Timing Diaspora, Diasporic Art in Two Acts:
Examining Black and Caribbean Diasporic Temporality

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Submitted to OCAD University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Contemporary Art, Design, and New Media Art Histories

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2024

Abstract

This MRP explores the temporal dynamics of Black and Caribbean diasporic art through two independent chapters. The first chapter focuses on the work of the Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) Collective, a multidisciplinary creative enterprise founded in 2014 in Philadelphia, PA, by musician and poet Camae Ayewa (Moor Mother) and community activist and housing lawyer Rasheedah Phillips. Through their self-publications and creative manifestos, the BQF Collective investigates applications of Afrofuturist theory, quantum mechanics, and Indigenous African theories of time to the production of community, Black, queer, and womanist futures. This chapter interrogates BQF theory and practice as a potent tool for challenging conventional Western timelines and time consciousness, offering avenues for the creation of alternative temporalities and temporal liberation for Black individuals. Particular attention is given to the application of BQF theory in the Black Quantum Futurism Collective's *Time Zone Protocols* project and *Prime Meridian Unconference*. Here, I argue that BQF theory delineates a visionary and retrospective philosophy with a chronopolitically urgent practice.

The second chapter presents an examination of three exhibitions of Caribbean diasporic art that took place in and around Toronto, Ontario within the last three years. These include *Fragments of Epic Memory* (2021-2022) at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), *Kept Alive Within Us* (2023) at the Art Gallery of Guelph (AGG), and *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art, 1950s–Now* (2023-2024) at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In this chapter, I contend that the curatorial organization of *Fragments*, *Kept Alive Within Us*, and *Life Between Islands* positions the artworks in relation to a diasporic perspective, specifically as a result of the exhibitions' temporal framing. Time and temporality denote underexamined areas of diasporic and Caribbean (diasporic) art history, even though time and temporality intertwine with all facets and determinates of cultural identity. For diasporic individuals, this relationship to time is doubly mediated due to what I identify as a "diasporic temporality," which results from the interpolation of two incommensurable cultural time-spaces—that of the host land and that of the homeland. In this way, diaspora may be characterized as a spatial and temporal condition. By recognizing diaspora as a temporal and spatial condition, (characterized by the experience of "dwelling-in-dischronotopicality"), I underscore the complexity of diasporic experience and the necessity of a pluri-temporal approach to holistically assessing diasporic art. Later, I also examine the implications and limitations of positioning non-diasporic art under a diasporic temporality.

Acknowledgements

This MRP would not have been possible without the thoughtful contributions and support of my primary supervisor, Ésery Mondésir, and my secondary reader, Dr. Jim Drobnick. Thank you both for your insight and criticism; it has made this paper better than what I could've done alone.

I am grateful for the opportunity to safely complete this degree and continue my education, in recognition of the ongoing colonial violence and ethnic and cultural genocides in Palestine, Congo, Sudan, Manipur, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Ukraine, and Canada (Turtle Island), among others.

Thank you to my family and friends for alternatively cheering me on and calling me "sick" for doing this, (you know who you are). That made me laugh.

And thank you to the OCAD community and CADN program. I've had fun.

Table of Contents

Whose Time Is It Anyway? Temporality and the Liberatory Politics of Black Quantum Futurism Theory and Practice

Within the fields of art history and cultural theory, the aesthetic and philosophy of Afrofuturism attends to the collective concerns and futures of the African diaspora, as seen through artistic or literary examinations of the intersections of technoculture, science fiction, and speculative futurism. The Black Quantum Futurism (BQF) Collective — founded in 2014 in Philadelphia, PA, by musician and poet Camae Ayewa (Moor Mother) and community activist and housing lawyer Rasheedah Phillips — is a multidisciplinary creative enterprise, whose prolific practice investigates applications of Afrofuturist theory to the production of community, Black, queer, and womanist futures. Through their publications and creative manifestos, Black Quantum Futurism theory and practice emerge as an innovative synthesis of Afrofuturist discourse that integrates elements from quantum mechanics and Indigenous African theories of time and event progression to construct a handbook of temporal manipulation strategies for equitable futures.

This chapter considers BQF theory and practice as a potent tool for challenging conventional Western timelines and time consciousness, offering avenues for the creation of alternative futures, historiographies, and temporal liberation for Black individuals. Particular attention is given to BQF theory's application in generating alternative temporal orientations and collective futurisms, as seen in the Black Quantum Futurism Collective's *Time Zone Protocols* project and *Prime Meridian Unconference*. I also assess BQF theory's implications for developing Black diasporic temporal epistemologies, specifically as it relates to the BQF theory's wholesale rejection of "progress narratives." In short, I suggest that Black Quantum

Futurism theory delineates a visionary and retrospective philosophy with a chronopolitically urgent praxis.

I. Temporal Meditations: On the Colonization of Time and History

One of the great myths of modern capitalism is that we all share the same time —that the twenty-four hours of the day are not only equally accessible to all but that they demarcate a fundamental ordering of the world, one that is simultaneously natural, rational, and hierarchical. This understanding of time follows a linear unidirectional progression from "zero time" [1] to infinite time, and unlike acceleration, progresses at a consistent rate. I mention the hierarchical aspect of time for the ways in which we are accustomed to measuring time: through seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years. For clarity and ease of writing, I refer to this hierarchical sense of time as "clock time."[2] The mechanical clock has two functions: (1) regulating time and (2) synchronizing a temporal consciousness. Rasheedah Phillips notes that this linear, hierarchical time sense "is built into our language, behavior, and thought."[3] While early forms of time keeping devices such as lunar calendars and sundials have been in use since antiquity, the mechanical clock and clock time originates in the early 14th century—as does Western time consciousness.[4] As studies on the history of time and capitalism have shown, the

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[1] Nikitah Okembe-R. A. Imani, "The Implications of Africa-Centered Conceptions of Time and Space for Quantitative Theorizing: Limitations of Paradigmatically-Bound Philosophical Meta-Assumptions," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 5, no. 4 (June 15, 2012): 102.

[2] For an explanation of clock time and its relation to temporal culture see Tamar Avnet and Anne-Laure Sellier, "Clock Time vs. Event Time: Temporal Culture or Self-Regulation?," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 47, no. 3 (May 1, 2011): 665–67, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.01.006.

[3] Rasheedah Phillips, "Constructing a Theory and Practice of Black Quantum Futurism," in *Black Quantum Futurism Theory and Practice Vol. I*, comp. by Rasheedah Phillips, (The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2015), 12.

[4] "The Invention of Time: Mechanical Clocks and the Age of the Manuscript | Getty360 Calendar," The J. Paul Getty in Los Angeles, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.getty.edu/visit/cal/events/ev_3354.html.

invention of the clock and "clock time" are inextricably connected to class oppression, imperialism, colonialism, and by extension, slavery.[5]

For example, in the late 19th century, the establishment of Greenwich Mean Time provided a way to synchronize the project of British imperialism. Historian Emily J. Manktelow writes that the "temporal hubris"[6] of Greenwich Mean Time, (launched by the British Empire in 1884 as an "international standard of civil time"[7]),

> was not only practical and mechanical - based on scientific knowledge tethered to imperial advance through the discovery of longitude and thus imperial seafaring - but both created and relied upon a particular *culture of time* [emphasis added]: a temporal ideology that linked the harnessing of time with enlightenment and productivity …exported throughout the world as an elemental part of colonial culture.[8]

Productivity thus became elevated as a reflection of cultural value, encouraging colonized cultures to adopt colonial temporal logics as superior to their own. Greenwich Mean Time was replaced by Coordinated Universal Time in 1972, however for nearly ninety years of seafaring and mapmaking, Greenwich, England was the center of the world, (the Longitudinal 0º).[9] As historian Giordano Nanni notes,

> At the most fundamental level, therefore, time was both a tool and a channel for the incorporation of human subjects within the colonizers' master narrative; for conscripting human subjects within the matrix of the capitalist economy and ushering 'savages' and superstitious 'heathens' into an age of modernity.[10]

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[5] Rasheedah Phillips, "Dismantling the Master(s) Clock(work) Universe(s)," in *Space-Time Collapse I: From the Congo to the Carolinas*, ed. Dominique Matti and Rasheedah Phillips, (The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2016), 27. See also Vanessa Ogle, Time, Temporality and the History of Capitalism, Past & Present, Volume 243, Issue 1, May 2019, Pages 312–327, https://doi-org.ocadu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz014 & J. M. Blaut, "Colonialism and the Rise of Capitalism." *Science & Society* 53, no. 3 (1989): 260–96.

[6] Giordano Nanni, *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the Empire* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2012), 3.

[7] "What Is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) - and Why Does It Matter? | Royal Museums Greenwich," accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/greenwich-mean-time-gmt.

[8] Emily J. Manktelow, Review of *Colonising Time*, by Giordano Nanni. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, no. 3 (2014): 649–50.

[9] Maps—like clocks—do not represent innate facets or divisions of natural space/time; rather, they are tools of standardization and control.

[10] Nanni, *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the Empire*, 4.

Nanni's assessment of the function of time in empire building contextualizes the role of the clock as a tool of control. This temporal manipulation manifests to its most extreme extent through its application to the control of enslaved populations.

Take for instance the chattel slave economy of the United States, which relied upon mechanical clock time as a form of physical and psychological control over enslaved Africans. Walter Johnson, a researcher of African and African American studies, notes that "one of the many things slaveholders thought they owned was their slaves' time; indeed, to outline the temporal claims that slaveholders made upon their slaves is to draw a multidimensional portrait of slavery itself." [11] From their daily work schedules to holidays and holy days, to plantation cycles and even biological clocks, slaveholders "defined the shape of the day" for the enslaved.[12] Those who resisted what Phillips calls "the master('s) clock" [13] were met with violence, coercion, or starvation. While the enslaved were forced to internalize the master('s) clock for their survival, they also fought against it by slowing down their work, running away, feigning sickness, worshipping, or delaying conception.[14] Through these acts of revolt and rebellion, the enslaved imagined futures for themselves; and as Johnson says, "imagined themselves into time."[15] The Black Quantum Futurism Collective similarly harnesses and reappropriates the liberatory potential of time for the benefit of Black creative practitioners. Through their art, exhibitions, and research-creation projects, the BQF Collective imagines equitable and healthy futures for marginalized communities.

