
entangled legacies
BROWN

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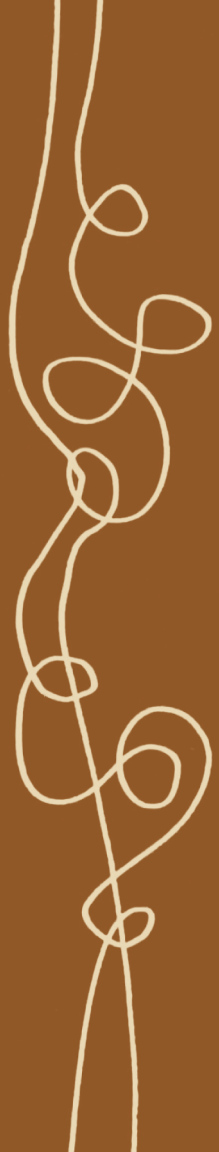


LETTERS FROM THE DIRECTORS

Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice

The encounter between Europe and the so-called "New World" became the basis for new forms of economy, domination, racial slavery and the near genocide of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. This colonial encounter created different forms of power, but in the USA, settler colonialism was the initial form of domination which quickly morphed into slave/settler colonial rule. At the core of settler colonialism has always been the issue of land. Historically, first the British colonial state and then the American slave state were all driven by issues of land and enslaved labor. And here it was both enslavement of the Indigenous population and enslaved Africans. It means that one hidden historical narrative of American history is that of the complex relationship between conquest and near genocide of the Indigenous population and the enslaved African. This

relationship was a complex and sometimes fraught one. In some instances, like in Rhode Island, both the Indigenous and the Africans were enslaved. In another aspect of the relationship they were exchanged as slaves. In Connecticut, in 1637, a group of Pequot were defeated by the English colonists. The Pequot prisoners of war were sold to Caribbean plantations. Yet, in some Indigenous nations enslaved Africans were held captive. So, we are faced with the conundrum of how to tell this story of the relationship between these two peoples, one in which there was enslaved labor, and where as the late Rhett Jones, the African American historian and former chair of Brown Africana Studies wrote, that in spite of the 1726 law in South Kingstown which prohibited Blacks and Native Americans mixing that, "Native Americans and Blacks continued to meet in both public places and in private." It is the fact of these meetings, their frequency and their intent, which allows us to understand historically, the project *Entangled Legacies* and its importance for our times.

The American nation was founded with two forms of death practices, racial slavery and the conquest of Indigenous peoples. These were separate, yet, related practices and produced a polity and society in which foundational inequality was its basis. Today in a period when anti-Black racism is on the rise, and forms of whiteness define American citizenship, there is the necessity for hard conversations about our history. Not simply for the sake of understanding the past and then putting it into a box to be closed and forgotten about, but rather a conversation to confront the present, grappling with it in order to build a different future. But, there are two sets of conversations to be had. One about racial slavery and the other, a conversation-dialogue between African Americans and Indigenous peoples. It is this later dialogue which this project has worked so hard to create. Such a dialogue is facilitated by artistic practices where sensibilities are open, where each artist draws upon inner resources and openness to challenge each other, but does so in ways that work through what Fanon would call an "open consciousness."

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ) is committed to dialogue and hard conversations. The ethos of the report out of which the Center emerged was a deep democratic one in which debate never ended. The historical lives of the enslaved African and the conquered Native American speak to us across centuries and do so by inviting us to think about the lives of the past and how in the present we can live in more humane ways.

Anthony Bogues

Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory; Professor of Africana Studies; and Inaugural Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice

Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative

The Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative (NAISI) at Brown is an interdisciplinary initiative of faculty and students interested in teaching and research that explores, and increases the understanding of, the cultural traditions and political experiences of Indigenous Peoples (especially in the Western Hemisphere) through historical and contemporary lenses.

The benefits of continued collaboration between CSSJ and NAISI are many. Our students greatly benefit from understanding the interdisciplinary nature of our collective work, and the interwoven histories of Black and Native people over the centuries, particularly in Southern New England where Brown University is situated. We have many opportunities to engage the Brown community as well as the public and help shape the story of the land and history of the University and how that is told. Specific projects, such as *Entangled Legacies*, enable us to more critically consider Indigenous cultures wholistically, since all aspects of culture are interwoven. Through the work of our Indigenous artists, we are expanding our knowledge of their worldviews, history, culture and epistemologies, and of their experiences of the contemporary world we all live in. Their works connect past, present and future and provide another voice to express our identity, knowledge and experiences. This is just one opportunity to increase our knowledge and understanding of the interconnectedness of Black and Native histories, cultures and identities.

Rae Gould

Associate Director of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative

UPROOTINGS AND REROUTINGS

With *Entangled Legacies*, I hope to begin conversations around the silos and similarities between Black and Native histories, and offer a space for artists to acknowledge and re-interpret personal histories, including what they have forgotten or what has been erased. I wanted to center the power and creativity of both communities. I wanted to start from a place of unity, where the artists' personal histories could be a means of imagining a holistic and empowering future. While the work of these artists sometimes speaks to the painful histories suffered by both groups, they also encourage us to build a future where collaboration and solidarity are integral to telling full and complete stories. Becci Davis' reinterpretations of historical documents, monuments and historic spaces open conversations for sitting with painful moments of our past. Nia Holley's

metalwork centers the survival of Black Indigenous people, calling attention to the ways creation is a healing practice. Jordan Seaberry's paintings are living testaments to empathetic engagement, juxtaposing historical injustices with present day problems and questions. Sherenté Harris' delicate drawings highlight important moments in Narragansett history and invite us to re-remember what never should have been forgotten. The prompt, *Entangled Legacies* has encouraged each artist to either re-think or continue to center their personal histories. Confronting the complexities of Black life in the United States should inherently mean concern with the disruption that has continued to affect Native life.

