

Vault | Handbook 2017-2025

A book project by

Marisa Williamson

Kevin Hernández Rosa

Arien Wilkerson

PROLOGUE

The paralog, an expansion upon the catalog form, is a text entanglement of journal entries, choreographic scores, notes, drawings, photographs, maps, email logs and transcribed conversation between the artists that lead us through the creation of Vault.

This is about mapping, but not in the literal sense. We explore mapping as a metaphor for spatial thinking and sensing—delineating where we are and various routes for “finding our way” through the multiplicity of our experience.

Deborah Goffe, Arien’s mentor, says: Set up the audience to be held. Bodies should not be thrown into ‘dangerous’ things without being held by those who brought them there.

Therefore, this conceptual framing—this background, is a form of safety, meant to guide and offer multivalent ways of looking at and labeling the landscape.

We’re creating reparative routes on territories of rupture, rift, and ruin. We track how these manifest on social, historical, cultural, and psychological registers.

When we share stories we reinforce and forge pathways through collective space. We invite you to think and play with us, finding pathways of repair.

These pathways can be psychic, imaginative, sensorial, and material. We are living in and benefiting from these very pathways whether we know it or not, as we are made of deep somatic pathways that have been laid by our ancestors.

What happens when people systematically forget, misremember, fail to record, or record incorrectly? What happens when the site of self knowledge is shut down? What happens when situated knowledge is scattered? A particular history goes underground, becomes buried, suppressed, or internalized. It can become a source of shame. Those of us who cannot forget, bodies heavy with unforgotten overlooks, how can we confirm and transform? How do we find pathways of repair from rupture?

This is a multifaceted and multidimensional activity. One that stretches across conventional boundaries of time, geography, and identity. One that must NECESSARILY cut across norms and oppressive structures to rebuild ourselves and a new meaning of the social.

We acknowledge that this journey is imperfect and will always be unfinished.

We propose some strategies and examples to explore different lines of repair and recovery—from various social locations, and locations of the everyday and mundane.

What do we keep away and hidden even from ourselves?

What is too painful to bear?

Can we honor all of these parts without seeking any final resolution?

Can we honor ourselves and the work along the journey of imperfect recovery?

DRAFTING

Prologue

The paralog, an expansion upon the catalog form, is a text entanglement of journal entries, choreographic scores, notes, drawings, photographs, maps, email logs and transcribed conversation between the artists that lead us through the creation of *Vault*. This publication was in part funded by the Yale 2020 Dean's Critical Practice Research Grant.

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PARA-

This document serves as a list of affirmations, reminders and acknowledgements for our collective meditation. Divided into four sections: SUBJECT, LANDSCAPE, AUTONOMY, and VALUE, the PARALOG is written for the collective student body that attended John C Clark elementary school. Intelligence is stored in their bodies, the space around them, and the spaces we all cannot see but contribute to how we relate to the world and one another. There ARE truths to be shared and these truths are in the schools and its people. For far too long dominant art institutions have upheld the grips of neoliberalism, elitism and White supremacy against every person of color of every age that has lived in areas largely contaminated, colonized and profoundly affected by whiteness. This document is decisively created to help in developing a BIPOCLGBTQAI+ art canon. Art can only be a liberative field of study for us as long as it is founded upon and maintains the lens that centers but does not inundate our most vulnerable. VAULT is not composed of distinct healers but rather folks asking for us all to try healing together, as a code of ethics that refuses to leave anyone behind. VAULT was made to help create something new out of ruins. Many other Hartford public schools are also suspected to be exposing Hartford students and teachers to harmful carcinogens that are known to cause chronic health problems, thus making something new out of future ruins is also part of the VAULT mission.





Position our bodies towards John C. Clark Elementary, we walk.
We do what comes to us, among many other things, that also involves
trespassing.

There is an eye hovering above us, it is watching our bodies move.

As we walk, we locate as many points in our body that have been inflicted
with violence.

Wrapping ourselves around ourselves.

We hug our bodies then swiftly flick away the pain through our fingertips.

We find that this is extremely hard to do.

Bodies take time to rejuvenate, and the rejuvenation process happens in
tandem

with our fight against the violence we still and will experience.

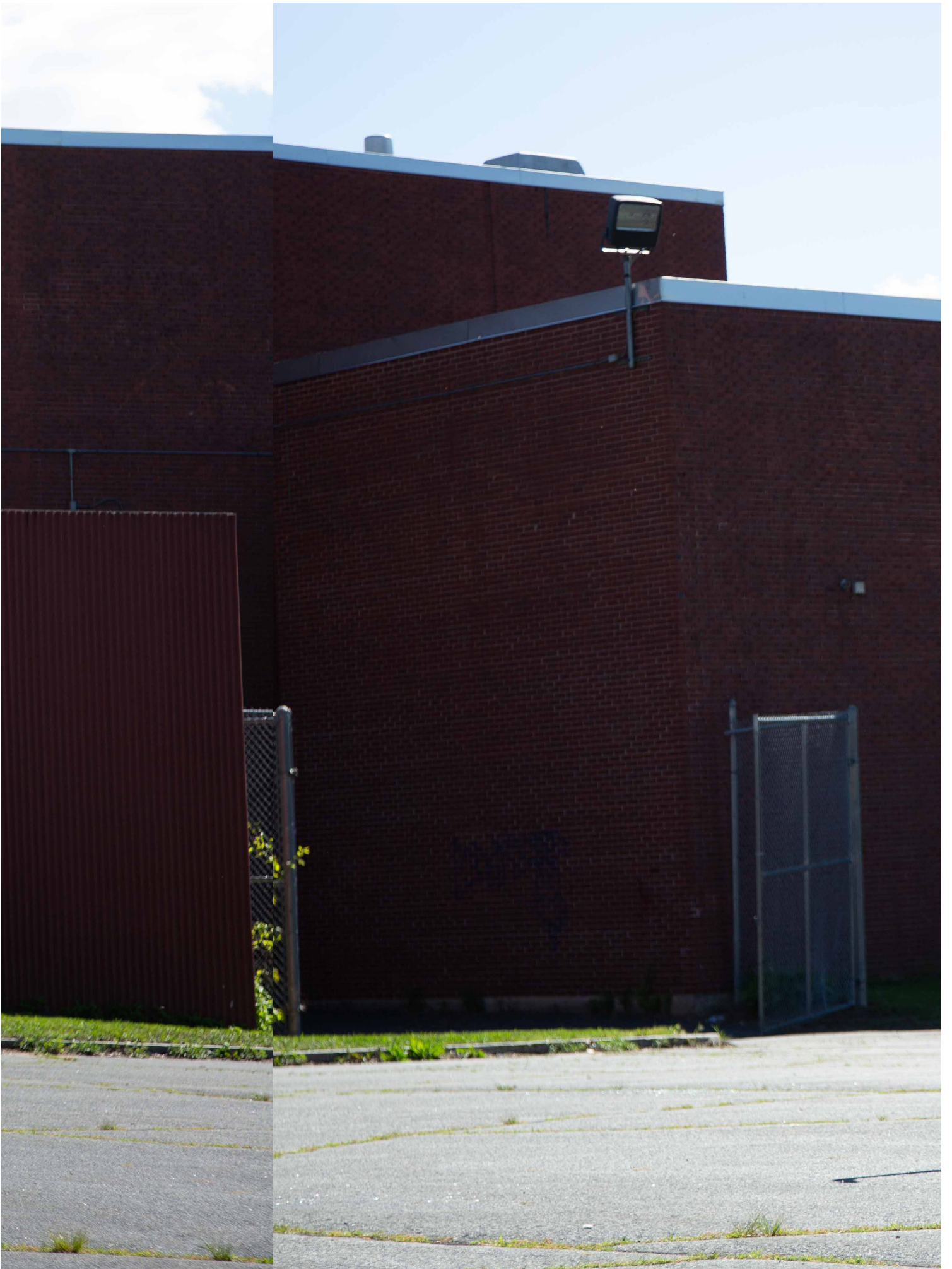
Our lungs carry PCBS, we breathe them in and out with intention.

We let our lungs carry our attention to our rib cages.

We expand our rib cages like a puffer fish remembering to breathe
and release the tension in our torso and back.

We reach our hands high, so high that they begin to feel
as if they are going to pull apart from the ground.





PRO

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a

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TION

KINESTHESIA

Kinesthesia is awareness of the position and movement of the body through sensory organs (proprioceptors). Examples of Kinesthesia: eating, using the bathroom, driving, brushing one's teeth.

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THE

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KIN

PROPRIOCEPTION

Proprioception is about sensing where you are in space, a sense of locomotion, or position, or about locating the tiny sensors in and on our bodies and especially in our muscles. Proprioception is “sensual awareness.”



To have a body

Is to be

And share

A divine tool

SUBJECT

In the historic North End of Hartford is a Statue of Liberty-sized school building. Its foot print at least, corresponds to that of the Island monument.

[illegible]

— blocks the sun and ~~catches~~ ^{flame} on ~~Walls~~ ^{intense heat} inside. ~~there~~

White boards and plastic for food, construction paper projects, stacked chairs and fallen ceiling give it ~~more~~ ^a natural history museum feel and people feel perfect ~~at~~ ^{an} educational evidence that once ~~we~~ ^{some kids} ~~decided~~ ^{they} ~~that~~ ^{was} ~~once~~ ^a school.

"The weeds are growing," Wilkerson said. "What they do is they keep fencing and fencing and fencing, and they keep putting these tiny, tiny little yellow signs that say 'PCB contamination: stay away,' but no information. Nothing has been given to any of these communities."

from 1930 to 1977. Monsanto Company, produced PCBs marketed under the trade name Aroclor. Aroclor was used in products installed during the construction of Clark Elementary School in the late 1960s.

PCBs are highly toxic. They were used in industrial and consumer electronic products, until 2001, when their production was banned internationally. Monsanto the only company manufacturing PCBs in the US, stopped in 1977. throughout the 20th century many different controversial products: DDT, insecticide banned in 1972

for its threat to world life and human Agent Orange used in the Vietnam war to eliminate plant life the forest might provide growing cities

Like Agent Orange, PCBs have been shown to have toxic and mutagenic effect they change people from the inside out, causing cancer & birth defects

The North End is the capital city's poorest neighborhood. "People think of it as just another ghetto neighborhood," Merle Kummer, assistant director of the Hartford Architecture Conservancy, told the *New York Times* in 1980, "but it's a wonderful kind of visual experience." The life expectancy is 74.8 years, almost five years less than the life expectancy in Hartford overall.

