeted as part of a plantation economy, which included the slave plantation, the auction block, the big house, the fields and crops and the slave quarters. This plantation economy dehumanized Blacks and normalized Black dispossession and White supremacy. But such bondage did not prevent enslaved people from defining the land and writing their world. Fugitive and maroon maps, food-nourishment maps, family maps and music maps were all produced, along with side road, route and boundary maps. Furthermore, Blacks invested in the making of place through alternative material and imaginary spaces. Toni Morrison (1995)

constitutes a paradigmatic example. She uses literary archaeology to journey to a site to see what remains there and to reconstruct the emotional memories that these remains imply. Saidiya Hartman (2008) also uses such critical fabrication, but in her case, she combines archival research with a fictional narrative to make the absent voices of enslaved women heard through storying. Both writers create a space of resistance, imagined for change. In addition, there are also methodological practices in place-based research that Nxumalo (2018) calls "testifying-witnessing" (14). Borrowing from Black feminist practices (Tarpley 1995; Collins 1998), Nxumalo (2018) says testifying-witnessing makes "visible the complexities of Black geographies beyond stories of damaged place relations, surveillance and absence" (14). Testifying-witnessing is a relational practice that includes affective responses situated within particular Black experiences and actively names multiple truths, including injustices and affirmations of strength and resilience, using creative means.

We frame our own engagement with the CRP within the Black methodologies of place proposed by Black artists and scholars Morrison, Hartman, Nxumalo and others. Thus, we consider enacting, experimenting and inventing with such methodologies can lead to possible reconfigurations in the city that affirm Black presence. The CRP reappropriates space as a social and material transformation in order to claim and to reimagine the city complexly. The land is not understood as a flat terrain but as a deep space (Massey 2005). The CRP constructs this as a space in which to dwell on a

multitemporal scale where Black presence rooted in the past, present and future can be felt. Furthermore, participants in the CRP increase the use value of the space through congregation and inhabitation. According to Trigg (2012), "inhabiting" refers to the interplay between ourselves and the places we find ourselves. The result of this shared inhabiting is the hybridity of place and self, which allows us to see differently. As McKittrick (2011) relates, "black sense of place can be understood as the process of materially and imaginatively situating historical and contemporary struggle against practices of domination and the difficult entanglements of racial encounter" (949). A Black sense of place is thus not the authentication of Blackness nor an offer of a better place for Blacks but instead refers to a space of encounter that holds inside itself useful anti-colonial practices, narratives and resistance. The CRP examines alternative forms of living through undoing and rearrangement, including that of materials (Thompson 2017).

7.4 The Call and Response Program as a different space of encounter with nature

The Lynden features a type of landscape garden that emerged among British noble and upper middle classes in the early eighteenth century, people that financed the

industrial revolution by investing in the slave trade and forced labour in overseas plantations. This model of the garden was also adopted by industrialists in America, like the Bradleys. Connecting themselves to this heritage, the Bradleys constructed the Lynden as an idealized view of pastoral nature with ponds, bridges and rolling lawns set against groves of trees imported from all over the world and replanted at the estate. In the garden, the city disappears and art emerges. The permanence, the noise, the population density and the fast rhythms that make up the city move to impermanence as trees and vegetation change. The white noise of cars is replaced by an idyllic quietness only interrupted by birds tweeting, frogs croaking or leaves moving. Few people linger on the art in a relatively still and empty outdoor space. The natural scenery resembles that found in landscape paintings, blurring the boundaries between art and nature with the picturesque, a spatial imagery where Blackness is rarely present.

As one moves towards a work of art entitled *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities* (2016), a slave cabin which initiated the creation of the CRP, one crosses this scene, where the collection of monumental sculptures can also be found and travels across the garden to arrive into a wooden thicket located at an outer limit, where artefacts made and performances staged during the year for the CRP can be experienced. Situating the art of the CRP at the outer limit of the English Garden is an important choice. It makes explicit that the garden is an enclosure and evokes the understanding

that slave cabins were always located in marginal spaces of the plantation away from its vistas. The English Garden and many of the artworks made through the CRP aims to connect people to the natural world. However, as Finney (2014) has noted, the history of conservationism in the USA even that connected to national parks has normalized notions of environmentalism that excludes that exercised by Blacks. Conservationism builds itself on idealistic notions of nature where the land is separated from histories of conquest, colonialism and proprietary regimes. In turn, this has led to ignoring the messy and imperfect nature systems that are already present in urban spaces and limits understandings around what counts as nature and life in the city (Nxumalo and Ross 2019). According to McLean (2013),

white bodies become white through the essentialization of nature as a pure uninhabited space. In this way, nature is constructed as a cleansing system, a place where white bodies can escape the negative consequences of urban industrialism, and reclaim identities of innocence...These discourses work to produce environmentalism as a space where white identities safeguard and maintain the land, rather than consume and destroy it.