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[11] Walter Johnson, "Time and Revolution in African America: Temporality and the History of Atlantic Slavery," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), Accessed December 13, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central.
[12] Johnson, "Time and Revolution in African America: Temporality and the History of Atlantic Slavery," 5.
[13] Phillips, "Dismantling the Master('s) Clock(work) Universe(s)," 28.
[14] Johnson, "Time and Revolution in African America: Temporality and the History of Atlantic Slavery," 5.
[15] Ibid., 5.

II. Boundless Time: Future Present, Future Memory

Before continuing into an analysis of BQF theory, it may prove edifying to frame this discussion within the lens and discourse of Afrofuturism. To summarize, Afrofuturism denotes an aesthetic and philosophy that blends science fiction and technology with Afrocentric narratives to imagine alternative futures for Black people outside of trauma of colonialization. In Afrofuturism, science fiction operates as a site of empowerment for Black artists and a discursive catalyst in revealing, or contending with, the experiences of Black dislocation, alienation, and estrangement.[16] Rooted in science fiction and futurology, Afrofuturism, (and the *afrofutures* it produces), operates as a chronopolitical philosophy. In other words, the goal of Afrofuturism is to take back time. Critic and curator Kodwo Eshun writes on Afrofuturism and the politics of time, arguing that, "The powerful employ futurists and draw power from the futures they endorse, thereby condemning the disempowered to live in the past. The present moment is stretching, slipping for some into yesterday, reaching for others into tomorrow."[17] Following this statement by Eshun, Black Quantum Futurism enters as a practice that allows African-descended people to "see into" and choose their futures, rather than being condemned to the past.

According to the creative manifesto for Black Quantum Futurism theory and practice, BQF "vision and practice derives its facets, tenets, and qualities from quantum physics, futurist traditions, and Black/African cultural traditions of consciousness, time, and space" to develop strategies of temporal resistance.[18] BQF creative practitioners utilize the tools of future visioning, future altering, and future manifestation to determine their course of action in the present by

[16] Kodwo Eshun, "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 2 (2003): 297.
[17] Eshun, "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism," 289.
[18] Phillips, "Constructing a Theory and Practice of Black Quantum Futurism," 11-12.

working backward from the futures they want to happen. The three modes of BQF practice are defined as follows:

1. Future Visioning: Through this mode of practice, you increase the 'knowability' of the future by being able to see it with more visual clarity than normal. This mode involves little to no deviation of the future, just increased accuracy in visualizing it. With future visioning, you continue to live out the vision of the future already set, choosing the path of least resistance; however, you know with a greater degree of sensory certainty just how that future will unfold.
2. Future Altering: This mode of practice involves a narrow deviation from the present reality, using what is already available and statistically probable in order to choose the future from a small subset of probable futures.
3. Future Manifestation: This mode of practice involves the greatest degree of creativity, allowing the practitioner to build the future up step by step, piece by piece.[19]

Black Quantum Futurism theory and practice envisions time as flowing cyclically from the future to the present, from the present to the past, and from the past to the future. BQF future visioning, altering, and manifestation occurs in the instant when the future meets the present, allowing the practitioner to shape the future in the present. These strategies are rooted in the principle of retrocausality, (or backward causation), a concept borrowed from the field of quantum mechanics.

The principle of retrocausality can be seen in the behavior of entangled particles, wherein attempting to predict the position and momentum of one particle, the second particle's measurement will be affected, (and therefore cannot be accurately determined). Put differently, this concept suggests that the effect of an event can precede its cause.[20] Drawing on the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, theoretical physicist Rod Sutherland clarifies that the logic of the theory of retrocausality "is reinforced by a second familiar aspect of quantum mechanics: that measurements not only provide information about a particle's quantum state, but also exert an

[19] Ibid., 17.
[20] Jan Faye, "Backward Causation," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Summer 2024 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2024), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2024/entries/causation-backwards/.

influence which can change that state."[21] BQF theory unifies the principle of retrocausality with astrological, genealogical, and ecological readings of time from African spiritual and cultural traditions, and taps into communal and ancestral memory as metaphysical agents for reshaping the future present.[22] The Swahili concepts of *sasa* (immediate past, present, future) and *zamani* (eternal past, present, future) time appear to have the largest influence over BQF event-building strategies. When applied to a linear timeline, BQF altered time consciousness, (as seen through future visioning, altering, and manifestation), shifts the rhythms and speed at which events unfold. BQF event-building uses "sense impressions" such as taste, touch, sight, smell, and feeling/emotion to construct future memories, which, through BQF event mapping, will collapse into the present at a predetermined date and time.[23] Within the context of the BQF Collective's community engagements and numerous research-creation projects, the creation of future memories using event mapping—as an approach to generating radical futurisms—allows BQF creatives to combat collective experiences and memories of institutionalized temporal deprivation. BQF's *Time Zone Protocols* research project, exhibition, and *Prime Meridian Unconference* supplies an entry point for BQF theory's application to public memory discourse and the role of art in creating alternative temporal orientations.

Held from April 15-17, 2022, at the Parsons School of Design in New York City, the *Time Zone Protocols* (TZP) exhibition and *Prime Meridian Unconference* was at once a public event and a collaborative research-creation project, organized and facilitated by Black Quantum

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[21] Rod Sutherland, "Retrocausality: How Backwards-in-Time Effects Could Explain Quantum Weirdness," *Research Outreach* (blog), February 10, 2023, https://researchoutreach.org/articles/retrocausality-backwards-time-effects-explain-quantum-weirdness/.
[22] Phillips, "Dismantling the Master(s) Clock(work) Universe(s)," 20 and Moor Mother Goddess, "Forethought," in *Black Quantum Futurism Theory and Practice Vol. I*, comp. by Rasheedah Phillips, (The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2015), 8.
[23] Phillips, "Constructing a Theory and Practice of Black Quantum Futurism," 25.

Futurism Collective member Rasheedah Philips. During the *Unconference*, participants gathered for three days to explore the implications of the 1884 International Meridian Conference (IMC), a convening that led to the establishment of Greenwich Mean Time as a universal temporal standard and Greenwich, England as Longitudinal 0º.[24] The *Unconference* resulted in the creation of sixteen experimental "time zone protocols"[25] based on participant-generated temporal mapping and orientation strategies.[26] "Protocol 2: "Bending SpaceTime with Botanicals," for example—developed by bioregional herbalist Asia Dorsey—observes, "The nature of time is rooted in our bodies and our bodies are rooted in each other as miraculous manifestations of nature;" to that end, "time cannot exist without us as observer…our physical bodies are in relation to all bodies around us including those of plants."[27] By grounding spacetime in plants, Dorsey decenters anthropocentric conceptualizations of time. Protocol 2 suggests that plants' mobility allows them to access a "multiplicity of timelines and collapse based on signals of need."[28] Through the lens of plants, time becomes a relational embodied experience.

For the BQF Collective, community-centered praxis grounds their work in Black communal futures. Consequently, what is present most significantly in BQF theory and practice are methodologies for creating collective future memories for disenfranchised, poor, and racialized groups. In other words, the aim of the BQF Collective is to rewrite African American collective memory. Scholar Andreas Huyssen comments on the importance of public memory discourse stating,

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[24] "Home," Time Zone Protocols, accessed May 5, 2024, https://timezoneprotocols.space/.
[25] The word "protocols" is defined as "a draft set of agreements, approaches, strategies, tactics, lenses, experiments, rituals, and/or tools." See the "Evolving Time Zone Protocols" document from the Black Quantum Futurism: Time Zone Protocols exhibition and Prime Meridian Unconference, April 4–18, 2022 at the Parsons School of Design, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery. Visit https://timezoneprotocols.space/diy/.
[26] See Appendix A for list of Protocols.
[27] "Evolving Time Zone Protocols," 1.
[28] Ibid. 1.

> It is precisely the function of public memory discourses to allow individuals to break out of traumatic repetitions. Human rights activism, truth commissions, and juridical proceedings are better methods for dealing with historical trauma [than Freudian psychoanalysis]. Another is the creation of objects, artworks, memorials, [and] public spaces of commemoration.[29]

The *Prime Meridian Unconference* presents one such example of public memory discourse and public commemoration. The BQF Collective's installations, exhibitions, and artwork—such as their *Nonlinear Histories & Quantum Futures* (2020) interactive outdoor stage and *Oral Futures Booth* (2020) for *Manifesta 13* Marseille in 2020—invites viewers to immerse themselves in alternate temporal realities. The BQF Collective's *Nonlinear Histories & Quantum Futures* outdoor installation consists of three circle platforms resembling watches, two of which are collaged with images of found objects and archival material from *Jet* and *Ebony* magazine (circa 1962-1972), as well as images from BQF's *Temporal Disruptors* series, a collection of custom watches inspired by Black women scientists and medical professionals.[30] The largest stage design was inspired by cosmograms, which are maps used to depict the physical and spiritual universes,[31] and contains an interactive element with dials that sync to visitors' movements.[32] The installation is covered with a roof, which depicts a reproduction of the BQF Collective's Community Futures Lab event map, a diagram that illustrates various yet fluid temporal positions to be used in event mapping. The *Oral Futures Booth*, the second half of the BQF Collective's *Manifesta 13* Marseille commission, was installed at French politician Alexandre Labadié's former office as an audio archive and recording booth. Visitors can listen to oral

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[29] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 9.
[30] Black Quantum Futurism, 2020. "'Nonlinear Histories & Quantum Futures' Interactive communal outdoor stage commission by #BlackQuantumFuturism in front of Palais Longchamp in Marseille France." Facebook, September 16, 2020. https://www.facebook.com/blackquantumfuturism/posts/nonlinear-histories-quantum-futures-interactive-communal-outdoor-stage-commissio/3389902147738069/.
[31] "Black Quantum Futurism* – Manifesta 13 Marseille," accessed May 5, 2024, https://manifesta13.org/participants/black-quantum-futurism/index.html.
[32] "What Is a Cosmogram?," accessed May 5, 2024, http://cosmogramofharlem.weebly.com/what-is-a-cosmogram.html.

histories of housing, land, and public spaces in Marseille or record their own visions for the future.[33] As *Time Zone Protocols* and these projects exemplify, the underlying goal of BQF theory and practice is undoubtably the temporal liberation of marginalized Black communities.