Once home to mostly Irish and Jewish immigrants and their descendants, these populations rode the GI Bill to home suburbs. After World War II, an Irish inhospitable to "whiteness" they found decreased barriers to education had access to well-paid jobs were supported by lending institutions in the purchase of affordable housing.

John C. Clark Jr. moved with his family to Hartford from Georgia in 1929
 African Am. ^{part of the Great}
 then years lived in Hartford Public Hlth. School
 Black students, such as Lurline Wheeler, who was
 born in attendance since 1904. Wheelers father was
 the pastor of Talley Good Church, the oldest first black
 church. The congregation would merge with Mount
 Bethel Methodist to move into the Madison Avenue (Congregational)
 Churches former home on Main Street in Northville.
 Clay Memorial. later in life John C. Clark Jr. would serve as
 and trustee of Faith Congregational Church, the old congregation in its
 home

The church building built in 18
- from ~~there~~, Walter a half st
town left John Evers. His
wonder most marks of the
The last right, Clark struc
~~you~~ the ~~second~~ round S
the street - holding chairs
Elementary School, which opened in September of
designed to educate public school.
ing to be the state of N.A. African. He
interchange women. Therefore
they gathered ~~together~~
be handled between. One of the
with Africa, Africa, southern Africa
Bowie. The disesteemed watching
to the states
John C. Clark studied and
and ~~was~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~state~~ ~~of~~ ~~Africa~~
bodies for viewing and turing it off the face
Clark's Commission a federal agency to study the color con
ment of how race and ~~not~~ it would be to create pro
work at a contract agreement, for Harbord based in
When. He became the first African American elected
"at blacklisting", Clark had successful
John C. Clark Federal Service, and was in
Nashville. Ed not far from

[illegible]

An estimated fifteen schools in Hartford were built or renovated when PCBs were in use. And but how low have been tested for levels of contamination rule out harmful levels of contamination. John Clark, school closed in 2015, many students were relocated to Wish School built in 1962. It has not been tested. Remediation of Clark would cost five million dollars, a considerable astronomical litigation against Baytex, the company that absorbed Monsanto in 2015.

alleges that Monsanto knew about the dangers of PCBs 20 years back as the 1930s.

in 2019, the company was ordered to clean up PCBs from Los Angeles County waterways and storm drains. In 2020, Bayer agreed to pay \$650 million to settle with numerous municipalities over contamination with. That same year a judge ~~also~~ rejected a plea from the company to dismiss all future charges for in exchange for a \$650 million settlement!

Since then,
mediate Refs in those New England states.
Down at
In New Haven
is another Island - named Newman's after the independence
of ~~the~~ man - great production sites, ~~which~~ in
~~the~~ an area of property - known that
silenced voices calling ~~for~~ perhaps for caution
consideration, are. Whether producing people more, formed
power, electric energy & three sites ~~perhaps~~ ~~more~~ like a new
~~at~~ level alarm.

During the pandemic lockdown, Arin ~~Stiller~~
~~Stiller~~ had us watch Stiller, a
NATV soft film. Black ~~man~~ Surrealist
marvelous folks a ~~well~~ writer, a professor,
and their guide the stalks, into a biohazardous
"zone" where ~~disorder~~ ~~and~~ rumor has it
our deepest desires can be fulfilled. From
unsettling road trip, lying, old drawing, toxic and
enchanting. It inspired us to look at things
that were subject ~~pages~~ clear desire for resolution,
salvation, answers, wholeness, a plan, might ~~that~~
be a trap. And so, so what?

At the end of the movie, the stalkers' young daughter is revealed to have powers - the power to move objects with her mind. The prisoners take care of her with grace. But then a train crashes by ^{the window} ~~the window~~ of the family's ~~own~~ dream apartment.

Likewise I imagined it, but ~~the little sketch~~ I
 start to see inside, the transformations of many
 folding scars in an audience way bow down
 where the invisible weight of an audience sitting
 forming ~~the~~ ^{the} attendance and assembly ~~around~~
 a former changed chain ~~of~~ of events -
 our vault ^{putting} subjects a choir, ^{see} cells
 of dragons keep into to keep ~~into~~
~~into~~ in the zone.

In the historic North End of Hartford, where it overlaps with the Clay Arsenal Neighborhood, there is a Statue of Liberty-sized school building. Its foot print at least, corresponds to that of the island monument.

Since 2017, the school has been closed. Wildflowers are allowed to grow along the east facing front wall, presumably where seeds were scattered by elementary-age students and their teachers. “J.C. Clark Jr. Elementary” steel lettering attached to the brick surface of the two story, solidly rectilinear fortress announces. I imagine an auditorium empty. A flagpole, juvenile trees, wide concrete promenade up to a rise of stairs, or a ramp on the right, frame a dark hollow of windows and double doorways where in and out you can picture kids and caregivers flowing, playing, paused or perched, waiting for pickups, teasing, too loud laughing.

Someone mows the slopes and stretches of grass. Still humming evidence of ongoing occupancy; a mattress, a pile of clothes, a shopping cart hidden in the nooks and shrubbery.

There are windows where you can walk right up and see yourself until your body eclipses the sun. In your shadow shape an interior vista appears. White boards and plastic toy food, construction paper projects, stacked chairs and fallen ceiling tiles and peeling faded posters behind the glass give a natural history diorama, artifactual evidence-like air to the crime scene stillness screaming that once and always this was a school.

“The weeds are growing,” Wilkerson said. “What they do is they keep fencing and fencing and fencing, and they keep putting these tiny, tiny little yellow signs that say ‘PCB contamination: stay away,’ but no information. Nothing has been given to any of these communities.”¹

From 1930 to 1977, Monsanto Company produced PCBs marketed under the trade name Aroclor. Aroclor was used in products installed during the construction of Clark Elementary School in the late 1960s. PCBs are highly toxic. They were used in industrial and consumer electronic products until 2001, when their production was banned internationally. Monsanto, the only company manufacturing PCBs in the US, stopped doing so in 1977. Throughout the 20th century, Monsanto manufactured controversial products: DDT, an insecticide, banned in 1972 for its harm to wildlife and humans and Agent Orange, used in the Vietnam war to eliminate plant life that might provide enemy cover. Like Agent Orange and DDT, PCBs have been shown to have toxic and mutagenic effects. They change people from the inside out, causing cancer and birth defects.

The North End is the capital city's poorest neighborhood. "People think of it as just another ghetto neighborhood," Merle Kummer, assistant director of the Hartford Architecture Conservancy told the New York Times in 1980, "but it's a wonderful kind of visual experience,"² The life expectancy in the North End is 74.8 years, almost five years less than the life expectancy in Hartford overall.

Once home to mostly Irish and Jewish immigrants and their descendants, these populations rode the GI Bill to the suburbs after World War II and their initiation into whiteness. They found decreased barriers to education, had access to well-paid jobs, and were supported by lending institutions in the purchase of affordable housing.

John C. Clark Jr. moved with his family to Hartford from Georgia in 1929, part of the Great Migration of Black folks from the Jim Crow south. The fifteen year old enrolled in Hartford Public High School where Black students, such as the artist, Laura Wheeler Waring, had been in attendance since 1904. Wheeler's father had been the pastor at Talcott Street Church, the state's first Black church. The congregation would merge with Mother Bethel Methodist in 1953 to become Faith Congregational Church. The church community moved into a new church home on Windsor Avenue (these days, Main Street) in the North End, the former home of Windsor Avenue Congregational Church. Later in life, John C. Clark Jr. would serve as a deacon and trustee of Faith Congregational Church, this old congregation in its new home.

From the church building built in 1871, walk a half block up Main Street, cross and turn left down Elmer Street. It's windy and grey down this corridor most months of the New England year. At the first right, Clark Street, halfway down the block, the ruined school appears, set back from the street behind chain link fencing. John C. Clark Jr. Elementary School, which opened in September 1971, was named for the first Black person elected to public office in the city of Hartford. After high school, John Clark Jr. served in the Army, rising to the rank of Lieutenant. His cousin, Connie Nappier was a Tuskegee Airman. There were limited roles for Black servicemen my grandfather, who was assigned to a ship called the Decker, would recall. There was the racism of officers. And, then of course, there were the bullets and bombs. Between 1944 and 1946 my grandfather, who had barely left Philadelphia, traveled to North Africa, Italy, Southern France and somehow, Burma—present-day Myanmar. He described watching parachuting men shot out of the sky. He and John C. Clark Jr. would have seen similarly new and unforgettable sights. Upon his return to the state, Clark studied embalming.

He learned to prepare bodies for viewing and burial. He was president of his graduating class. Clark worked as a contract analyst for the Hartford-based Travelers Insurance Company in the late 1940s and early 1950s, in the years after the federal Home Owners Loan Corporation released color-coded maps in which neighborhoods were outlined and ranked according to how safe it would be to insure property and extend loans. By the time he was elected to City Council in 1955, he had successfully opened and operated his own funeral home. He lived in a single-family home in the North End not far from Faith Congregational Church. In his position, he advocated for a study of 'credit blacklisting,' which is illegal but can be applied, in effect, through redlining.

Serving from 1955 to 1963, John C. Clark Jr. created the Fair Rent Committee and sought to improve housing conditions throughout the city. He sat on Development Committees and served on Renewal Teams. Mr. Clark was a delegate to the 1965 Connecticut Constitutional Convention. A year later, he died of cancer at fifty-two, leaving a wife, a daughter and son. By 1969, the construction of Interstate 84 had cut off Clark's North End neighborhood from nearby downtown. Today, the North End is primarily African American, West Indian, and Latino.

An estimated fifteen schools in Hartford were built or renovated when PCBs were in use. All but four have been tested to rule out harmful levels of exposure. When Clark Elementary closed in 2015, many students were relocated to the Wish School, built in 1962. Remediation of Clark would cost one billion dollars by conservative estimates. Stalled litigation against Bayer, the company that absorbed Monsanto in 2018, by the city of Hartford, alleges that Monsanto knew about the dangers of PCBs as far back as the 1930s.

In 2019, the company was ordered to clean up PCBs from Los Angeles County waterways and storm drains. In 2020, Bayer agreed to pay \$650 million to settle with numerous municipalities over contaminated water. That same year, a judge rejected a plea from the company to dismiss all future charges in exchange for a 6500 million settlement.