(360)

Furthermore, environmental organizations have often framed the absence of Blacks

from their programmes as rooted in a lack of interest in nature, but this is a continuation of the colonial perspective that regards White people as the custodians of nature. Various reasons have kept some away from nature including associating it with physical work, poverty, legacies of slavery, colonialism and limited options (McLean 2013).

The CRP reconnects visitors both young and old to nature and the land, allowing them to enjoy the aesthetics of the outdoors and uses art to feel (dis)connected with natural and cultural systems. It does not position nature as a space for play and discovery for some and as a form of rescue for individual development, academic outcomes in science and a respite from rough neighbourhoods for others (Nxumalo and Ross 2019). Although experiential, the CRP also connects to social and political issues without essentializing nature and reinforcing binary views of nature. In reimagining Black space at the Lynden as part of an arts-based environmental education, participants delve into speculative fiction as an imaginative emancipatory movement that disrupts the dislocation of Blacks from natural spaces. It is counter to connecting Whites to pure nature. Instead, it offers a way of seeing and imagining the various ways in which Black lives are lived. It imagines Black futurities in response to settler colonialism, anti-Blackness and Black erasure by re-envisioning the relationship between Blackness and natural spaces. As Nxumalo and Ross (2019) remind us, play, embodied encounters with the outdoors, humour, activism,

environmental science, discussion on environmental racism, history and geographies are all necessary to Black spaces.

7.5 The Call and Response Program constructs place through processes and experiences

The CRP is a unique space to study how to enable investment in and security of a place. Here, contemporary art is used to facilitate this through material encounters. The institution invites artists to make art that can become a catalyst for new, entangled relations among people, communities and places (Peers and Brown 2003). We, as an educator and an artist, have accompanied visitors as they wander across the lawn of the Lynden, pass modernist sculptures, experience edge effects, cross a bridge over an artificial pond with frogs croaking and enter a wooded area. Tucked inside a clearing is the slave cabin, with a vegetable garden and bits of prairie grass (Figure 7.1). Visitors enter the cabin, which has an open front door and side wall. All are welcomed inside by this spatial manipulation and encounter many objects. As they dwell within the space, they come to know aspects of the occupant's life through her objects—a field journal with entries and drawings; a small writing desk; a ceiling lined with facsimiles of the *Emancipation Proclamation*; imagery from *Aesop's Fables*;

photographs; sculptures; specimens; books; bones; jars; video of rippling water; and more. The cabin resonates with the life of an intellectual from the antebellum period. But there are objects that puzzle and do not seem to fit the time period, such as a Princess Leia action figure or a sculpture made of arms and legs of a variety of decaying dolls. These bits and pieces seem out of place and the clarity of the scene in which they obtrude is impaired by their presence, making us pause. *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities* (2016) is the work of contemporary artist Fodayemi Wilson. Wilson's character of Eliza is an African-American slave, a scientist, a time traveller, an artist, a collector and a writer; she lives "here" and travels "there" making a study of the world around her. The house demands attention since it is built to reimagine, offering an in-betweenness of spaces of past-present-future for the intersection of multiple stories that contest what we imagine of Black women, of slave women, of time-space matters.



Figure 7.1 *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities* (2016). Image courtesy of Jim Wildeman.

To highlight a commitment to a place that is culturally and environmentally responsive, the Director of the Lynden, Polly Morris, invited Wilson to create an installation as a full-scale Wunderkammer, literally a “room of wonder” or cabinet of

curiosities, and slave cabin. As McKittrick (2006) asserts, spatial manipulation using materials makes possible interrelated processes that produce a different type of picturing of Black women. Instead of servitude, inhuman being, worker, captive, or an objectified site of sex, violence and reproduction, the work imagines what the empowered nineteenth-century woman of African descent might collect and includes objects from captors, plantation life and the natural world. It is what Nxumalo (2018) calls a testifying-witnessing where the means by which to imagine the invisible is made visible through speculative fabulation, storying as a way of crafting relations of possibility (Haraway 2016). Eliza explores her own voice through her field journal writings and drawings, collections and displays when historically people like her were rendered silent and this affects us intensely through her material processions by having us consider what was and what could be possible.

