

*CERTAIN TRUTHS ARE BLACK AND WHITE*

THE EXISTENCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IS NECESSARY

THE NEED FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IS SHAMEFUL

## **WHILE BLACK**

WOULD IT SHOCK YOU IF I TOLD YOU THAT AS A HUMAN BEING BLACK/OF COLOUR  
IS NOT THE PRIMARY FACTOR THAT DRIVES ME?

THAT MAKES ME WHO I AM?

IS IT WHAT I AM? OR IS IT A HAPPENSTANCE OF HISTORY? MY BEING?

WHAT AM I – WHILE BLACK?

**WHILE:** A PERIOD OF TIME ...AT THE SAME TIME

**BLACK:** THE OPPOSITE OF WHITE

OH! SO THIS IS PERSONAL. - (*WHO AM I?*)

*“THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL...”*

OH NO! THIS IS UNIVERSAL. - (*WHO ARE WE?*)

*WHERE THERE IS A LACK OF BLACK POWER*

THERE IS A DOMINANCE OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

In order for that state OF PRIVILEGE to exist

In order for there to be A LACK of EQUALITY, an IMBALANCE

THERE HAS TO BE AN ABSENCE OF DIVERSITY, DISSENSION, DEFIANCE

AN ABSENCE OF INVITATION, INTENTION, INCLUSION,

AN ABSENCE OF VISIBILITY

AN ABSENCE OF TRANSPARENCY

AN ABSENCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

THE OPPOSITE OF BLACK

WHITE

**BLACK -**

**Proto-Germanic “blakkaz” (“burned”) From Proto-Indo-EUROPEAN “bhleg” (“To Burn, Shine, Flash”) - Wikipedia**

**WHO AM I?**

**WHILE BLACK**

These words, which were written in 1977 by self-described Black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet, Audre Lorde, are a rallying cry towards the use of language and action to dismantle the strongholds of systemic racism, sexism and homophobia in society, are sadly as true and needed today as they were in her time.

**FULL CIRCLE: 1**

**THE MORE THINGS CHANGE. THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME....**

When asked to be a part of this exhibition, *WHILE BLACK*, I enthusiastically agreed. It was only later, faced with the fact that I was being asked to participate in an exhibition which challenged Canadian artists to speak to their exclusion from prominent galleries and Art institutions in Canada, that I began to question my inclusion. Having not lived in Canada for almost 20 years, I struggled to see how I would still be able to make a meaningful and relevant contribution to the issues being raised. I soon came to the difficult conclusion that the only way to do so would be to delve into complex, triggering, deeply painful and extremely personal memories and experiences from my buried artistic past. Sadly and tellingly the same issues that I had dealt with way back then, had recently been raised in the Canadian press yet again!?

***Why is there still a lack of representation of Black Artists and Curators in elite Canadian Art Institutions, Museums and Galleries?***

***Why are Black artists not being shown bought and collected, and their careers documented by these same elite Institution, Galleries, and Museums?***

*Why was I, being included amongst these younger Canada based Artists?*

WHO AM I?

**“THE MASTER’S TOOLS WILL NEVER DISMANTLE THE MASTER’S HOUSE.” Audre Lorde**

***FULL CIRCLE-THE MORE THINGS CHANGE.....***

***HISTORY/REMEMBRANCE – SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION - SELF-DETERMINATION-COMMUNITY***

***BLACK: TO SHINE... TO FLASH... TO BURN***

## TO SHINE

Once upon a time, more than 20 years ago, *WHILE BLACK* - I had my "Come Up" on the Toronto Art Scene, I shone.

The path was paved through the formation of a Collective called Syndicate with another young woman of colour, Ingrid Chu, who is now an Associate Curator in Hong Kong at Tai Kwun Contemporary, in Hong Kong. We were two young women of colour, fresh out of art school, who met while working as Docents at one of the very same Art Institutions which (for the most part) denied young people of colour access.

