The Luxury of Amnesia

ALBERTA WHITTLE

MY PRACTICE IS INFORMED BY THE ABILITY to ‘forget’ unpalatable histories, specifically contested historic and contemporary relationships between the Caribbean and UK, a condition I have termed ‘the luxury of amnesia’. Concerned with the ability of counter-narratives to facilitate protest, I also analyse relationships between decolonisation and radical self-love.

Recently exhibiting and performing at the Rum Retort event in Barbados, I presented a commissioned performance, A Recipe for Planters Punch,¹ and a video, Mammmmmyyywata Presents Life Solutions International.² The avatar of Mammmmmyyywata³ has catalysed new mechanisms for discussing decolonisation and memory through collage, including videos, prints and performance. My practice provides an important space for negotiating decolonisation through insisting on reciprocity, coercing and demanding that audiences participate in their own discomfort when race or gender is discussed.

NOTES

1. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2VtBT_sbf0.
2. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNiDUpa-xmw.
3. My avatar of Mammmmmyyywata is based on the creolised, mythological figure of Mami Wata. Rooted in belief systems from West Africa, carried over the Middle Passage in the memories of the enslaved, she arrived in the Americas ready to transform again in various presentations in creolised spaces throughout the Caribbean and the Global South, including Yemanja in Brazil, Mamlambo in South Africa and Maman de l’Eau in Trinidad.

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DOI: 10.1080/00086495.2017.1302145
Recipe for Planters Punch, 2016
Performance still

Recipe for Planters Punch, 2016
Performance still
Studies of Welcome I, 2016
Digital collage, 841mm x 1189mm

Celestial Meditations, 2016
Digital collage, 841mm x 1189mm
Mammmmyyywata Presents Life Solutions International, 2016
Video still

Dem A Pressure We Hard Hard Hard, 2015
Digital collage, 841mm x 1189mm