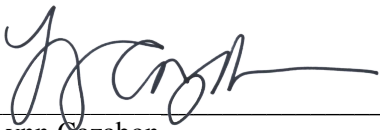


APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: THE COLONIZED AND THE COLONIZER WITHIN ME:
FINDING RYUKYU LANGUAGE OF MY MATRILINEAL
ANCESTORS ON A MILITARIZED ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE COLONIZED AND THE COLONIZER WITHIN
ME: FINDING RYUKYU LANGUAGE OF MY
MATRILINEAL ANCESTORS ON A MILITARIZED
ISLAND.

Chinen Aimi, Master of Fine Arts, 2019

Directed By: Lynn Cazabon, Professor
Department of Visual Arts

The Colonized and the Colonizer within Me is an attempt to transliterate and translate the individual micro experiences to the geopolitical macro circumstances that created my existence.

THE COLONIZED AND THE COLONIZER WITHIN ME:
FINDING RYUKYU LANGUAGE OF MY MATRILINEAL ANCESTORS ON A
MILITARIZED ISLAND.

By

Chinen Aimi Bouillon.

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts
2019.

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Preface

My thesis exhibition at the Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture is a group exhibition with my peers. My work is located in a rectangular nook at the back of the gallery, directly across from the entrance, and is only visible once visitors have navigated around the fourth wall of the rectangle. This fourth wall, which is situated parallel to the gallery entrance and set apart from the nook's other three walls, is purposefully placed to obstruct a view of my installation until visitors have made the choice to enter. To enter, visitors must navigate around the right or left side of this wall and then remove their shoes in exchange for slippers that I have provided – in keeping with Eastern cultural traditions of showing respect for inhabited space. Vinyl stickers on the floor provide instructions for this exchange.

In the center of the space sits *Theater of Tacit Operations* (2019), a board game (abbreviated as *T.O.T.O.*) in the form of a tabletop (in this case, the game is actually carved into the top of the wooden table) that sits one foot up from the floor. The height of the table makes it necessary for participants wishing to play the game to kneel or sit on the floor, and traditional Eastern goza mats and cushions are provided on either side of the table for this purpose. *T.O.T.O.* has two transducers attached to the bottom of the tabletop that resonate recordings of the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu local ocean and military aircrafts flying overhead. “Resonate” here means that participants making physical contact with the table while playing the game will actually “feel” the sounds. This fusion of sounds (nature and military) has been created by the circumstances of colonization of the island. Emphasizing these circumstances, a separate audio track emits propaganda from an overhead parabolic speaker – a track taken from an episode of a documentary television program produced by

the United States Army Signal Corps Army Pictorial Service in 1956 called *Okinawa: Keystone of the Pacific*. On the walls are framed photographs hung at eye level of the participants sitting or kneeling on the goza mats and cushions. These photographs are black-and-white images of Okinawa, Japan, that I took in the summer of 2018. On some of the images are 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu terms that I have translated and/or transliterated, providing commentary on the environment and history of the area.

琉球 ↔ Ryukyu language is an oral language. There was no standardized writing system for the sounds of the language that varied slightly from community to community, region to region. The written forms were borrowed, adapted, and enforced by my ancestors' relations with China and Japan. Even the Japanese language has a Chinese origin (its logographic characters, called Kanji, were adopted and adapted from Chinese) and was used by male scholars of Japan's upper-class families during the feudal era. The Hiragana writing was developed by women of high court through their "extracurricular" activities of writing. Hiragana was much easier for the everyday people to learn and became a widespread method of disseminating policies and orders. From Hiragana developed Katakana, which is typically used in transliterating foreign words into the Japanese writing system. Language in this way shifted from one form to another, by adaptation and mutation, to suit changes in the culture, space, and time.

My work deals with language from the perspective of an artist caught in linguistics' cultural limitations. Transliteration is the process of converting the script (written system) of one language (a "source language," as linguists call it) into the written system of another language ("target language"), supposedly without the loss of meaning, even though such a process cannot account for differences in the sounds of the two languages. Translation is

the process of rendering the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences in one language, whether written or spoken, into another language. These methods of language conversion are the semiotic focus of my research and creative production. There is irony in this written thesis process. As I write, I am both articulating and demonstrating the effects of language colonization.

In this thesis, I will be using a double arrow “↔” system to designate each iteration of the language transformation that I am exploring. The appearance of each term in the string that I write stands in relation to the other terms, thereby showing its position in the conversion order. I start each string of terms with the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu Oral Language in the Japanese written form of Kanji, Hiragana, or Katakana.

Example:

#1 in the string is the Ryukyu oral term transliterated in Japanese ↔ #2 in the string is the English transliteration (this is the target language that allows for English readers to pronounce the word by virtue of its having been subjected to a method known as Romaji, or the “Romanization” of a word – i.e., its conversion into Latin script) ↔ #3 The Japanese translation ↔ #4 The English transliteration of #3 ↔ #5 Direct translation (of what each term signifies) ↔ #6 Translation or colloquial term ↔ #7 Transliteration of colloquial phrase.

The specific 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu term, which is the starting point of the conversion order, is written in Kanji. Hiragana would be used as the second option, but only if it’s considered a Japanese term adapted by my ancestors and used differently than it would have been in the standard language of Japanese. The 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu oral terms without Kanji will be

written in Katakana, as it is the most common and standard way of representing the foreign nature of the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu language.

Another way to help explain this system is to reverse the transliterating methods.

Example:

#1 Gasoline ↔ #2 gasorinn ↔ #3 ガソリン. Here, in order: #1 is the English term; #2 is the transliteration of the term for Japanese speakers, also known as Romaji; and then #3, for which Katakana is used to write “gasoline,” an import product (and, so, an adopted and adapted foreign term).

Regardless of its transliteration, the Ryukyu oral terms cannot be written in a way that matches an exact pronunciation in any other language than its own. Ironically, then, while Ryukyu language has borrowed its writing system from China and Japan, the sounds of the Ryukyu oral language can never truly be represented through writing.

The beauty and sadness of this oral tradition’s fate is that the writings will never fully be able to convey the voices of my ancestors. This endangered language can only be evoked by those who inherit the sounds in its environment. Without the inherited knowledge of its island aesthetics, meaning is lost in transmission. For this reason, I write with opacity of definition, and ambiguity in meaning. I play with English, Japanese, and Ryukyu language in the way meaning is implied and disregarded through tacit agreement of definitions. It’s not what I define but also what readers bring to the rendering of words that give it meaning. I hope to give you my own deepest definitions of 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu.

Dedication

To my then five-year-old uncle,

知念堅一 ↔ Chinen Kenichi

who lived through the largest amphibious assault
of the Pacific Theater during World War II.

Acknowledgements

I would like to give thanks to my ancestors, both matrilineal and patrilineal, and my closest peers, mentors, friends, and family:

The Badlands: Nicole Ringel, Dilay Kocogullari, Leah Michaels, and Bryan O'Neill; My fellow IMDA grads: Chris Kojzar, Mollye Bendell, Parastoo Aslanbeik, Jeffrey Gangwisch, Melissa Cormier, Jaclin Paul, Ghazaleh Keshavarz, Wes Stitt, Mandy Morrison, Jason Charney, Brandon Ables, Adan Roderiguez, Maks Prykhodko, Lindsay D'Andelet, Safiyah Cheatam, Rahne Alexander, Amelia Voos, Kelsey Davis, Danielle Damico. My thesis chair: Lynn Cazabon, and the committee: Kathy O'Dell, Sarah G. Sharp, Rebecca A. Adelman. My oral defense questioners: Steve Bradley, David Hess, and Mark Durant. To CADVC: Symmes Gardner, Janet Magruder, Sandra Abbott, Michael Woodhouse. My family, Chinen Erica, Marina, Aden, Ollie, Floyd, Miko, Randall, Becky, Ted, and Tina. Many more from the community, but most of all to my best friend Mitchell Noah.

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夢 ↔ Dream

I dream every day of the time I lived with nature. When I was so much a part of nature that I only had to exchange what was absolutely necessary to continue living.¹ I dream of the time when I understood my surrounding environment by the way the wind blew or the sun passed. I hear whispers of life around me, ゴーヤー ↔ goya ↔ bitter gourd vines crawling, アダニグチャー ↔ adanigucha- ↔ fruit of screw pine drumming to the sand, スーティーチャー ↔ su-ticha- ↔ ソテツ ↔ sotetsu ↔ Cycas revoluta scissoring in the salty winds. I feel time in the way the moon rotates around the earth, affecting the tides. I feel the seven planets extend their forces and the shifting gravity make itself obvious in the earthly materials and the sea. I dream of conversing with nature.