## **SELF-DETERMINATION - LANGUAGE & ACTION**

Young as we were - we became warriors, using language and action (as Audre Lorde encouraged), doing every single part that is entailed in the making of an exhibition - from finding the spaces, to curating the artists and art, to the PR and writing. We purposefully chose tools that were not part of the Master's Box to dismantle the racist, sexist, hierarchical and exclusionary structures that had sought to oppress us. By making use of our own self-determination, drive and personal finances we f-ed and bucked the very System that had shut us out. Ironically it was through our chosen mandate to circumvent those institutions, by having exhibitions in local stores, warehouses or abandoned factories that we slowly gained notice, interest and respect from our fellow artists, curators and journalists. Eventually for me this led first to being invited to show with other Artist Collectives, then local Artist Run Centres and eventually outside of Toronto-internationally.

## TO FLASH

My first "lucky break" or first foray into an elite Canadian Institution, was the result of the combination of a sudden cancellation and the support of the first Black Curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Michelle Jacques. This made me the first Canadian Black/Woman of Colour, (I am also of East Indian heritage), to have a solo exhibition at that Institution. My exhibition *KARMA 2000*, however was not a full solo exhibition, but held instead in a small gallery Project Space that highlighted young emerging artists called ***Present Tense***. My initial unease was calmed by the fact that the experimental, grass roots and emerging aspects of the series fit my non-commercial, unconventional, underground background, approach and work. As well, at a time when I was deeply involved with youth at risk I was able to speak to them, on their level, and hopefully make a difference by presenting a piece that dealt with youth violence and Racism. My personal need to justify my artistic career by meeting any challenge presented to me also made me open to the invitation. Ultimately, however it was my deep respect and trust for Michelle and the impetus to work with her that convinced me to do the show. All of this combined with the distant hope of possibly opening doors for other "Black/Brown women, convinced me to "enter the Master's House."

I must also state here, that as much as the elite Institution, Museums and Galleries shut out Black artists, and especially Black female artists at that time, there were individual curators who were supportive of both me and my work. In achieving access to some of the major Art Institutions in Toronto, I had the luck and good fortune to have the help and support from many different people within the Toronto art community. These supporters included, of course such established Toronto curators as the previously mentioned Michelle Jacques, as well as Philip Monk (who curated me when he was Chief Curator at the Power Plant Art Gallery, and most recently until his retirement (Director of the Art Gallery of York University), and David Liss (Director of MOCA) to (then) emerging curators such as Ingrid Chu, Eileen Sommerman and Shelly Bahl (then Director of SAVAC) as well as many other artists and organizers. All of them generously supported me giving me precious opportunities.

Still - the video work which I included in the Installation was not purchased until last year, 21 (!) years after the fact. **OH CANADA...!**

***-“Black Women rarely enter the gallery as part of the permanent collection...”***

***(Julie Crooks, NOW MAGAZINE, January 30, 2019 TO BURN)***

#### **FAME – TOKENISM - “OTHERING” – EXILE - OBLITERATION**

That same year I was the only female Black/Artist of Colour nominated for The Canada Council’s *MILLENNIAL PRIZE*, an award based on both Artistic achievements and Voluntary engagement.

Three years after the Exhibition at the AGO, after having finally ‘broken’ into the other major Toronto Contemporary Institutions, (the Koffler Centre, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, The Power Plant and having participated in National and International exhibitions in the USA, Austria, Brazil, England, France, Germany, India, South Africa and Spain. At home, in Toronto, it seemed that my career had come to a standstill. Concurrently, I suffered from extreme burnout. I had been working overtime (i.e. on the Boards of Artist Run Centres or devising and giving art workshops for Charities that worked with Children at Risk, from primarily poor Immigrant and Black communities). Being a young artist, I felt carving a path for oneself was not enough. I **needed** to take action, to be a warrior, to use Art to make a difference, to prove myself worthy of my achievements. I had to show the ‘Haters’, who claimed that I had gained my opportunities due to that I was undeserving. With each new article written about me, I began to suffer from what I at that time labelled “imposter syndrome,” and I longed for my one time anonymity.