The fictional Eliza makes material her world using creative forms of social commentary. She is in touch with her surroundings past, present and future, including the natural space. Here, nature is positioned as a space of discovery and scientific exploration, a space often denied to Blacks and others from historically marginalized communities. As Nxumalo and Ross (2019) remind us, imagining the production of Black spaces necessitates a re-envisioning of the relationship between Blackness and nature spaces. This Black woman is visually and socially represented in the landscape and is made a viable contributor to an ongoing geographic struggle for space and

place. The architecture, material objects and natural specimens become important agents for the inclusion of voices that are usually marginalized (Lynden Sculpture Garden n.d.-b, "Fo Wilson: Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities"). The invention of Eliza creates an "alterable terrain in which Black women assert their sense of place" (McKittrick 2006, xviii).

This cabin also anchors the CRP as a site where artists from multiple disciplines develop inquiry and social practice while sharing a commitment to the radical Black imagination to gather together, invent and create a sense of belonging. What began as a unique work of art of Black presence on the Lynden grounds turned into a way of programming by the Fall of 2016. Wilson first called to spoken word performers to respond to her cabin and resulting programmes became cross-disciplinary, focused on community and centred on voicing artists of colour. According to Lynden Director Morris, the programme "required us to create and sustain relationships among artists, to look beyond Lynden's borders, and to stitch ourselves into our community" (2017, n.p.). Later, Wilson would also call on visual artists to respond to her work and they in turn called on others. It is currently in its sixth year of programming and includes performances, artworks and installations, workshops and symposia.

As an Afrofuturist artist, Wilson decolonizes and re-inhabits by offering an alternative history worth recovering. Afrofuturist artists use a range of media and draw on the speculative or speculative fabulation to examine, critique and revise historical

understandings of lives and events, and to (re)imagine the future (Derby 1994; Haraway 2016). Wilson uses the imagination to design alternatives to transform lives. Common characteristics of Afrofuturism include: (1) going forward by first going backward into the past; (2) presenting counter memories; (3) exploring magic realism; (4) combining elements of science fiction, fantasy, history, Afrocentricity and/or nonwestern cosmologies; (5) envisioning, shaping, managing and delivering counter-narratives (the gaze); (6) using imagination to transcend circumstances and empower; (7) closing the digital/tech divide; (8) providing a space for Black women to engage with the intersections of race and gender; and (9) seeking to disturb or defamiliarize through creative processes (Derby 1994; Yaszek 2006; Rambsy 2012). The Afrofuturist artist focuses on how Afrofuturism can be a lens through which to investigate belonging, or to investigate being set in place by presenting a counter-narrative through, for example, magic realism, science fiction, fantasy or history, which speaks to the call for alternative tellings that entangle facts and fictions and imaginatively situate historical and contemporary struggles. The site is both material and discursive, presenting psychological, mythic and historical connections. Wilson shares:

The project foregrounds Eliza's experience—fictional or not—and the imaginations of others like her as a unique technology of Black agency,

resistance, and survival, and as the under-appreciated gift of Blackness from which all of America has benefitted.

(Wilson 2017, n.p.)

Wilson's cabin curates the life of Eliza. It is a microcosm of a world and of memory, mixing fact with fiction, showcasing the inhabitant's education. It takes visitors back into the past so that they can reimagine a future from the perspective of the Other. Eliza's cabin and its surroundings vibrate with sensorial experiences that counter the normative knowledge of enslaved, Black women. Viewers instead witness a becoming, where the materiality of the environment gives Eliza memories and histories and in turn acts upon us and upon others who encounter it. If people, animals, plants and objects act, react and become with one another, we are also required to be obligated to the other and to move to co-creative relationships with these presences (Greeson 2016; Caniglia 2018).

7.6 Relational movements in response to the multisensory and juxtaposed environment

Author, filmmaker and installation artist Portia Cobb's *Rooted: The Storied Land*,

Memory, and Belonging responds to Wilson's call to connect herself to the cabin. *Rooted* was a multi-year artist residency which involved making a garden, performances with the community and collaborations with others. Cobb recalls:

My work memorializes food ways that survived slavery through the use of a vegetable garden cared for by Lizzie, a woman born free, with a relationship to Eliza. She is based on my Great Aunt Lizzie. The garden is a reminder of the plantation as a site of production from which a racial capitalist system was built but also a space where "survival, substance, resistance and affirmation" are born (Woods 1998, 27). The stories I tell and share of home and place have evolved over my lived experiences with movement set in motion when I was a small child. My mother left her birthplace, Charleston, South Carolina at the age of 21. She lived in Boston for a short time and then made her way to New York where she had familial connections. She worked and sent money back home "down south" to help with family and to support the new home her father was building that became our homestead.

