Ayida Course Packet

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Introduction

This course packet accompanies the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU exhibition *Ayida*, which celebrates the Caribbean and its diaspora. Curated by guest curator Serubiri Moses and featuring works by Lizania Cruz, Oletha DeVane, Thomas Allen Harris, mujero, and Didier William, *Ayida* draws inspiration from the poet Assotto Saint (1957–1994) and his complex relationship with Haitian Vodou as it investigates the material, spiritual, and intellectual cultures of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, among other sites.

Central to *Ayida* is the exploration of syncretism—how religions and cultures blend and transform—particularly within Afrodiasporic traditions. The exhibition also builds on dance and folklore research by the Dominican sociologist Fradique Lizardo (1930–1997) on El Gagá, a movement-based Vodou practiced in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The course packet includes prompts and exercises for the museum visitor. These prompts are designed as a self-guided tour of the exhibition's sources, which include literature, academic books, as well as artistic texts.

Audre's Apples

By Assotto Saint
For audre lorde

as i swallow
the last morsel of a little green apple
blessed with myrrhed prayers & libations on an african altar

in a gothic cathedral
where with banners from all corners of our country
freed from the prejudice of a dozen years' politics of greed

thousands gather on king's day
to ground sorrow at a sister's recent passing
(lorde we testify)
drum up her spirit along a cascading rainbow
to the orishas' paradise

the juice snakes sweetly down my throat & circles my veins
it loosens my tingling toes stiffened
by neuropathy

armed only with a white candle that flares its last flames
i march out into the dark hell of
our big apple[1]

Prompts on Honoring: Remembering Loved Ones

What are three things that remind you of someone you love?

How do you honor the memory of loved ones?
Draw and describe the ways that you can remember others.

How do you share experiences with other people?

How do you hold onto memories?

Shores

By Assotto Saint

i remember
makkis sailing the aegean sea
on breakfast of feta baklava & sunshine
pepe rafting through floating gardens
while on a siesta of mariachi y margaritas
abdullah who sliced the golden nile with his felucca
bits of pita beans & english falling from his lips
olive-skinned mario of the gondolas who enchanted me
with pasta pasolini & stars then arrivederci
they all chattered about anchoring their dreams
on america's shores
but do they know that our lady in the harbor
milks
us
immigrants of
the
honey
in
our
blood[2]

Prompts on Place

What smells remind you of home?

Draw or describe ways that you gather and collect objects in your domestic space.

What helps you connect with nature? With yourself? With others?

Can you describe the environment of the last place you danced?

Where was the last place you visited away from home where you learned more about yourself?

The Quilt

By Assotto Saint

this is not the fire island sand but molten lava
we are burning you talk strange land i stalk
cross-country fabric handsewn name panels sequins bulletins
daily road of photographs painted resistance flashes pennants
albums whistle jockstrapped cats tuxedo stars t-shirt butterflies
feather dolls leather bears patchworked lives cut three by short

joe / testimonies / counsel / memories / lew / fantasies /
it's them / they were here / it's them / they were here /

pinch myself no tv mixed media homo epidemic hemo quarantine
virus junkie the blood hiv test semen rockhudson kaposi's cdc
t-cells liberace pneumocystis bad blood terrydolan antibodies azt
voodoo arc a 1721 africa roycohn opportunistic gmhc condoms nih
always the blood michaelbennett willismith carriers gaetandugas
asshole president commission syphilis positive safe sex vaccine

joe / testimonies / counsel / memories / lew / fantasies /
it's them / they were here / it's them / they were here /

we might not make it through the fog grids display epitaphs full
circle headache grips art faint thunder the skies dark clouds
perhaps kleenex cry sap strength bereavement project burdens
horrific holocaust imagery in this tragedy 100%
futile judeo-christianity infamy in this travesty 100% fatal
our country 'tis of teflon gipper's bushshit

joe / testimonies / counsel / memories / lew / fantasies /
it's them / they were here / it's them / they were here /[3]

Prompts on Dreams, Rituals, and Objects

Describe rituals you have on a daily basis.

What rituals involving touch do you have?

Is there any food that you eat on special occasions?

