

What does it mean to develop a black landscape aesthetic and how might it be different from what we have come to understand or know as the aesthetics of landscape?

What do we need to unlearn?  
"let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Genesis 1:26 aka "Everything the light touches is yours Simba"

If the convention of landscape is founded on surveying the land from outside it, what emerges from an intimate experience of being within it?

If surveying is an act of making hyper-visible in order to take ownership, is there a place for a black landscape aesthetic concerned with keeping secrets and withholding, to tend and to safeguard.

If blackness (and femaleness) has historically been inside the land due to primitive proximity, what does landscape look like from this vantage point? Do we want to challenge this racist, sexist and speciesist formulation, or might we make it our own?

Might we take from our names that we share with the more-than-human, or with our totems that we associate with our places?

Could we be informed by the way we name plants based on our close relationships with their character?

Is the oral a practice or  
experience of storytelling or of  
directions or of descriptions ...?  
The pictorial frame always has  
its limits. But the oral has  
"and ...", "then ...", "as well ..."  
The oral then has the capacity  
for more. More detail, more  
expanse, more voices, etc.

What might a tradition of oral  
histories afford us?  
How might the ear understand  
differently from the eye?  
To question the supremacy  
of the eye is to claim the multi-  
sensory. And to claim the  
embodied?

What place does knowing the land intimately have in informing a black landscape aesthetic? Is this a knowledge of detail and the minute, the manifold and plentiful?

But also how did Bakoni make images of the land from a bird's eye view?  
Did they borrow the eyes of the ancestors?  
Is a black landscape aesthetic ancestral?  
If so, does it exist across multiple concepts of time?

If a black landscape aesthetic can perceive from the sky, can it also know the sky from the ground? A knowledge of patterns and cues of storms and seasons? An intimacy with unknowns, an ability to see into the future?

If the convention of landscape is founded on surveying the land on the basis of owning it, what is a landless (read dominionless ... because God wasn't talking to the African) aesthetic of the land?

Existing modes of black  
portraiture have sought an  
aesthetics of re-subjectification.  
Might we take lessons from  
making ourselves whole again  
in image, as a strategy for  
empathy with the image of the  
land?

Painting landscape while  
landless \*

\* thinking  
with  
Moses  
Tladi

We know that when we perceive  
the beauty of the land, often the  
violence is in the knowing \*

\* thinking  
with  
Santu  
Mofokeng

But home is also in the knowing

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