***-“OTHERING “Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome For many women, feeling like an outsider isn’t an illusion — it’s the result of systemic bias and exclusion. Ruchika Tulshyan and Jodi-Ann Burey, Diversity And Inclusion, Harvard Business Review- February 11, 202***

## **“OTHERING “**

Not only was I physically, emotionally and mentally exhausted, I was fed up with having to fight so hard to meet goals that were never even really my own, and I was not even sure helped to make a difference

I had been fighting against a system, that I had initially striven to negate through my actions, (forming a Collective and curating alternative exhibitons) only to get caught up in the ideas and ideals of achievement and success of that very machine, of the “Master.”

The System, and the Systematic Racism that I had fought so long and hard to combat had finally broken me. I realized that contrary to my hopes, that the elite Canadian Institution had indeed treated me as a “token gesture.” How foolish of me to think that my foot had propped open that Institutional door...

The next woman Black to have a solo exhibition at the AGO 10 years later! As grateful as I was to my community, to those who had helped me to get where I was, I knew then that the very System that we had infiltrated together had “let me and my kind in” only to shut us out again. I had “dipped a toe in the water”, but all the while felt the pressure of that icy invisible ceiling pressing down on my head. Intuitively, intellectually, and implicitly I knew that there I had gone as far as I could at that time. Also as it later turned out, as far as I wanted to go...fame was, it would seem ultimately, not my game. My ambiguity and disillusion about having entered into the Master’s house grew. In a stroke of fate rendolent of Greek Tragedy, after my greatest victories, I was hit with the most agonizing of horrible and intensely devastating series of personal tragedies. These, which begun as my career peaked, and relentlessly continued in the difficult years that followed,were the final tipping points that I needed. I looked for a way out.

## **OBLITERATION**

Ultimately, like so many Black artists before me, I chose exile in Europe (and with it new artistic and also race-related hurdles). Having fallen in love with the vibrant underground, leftist punk vibe of the art scene of that time- that reminded me of my origins I ran to Berlin, Germany, and towards anonymity. What I got instead was total obliteration.

## **FULL CIRCLE 2**

**"PAIN IS IMPORTANT**

**HOW WE EVADE IT**

**HOW WE SUCCUMB TO IT**

**HOW WE DEAL WITH IT**

**HOW WE TRANSCEND IT " Audre Lorde**

### **MOURNING – SURVIVAL – SILENCE - SELF-NEGATION – ERASURE**

Here I was, in exile in a new White-dominated country. All the years of fighting so hard to make a name for myself, years of literal blood sweat and tears -gone, erased, -forgotten. It is here that I have to pose a serious if provocative question:

***Would this have ever happened to a White, Male Canadian artist with similar achievements?***

#### ***MOURNING***

Once in Berlin, whether I was remembered in annals of the Canadian Art World or not was the last thing on my mind. At that time in my life, grief stricken and in deep mourning for the 9 friends and family that I had lost to suicide and cancer - not only did I give in to my animalistic need to go into hiding, but kept a very low profile-and, for the most part, completely avoided the Art World.

Burdened by guilt and grief for those that I had lost as I had focused and fought so hard for my career, I searched for a means to make myself pay for my selfishness. I also wanted to rail against an art world that I had grown cynical, disillusioned and sick about. Struggling with these issues, I made the extremely hard but also deeply heartfelt decision to go on a conceptual and literal "art strike," part personal punishment, part general protest. I considered it as a time of Karmic payback, meted out through emotional and spiritual suffering. I therefore purposely stopped making art for many, many years.

#### ***SILENCE***

Having already silenced myself artistically, once in Berlin, I also, in order to literally survive, (racially, politically, economically, physically, emotionally, and psychologically), chose to quiet my warrior voice, to relinquish the fight, to grow silent.