Are there items of clothing or ornament that you put on on a daily basis?

What symbols have occurred in your recent dreams? Can you draw them?

Fradique Lizardo, Cultura africana en Santo Domingo (excerpt)

Translated by Laura Jaramillo

For many years, we have believed as a dogma of faith that we are a Hispanic, white nation of ancient lineage. Unfortunately, the statistics indicate a very different thing, but we've believed this for two fundamental reasons: first, it is what has always been proclaimed openly, and second, we have never worried ourselves with finding the truth within authorized sources.

The first Black man who arrived on our island as part of Christopher Columbus's second voyage arrived on our soils in November 1493 as cargo. Let's remember that the Black man is not newsworthy, and only by coincidence is he mentioned in the chronicles; because of this the first Blacks who are arrived as domestics are not mentioned, overlooked by the researchers until we found out that a free and unfortunately anonymous Black woman found and healed the sick in 1502, where today stand the ruins of the San Nicolás hospital.

These first Blacks were all ladinos[4] and there is not even an allusion as to the ethnicity from which they came, but because of the theater of the era in Spain, we know how they behaved and spoke and the role they played within that society.

For certain, we know that before 1503, a group of Blacks was sent, whose numbers and provenance we ignored.

In 1505, a hundred slaves are sent.
In 1510, 250 slaves are sent.
In 1518, a thousand slaves are introduced.
In 1518 (August), the introduction of 4,000 Black slaves is authorized.
In 1519, it is reported that none of those 4,000 slaves has yet arrived on our island.
In 1523, it is recognized that there are many more Blacks than Spaniards on the island.
In 1542, somewhere around 30,000 Blacks and only 6,000 Spaniards are counted.[5]

Fradique Lizardo, Cultura africana en Santo Domingo (excerpt)

Durante muchos años, hemos creído como dogma de fe que somos una nación hispana, blanca y de rancio abolengo. Desgraciadamente los números de las estadísticas indican otra cosa muy diferente, pero hemos creído en eso por dos causas fundamentales: primero, eso es lo que se ha proclamado siempre abiertamente, y segundo, nunca nos hemos preocupado por averiguar la variedad en las fuentes autorizadas.

El primer negro que llega a nuestra isla, forma parte de segundo viaje de Cristóbal Colón, y atraca en nuestro suelo en noviembre de 1493, pecio recordemos que el negro no es noticia, y de casualidad se menciona en las crónicas; por esto los primeros negros que llegaron como domésticos no se mencionan, pasando desapercibidos para el investigador hasta que encontramos que una negra liberta, y desgraciadamente innominada, recogía y curaba enfermos en 1502, donde hoy quedan las ruinas del hospital de San Nicolás.

Estos primeros negros, eran todos ladinos y no se hace alusión siquiera a la etnia dude la cual provenían, pero por el teatro de la época en España, conocemos cómo se comportaban y hablaban y el papel que desempeñaban dentro de esa sociedad.

Por seguro tenemos que antes de 1503, se envió una partida de negros, que ignoramos de cuántos, y de dónde procedían.

En 1505 se envían cien esclavos negros.
En 1510 se envían 250 esclavos negros.
En 1518 se introducen mil negros esclavos.
En 1518 (agosto) se autoriza la introducción de 4,000 negros esclavos.
En 1519, se reporta que ninguno de esos 4,000 esclavos ha llegado aún a nuestra isla.
En 1523, se reconoce que hay muchos más negros que españoles en la isla.
En 1542 se cuentan alrededor de 30,000 negros y sólo unos 6,000 españoles.[6]

Performance, Subjectivity, and the Afterlife of Live Art:
A Conversation Between Thomas Allen Harris and Daniella Brito

The following is an excerpt of the article by Daniella Brito published in e-flux Notes, Dec. 16, 2024.

Daniella Brito (DB): *Blue Baby* and *Heaven, Earth & Hell* are two very different entry points into your work. Can you give us a sense of what your practice looked like when you made these works in the early 1990s?