Within our history, African Americans have lived a series of 'uprootings,' from being forcibly taken away from the continent, to fleeing racial terror in the American South, to leaving the United States completely.[1] The descendants of enslaved Africans have faced exile and exodus while trying to recover their humanity and find economic and social stability post-Emancipation. As people who are living in what is now known as the United States, we should consider how the existence of enslaved Africans in the Americas is implicated in the theft of Indigenous lands and the genocide of Indigenous people. In her newest book, *The Black Shoals*, Tiffany King mentions that encounters between Black and Indigenous people were often mediated by violence.[2] Under whiteness and capitalism, dispossessed people are often invited to participate in the oppression of others. Sometimes, this meant the enslavement of Black people at Native hands or, after Emancipation, Black settlement of Indigenous lands. At heart, King acknowledges that Black people, whether they knew it or not, had to build their lives on Indigenous lands.

These histories parallel and intertwine here in Southern New England. During the Pequot War and King Philip's War of the 1600s, coastal Indigenous people were captured by European colonists and sold, traded, or sent to different places throughout the Atlantic as "slaves" or war captives. Although people were forced out of the area, their relatives maintained a presence in their Indigenous homelands and are today members of tribes in the region. In 2002, members of these local tribes traveled to Bermuda to meet the descendants of their enslaved ancestors. After nearly 300 years of separation, reuniting was a powerful and transformative experience and recognized how the transatlantic slave trade not only brought Africans to the Americas, but forced Natives off of their ancestral lands onto islands such as Bermuda, Jamaica and Barbados.[3] By the 1700s, Rhode Island dominated the North American share of the slave trade, and 10 percent of the state's population was enslaved. Black Rhode Islanders – free and enslaved – navigated in a world where their existence was constrained by slavery, white supremacy and capitalism.[4] In these instances, Black and Native people built new communities

in unfamiliar lands, while they built parallel relationships with each other in surrounding local areas.

Today, African Americans and Native Americans continue to face high rates of mass incarceration, joblessness, and inadequate health care. These are not independent of each other, but are a part of a capitalistic system that maintains hierarchies of white supremacy which upholds barriers to living healthy and holistic lives.[5] In Flint, Michigan, and at Standing Rock Indian Reservation, access to clean water is actively denied by the state and complicit corporations. Young activists like Mari Copeny – "Little Miss Flint" – and Jasilyn Charger (Cheyenne River Sioux) are using their youth to argue and organize for their communities' rights to safe water.[6] The white supremacist state uses many of the same strategies to disempower and control Black and Native families and their futures. The 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act was passed to keep Native youth within their tribal communities.[7] In 2019, the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act was introduced and used much of the same language to keep African American youth in their homes and out of the child welfare system.[8] Both communities continue to organize and fight to remain grounded in their identities and cultures.

This project was sparked by my own ignorance. I felt that I could not properly understand Black American histories if I did not stop to consider the many ways they are implicated by Indigenous existence. I felt that by tapping into Southern New England's communities I could find artists whose work already spoke to some of the questions I posed in accessible and dynamic ways. Native erasure is one of settler colonialism's many goals.[9] Remembering and re-imagining Black survival in tandem with Native life can make space for more accurate public interventions surrounding histories of slavery and other aspects of Black life. Public projects that deal with the legacies of slavery have rightly focused on the racialized bondage of people of African descent throughout the Americas, but could better consider the ways Black and Native histories are entangled. In acknowledging the ways slavery and genocide operate as arms of settler colonialism, we can find ways to uproot our histories and reroute new ones. We can begin to do history justice by looking directly at the difficult histories we share.

Chandra Marshall

Chandra Marshall is a Masters student at Brown University's Center for the Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage (JNBC) and Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery a joint appointment at the JNBC and Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. She works on educational initiatives that teach difficult histories to K-12 students.

[1] Leslie A Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2009), 12-13.

[2] Tiffany King, "Introduction." *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 1-35.

[3] Christine M DeLucia. "Algonquian Diasporas: Indigenous Bondages, Fugitive Geographies, and the Edges of Atlantic Memories" in *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 289-324.

[4] Christy Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), 8.

[5] Camille Bussette. "A New Deal for Poor African-American and Native-American Boys." The Brookings Institution, March, 14, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2018/03/14/a-new-deal-for-poor-african-american-and-native-american-boys/.

[6] For information about Mari Copeny's activism in Flint, Michigan, see: "About," https://www.maricopeny.com/about. For more information on Jasilyn Charger's activism see: "The Youth Group that Launched a Movement at Standing Rock" *The New York Times*, Jan. 31, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/magazine/the-youth-group-that-launched-a-movement-at-standing-rock.html.

[7] For information about the Indian Child Welfare Act, see the "About" page of the National Indian Child Welfare Association, https://www.nicwa.org/about-icwa/.

[8] Daniel Heimpel, "Minnesota Wrestles with Foster Care's Role in Breaking up Black Families" *The Chronicle of Social Change*, February 4th 2019, https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/race/minnesota-wrestles-with-foster-cares-role-in-breaking-up-black-families/33681.

[9] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 no. 4 (2006), 387-389.

“Without looking at the past, it is also hard to determine how we can build better futures.”

BECCI DAVIS

Becci Davis was born on a military installation in Georgia named after General Henry L. Benning of the Confederate States Army. Her birth initiated her family's first generation after the Civil Rights Act and its fifth generation post-Emancipation. Becci earned her MFA from Lesley University College of Art and Design. In 2018, she was the recipient of the St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award in Visual Art, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship in New Genres, the Providence Public Library Creative Fellowship and the RISD Museum Artist Fellowship. Her creative practice explores the politics of representation, commemoration and monuments, both structural and cultural. It questions how to engage with an archive whose source and steward has historically been the dominant culture that oppressed and exploited her community.

artist profile

Who is your work for? What audiences do you have in mind?