#### ***SURVIVAL***

My voice, my warrior, had too many other fights to fight. Faced as I was with the struggle to survive in Berlin, to integrate into yet another culture of whiteness and colonialism, I chose to "shut up and put up," rather than be "beat up." The job that I worked at necessitated me traveling to suburbs of Berlin that were not only rife with

racism, but sometimes actual hotbeds of “Hooligans” or Neo-Nazis in other clothing. Whilst trying to teach myself German (one of the most difficult languages there is), trying to integrate into another Culture of Oppression and Exclusion, I was confronted with both blatant racism and myriads forms of microaggressions as I simply tried to live my life. The grass is not always greener-but only less polite.

### **FULL CIRCLE 3: WHILE BLACK**

***“YOUR SILENCE WILL NOT PROTECT YOU...” Audre Lorde***

***THEY WILL USE IT AS A TOOL AGAINST YOU AND TO UPHOLD THEIR POWER.....***

Eventually, after years of ‘silence,’ having worked through my grief as best as I could, I found my creative and warrior voices again. After my many years of being quiet, tolerant and invisible, I was tired with my lack of voice, my not speaking up and of the lack of representation of Black/Women of Colour in the Berlin Art World. Sadly, the same apathy that I had run from in Canada was rampant within prestigious Institutions, Museums and Collections, in Berlin as well. Berlin elite Institutions Galleries, and Museums still fail to show/collect Black Women/the art of Women of Colour, or that of their male counterparts. ***THE MORE THINGS CHANGE....***

Without a means to express myself, without an outlet for my creativity, my spirit had died a miserable death. My soul needed to be fed. My heart need an outlet for all of the pent up pain for those that I had lost. My thoughts and emotions needed to be expressed. I started to make art again.

Then came the killings, of young Black men, and women. I was shocked, sorrowful and filled with fear. Then came the Anger-that flamed into fury. I knew then that I must join in the fight again.

My passive silence that had once again become a voice- grew to be a ***ROAR!***

***“REVOLUTION IS NOT A ONE TIME EVENT” Audre Lorde***

**This then is the path that led me here - to *WHILE BLACK*.**

In 2002, when I participated in an interview in ***13 Conversations About Art and Cultural Race Politics*** edited by Monika Kin Gagnon and Richard Fung (published in 2002 by Artexte in Montreal), I never believed that I would have to be asked two decades later to address the very same issues that I had to then: the lack of inclusion of Black artists and Artists of Colour and the distribution of power within those same elite institutions and galleries. When I left Canada for Berlin I may have been cynical, but honestly believed that it was “just a matter of time...” until Canada’s elite institutions “did the right thing, and allowed greater access to Black

people and specifically, *because as personal as this piece is personal- this piece includes experiences that are universal to many Black Female artists.*

**“IN OUR WORLD DIVIDE AND CONQUER MUST BECOME DEFINE AND EMPOWER” Audre Lorde**

**THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...**

**POSITIVE CHANGE - SELF-DETERMINATION - SELF-CURATION – DIRECTION - POWER**

Since I have left Canada, a number of positive changes *have* taken place.

There have been (mostly within the last couple of years) a number of (mostly female) curators appointed as Chief Curators in various galleries and Institutions across the country. One of these appointments includes the woman who had the courage to support a virtually unknown female Artist of Colour all those years ago, Michelle Jacques. On a personally positive note we have come “**FULL CIRCLE**” by having the opportunity to work together again, after all that time.

The appointments of the three main organizers of “While Black”: Michelle Jacques (Remai Modern Saskatoon), Denise Ryner (previous director at Or), and Charles Campbell as an Adjunct Curator (here at Confederation Centre Charlottetown) are also beacons of positivity.

In my hometown of Toronto, we also have the now years long pro-active leadership of Gaetan Verna (for 10 years as Director of the Power Plant-now moved to the Wexler Centre for the Arts) and Julie Crooks (Chief Curator of the new department “Arts of Global Africa and the Diaspora”) to show as strong indications of a will to take the necessary steps for change in terms of who gets to Direct and to curate Black artists.

Yet, one simply has to examine the list of those people sitting on the boards of many of Canada’s elite institutions to see that we have a long way to go.

The majority of the people on those boards, that is the people with the power to make those hiring decisions, are still overwhelmingly white.