Thomas Allen Harris (TAH): They're both very different. *Blue Baby* was a live performance, while *Heaven, Earth & Hell* was performed for the camera. I hadn't seen Blue Baby in years until I digitized my archives recently. In the 1990s, I was doing a lot of live performances on the West Coast, while my work on the East Coast focused more on performance for the camera. Moving back east, I shifted towards creating commissioned work for television while also maintaining my independent practice. Those were different times.

DB: Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, you often pushed the boundaries of documentary filmmaking by interweaving personal biographical material into larger conversations regarding gender, race, and diasporic belonging. This was about a decade after members of the Combahee River Collective published their 1977 statement in which they named that racial, sexual, and class oppression are interlocking and established the foundation for contemporary identity politics. How did these preliminary dialogues about identity politics manifest in your early work?

TAH: In the 1980s, my references were rooted in a spiritual journey, as one can see in *Heaven, Earth & Hell*. I was trying to compose my own cosmology. After graduating from college in 1984, I was on my way to medical school and spent a summer in Europe. But when I came back, I decided not to pursue medicine; instead, I became a filmmaker and an artist. My first rigorous engagement with research and theory was at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. I worked with Ellis Haizlip, who was programming events connected to the Black Arts Movement. This was my introduction to the possibilities of being an African American in the world from the perspective of a creative person. Towards the end of the 1980s, I discovered the work of Marlon Riggs, bell hooks, and Essex Hemphill who profoundly impacted me. All of whom were influenced by the work of the Combahee River Collective. I left my work in public television around the same time which allowed me to explore race, gender, and identity more creatively. It was around this time that I shot my first film, *Splash*.

DB: Could you talk more about *Splash*?

TAH: *Splash* exemplified an awareness of race and gender during the time of pre-adolescence—before I had the theoretical language to articulate it. I shot the film in 1990 or 1991 in a friend's apartment. It reflected this moment when theorists like Stuart Hall discussed untangling modes of oppression, opening up more room to claim diverse identities. In this period, bell hooks also wrote about decentering dominant narratives, encouraging us to subvert the ways that Black identities are presented across the media. That inspired me to create work that embraced both personal and broader cosmological explorations.

DB: In *Heaven, Earth & Hell*, you center the Trickster, which is a recurrent figure across African diasporic cultures. It's seen in Haitian Vodou and across Black American vernacular traditions through characters like Brer Rabbit and Anansi the Spider. Can you describe how you were positioning yourself as the Trickster in this work? How does the figure appear in your personal life?

TAH: Yes, the Trickster is one of the archetypes that Robert Farris Thompson talks about in *Flash of the Spirit*, and I was thinking about how these archetypes resonate with various parts of our personalities. I was also thinking about Carnival and possession and how the Trickster invites people to adopt provocative positionalities that can be both destructive and liberating.

Growing up, I didn't fit neatly into boxes. In Western society we don't have figures like Ogun, the strong and powerful deity of iron, or Oya, the goddess of the wind, who holds both creative and potentially destructive powers. The Trickster archetype provided me with a way to explore the nuances of my own identity. It helped me investigate what it means to step outside rigid structures—beyond black-and-white binaries and Western frameworks of identity.

Living partly in East Africa as an adolescent exposed me to other spiritual practices. I lived in Dar es Salaam for two years, where I saw how spiritual practices from indigenous African cosmologies, Islam, Buddhism, Hindu and Anglican Christianity intersected. That blend of influences shaped my understanding of the Trickster; I see the Trickster as someone who traverses those different spaces, connecting and disrupting them at the same time. In *Heaven, Earth & Hell*, the Trickster allowed me to adopt a role that was both playful and challenging, questioning societal norms while embracing transformation and possibility. And today, I am still thinking a lot about the way suppressed narratives are fighting to be seen. I've been so moved by the struggle for Palestinian liberation. It reminds me of how all of these postcolonial struggles are interconnected. The narratives we've been taught to forget are being elevated, and it's affecting everything—even the students in my classes. They're engaging with these marginalized histories and thinking critically about the aesthetics of coloniality.[7]

Conversation with Lizania Cruz, mujero, Egbert Vongmalaithong, and Serubiri Moses

Serubiri Moses (SM): In preparation for this conversation, I found myself blurting out in a museum planning meeting this week that Dominican sociologist Fradique Lizardo's work has never been translated from Spanish into English. At the same time, African American writers including Zora Neale Hurston are cited in books as authoritative sources on African folklore and religious practices in Santo Domingo.[8] Can you speak to the possibility of translating Lizardo's books, including *Cultura Africana en Santo Domingo,* and to the lack of citation around his work more broadly?