That's a great question. I feel that the audience for my work varies, I feel some work is very focused on, or intended for people that I share a common culture and history with. For people in my family, for those in my immediate circles, and beyond, but also I have work that's not intended for those people at all. This work is intended to inform and educate people that I do not share a common bond with. My goal for this type of work is for it to be legible to the broadest possible audience, which isn't necessarily true for the aforementioned audience.

How is the history of racial slavery and settler colonialism important to your work?

They are important to my work because they both lay the foundation for the environment and the culture that we currently live in. Without thinking about the past, it is difficult to get a full understanding of the present. Without looking at the past, it is also hard to determine how we can build better futures. My work is informed by these past histories to help ground it in the present and to lay the foundation for a better future.

What does a better future look like for you?

Historical honesty. Acknowledging the horrors of the past and working to dismantle the systems that are based on those horrors.

How has the prompt* Entangled Legacies *encouraged you to change/shift your practice?

I have been thinking a lot – in the work I'm doing inspired by *Entangled Legacies* – about the story of Sarah Fayerweather and her husband George Fayerweather, who came from a mixed race family. His mother was the daughter of a Narragansett chieftain and his father was an enslaved person who gained their freedom. This project has encouraged me to broaden my perspective. Rather than thinking about Indigenous and Black histories in America being parallel to one another, I am now thinking about how they have relied upon each other, and whose stories are very much intertwined.

What is your process from start to finish? Specifically with the Fayerweathers, how are you approaching this family's legacy in relation to Entangled Legacies*?*

The process starts with brainstorming and devising a plan for research. First, I ask myself questions. What am I really interested in? What do I want to find out? Then, I take steps to uncover that information. With Sarah Fayerweather, knowing that she was from the area of South County, Rhode Island, I imagined that she would probably have items in the local archives, or at the very least, that there would be documentation that mentioned her. She and her husband were both staunch abolitionists and she was a prolific letter writer. During the initial Google searches I found the family archive collections at the University of Rhode Island library's special collections and also in the Washington County archives. From there, I went on to find more basic information like census records and government or church documents. Those items, on the surface, may not seem to have a lot of deep information but they go a long way in helping to create a story.

How have you thought about African Americans being on stolen Indigenous land? Even in this project? Is there space to think about these things, even back then?

That's a great question. Nothing that I've come across thus far leads me to believe that folks back then were thinking deeply about these issues. That's not to say they were not...but I feel that our past and our destinies have always been intertwined and there is evidence at least with the Fayerweather family of these two cultures relying on one another because they had to in order to survive. With both cultures being otherized and oppressed, I believe, in this particular family, it really helped to bring them closer. I've found evidence of that happening with intermarriage in other families including my own. These histories are very complicated, though, and there are no straightforward answers. I do try to hold space in my own work to acknowledge that we reside on stolen land and to think of ways to reconcile that.

How are you being an ally to local Indigenous communities?

By holding space for Indigenous voices in exhibitions I curate. By acknowledging the connections between Black and Indigenous histories. By remembering that I am on stolen land, and that fact needs to be recognized on any platform that I've been given. By listening and being respectful. By practicing empathy in the way I navigate the world. For example, that has manifested by asking local Indigenous artists to participate in my projects with their own work, or, to provide a welcoming or blessing for the space. Holding space also means not expecting that someone will say yes.

Being okay if someone says no?

Yes. I believe that financially supporting participation is also very important. Basically, I wouldn't expect anyone to participate without compensation. I am going to make space, if I have resources for a certain show or event. And if I am going to ask, I will offer as much compensation as I can afford. I think it's important not to simply perform allyship, but to truly practice it. To make these considerations not as an afterthought, but as part of the work itself.

***Memory Map: Fayerweather House*, 2019**
mixed media, acrylic, collage and image transfer on panel

"I've always been told growing up that it is my responsibility, our responsibility, to tell our stories as a response to this prolonged history of erasure."

SHERENTÉ HARRIS

Sherenté Mishitashin Harris intertwines the stories of his cultural path with his Two Spirit identity, to evoke emotion, spark dialogue, and amplify ideologies that are too often silenced. Sherenté's efforts oppose the prolonged issue of Indigenous invisibility. Allowing his stories to manifest through writing, speaking, performance, and visual art, Sherenté can expand the audience of his message, educating and creating change within his communities. Sherenté is a member of the Narragansett Tribal Nation. Named a 2019 LGBT Icon, Sherenté is also a 2018 Presidential and Rhode Island Foundation Carter Roger Williams Scholar and is currently enrolled in a five year dual degree program at Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design.

artist profile

Who is your work for? What audiences do you have in mind?

My work is for my people. First and foremost. Oftentimes, especially at RISD, I've found that other audiences don't understand what my art is referencing, what it's pointing to, and a lot of times it can even build into a kind of anger or resentment that these things aren't readily explained. But I think that there's a time and place for both of those things. I think that it is beneficial to have things that I am making for my people, to build up my people, to empower my people. At the same time to accomplish that goal, I also need to have a cognizant mind towards the other audiences that are viewing this work. Because the way that those outsiders view us determines our present, our future, how our histories are told. So, I think, as a person who is seen in the public whether through art or performance, it is always an opportunity to educate and bring awareness to something that is so invisible to modern day Americans, that the Narragansett people are still here and we are continuing in the tradition of our ancestors.