Since then, over ninety Vermont school districts have joined a lawsuit against Monsanto to remediate PCBs in their New England schools. Down Interstate 91, in New Haven, Connecticut, English Station Power Plant is another island-sized monument to inescapable post-industrial ruin.

During the pandemic lockdown, Arien had us watch *stalker*, a 1979 Soviet film. The sparse narrative follows a writer, a professor, and their guide, 'The Stalker,' into a biohazardous zone where rumor has it, one's deepest desires can be fulfilled. It is a bleak, unsettling road trip flick, spiralling and slow. It inspired us to look at the ways in which our toxic subject and our desire for remediation, resolution, wholeness, might be a trap. And if so, so what?

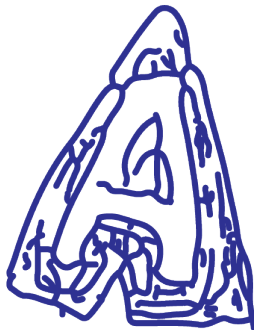
At the end of the movie, *The Stalker's* young daughter is revealed to have powers—the power to move objects with her mind. The kitchen tableware shutters under her gaze. But then a train thunders by the window of the family's dreary apartment.

Maybe we imagined it. Or, maybe the magic is real. I start to see inside. I see the transformation of musty moulding folding chairs in an auditorium bow down under the weight of an invisible spectral audience, settling, squirming in attendance and assembling around a forever chemical chain reaction of staged events. Vault puts a choir of cells, a roster of subjects, into motion. Vault is a glorious leap into the trap and into the zone.

Marisa Williamson 2025









[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Action in a
 nation
 It is a lie
 A nation is
 on location

ALIENATION
DISLOCATION

Can you control the relationship between the environment and your emotions?
How do strangers control?
How may autonomous zones expose the tricks of any given social structure?
How have you been trained to be who you are?
Do you consciously live your life towards attraction and away from repulsion?
How do you respond when you are addressed?
How often do you find yourself pretending in public or private?
Who taught you how to act?
What effect does pretending have on your emotions?
How easy is it for you to distill your thoughts and emotions?

ORIGIN STORY

We intended to use dance to express value and to interrogate an existing value system represented by the site. Specifically, we intended to interrogate the relationship between value and how we remember and forget.

Kevin My involvement in VAULT had always been predicated on my desire to work closely with my sister Arien, who I am in solidarity with, and to think of Hartford, and the kinds of issues it faces as a community and geographical/celestial location, in a more direct manner. I wanted to address the obvious sadness people carried.

Marisa I was commuting to the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford from New Jersey where I lived with my husband. I hated packing up each week, leaving home, and driving for two-and-a-half hours for a less-than-ideal job. But, when I would arrive in West Hartford I entered a warm safe space with my colleague and roommate, Billie Lee. Billie is a brilliant thinker who has contributed generously to the language and scholarship of Vault. How do you make a new space out of the ruins of another? How do we heal and find joy amid uncertainty? We were always asking.

Arien I co-conceived Vault thinking about education and becoming educated and what it has meant for me to choose to be an educator. As a choreographer, I was working with these elements: Proprioception, Kinaesthesia, Alienation, Dislocation, Memory.

Marisa Billie introduced me to Arien. I was intimidated by Arien's frenetic and provocative mannerisms. But I knew right away that Arien was smarter than most people with advanced degrees and had a lot of what I did not and could use some of what I had.

Arien I, most importantly, think that movement is a language. So, I prefer not to offer any gifts besides the toolbox used to break all of this down including whatever written materials the viewers get once they get into Vault. If movement is a language, I wonder how many conversations I will truly have.

Marisa In a grainy cellphone video, shot in September of 2021, Arien directs Trinity College students in a slow walk sequence up and down the concrete steps of a modernist brick building dappled with sunlight. A plodding bass (Nick Serrambana is playing) riffs atmospherically off-camera. A growling vehicle solos in the background. Stillness is the theme of the lesson Arien explains to the students. watching this one of many clips from the Vault archive, I am overwhelmed with longing. We are at John C. Clark Elementary School in Hartford, but I was not there

Kevin, Nicholas and Arien did an on-site visit with Trinity College students in a class titled, Sites and Histories. It was taught by our friend, Rebecca Pappas. The students came to the site and were led by Arien and Kevin in performance exercises, with Nicholas providing a live musical score. They performed a number of physical exercises that embodied the project's focus on epistemological approaches to the abandoned elementary school. Students were encouraged to question and push their approach to looking, receiving, and relating to art and its attachments—sounding an alarm.

For me, Vault has been about imbalance and balance. In practice, it has been about tripping and stumbling, catching one another up, challenging each other, over and over, and trying to provide support.

The history of conservation in the New England region and much of the Nation is marked by coordinated efforts of the empowered to preserve natural landscapes while displacing indigenous populations, over-industrializing, constraining, isolating and detaining Black and Brown people in ghettoized, underserved, ecologically perilous, and arbitrarily marked environments. Clark Elementary is one of many abandoned, neglected, and hazardous environmental sites in the North End of Hartford.

VAULT critiques the policies and practices that produced the 250-mile nationally designated, New England Scenic Trail on one hand and shuttered Clark Elementary on the other. I joined the project as an artist-in-residence on the New England National Scenic Trail. My project,

Monuments to Escape, was about connecting with artists located along the trail and getting them to propose monuments—either honoring escape or from which we are compelled to escape.

When I met Arien at a playground no more than a week after meeting him for the first time, he explained where he was coming from (a recent HIV-positive diagnosis) and explained the premise of Vault. He got in my car and directed me to the school that afternoon and we walked around the neighborhood.

Arien In 2018, Scott Campbell, who had encountered a previous installation and performance of mine, reached out by email and presented me with an idea emerging from his work at UConn Hartford. A plan to build introductory writing seminars around Hartford, questions about its past, future, and our relationship to that legacy was truly inspiring to me.

Scott For the most part, these are inexperienced students in their first semester of college. They take the course to get required credit for writing, and they may have no interest in the course, its subject matter, or its big ideas. But, of course, this is not so different from most people, and like most people, there is room here to encourage, inspire, model and transform. It's why we do the work

Arien As a movement artist I was first enthralled by the idea of researching and creating diacritical movements. ‘Diacritical’ is an adjective that describes an accent, or an acute marking over something, essentially used in languages. Since the premise is English and writing, movement, as always, is an alluring subject matter.

Scott and I spoke specifically about UConn Hartford, a satellite campus, and its refurbished ‘porch.’ I lent Scott my copy of Kevin’s newly self-published book of poetry titled *brandishing*, *EX-WRITER*, etc. In it, Kevin writes about the conception of the self when juxtaposed with a previous self, the fragility and strength surrounding his identity as a Puerto Rican, genderqueer male from the south end of Hartford, and the conditions he lived through in the city. In addition to the deep impression the book made on me and Scott, we also found there to be a lot of overlap with the book’s approach to self-archiving and UConn’s Writing Hartford 2.0 project.

After a meeting together with Kevin and Scott at the UConn Hartford campus, Kevin and I observed that the building itself, every single wall, hallway and floor, had zero art integrated into the space, not even a clock on the wall, not a painting or sculpture in sight. The facade, front, facings, and interior of this institution in its newness did not reflect the community or the students who occupied it. It embodied a kind of aggressive nothingness.

Along with mine, Kevin’s eye distinguishes the subject matter, finding a locus in all this material.

Kevin In 2016 I met Arien Wilkerson. Arien goes by all pronouns so for the rest of this text I will refer to them using all pronouns interchangeably. I had written a poem a month before reciting it to no public whatsoever at the residential campus of the University of Hartford on occasion of a Hip-hop festival that the university had paid my other homie, Lindaluz Carillo, to organize in the springtime. So I participated as a poet and Arien as a dancer. Arien came up to me after my reading and said that she loved what I wrote citing it as “void of pontification”. I gathered from his terse but affirmative feedback that Arien had a deep understanding of art, this is very rare in a city like Hartford, especially coming from a person who didn’t have any formal training in visual art proper. In short, I trusted her taste in art and this was a very big ordeal. I did not know how notorious Arien was. In the next coming weeks Arien would blow up my DMs on Instagram, expressing her interests in friendship and romance. We never became lovers, instead we became sisters. It was the first time that anyone had referred to me using feminine pronouns.

At the time I had begun to identify as an ex-graffiti writer. As a 14 year old I co-founded a seven member graffiti crew named *Beyond Your Control / Bomb Your City / Burning Your Centers*. Bombing, a colloquial graffiti term, refers to all forms of graffiti related to tagging, creating bubble letters,

and general vandalism-centric aspects of graffiti production; as opposed to making detailed, laborious murals, bombing is what the general public and public officials refer to as the “ugly” kind of graffiti. It’s the scrawl that tends to diminish instead of directly adding to the property value of a given neighborhood. Bombing is commonly considered a signifier of blight while graffiti murals (piecing) a contemporary signifier of gentrification. I had a natural gift at making the elaborate kind of graffiti. I had spent lots of time honing my formal skills in creating letter structures and fun color schemes. I preferred to be alone for long periods of time as well. But, I was always critical of the commodification of graffiti and resisted turning my piecing practice into a commercial job. Usually, I would spend entire days painting a single “piece” in some remote area in the margins of the Hartford outdoors but for me bombing was a lot more conceptually exciting and appropriate as a form of existentially driven protest against this fucking atrocious country I grew up in. Bombing felt like real anti-hero shit and given my tumultuous upbringing and the general living conditions in Hartford at the time, I felt as though bombing was more realistic and exemplary of the mood of real Hartford residents. Bombers got into more fights, they stole more material, they risked their lives more often, they embodied agitation more directly. Mentally, I believed in the value of bombing, but as a way to kill time and play. Piecing seemed to come more naturally to me. After being exposed to the art of the Young British Artists³ through youtube and wikipedia the entire pandora’s box broke right open for me. At this point I realized that my skepticism of the epistemological limits of graffiti were true all along.

Sculpture now had taken precedence over all other forms of art because sculpture specifically integrated all forms of craft and conceptualism into a larger consideration of what separates (or fails to separate) art from life. Everyone has the technical skills to be a sculptor because a sculpture can take any technical form, be it a cooked meal, a theatrical play, the building of a home, babysitting, outdrinking someone at a bar, crawling on the ground like a baby, deep kissing, or producing building materials that would later go on to harm entire generations of black and brown children, it’s all valid approaches to crafting what could temporarily be considered a sculptural practice. Through the invention of the readymade, Duchamp brought us the idea that life inherently had all the conditions necessary to compose art. And so, Arien met me when I was an ex-writer, a very pivotal moment that would inform my later unhinging.