The people who sit on the Collection Boards and committees in Canada’s Museums and Institutions are overwhelmingly white. The artists who are shown and promoted Canada’s major galleries, are still primarily male and White.

I cannot, in good conscience, state: “the More Things Change, the more they stay the same...”, but I will say “the More Things Change, the More that Those in Power hold tightly, archaically, and painfully (for them and for us) onto that power.”

***“IF POWER IS AN APHRODISIAC...then who here is getting fucked?”***



## **FULL CIRCLE 4-(SO SORRY) FOR-THE –SYSTEMATIC ERASURE**

### **NEGATION-INVISIBILITY-ERASURE-**

A key tool in keeping a hold of that power and the Systems of Exclusion that it upholds is the negation of history-Both POSITIVE HISTORY: i.e. Our Achievements as Black/people of Colour and NEGATIVE, i.e.-What the White Supremacist System Has Done to Keep Us Down and Out), where articles like:

**“Why Have There Been No Great Black Canadian Women Artists?”** Appear in Canadian Art Magazine, [Essays / January 10, 2019](#).

***“An act of erasure is most violent when it becomes mundane—when it occurs so frequently that it begins to spring, nakedly, from an ugly and haunting banality.” – by [Connor Garel](#)***

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Both my career and the careers of many other Black Canadian Women Artists who had worked so hard to gain the achievements that they had - despite the closed doors, despite the lack of interest, despite the lack of acknowledgement, were, in the eyes of the Canadian White Art Community, not worth keeping historical records of, not worth celebrating - they were dust. And just like dust, our struggles, the paths that we forged and the walls that we broke down - were blown away, to all extents and purposes erased.

A few weeks later AGO curator Julie Crooks, in a show of faith and remembrance mentioned my AGO exhibition and that of another artist who I knew and who was supportive of me as a younger emerging artist during my “Come Up,” Winsom, in an article in the alternative Toronto paper: *Now Magazine* about that very invisibility of Black artists within “elite cultural institutions,” that we now, with this project, are asked to confront:

**Black Futures Month: Five Torontonians want to make 2019 the year for change**

*BY CHAKA V. GRIER, NEIL PRICE AND RADHEYAN SIMONPILLA, Jan 30, 2019*In 1997, Winsom was one of the first Black Canadian female artists to take part in a group exhibition at the AGO, which was organized by Michelle Jacques, then the AGO's assistant curator, contemporary art and Jessica Bradley, curator, contemporary art. Clark has been a fixture in the Black arts community in Toronto since the 1980s. Her show recently closed at the AGO and her work has been added to the permanent collection. And in 2000, Jacques curated works by Clarke-Davis – an innovative artist who worked with time-based media as part of the Present Tense contemporary series. **It's important to get this right. The record needs to be corrected. History must not be erased.**

## **FULL CIRCLE: 5**

**THE EXISTENCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IS NECESSARY**

**THE NEED FOR EXISTENCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IS SHAMEFUL**

**THE EXISTENCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER**

**“REVOLUTION IS NOT A ONE TIME EVENT”... Audre Lorde**

**“ ...and neither is TRANSFORMATION...it is an act of GROWTH, OVERCOMING and TRANSCENDENCE”-KARMA**

**MY VIDEO: WHILE BLACK/WE ARE MONARCHS:**

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PAIN AND A HISTORY OF OPPRESSION INTO REBIRTH AND METAPHORICAL FLIGHT-

Right before the first iteration of this exhibition, George Floyd was brutally murdered.

This horrible inhumane act, with the much more meaningful, important and pressing issue of the erasure of Black people, often through police violence, but also through being killed, being murdered, by White Supremacists. Thanks to Trump and other “leaders” like him who have tolerated and even encouraged racism, White Supremacists and Neo Nazis have been given permission to not only parade their prejudice and hatred (like in groups such as Pegida or the AfD-party in Germany), but to act on it with horrific violence, as we have seen in America with groups such as the Proud Boys. We have seen the murders of (primarily) Black men by police which for me are a form of continued denial of humanity, repression and intimidation of a practice that had its heyday for the 70 years after the civil war, Lynching.