Ultimately, BQF theory and practice challenges the colonial temporal logics which lock Black people out of the future and enable their historic marginalization and dispossession. The BQF Collective's focus on making BQF theory practical and accessible to Black communities led to the development of a framework they call *community futurisms*.[34] The Community Futures Lab, which opened in North Philadelphia in 2016, probed the temporal dynamics, rhythms, and memories of the Brewerytown-Sharswood neighborhood through community workshops and "oral histories/futures" interviews.[35] In a recent editorial for *Generosity.org*, Rasheedah Phillips reflects on the objectives of BQF community futurisms:

> Applying a Black quantum futurist lens to communal temporalities works to reappropriate time, stealing back time to actively create a vision of the future for marginalized people who are typically denied…creative control over the temporal mode of the future, and redefining that future's relationship to the past and present.[36]

The necessity of community futurisms subsists on the fact that temporal deprivation can be inherited; similarly to the way generational wealth compounds over time, inherited temporal deprivation can intensify intergenerational poverty and restrict access to healthy futures.[37] All facets of time, whether physically experienced or not, determine an individual's experience of

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[33] "Black Quantum Futurism* – Manifesta 13 Marseille."
[34] "Community Futurisms/Community FuturesLab," blackquantumfuturism, accessed May 5, 2024, https://www.blackquantumfuturism.com/community-futurisms.
[35] "About FuturesLab.Community | Community Futures," accessed December 18, 2023, https://futureslab.community/about.
[36] Rasheedah Phillips, "Time Is Key: Applying a Black Quantum Futurist Lens to Understanding Solutions to Housing Inequality," Generocity, June 9, 2021, https://generocity.org/philly/2021/06/09/time-is-key-applying-a-black-quantum-futurist-lens-to-understanding-solutions-to-housing-inequality/.
[37] Arts · at · CERN, "Black Quantum Futurism: Black Diasporan temporalities share many parallels with quantum principles," accessed November 2, 2023, https://arts.cern/article/black-quantum-futurism-black-diasporan-temporalities-share-many-parallels-quantum.

the "now." BQF theory and practice intervenes in the present and supplies practitioners with tools to take control of that time.

III. Creating Black Temporal Ontologies and Epistemologies

From a historiographical perspective, Black Quantum Futurism theory highlights how ideas of the past, present, and future can be used to restrict the emergence of narratives that run counter to hegemonic Western timelines and keep Black and Indigenous communities locked out of the future. The socially and culturally constructed nature of time demands that we in the humanities examine time as a facet of historical scholarship. Black diasporic and Indigenous cultural and artistic production must therefore be analyzed within their own temporal registers, not flattened into Western timelines. Rasheedah Philips describes the spatiotemporal orientation of African Americans in terms of a "Duboisian double consciousness," a result from the lingering trauma of the transatlantic slave trade. Having been forced to adapt to a colonial temporal logic that divests Black people of a past and future, Phillips contends that post-emancipation African Americans developed "a split spatiotemporal consciousness," leading to the emergence of "Colored People's (CP) Time."[38] The short definition of CP Time denotes the class and race-based temporal orientation of *presentism*. Within the context of the African American community, the imposition of a presentist orientation denotes a criticism of African Americans' supposed lack of concern with future matters. CP Time, in Phillip's view, depicts a form of temporal disorientation and coping mechanism caused by the traumatic legacy of slavery.[39] The temporal estrangement and dislocation of enslaved Africans from their homes

[38] Phillips, "Dismantling the Master(s) Clock(work) Universe(s)," 24.
[39] Phillips describes the transatlantic slave trade as "the first great Indigenous African Space-Time Splintering, a long wave form of trauma that continues to spread, touching the present day" in "Dismantling the Master(s) Clock(work) Universe(s)," 19.

produces an insidious form of temporal deprivation, which divests Black people of their temporal autonomy and self-determination. Temporal deprivation works together with capitalism and white supremacy to impose a hierarchy of the temporally wealthy and temporally poor. Those at the bottom of the hierarchy are positioned as "behind the times" or "living in the past," with no stake in the present or future. Those at the top dictate who time passes for and who has access to the future. The imperative to create counter-temporalities becomes clear when seen through the lens of counter-histories and Afrofuturist theory and practice.

The tradition of writing counter histories is inextricably linked to future-oriented critical inquiry. Kodwo Eshun details the visionary and retrospective currents of Afrofuturism, underscoring that in the early 21st century, "inquiry into production of futures becomes fundamental, rather than trivial. Afrofuturism…aims to extend that tradition [of counter-memory] by reorienting the intercultural vectors of Black Atlantic temporality towards the proleptic as much as the retrospective."[40] Here Eshun underscores the role temporality plays in the field of Black Atlantic studies, which by and large focuses on the impact of *geographic* displacement through the transatlantic slave trade in the construction of Black Atlantic diasporic history and culture. The dimension of time, or the idea of temporal displacement, attracts significantly less attention. As a result, the history of the Black Diaspora is rooted in, and routed through, the temporal logics of the Middle Passage. Rarely though is the dominance of this narrative ever questioned, despite its epistemological limitations as a form of a linear progress narrative. Author Michelle M. Wright posits the conflation of Enlightenment philosophical progress narratives and epistemologies of the African Diaspora. "Progress narratives," Wright argues, begin with determining a "metaorigin," and subsequently, "all ensuing historical events

[40] Eshun, "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism," 289.

are understood as a series of causes and effects that eventually relate back to this origin."[41] Historically, progress narratives played an important in the articulation of shared Black culture and African diasporic history. To combat white supremacist claims to history, (absurdly enough, to the project of history in its totality), and to the positioning of Black people within the presentist framework, Black intellectuals, such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Gilroy embraced what Wright calls "the Middle Passage Epistemology (MPE)."[42] In short, the Middle Passage Epistemology traces the metaorigin of the Black Diaspora to the transatlantic slave trade, where "our yardstick of progress [measures] how far away we are" from chattel slavery.[43] Wright expounds on these claims by positioning Blackness in time and space, demonstrating how the concept of Blackness is a product of social discourse rather than biology, thus exposing the limitations of MPE's representations of Black collective identity.

The existence of progress narratives in Western and African diasporic history accentuates the transformational potential of community-seeded collective memory. As Moor Mother Goddess of the Black Quantum Futurism Collective asks, what if communities had the power to dictate what becomes history—what if they could choose what they remember and what they forget?[44] Eshun explains the implications of Afrofuturist historical revisionism as follows:

> By creating temporal complications and anachronistic episodes that disturb the linear time of progress, these futurisms adjust the temporal logics that condemned black subjects to prehistory. Chronopolitically

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[41] Michelle M. Wright, "Black in Time: Exploring New Ontologies, New Dimensions, New Epistemologies of the African Diaspora," in *Black Quantum Futurism Theory & Practice Vol. II*, comp. Rasheedah Phillips, (The Afrofuturist Affair/House of Future Sciences Books, 2021), 18-19. Reprint from American Anthropology Association, *Transforming Anthropology* 18, no. 1, (April 2010): 70-73.

[42] Wright, however, is not the first scholar to coin this term. It instead comes from the following citation: Annette Henry, "'There's Saltwater in Our Blood': The 'Middle Passage Epistemology of Two Black Mothers Regarding the Spiritual Education of Their Daughters," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 19, no. 3, (May-June 2006): 329-345.

[43] Wright, "Black in Time," 19.

[44] "What do we choose to remember and what are we trying to forget? What memories are forced upon us and what memories are we forced to forget?" Moor Mother Goddess, "Forethought," 7.

> speaking, these revisionist historicities may be understood as a series of powerful competing futures that infiltrate the present at different rates.[45]

Ultimately, at stake are not only our memories of the past, but our visions for the future. Rather than relying on hegemonic progress narratives, BQF community futurisms reposition the starting point for thinking through time and ideas of past, present, and future by forcing us to interrogate whose past, present, and future we are living.

In short, BQF theory and practice provides tools for exploring the overlapping and entangled timelines/timescapes that comprise our contemporary moment. BQF creative practitioners combat histories of temporal deprivation utilizing BQF event-building strategies, thereby rejecting the inescapability and inevitability of colonialist timelines in favor of visionary Afrofutures. The BQF Collective's *Nonlinear Histories & Quantum Futures* and *Oral Futures Booth* demonstrate the importance of cultivating community-based memory and futurity, while their *Time Zone Protocols* project offers avenues for exploring alternative temporalities outside of linear progressive narratives. The BQF Time Zone Protocols project presents an entry point for the development of Black diasporic temporal epistemologies; however, due to the sheer abundance and diversity of these protocols, codifying them will likely prove challenging. The socially and culturally constructed nature of time requires that we in the humanities examine temporality as a facet of historical scholarship. Further considerations on Black diasporic temporal consciousness should also consider gender and sexuality as intersectional frames. The Black Quantum Futurism Collective's *Black Womxn Temporal* web-based research creation portal investigates Black womanist (and queer) temporalities and may prove a good place to start.

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[45] Eshun, "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism," 297.