Lizania Cruz (LC): Last year, I started reading Zora Neale Hurston's book *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*.[9] As a Caribbean woman, I found myself a bit taken aback by some of her language that imposes a specific gaze on how and who we are. I haven't finished the book yet, but I would say I had a visceral reaction to it, one of discomfort. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that Lizardo's work is not regarded as important as that of other Caribbean scholars. For me, Lizardo's book *Cultura Africana en Santo Domingo* became one of the primary pieces of evidence and sources for my body of work *Investigation of the Dominican Racial Imaginary*.[10]

When I lived in the Dominican Republic, I had no idea of the book. Sadly, it is not only the fact that this book is not translated, but also that it is mostly out of print, and can only be found in libraries and other archives in the country. This book and Fradique's archive *Fondo Fradique Lizardo de folklore Dominicano, 1940–1990*, stewarded by Centro Leon and named a Memory of the World archive by UNESCO, has the potential to open doors to greater understanding of the African diaspora in the Caribbean from the perspective of someone who embodied that culture.

For me, *Cultura Africana* provided specific examples in Santo Domingo of the formations of syncretism, miscegenation, and how African culture is still embedded in our everyday life in the Dominican Republic. This despite the many efforts by the state to deny such links. In Fradique's archive, there is a letter dated September 30th, 1980, from Joseph E. Harris, a dean of Howard University's History Department at the time, in which he is inviting Fradique to assemble and submit information from Santo Domingo for the creation of "studies and programs of the African diaspora in the world."[11] To me, this shows the importance of his work and, perhaps, provides clues that his work must be translated somehow.

mujero (m): Well, it's something I would hope for! Quite frankly, I think US institutions have only just started to trust the work of African diaspora writers. I'm not surprised that this trust is, mostly, in the few African American writers who work within their institutions, and who have written on the Caribbean region. This sort of reminds me of Frederick Douglass's congressional visit to the Dominican Republic in 1871 (which Lizania has made great work on!), and later his placement as chargé d'affaires of Santo Domingo and, simultaneously, Counsel General to Haiti between 1889 and 1891. The logic of his placement assumed that a shared ancestry provided insight into the region. This isn't entirely unfounded. However, it loses sight of writers from within the region who might articulate themselves outside of the US influence and interests.

SM: While reading literary critic Silvio Torres-Saillant's work, I learned that Dominican sibling writers Jesusa and Felipe Alfau—Felipe wrote the experimental novel *Locos* (1936) and Jesusa wrote the novel *Los Débiles* (1912)—were described as "Jesusa and Felipe remained oblivious to things Dominican."[12] They lived and set some of their novels in Spain. Can you comment on this phenomenon?

LC: I have to read *Locos* to better respond to his motivations for setting the novel in Spain, but this is not surprising. In my experience most Dominicans find themselves gravitating toward the allure of our former colonizer Spain. We are taught this sentiment in school and at home through the celebration of the so-called "discovery" of the Americas. With pride, they teach us to celebrate Christopher Columbus with monuments and national holidays. This masking and ultimate suppression of our African heritage is something that we deeply need to unlearn. It is, perhaps, the best example of the racial phenomenon that Frantz Fanon described in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*.[13]

m: There are many factors that contribute to how fervently one holds onto their roots. In the essay "Dominican American Literature," where Torres-Saillant discusses Jesusa and Felipe, he brings up the disparaging comments Felipe made of Dominican immigrants in New York in the 1990s.[14] In my experience, that kind of differentiation was very common to exercise as a way to signal to others: "I'm not like those Dominicans." This is something I grew up hearing around me. Though I never noticed much difference between us and them. It's almost like a reverse disidentification à la José Esteban Muñoz: Instead of finding a self in the other, you find another in the self.[15]

In *Tacit Subjects*, Carlos Ulises Decena interviews various queer Dominican immigrant men in New York. According to Decena, some of the men create a conflation between homophobic experiences of their time in the D.R. and their new life in New York—a regressive past and a

progressive future. Decena makes a note that these distinctions allow for his informants to differentiate among class and cultural lines, in some ways, echoing the words of Felipe Alfau. And it's something that still happens! This was exemplified for me while in undergrad at Parsons School of Design, The New School, speaking to a Dominican student who said she was scared to go uptown to interact with "those Dominicans," presuming that I couldn't possibly be one of the uptown Dominicans she referred to. I was!