***Death of Hobbamook,* 2018**
gouche

How has the prompt Entangled Legacies *encouraged you to change or shift your practice?*

I think it's important to look at these strands of interconnectivity. I mean thinking about decolonizing. We look at the world and our history in such objective, divvied up ways that are static and are not in this kind of continual metamorphosis and that's just not real life. There's a deep history between, well, I even think of the deep history between Indigenous people and Black people and especially here on the East Coast the way in which these communities came together. These histories are inseparable.

How is the history of racial slavery and settler colonialism important to your work? What personal histories do you draw from?

This is really interesting. At Brown right now I am taking classes that have to do with this very topic and amidst

my own personal research it is astounding how much misinformation exists out there. How much bias can play a role into how these stories are told, and so I've always been told growing up that it is my responsibility, our responsibility, to tell our stories as a response to this prolonged history of erasure.

What I think really makes this history so poignant is that it is still impacting us to this very day. I live in Southern Rhode Island right off of our reservation in Charlestown. Even small things like that, people are surprised I'm Narragansett and they think "oh, you're from Narragansett." And are oblivious to this history of oppression and genocide. That we still continue despite all of that in the face of that. And, I think of stone walls. In my part of Rhode Island, I think throughout Rhode Island, there are these stone walls that people know of and many people know that they were built by farmers to divvy up the land, but they don't talk about the enslaved, the forced Indigenous labor used to build those walls. And the history of *Manitou Hassanash* our sacred stone gatherings and that this was a long tradition of stone masonry within our people and that there are stone masons in my family. I think people don't realize how recent even this history is.

I also think that brings up a whole conversation about decolonization, about how traumatizing it is because we must assimilate to survive in this world today. But we are conditioned to view our world in ways that are in opposition to our traditional way of looking at the world. It never can be the primary foundation of understanding because of how pervasive colonialism has become because of this history.

How do you think about Black struggles for freedom or Black existence in this country? How is it relevant to you?

If we go back to the American Indian Movement in the 1970s, it very much parallels the Black Panther Party in the idea of building communities that were self sufficient. I mean as Indigenous people defending our rights, treaty rights, and fighting against illegal detribalization. So I feel like for Indigenous people of course everything has been taken away from us and we have to grapple with the fact that the only way to get that back is through government approval. I think the American Indian Movement was really powerful when we look at the occupation of Alcatraz or the occupation of Wounded Knee and this kind of resistance and rebellion against that notion, while simultaneously, partially still being tied into these real rights we had been given that were then not acknowledged.

But I think Indigenous youth of today and Black youth of today are starting to realize the power of media. I mean, Indigenous invisibility is so pervasive and really it may not be the sole inherent cause but is tied to the many causes of our continued oppression. I mean just thinking about the Narragansett tribe as a specific example, the smoke-shop raid of 2003, thinking about not being able

to have a casino on our reservation even though we are a federally recognized tribe. Trying to build houses on our reservation for our elders and the State of Rhode Island having electric companies turn off the power. So now those houses are abandoned and shut down. But all of these things are tied to legislation and the ambivalence of the people, the ignorance of the people.

This ignorance then leads people to not be aware that these are even issues. People don't know that the Narragansett peoples are even their neighbors. How are they supposed to know that these injustices are being done? Settlements over land being put into trust. People are just unaware. I think it's the same thing when we look at things like Black Lives Matter. People are of course aware of the movement Black Lives Matter, but again it comes back to this media. Black Lives Matter was only able to proliferate because of media attention when before, Black people had been killed by the police for a long long time before the Black Lives Matter Movement. I think there's a real power in that in this next generation for using media for things like #NoDAPL. We can get people to realize the ways that these issues are still impacting us today.

Brown is the first place I've heard land acknowledgments. What do you think about them?

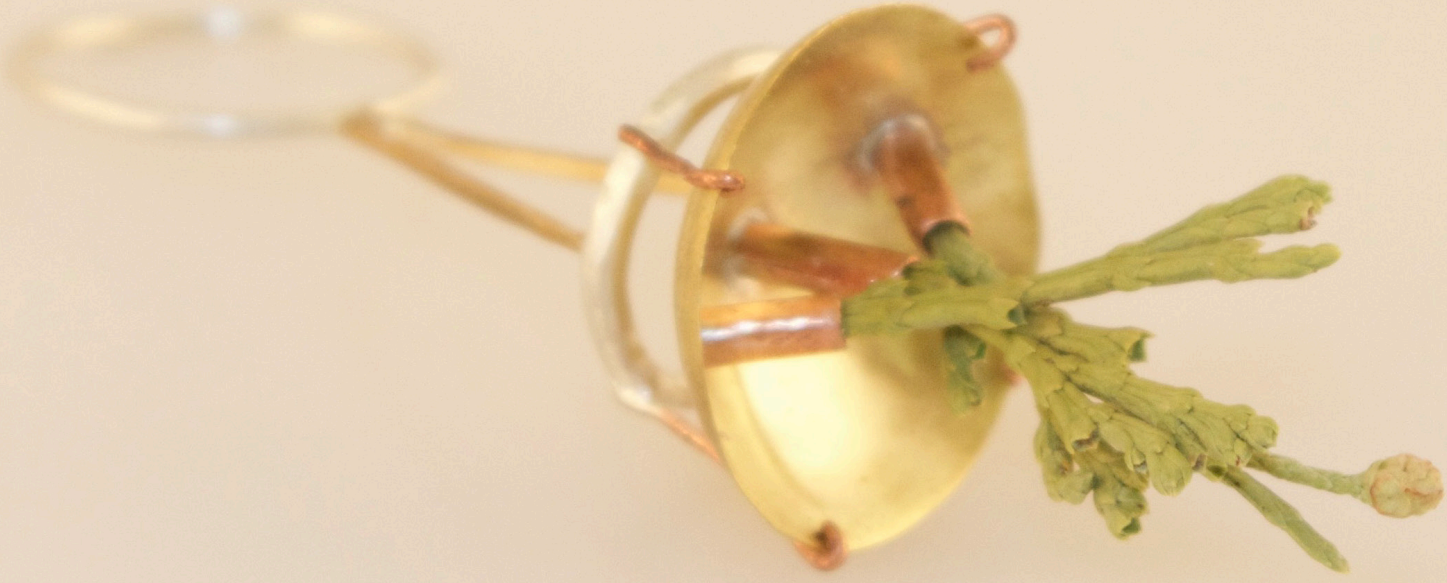
If you want a land acknowledgment to have meaning, you should really be taking a moment to acknowledge who these people are. Why are we on their land today? And you know, there is a point of pride with the Narragansett people being so invisible, hearing someone acknowledging that "we are on the land of the Narragansett people."