I think that when Arien realized that I thought this way, that is, sculpture reigns supreme, our friendship accelerated into overdrive. In her youth, Arien had founded a dance installation company, TNMOT ASTRO to specifically tackle this issue within the dance industry in which she found there to be many glass ceilings and very little room for distorting conventions and flexing her potential for artistic autonomy and rigor as well as community building. Generally speaking dance traditions are steeped in othered identities, eurocentric white supremacy or boxed into digestible genres that

render dancers as simply tools to reenact cultural tropes. The choreographer is often the person who has any real say as to what happens in a given composition and the program director often has a bigger vision for the direction and cultural impact of a given institution. TNMOT ASTRO was his to define and invent new works for the viewing public and as a tool to deal with institutions, which in her mind were just the money and space havers.

Arien and I coincidentally had been deeply influenced by Kanye West and his tenacity to refuse to be reduced to creative roles and identities that compromised the scope of his vision. We both still keep very close to our sense of self the idea which most children are encouraged to believe: there is no limit to what we can be and do in this world. Given our very real experiences of hardship, me as a short, skinny (and later fat), gender fluid, queer, poor, neurodivergent, mentally and physically abused, Puerto Rican and her as a H.I.V positive, gender fluid, queer, poor, dark-skinned African American we also both made work that addressed this phenomenon as a seemingly indomitable impasse when compared to the deeper feeling of being able to do anything. We have a high degree of plasticity and we're toys, playthings of some other more autonomous elite class or ideological foothold.

The reality of our toyness and the ferocity of our plasticity becomes fully articulated through VAULT. In 2018, about a year into our friendship, Arien gave me a tour around an elementary-school-turned-exclusionary-zone that sits at the end of her childhood street, John C Clark Elementary. The school was shuttered after it was found to contain building materials produced by Monsanto that had astronomical levels of carcinogenic compounds called PCBs. He said he wanted to make a lifework with me based on this school called VAULT.

Marisa Arien described dancers flocking from one narrative landscape to the next. Their solo phrase material and audio would draw the audience through the co-created world.

For me, VAULT started as a collaborative piece conceived to reassemble, channel, and question how monuments are socialized into communities and how communities are socialized around monuments.

For Kevin, who I would later meet, Vault was about the dispersion of bodies and kinship. He described fleeting and ex-centric objects appearing throughout the school's exterior.

Arien wanted the performance to cover ground. The performance is a platform on which the Black body is a monument of and to its surroundings. Pointing out the corner where a teenaged boy was shot (Kerry Foster Jr.)⁴ and killed in front of his parents house, Arien waved to the boy's father who still lives there. Arien chattered with a friend, the Hartford Catholic Worker on the other corner whose son Arien loved but who is now strung out on drugs.

Kevin The place in its current condition exemplifies all the issues churning around in our pinheads since day one as artists. Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What can we do when there are future disasters that are destined to happen? What do we do with this disaster and the impact it has had on our lives? Why do very few people in Hartford behave as if they can be and do anything they would like to in this world? Why does the Hartford community seemingly only want to support art that lives as far as possible from criticality or cultural agitation? Why must art always be reduced to entertainment? Why must you be expected to bear more ugliness and bleakness the darker your skin is or the more outwardly gay you are? Why does Hartford keep supporting aesthetically basic shit? Why are there no people outdoors in Hartford except dope fiends? Why have people not from Hartford been paid to paint feel-good pictures of specific Hartford residents without their consent (or better yet specific people who are currently struggling to survive)?

Marisa Vault is about how we remember and forget the familiar and the strange, Arien explains. It is something to be watched covertly or overtly, in a time-based signature. We go on our 'dérive'⁵ through the neighborhood. I am nervous. In this environment I do not understand what I am looking at much of the time. What are the rules here? My role, I decide, is going to be to bridge something, find some unrotten piece of wood to lay over the many obstacles, to sure up the path for others. I want to get to know this place better so I can pass as a tour guide. Until I do it a few times, I will be nervous and a little confused about what to do with my body here. This is Arien's world—and he will be, as he is now, dancing, flying, leaping out ahead of me. I take some mental notes and pictures as we go—for my mapping of endangered hidden histories. Note: These mattresses under a tree, this defaced sign, a burned out house. Gather and interpret these stories I am being told. Create 'places of viewing.' Contextualize an alternative network of pathways and desire lines. Frame narrative proscenium. Redirect resources.





Marisa In the Vault performances on May 6th and 7th, 2023, Chloe dances her solo to Trevonna's description of being one of the only Black girls at Plainville High School from Hartford. I interviewed Trevonna. Sitting on the geodesic dome of the playscape with my bluetooth speaker bouncing the Black woman's voice off the concrete, seeing the beautiful Black woman dance pigtailed like a girl my daughter could be, I lose my emotional balance and fall into a black hole of sensation, stomach sick with anxiety, memories of my own time in primarily white institutions.

Elise Castillo is a Trinity College social science professor with whom I was in a reading group that Rebecca Pappas started during my time in Hartford. Elise writes about school choice, busing, and school closures in Hartford and other cities where desegregation led to the consolidation and collapse of inner city schools. Like the parents Elise interviews, Arien's mother Beverly emphasized 'diversity' over 'desegregation' when explaining her decision to have her sons bused thirty minutes away to Plainville. She wanted, in her words, to expose the boys to 'adversity.' She wanted them to know how to carry themselves around different people.

She wanted to keep her kids busy. This was a sacrifice as a single mother. But, she wanted better for them than what she saw around her. Beverly had gone to John C. Clark Jr. as a child. She remembered her time there with fondness. But things had changed.

Kevin Vault feels like a project about Hartford and areas like it that hold little cultural capital, nowhere-places in America whose golden era have passed long ago, and the genuine inquiry on what happens when these are invigorated with a substantial amount of punkness, queerness, freakiness, accountability, and obliqueness. I feel like the work may more directly embody the conditions that I often nebulously am ruminating on, namely: the aesthetics and philosophy of bombers, desire lines, psychogeography, going crazy internally as directly coinciding with the destruction of community, dissociation as a coping mechanism, defamiliarization, making new forms out of ruins and the illuminating the beauty of a profoundly broken but still living being.

WHY WE CHOOSE THIS PLACE TO BE VAULT

Choose any city in any part of the world and you will find families with lineages, sites with historical weight, movements of ideological and social empowerment, historical foods; the essence of what culture and time can offer. Much of what goes into the knowing of where art may exist has to do with art being clearly visible. Surround anything with white walls and it becomes an object in a gallery. It becomes a Vault.

- Kevin Can you speak about Vault and its internal conceptions while the or after The movement occurs. This question does not come from my desire for you to do so but rather an inquiry on what you see is conceptually necessary of the artifice/reality of the contrivance that is Vault.
- Arien In terms of performance in Vault and its internal conception I want to refer back to “The List.” By dislocating dance from its conventional location (indoor, privately owned and operated stage) to an unconventional one you immediately change the relationship between the dancer and his or her audience. There is no distance anymore. You also change how the audience understands choreography and the performance. It’s no longer dance; it’s art of some sort. When people stand back “to get a better view,” a certain theater-like distance is reintroduced. Some of that text comes from Glenn Lowry former director of MoMa in conversation with choreographer Will Rawls in “On Value.” Glenn went on to say that “sometimes the myth of an event can be as important as the event itself.”
- Kevin When you go home after the movement are you still in Vault?
- Arien As for what is necessary so much of my moving is in relation to the constant cycling of why performances themselves are ephemeral. Movement in its entirety is ephemeral. I am asking, does this need an audience? Can this be seen while no one is watching? What do I need to happen in order to feel safe? What marks am I willing to make on someone?
- Kevin If there is no clock, are you a new clock?

Arien I am definitely some sort of time keeper, but I don't know if I'm keeping time for them or for the Vault itself. I think for me to transmit myself as a new clock, sorta fragments or combats the moment of self-discovery. The moment any person lays an eye on me, a new time begins.

I think my body activating that space for however long a durational setting needs to feel for me, has an outcome of either them losing track of time or thinking about how long I was there for before they got there, or even searching for time on their phone. I am more of an activator for clocks. I would say more time keeping.

HAHAHAHA. Basically I'm a fuckin clock

Kevin Concerning the blade of grass that is one of many, how could you be Vault's blade of grass as a movement?

Arien Stillness; emitting energy while being still. Forms that happen through imposing stillness.

Precision in terms of coming back to the same movement with the same exact energy is highly a part of my pattern of focus when movement occurs. For me it's the getting into moving that will first be the most challenging moment. Stillness as a form of movement is what I have been after for a while. That, to me, would feel like alienation.

Sleeping or resting or falling asleep while standing on two feet as form, as residue for channelling stillness. I would be interested in knowing if I could just fall asleep standing what form that would make.

Kevin Will there be artifacts left in the space during the movement as a byproduct of the movement?

Arien I do believe there will be artifacts already in the space. However, yes, as a byproduct of my movement, not left though, maybe given. The atrium space my movement occurs within is more like a core inside of the earth or a jewel in the center of a vault.

- Kevin What parts of the movement become weighted down or energized by the potentiality of improvisation? Your own improvisation and the improvisation of the people inside Vault?
- Arien Everything is weighted down by improvisation. I don't think there are any moments of choreographic subject. In the list of Vault prompts, ideas, questions and phrases to think about I ask, "As you watch the performance make proposition to be criticized, changed, elaborated on, refined, abandoned and revived over time"
- Marisa My child uninhibitedly pulls me in with her little hands. "Twirl mommy!" My proprioceptors hum against hers. Robin was born into Vault in the late pandemic days, seven weeks early, very surprising. I was caught off guard, sick and unbalanced. For five weeks I was in a long dark tunnel of exhaustion, waiting for her to leave the hospital. Not knowing when I would feel the sunshine again. Now she is almost four. We sing Hakuna Matata and dance furiously.
- Kevin I went to the psychiatric hospital twice for emotion dysregulation, suicidal and homicidal thoughts.

Arien lost a fellow Hartford collaborator and friend, Karim Rome. Karim was part of Vault. Karim vaulted. Next level, out of this world and into the next.