I was born to a U.S. Marine Corps patriarch and a colonized indigenous Ryukyu matriarch. In the 琉球列島 ↔ *Ryukyu-retto* ↔ Ryukyu island² traditions of my matrilineal ancestors, the Ultimate Ancestors are said to be ティン ↔ tien ↔ Heaven, ジチ ↔ gichi ↔ Earth, and リュウギユウ ↔ ryugyu ↔ Sea, who make up nature and life. Ultimate Ancestors live in the ウサチーユ ↔ usachi-yu ↔ ancient age ↔ beginning of time ↔ source of life, where it all began. The Ryukyu ancestors understood the importance of

¹ 古宇利島の話 - Narrative from Kourijima

² Okinawa is the largest island of the 150 琉球諸島 ↔ Ryūkyū-shotō ↔ Ryukyu island chain in the Pacific. Located between mainland Japan's southern point and Taiwan, it is sandwiched between the East China Sea and Pacific Ocean, where the 黒潮 ↔ kuroshio ↔ black salt ↔ black tide runs, guiding ships from faraway lands. Formerly known as the 琉球王国 ↔ Ryukyu-ookoku ↔ Ryukyu Kingdom, with over 450 years of history and trade, Okinawa is an island of 1,206.98 km² and is one-third the size of Rhode Island, which is 3,144 km². Rhode Island is a significant comparison because it is the birth home of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, the first U.S. Military Naval Commander to invade 琉球王国 ↔ Ryukyu-ookoku ↔ Ryukyu Kingdom in 1853.

connection that created the need for language. Do you know where you come from? How you came to be? Who your family is? How you are connected to your parents, sisters, brothers? Is your idea of a family nuclear or cosmic? Is blood the deciding definition of family or everyday relationships? Your parents' parents, who are they? How are they connected to you? Do you hear from them? Do you see them? How is their relationship to you? These are questions I ask in search of a sense of belonging to time and space, and to the unknown, faraway place known to my matrilineal Ryukyu ancestors as ニライカナイ ↔ niraikanai ↔ ancestral time, where it all began. Where language mediated, connected, and bonded relationships with time and space.

琉球 ↔ Ryukyu Detective

Where are the histories I seek? Where are the voices of women and children? How are the narratives of the so-called “common” people, their family, and community archived?³ In order to accept my contradictory identities as both the colonizer and the colonized, I need the knowledge and information of the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu women’s religious domain. I need to excavate these hidden secrets of peace traditionally passed down through the matrilineal line. These women developed rituals that symbolize important relationships to the surrounding environment, a religious philosophy that is known most commonly by westerners as animism.⁴

I’m looking for the histories before standardized written language and words were ever a thing. I’m looking for the histories told only through the voices of my ancestors. I’m looking for the matriarchal narrative that connects me to the ウサチーユ ↔ usachi-yu ↔ ancient age ↔ beginning of time ↔ source of life. These narratives I am searching for have been severed by colonizing agents. 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu has been colonized at least twice and this confuses and conflates 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu island’s own narratives with the colonizer’s narratives, the former having been tacitly archived in the landscape through the contamination of colonization.

³ Megumi Chibana, in her essay “Priestess and Warrior: The Picture of Indigenous Okinawa Women in Folklore,” retells the story of Amakawa women defending their land from an invasion led by the Satsuma General Kabayama and his 70 navy ships. “Oral indigenous stories disclose another side of history; in this case, supporting different aspect of women’s history in society that had not otherwise been recorded much in the official archival documents produced during that time” (22). Megumi Chibana, “Priestess and Warrior: The Picture of Indigenous Okinawa Women in Folklore,” 国際琉球沖縄論集 ↔ *International Review of Ryukyuan and Okinawan Studies* 2 (2013): 19-26.

⁴ For deep and detailed discussion of animism in the field of philosophy, see Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World*, 2nd edition (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2017).

On this little island, my matrilineal ancestors inherited language from nature. Nature was the source of life, and the indigenous culture maintained a sharing relationship with the land and sea. The history I seek of the indigenous animist culture of my ancestors is not easily found. Layers and layers of colonizing patriarchal history have written over and fused the everyday language and environment of the people that focused on immediate interactions and relations with family, neighbors, community, and nature.

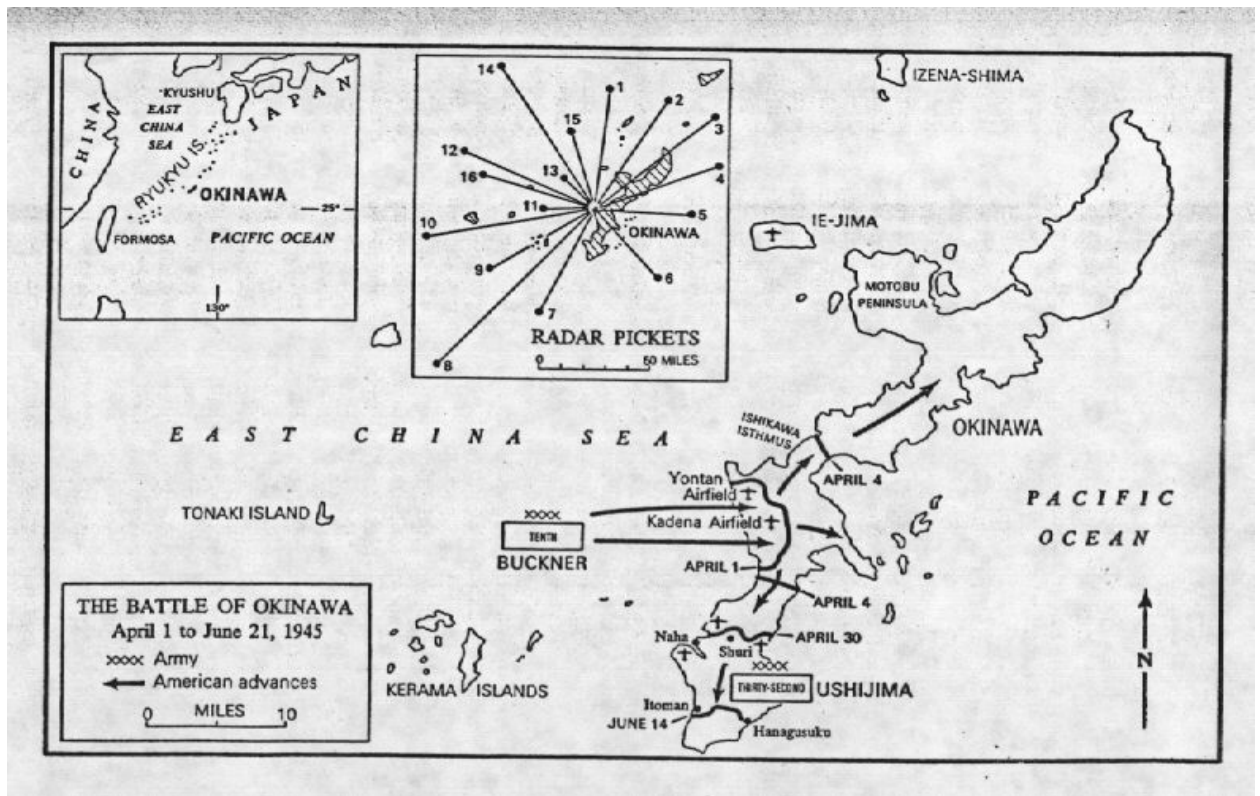


Figure 1. Map of Okinawa and United States military invasion plan, 1945.

In my research, I act as a detective sifting through patriarchal narratives, uncovering the deep matriarchal and animist history of my ancestors. I find traces, methods, and ways colonization was deployed (fig. 1), using my military father as the anchor of the story. As I manifest my research findings in my art practice, I seek to resist further colonization by creating awareness of its methods and even to reverse the effects of colonization by giving

voice back to the lost histories of matriarchal power that once balanced patriarchal power in this culture. My matrilineal ancestors had the knowledge to balance the oscillation of gendered powers within spiritual and physical domains. Here are my attempts of 琉球探
し ↔ Ryukyu sagashi ↔ Finding Ryukyu amongst transliterated histories.



Figure 2. 辺野古 ↔ Henoko home, next to Camp Schwab, its military fencing in the background. Picture is of my USMC father and his three mixed-blood daughters on Easter Sunday (L to R: Aimi, Marina, Erica). World War II's L-Day Invasion of Hagushi Beaches was April 1 – Easter Sunday and April Fool's Day of 1945.