One of my professors recently...I was really pleased to hear, it wasn't much, but it was just a bit more of saying more about the Narragansett people. Where we lived, how we were displaced, and most importantly, that we still exist today. And we're here. I think that another big thing is that they talk about the enslaved people that built Brown University. And it's like, you have descendants of those enslaved people that are going to your school right now and these enslaved people start becoming some ambiguous, amorphous cloud of an idea as opposed to "there were slaves at Brown?" Okay so what? Tell us, why are you telling us this right now? Is there a problem? Yes, there is a problem, tell us what that problem is.

"...thinking about the entanglement of Blackness and being Native is central to my work because that's who I am."

NIA HOLLEY

Nia Holley is an interdisciplinary artist whose work is deeply influenced by what survival and healing look like within Black and Indigenous communities. Her work ranges from printmaking, ceramics, metalsmithing, and traditional arts, to bringing tribal communities together around food justice, agroecology, land, and history. She strives to cultivate relationships across tribal borders to rebuild a more inclusive and historical process of kinship and survival. She has worked as an outreach and project coordinator with Gedakina, a Native-led grassroots organization, and has been actively involved in Nipmuc programs since she could walk and talk. Nia is a co-founder of the Eastern Woodlands Rematriation collective. She currently works transcribing Native American petitions at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University.



artist profile

Who is your work for? What audiences do you have in mind?

I think it depends on what I'm working on, typically my work is for myself. Making work is a way to work through the things I'm having a hard time verbalizing. Ideally, the work is for the women in my life because I feel like I wouldn't be who I am without them. The work is for them and the audience, I don't necessarily worry about because, one, I don't normally display my work and two, for me it's not about who's seeing it. It's about the process of it being made and in doing so, feeling – kind of connected to the important people in my life that I love and who love me. So it's kind of like nurturing that relationship in a different way than relationships are thought about in today's standard.

***Untitled (On Healing, part III),* 2017**
gifted cedar, copper, brass, silver, and bronze

How does the prompt Entangled Legacies *apply to your work or is important to your work?*

I think *Entangled Legacies* applies to my work just because that is my work. That's the basis of my work, thinking about the entanglement of Blackness and being Native is central to my work because that's who I am.

How is the history of racial slavery and settler colonialism important to your work? What personal histories do you draw from?

Both of those histories are connected to my personal history. Being a Black and Nipmuc woman, its hard not to – how do I *not* distance myself from slavery or settler colonialism? My mom's family – that's how I'm Nipmuc – but even within my mom's family we're also Black. So my mom's family is Nipmuc and Black and my dad's family is Black – they're from West Virginia, an old mining town, and Alabama. But even within both family histories – I'm lucky that my mom is a genealogist and she goes back through our family tree and I don't even know. I don't even understand how to think about personal histories in

that way because it's just so completely compacted but also long and stretchy that it's hard to think about.

With knowing that there's so much missing in the archive for Black folks and Native folks, I really try to kind of lean on my relationships with people. By having conversations with my mom, my grandmothers, just family to kind of figure out how they deal with all of this information that either does not exist in a way that I could easily access it or it exists through oral history. That's an effect of racial slavery and settler colonialism because it doesn't allow you to be able to connect with yourself in that way I think.

When I was a sophomore in college, I did this one project in ceramics. I was making a series of vessels that looked like they could be functional but different parts of them had holes or cracks. You couldn't really use them. That's how I was feeling about being a Black person in society, like we look functional and we are – especially for the system that we are in – but, it's really hard to feel like we can be people with lives versus people that are surviving. It's very difficult to feel whole in this world.

How are the intersections of Black and Indigenous histories—oral traditions, documents, ancestral knowledge—central to your work?

Well being Black and Indigenous and being raised traditionally or as traditionally as my mom could in a Nipmuc way, but also at the same time, never *not* saying she was a Black woman too. But my mom would always be like "I'm a woman of color" or, "I'm a Black woman." So I think my mom balancing, or not balancing, but always making sure we knew who we were no matter what. We are very active in our tribal community and I think sometimes that is hard to do when one, you aren't living on a big reservation. Two, colonial constructs in general, three, us not looking how Natives "supposedly" look and four, being Black and society not always allowing you to be and feel confident in the complexity, or I guess, the different dimensions identities often have?

Because of her I was always the worst student in history class because I'd be like, "that's not true, that's not what happened." All because of what my mom would say. The way it intersects, or how it intersects for me, not only through my identity but even my Nipmuc identity. After King Philip's War, which we fought in, that was in the 1670s, if Nipmuc men weren't sold off into slavery, killed, or forced to fight in all these other random English wars afterwards, Nipmuc women had kids with either freed Black men or still enslaved Black men so even my Nipmuc identity is intertwined with Blackness and Black history.