On Curating Dischronotopicality: Organizing Time and Temporality in Exhibitions of Caribbean Diasporic Art

In three recent pan-Caribbean and Caribbean diasporic art exhibitions in and around Toronto, Ontario, the voices of several generations of Caribbean artists have found deep resonances with the local Black and Caribbean diasporic populations. *Fragments of Epic Memory* (2021-2022) at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), curated by Dr. Julie Crooks of the AGO, was a major group exhibition that featured the work of twenty-seven modern and contemporary Caribbean and Caribbean diasporic artists, positioned alongside a selection of over two hundred historical photographs from across the Caribbean. The exhibition commemorated the AGO's acquisition of the Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs, a historic collection of photography and ephemera totaling over 3,500 objects; over $300,000 worth of acquisition funds were raised by members of the public to purchase the collection, which boasts an array of daguerreotypes, lantern slides, stereographs, albums, postcards, and prints.[46]

Kept Alive Within Us (2023) at the Art Gallery of Guelph (AGG) marks another Caribbean group exhibition initiated in Ontario. *Kept Alive Within Us*, curated by independent curator and writer Sally Frater, investigated the customs and rituals of the everyday and natural world that artists of Caribbean ancestry engage in. The exhibition "attests to forms of cultural resilience and survival that disrupt and resituate how the Caribbean is encountered and perceived within the West," while emphasizing "the ways in which West African cultural knowledge and customs are embedded within the practice of daily life throughout this southern geography and

[46] According to an AGO press release on the acquisition in 2019, of the twenty-seven donors who contributed, most are members of the Black and Caribbean communities in Toronto. "AGO Acquires World Class Collection of Historical Caribbean Photographs," Art Gallery of Ontario, June 5, 2019, https://ago.ca/press-release/ago-acquires-world-class-collection-historical-caribbean-photographs.

its diaspora."[47] The final exhibition that I note here, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art, 1950s–Now* (2023-2024), celebrates the work of over forty Caribbean diasporic artists and explores their impact on British art, culture, and society.[48] *Life Between Islands* was staged at the Art Gallery of Ontario from 2023-2024, although the first staging of this exhibition occurred at Tate Britain from 2021-2022.

Fragments of Epic Memory, *Kept Alive Within Us*, and *Life Between Islands* represent a significant step in increased institutional representation for Black, Caribbean, and Caribbean diasporic (or Caribbean Canadian) art histories; however, the development of nuanced narratives and criticisms of modern and contemporary Caribbean art histories are in their early stages. The history of Caribbean immigration to Canada goes back to the late 18th century, with the history of forced displacement even earlier to the 17th century.[49] Today, Canada is home to many immigrants from the English, French, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Toronto in particular, hosts a large settled Caribbean diasporic population as a popular destination for English-speaking Caribbean immigrants (the majority of whom come from Jamaica).[50] The cultural, political, and economic influence of Caribbean immigrants on Canadian, and indeed, Torontonian life, is evident in the manifold of cultural festivals related to the Caribbean that occur throughout the year, as well as the presence, (past and current), of businesses and community hubs throughout

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[47] Art Gallery of Guelph, "Kept Alive Within Us," AGG, accessed May 6, 2024, https://artgalleryofguelph.ca/exhibition/kept-alive-within-us/.
[48] Tate, "Life Between Islands | Tate Britain," Tate, accessed May 6, 2024, https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/life-between-islands.
[49] See "BPHC – A Black People's History of Canada," accessed May 6, 2024, https://www.blackpeopleshistory.ca/
[50] Statistics Canada Government of Canada, "Jamaica and Canada: Connected by People, Travel and Trade," February 3, 2023, https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/2880-jamaica-and-canada-connected-people-travel-and-trade.

the city.[51] In the context of Toronto, Caribbean art exhibitions attain greater significance as they closely connect with and reflect the communities that live here.

Although the concept of the "Caribbean art exhibition" lacks a strict definition, the designation of "Caribbean art" signifies an inherent cultural tie an artist maintains to the region through their lived experience, memory, and/or genealogy. Due to the heterogeneity of Caribbean art and identity, Caribbean art exhibitions tend to overlap with explorations of Caribbean culture and history, and often gravitate to themes of land, geography, colonialism, indigeneity, identity, representation, globalization, and diaspora as threads of commonality.[52] Rarely, though, is the relation of time and temporality to Caribbean life and identity explicitly probed as a matter of curatorial importance. Time and temporality (defined here as one's relationship to time) constitute the fabric of lived reality, and therefore intertwine with all facets and determinates of cultural identity. For diasporic individuals, this relationship to time is doubly mediated as a result of what I identify as a "diasporic temporality," which results from the interpolation of two incommensurable cultural time-spaces—that of the host land and that of the homeland. In this way, diaspora may be characterized as a spatial and temporal condition.

Previous research on diasporas by scholars of the social sciences tend to prioritize geographic displacement and mobility as key to understanding diasporic identity formation, while existing literature from the fields of cultural analysis, anthropology, and literary criticism recognizes temporal displacement as a constitutive dimension of diasporic identity. Cultural analyst Esther Peeren notes the lack of consideration to issues of temporality in definitions of

[51] Kensington Market, Little Jamaica/Eglinton West corridor, and Bathurst-Bloor Street, (also known as "Blackhurst"), are historic Black and Caribbean neighborhoods in Toronto.
[52] This list is by no means exhaustive.

diaspora, which primarily order diasporas around physical displacement from a homeland, writing that,

> [Anne-Marie] Fortier's...coagulation of time and space into "timespace" displaces their usual reduction to cause and effect (spatial displacement resulting in temporal disorientation) and signals their inextricable linkage in the production and reproduction of diaspora consciousness. Her usage of timespace links with concrete places and times, but also bears on the constructions of time-space so intrinsic to diasporic living and diasporic memory.[53]

From this, Peeren proposes a conceptualization of diasporic identity utilizing Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the "chronotope;"[54] diasporic communal identity, she suggests, "[is] predicated on an enforced separation not only from a particular location or place in space and in time, but also from the...construction of time-space through which a community conceptualizes its surroundings and its own place in them."[55] Diasporic individuals may therefore be described as "dwelling-in-dischronotopicality."[56] The effects of this "dwelling-in-dischronotopicality" can be seen in real-time in diasporic art and literature, as diasporic cultural production frequently explores concepts of return, estrangement, nostalgia, longing, alienation, existential rootlessness, absence, and their effects on identity.[57]

Returning to the exhibitions, *Fragments of Epic Memory*, *Kept Alive Within Us*, and *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art, 1950s–Now*, I argue that it is not just the content or the artists who identify the exhibitions as from a Caribbean diasporic perspective, but it is the curatorial *framing/structure/interventions* which position the artworks as being in relation to this expression of time, of "dwelling-in-dischronotopicality," or in other words, of "diasporic time."

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[53] Esther Peeren, "Through the Lens of the Chronotope: Suggestions for a Spatio-Temporal Perspective on Diaspora," in *Diaspora and Memory* (Brill, 2006), 67, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401203807_007.
[54] In Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*, he defines the word "chronotope" as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature." Bakhtin, M.M. "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996, 84.
[55] Peeren, "Through the Lens of the Chronotope," 68.
[56] Ibid., 68.
[57] Saritha Samuel and Rashmi Pulizala, "Diaspora in Indian Writings in English: A Study," *International Journal of Creative Thoughts* 11, no. 3 (March 2023), 36.

Fragments of Epic Memory's curatorial arrangement eschews linear chronology in favor of an approach which strategically positions the modern and contemporary artworks in relation to the historical photographs in the gallery, thus encouraging a dynamic temporal movement that unlocks the separation between the past, present, and future to be viewed simultaneously; the thematic groupings in *Fragments* further underscore this methodology. The dislocation in *Fragments* from any temporal center demonstrates its application of diaspora theory's two models of continuous and fragmented time, thereby cementing its diasporic perspective.[58] *Kept Alive Within Us* clearly expresses a diasporic perspective in its curatorial statement[59] and thematically engages a diasporic temporality in its considerations of ritual, customs, cultural knowledge, and memory, (framed in terms of resilience and survival). The final exhibition to be discussed, *Life Between Islands*, exhibits a diasporic temporality through its close study of the lives and conditions of a specific diasporic artist population— that of the British-Caribbean diaspora. *Life Between Islands* combines a linear chronology with non-linear thematic groupings, resulting in a curatorial temporal scheme that curator Alex Farquharson describes as *spiralic*. The curatorial decision to build around diasporic perspectives signals the exhibitions as embodying a Caribbean diasporic temporality as opposed to a localized temporality. The

[58] As an explanatory device, diasporic theory responds to different moments in history and can serve distinct objectives relating to how we construct meaning out of the past. The historical aspect of diasporic theory questions just how much emphasis should be placed on originary roots, and generally falls between two models of continuous or fragmented time. Continuous time models of diaspora have resulted in the growth of critical discourses around the Black Atlantic, the négritude movement, and Pan-Africanism. By contrast, créolité, hybridity, assemblage, and spidering reflect the mid to late 20th century prioritization of disruption, discontinuity, fragmentation, and rupture.
[59] From the curatorial statement of *Kept Alive Within Us*: "*Kept Alive Within Us* attests to forms of cultural resilience and survival that disrupt and resituate how the Caribbean is encountered and perceived within the West." See Art Gallery of Guelph, "Kept Alive Within Us."

intentional decision to frame the artworks from a diasporic perspective should be remarked upon, as each exhibition contains at least one artist living or based in the Caribbean.[60]

Here, I assert that the analysis of diasporic art must involve a consideration of time and temporality as a constitutive factor of its production (this, in addition to the more commonly accepted dimension of place/geography). Caribbean diasporic art results from the artistic production of Caribbean diasporic individuals; thus, any consideration of this art form must also take stock of the conditions which inform the production of that identity. By recognizing diaspora as a temporal and spatial condition, (characterized by geographic and temporal displacement from a "home country"), I underscore the complexity of diasporic experience and the necessity of a pluri-temporal approach to holistically assessing diasporic art. Later, I also examine the implications of positioning non-diasporic art under a diasporic temporality and suggest possible alternative frames for temporalizing Caribbean art apart from the diasporic and localized perspectives.