辺野古 ↔ Henoko

Between the ages of five and eight, I lived in a small village called 辺野古 ↔ Henoko. Across from our house stood a wall of chain-link fence that stretched beyond my sight. The area alongside the fence was mowed and maintained, but beyond that two-meter strip, a jungle of overgrown plants fought for space (fig. 2).⁵ On the other side of the jungle was a place I didn't understand: a United States Marine Corps garrison called Camp

⁵ Native Okinawan men are contracted to maintain the military base facilities. All of the mowing and clearing of shrubs along the fenced borders are done by local Okinawan men who dress like ninjas, fully covered for protection from the hot steamy sun. This U.S. military-contracted maintenance by the locals exemplifies the complication of merged borders and identities, and is evidence of colonizing methods.

Schwab, nicknamed “Man Camp,” where my father worked. As a child I knew the borders enforced by colonizing agencies. Violence was structurally imbedded in their fences, buildings, roads – a colonized landscape – but I also felt love in between those constructed spaces. I don’t have words to describe this love. I know I felt it and I was touched by it. Was it the island grandparents who treated me with kindness and stories of their everyday life? Was it the way they maintained their neighborhood without compensation because they knew the debt to nature (their ultimate ancestors) that they, as the present generation, held? Was it the way they affected me through their lifestyle and understanding of the world that acknowledged connections with nature that I needed as a child raised in a militarized nuclear family? Was it the contrast I sensed between the close-knit family that interacts across generations and my own isolated family structure? I am not sure. But this, my birth island, deeply affected my perspective of the world.

The fence extends down the jungle cliffs through 辺野古 ↔ Henoko beach into the ocean of 大浦湾 ↔ Ourawan ↔ Oura bay. When I was a child, the fencing on the beach was much shorter than it is today, and it didn’t have its current concrete foundation. The boundaries were set by rolled layers of barbed wire stretched like a war-toy Slinky⁶ down into the ocean, with concrete pilings anchoring the end of the fence. This beach, mostly taken over by Camp Schwab, had, as it still does, a small access point to a fishing port for locals. Out in the strong salty waves, in between the small beach and the port, is a natural rock formation, which houses the shrine of 龍宮神 ↔ リュウグウシン ↔ Ryugyu-shin

⁶ The Slinky was invented serendipitously during WWII, as mechanical engineer Richard James was working in 1943 on a device to stabilize sensitive equipment aboard U.S. Navy ships. His wife came up with the name “Slinky,” and they started marketing the toy after the war ended in 1945.

↔ God of the Sea ↔ 女之神 ↔ women's god ↔ female god (fig. 6). She has watched the landscape around her change over time. She watched the three feudal kingdoms unite in 1429, she watched the Satsuma clan invade in 1609, in 1879 she watched the Meiji government of Japan annex her home, and in October 1944 she watched the U.S. Armed Forces begin their preliminary bombardment while the island was still under the Japanese Imperial Army's control. She watched the invasion continue to split the island into pieces, destroying and dividing communities, families, and culture (figs. 3-5). She was there when the U.S. started building detention centers and bases. She felt the shock of the U.S.'s second nuclear bomb in August 1945 when it detonated over Nagasaki, 444 miles away, and the Boeing B-29 Bockscar aircraft, which had dropped the "Fat Man" bomb, land on the freshly occupied Yontan Airfield, 20 miles away. She heard the Imperial Army announce their surrender and the conquering roars of U.S. soldiers. She still feels the sadness and trauma of her descendants dislocated and mistreated. She was there to witness and record. She is part of time and space.



Figure 3. Love Day Invasion, Okinawa, April 1, 1945, Easter Sunday & April Fool's Day.



Figure 4. U.S. Soldiers walking through the courtyards of family homes, Okinawa, 1945.

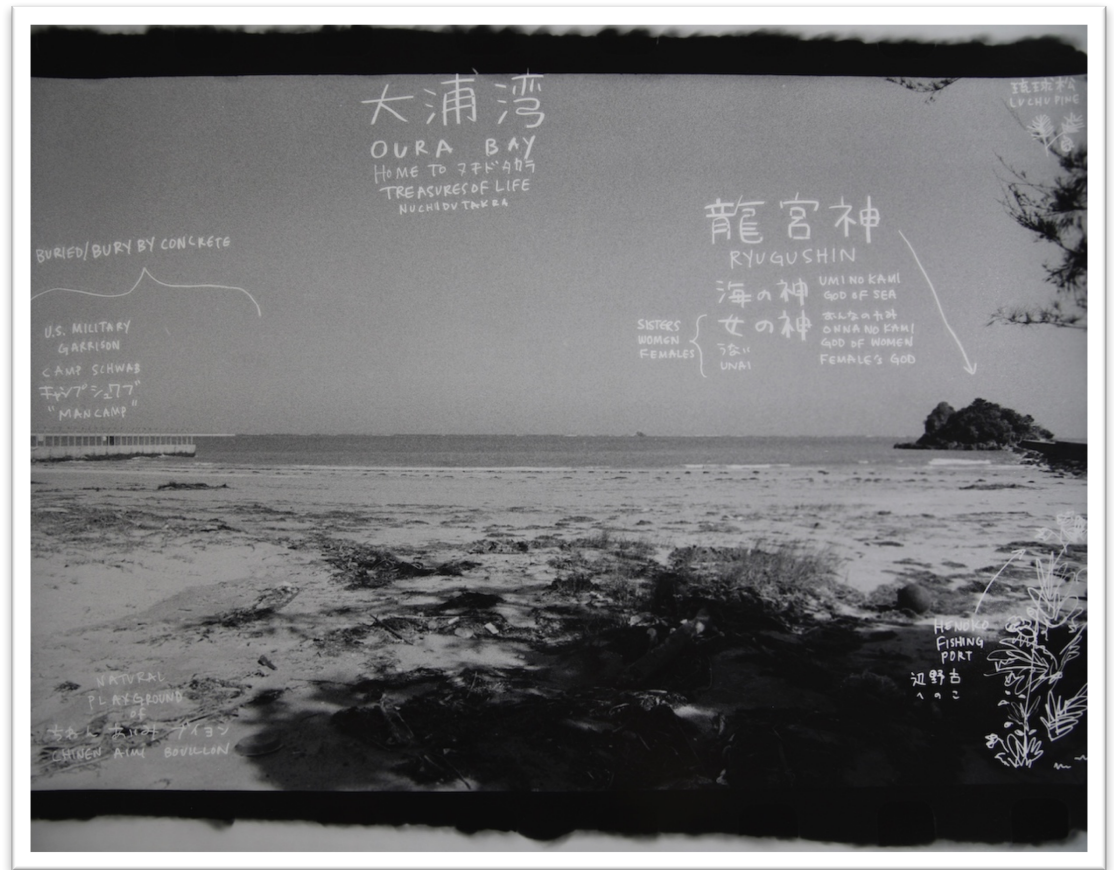


Figure 5. Gelatin silver print from “Seeing 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu: Collective Unconscious” 辺野古 ↔ Henoko beach with United States Military Base, Camp Schwab, a.k.a. “Man Camp,” fencing on the left and Ryugyu-shin on the right.

Years later, unbeknownst to me, she watched as I played. This little beach of 辺野古 ↔ Henoko was my sanctuary. A place that represented my complex identity, history, and continuing cycles of life and death. I played on both sides of the war-toy Slinky. A product of repeated invasion and colonization by imperialist nations, I was born to a U.S. Marine Corps patriarch and a colonized indigenous Ryukyu matriarch, as mentioned earlier. My mother adapted to the violence inflicted upon her ancestors and embodied it through

her survival.⁷ I was born on the garrison⁸ island of Okinawa, Japan, on a military base that was called Camp Lester by the U.S. and キャンプ桑江 ↔ Camp Kuwae by the native locals. It is considered U.S. soil within the fenced area, and on this plot of land fused with colonizing energy is a large Naval hospital where my mother gave birth to me. This island is the place of contradiction that is the core of my existence.

I am both the colonizer and the colonized.

Power is attracting. Our bodies sense power and we are affected by it. We gravitate toward it. We side with power because we think if we are a part of it, it will protect us. That if we side with power, power will become us and we will become power.

↔

Power is repelling. Our bodies sense power and we are affected by it. We are repelled by it. We reject it because when we don't, it will devour us and we cease to exist as ourselves. We can disassemble and disseminate that power to absorb its energy and preserve our identity.

I am this power.

What I have in me is the power to attract and the power to repel.

How I grapple with the space I embody is dependent upon my dreams and wishes.

⁷ For a useful investigation of Okinawan women's survival strategies following WWII, see Linda Isako Angst, "Loudmouth Feminists and Unchaste Prostitutes: 'Bad Girls' Misbehaving in Postwar Okinawa," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* no. 36 (2009): 117, accessed February 8, 2018.

⁸ A garrison is a military installation where troops are stationed. I first came across the term on the book cover of Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).