Arien's mother, Beverly Wilkerson, was diagnosed with cancer, possibly contributed to or produced by her physical proximity to the exclusionary zone.

- Kevin We are focusing on the slippery pursuit of creating force fields. In graffiti dialect, a force field is your last line, it borders or wraps around your piece. It is there for clear distinction of where your graff begins and ends. Forcefields offer protection and a formal hail; illuminating its very being as something of value.

Graffiti is an expansive field of exterior art that traces back to paleolithic cave art and all the way forward to being one fourth of the foundations of Hip-Hop. In his book "The Art Of Getting Over: Graffiti Art in the Millenium," muralist and designer Stephen "ESPO" Powers, describes graffiti legend, VFR as possessing a specified set of aesthetic codes in regards to how and where he chooses to perform his 'vandalism'. Graffiti is an expansive field of exterior art that traces back to paleolithic cave art and all the way forward to being one fourth of the foundations of Hip-Hop. ESPO stated that VFR "consistently hits spots out of the direct line of sight, usually low to the ground, or down alleyways, or in the forgotten corners of the city...his tags settle into their surroundings so well that they become subliminal in their stature."





VFR's spiritual and physical affirmations (tags) settle smoothly into the texture of the city's architecture, and thus, are documents of the oneness between himself and the city.

VFR flipped the premise of graffiti's supreme visibility on top of its Head. Subtly and low visibility will be a major driving theme of how each artwork is installed within Vault.

Marisa "All these mosquitos." Kevin's voice is close by in the video. Always complaining. My own laughter snaps me back into the present. I scrub through the clip and move on.

Other than taking pictures on my phone, I was really present that first afternoon at Clark with Arien. You can't really do anything other than be present with Arien. It is like a drug for me. Being present in this work is Sometimes very painful.

Over the last eight years we have tried working with universities, public officials, art patrons to try to get the hood to come out and inform or literally sit with a composition that was made to directly address the travesty produced by Monsanto in the area that many Caribbean and African American folks call their own. The money is evidently there (google the statistics for art funding in Connecticut as compared to the rest of the United States) but it all goes toward things that capitulate to some kind of basic, unchallenging, appealing excuse for cultural activity that Hartford is all too familiar with.

Letting go? Letting undergo? Maybe we don't need this anymore? Is the language of Vault at its limit? It is crucial for Vault that words are ever changing forms. They may reinforce or deflate depending on how they are said, who says them and the subtext in which they are being used. At the heart of it is the idea that VAULT is always one gesture that leads to another. We are midair already vaulting. Can't stop now. Vault is an installation of one, hypermobile body, one shared diving | devine tool.

Marisa "On the stage, Arien's hyperactivity was focused." Beverly Wilkerson told me. "He stopped stuttering. Found breath. Learned stillness."

KEY PARTNERS

- Marisa Early on I connected with Herb Virgo of the Keney Park Sustainability Project. Herb was very patient and good to talk to. He had, for real, done what I was writing in grants that I hoped, but doubted, Vault could do. The Keney Park Sustainability Project sustains the local, cultural, spiritual, and creative ecology of Hartford. Keney Park is a multi-acre, Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park in the North End of Hartford. KPSP creates radical and routine practices of cultivation and growth through its garden, education, and food programming that transforms everyday space. Herb agreed to be our fiscal sponsor which allowed us to get funding from the Graham Foundation based in Chicago. That \$10,000 helped keep everyone afloat when performance work dried up during the pandemic.
- Kevin Nicholas Serrambana created the VAULT Mixtape with Arien and contributed movement and music to a film titled after the Vault Paralog. He came to meetings and advocated passionately for our project in our collective efforts to retain grant funding.
- Marisa During a Vault retreat in July 2021 we had a zoom call with Joe Condren. Joe is the assistant director at UConn Husky Sports, a nutrition education and physical literacy program working within the North End community, including at Clark Elementary before it closed. Joe and Arien are old friends. Joe has supported the project by providing candid and valuable on-the-ground insight. He took video and photos of the May 6th and 7th Vault performances that you see in this publication. Joe's parents opened their home to the Vault team while we were in Hartford for our performances. Their warmth, positivity, and compassion strengthen us in the work.
- Arien Joe stood out in his purple jacket, Timbs, dark brown hair, and long bushy beard when I met him at Real Art Ways in 2015. Of course, I was drawn in by his beauty and his eyes, but there was also a warmth. Our first conversations centered around a mutual friend, who will remain nameless, and my cousin, an incredible artist in music and many other things.

Joe comes from what I would call a wealthy white family, attended school with mostly Black peers. I come from the North End of Hartford (considered a “dangerous” place but also a historic Black neighborhood full of strength and continuity) and went to school in Plainville, Connecticut, surrounded mostly by white people.

We were from different sides of the city, different backgrounds, and had experience being immersed in difference. I had a different relationship to how I connected, spoke, and moved through my Blackness in Hartford. I was everything different from Joe's post-undergrad, NYU world, but that attracted me to him.

I'm not quite sure how our conversation turned toward Vault. Joe mentioned seeing me in a video and being captivated by my work. I recall learning that Joe was deeply involved in community work, primarily in the North End Hartford schools, and also served as a lifeguard at the Keney Park Pool. It felt like we were both driven by a shared, unwavering sense of community and love for people. Even as I fell in love and out of a particular type of love with him, our friendship didn't fold or bend or waver. It was important for us to remain friends in the fight. That friendship has become the foundation of everything we do together.

Joe is a pivotal part of VAULT, a key partner not only because of his work ethic and care, but because of who he is: a white person who has chosen to work in a predominantly Black neighborhood, listening, learning, and witnessing.

Together, we met with Mayor Luke Bronin and City Officer Thea Montanez. Our discussions focused on starting a project in the North End, on Clark Street an area with not only an abandoned school but also a vacant church and facility. We explored many ways to move the project forward despite setbacks.

Joe understands the social and economic struggles that shape Black life, and he recognizes that race remains a defining issue that white people must consciously examine as they move through the world and try to relate to others.

So much racism has seeped into the core and fabric of our societies that even now, we are still fighting for justice, for equity, for a world where we can breathe clean air, eat freshly grown foods, and not fear being abducted.

Joe remained a constant support, helping us pursue our vision of a free and open world of VAULT. In the end, Joe's connection to VAULT I can in some ways claim is rooted in his connection to me, but also our mutual love for this amazing fuckin city, Hartford, CT. For that I love Joe forever.

Marisa Billie Lee is my thought partner in conceptually, practically, and emotionally framing Vault, especially its pedagogical elements. In February of 2021, she and I led an interactive workshop inspired by Vault as part of the Radical Black Performance Art Series curated by Arien at UConn Contemporary Art Galleries. We led participants in a *dérive* that focused on locating and identifying sources of shame—personal and collective—as a strategy for escaping the harm produced and perpetuated by it. How Do You *Vault* maps a journey of imperfect recovery and provides instructions for others who wish to supplant existing power structures with reparative ones—finding ways to locate shared and intersecting sources of shame in order to build new strategies to resist its corrosive power. I could not have come to Vault and through Vault without Billie.

Arien I can't approach the matter of this person without mentioning the long period that passed between our initial friendship and what became a relationship. It started a few years before they joined the project during COVID, when they were just a cool friend in Hartford.

D was the type of person I wanted to be with. D's connection to Hartford, his link to my friend group, and the broader dissemination of black and Latino love and interconnected struggles with brown identities; these were core in our communal discussions and made it a sure-fire guarantee that I would be in love with him. There is always a challenge in making Black and brown love. It is a complex, often misunderstood idea, that seems completely easy and rational to me but that I now realize is hard for many others.

My relationship with time, humanity, earth, science, and arts is shaped by how I feel being in a Black body is perceived, Whether in baggy jeans, feminine clothing, or in between. All of this ontological nonsense has led me to see this person as a pivotal figure in my discovery of what I wanted for myself. The quest for intimacy at the edges of the end of the world looms all the damn time; not, just as a human or a lover, but as someone striving to live freely in a radical world, using information, critical thinking, and love to create change.

My relationship with D solidified in the summer of 2020, and for six months, they were involved in the project. Essentially, they were going to design the brochure, which would eventually become part of this book. We also went on our own *dérive* and did some photo experiments or editorials using photo as the template and the isolated worry of COVID in the city. We also worked together on the mixtape. It really felt like my first relationship, where I was using my experimental and avant-garde art lifestyle, merging everything that was happening. We were also going to many protests. This was during the era of George Floyd and the shifts happening with institutional racism.

Honestly, it was really fun, and although it ended in a toxic, complicated manner, I had a great time and truly loved them. The sex was great. They were funny. It was perfect. It was absolutely perfect at a time when the world was less messed up than it is now. It was nice to be in love and working on this project. It created a softness, a gentle echo chamber, that allowed me to give compassion and love to myself and others in ways I deeply needed at the time.

Maybe I am also admitting that I probably don't do that as much now. I don't know. Back then, I could clearly feel that everything inside me was real, and I gave it all I had. Their work was a good reminder of how you can truly grow as a person when you're working on something involving the humanity of others. He was the best kind of person to help make my life feel lighter, and I'll always be grateful and thankful for what that experience gave me during that time.

Marisa My child, Robin, is so joyful even in her moments of sorrow. She gives me new reasons to wake and be grateful, to work, and look harder. I had so many good reasons before. But now the reasons are infinite.

My dear husband Tom who, through me and through the world we now navigate together, has learned and loved to learn about this work and me and the hidden worlds and histories living inside us, thank you. We are all love.

Thank you to Rebecca Pappas and Deborah Goffe who in very different ways helped this project along with grace and rigor.

Arien Dear Karim: I'm sorry it took so long to write this. The world has not been the same since you left, even scarier than before. I think what made me so fearless all the time was having people like you in my corner, that I thought I could protect. So losing you is not only devastating but a constant challenge for me as a person bound by the relentless quest to make the world fair.

I never imagined VAULT would be our last show together. I always thought we would have more and more chances to be with each other in the world.

I'm truly devastated that you died. It's a reality that has consistently failed to set all the way in.

I'm happy you didn't get to see us in full fascist mode. Though you would've been impressed with how the people of this world are fighting against tyranny and destruction.

Feels like I've been struggling all day just to tell you that I love you, simply cause who wants to write a letter to someone they feel should be alive?