SM: I wrote an article in *The Brooklyn Rail* a couple of years ago at the invitation of Brazilian curator Rodrigo Moura, in which I talk about a monument downtown on Canal Street and Sixth Avenue. Can you respond to this quote? "I go to Duarte Square similarly to have a sort of evening stroll. I tend to go there and sit briefly to get on the phone, or to just watch the crowd and passers-by. I might sit there with another sandwich too. Then, I have visited the Hudson River Park in the very early hours of the day to bike, as the park's bike lane goes all the way to Battery Park, and standing at the tip of the Manhattan island, you can see the Statue of Liberty, even faintly. On Duarte Square, I noticed that people leave wreaths and flowers at the foot of the large Juan Pablo Duarte statue as a kind of commemoration. This commemoration strikes me as both sincere and unusual."[17]

LC: I know exactly where this statue is. On September 25th, 2021, I staged a happening in front of this statue.[18] During the happening, I read, accompanied by a drummer, a timeline of the events that led to the formation of the nation of the Dominican Republic from the book *We Dream Together* by scholar Anne Eller.[19] After the reading, dance instructor Julio Jean taught a combination of Kompa and Merengue.

Duarte is an emblematic figure in Dominican history and identity, but we know little about the full picture of his story. He is considered el padre de la patria. Therefore, it was important, for me, as part of [my project] *Investigation of the Dominican Racial Imaginary*, to activate this space as a site of inquiry and solidarity between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

I am sure the wreaths and flowers that were left behind at the statue were to an extent a visual representation of the admiration and mythologizing of the idea of a nation's "founding father." The more that I study Duarte as a subject, the more I find parallels to other similar characters in the history of the Americas, such as José Gervasio Artigas in Uruguay or George Washington in the United States. It makes me wonder why don't we instead put more attention to figures like Gregorio Luperón and La Guerra de Restauración or Restoration War, which fought back and won independence for a second time from Spain? It is at such moments when I think of these figures and the veneration that they receive from the public that I am reminded of Saidiya Hartman's quote "Myth is the threshold of history."[20]

m: I share a bit of the incredulity in your response to the commemorative wreaths and flowers. And it's not specific to the Juan Pablo Duarte statue, but more so the need to commemorate these state-making figures at all! Growing up, my parents had to make certain concessions on what to keep and what to teach in regards to their Dominican heritage. I think it's notable that what was passed down to me was music, dance, stories, food. Rarely did they bring up historical figures. The only one worth mentioning was my father's admiration for Juan Emilio Bosch, the first democratically elected president of the Dominican Republic. I think it is a kind of discrepancy between two very powerful forms of diasporic memory and meaning making: one that is routed through the diplomatic forms of state and citizenry, and the cultural form that is on the ground and in community.

SM: While ICA staff members Andy Clifford and Egbert Vongmalaithong worked on the placement of objects in the exhibition at ICA, they realized that there was a strikingly domestic setting. I've been thinking a lot about how the everyday actions that are repeated can constitute a form of religious ritual. Cleaning and dusting, moving things around, playing sounds or music. The everyday actions that can form the basis of religious practice remind me of something I saw earlier today on my street here on Bradhurst Avenue, Harlem. Very much recalls the wreaths I mentioned. Perhaps something else is going on in the image below. This is not a memorial for a state figurehead or national hero. I wonder if this is something, perhaps, that you can all speak about?

m: These actions take on a ritualized affectability through repetition. Repetition makes liturgies spiritual.[21] Repeated actions have a communal or singular meaning attached to them.[22] In that way, any repeated action can slip into liturgy. Thinking about spiritual practices that developed in the Caribbean and their diasporas, you need those domestic liturgies in order to build that bridge of memory and spirituality, especially diasporically.