Figure 6. Gelatin silver print from “Seeing 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu: Collective Unconscious” 辺野古 ↔ Henoko Ryugyu-shin with helicopter on its way back to United States Military Base, Camp Schwab, a.k.a. “Man Camp.”

Language Over Time:

ウチナーグチ ↔ uchinaguchi ↔ One's own language

To be wholly understood, my first language ウチナーグチ ↔ uchinaguchi ↔ one's own mouth ↔ Ryukyu language ↔ 方言 ↔ hogen⁹ relies heavily on context and its indexical connection to other words, concepts, circumstances, and spatial relations. The language of the sounds is most effectively conveyed in physical interactions among those who have inherited and carried forward the cultural semiotics of the island.¹⁰ I don't spend enough time with ウチナーグチ ↔ uchinaguchi because I am not around cultures that speak my language. My childhood peers from Okinawa are intrigued when I speak. They have assimilated to the Japanized culture and lost their ancestors' language. I relocated to Ohio when I was sixteen years old and adapted to American English, but because I was taken away before reaching Japanized adulthood, I became a capsule preserving childhood ウチナーグチ ↔ uchinaguchi.

⁹ Dismissed as a dialect, Hogen ウチナーグチ ↔ uchinaguchi ↔ one's own mouth ↔ Ryukyu language 方言 ↔ hogen is heavily colonized. With my mother and community people in different areas, my upbringing of relocating roughly every two years has created an identity of hodgepodge language. What I realized is how people liked to enforce their superiority of culture, language, and knowledge by correcting my usage. This happened in various parts of Okinawa; in 29 Palms, California; in Ohio; within my patrilineal family; and at the different schools I went to in Okinawa, California, Ohio, and Maryland. Ethnocentrism works in very colonizing ways, dismissing other systems of language as inferior or incorrect.

¹⁰ I want to describe the sound of the language here, but I don't know how I would be able to. I attempt to share the evocation of Ryukyu through my *Affective Objects*, I will explain in the "Affective Objects" chapter, and through my photographic images, where viewers are invited to read and sound out the superimposed terms. This still isn't enough to convey the whole meaning of Ryukyu. This is why my presence with my work is so important, in that I can be the embodiment of the language. I have to be the one to evoke the sounds of the animist ancestors but how do I balance my identity as the colonizer and the colonized when I am in the colonizers' environment where the language of my matriarchal ancestors would be misheard and misunderstood?

Language Over Time:

Transliterating and Translating Language

When my patrilineal colonizers first came to study my matrilineal ancestors, they transliterated the local language into their ethnocentric context.¹¹ Remember: Transliteration is the process of converting one language (a “source language,” in linguists’ terms) into the written system of another language (“target language”), supposedly without loss of meaning. But this process, which may make the language visually understandable and pronounceable in the new context, abandons the phonetics of the original language – that is, what the speaking voice actually sounds like (figs. 7-8). Without an embodied knowledge of the original auditory and acoustic elements of the source language, how can meaning not change? Coming across the many variations of transliterated names for this small island has never ceased to fascinate me.

¹¹ Ethnocentrism is the way one cultured being understands another culture through the signs and symbols associated with their own upbringing, rather than understanding the other culture’s mindsets through its signs and symbols.

*Figure 7. Transliterated names for the former 琉球王国 ↔ Ryukyu Kingdom.*¹²

琉球	(This is the form of Kanji)
りゅうきゅう	(This is the form of Hiragana)
リュウキュウ	(This is the form of Katakana)
LOO CHOO	(These are the forms of Romaji)
LIU CHIU	
LIU KIU	
LOOCHOW	
LU CHU	
LEW CHEW	
LEW CHIU	
LIU CHEW	
LIUE KIUE	
LIEOU KIEOU	
LOUTCHOU	
LU TCHU	
RUU CHUU	
RIU KIU	
RYUKYU	

¹² Hear my recording of transliterated Ryukyu at <https://www.chinenaimibouillon.com/semiotic-sphere-12-transliteration>.



Figure 8. Loutchou man, 1844. Drawing by Auguste Wahlen, a westerner.

I wanted to know what each of these iterations of one place meant for its identity and mine. When the form of representation changed (for example, when the writing system moved from Kanji, Hiragana, or Katakana to Romaji), the transformed signifiers came with shifts in meaning, as well, even when not intended. But, since the intention benefits the speaker of the target language over source language speakers, it's hard not to see transliteration as the first sign of colonization.

Okinawa is an island known by many transliterations. It has been misunderstood and misrepresented by the silent violence of colonizing forces. There is complexity in transliterating the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu language while maintaining original cultural meanings. This complexity increases with the translation of terms once they've been transliterated. How I know the island, and how my ancestors knew it, were by its deep natural and geological energies. But note how seldom those qualities appear in the translated names 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu by which the island has come to be known (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. Translated names.

Meiji Government of Japan	沖縄 ↔ Okinawa ↔ coast rope ↔ cast rope ¹³
Meiji Government of Japan	南西諸 ↔ Nansei shoto ↔ Southern Island Chain
U.S. Military	Keystone of the Pacific
U.S. Military	Pacific Hold
U.S. Military	The Rock
U.S. Military	Junk Heap of the Pacific
U.S. Military	Land of Contrast
U.S. Military	Island of Freedom
U.S. Military	Force in Ready
U.S. Military	Galapagos of the East
The islanders	矛盾の島 ↔ Mujyunno shima ↔ Island of Contradiction
The islanders	悪魔の島 ↔ Devils Island ↔ Island of Murderers
The islanders	うるま島 ↔ kodakusan no Shima ↔ Island Full of Children
The islanders	太陽の島 ↔ Tida no Shima ↔ Island of the Sun

¹³ The name Okinawa was given by the Meiji government in 1879. The name represents the way they perceived Ryukyu as an extension of their center location. In my table top board game *T.O.T.O.* has a rope around the edge as a frame to represent this idea and the maritime relations it had as an island nation.

Language Over Time:

Colonizing Language

With the Meiji restoration of 1868,¹⁴ the Japanese government enforced the standardization of the Japanese language, demonstrating the toxic patriarchy that is at the core of colonialism.¹⁵ High-ranking military officials were sent to 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu island to observe and enforce Japanese language education for Ryukyu children. Currently, many of Okinawa's children are encouraged to learn English rather than the language of their grandmothers and grandfathers. It seems to be the common myth of modern Okinawans that to know English is to have better economic prosperity within globalized capitalism. Modern Okinawans think if they speak English, they will be able to work in higher-paying jobs. This myth is created by Japanese political relations with the U.S. military. In exchanging animist language for capitalist language, the core identity of my ancestors, who had the knowledge to live with nature through the concepts embedded in the words and names of their everyday surroundings, was colonized.¹⁶ They had lived without the need for capitalism, but the capitalism of the bureaucratic Japanese and English language substituted the mindset of sharing with a mindset of profit. The capitalist mindset is about

¹⁴ Meiji restoration was the Japanese government's adaptation of western imperialism with ideas of modernization, which was triggered by forced U.S. trade agreements implemented by Commodore Matthew C. Perry after his entry into Japan in 1853.

¹⁵ Patriarchy doesn't have to be bad. Patriarchy is an important part of human societies where we cannot have a balance of gender without patriarchy, just as we cannot without matriarchy. Toxic patriarchy is imperialist and capitalist, structuring itself on hierarchies of biased power. It's the kind of patriarchy that disrespects women and nature. It's patriarchy that uses violence in all its forms to enforce its domination.

¹⁶ In my art, I represent the loss of knowledge through terms written in Katakana on *Affective Clay Balls* that roll or fall into traps of military spaces.

maximizing wealth in a short period of time. This profit mindset ultimately leads to ethnocentric greed that ignores the laws of thermodynamics in any given situation.¹⁷

¹⁷ A full discussion of thermodynamics goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but I invoke the term here for its conceptualization of natural energies (the three Laws of Thermodynamics) and its connection to game-playing. The first law is the theory that energy is neither created or destroyed (also known as the Law of Conservation of Energy). The second declares that the entropy of any isolated system (“entropy” being the measure of its movement from order to disorder) increases. The third law discusses how the entropy of a system approaches a constant rate as temperatures approach absolute zero. Given my focus on game-playing and, especially, the creation of a game that cannot be won, I found it interesting that the Laws of Thermodynamics are sometimes explained for the layperson by using a game metaphor. The first recognized person to summarize thermodynamics in this way was novelist and physicist C.P. Snow, who, as one online source explained, “stated that a person who was not a scientist and didn’t know about thermodynamics was similar to a scientist who never studied Shakespeare. This famous statement was stated to show that it was important for non-scientists to learn about thermodynamics and be familiar with the significance of the field. Thermodynamics examines how energy works in a given system, whether it is an engine or the core of the earth. Thermodynamics can be boiled down to a group of fundamental laws. Snow wittily summarized the laws as follows: ‘You can’t win,’ ‘You can’t break even,’ and ‘You can’t quit the game.’ ” “Laws of Thermodynamics,” *Highbrow*, March 24, 2015, accessed March 10, 2019, <https://gohighbrow.com/laws-of-thermodynamics/>.