I've just been trying to figure out how it feels to live in a world catalyzed by death.

It was an honor and always a privilege to have you as my friend, and I will forever be grateful. Sometimes I wonder if the universe is trying to punish me or give me more reasons to fight.

I don't know the answer to that question. Should I?

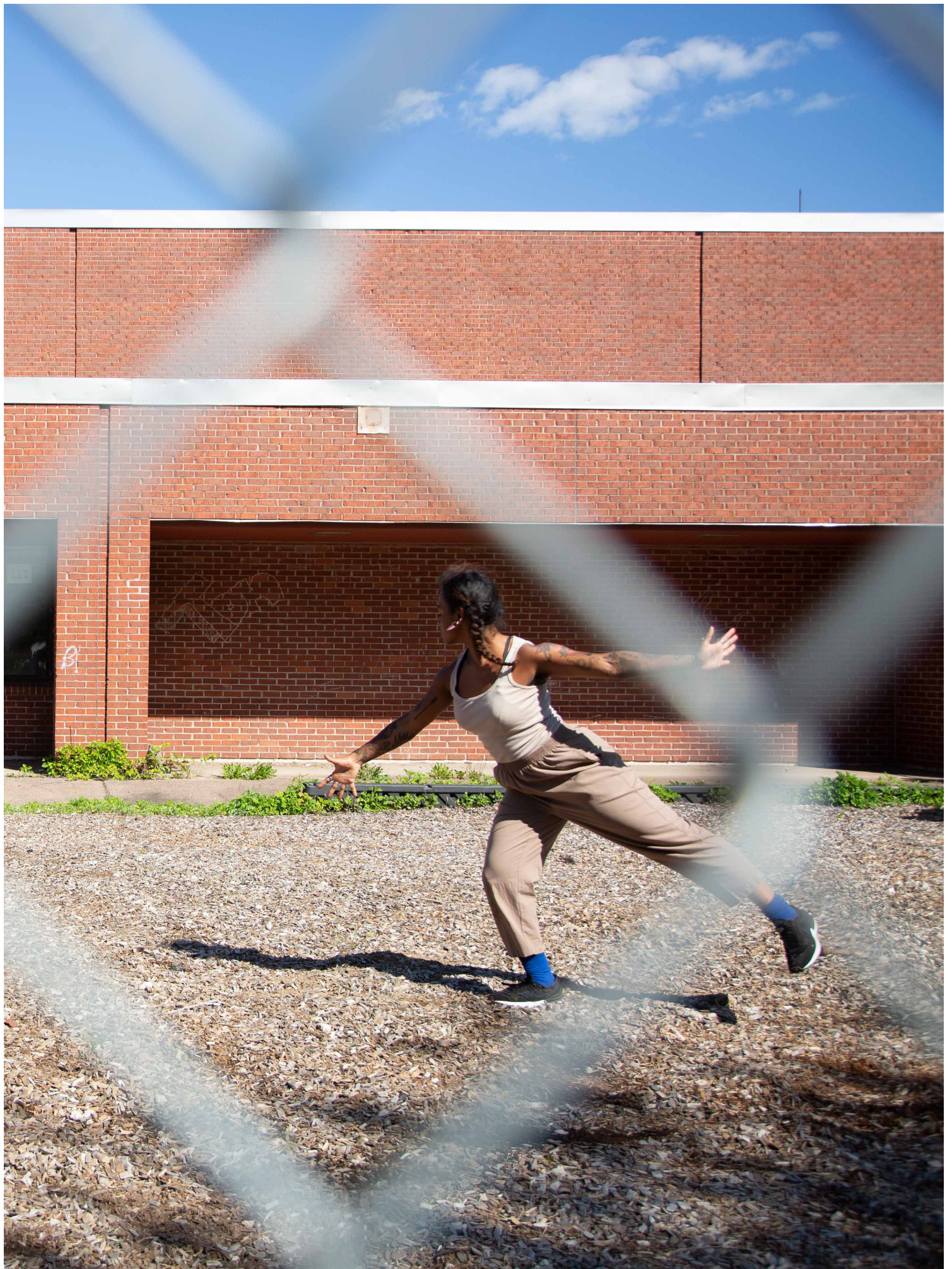
I want to save many people. I want to help the world so badly. I want to remind you and the many people I love, just like you, that you are loved unconditionally. No matter how disgusting the world becomes, you always have safety. You'll always have me. I will always be a loving place, whether you're in this spirit world, the afterworld, or somewhere in between.

I love you, Karim

Kevin This publication was in part funded by the Yale 2020 Dean's Critical Practice Research Grant. Additional support for VAULT | KAJE was provided by the Jackie McLean Fellowship at the University of Hartford.

Kellen Grissom was my student and advisee at the Hartford Art School Sculpture Department. He heavily contributed dramaturgy towards my contributions to the Vault KAJE exhibition.





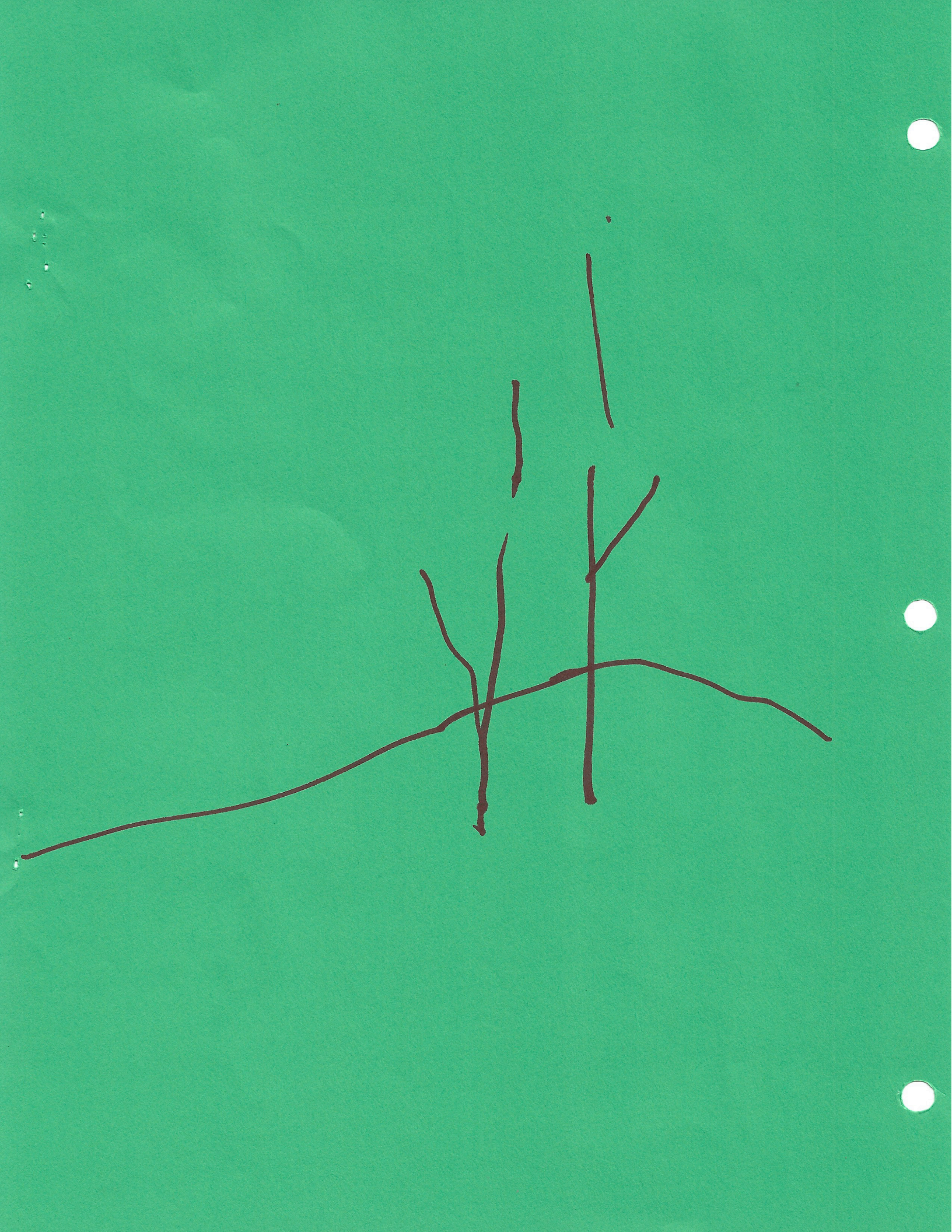
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"By 1865, Merle Kummer writes in defense of the Mother House's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places," a horse-drawn street railway had started operating on Main Street. Kummer's research is thorough. Her descriptive narratives, typed in regular not forms in the early 1980s bear little evidence of collective tape. She must have made and edited numerous drafts.

In the late 1880s, Kummer reports, a real estate developer named Frederick Muhl purchased most of the Mother estate. In five years, Muhl opened a street (named, not surprisingly, Muhl Avenue), divided it into house lots, and built an entire street of densely set 70-story houses. In 1930 Muhl and Henry V. Carty bought one of Muhl's Queen Anne style houses. Their daughter, the actor, singer and activist Marietta Carty would grow up and later in life live on what had a century earlier been known (by some) as Muhl Lane. They attended the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church across Main Street, once the Whinnor Road. In 1930 John C. Clark's Fifth Congregational Church

increasingly, religious and cultural institutions were moving out of rented quarters and into permanent homes. Merle Kummer writes, Between 1925 and 1930, three brand-new synagogues were constructed in the North End, the last one:

"The residential transformation has two facets of significance: it reflects first the extraordinary population growth in the city due to industrialization, and second, the increasing ethnic diversity of that population."

"The summer I turned fourteen I got my first job working on a farm outside Hartford. The Vietnam-born author, Ocan Vuong writes in his 2019 epistolary memoir, On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous.

Connecticut shade tobacco grown in the Connecticut River valley premium cigars in Connecticut valley vernacular. It is used to bind and wrap the vanishing landscape and architecture of the New England tobacco fields. James F. O'Gorman.

ex plans that starting in the early 20th century, new groups successively arrived to work for the farmers and the corporations in the fields and in the sheds, and chief among them came Southern blacks, West Indians, and Puerto Ricans.