Case 1: Fragments of Epic Memory

In the exhibition *Fragments of Epic Memory* at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the theme of positionality underscores the curatorial decision to contrast historical photographs of the Caribbean with modern and contemporary works by artists of the Caribbean diaspora. Curator Julie Crooks prefaces her writing on *Fragments* in the exhibition catalogue with an epigram by Barbadian author and essayist George Lamming;

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[60] Exhibition artists based in the Caribbean: *Fragments of Epic Memory* (Sybil Atteck, Trinidad; Belkis Ayón, Cuba; Robert Charlotte, Martinique; Christopher Cozier, Trinidad; Abigail Hadeed, Trinidad; Nadia Huggins, St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Wilfredo Lam, Cuba; Kelly Sinnapah Mary, Guadeloupe; Wendy Nanan, Trinidad and Tobago; Ebony G. Patterson, Jamaica and USA; Peter Dean Rickards, Jamaica; Frank Walter, Antigua; Rodell Warner, Trinidad, Jamaica, and USA; Dorothy Henriques Wells, Jamaica, Barbados, USA; Aubrey Williams, Guyana and UK), *Kept Alive Within Us* (Las Nietas de Nonó, Puerto Rico), *Life Between Islands* (Peter Doig, Trinidad; Aubrey Williams, Guyana and UK; Dennis Williams, Guyana and UK).

> I don't think there has been anything in human history quite like the meeting of Africa, Asia, and Europe in this American archipelago we call the Caribbean. But it is so recent since we assumed responsibility for our own destiny, that the antagonistic weight of the past is felt as an inhibiting menace…how to control the burden of this history and incorporate it into our collective sense of the future.[61]

Fragments thereby aims to unravel the colonial and imperial menace of the past by exploring how modern and contemporary artists "re-vision and reflect on the [Caribbean] and its histories through the lens of an ongoing struggle for liberation."[62] In the context of the AGO and the Black Lives Matter movement of 2020, *Fragments* also functions as part of an institutional strategy to remediate the AGO's legacy of historical erasure, racism, and Black invisibility, as well as its framing of "so-called 'primitive art.'"[63] *Fragments*' adoption of a nonlinear historical approach, (one that jumps around in time rather than following a strict chronology), brings together 200 plus Montgomery Collection photographs alongside work by thirty-six modern and contemporary artists, and groups them into three themes: "Ghosting/Post Emancipation," "See.We.Here," and "Freedom/Futures." While the works in *Fragments* do jump around in time, the thematic groupings directly correlate to the temporal dimensions of past ("Ghosting/Post Emancipation"), present ("See.We.Here"), and future ("Freedom/Futures"). The past, however, haunts all these groupings, as seen in the purposeful tension created between the modern and contemporary artworks and the historical photographs.

The temporal dialogue within *Fragments* draws on Derek Walcott's evocative poem and 1992 Nobel Lecture, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory,"[64] as well as Kamau Brathwaite's concept of "tidalectics."[65] In "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory," Walcott

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[61] Julie Crooks, "Seeing the Unseizable: Confronting the Past and Considering the Future," in *Fragments of Epic Memory*, ed. Julie Crooks (Art Gallery of Ontario in association with DelMonico Books D.A.P.), 31.
[62] Crooks, "Seeing the Unseizable: Confronting the Past and Considering the Future," 33.
[63] Ashley Raghubir, "Caribbean Being and Becoming in 'Fragments of Epic Memory,'" Momus, February 16, 2022, https://momus.ca/caribbean-being-and-becoming-in-fragments-of-epic-memory/.
[64] Crooks, "Seeing the Unseizable: Confronting the Past and Considering the Future," 33.
[65] Jonathan Dekel, "Reclaiming Caribbean Art History in the AGO's 'Fragments of Epic Memory,'" Toronto Star, September 2, 2021, https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/visual-arts/reclaiming-caribbean-art-history-in-the-ago-s-fragments-of-epic-memory/article_2adcc4cc-dbbd-5c25-a6be-b19df6f98e19.html.

encapsulates what it means to be in diaspora through a meditation on Caribbean history and diasporic memory. Walcott emphasizes that Caribbean culture must not be looked at in terms of the sum of its parts or as a fragmented echo of great cultures past, but instead ought to be considered as present and alive as the land itself.[66] Crooks explains the connection of *Fragments* to push and pull "tidalectics" in an interview with Tim Gihring for *Medium*,

> I think about it as a dialogue, which is what 'tidalectic' is alluding to: point, counterpoint, point. Given the setup of the show, you encounter the contemporary, then you go to the table case where you see a historic photograph, then you go back to the contemporary. It makes the viewer part of the unfolding — you're actively participating in the revealing of these histories.[67]

In this statement, Crooks describes the interaction of the historical and contemporary as joined in a process of retelling history. This is corroborated in the curatorial statement, as modern and contemporary Caribbean artists "show how the region's histories are constantly revisited and reimagined through artistic production over time."[68] What, then, does this imply about the relationship between diaspora and temporality? What temporal resonances appear throughout the exhibition considering *Fragments*' thematic/temporal groupings?

The thematic category "Ghosting/Post-Emancipation" centers on the temporal dimension of the past and investigates the lingering presence of colonial regimes in the art of the Caribbean. Sir Frank Bowling's abstract painting *Middle Passage* (1970) communicates this theme most overtly. As Crooks states in the exhibition catalogue, "*Middle Passage* functions as both focal point and historical anchor."[69] In *A Litany for Survival,* Andrea Chung evokes the histories of extraction and survival of the Caribbean's aquatic ecosystems. Her cyanotype prints are richly

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[66] As Walcott writes, "The sigh of History rises over ruins, not over landscapes, and in the Antilles there are few ruins to sigh over, apart from the ruins of sugar estates and abandoned forts."
[67] Minneapolis Institute of Art, "Revisiting the Caribbean: A Q&A on 'Fragments of Epic Memory,'" *Minneapolis Institute of Art* (blog), March 28, 2023, https://medium.com/minneapolis-institute-of-art/revisiting-the-caribbean-4fccc9c46f8f.
[68] "Fragments of Epic Memory," Art Gallery of Ontario, accessed May 6, 2024, https://ago.ca/exhibitions/fragments-epic-memory.
[69] Crooks, "Seeing the Unseizable: Confronting the Past and Considering the Future," 35.

coloured and textured with sugar rubbings. While I can agree with Crooks' assessment that "Chung expertly summons both the elemental past and the enduring legacies [of ongoing extraction and harm] that shape the future,"[70] I also wonder how Chung's work might reveal possibilities for revival and renewal? *A Litany for Survival* recognizes the harm ecosystems endure, but Chung's focus on marine life also suggests the longevity and persistence of the natural environment despite its attempted destruction by humanity. As evidenced by the environmental resurgence amid the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, the Earth will persist long after humans have gone (though perhaps in irrecoverably altered conditions). The invocation of "Ghosting" works to connect the past to the present and future. Nonetheless, the photographs and artworks centered on "Post-Emancipation" do ground this selection in a certain place and time.

The thematic category "See.We.Here" explores various modes of self-representation, as seen in selections of studio portraiture from the Montgomery Collection, as well as photographs and artwork centered around agency, resistance, movement, migration, exile, and belonging. The modern and contemporary artworks in "See.We.Here," "call attention to self, agency, and belonging while pushing beyond colonial boundaries and constraints."[71] Artists in this category contend with the colonial gaze and its present-day manifestations. Nadia Huggins' video installation *Circa no future* (2016-2019), for instance, addresses gender binaries and Black Caribbean masculinity,

> In the sea, gender binaries become more fluid than they are on land. With this video, Huggins want to 'reconfigure ways of seeing the familiar.' Because the sea offers a break from the imposed rules that govern how we interact on the land, she says, 'that transition zone…allows for a re-imagined self.'[72]

[70] Ibid., 34.
[71] Ibid., 37.
[72] Object label for *Circa no future*. Art Gallery of Ontario, *Fragments of Epic Memory* Large Print Exhibition Text, 13. Accessed May 6, 2024, https://ago.ca/exhibitions/fragments-epic-memory.

The transnational origins of the artists in *Fragments* encourage various forms of self-expression that go beyond national boundaries. A closer examination of individual works of art may reveal multiple layers of time or experiences of temporality that each artist accesses based on personal diasporic routes/roots.

The last section "Freedom/Futures" concerns work that subverts the colonial archive and utilizes fragmentation as a methodological foil to an institutionalized colonial gaze. Crooks later states, "they [the artists] deploy a variety of inventive strategies related to the illegible and the obscure while rethinking notions of looking and seeing in the context of the embodiment of Black and racialized individuals."[73] Seeing, the Gaze, and the colonial archive appear to be at the core of this grouping. Rupture and fragmentation position the artists in opposition to this center—this is the future freedom they are seeking. Crooks recognizes this objective with her statement on the implications of Firelei Báez's diptych painting installation *Adjusting the Moon (The right to non-imperative clarities): Waxing [left] and Waning [right*] (2019-2020),

> Cast within arch-shaped panels whose forms allude to colonial architectural elements, these figures transgress the frame of the past and future that surrounds them; they dissolve into radiant, fragmented explosions of colour. By projecting the cultural and historical legacies of the diaspora into an imaginative and futuristic realm, Báez reclaims power.[74]

Through these conceptual groupings, *Fragments* attempts to capture the past, present, and future of Caribbean diasporic art. Diaspora thus becomes a way of moving fluidly through time.

Set against the colonial gaze, *Fragments* is organized around the temporal center of the Montgomery photographs. The then newly acquired photographs become the grounding point of the exhibition's counter-discourse, thereby enabling the contemporary and modern artworks to operate as catalysts for disruption in the colonialist temporal orientation established by the

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[73] Crooks, "Seeing the Unseizable: Confronting the Past and Considering the Future," 37.
[74] Object label for *Adjusting the Moon (The right to non-imperative clarities): Waxing [left] and Waning [right]*. Art Gallery of Ontario, *Fragments of Epic Memory* Large Print Exhibition Text, 26.

photographs. Connected by the traumatic history of the Middle Passage, the colonial past haunts the present in all categories of this exhibition. Even "Freedom/Futures" seems to contain a backwards glance. In my view, the modern and contemporary artworks in *Fragments* present not just a continuation of postcolonial struggles, but proof of the *simultaneity* of alternative temporalities. The thematic organization of *Fragments* around past ("Ghosting/Post Emancipation"), present ("See.We.Here"), and future ("Freedom/Futures") echo the temporal relationality of diasporic experience. Diasporic perspectives are necessarily preoccupied with time (recuperating time, being [plurally] in time, imagining time). The Montgomery Collection itself can be thought of as a diasporic archive, as the objects that comprise the collection have been dislocated from the time-space that gave them their meaning. Ultimately, *Fragments* contains the expression of diasporic temporality—of movement through time, of dislocation from time, and projecting into time.