Affective Objects

Conglomerations of earthly materials resonate information. *Affective Objects* (2017-ongoing),¹⁸ the title of one part of my M.F.A. thesis exhibition, is the name I created for such conglomerations – objects that can be picked up, held, placed on, and played with when interacting with the tabletop board game *Theater of Tacit Operations* (2019), or *T.O.T.O.* These objects, their conglomerate nature secured by having been dipped in encaustic, include:

Peach pits

Flower of a rose

Magnolia pods

Locust pod and seeds

Grape seeds

Charcoal

Wasp's nest

Cicada's shell

These *Affective Objects* are a part of ユタの道具 ↔ Yuta no dougu ↔ Yuta's tools ↔ shaman's tools, and are fragile, tacky, sweetly scented, and preserved in beeswax and resin.

¹⁸ I use the phrase “affective object” differently from artist-scientist Jocelyn Schreier. I am referring to any physical form that influences its surroundings by the energy and information it radiates just by its existence. Schreier and electrical engineer-computer scientist Rosalind Picard wrote in 1999: “An affective object may be defined as any physical object which has the ability to sense emotional data from a person, map that information to an abstract form of expression and communicate that information expressively, either back to the subject herself or to another person.” Jocelyn Schreier and Rosalind W. Picard, “Affective Objects,” *MIT Media Laboratory Perceptual Computing Section Technical Report* No. 524, 1999, 1, accessed November 15, 2018, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=3EBFAEA4B2DB27B13B730ABF86E3B19C?doi=10.1.1.153.7692&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

The totality of *Affective Objects* is itself a conglomeration of earthly materials, skeletons from the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu beaches, and bisque clay. Many of the earthly materials of *Affective Objects* are small parts of a larger ecosystem: rocks from a boulder in a river or mountain; coral skeleton from a beach with salt, water, and sun; seeds from a pod from a branch from a tree that can sprout. These dead objects represent information about life, identity, time, and space from which they come.

Removal from their original environment and placement into a different context represents the same kind of diasporic movement and feeling of displacement that I have experienced. The sense of displacement is the gravity that pulls me to search for missing matriarchal narratives. I see my external and physical world through my inner reflection. How I feel on the inside depends on my body's affected history.¹⁹

Affect works like electricity and magnetic charge. My body is a battery. My body is a radio. I hold charge. I store and release waves of information: language of words, sounds, and movements. I recycle energy by absorbing and releasing information gathered through the process of spending time in an environment. My first charge was on the island of Okinawa, standing with the intense spiritual and physical energy embedded in the

¹⁹ To further explore theories on affect, see feminist writer Sarah Ahmed's description of affect as "sticky." In brief, she asserts: "Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects." Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 29. Also, social-political theorist Teresa Brennan traces the Eastern and Western philosophy of affect, carrying out a radical critique of the western foundation of study on where life begins and ends: "What is at stake with the notion of the transmission of affect is precisely the opposite of the sociobiological claim that the biological *determines* the social. What is at stake is rather the means by which social interaction shapes biology. My affect, if it comes across to you, alters your anatomical makeup for good or ill. This idea, perhaps more than any other, stands neo-Darwinism on its head. It is directly at odds with the premise on which neo-Darwinian biology is based. In neo-Darwinian biology especially, the individual organism is born with the urges and affects that will determine its fate." Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 74.

environment.²⁰ Uprooted from the place of my childhood comfort, I was also charged by patriarchal trauma, proclamation by my father to experience diaspora, made to feel out of place by my colonization. I have repeated what happened by collecting and displacing material objects (*Affective Objects*) into a space I can touch and move, trying to make sense of the erupting emotions, releasing the patriarchal trauma I never wanted charged and channeling hope of a peaceful future.

Affect is energy like gravity and electricity. It is magnetic.

Affect is residual and if you're close enough you'll feel it.

Affect is memory and it's embodied.

Affect is the way we relate to our environment.

Affect is our environment that shapes our belonging.

Affect is developed over time.

Just as we learn our tastes, we charge our affects.

Our bodies are magnets. Our bodies are metal.

What we spend time with is what affects us.

What we filter shapes us.

energy integrate(s) ↔ energy explode(s)

gravity compress(s) ↔ gravity disperse(s)

positive electric charge ↔ negative electric charge

Affect attracts similar energies. Affect repels similar energies.

This is the magnetism: Its continuous attraction and repulsion.

Spaces and environments record time, and the structure within them embodies history. That history is transmitted and absorbed by those who pass through the spaces and environments,

²⁰ Sites known as “Power Spots” in Ryukyu islands are scattered throughout the landscape. These Power Spots are natural sites that have been worshiped by ancestors of the islanders as sources of their sacred knowledge. There are small communities that maintain tradition and worship according to the lunar calendar. Some of these sights are now visited by large numbers of tourists from all over the world.

becoming inflicted with the past in the present. How do I keep from absorbing unwanted histories? How do I absorb the histories I need? As a child, I absorbed my environment with all its good and all its bad. As an adult, how do I control what to reflect, project, and channel?

Through my art practice, I look for a way to channel my patriarchal trauma that is caused by toxic masculinity and reflect on the current status of U.S. military occupation of Okinawa.²¹ I want to correct my patrilineal heritage of violence and colonization by bringing back the matrilineal knowledge my mother has been made to forget. The island religion of 琉球信仰 ↔ Ryukyu shinkou ↔ Ryukyu faith ↔ 御岳信仰 ↔ Utaki shinkou ↔ Nature worship ↔ 祖先崇拜 ↔ Sosensohai ↔ Ancestors Worship is my guide to a language of peace that can balance the traumas I inherited. This is radical, as in the Greek origin of that word: going back to the root of things, to the source of it all. The abstract and grand 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu belief system of Ultimate Ancestors; テン ↔ Sun ↔ Heaven, ジチ ↔ Earth, and リュウギョウ ↔ Sea. What I call mother nature. Where is the history that talks of 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu relationship with nature and its traits of animism? I must not be reading the right language.

²¹ I don't want my works to be about trauma. Rather, the underlying motivations come from figuring out ways to cope with the trauma I feel and am affected by as a colonized identity. I address more on trauma in its own chapter, ahead. But for now: I channel my anger in my work and convert it into language that I can understand. Theorist Jill Bennett's insights on trauma, affect, and art are useful here: "These works [that engaged with traumatic memory] had eluded classification as trauma works largely because they in some way evoked the process of post-trauma: and indeed, in many cases, they would appear to be about something else. The trauma, it often seemed, was not evinced in the narrative component or in the ostensible meaning but a certain affective dynamic internal to the work.... Insofar as they could be deemed to promote understanding of trauma, their contribution tended to lie in the endeavor to find a communicable language of sensation and affect with which to register something of the experience of traumatic memory—and, thus, in a manner of formal innovation." Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 1-2.

Theater of Tacit Operations

T.O.T.O., as mentioned, is short for my work *Theater of Tacit Operations*. This is a wooden table top, sitting about one foot off the floor, with the geographical outlines of Okinawa carved into/out of it. Military training areas, called “Impact Area” or “Drop Zones,” are indicated by clusters of X-markings chiseled out of the table top.²² The military base locations have been cut out of the table top. The cutouts are meant to represent the lost identity of Ryukyu island. The resulting void also acts as a type of black hole that figuratively has “eaten” Ryukyu identifying attributes – the inherently animist terms – of the island. These terms are written on *Clay Balls* (2019, part of the *Affective Objects* series), which are made from red earthenware bisque.

