



Yanira Collado: Alchemic Chants/ Reliquias Fragmentadas

"Incomplete Notes: The Fragment, Achieved Indigeneity, and Intercommunal"

1. Allusions to forms found in the North African Moorish architecture in Spain, the sacred geometry of Persian architecture and textiles, and even fractals can be found in Yanira Collado's works in this exhibition. On the one hand, these sources of inspiration can all be connected to the Dominican Republic. But, on the other hand, it is best not to think of them as fragments that cohere into a seamless whole. To explain, it is worth thinking about what a FRAGMENT constitutes. Firstly, it is often characterized as the opposite of the whole. But maybe it is better to think of a whole as a fragment, too, and thereby to avoid the rationality, purity, and completeness often implied in the word. In so doing, there are only degrees of irrationality and incompleteness—both of which characterize much of Collado's oeuvre [or practice?]. That is, one no longer can apprehend individual units or inspirations of her installations to cobble together a singular narrative. As a result, any sense of stability or coherence of the pieces disappears. I would argue that this sense of the unstable is underscored by the viewer's habitus or comportment that is often slightly shifted when experiencing Collado's structures—you sometimes have to look down, over, or behind structures to fully take them in. Through this, one's relationship to her interventions is shattered into innumerable fragments—each fragment provides a partial glimpse into other fragments.


2. Diasporic populations are often defined as implicitly inauthentic. The suggestion is that (for example) diasporic Dominican Republic populations are not native or indigenous to the lands they occupy outside of the nation. This feeling of unbelonging, though, is based on fiction. To argue my point, I will turn to the concept of creolization, which refers to a process that results in incessant entanglement and constant renewal. Each point of renewal in this process is not a moment of hybridization but instead of indigenization that cannot be traced back to discrete components. Sociologist Mimi Sheller points out that

the word creole carries connotations of ACHIEVED INDIGENEITY (*Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*, 2003). She writes that creolization can be understood as a process of attaining an indigenous status of belonging to a locale through the migration and recombination of diverse elements that have been loosened from previous attachments and have reattached themselves to a new place of belonging. Collado's pieces can be productively thought of as bringing into being such a condition of achieved indigeneity. Many populations consider themselves indigenous to certain lands and continue to work earnestly to be recognized as such by governments. Shiller's and my approach to indigeneity is not meant to abstract the subjectivities of these individuals. At the same time, it does trouble the narrative of indigenous populations as somehow static and not the product of (nomadic) movement.

3. "Art" as we know it came into existence in the mid to late eighteenth century and is linked to colonial conquest and the West's mastery of time. In her book *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (2019), Ariella Aisha Azoulay gives a harrowing account of early twentieth-century violence and subjugation of the peoples of the Congo by Belgians. In particular, she argues that the intergenerational and INTERCOMMUNAL character of the objects produced in the Congo was compromised. Even though the Belgians did not consider the objects being created as important, they had to be cleaved from time and place to be positioned in the progressive timeline of art history. In the process, the affective qualities and social aspects of the objects were deemed unimportant. Collado's works in the space partially draws on the formal structures embedded in objects from the Congo and North Africa. Even if implicitly, I believe she asks viewers to re-orient how we approach art—not as disembodied, purely optical, and individual—all hallmarks of Western understanding of objects—but as synesthetic, haptic, and communal. As a riposte to the ugly history of Western art, she poignantly considers the relationship the people of Congo had with their objects and, in the process, redefines what "art" constitutes.

Alpesh Kantilal Patel (November 2021)

Dwellings No. 3, 2020
Photo, Textile in wood frame,
24X36

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Emerson Dorsch Gallery 5900 NW
2nd Avenue Miami, FL 33127 USA

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