Case 2: Kept Alive Within Us

Rather than relying on thematic groupings, *Kept Alive Within Us* at the Art Gallery of Guelph loosely organizes around ideas of Caribbean diasporic memory and cultural practice, with an emphasis on customs, ritual gestures, and environmental encounters. *Kept Alive Within Us* employs a multipronged approach, surveying a wide variety of artistic practices which underscore how ancestral knowledge survives in artists of Caribbean descent.[75] The artists in this exhibition demonstrate how "domestic, gastronomical, ecological, and spatial" encounters "constitute ongoing acts of remembrance and resistance,"[76] allowing for a manifold of expressions of cultural memory and resilience. Here the negotiations amongst time, temporality, and diaspora manifests in terms of the artists' relationship to their cultural heritage and shared

[75] Art Gallery of Guelph, "Kept Alive Within Us."
[76] Ibid.

cultural memory, (both embodied and consciously remembered). Of the eleven artists in *Kept Alive Within Us*, I will discuss the work of three; namely, Sandra Brewster's mixed media work *Heirloom* (2017), Sharon Norwood's porcelain sculptural series *Hair Matters* (2018-2019), and Deborah Jack's photographic series *when the evidence of our wounds was reborn as petals* (2009).[77]

Sandra Brewster's *Heirloom* supplies an unconventional entry point for investigating ancestral knowledge through the lens of baking. *Heirloom* invokes the time-honored and often closely guarded tradition of passing down family recipes. In this artwork, the artist mixes together the ingredients for Black Cake—a Caribbean Christmas dessert made with rum, currents, dried fruit, port wine, and sherry—and places them in a jar.[78] The title *Heirloom* speaks to the cultural and domestic value of recipes that may be preserved for generations. As the artwork's didactic text notes,

> Despite the context in which it is derived, *Heirloom* holds a power that brings us together whether through our love for cake or through humorously competitive tendencies to declare that our country makes the best. Placing the jar in a position of reverence centres the stories it is a part of and the people attached to them.[79]

For members of the Caribbean diaspora, *Heirloom* conjures memories of baking black cakes in bulk for Christmas, measuring out ingredients "by feeling," and pouring wine as a finishing touch to moisten the cakes. The past slips into the present as we repeat these actions, such that we are always in conversation with the past.

Farihah Aliyah Shah retraces past migration routes and the complex process of reclaiming identity in her photography series *Along the Demerara*. In this somber homecoming, Shah "explores the return of the Weatherspoon family to their childhood family home in Victoria

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[77] Participating artists not identified here include Samantha Box, Andrea Chung, Giana De Dier, Las Nietas de Nonó, Ésery Mondésir, Farihah Aliyah Shah, Nyugen E. Smith, and Kara Springer.
[78] Object label for *Heirloom*. Art Gallery of Guelph, "Kept Alive Within Us," AGG, accessed May 6, 2024, https://artgalleryofguelph.ca/exhibition/kept-alive-within-us/.
[79] Ibid.

Village for the funeral of their eldest sister."[80] Set in the context of Guyana, *Along the Demerara* is informed by the negotiations of outsider and insider-ness in Guyanese culture as the only English-speaking country on the South American mainland. The dual outsider/insider perspective permeates the content of this selection of images; in which, despite the emphasis on homecoming and return, the people undergoing said journey are not depicted. Instead, return is signified by a car abandoned on the side of the road, the insides of a coconut shell, a broom left by a stone staircase, or the foundations of a building overtaken by plant growth. Through these images, two contrasting experiences of time begin to emerge: the continuous progression of home country time with the temporal disorientation of diasporic time. In Guyana, time progresses in the absence of the Weatherspoon family. The passage of time evident in the images suggests a sense of belatedness upon arrival; in other words, they capture the temporal displacement characteristic of diasporic return.

Deborah Jack similarly interrogates the disjunctive effects of diasporic return on memory, particularly in the recollection of landscapes, as seen through photographs of nature on the island of St. Martin. *Evidence #8, #20, #10,* and *#25* each portray ephemeral landscapes. Jack utilizes multiple exposures to create blurred backgrounds while intensely representing the foreground as a visual anchor point. These photographs seemingly replicate the fabrication and recollection of memory, wherein certain parts can be visualized clearly while others remain indistinct, yet it is unclear whether the *evidence* series visualizes the process of remembering or forgetting. Jack describes the photographs as "[seeking] to illustrate a moment that is fleeting, like the tickle of a memory in waiting."[81] In memories, time and experiences of temporality become unbounded

[80] Farihah Aliyah Shah, "Life Along the Demerara," Farihah Aliyah Shah, accessed May 6, 2024, https://www.farihahshah.com/victoria-village.
[81] Deborah Jack, "When the Evidence of Our Wounds Was Reborn as Petals...," deborahjack, accessed May 6, 2024, https://www.deborahjack.com/works-1/when-the-evidence-of-our-wounds-was-reborn-as-petals...

from reality. In memories, time compresses and expands without conscious effort. Diasporic remembering also maintains these characteristics; however, the remembering is bound up with the pain of forgetting. On the *evidence* series, Jack remarks,

> The images of the red flowers of the Flamboyant Tree carry with them an inherent beauty as well as a past that includes rebellion, revolt, and emancipation. The land for me is a keeper, a witness to the events that occur/ed on the Caribbean. The Caribbean reality carries with [it] a constantly evolving dichotomy of opposites that coexist daily. Beauty and tragedy live together in an uneasy harmony but together, nonetheless.[82]

Through their individual works, Jack, Shah, and Brewster consider the formation of memory and its relation to diaspora. Brewster locates cultural memory in recipes, whereas Shah and Jack tackle the temporal displacement and slow forgetting associated with diasporic return. Jack and Shah illustrate that upon "the return," the residues of memory make themselves known—that is to say, upon the return it becomes apparent that the memory no longer reflects the existing reality. Cultural memory is an essential component of diasporic formation, but what if the thing being remembered is not the Caribbean itself, but a certain memory of the Caribbean? In this way, diasporic remembering is doubly mediated. Diasporic individuals resist the obliviation of their memories, leading to the subsistence of Caribbean diasporic memory and cultural practice. Diasporic memory thus takes on a life of its own, independent of an existing reality.

Case 3: Life Between Islands

Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now presents a comprehensive reflection on the lives of Black British artists from the 1950s to the present, notably grounding its curatorial exploration of Caribbean diasporic art in time and space to investigate the impact of over thirty Caribbean artists on British life, society, and art history. *Life Between Islands* is a travelling exhibition from Tate Britian—co-curated by David A. Bailey and Alex Farquharson and

[82] Deborah Jack, "When the Evidence of Our Wounds Was Reborn as Petals...."

overseen at the AGO by Julie Crooks—that "[tells] the history of British art from a Caribbean vantage point."[83] The Toronto iteration of the exhibition features the addition of works by British visual artist Rachel Jones, Glasglow-based multidisciplinary artist Alberta Whittle, and a site specific installation by Michael McMillian, *The Front Room: Inna Toronto/6ix* (2023).[84] A local Torontonian news source, *The Caribbean Camera*, reported that Crooks sees *Life Between Islands* as an opportunity "'to continue the conversations the AGO began in 2021 with *Fragments of Epic Memory*…and to consider the extraordinary impact that the Caribbean diaspora has had in Britain and globally.'"[85]

The temporal organization of *Life Between Islands* incorporates a linear chronological retelling broken up by thematic categories. As viewers walk through the exhibition, they encounter seven thematic categories: "Arrivals," "Artists and Writers," "Black Power," "Pressure," "Black Arts Movement," "Caribbean Regained: Carnival and Creolization," and "Past, Present, Future." As Tate Britian curator Alex Farquharson writes in his curatorial essay, "As much as *Life Between Islands* offers a linear art historical account, it also, in fragments, through imagery and sometimes language, offers glimpses of a linear social history that is around seven decades long."[86] The thematic categories in this exhibition build off one another, repeat, and overlap. As with *Fragments*, temporal reverberations and hauntings "unravel the linear, positivist unfolding of time inherited from the British empire and the Enlightenment" and

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[83] "Showcasing the Creativity of the Caribbean Diaspora in Britain, Life Between Islands Arrives at the AGO," Art Gallery of Ontario, December 7, 2023, https://ago.ca/press-release/showcasing-creativity-caribbean-diaspora-britain-life-between-islands-arrives-ago.
[84] "Diasporic Transitions with David A. Bailey and Alex Farquharson," Foyer, accessed May 6, 2024, https://readfoyer.com/article/diasporic-transitions-david-bailey-and-alex-farquharson.
[85] The Caribbean Camera Inc, "AGO Welcomes Caribbean-British Art: 'Life Between Islands,'" The Caribbean Camera, December 7, 2023, https://thecaribbeancamera.com/ago-welcomes-caribbean-british-art-life-between-islands/.
[86] Alex Farquharson, "Anew: To the Future, Via the Past," in *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now*, ed. Alex Farquharson and David A. Bailey (Tate Publishing, 2021), 18-19.

dissolve "distinctions between past and present, the linear and cyclical, distance and proximity, [and] social reality and oneiric desire."[87] Not strictly linear or cyclical, in *Life Between Islands*, Farquharson proposes, time *spirals*. The linear fuses with the cyclical,

> [breaking] apart the fatal Western imperialist binary between the culture of the coloniser - linear, endlessly progressing - and the global majority whose complex, changing societies were written off as cyclical, outside of history, and therefore available for brutal exploitation on an historically unprecedented scale.[88]

Interestingly, Farquharson clearly articulates the temporal arrangement of *Life Between Islands*, perhaps foreshadowing a changing attention to temporal differences in the future of curating Caribbean art exhibitions.