There are many Protestant, Evangelical, and Catholic categories of community and ritual that people fall into. In thinking about Santería in particular, there's a way that this can be practiced at home: no institution, just word of mouth, a place in your home. The domestic space becomes central in preserving certain spiritualities that don't formulate like other faith traditions that typically have more resources to establish themselves.

Repetition also has a sort of alchemic quality in my practice. In artworks like *Homogeny of Man*, *Semiotic Circuit*, *and Orchid for Sylvia*, the Jordans are rearranged in mirrored forms that call to the body or rorschach tests. The central repetitive task in creating the work is the dismantling and reassembly of shoes. The shoes are stripped to their parts and laid out,

and I intuitively place the pieces together within the frame. There is no predetermined form for the parts to take shape, but a way for these pieces, that once so confidently formed a shoe, to now allude to different parts of the body and psyche in a semiotic transformation. With this repetitiveness, I have to have faith that in its reconfiguration something larger will emerge than the sum of its parts.

LC: Perhaps, yes. I see these as rituals and memorials that we practice for our ancestors. I do think that we have these practices in the DR. I grew up seeing altars in my grandmother's house and my grandfather's sister's house. Specific rituals to saints that can also be identified through our syncretism. For me, the ones at Duarte's statue feel different because in some ways they are worshiping the mythmaking of his figure. Therefore, even though the sentiment might be rooted in a similar ritual, it connotes something else for me.

Egbert Vongmalaithong: Domestic rituals are grounding and help me connect with the past and present. I'm humming when I'm cleaning, and I'm watching my hands. I'm moving the dust of yesterday and carving the space of now. Cleaning is an act of clarity. It's meditation. Objects can be symbols that guide me and remind me to practice care. With a fast-moving world that tugs at my attention, the ebb and flow of attention—even for a moment—is stabilized when I'm practicing care in my home. And then I get to share that with others. Related to organized religion, I grew up in a Buddhist household. Though I was never seriously religious. Now in adulthood, I've sort of looped back to the rituals I remember seeing my mom perform—praying to altars, meditating, and chanting.

Hector Hyppolite
Damballah La Flambeau

(also known as Aida-Quédo and The Snake Goddess Ayida-Wedo)

c. 1947
oil on board
30 x 24 in. (76.2 x 61 cm.)

Extended Prompts

Regarding "Audre's Apples," how does the persona of the poem use food (in this case an apple) as a way to represent spiritual practices?

Regarding "Shores," how does the persona of the poem use food (in this case baklava and pita beans) as a way of representing migration and cultures of origin?

Regarding "The Quilt," how does the persona in the poem connect Haiti, Africa, and the US in relation to the AIDS pandemic?

Regarding "Cultura africana en Santo Domingo," in what way does Fradique Lizardo's description of the year 1542, when the Black population far outnumbered the Spaniard population on the island, challenge myths about race in the Dominican Republic and Haiti?

Regarding the interview with Thomas Allen Harris, how does the filmmaker and artist frame the idea of syncretism?

Regarding the *Ayida* group conversation, how does this conversation describe acts of ritual practice, as well as the experience of migration?

Credits

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Endnotes

[1] Assotto Saint, "Audre's Apples," *Sacred Spells: Collected Works by Assotto Saint*, edited by Michele Karlsberg (New York: Nightboat Books, 2023), 137.

[2] Assotto Saint, "Shores," in *Sacred Spells: Collected Works by Assotto Saint*, edited by Michele Karlsberg (New York: Nightboat Books, 2023), 86.

[3] Assotto Saint, "The Quilt," in *Sacred Spells: Collected Works by Assotto Saint*, edited by Michele Karlsberg (New York: Nightboat Books, 2023), 120.

[4] [Translator's note]: "Ladino" is a term applied to non-European populations that adopted Hispanic cultural customs and the Spanish language during the colonial period.

[5] Fradique Lizardo, *Cultura africana en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Taller, 1979), 23–24.