琉球 ↔ Ryukyu animism relies on nature as the giver of meaning. The oral language of my ancestors is parallel to the sound of nature. Sounds of the ocean, waves, rain, springs, wells, rivers, wind, typhoon, trees, flowers, and all the plants, animals from fishes to corals, rocks, sand, and earth – none were written in letters, only heard, felt, or described. The environment is the written language. The environment is the archive. The relations between each human being and their environment facilitated the tacit archive of generational knowledge to be built through the spoken, gestured, and embodied sounds. My ancestors ritualized what it meant to be human within a cosmic system. The everyday rituals focused on family and methods of maintaining healthy relationships. The power and resources oscillated between and amongst the community. The family extended to their

²² *Theater of Tacit Operation* is a title that plays with how the military frames strategic planning of an area for warfare. Theater of Operation (TO) is a subgenre of Theater of War and is any area of land, sea, and air that is used for “important” operations of war. Impact area or drop zones are designated areas for the training of soldiers used to drop bombs and simulate combat situations.

environment, to which they were connected. They used words that perpetuated these concepts in their daily life.²³

Lying on the table top are items from the *Affective Objects* series, including the *Clay Balls* – spherical ceramic objects, onto which transliterated 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu oral terms have been written in Japanese Katakana. Wall text makes clear that participants may roll these *Clay Balls* and, by doing so, create a type of performance or enter into a game without any designated rules, except the laws of thermodynamics: the scientifically recognized exchange in energy and actions. By playing, participants create indexical relations to the map from their positions as the colonized and/or the colonizer. The *Clay Balls* are like tiny moons being moved in relation to planets. They find their place through forces that push and pull them toward each other to create relationships of power. Albeit opaque and ambiguous, meaning can be interpreted through proximity, distance, and overall relationship between and among the *Clay Balls*, other *Affective Objects*, the map, the participant, and other visitors.

²³ My thinking here has been supported by cultural ecologist David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), in which he writes: "For the largest part of our species' existence, humans have negotiated relationships with every aspect of the sensuous surroundings, exchanging possibilities with every flapping form, with each textured surface and shivering entity that we happened to focus upon. All could speak, articulating in gesture and whistle and sigh a shifting web of meanings that we felt on our skin or inhaled through our nostrils or focused with our listening ears, and to which we replied—whether with sounds, or through movements, or minute shifts of mood. The color of sky, the rush of waves—every aspect of the earthly sensuous could draw us into a relationship fed with curiosity and spiced with danger. Every sound was a voice, every scrape or blunder was a meeting—with Thunder, with Oak, with Dragonfly. And from all of these relationships our collective sensibilities were nourished" (ix).



Figure 10. “‘Toy Horse’ was a classified operation where Japanese occupation banknotes were printed in San Francisco and then shipped to Sacramento for numbering, cutting, and wrapping by the State Printing Office, hidden in the Governors Hall of the State Fairgrounds. This photograph of Operation ‘Toy Horse’ was from the estate of Norman Jack Rath, a foreman at the State Printing Office during the project.” <https://www.atlas-repropaperwork.com/allied-military-currency/>.

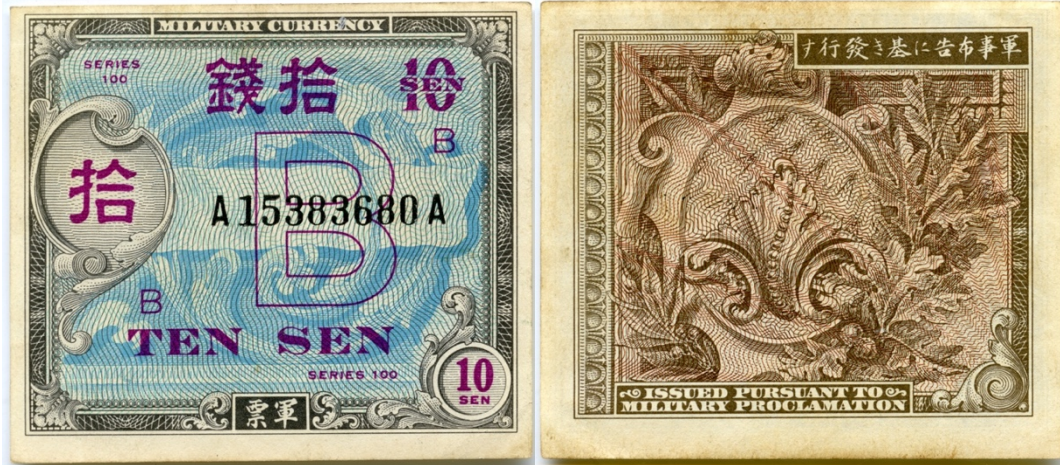


Figure 11. Front (left) and back (right) of Allied Military Currency Japan, which was distributed and used in Okinawa and Japan, 1945-1958.

Playing on the tacit means of cultural production, copies of Allied Military Currency (AMC) Japan, colloquially called B-yen, also appear alongside the *Affective Objects* on *T.O.T.O* (figs. 10-11). B-yen was used during the U.S. Military occupation of Okinawa from 1945 to 1958, before being exchanged for the U.S. dollar, then back to Japanese Yen with the “reversion” of Ryukyu islands back to the Japanese Government in 1972. How the participants decide to utilize the currency presented on the game board is an artistic experiment with how rules, regulation, and culture are accepted and perpetuated in any given structured environment.

Seeing 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu: Collective Unconscious

The black-and-white photographic series on the walls of the semi-enclosed, nook-like space of my installation, is called *Seeing 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu: Collective Unconscious* (2017). This is an ongoing series that started when I first learned how to use a film camera. Twenty-four images from *Seeing 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu* are framed and, as mentioned earlier, hung at eye level for participants sitting or kneeling on the goza mats and cushions on either side of the *T.O.T.O.* game table, positioned in the center of the space. My goal in the series has been to mine the symbolic capacity of documentary photography to represent known and unknown narratives of 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu histories and its language.

In terms of process, I first captured images of island plant life, memorials, and landscapes when I visited Okinawa in 2018. Second, in the darkroom, where meditation on each of these images could take place, I created schematic drawings on the black-and-white photographs by drawing on glass overlaid on the light sensitive paper during exposure. As I created these drawings, I felt I was indexicalizing the underlying images by mapping and connecting names, dates, stories, and events with playfully drawn dots, arrows, and transliterations of visual signs I found symbolically imbedded in the film negative.²⁴ Part

²⁴ The way I use “indexical” here has to do with how an object or idea is related through its association. Index is both a physical and invisible entity that exists because of reaction and relation. Index is what points to something related to itself but that exists elsewhere in another form, the latter being the referent. And I use “referent” here as Roland Barthes does in his examination of photography in *Camera Lucida*: “A specific photograph, in effect, is never distinguished from its referent (from what it represents), or at least it is not *immediately* or *generally* distinguished from its referent (as is the case for every other image, encumbered – from the start, and because of its status – by the way in which the object is simulated): it is not impossible to perceive the photographic signifier (certain professionals do so), but it requires a secondary action of knowledge or of reflection....It is as if the Photograph always carries its referent with itself” (5). Another important quote: “The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who, am here; the duration of the

of this process entailed observing the shadows projected onto the images by a light table or enlarger. As I did so, I discovered and then analyzed the synchronic and diachronic relations of historical narratives and began to understand where the animist traditions of my ancestors had been severed, polluted, and/or paved over.

I consider these photographs and narratives, which I call “somaesthetic structures,” as affective environments with the capacity to shape and perpetuate human behavior.²⁵ Through creating images of the Okinawan environment, I seek to discover concepts that my indigenous 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu ancestors drew on to maintain a healthy family, community, and societal relations with nature.²⁶ I draw metaphors from narratives that are

transmission is insignificant.... A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed” (80-81). Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010).

²⁵ “Somaesthetic” is a term I learned during my undergraduate studies at Bowling Green State University. I had a class with art historian Allie Terry-Fritsch, who used the term somaesthetic to frame the way the body experiences space and constructed environments. In keeping with this meaning of somaesthetic, I also describe the setting in which the body feels and reads spaces as an “affective environment.” How our environment influences us is very structural. When there is a wall, we walk around it, or climb or jump over it. Our human bodies are physical in that they have weight and mass that occupy space. These bodies have the capability of absorbing information from the environment to adapt the way the body interacts with other objects in the space. In a cool room, a wooden chair would be warm compared to a metal chair. A room with drywall would have a smell that is different from an exposed brick wall. The environment with its materials holds molecular information that affects the body’s senses. Many Eastern cultures have adapted their living environment or homes and structures without chairs or meter-high tables by learning to sit on the ground or floor very comfortably. These bodies have adapted to the affective environment without chairs. On the other hand, many European cultures have chairs in the spaces they frequently occupy. There, the body has adapted to sitting on a stool or chair that allows for less bending of the knees and less physical exertion from lowering the body to be in a state of seated rest. This affective environment has shaped the bodies in these affective spaces to be uncomfortable with lowering the body to the ground or floor, opposite of the generations that grew up in chairless environments. Allie Terry-Fritsch, “PERFORMING THE RENAISSANCE BODY AND MIND: SOMAESTHETIC STYLE AND DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE AT THE SACRO MONTE DI VARALLO,” *Open Arts Journal*, no. 4 (Winter 2014), doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5456/issn.2050-3679/2015w07>.