Beginning with the category "Arrivals," *Life Between Islands* chronicles the development of Black British art from the arrival of the first generation of Caribbean artists and immigrants of the Windrush Generation in the late 1940s and 1950s. The artists shown in "Arrivals," such as Guyanese artist Aubrey Williams and Jamaican artist Ronald Moody, were among the first to begin challenging the superiority of British cultural norms through the use of abstraction and symbolism inspired by their African and Caribbean heritage.[89] The next category "Artists and Writers" surveys the formation and impact of the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM), a collective of artists, critics, and writers from the Caribbean diaspora. Three designs by Althea McNish, the only woman in CAM, appear in this section. *Painted Desert (Purple)* (1959) depicts inked sketches of moon cacti washed with a light green stain over a dark purple background, whereas in *Van Gogh (Red)* (1959), large sunflowers stretch across the fabric over a blend of red,

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[87] Farquharson, "Anew: To the Future, Via the Past," 22.
[88] Ibid., 23.
[89] Alex Farquharson and David A. Bailey, eds., *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now,* (Tate Publishing: Tate Britian, 2021), 97.

orange, and pink stripes. McNish's final design *Trinidad (Red)* (1961), includes dappled palm trees rendered in orange and yellow on a deep red base.

The thematic category "Black Power" skips forward a few years to 1968 with the establishment of the British Black Panther Party (BBPP), and highlights photographs of anti-racist activism by Black communities.[90] Photographer Neil Kenlock is emphasized as a first-person witness to the party's activities; his photographs form the core of this section, alongside works by fellow photographer and filmmaker Horace Ové. "Pressure" similarly groups artworks that respond to the hostile environment faced by Black British communities in the 1970s and 1980s. Second-generation artists who identified as Black *and* British, (as well as those who had arrived as children and grown up in the UK), experiences of racism and police brutality, and the political hostilities that existed as a result of the emergence of the National Front and rise of the far right.[91] Protest and community-driven action materializes as a response to this external oppression, as seen in Vron Ware's photograph, *Black People's Day of Action, 2nd March 1981* (1981). Out of "Pressure," community gatherings in the form of Dub Reggae nightclubs fostered solidarity,

> DJs, engineers, and MCs set up in homes, on the streets, and in community centres. They offered a way to connect with culture coming out of the Caribbean, especially Jamaica. For young Black Britons, music created opportunities for collectivity and celebration but also a means to address hostility and racism with a spirit of defiance.[92]

Denzil Forrester's painting *Jah Shaka* (1983) captures the Dub Reggae scene in London in vivid color. Jah Shaka, (aka the Zulu Warrior), is the name of the man in the pink hat; a well-known

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[90] In the context of the UK, the designation "Black" referred to and encompassed people of African, South Asian, and Caribbean descent. Farquharson and Bailey, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now*, 123.
[91] Farquharson and Bailey, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now*, 153.
[92] Didactic label for "Pressure." Art Gallery of Ontario, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now* Large Print Exhibition Text, 14-15. Accessed May 6, 2024, https://ago.ca/exhibitions/life-between-islands.

Jamaican sound system operator from the southeastern part of London.[93] "Pressure" signals a shift in focus, as the subsequent thematic categories "Black Arts Movement" and "Caribbean Regained: Carnival and Creolization" continue to probe the cultivation of Black British creative expression from the 1980s onward.

The objectives of the Black Arts Movement (BAM) parallel the earlier aims of the Caribbean Artists Movement of articulating expressions of Black Britishness. Artists in this category, including Sonia Boyce and Vanley Burke, intertwine representations of Black diasporic identity with reflections on gender roles and Black femininity (in the case of Boyce), and Black social life (in the case of Burke). Within the context of the curatorial organization of *Life Between Islands*, these two categories embody the historical echoes or temporal spiraling of Caribbean diasporic art history. "Caribbean Regained: Carnival and Creolization" elaborates upon the introduction and translation of Caribbean Carnival to a British context. Trinidadian artist John Lyon's colorful oil painting *Carnival Jouvert* (2005) captures the expressive gestures of costumed performers in a scene from Trinidadian J'Ourvert (or "jouvay").[94] Lyons highlights the revelers freedom of movement stating,

> 'After the all-night dancing on Carnival Sunday, on the Monday morning when church bells ring and cocks crow signaling the dawn, dancehall revellers spill out onto the streets gyrating to the compulsive rhythm of the music. They are soon joined by motley crowds, some parading miscellaneous fragments of last year's costumes.'[95]

By contrast, Tam Joseph's gouache painting *The Spirit of Carnival* (1982) speaks to the challenges of protecting Caribbean self-expression in the UK due to intense policing. The painting, inspired by a real scene from the Notting Hill Carnival in London, presents the image

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[93] Safi Bugel, "Jah Shaka: Dub and Reggae Pioneer at the Helm of London Sound System Culture Has Died," *The Guardian*, April 12, 2023, sec. Music, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/apr/12/jah-shaka-dub-and-reggae-pioneer-at-the-helm-of-london-sound-system-culture-has-died.
[94] "Jouvert, Carnival," *Itzcaribbean* (blog), accessed May 6, 2024, https://www.itzcaribbean.com/carnival/jouvert/.
[95] Object label for *Carnival Jouvert*. Art Gallery of Ontario, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now* Large Print Exhibition Text, 22-23.

of a masquerader in colorful tassels surrounded by a swarm of police. The police trap the masquerader and block their escape using tactical shields, while a snarling police dog breaks through their ranks to attack. As a section, "Caribbean Regained: Carnival and Creolization" localizes Caribbean cultural expression in time and place. The creolization and cross-cultural exchange that animates Carnival reverberates through Black British life as affirmation.

Life Between Islands concludes with the final thematic category "Past, Present, Future." In this grouping, artists call attention to one of the main themes of the exhibition: the complex temporal dynamics of diasporic existence and the effects of cross-culturalization in British and Caribbean art and social histories. Artists Blue Curry and Hew Locke work across these differing geographic and cultural contexts to investigate how space is constructed (physically and conceptually) and remembered in the Caribbean. The effects of cross-culturation also appear in Alberta Whittle's textile figure *We Remain With You* (2022). In *We Remain With* You, Whittle draws upon her Caribbean heritage in her efforts to combat anti-Blackness and racism. The open arms of the figure symbolize protection and guidance, while the artist uses materials and imagery that reference Caribbean Carnival, masquerades, and tuk bands, (a type of Barbadian musical group).[96] Time spirals through these artworks as the artists build upon the groundwork established by previous generations. The diasporic temporality thereby becomes a facet of cross-culturation.

Since this iteration of *Life Between Islands* takes place in Toronto, Canada, it may prove edifying to briefly consider the relationship between all three locales and the resulting resonances that appear here in the exhibition. The migration stories of Caribbean immigrants to

[96] Object label for *We Remain With You*. Art Gallery of Ontario, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now* Large Print Exhibition Text, 30-31.

the UK and Canada contain many similarities, as Canada, the UK, and the Caribbean are connected via the enduring legacy of British imperialism, and the political and economic ties forged in the foundation of the British Commonwealth in 1931.[97] From the early to mid-twentieth century, Caribbean migrants immigrated to Canada and the UK in search of better economic opportunities. Upon arrival, racist and discriminatory immigration policies created precarious living situations, making it difficult for migrants to stay longer in the country.[98] The large-scale impact of Caribbean immigrants on British society mirrors that of the impact on Canadian society, (especially in Toronto and London), and can be seen as Caribbean food, music, and language have been integrated into mainstream culture.

Michael McMillian's immersive site-specific installation at the AGO for *Life Between Islands, The Front Room: Inna Toronto/6ix* (2023), speaks to the diasporization, (or the process of becoming diasporic), that Caribbean immigrants in Canada underwent in the 1980s through creation of fictional homes and settings. *Front Room: Inna Toronto/6ix* belongs to a fictional woman named Gloria who immigrated with her siblings to Toronto in the 1960s.[99] We encounter Gloria's front room nearly two decades later after she becomes a nurse, gets married, and has two children. Through his attention to the specificity of material culture—as in the television set, china cabinets, décor, and plastic-covered floral-print furniture—McMillian evokes a Caribbean sitting room in Toronto from the 1980s. While *Front Room: Inna Toronto/6ix* attracted significant attention in the media reception of *Life Between Islands* in Toronto due to the

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[97] Global Affairs Canada, "Canada and the Commonwealth," GAC, May 30, 2017, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/multilateral-multilateraux/commonwealth.aspx?lang=eng.
[98] Didactic label for "Past, Present, Future." Art Gallery of Ontario, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now* Large Print Exhibition Text, 26.
[99] Object label for *Front Room: Inna Toronto/6ix*. Art Gallery of Ontario, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now* Large Print Exhibition Text, 26-27.

localization of the artwork's content, the work also operates as a prime example of the experiences of diasporization that *Life Between Islands* fundamentally articulates. And if, as initially stated, diaspora is a temporal and spatial condition, localization and periodization go a long way in setting up the exact contours for a careful analysis of diasporic art. Overall, the success of *Life Between Islands* is because it does just that.

Implications and Limitations of Diasporic Temporal Perspectives in Exhibitions of Caribbean Art

The conceptual and geographic contours of the Caribbean, (its shape and character), have always been subject to external perspectives, and today remains a contested subject.[OBJ] Western powers have historically regarded that Caribbean as a romantic paradise, conveniently overlooking the complex legacies and negotiations of plantation slavery, indigenous genocide, and indentured servitude that inform the region's (and their own) history. Presently, as seen in recent Caribbean art exhibitions in Canada and the United States, this one-dimensional view has shifted away in favor of exhibitions that reflect the resilience of the Caribbean and its diasporas; that said, I must question the implications of allowing diasporic perspectives to take precedence in shaping narratives of contemporary Caribbean art.

