Residency description

During my time in my residency, I have been reflecting on James Baldwin's interview where he is asking himself what is the role of the artist? I am inspired by his question and have looked inward to ask myself "what is my role as an artist? To investigate this I have been using archival materials such as newspaper articles, videos, films, tik toks, tweets, Black feminist texts to think through concepts of memory and opacity and as a way to explore how erasure of Blackness and Queerness is present within music and dance culture. While being in dialogue with Baldwin's work, I looked at Nina Simone and her relationship to what freedom means for herself. To quote Nina Simone from an interview in 1968 where the interviewer asks her what Freedom means to her she states

"It's just a feeling. It's just a feeling.
It's like, how do you tell somebody how it feels to be in love?
How are you going to tell anybody who has not been in love, how it feels to be in love?
You cannot do it to save your life. You can describe things, but you can't tell them.
But you know it when it happens. That's what I mean by free."

During my residency I have made a reading list. The reading list is a guide to the question of "what does liberation look like for myself as a Black queer person in this present moment?"

If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you don't see"

Reading List: by Mahlet Cuff
Self Directed Residency
Aug 4th-22nd 2026

Books:
Sharpe Christina, Ordinary Notes
Lee, Yaniya, *Selected Writing on Black Canadian Art*. Art Metropole, 2024

Music:
Whitney Houston, Self titled, 1985
Aaliyah, self titled, 2001
Kelela, Raven, 2024

Podcast:
Gender Spiral Podcast **Season 1 episode 3**
A Liberated Black and Trans Future (w/maya finoh)
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63fe5e381061b82e5f30f608/t/65a0425cbcc6a81864070b40/1705001564969/GS_03_maya-finoh_A-Liberated-Black-and-Trans-Future.pdf

Films:
Black Nations/Queer Nations directed by Shari Frilot, 1996.

The Watermelon Woman directed Cherly Dunye, 1996

Yaya/ayat directed by Shimby Zegeye-Gebrehiwot,Winnipeg Film Group, 2010

Shakedown directed Leilah Weinraub, 2018

Quotes:
Octavia Butler, Charlie Rose Interview (2000)
"You've got to make your own worlds, You've got to write yourself in"

Rememory as defined by Toni Morrison: "recollecting and remembering as in reassembling the members of the body, the family, the population of the past" -- (2019, August 9). The Guardian.

DeForrest Brown Jr.: "Techno, as a historical artifact, de-rives its central premise from the act of African Americans dreaming of a future beyond the structural failings of a postindustrial collapse in the late twentieth century." (5) Assembling a Black Counter Culture, 2022

Live Performance:
Are you ready? Nina Simone at Summer of Soul
https://youtu.be/zVrAEBhzqco?si=uHh-OB8TqEeWT3ck