[6] Fradique Lizardo, *Cultura africana en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Taller, 1979), 23–24.

[7] "Performance, Subjectivity, and the Afterlife of Live Art: A Conversation between Thomas Allen Harris and Daniella Brito," e-flux Notes, December 16, 2024, https://www.e-flux.com/notes/646416/performance-subjectivity-and-the-afterlife-of-live-art-a-conversation.

[8] Roberto Strongman, *Queering Black Atlantic Religions: Transcorporeality in Candomblé, Santería, and Vodou* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

[9] Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (Philadelphia: L.B. Lippincott, 1938).

[10] See: *Lizania Cruz: Gathering Evidence: Santo Domingo & New York City*, at CUE Art Foundation, July–August 2021; and Lizania Cruz, "A Port Within an Island," SEEN, no. 5 (Winter 2023), https://www.blackstarfest.org/seen/read/issue005/lizania-cruz-dominincan-racial-imaginary/.

[11] Centro Leon, *Epistolário de Fradique Lizardo: Tomo II*, 2021, pp. 24, https://issuu.com/centroleon/docs/epistolario_ii_de_fradique_lizardo_ii.

[12] Silvio Torres-Saillant, "Dominican American Literature," in *Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*, edited by S. Bost et al. (London: Routledge, 2012), 423–426.

[13] "To speak as the colonized is therefore to participate in one's own oppression and to reflect the very structures of your alienation in everything from vocabulary to syntax to intonation." John Drabinski, "Frantz Fanon" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Stanford University, 1995–), published March 14, 2019, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/frantz-fanon/.

[14] Torres-Saillant, "Dominican American Literature."

[15] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[16] Carlos Ulises Decena, *Tacit Subjects: Belonging and Same-Sex Desire among Dominican Immigrant Men* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

[17] Serubiri Moses, "What's Possible Now?" *The Brooklyn Rail*, June 2021, https://brooklynrail.org/2021/06/criticspage/Serubiri-Moses/.

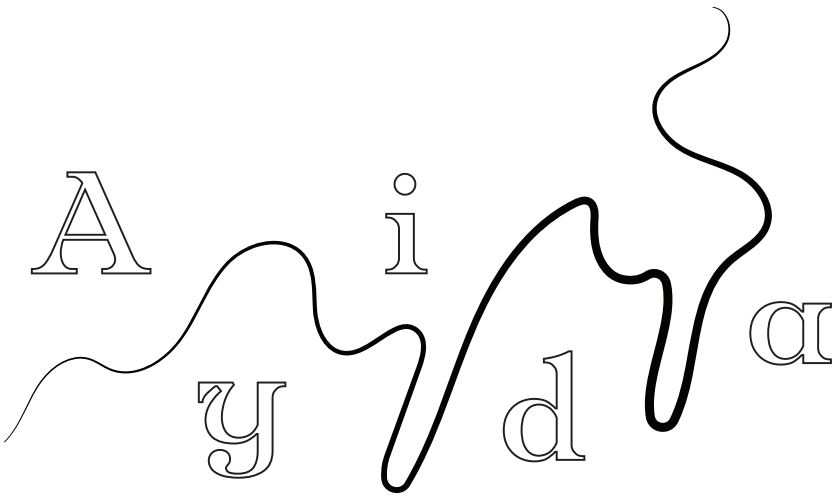
[18] Lizania Cruz, Happening of the *Investigation of the Dominican Racial Imaginary*, September 25, 2021. See: https://cueartfoundation.org/upcoming-events/happening-of-the-investigation-of-the-dominican-racial-imaginary

[19] Anne Eller, *We Dream Together: Dominican Independence, Haiti, and the Fight for Caribbean Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

[20] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

[21] "Repetitions are necessary to produce and sustain the coherence of human communities and their members' sense of belonging. Ritual is one of the most important forms of repetition." Christophe Wolff, "The Movement in Repetition: Incorporation through Mimetic, Ritual and Imaginative Movements," *Gestalt Theory*, vol. 42, no. 2 (2020): 87–100.

[22] Christophe Wolff, "The Movement in Repetition: Incorporation through Mimetic, Ritual and Imaginative Movements."


Aida