Various theorizations of diaspora intersect with dialogues on Caribbean art, which typically locate Caribbean and Caribbean diasporic art as part of a canon of Black Atlantic studies; however, as art historian Leon Wainwright plainly asserts in his book on temporality and the transnational Caribbean, these theorizations of diaspora (or transnationality) contain implicit temporal hierarchies,

> [Space] is intersected by time in the orthodox distinctions between the 'mainstream' and the 'margins,' along the scale of inclusion, marginality and exclusion, and in optimistic declarations that such differences dissolve with global, transnational movement and new spatial arrangements and networks. The spaces that appear to be opened up by transnational approaches to study have still to contend with how time governs and constrains the generation of any such expanded or novel geography. The present challenge is to reflect

> on the continuing attachment, in art history and curating, to reputed 'leading' metropolitan centres, and 'belated' peripheries. This means confronting and undoing not only the orthodox attachment to spatio-temporal narratives of cultural value, but the entire cross-matching of 'over there' and 'back then', which suffuses even the 'global turn' in art history.[100]

Here, Wainwright highlights the temporal hierarchies embedded in global art historical discourse and contemporary art curation, arguing that the notion of centers and peripheries are geographic *as well as temporal* categories. The relegation of Caribbean art as marginal in art historical discourse first ignores the timeliness of Caribbean artists, and second, risks equating transnationality to contemporaneity. Wainwright further notes that, "The celebration of the Caribbean as a seminal example for the new global geography of border-crossing, intermixing and mobility needs to be handled more carefully."[101] In reality, whether positioned in terms of transnationality or situated as feature of diaspora, the geographically unspecific and temporally homogenous notions of global mobility these terms evoke are not actually reflective of lived experience, as this transnational movement happens in space and time. Nor does transnationality eliminate the existence of spatio-temporal hierarchies, and in certain cases, may reinscribe a provincializing effect on specific time-spaces.

Essentially, Wainwright's criticism of "the diaspora concept"—despite its intentions to connect Black communities across national borders—lies in, what he argues is, the diffusion of a hegemonic spatial-temporal scheme that "[presents] art history and cultural modernity through a myth of a modernizing, progressive transition."[102] In the context of Canada (and Toronto), there exists a similar danger of provincializing perspectives based in the Caribbean by conflating

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[100] Leon Wainwright, *Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 12.
[101] Wainwright, *Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean*, 12.
[102] Leon Wainwright, "New Provincialisms: Curating Art of the African Diaspora," *Radical History Review*, no. 103 (January 2009): 208.

diasporic and localized perspectives.[103] All three exhibitions introduced here center diasporic perspectives in their curation and position the artworks in relation to a diasporic temporality despite the inclusion of non-diasporic, or locally based, artists. The result of this brings locally based artists into a relationship with diasporic time, possibly obscuring their own relationships to local time-spaces and temporalities.

Far from fostering genuine South-North dialogues, this equation of diasporic perspectives with those based locally in the Caribbean obscures the nuances of their differing cultural contexts and raises questions about whose voices are prioritized and whose experiences are marginalized. Therese Hadchity, an independent art critic, curator, and educator based in Barbados, advocates for more careful consideration of Caribbean art and artists, and the temporal and spatial conditions that motivate and position their artwork. For Hadchity, this is doubly important for understanding how national contexts impact contemporary artmaking in the Caribbean, and the limits of globalization and the politics of representation. Like Wainwright, Hadchity critiques the prevalence of the diaspora concept, (or in her words, the "transnational Caribbean"), which privileges fluid, geographically unspecific conceptualizations of diasporic difference.[104] She further suggests that the popularity of the diasporic perspective relates to the ease with which Caribbean narratives can be packaged and disseminated to other institutions in the global north.[105]

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[103] The question of timeliness, of "'leading' metropolitan centres and 'belated' peripheries," appears again in Caribbean art exhibitions in Toronto.

[104] As Hadchity writes, "the almost unanimously applauded concept of a 'transnational Caribbean' carries internal hierarchies… [and] may at times obscure fundamental differences in the transatlantic art community with the effect of reinforcing them." See Therese Hadchity, "Criticality and Context: Migrating Meanings of Art from the Caribbean," *Open Arts Journal*, no. 5 (July 2016): 37. https://openartsjournal.org/issue-5/article-2/.

[105] Hadchity, "Criticality and Context: Migrating Meanings of Art from the Caribbean," 30.

Succeeding Wainwright's critical argument that existing art historical canons are insufficient for theorizing Caribbean art, Hadchity supplies an example of the reception of Barbadian artists at home and internationally,

> …the ability of artists like [Ewan] Atkinson and [Sheena] Rose to simultaneously gratify audiences of potentially conflicting outlooks and interests, must force us to take more seriously the contingencies and locations in which Caribbean art is made, received and historicised through scholarly and curatorial representation, as well as popular promotion. The oversimplifications need addressing, picking apart assumptions that such art is antithetical to nationalist endeavours, or that it conforms readily to the conventions of a transnational or diasporic field of art discourse. In sum, any belief that all art of the Caribbean is a palpable visualisation of a critical impulse toward 'resistance' demands serious scrutiny.[106]

Adding to this, Wainwright expresses his concerns about the limits of countercultural discourse in challenging Western-centered knowledge and narratives. Instead, he writes, "What is more likely is that the existing power structures are reproduced not despite but through the appropriation of the 'countercultural' and all its correlates."[107] Words such as transnationality, diaspora, globalization, transculturality, displacement, and multiplicity have become common art world parlance synonymous with the counter-cultural. While the exhibitions discussed here constructively move towards increased institutional representation for Black, Caribbean, and Caribbean diasporic art histories, by taking a diasporic perspective as the center point, they chance flattening non-diasporic perspectives into the same worldview. Not only that, but by solely focusing on macro-scale issues such as climate change, neo-colonialism, and histories of violence and oppression as determinates of shared experience, they may overlook the myriad of mundane experiences that unite the diasporic and the local. To that end, Wainwright suggests, Caribbean and Caribbean diasporic artists

> should be seen as engaged on several historical fronts. These are not all about battling to undermine the legacy of former imperial centres... In some cases, there are ongoing and powerful displacements that result from an idea of 'the contemporary' which has no obvious centres or peripheries.[108]

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[106] Ibid., 35.
[107] Leon Wainwright, "Timed Out: Pathways and Pitfalls for Art History and Caribbean Studies," *Small Axe* 19, no. 2 (2015): 189. https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-3139322.
[108] Leon Wainwright, *Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean*, 12.

With regard to conceptualizations of temporality, Wainwright's comment can be situated within larger discourses on the contemporary *Caribbean-as-space*,[109] or the idea of Caribbean spaces,[110] which may imply the simultaneity of multiple, and possible intermediary, time-spaces and temporalities.

Future Caribbean art exhibitions should pay attention to where they establish their temporal centers and peripheries to provide more nuanced criticism of Caribbean and Caribbean diasporic art histories. Wainwright's call for "an original architecture of cultural analysis…capable of showing the intersectionality and relational quality of the Caribbean's histories of art in all its time-space registers: heterochronic, geohistorical, temporal-morphological"[111] ought to be prioritized in future curatorial and art historical accounts of modern and contemporary Caribbean art if Caribbean art is to be considered holistically. A genuine engagement with Caribbean art can be achieved by prioritizing intersectional and relational methodologies for curation.

Conclusions

In three exhibitions of Caribbean diasporic art in and around Toronto, Ontario, the concepts of time and temporality offer critical perspectives for understanding diasporic art and life. The curatorial organization of the AGO's *Fragments of Epic Memory* expresses the fluidity of diasporic temporality through its thematic grouping of past ("Ghosting/Post Emancipation"), present ("See.We.Here"), and future ("Freedom/Futures"); whereas, *Kept Alive Within Us* at the

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[109] In Christopher Cozier's "Notes on Wrestling with the Image," he discusses how Caribbean artists navigate the fixed geographic, cultural, and political dimensions of the various locations they inhabit, travel through, or imagine. He later argues for the understanding of the Caribbean as "a space rather than a place…a dialogue about dispersal, rather than just displacement." From *Wresting with the Image*, ed. Christopher Cozier and Tatiana Flores, eds. (Washington D.C.: Artzpub/Draconian Switch, 2011), 11.

[110] Carole Boyce Davies, *Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zones* (University of Illinois Press, 2013), https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt3fh5kj..

[111] Wainwright, "Timed Out: Pathways and Pitfalls for Art History and Caribbean Studies," 187.

AGG engages ideas of time and temporality through its considerations of diasporic (re)memory, ritual, gesture, and return. The final exhibition, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art, 1950s–Now* at the AGO, demonstrates how strategies of periodization and localization offer parameters for nuanced and sustained explorations of diasporic artistic production. While *Fragments of Epic Memory*, *Kept Alive Within Us*, and *Life Between Islands* operate as sites of Caribbean diasporic expression and representation, diasporic interventions have their limitations and should not be regarded as sufficiently reflective of localized Caribbean perspectives. The incorporation of time and temporality as underexamined lenses into traditional analyses of diasporic art may hold a key to cultivating the generative potential of future exhibitions of (Caribbean) diasporic art.

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Appendix A

Black Quantum Futurism Evolving Time Zone Protocols

- Protocol 1: Undesigning Systemic Time (developed by Rasheedah Phillips)
- Protocol 2: Bending SpaceTime with Botanicals (developed by Asia Dorsey)
- Protocol 3: Dead Line? Slowing down in Black “spacetime” (developed by Dr. Danielle Purifoy)
- Protocol 4: Grief Reparations and Temporal Hush Harbors (developed by Joy Tabernacle)
- Protocol 5: Black Fugitive Infrastructure and Cross-time Space Routines (developed by Dr. Celeste Winston)
- Protocol 6: Reticulation (developed by Dr. Katherine McKittrick)
- Protocol 7: Cloud Time (developed by V. Mitch McEwen and Nadir Jeevanjee)
- Protocol 8: The Future of Black Spaces (developed by Ujijji Davis Williams)
- Protocol 9: Epochs, Ages, and Yugas: Macro-Temporal Texture + Alter Destiny (developed by Dr. Thomas Stanley)
- Protocol 10: Timecasting with Entropy & Lasers (developed by Kendra Krueger)
- Protocol 11: Chronomorphism (developed by Walter Greason inspired by Dwayne McDuffie)
- Protocol 12: The Future of Time: Metaverse and Black Health (developed by Ingrid LaFleur)
- Protocol 13: Malleable Futures (developed by Ingrid Raphael)
- Protocol 14: Land, Entangled Time, & Space (developed by Camae Ayewa)
- Protocol 15: (developed by Xenobia Bailey), & Protocol 16 (developed by The BlkRobot Project).