What is an ideal future for African Americans and Native Americans to come together? What would your dream outcome of reciprocity or acknowledgment be?

I definitely don't think us singing in a circle all kumbaya is going to be a thing, but I do think that we've been able to live in community with one another. I feel like sometimes people think that living in community or being in community means there's no conflict. But that's the reality of being in community with folks: conflict. Ideally it's getting to the point where we have enough understanding of one another that the conflict is something that can be worked through. I think that starts with acknowledging both sides of the history and acknowledging that not every Native history is the same and not every Black history is the same.

Because there will be the conversation about the history of the Five Tribes enslaving Black folks and some people will be like "well, there were Black cowboys" and, okay, yeah both of those histories were messed up and we did messed up things to each other, but both of those things were unfortunate choices for modes of survival. We have the luxury of being able to look back in hindsight. How can we start being less ego centered and really think about the big picture? How do we acknowledge these histories and these present things that are happening together? How can we move forward so that we are not stuck doing the same thing over?

I just hope people are thinking rather than assuming. And being open to being uncomfortable. I think this would need to be something that would be centered by Black-Indigenous people. Or Black-Indigenous people would need to be centered in this because they would know how to bring both of these groups together and understand both sides fully.

“...slavery and Indigenous genocide aren’t parts of our hegemonic enterprise,... they are the enterprise.”

JORDAN SEABERRY

Born and raised on the Southside of Chicago, Jordan first came to Providence to attend Rhode Island School of Design. Alongside his art, he built a career as a grassroots organizer, helping to fight and pass multiple criminal justice reform milestones, including Probation Reform, the Unshackling Pregnant Prisoners Bill, and laying the groundwork for the "Ban the Box" movement here in Rhode Island. Jordan has received awards for his work within the community from the NAACP, the City of Providence, the RI Governor's Office, and others. He maintains a painting studio in Providence, and has displayed works at institutions such as the RISD Museum, the deCordova Museum, the Boston Center for the Arts, and exhibition spaces in LA, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York and elsewhere.

artist profile

Who is your work for? What audiences do you have in mind?

For my work, the audience is always the most critical variable, it changes from project to project. In my most recent show in Boston, every piece was in direct response to one of the countless social justice struggles happening on the ground here in Providence. There was a piece about the housing discrimination work happening here, a piece about the Right to Education lawsuit. But it's important to me that the movers in that work are a part of the creative process too, and that my dual life in the criminal justice world and the art world are in a healthy tension.

Other times it's more explicit. For a suite of paintings called The Violences Project, for example, I reached out to the families of every homicide victim from a specific year, sat on their couch, and had honest conversations with them. I painted a portrait of the person who was killed which the family owns as their own, and then made larger-scale more "gallery" paintings. I display those, but not the portraits. For me, that audience is tied into the creative process and I know that I'm accountable to them through the entire painting/research process.

How is the history of racial slavery and settler colonialism important to your work? What personal histories do you draw from?

The two are critical threads in my work, both the political and the artistic lives. In both contexts, I see part of my task as organizing my neighbors to see the inherent illegitimacy of the settler project. That slavery and Indigenous genocide aren't parts of our hegemonic enterprise, but that they are the enterprise.

On a personal level, I've always been driven to interrogate the interlacing of historical violences in my own identity. My grandfather was chased out of Mississippi and fled to Chicago. If he's a refugee from state-sanctioned terror down South, then it's always felt ironic that he found himself on the Southside of Chicago, where the dominant national narrative surrounds our homicide rate. There's so much more beauty to the Southside of course, but that's what permeates the national dialogue. And so for me to construct my own idea of home and place in a place labeled for violence, and the only reason I've found myself there was my family fleeing violence in the first case.

How has the prompt Entangled Legacies *encouraged you to change/shift your practice? What would it mean to reinterpret or annotate your project with consideration to Native American histories? How are you doing so already?*

The use of the term 'entangled' is really nice because it eschews the commonly used term of 'centering,' which maintains (to my mind) a binary or a hierarchy. That singularity of focus actually contradicts the intersections that define the survivors of white supremacy. I'd like to think of ways to bring that term up, to make my work more entangled, less singular, less centered. Some of that means questioning audience, how do I listen to Indigenous technologies more in the work? I love that challenge. Toward entanglement.

What resources or archives have you used in the past and how have they shaped your work?

I love a historical archive as much as the next person, but community wisdom is my go-to, always. For me, that means training my ears and my mind to actively listen to the elders in my life, and to seek out communities that get shut out of the art world. That's why my show *We Speak Upon the Ashes* was so important to me – it was a chance to truly hear the community wisdom around me, while still reflecting on those personal and family intersections.

What is your process from start to finish? Once you are complete is there anything in particular that you like to do to recognize/confirm its completion?

My process is a long, often confounding one. I have never known what a painting will look like before it's finished, nor do I know what it's narrative thread is. It's a process of excavation that I think of as 'call-and-response.' It's a mode of making that, I hope, undoes most of the western conventions of making and mastery. I know a piece is done when all the answers I approached with have been wiped out. Whatever I thought it was going to be at the outset should be a thing of the past, replaced by new questions. Answers being replaced by confusion is a good place to be, ever the student.

How is your being on this land, with your ancestors being forcibly brought to this land, involved/implicated Native Americans rightful demands for sovereignty?

I've heard many expressions of anxiety from other marginalized groups when Indigenous communities assert their right to place. That's, again, why I like the notion of 'entanglement' over centering, because those histories are complex and Indigenous people have been by no means static throughout time, monolithically tied to a singular piece of "land." It's as much about land as it is water, air, minerals, the infinite places from which Indigenous communities can draw connection and identity, and

when you contradict settler claims to those things called "resources," then you've contradicted the same system that brought my ancestors here in chains. There's an inherent solidarity that we should see.