Recently, there have even been some unsolved murders of young Black men which were suspected to be resurgences of this hideous and repulsive crime.

This unspeakable act of vigilantism was used as a means of repression by Southern White men in the United States. It was a means to “keep Black people in their place,” after they, with the loss of the war, had lost the political/legal right to do so. So it was that the hung and often badly beaten/mutilated/ skinned/ burned bodies of first ex-slaves, and as time drew on, the first Black people born into ‘freedom,’ were hung up as symbols of various “crimes” against white people: i.e. speaking out against injustice, running away from one’s “Master,” - often due to sadistic mistreatment, seeking fair pay or treatment, or the right to vote, and the most trumped up charge of them all, “looking at a white woman.” It is clear that all of these supposed “infractions” all

essentially boiled down to “showing oneself to be an equal to a white man or woman, and acting in ways that showed one’s intelligence, dignity, freedom and humanity.

**“The More Things Change.”**

This hideous and horrific act, that was used as an act of hate and oppression by White Supremacists in the Southern States to hang on to their dominance, their self-appointed supremacy, to their power, is a metaphor for the continued perpetuation of racism, killing and oppression of Black people in our society. Now, after having been “subject to” the first Black President in American History, many Americans returned to practices that had once allowed them to exercise what they see as their God given White Privilege, what they deem to be their ‘God Given Power’ over Blacks, to control, to rule, to eradicate-**FULL CIRCLE**

### **“THE MORE THINGS CHANGE”-FULL CIRCLE: 6**

**“I WAS GOING TO DIE, IF NOT SOONER, THEN LATER, WHETHER OR NOT I HAD EVER SPOKEN MYSELF.**

**MY SILENCE HAD PROTECTED ME. YOUR SILENCE WILL NOT PROTECT YOU. “ Audre Lorde**

Like so many Black people, I am engorged. With sadness, with horror, with rage. I am (the stereotypical!) justified Angry Black Woman who wants to lash out against a system that allows such things to happen. Intellectually, I understand, that erasures or exclusions, such as those faced by Black artists in Canada, America and other White Dominated Nations, when juxtaposed against the bigger picture of the nightmare of killings and murders, may seem small, unimportant and insignificant.

***This, I would argue, is simply not the case.***

Yes, the hate crimes and proud displays of prejudice that we now face, again as a Black community, are acts that must be immediately dealt with, that must be stopped.

Equal representation in the arts, at an elite level is also part of that “Bigger Picture,” in quiet, yet meaningful ways. It is about **RESPECT**. It is about **EQUALITY**. It is about **FAIRNESS, BALANCE**-the breaking down of a system that has upheld **DISCRIMINATION, RACISM, INEQUALITY, and IMBALANCE OF POWER**.

Until those institutional walls come down, until the systems of oppression-be they economic, political, or artistic are destroyed-there is no hope of true equality for Black artists in Canada. Ultimately, it is about abolishing the very structures and systems that

have brought us to the point where we have the need for this exhibition: **WHILE BLACK**. We as artists have a role and an active role in the shaping of both society and our culture. If Black artists are not allowed to be part of that process in an active, respected and yes, elite level, the bastions of white elitism will continue to be just that for us, “closed, exclusive fortresses,” and White Supremacy will continue to smugly perpetuate itself.

Ultimately, it is about gaining **A VOICE, POWER** and **AUTONOMY**. It is about gaining autonomy over one’s own artistic practice, it is about the power **TO BE HEARD, TO BE VISIBLE, TO BE KNOWN, TO HAVE OWNERSHIP and CONTROL over our own fate**. To have **Black Artist** and **Curator** accomplishments **acknowledged, appreciated and recorded** in the artistic history of this country. It is about the grace afforded any white artist worth his/her salt-Black artists have the right to be a part of Art History. The right to be **remembered-THE RIGHT TO SHAPE OUR COUNTRY’S FUTURE**.