"Set in the late 1940s and early '50s Mildred Savage novel, Parish is a coming-of-age story played in the 'Indian gold' tobacco fields of Connecticut's Vuong story, also a coming of age, shows the landscape. Once picked, like the young worker, the tobacco leaf is suspended for a 'hanging period'. It changes - develops its golden brown color. 'Most people don't realize tobacco can grow this far north,' Vuong writes, 'but put anything near water and it'll green itself to the height of a small army.' For Vuong and other 'second wave' settlers in the region, racial consciousness is a weathering - acquired or inherited with time.

As subjects of Colonialism, we learn our place, explore its limits, if not through oral history, independent study, then through affect. The North End is a vibe, with its troubles and hardships, its traditions and peculiarities, its remembrances of families, its stories.

In a History of Hartford streets: their names with origin and dates of use, published in 1911, the authors, Albert Washburn and Henry R. Buck conclude that Clark Street is 'Named after George H. Clark, or after Henry Clark who lived in the first house on the street.' Their project is ambitious. Comparing various maps to first hand accounts like Gordon Russell's, combining Hutter's genealogies to see whose oldest son of whose oldest son might have inherited land, a finding centuries old descriptions about where that land was located relative to the dusty or muddy dirt roads, the rivers, the meadows, the hills, the wetlands to understand the reasons why a half mile square block of city streets is named and divided the way it is is challenging. To do it accurately for all the streets in the southern square miles of the whole city is impossible.

George Henry Clark was a clergyman in Georgia in the lead-up to the Civil War. He protested the state's secession from the Union and was asked to leave by his congregants.

In 1861, he returned home to the New England. His family can be traced back not to Hartford's founding fathers, but to Clark who stayed in 19th-century streets or went further north. Henry Clark who lived in the first house on the street. ...

cannot be verified. A house on Barbours Street, the very one that John C. Clark Jr. made his funeral parlor in the 20th century, is, without claim, described by an amateur historian as having been built around 1875 by John Clark. I want you to be true.

I took back through everything. I trace my steps down Barbours Street, spins unspun before. Across the street from the funeral parlor, for example, until very recently, another school: Fred D. Wisk Elementary School. Stand at 350 Barbours Street. Built around the same time as John C. Clark Jr. Elementary, Wisk School likely contained the same PCB materials. But we have to renovate the school. Demolition and new construction won out as the more affordable option with no public reaction of whether PCB remediation would be part of that work. A source from inside the renovated Wisk school says that the new school building will probably never be built. A push to consolidate all schools in the North End of Hartford will, for financial & political reasons likely result in there being no schools in North Hartford save for a very small charter elementary school.

When, from deed records for the Clark Bell & Bell now Howard K. Hill Funeral Services building, I see that the house was built in 1920 not 1875, I also see that the surrounding neighborhood is dense with registered sexual offenders. A population who in the absence of, guess, can make the North End home. Pissed off.

I arrive where I started, with a man's name attached to a building whose purpose and meaning is complicated by the coming and going of people through this neck of the woods: their arrival, forced migration, settling and establishment, flight, displacement, unrest, resistance to capture, failure to be housed, resettlement, recollection, death, burial and obliteration. The sprawling fate of the former Wisk school is also the site of the 1941 Hartford Cannon Fire.

On July 6th, a Thursday, some 167 people died and 700 injured when the Kingston Bros. and Brothers B. Bailey Circus tent caught fire. Children were in particularly high attendance. People were burned, impaled, trampled, and fell from bleachers in the chaos that still haunts public memory in the region. A memorial, installed in 2001 behind the school, was in accessible this summer when organizers and their loved ones were scheduled to gather there to commemorate the event.

In my place of steps, I find a 1941 document summarizing the origin of all of Hartford's public schools. Clark Street School was originally housed in the three-story 1920s

ethic style building on Clark Street. It had formerly been a parish school of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, beside it. The city took over Saint Michael's schoolhouse.

In 1975, after the new school building had ground and the school's name revised to honor John C. Clark Jr. the old Clark School building became home to the Artists Collective. Founded in 1970 by Jackie McLean, two wife Delle, other jazz musicians, Paul Brown and dancer Cheryl Smith and visual artist Jonas Mart, the Artists Collective has, for over a half-century, pushed into education, "skills for living," and cultural enrichment to youth in Hartford. While Africa was based from his North End home in the mid-nineties to be predominantly white Plainville School District Elementary schools as a participant in a then already three decades old voluntary busing program his classes at the Artists Collective, connected him to his black culture, he explains. There was documented resistance to busing throughout the years. A suburban resident in a 1968 school board meeting said to applause that her neighborhood "is a nice, wonderful, middle-class town, and I do not wish to share this with anyone from Hartford. What we have, we have earned and want to keep. What is mine, is mine."

In 1968, the North End of Hartford, Connecticut, exploded with anger at the news of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. The year later, Harvard students at Stanford University that "social justice" and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.

Literal and poetic, the North End of Hartford is a landscape difficult to escape. School is a way out. But these perfect doors have almost all been shattered demolished, displaced. Where, for generations, for all of living memory, the safety nets have been falling and in fire that are children supposed to escape? How do they vault?

a 1639 inscription in one flat but two Clark family genealogies offers at last, the most satisfying explanation as to why the Clark name is so sticky, stubborn, and vital: "February Anne Dom. 1629. Several parcels of land in Hartford upon the River of Connecticut belonging to John Clark & to his heirs forever."

Forever like PCBs, forever like a lesson learned the hard way, forever like trying to decolonize your home, your neighborhood, yourself, will take longer than you have time for. It is a monumental project.

"Some people," Ocan Vuong writes, "say history moves in a spiral, and this is where I am with the North End's dark history. I am no further in or away from where I started. But I am not the same. If I live, I will be stronger, for sure. But some things like a poison weaken my faith in justice, progress."

On the 100th anniversary of the Clark Clark Jr. School, in 1825, where (now) the John C. Clark Jr. School bleeds her toxic chemicals into the earth.

Just north of the schoolhouse was a tract of two or three acres, more or less, owned by the Clark family. The tract was given to a number of friends who lived with them and their families. There were a few trees, mostly apple trees, but also some pear, and some cherry. There were also some blackberry vines, and some blackberry vines. The land was given to a number of friends who lived with them and their families. There were a few trees, mostly apple trees, but also some pear, and some cherry. There were also some blackberry vines, and some blackberry vines.

Let there be a riot.

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What ancestors loom around the building you find yourself permeating?
What specific effects on your emotions and behavior does the geographical environment generate?
What narratives have been created around your love for the land which you occupy?
How did you come to occupy this place?
Who does not love the place you occupy?
What does the space of conflict look like?
Can you imagine a peaceful landscape?
What can be found at the limits of your attention?
What obstacles can love not penetrate?





New England settler colonial history is a compilation of micro-histories written by one settler son to another. I notice Black history trickling steady in the gutter in the negative space formed by adjoining inside margins of the interfacing pages of the white man's handbook. Whose history gets buried and how? Where and with what tools can we dig into the landscape of New England to find the people, places and things that we value—that we want to learn from, hold onto, place into VAULT?

I dig and discover, disbelieving, that Clark Street, the street on which John C. Clark Jr. School was built and opened in 1971, was not named after the school and the Black politician, i.e. the Black man's family, but for another Clark family. Once I know this, it seems obvious. An elegant coincidence the Hartford Board of Education must have thought when they voted unanimously to name the new school building. Who knew anything (Monsanto, allegedly) about the persistent multitude of organic long-lasting chemicals and curses that would become locked into the landscape that bears the Clark name?

Many of the early Hartford families have published genealogies. Many are digitized. You can search these documents by first, maiden names, and names acquired, though almost all are recurrent. A John Clark was born in England in about 1608. He made his way to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1632. He was released from his indenture in 1635, the year of the Great Colonial Hurricane. I imagine a storm like nothing the settlers have ever seen before, from Virginia Colony to Plymouth Rock. What spiritual revelations must have been had in the wind and rain. Hartford emerges from this storm.

Reverend Hooker, citing irreconcilable differences, takes a party of congregants west from Cambridge. They plant themselves into the soft soil beside the Connecticut river. The settlement is first called Newtown, and then Hartford. By 1636, John Clark was in this new town, working as a hogreeve, someone who assesses and prevents damage done by stray pigs. Seventeenth century John Clark is, like twentieth century John Clark, something of an insurance man.

"My grandfather was born in 1748," Gurdon Wadsworth Russell writes in his very local history of the northern suburb of "Up Neck," the present-day North End. His 1890 text gives a social and geographic history of the neighborhood in 1825. Russell establishes his authority through family ties to the land. His great grandfather Samuel was born here in 1716. His great great grandfather Jonathan in 1686. And, his great great great grandfather Joseph was the son of the first settler, in 1648." Russell was born in Hartford in 1815. He graduated from Yale Medical School in 1837 and Trinity College in 1835. As a boy he attended the District School established by the settlers in North Hartford and above the city line. These were landed farmers, their forefathers left England forced out likely by enclosure; the 18th and 19th century practice of enclosing what had been common land for grazing and cultivation and making it private. They had found themselves without anywhere to subsist, had perhaps turned to crime, been caught, and punished with exile and indentured servitude. Once freed, if they were able to, they deployed this strategy in the new world, forcing people off the land. They taught their sons, and son's son's, to do the same. The District School was at the center of a newly designated, First North School District in 1798. It was also located right in the middle of The Windsor Road.

In the Hartford land inventory of 1639 and 1640 John Clark, probably raising pigs and cows, had twelve parcels of land in this “Up Neck” neighborhood on the east and west side of The Windsor Road. He had served in the Pequot War, perhaps participating in the Mystic massacre of 1637. The Mystic Fort Pequot massacre was the first recorded demonstration of European-style siege warfare. The Pequot tribe’s fortified village was set ablaze by settlers in alliance with Narragansett and Mohegan Indians. Those who fled were shot. Survivors were enslaved and forced to assimilate. The Treaty of Hartford in 1638 authorized the extinction of the Pequot culture, name, and identity.

