The Bakhita Project

Disorientation
Research worthy of our times

MAKING SANCTUARY

- Making sanctuary is a political project performed with/in a damaged planet. It is a public pedagogy rooted in decoloniality and emancipation, a translocal artform that takes as its premise the idea that we live in a more-than-human world (and that we need more-than-human approaches to become more response-able to the challenges of our times).

- At the heart of making sanctuary is inquiry.
Research worthy of our times

MAKING SANCTUARY (Contd.)

❖ Because the concept of research is popularly tied to knowledge, we habitually imagine research as a human thing, a humanist vocation. Something ‘researchers’ do.

❖ But who is the ‘researcher’? Who is the agent of inquiry in a time when the very idea of the boundaried, self-evident, separate human is unsustainable?

❖ There is a more-than-human sense in which research is what the world is always doing, that thinking is not exclusively human, and that we are often compelled to move with the world differently.
Research worthy of our times

MAKING SANCTUARY (End)

❖ Research worthy of our time begins with a crack. An instigation. A call, an invitation. Something uncomfortable that might take us in directions we are not used to.

❖ Like the crack in the ground that was Bakhita.
Ancient civilizations positioned sanctuaries above fault lines in the Mediterranean and other parts of the world. A crack signified the potency of destabilization, the unexpected gifts of seismic shifts, the presence of the invisible.

So I positioned myself at the opening of Bakhita’s crack in the ground and listened. I received a strong impression to “come under” - to embark on a journey of katabasis - in response to the troubles of the surface.
Bakhita’s Invitation

❖ If “making sanctuary” were a pantheon of gods and goddesses, Bakhita would be one of its striking figures:

➢ Bakhita is a figure of ‘becoming-lost’ in other to find your way
➢ Bakhita is an invitation to experimental descent, a call to build wilder coalitions and enter into new networks of doing-with
➢ Bakhita reminds us that hope is not enough and justice can oppress
➢ Bakhita is a “more-than-critique” in the flatness of the surface, the territory of Man that frames humanity as colonial mastery
➢ Bakhita is the rift that invites new moves, a hole in the ethical fabric that conditions where we go and what we think is appropriate
Bakhita’s Invitation

- We begin this rehearsal of making sanctuary here, where she lies, and with her invitation:

  - A Speculative Writing Journey and Diffractive Exercise:

    - “Rebuild the Slave Ship”

  - This prompt issues from my encounters with Bakhita. I cannot speak to what it fully means because what it means is not clear. We are using confusion/getting lost as methodology. It is a cartographic weapon meant to throw us off balance, to help us chart a course towards unexpected places.
Phase 1 - What’s involved?

- Opt-in via form
- Arbitrarily-assigned, self-facilitated groups based on time zone and geography
- Exploration based on the prompt ‘Rebuild the slave ship.”
- Moves based on group deliberation and consent of everyone in the group
Phase 1 - Timeline

Between now and 30 Nov: Opt-in

1 Dec: Receive group information and instructions

Between 1-30 Dec: Work with your group and see what mutually consenting moves can be made, if any

30 Dec: Receive information about Phase 2 and decide whether or not to continue
Roles

❖ Coordinating Team
  ■ Bayo, Alex, Geci, Karen
  ■ courseteam@bayoakomolafe.net for design and logistical questions

❖ Research Mentor Team / Brain & Heart Trust - will be participating in research and is available to support groups
  ■ Geci, Alex, Owolabi, Jiordi
  ■ Contact individually for support or shared exploration around what’s being uncovered
Geci Karuri-Sebina

- Contact: geci@emergencenetwork.org
- I live in Johannesburg, South Africa, born in Kenya
- I’ve been a scholar-practitioner-technologist for a long time, mainly working for public sector in global south, currently linked to a few universities
- In a major journey of unlearning, emerging out of activism, interested in anticipatory systems, and weighed down by the past (esp. race & inequality)
- Where I can help: systems thinking, helping sort through/clarify other people’s ideas, pan-African journeyings, play-dance-fun-laughter
- Where I can’t help: hypertheory, hyperconsciousnesses
- Metaphoric image: Imagine a big ol’ ball of confusion (with a superhero cape on!)
Alex Rodríguez

- Contact: arod@hey.com
- 5th-generation settler Oregonian of European ancestry currently living in Massachusetts, USA (occupied Nipmuc/Pocomtuc land)
- Recovering academic, General Coordinator for Bhumisparsha Buddhist sangha
- I’m a new father and improvising trombonist exploring modes of interbeing across distance, choosing treason to whiteness, and trying to better understand the current stakes of marronage. I can offer playful listening, surrealistic interventions, references to literature on racial capitalism.
- Metaphoric image: Elmo yeehaw! (Muppet with a cowboy hat)
Owólabi William Copeland

- Contact: williamwholenote@gmail.com
- A citizen of the Republic of New Africa based in Detroit
- Mutating and sharing mutagenesis with others. Writing essays linking pre-colonial science, chronic illness, liberation, Detroit, healing, warriorship
- Interested in making music, making lyrics, playing with words; ancestral/intergenerational healing; decolonization from polycultural spaces; how we will survive another winter; being present to the last 1100 years; developing Diasporan African culture and investigating the impact(s) we have on the world(s) being birthed as Africans; moving chi, bodywork and other forms of embodied inquiry; shifting stolen resources aka Reparations; Orisha cultural inquiry across the oceans.
- Metaphoric image: Detroit Diplomat, Plantation Burner, Father of Dragons
jiordi rosales

- jiordi@emergencenetwork.org
- living between oakland, california and the coastal range of northern california (ohlone // kashaya pomo)
- mexican-romani jew -- flitting between nuanced cultural identity & forgetfulness. 120 years of east l.a. chicanx swirling, the sonoran desert before all that. finding home in the glitches; yiddish for ‘slippery places’
- attentive to the forms of learning that most permit joy, humor, mystery, contradiction. running a sanctuary site in the mountains. mostly I just want to talk about theurgical divination practices from assyria 400 b.c.e., but that often comes later, we should start with music. I’m a cellist and can’t stop hearing the sound of calving glaciers
- grateful for all this theory-work / world-building - but what the f**k does all this mean for how we live places, practice together, die together? I’m more a decomposer than a toppler
- metaphor: looking up at the stars above ... ah so beautiful and peaceful ... then realize they’re also beneath me too ... oh god, stars are down? ... and all around and transmitting infinite times together at once ... suddenly the ground is up ... *i vomit and faint, ants carry me away*
A short game to try this out

- In breakout groups of 4-5 people, for 1-2 minutes:
  - Together, everyone in the group states “we are”
  - In alphabetical order by screen name, each person speaks one word or adds one punctuation mark, until someone adds a period, question mark, or exclamation point to complete a sentence.
    - E.g. “we are iguanas bananas eating phase mountains!”
  - As the words are spoken, any participant who is able to do so will type the words into the chat box and then hit ‘enter’ when the sentence is complete (this could be more than one person.)
  - Repeat if desired and if time permits
  - Next, someone in the group makes a proposal to share a sentence back to the full group; if everyone in the group consents to the proposal, share it back with the full group. If no consent is reached, that’s OK!
Phase 1 - Opt in

❖ Attend the Disorientation or watch the recording

❖ Make sure you are ready to commit to Phase 1 (30 Nov-30 Dec)

❖ Fill out this form by 30 November:
  https://form.jotform.com/203217018131137 //
  https://tinyurl.com/bakhitaproject

❖ Questions: courseteam@bayoakomolafe.net