## **VOICE**

***I AM HERE! I am BLACK! I AM ANGRY!***

***I AM NO LONGER SILENT... I HAVE FOUND MY VOICE AGAIN...***

***WOMAN. ARTIST. FEMINIST. SOCIALIST. WARRIOR. WITCH.***

***WHILE BLACK***

***FULL CIRCLE.***

**I AM BLACK/ OF COLOUR. IN AN IDEAL WORLD - I WOULD NOT CALL MYSELF THAT BECAUSE FOR ME-SKIN COLOUR DOES NOT DEFINE WHO I AM AS A HUMAN.**

**I AM A WOMAN. IN AN IDEAL WORLD - I WOULD NOT BE DEFINED AS THAT BECAUSE MY SEXUALITY WOULD NOT BE THE DEFINER OF MY ABILITIES, NOR OF MY PLACE IN THE WORLD.**

**I AM AN ARTIST. IN AN IDEAL WORLD WOULD NOT CALL MYSELF THAT BECAUSE ART FOR ME IS LIKE AIR: SOMETHING ABSOLUTELY INTRINSIC TO ME PERSONALLY-NECESSARY, WITHOUT WHICH MY BODY DID NOT DIE - BUT MY SOUL AND SPIRIT DID. ART IS CRUCIAL-NOT ONLY FOR ME, BUT FOR HUMANITY AS A WHOLE. IT ENABLES US TO REALIZE, EXPRESS AND SHOW, WHO AND WHAT WE ARE IN SOULFULLNESS, THOUGHT, POLITICALNESS AND BEAUTY.**

**I AM A SOCIALIST. IN AN IDEAL WORLD I WOULD NOT CALL MYSELF THAT BECAUSE WE WOULD ALL BE SHARING THE WEALTH - SO THAT WE ALL BENEFITED FROM A SYSTEM THAT MET OUR KEY HUMAN NEEDS OF HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, HOUSING, BEING FED, AND ART.**

I AM A WARRIOR. IN AN IDEAL WORLD I WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE ONE. - I WOULD NOT HAVE TO FIGHT TO JUSTIFY MY VERY EXISTENCE, I WOULD NOT HAVE TO FIGHT TO BE SEEN, TO BE EQUAL. I WOULD NOT HAVE TO FIGHT FOR THOSE IN POWER TO SHARE WHAT THEY HAVE AND CONTINUE TO HOLD ONTO UNTIL TODAY.

I AM A WITCH. IN AN IDEAL WORLD I WOULD NOT LABEL MYSELF AS SUCH. THERE ARE THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO LISTEN TO THEIR INTUITION, DRAW UPON AND WORSHIP NATURE - HER MAGIC AS BOTH WONDROUS AND RELEVATORY - AND THE WORLD, THAT IS COMPRISED OF HER AND IN DESPERATE NEED OF CARE, REPAIR AND OF SAVING.

UNTIL THIS SOCIETY IS ABLE TO FREE ITSELF FROM THE RACIST/SEXIST/ANTI-ARTIST/ANTI-SOCIALIST/ANTI-ECOLOGIST WAYS OF THINKING AND BELIEVING THERE IS SIMPLY VERY LITTLE HOPE FOR ME, OR ANY OTHER:  
BLACK/FEMALE/SOCIALIST/WARRIOR/WITCH/ARTIST TO BE GRANTED EQUALITY FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE.

THE FACT THAT IT WILL NOT HAPPEN IN OUR LIFETIME DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE HAVE TO STOP FIGHTING AGAINST IT IN OUR TIMES.

THIS TRUTH I SAY TO YOU...YOUR SILENCE WILL NOT PROTECT YOU,  
IT MAY IN ACTUALLITY KILL YOU.

THIS I SAY TO YOU...

YOU ARE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR ANGER!

SPEAK UP!

SPEAK OUT!

SPEAK YOUR TRUTH!

TAKE IT TO THE STREETS!

REVOLT!

TAKE ACTION

THAT LEADS TO TRANSFORMATION!

IT IS TIME TO DO MORE

MUCH MUCH MORE

THAN JUST SURVIVE!

***-WHILE BLACK***