²⁶ My preliminary research has revealed the almost haunting knowledge of 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu concepts my matrilineal ウヤファア ↔ uyafa ↔ 先祖 ↔ sennzo ↔ 神 ↔ kami ↔ ancestral gods developed through their relation to nature, as they strove to maintain the emotional and physical well-being of humans, keeping peace in their communities.

the result of conflicting identities and contradictions (the colonized and colonizer within me). As such, I make images in the present for a future that speaks to the past.

Time and Space are the Index

Decimated 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu landscapes have eroded important cultural knowledge that has at its core an understanding of the place of human activity in relation to nature. The 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu architecture and urban planning were physical indices to the oral language of everyday life. But there are very few traditional structured homes left in Okinawa, as most were destroyed by the U.S. military during and after WWII, when they bulldozed down remaining villages to build their bases for official occupation.²⁷ The ruling entity was first called the United States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands ↔ 琉球列島米軍政府 ↔ Ryūkyū-rettō Beikoku Gunseifu from 1945 to 1950. After the U.S. military (code name Operation Blacklist) ended its occupation of Japan in 1952, the Ryukyu-rettō Beikoku Gunseifu changed its ruling name to the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands ↔ 琉球列島米国民政府 ↔ Ryūkyū-rettō Beikoku Min Seifu, or “USCAR” (Fig. 11). Without support for restoration of traditional structures, the locals were forced into building new homes with the materials and in the styles of U.S. architecture and urban planning: concrete and cinder block; grids of rectangular buildings; paved streets; and electrical lines. All these changes were couched in the vocabulary of “the modern,” a term that stood in contrast to the labels that the U.S. military used to describe the people of 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu as “primitive” and “backward” peasants.

²⁷ After WWII, ninety percent of homes and buildings were bombed, burned, and/or bulldozed, leaving the people without homes, factories, schools, community centers, restaurants, markets. The U.S. military set up camps that had the same structure and layout as oppressive internment camps.



Figure 11. Seal of the High Commissioner of the Ryukyu Islands.

The aesthetics of indigenous 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu incorporated the peoples' relationship to nature and their environment. Landscape is the index to the language of the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu that guided relationships of family and community through its representations. Through the black-and-white photographs in the exhibition, I search for terms and concepts of culture in the island environment. In one photograph, I describe,

translate, and transliterate ティンザケー ↔ tinzake- ↔ 水平線 ↔ suiheisenn ↔ horizon ↔ heavenly border ↔ split of this world and the other world. This photograph is an image of the sea and its horizon with part of the beach plants in the foreground. This image demonstrates how the landscape is an index to concepts of words that deepened 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu people's understanding of the world. Language is more than words; it's the material, the form, the affectivity of the object and/or space. The way houses were built and structured. The way each community and town laid in relation to the 大家 ↔ Origin House and 御岳 ↔ Utaki spiritual sites. The structures related and conveyed methods of the people's daily interactions with the space. The people moved within the island foundations and followed the rising of the sun and moon. The landscape was a written guide to everyday health. This landscape was drastically changed by U.S. colonizers, who showed no consideration or respect for indigenous aesthetics. Modern roads paved over natural paths, and the Ryukyu index to the oral language was buried (fig. 12).

In order to understand these layers of history, I attempt to digest my detective work, observe the physical evidence presented, and draw out locations, dates, names, definitions, stories, and representations of the framed image to visually connect to its parts. These parts exist somewhere amidst the fusion of layered meanings that were once the history of those who were eventually colonized.



Figure 12. Road-Surfacing Operations by the 71st Seabees on Okinawa, 1945.
https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Building_Bases/bases-30.html.

Historical Trauma

Trauma is embodied. And the way you feel trauma is very much in the present, even when the trauma-causing event is in the past.²⁸ Trauma has a way of spending time with the body. Trauma is triggered by outside forces. (Colonization is a form of trauma-inducing event.²⁹) Trauma can accumulate and manifest as violence when not careful. Trauma is a combination of affect and energy that needs to be channeled carefully, or it affects the surrounding bodies with the same force as the original trauma. How good are we at defusing our traumas so that we don't affect others around us?

My patrilineal ancestors, who have long forgotten their source of ancestral trauma, unwittingly perpetuate that trauma onto others. 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu Yuta understood that when we are aware of our trauma, we can choose the method of transmission or conversion. When our trauma is buried in the depths of our subconscious, we may act and react without

²⁸ Psychiatrist Allison Crawford explores transgenerational trauma through narratives that are passed down and told by new generations who are experiencing traumatic symptoms. She reports: "Over the last three decades, trauma has emerged as a mode for organizing and representing our relationship to the past. As a clinical and social concept it has the potential to bring together considerations of both the individual and the collective, particularly when groups are subjected to collective trauma. Collective violence has been experienced by social groups, including: the Jewish experience of the Holocaust, African American experience of slavery, Hiroshima, apartheid in South Africa, and numerous other historic and contemporary examples." Allison Crawford, "'The Trauma Experienced by Generations Past Having an Effect in Their Descendants': Narrative and Historical Trauma among Inuit in Nunavut, Canada," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, no. 3 (2014), 340.

²⁹ For more on this topic, see Yin Paradies' examination of colonization and its trauma-inducing methods. He states: "Although its meaning has changed considerably over the twentieth century...colonisation nonetheless possesses largely agreed upon manifestations. It encompasses a range of practices, predominantly historical: war, displacement, forced labour, removal of children, relocation, ecological destruction, massacres, genocide, slavery, (un)intentional spread of deadly diseases, banning of indigenous languages, regulation of marriage, assimilation and eradication of social, cultural and spiritual practices. Yin Paradies, "Colonisation, Racism and Indigenous Health," *Journal of Population Research* 33, no. 1 (2016): 83.

thought or kindness. My matrilineal ancestors had words and understood concepts of trauma. They say an individual can be affected by チジウリ ↔ chijiuri ↔ 神ダーリ ↔ kamida-ri ↔ ウヤファフジカラヌシラシ ↔ uyafa-fujikaranushirashi, which translates to ancestral notice ↔ fate analysis ↔ spirit attack ↔ revenge from the gods, and is what can be considered transgenerational trauma in western terms. This individual, who is affected by チジウリ ↔ chijiuri, is said to be sensitive by nature. They are サーダカウマ ↔ sadakaumari, those who can go through a process of “lineage correction.” Lineage correction is a process of analyzing ancestral information in relation to symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, weakness, vomiting, sleep disorders, etc. The process of lineage correction is done by meaning analysis, which is applied to dreams, identity, relationships, and everyday habits to aid in creating awareness of inherited trauma.

This awareness becomes key to overcoming the effects of inherited trauma. That サーダカウマリ ↔ sadakaumari becomes a ヌタマンチャー ↔ yutamancha- during 意味判断 ↔ imihandan ↔ meaning analysis ↔ dream analysis. As a ヌタマンチャー ↔ yutamancha, she learns and performs dream analysis to find meaning in her identity, family, and worldly connections. She is the afflicted one who finds the source of her ancestral trauma in order to maintain peace in the future.³⁰ This is how my ancestors learned to cope with trauma. She, the afflicted, must make sense of signs and symbols in relation to her surroundings to answer to her ancestors and gods. When she finds meaning, she becomes a ヌタ ↔ yuta. A mediator between life and death. She has the after wisdom ↔ 猿のあと

³⁰ Dream analysis ↔ meaning analysis

Finding one's hopes, wishes, and fears. Where do they come from? How is it connected?

シニマブイ ↔ *shinimabu* and イチマブイ ↔ *Ichimabui*

知恵 ↔ sarunoatojie ↔ ape's after-wisdom ↔ monkeys after-wisdom, to guide the future.

She is born to everyone and is sensitive in nature.³¹ She is identified by her surroundings, grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, neighbors, teachers, and community members. She feels time and space with her whole existence. The future rests in her ability to see across time and space.

³¹ The word “nature” can be used in different ways, as in “it’s in its nature to be so,” justifying its behavior, habits, and existence, or “the living,” to include creatures beyond just humans.