My mother would remind those she met that we were from the East sometimes calling out New York but at other times, South Carolina was named. South Carolina holds a place for me because through my mother's bloodline, I belong to a cultural and ethnic diaspora of Gullah Geechee

people, descendants of Africans brought to the Carolinas. My creole identity is solidified through linguistic, culinary, and other cultural continuums. We ate rice, seafood, okra, field peas, boiled green peanuts, and an assortment of greens, which reinforced the memory of our Gullah Geechee identity. My mother took pride in our past and those surroundings that I witnessed manifest in the stories I tell as an artist and the representations I create of home and place. I layer my history through the imaginary as discussed in black geographies where the site of memory is also the sight of memory (McKittrick 2006).

Instead of a plantation which violently tied Blacks to the land and the historical trauma of it, Cobb presents a garden that re-envisioned production as creative and nourishing. The garden is Lizzie's but also called the Emancipation Subsistence Garden (Figure 7.2). Cobb invites others to respond to both Lizzie and Eliza, including the anthropologist, food scholar and chef Scott Barton, who pickled produce in 2018 from the garden and organized a harvest story table (Figure 7.3). Barton became interested in southern food and the contribution of Africans and African Americans to the culture of food and foodways while living in New York. He worked with Cobb and other Call and Response artists on the harvest story table which explored diaspora legacies through food and foodways and engaged a group of elders in discussions about land,

gardening, migration and food. Her invitation to respond to her garden also includes textile artist Arianne King Comer, who worked with the community to make a cloth recipe book of foods from the garden using indigo inks and dying techniques (Figures 7.4 and 7.5). Furthermore, a dinner was hosted by the Lynden and included 45 invited guests and such eighteenth-century menu and re-envisioned items, as shrimp paste benne wafers, okra and watermelon rind pickles, red rice, fritters, boiled peanuts, spoonbread, hominy, field peas, collard greens with kimchi, crab rice, rice pudding, sweet potato pone and sweet and sour peaches. Cobb and Comer King researched recipes using oral histories, archives and family folklore.



Figure 7.2 Portia Cobb in "Lizzie's Garden". Image courtesy of Maeve Jackson.



Figure 7.3 Scott Barton with guests at harvest table dinner in 2018. Image courtesy of Lynden Sculpture Garden



Figure 7.4 Arianne King Comer leads a workshop in 2018. Image courtesy of Sara Risley.



Figure 7.5 Community participants at Arianne King Comer's workshop. Image courtesy of Sara Risley.

All these entanglements are co-creations, calling us into connection with a web of movements, actions and materials that construct modes of emplacement. It is what bell hooks (1995) called an aesthetics of existence, a performative act remaking existence; it is a way of inhabiting space, a particular location; it is a way of looking and becoming through oppositional politics where we are called to witness, to listen and to meet the other on their terms. As Cobb explains,

My practice is to uncover, collect, contextualize, and re-imagine. *Rooted* was also a project that allowed play with elements in an open space. In 2018, I gathered together 40 visitors between the garden and the cabin, sharing the space with the vegetables [Figure 7.6]. I turned the space into a portal to the past by transporting visitors to Yonges Island, one of the Sea Islands and a chosen home for former slaves. My ancestors settled there. I also spent childhood summers there. As I sat on the platform of the cabin and watched the dancers, I embodied Lizzie and voiced how the food from the growing garden sustained a growing community during the Reconstruction era.



Figure 7.6 A performance connected to *Rooted: The Storied Land, Memory, and Belonging* at *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities* in 2018. The Jazzy Jewels, a troupe of elders, who perform a line dance, join Portia Cobb who brings Lizzie to life. Dresses are designed by Arianne King Comer. Image courtesy of Sara Risley.

The objects, images, sounds, smells, tastes, touch and the experiences produced are in movement and in relation to each other, "generated through their interrelatedness with both the persons they move with and the environments they move through and are part of" (Pink 2011, 4). These acts intensify relations among bodies, stories and things. They emerge from and are implicated in the production of place as matters "in-motion, in-relation" (Nxumalo 2016, 41).