How are you being an ally to local Indigenous communities?

Well, let me be clear that I don't think I'm doing nearly enough, either in the past or my present life. That's the beauty of this project. Allow me to be a case study in how the simple asking of questions can push people to action. For folks who are contemplating projects like this and unsure if there's any meaningful impact, I'm one person who, from the sheer act of being asked, feels compelled to do more meaningful work here.

***The Birth Partner,* 2019**
acrylic and mixed media on canvas

FRAGMENT FROM A RED, BLACK AND GREEN MEMORY (*Kosi Ewé, Kosi Òrìsà*)[1]

Climbing the steps to the third floor heart of the *terreiro*, dressed in white like the others we were to join, my friend and I were met with green.[2] Green leaves strewn everywhere on the floor gingerly stepped on by bare feet, as celebrants and guests crossed to their seats rimming the room. But even more deeply green: a temporary double wall of fragrant foliage dominating one corner of the spacious apartment, amongst which were exquisitely placed a variety of fresh indigenous fruits. Within this verdant semi-shelter of an altar, on a small stool, sat the spirit-entity being honored by the *festa*, the *Caboclo Tupiniquim*. Manifest this night in the body of the senior priestess of the *terreiro*, his voice, garb, and gestures as well as his bold gait and dance moves, were all those of an Indigenous Tupinambá hunter. Now and again, smoke drifted out from his fat cigar, emphasizing this rowdy comment, or that preamble to perceptive advice eagerly sought by those attending. It was an evening of dancing to the percussion of palms and drums, shared communal feasting, and invocations in ritual language to some of the African *orixás* (divinized forces of nature and ancestors) who had made the crossing from the lands of Yoruba, Fon, Kongo...Exu, Oxossi, Ossaim, Oxum.[3] But most of all, this night was dedicated to the *encantado* (enchanted one) honored in the pantheon of many Afro-Brazilian religions explicitly as "the owner of the land": the *Caboclo*.[4] In the course of the evening, the gestures and commentaries of other *caboclos* who began to incorporate some members would be heightened by the Tupinambá ritual drink, *jurema*. At the celebration's end, most of the fruits that had been harbored within the foliage were pressed by the *Caboclo Tupiniquim* into the hands of departing devotees, invited guests and several delighted young children accompanying their elders.

***Caboclo and Finda*. Geri Augusto, 2020.**
Assemblage-in-progress. Artist's own items on African textile background.

In thinking about relations between Native Americans (Amerindians, First Nations, Indians) and African-descended peoples in the Americas, perhaps it is useful sometimes to shift the frame and grounds. Instead of containing relationships within dominant settler colonial histories and the economies of dispossession, what if we

also considered memory-acts and played out on sacred geographies and in expressive cultures, from one end of the Americas to another, and across their islands? What if we thought imaginatively and even speculatively about what passed hundreds of years ago among those enslaved together in sugar mills, or neighbors by choice in maroon settlements? I did not have those thoughts consciously in mind the night I returned from the *festa do caboclo*. Instead, what came to my mind's eye was a painting, one from another indigenous territory European settlers had appropriated to profit from African skills and labor. *It was telling me something…*

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Commentaries on Afro-Cuban artist Wifredo Lam's iconic painting, "*La Jungla*" – sometimes translated as "the jungle," which was decidedly *not* Lam's intention – abound in art-historical literature, often labelling it as an exemplar of surrealism.[5] I want to invoke another interpretation, and a different cultural geography. Though Lam's grounds were Cuban, I think they are mobile, like so many red and black geographies are.

Lam, art historian Julia Cuervo Hewitt argues, painted an enactment of religious history, from a "syncretic symbolic Afro-Cuban perspective."[6] Within that aesthetic, Hewitt notes, *la jungla* is precisely *el monte*,[7] the dwelling space of "the Orichas and all the African entities," one which can as easily be forest, woodlands, a veranda full of plants, or an open field – "anywhere there is nature and where natural forces which preside over water, fire… plants and flowers can exist." On this reading, Ossain, Yemayá and Eshu Elegguá – all of whom have counterparts in Brazilian Afro-diasporic religions – are quite clearly discernible in "*La Jungla*." The scattered single eyes, arms and legs, about which so much surrealist ink has been spilt, are the symbolism in Afro-Cuban religions of Ossain, a forest divinity. Likewise, the calabash-breasts signal the ocean deity Yemayá, as do the swathes of heavenly/marine blue. And the thick atmosphere of green leaves and stalks on Lam's canvas? They manifest the sugar-cane so redolent of African enslavement, the palm trees sacred to Afro- and Indigenous Cubans alike, and tobacco leaves. Indeed tobacco, the liturgical plant favored by Ossain, Eshu Elegguá and Ochosi, is borrowed from the island's Indigenous Taino. All dwell in Lam's saturating greens and blues, a sacred geography of multiple remembrances, a splice of land which is "a living ceremony."[8]

It is this *monte/jungla* which travelled with the Africans who became Afro-Cubans (and Afro-Brazilians, too), a kind of portable, sacred geography-in-the-mind. This was the memory of the enslaved (and in particular, of maroons) to which another was eventually conjoined, that of those whom the Africans recognized as the owners of the land, in that "field of afroindigenous relations" that was both material and immaterial.[9] On the

sacred geography of the *terreiro* I had visited, perhaps what I witnessed was a respecting memory or embodied knowledge of another. If so, it was as far as the attentive mind can imagine from the appropriations of what Deloria calls "playing Indian," and the settler's habit of appropriating the place-name while erasing the human.[10] Those manifesting, dancing *caboclos*; those rhythms the celebrants played out on drum and hands beside a soft green architecture; that symbolic consumption of the quintessential, meaning-laden Native American tobacco and the sacred drink made from the *jurema* tree; those chanted invocations which explicitly acknowledge the peoples on whose lands a palimpsest country was erected; and the offering of abundant indigenous fruits to both gods and people – all were defiantly and joyously recreating a memory, often contested, but that neither colonialism nor slavery could erase. If Black sacral expressive culture is, as has been said of artist Renée Green's work, a "genealogy of contact,"[11] then in the diaspora it is not just solely of African nations mixing and forming something new. It might also be a genealogy of African and Native American contact, a manifestation of respectful memory on sacred grounds and in green architectures, and a "visual sovereignty" at least partly reclaimed.[12]