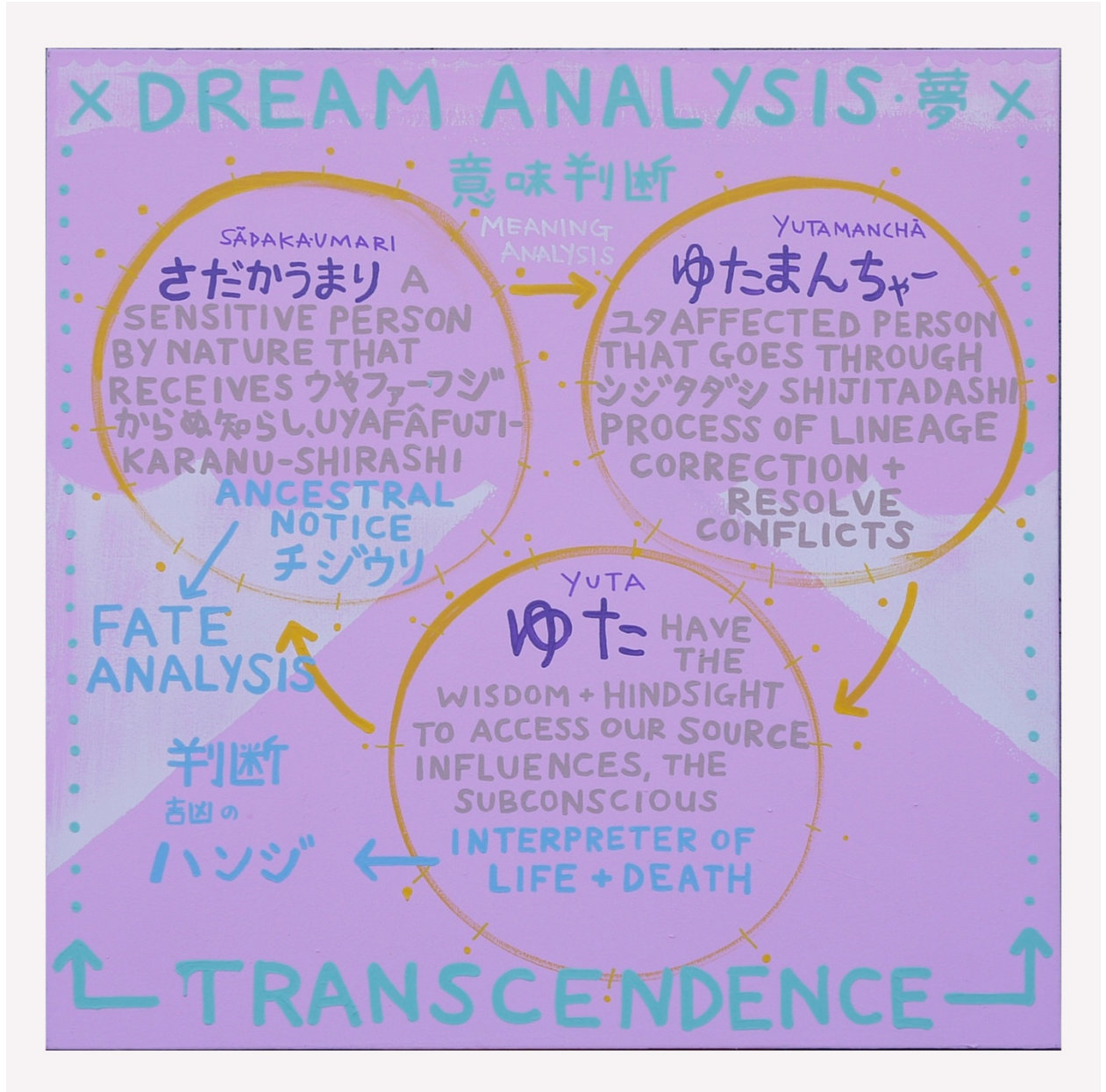


Figure 13. "Dream Analysis" (2017) found canvas and paint.

I am in the process of finding meaning. I am the colonized サーダカウマリ ↔ sadakaumari going through the process of ユタマンチャー ↔ yutamancha- during 意味判断 ↔ imihandan ↔ meaning analysis ↔ dream analysis. Through my art practice, I

find meaning in my identity as the colonized and the colonizer. I am representing my hybridized circumstance through art, an acknowledged space for the negotiation of meaning.

ニライカナイ ↔ Niraikanai is Ancestral Time

History should never be understood as a singular narrative, for it is multifaceted and layered spatially, and synchronic and diachronic temporally. History is therefore timeless. Moreover, what we cannot see or understand is the most important information. History is not told just through words or one language. History is in every language known and unknown. History is gendered. History is in our bodies, in our environment. History can be felt but never understood. History is in motion. History ripples, accumulates, dissipates, stretches, expands, and returns. History is collective and individual. My matrilineal ancestors have words for spirit that is singular and spirits that are collective and for how the singular is part of the collective. This singular and collective is also both the present and the past, conscious and the unconscious, living and the dead; イチマブイ ↔ Ichimabui ↔ one soul and シニマブイ ↔ shinimabu ↔ dead souls. My matrilineal 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu ancestors saw history in the future.

Now, can you read what this says?

琉球

Appendix 1

Semiotic Sphere

In my previous work *Semiotic Sphere* (2018), subtitled *Tableau Mapping Game of 12 Semiotic Ghosts of 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu*, I analyzed 12 transliterated 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu names in the context of historical documents and western linguistic tools that I had researched (figs. 14-15). The work comprises six tableaux wall installations and one floor installation. The latter is a board game, constructed as a triptych box, which, when opened, exposes transliterated 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu names. The game has three separate components. On the left side are the 12 different transliterated versions of the 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu. The right side features diagrams of the 12 numbers and characters from the zodiac, which is used to analyze relationships to time and space. The center board has the semiotic square drawn around a stencil of Okinawa island with *Affective Objects* that are used as pawns on the game board.

This work's title alludes to the famous Greimas Semiotic Square. Developed by a series of men traceable from Aristotle (his Square of Opposition), through Apuleius and Boethius (diagrams), and up to the twentieth-century French Lithuanian linguist Algirdas Julian Greimas, a semiotic square is a two-dimensional tools used in structural analysis to think through contrasting binary terms, such as feminine and masculine, by extending analysis to the ontology of the term's function as a signifier and signified.³² *Semiotic Sphere* (2018) expands the historically male-defined two-dimensional structure to three

³² John J. Corso, "What Does Greimas's Semiotic Square Really Do?" *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 47, no. 1 (2014): 69-89, accessed 2/2/2019, <http://www.jstor.org.proxy-bc.researchport.umd.edu/stable/44030128>.

dimensions by replacing written terms with *Affective Objects*. I wanted these various organic materials to introduce a fourth (unseen) dimension of time.



Figure 14. Wall shot of “Semiotic Sphere: Tableau Mapping Game” (2018).



Figure 15. Detail shot of “Semiotic Sphere: Tableau Mapping Game” (2018).

Appendix 2

Artist Influences

There are many artists who have influenced my work. Some are well known in the art world, and some are strangers to art history. I will discuss here only those who had a clear influence on my thesis work.

Maria Thereza Alves is an indigenous artist of Brazil who founded the Brazilian Green Party. Her well-known male partner is Jimmy Durham. Her work is educational and tells a narrative of the people. She gives voice to the voiceless, mostly through the investigation of nature and its migration and associated language. In her watercolor drawings titled *This is not an Apricot* (2009), she exemplifies the limitation of colonizing language to convey the uniqueness of an object or, in this case, fruit found only in Brazil. In this way, she gave voice back to the indigenous language by translating and transliterating a deeper definition of the varying “Apricots.”



Figure 16. Maria Thereza Alves, “*This is not an Apricot*” (2009).

Mao Ishikawa and Shomei Tomatsu are both photographers. Ishikawa was in photography club during middle school and in 1974 went on to study photography in Tokyo in Shomei Tomatsu's class, *The Workshop of School of Photography*. Her work takes on a political view of Okinawa women's lives in post-WWII, while Tomatsu focused more specifically on environments surrounding military occupation. Ishikawa is a native to the island and depicts much of what my mother lived through.



Figure 17. Photograph by Mao Ishikawa, 1976 Snack bar scene in Kin Town, Okinawa, Japan.



Figure 18. Shomei Tomatsu's 1969 photograph of Kadena, Okinawa.

Yasuo Higa's photographs have a special place in my heart. He did what I wish to do but cannot. He documented some of the last surviving rituals of the native religion led by women. Born to a native mother, he was a police photographer before the reversion of Okinawa to Japan from the United States in 1972. After witnessing and being deeply affected by Miyako Island's (part of the Ryukyu island chain) matriarchal shamans going into ceremonial trance, he focused on a matriarchal narrative that was supported by patriarchal narrative. This led him to become a fulltime photographer. I can only imagine the full experience, and relate it to my aunt who participated and led the ceremonial rituals

in Shuri, the former capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Due to circumstances of time, unlike Higa, when I document, I capture ghosts of Ryukyu identities.

Figure 19. Vesuvio (2001). Tacita Dean's one-of-twenty photo-etching from "The Russian Ending"

told differently, depending on the subject's perspective and what is named. That is what I have tried to accomplish within my image-making of the series *Seeing 琉球 ↔ Ryukyu: Collective Unconscious*, while adding other layers of languages.³³

³³ Tate. “‘Vesuvio’, Tacita Dean, 2001.” Tate. Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dean-vesuvio-p20261>.

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