7.7 *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities* reconsidered through wonder

As an organizational structure, the cabin, as a cabinet of curiosities or wonders, provides a generative, multilayered and comprehensively significant interactive framework for emphasizing the materiality of the process and labour of emplacement (Huber and McRae 2019) and is part of a relational field of interwoven entanglements (Ingold 2000). Historically, cabinets of curiosities were a means of display for the wealthy and powerful as they curated their collections; these were then later linked to museum displays. However, such cabinets differ from modern museums in their emphasis on the importance of the curator. Lubar (2017) notes:

The earliest museums, the early modern cabinets of curiosities, were, like museums today, collections of artifacts on shelves and in cabinets. But cabinets of curiosities had a different point to make. Early cabinets, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were heterogeneous, unsystematic displays. The message they sent was one of exoticism and variety. Look at all of these amazing things, they said. What a worldly person the collector must be! Each object stood for itself.

(179)

Eliza is not wealthy, of course, but her collection is unique, specific to her, and thus emphasizes her importance in its curation. Furthermore, as a catalyst to the CRP, it emphasizes a multi-vocal process that troubles hierarchical representations of knowledge. Its display does not isolate objects for contemplation but promotes unusual juxtapositions in which a multiplicity of possible meanings can emerge through relation, activity and calls for response. Invited artists and audiences are asked to interact with it and through multiple points of connection.

In addition, the Wunderkammer is a wonder cabinet. As Greenblatt (1990) explains,

[the] wonder-cabinets of the Renaissance were at least as much about

possession as display. The wonder derived not only from what could be seen but also from the sense that the shelves and cases were filled with unseen wonders, all the prestigious property of the collector. In this sense, the cult of wonder originated in close conjunction with a certain type of resonance, a resonance bound up with the evocation not of an absent culture but of the great man's superfluity of rare and precious things.

(29)

The CRP uses wonder to expand the radical Black imagination. MacLure (2013) discusses wonder as both material and relational. It exists in body and mind, "emanating from a particular object, image, or fragment of text", crafting the challenge, "what next?" (MacLure 2013, 229). Furthermore, wonder as material provides a way to highlight interconnected relations and a sense of place. It is not only a place where objects are housed but also a setting where relationships are made. The CRP provides an environment to grapple with the complexities of how art maintains, transforms and creates ways of understanding in relation to people and facilitates place-conscious inquiry and relation to the city through a recombinatory process using materialities.

The CRP gathers together artists as a means to re-examine the past and imagine a better future and to address belonging through decolonization and re-inhabitation. It is

a space where artists investigate complex issues, collaborate and extend dialogue, and their productions become catalysts for new relationships and knowledge constructs. The Lynden's CRP also facilitates interactions with participants. Perspectives of the museum, artists and participants intersect with and inform each other. In this zone, people have reason to come into contact with each other because they have aims that extend beyond the borders of their disciplines, to imagine new public spheres and relationships with place through the radical Black imagination and as a site of struggle, testimony, witnessing and work. The CRP stretches beyond preserving and contextualizing objects and instead acts as a resource of materiality for rewriting histories and social relationships with surrounding communities. Contemporary art practices at the CRP are used to inquire how spaces could be re-inhabited differently. People and objects become a function of the space. Black geographies allow for spatial understandings that revitalize space through the imaginary. In the CRP, participants are included in social interactions surrounding the production and reception of place through artist practices in order to connect people and ideas to their surroundings and to understand creative modes of emplacement, exchange, negotiation and communication (Gere 1997).

There are a number of questions that remain open that we continue to think about as we dwell with the CRP methodology of call and response. How can the wondrous force of contemporary art practices as radical forms of Black inquiry and socialization

avoid reification, appropriation or tokenization when inhabiting museums? How can invitations to non-Black Milwaukeeans to dwell in these spaces and relations provoke further engagement in troubling the ongoing settler-colonialist practices with which they are intimate in their daily life in the city? How do emplaced methods based on lived experiences of encounter, wonder and inhabitation remain open and not become knowledge that speaks for Blackness or constructs erasure? Inspired by Nxumalo (2018), what we think is that the CRP as an ongoing project and methodology needs to continue framing and reframing the tensions embedded in such questions by enacting space in deep and contested ways (McKittrick 2006). This requires persistence in a continued process of building place experiences that are intricate, complex, multiple, temporal and defined by frictions since the CRP also exists within a neoliberal system. It seems that the ongoing nature of the CRP programme holds great potential to engage and re-enact Black methods of connection with the land, posing resistance to possession, control and knowability while enacting and experimenting with new potentials for feeling, sensing, living Black presences of the past, present and future.

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