Geri Augusto

Gerard Visiting Associate Professor of International & Public Affairs and Africana Studies; and Director of Development Studies, Brown University

[1] Saying in Yoruba, used liturgically in some African-diasporic religions: "Without leaves [plants], there are no gods."

[2] I sought and received permission to write about my experience as a grateful guest at this event (gira de caboclos) in the terreiro (house of worship and its surrounds) of Mãe Juta (Dona Jutuacira Lisboa), lead priestess of the Centro de Caboclo Tupiniquim, in the Salvador, Bahia neighborhood of Pernambués. This is a fragment of the longer essay to which that led. In sharing my thoughts, I make no claim to authoritatively describing or explaining African diasporic religions, a task best undertaken (when they wish) by initiated sacerdotes and longtime devotees, as well as by many scholars whose studies make them far more qualified to do so than I. Suffice it for now to note that most prominent of the religions referred to (or inferred) here are Cuba's Regla de Ocha (Santeria), Palo Monte and Lucumí, and Brazil's candomblé, Tambor da Mina and Umbanda. For more on candomblé, its ideas, history and expressive culture, see: Barreto, José de Jesus. *Candomblé da Bahia: resistência e identidade de um povo de fé*, Salvador: Solisluna Design e Editora, 2009; Santos, Jocélio Teles dos, (1992), *La divinité caboclo dans le candomblé de Bahia*, Cahiers d'études africaines, PERSEE; Pedrosa, Adriano; Amanda Carneiro, and Andre Mesquita (2018), *Historias Afro-Atlanticas. Antologia* – Volume 2, São Paulo: Instituto Tomie Ohtake/Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP); Santana, Marcos, (2014), *Mãe Stella*

de Oxossi: Estrela nossa, a mais singela! Salvador: Editorial Aramafe; and Harding, Rachel, (2003), *A Refuge in Thunder*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[3] Spellings of these transplanted African gods' names, individually or collectively (e.g. *orixás, orichas, orishas*) may vary; here I use Cuban or Brazilian spellings, depending on the location being discussed. All translations from the works in Spanish and Portuguese cited here are mine.

[4] *Caboclo* is "a racial term that has meant different things at different times and places in Brazilian history. It may refer either to an indigenous Brazilian or to mixed descendants of Europeans, Africans, and Indians. In *Candomblé*, it refers to a ... pantheon of archetypal indigenous and hybrid gods.... The corpus of songs sung by and for the *caboclos* constitutes a body of knowledge about them." See Brazeal, B., (January 01, 2003), The music of the Bahian Caboclos, *Anthropological Quarterly*, p. 645.

[5] Lam himself stated that the painting "was intended to communicate a psychic state" and to "represent the spirit of the Negroes." See Noel, S. A., (January 01, 2018), Envisioning new worlds: The "tropical aesthetics" in the art of Wifredo Lam and Aaron Douglas, *Art Journal*, 77, 76-91, p. 84. For an image of the 1943 painting, now owned by the Museum of Modern art, New York, see https://www.moma.org/collection/works/34666 .

[6] See Hewitt, Julia Cuervo, (2007), Aché, ewe, guedes, nganga, vititi nfinda y Orichas en "La jungle" de Wifredo Lam, *Afro-Hispanic Review*, 26:1, 59-74, specifically pp. 59 and 63.

[7] On *el monte*, and the generative relationship between Lam and the Cuban anthropologist and activist-writer Lydia Cabrera, who reintroduced him to Afro-Cuban culture upon his return to the island from Europe, see Cabrera, Lydia, (2000/1954), *El Monte: Igbo. Finda. Ewe Orisha. Vititi Nfinda*, Miami, FL: Ediciones Universal, pp. 13-18; and Hewitt, (2007). From her Afro-Cuban religious mentors, Cabrera learned that "We blacks go to *el Monte* as if we were entering a church," with "respect and composure." And also that "Each tree, each bush, each herb has its owner."

[8] The expression is borrowed from endawnis Spears (Diné, Anishinaabe, Choctaw, and Chickasaw); see Amadeus Finlay, Voices of Turtle Island, 11/13/2019, at https://motifri.com/turtleisland/

[9] On this notion of *afroindigenous* relations, see Goldman, Marcio, (December 31, 2014), A relação afroindígena, *Cadernos De Campo*, no. 23, 213-222. The lack of hyphen, Goldman asserts, is deliberate, to flag not an identity or static binomial, but rather a process which has evolved historically, and continues to do so.

[10] See Deloria, PJ (Dakota), (1998), *Playing Indian*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

[11] On this framing of Green's work, see González, Jennifer, (2008), *Subject to display: Reframing race in contemporary installation art*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[12] I borrow the concept of "visual sovereignty" from Tuscarora scholar, artist, and educator Jolene Rickard. See M.F. Bell, (2011), Some Thoughts on "Taking" Pictures: Imaging "Indians" and the Counter-Narratives of Visual Sovereignty, *Great Plains Quarterly*, 31, 2, 85-104.

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