

it is what i say it is: a blk trans womynifesto by olaiya olayemi

i am an experimentalist by nature/experimentalism runs thru my veins like rivers

being a trans person requires experimentation

being a womyn in this world requires experimentation

being a person of the african diaspora requires experimentation

navigating a faulty system requires the full use of my experimental and creative impulses

this is my history

this is my inheritance

i cannot be a mere critic of the world/to be a critic in and of itself is not generative

i must create in order to make and sustain change

like my great-granny the quilt maker who took scraps of clothes to make blankets for my warmth

like my mother and aunts huddled over hot stoves to create gumbo to keep my stomach full

i too make things to nourish the battered mind and warm the cold-hearted

i thread together the memories, histories, and experiences of womyn of the african diaspora

and remix our lives to make meaning/to make a badass bruja brew/to make sense of this system

i am not an issues writer

i do not write about the popular progressive socio-political opinion of the day

on the contrary/i am interested in the human beingness that lies beneath the identities

i celebrate the multitudinous ways that blk womyn manifest

i work within a blk feminist anarchist framework/but my stories are not statistical analysis or social science

i am a performance artist and filmmaker who works within a d.i.y. aesthetic

commercialism does not impede my work nor do mainstream palates

i do not make large looming statements or race or try to school anyone on blk or feminist sensibilities

i preach to the choir

the people i write about are the people for whom i write

there are no footnotes or explanations to outsiders

i am an artist/intellectual/not a sociologist or political scientist

i do not write agit-prop or staged/filmed research papers

my activism is putting the voices and bodies of blk womyn on the frontline

the players in my pieces are not just reactive people/they are thinking people

writers/scholars/artists/teachers/ and professors populate the worlds i craft

i create spaces on the screen and stage and page for blk womyn to be vulnerable/experience

pleasure/process pain/and be fully ourselves so that we can move towards growth and evolution

and move the culture forward as we rise