Gurdon Russell writes with clarity, insight and detail about classmates and teachers, the families and homesteads, their business and buildings, their comings and goings in the frontier Hartford suburb that would become the North End and Clay Arsenal, later home to John C. Clark, Clark Elementary, Clark Street, and others. The spelling of names was not as standardized in the seventeenth century as it would become with the publication of West Hartford-native, Noah Webster’s dictionary in 1828. Some of the texts excerpted contain unusual or archaic spellings, unfamiliar words, and offensive or outdated terminologies. Locking things in, keeping things tight, building a repository of information and resources in fractious times is a proud New England value. He is an amateur conservator—collecting endangered public histories, like I am. And many others. “It is hardly possible for the present generation to understand,” Russell writes, “how primitive they were.” He’s nostalgic. “As far as I know,” he goes on, “there are not many of these people living, and but a few of their direct descendants in the town.” His book is in the Library of Congress. Timeless. BUT, he is a bit of a bigot and very much a product of his time. “It is a striking illustration of the decay or removal of families. New blood has come in, from other towns or from abroad.” He is not writing an autobiography, he explains, “but necessarily must I say something about myself.” He brings a certain lens to the landscape. I like to think I share this pursuit. I do histories, not completely unlike his. I wonder if the way I find through the landscape will be followed. “The road itself was the common highway to the north, and was in the usual condition of most highways at the time, very muddy in certain seasons, and very dusty in others.” If it is legible or logical, marked clearly, user-friendly, what will it even be called?

The road through Russells “Up Neck” was called The Windsor Road for a long time. And then, in the 19th century, Main Street. Off of this arterial highway are tangents where handfuls of histories, beyond Clarks, Russells, Capens, Wadsworth, and Greenfields are scattered and buried.

I compare hand-drawn maps in databases. I open window after window, looking into first- and second- and third-hand accounts of life in the new world. The easiest people to find are dead wealthy white people, who were prominently buried with grave markers and even better a record of death in some family book or city record. The Olcotts settle the North Cemetery, and they want us to know that. “Mrs. Anne Olcott,

Consort of Mr. Jonathan Olcott, died Feb. 6th, A.D. 1807, Aged 71 years. The first person buried in this yard.” Anne’s brother-in-law, Jonathan, her husband’s older brother, Captain Samuel Olcott inherited the Old Revolutionary War-era house on Windsor Road that stood as a gateward to “Up Neck.”

The house, “in good preservation” as of 1890 Gurdon Russell observed, was passed down then to the Captain’s bachelor son, Michael Olcott and two of his also unmarried sisters. Michael Olcott was the staff officer in charge of supplies for the army. His father, the Captain, who died in 1781, served in the American Revolution. General George Washington and the Marquis De Lafayette are said to have stayed as guests of the family at this house.

“There were a number of large mulberry trees,” Russell recalls, “which furnished abundant fruit for birds—and boys.” Michael Olcott was a trader in goods from the West Indies like his neighbor, Thomas Belden, north across the street that bears his name. While Belden had a stately mansion built for himself in 1808, the Olcotts, it is said, had carpets before anyone else did. And in 1803, they had forty dollars to spare for Thomas Burkett, the caretaker of North Cemetery, to bury the body of the child of the family’s enslaved worker, ‘blax bets.’ Where Black Bets’ child is buried we cannot know. Somewhere in North Cemetery, or was the body absorbed into ‘Nigger Lane’?

“There was a pent road on the south line of the cemetery, extending west as far as the land of Gurdon Wadsworth,” Russell writes. A ‘pent road’ is a New England term. It describes a public road that may be barred or enclosed by gates or bars, especially at its terminal points. “And only called, as I remember, ‘Nigger Lane,’ because there were a few houses upon it occupied by negros. It is now more pretentious as Pine Street, and it is also wider.” Russell recalls that Archibald Greenfield lived on the southwest corner of Pine Street and the Windsor Road. Greenfield’s descendant, Archibald Greenfield Loomis, is a colleague, Russell notes. Both men work for Aetna; Greenfield Loomis as “a cashier” at Aetna National Bank. According to Loomis’ obituary, he was not just a clerk but, by 1891, he was the president of Aetna National Bank. He leaves Aetna to serve as Vice President of the National City Bank of New York, before it is known simply as Citibank. Aetna, which started as a fire insurance company in 1819, issued life insurance policies in the 1850s on enslaved workers, naming their owners as beneficiaries. Russell himself was the Medical Director of the Aetna Life Insurance Company from 1857 to 1909.

Having introduced “Nigger Lane,” Russell engages in a remarkable reflection on the use of the word ‘nigger’ in the Hartford of the past, casting a flickering light on the transformation of racial consciousness in New England from the early 19th century to its end. In 1825, “the word ‘negro’ was not ‘current’ in the region,” Russell observes. “A negro was an unknown being; a ‘nigger’ was well-known.” Russell later describes Joseph Cook, “a very respectable colored man” who lived of the corner of Nigger Lane and the Windsor Road, presumably across from the Greenfields’. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a person of ‘color’ described a light-skinned person of mixed African and European heritage. This squares with the biography of Joseph Cook that Russell transcribes from the stone that marks the man’s grave: Mr. Joseph Cook, A man of Colour, was born in Virginia, free, came to Hartford about 1802, and died March 25, 1832.

What makes a ‘person of color’ or ‘colour’ distinct from a ‘nigger’ or ‘negro’ in the eyes of white society? Their enslaved status? How much of a link was there between color and perceived status? If ‘looks’ could get you killed, who was in the most danger? Do ‘nigger’ or ‘negro’ equate to ‘slave’?

Writing in 1890, twenty-five years after the end of the Civil War, Gurdon Russell suggests that northerners should be more open to restored friendship with southerners given how, not so long ago, northerners were also slavers. “We need not blame our southern friends too severely.” Invoking the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence, Russell cites slavery as ‘anomalous’ and ‘repugnant’ to the notion of all men being created equal. 1890 is the same year in which the Second Morrill Act was passed, requiring states to create land-grant institutions for Black students or prove non-discrimination at existing land-grant colleges. At the same time however, from the 1890s to the 1920s, lynching in the United States reached its height.

“I have found bills of sale for them in the papers of my great-grandfather, Samuel Wadsworth,” Russell writes of Black people. “And advertisements offering them for sale, or rewards for their apprehension, may be found in the public print of that time.” Archibald Greenfield, a white neighbor of Russell’s family in “Up Neck” who lived on the corner of “Nigger Lane,” was originally from Lyme Connecticut. In 1758 his father was Archibald Starr Greenfield, a mariner. Young Archibald lived with his brothers and sister, his mother and father, and an enslaved woman named Phyllis. A New London County Superior Court investigation concluded that an enslaved woman servant in the household died because “she had been poorly provided with proper clothing and bedding in freezing weather.”⁶

“I have heard it said by the women,” Russell writes, “and am afraid it was not in a spirit of humiliation, but rather of boasting, that such and such and one of their ancestors had such and such number of slaves.” “Why, yes,” he parrots them saying, “[they] slept on the kitchen floor. Or anywhere a place could be found.” There were notably no distinct quarters for the enslaved.

I remember winter nights (beyond Billie’s initially warming welcome) when I struggled to stay warm in my poorly-insulated room in West Hartford. I was under two comforters, one that covered my late grandparents’ bed.

Centuries earlier without my inherited warmth I could have died on the floor. How would young Archibald remember such an event? The lifeless Black woman is a startling inconvenience to the people she works for until, generations later, a Greenfield finds a way to capitalize on this unsettling loss with the new financial technologies engineered for profit by his insurance company.

“Finding it necessary for the improvement of our said parcells...” Russell finds in a 1705 Hartford City record “that there be an open highway [from the Windsor Road] through the southernmost bounds...of land belonging to...Samuel Goodwin and John Skinner. And, unto the beginning,” the record continues, “of the said Daniel Clark’s land...Do mutually agree...to leave out one rod and a half wide of said land on the southernmost bound of our respective parcells of land.” Have I found the origin of Clark Street, concomitant with the beginning of Nigger Lane? “This was the origin of ‘Nigger Lane,’” Russell believes, “which was only a narrow lane in my boyhood, but which was afterward widened, taking for that purpose, I fear, a piece of the cemetery.” Scholars who generated the content of the Hartford Black History Project in 1997 hypothesized that “the beginning of the North End Black community maybe be found in this Nigger Lane just north of the 1825 city limits.” The cemetery whose edge Russell laments being absorbed by the expanding Lane could be Spring Grove Cemetery created in 1845 by Stephen Page, who Russell describes as a “former sexton” –someone who cared for a church. It is Stephen Page who purchased Joseph Cook’s land in 1833, before the ‘respectable colored man’ died. The Lane may have expanded into North Cemetery where the Olcotts and perhaps Black Bets’ child are joined by the landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted in 1903. By Olmsted’s time, it is the Old North Cemetery.

There is a give and take of way between these sites of burial and Black concourse. Hartford's North End Black community lives on the historical edge of worlds; between life and death, city and suburb, various racialized lines and labels, slavery and freedom, the past and future of the settler-colonial urban project. Clark Street became an official part of the city and part of this project in 1859 when Hartford's northern boundary expanded over the dirt roads, farms, and homesteads of the North End. A little over a decade before this, the Hartford-Springfield Railroad was constructed along the neighborhood's eastern border. Old Ichabod Skinner's Pavilion House, east of Windsor Road, on what will become present-day 'Pavilion Street', was a mansion when it was built in 1798 on his ancestor's land. For a short time it would be a casino of sorts. And then, in the 1860s, it became an elite private school where freight and passenger trains periodically rattled objects on the children's desks.

"By 1869," Merle Kummer wrote in defense of the Mather Homestead's inclusion in the National Register of historic places. "A horse-drawn street railway had started operation on Main Street." Kummer's research is thorough. Her descriptive narratives, typed on government forms in the early 1980s bear little evidence of corrective tape. She must have made and edited numerous drafts. She is liberal but at times seems to have a bit of the 'pushy puritan' in her. In the late 1890s, Kummer reports, "a real estate developer named Frederick Mahl purchased most of the Mather estate...In five years, Mahl had opened a street (named, not surprisingly, Mahl Avenue), divided it into houselots, and built an entire street of densely set 2 1/2 -story houses." In 1930, Mary and Henry Canty bought one of Mahl's Queen Anne style homes. Their daughter, the actor, singer, and activist Marietta Canty would grow up there. Canty found moderate success in Hollywood portraying domestic workers. There were limited roles for Black performers. She moved back to her family home on what had, a century earlier, been referred to (by some) as Nigger Lane. The family attended the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, across Main Street from John C. Clark's Faith Congregational Church. "Increasingly, religious and cultural institutions were moving out of rented quarters and into permanent homes," Merle Kummer writes. "Between 1923 and 1930, three brand-new synagogues were constructed in the North End." A fourth Jewish congregation would move into the former Mather Homestead. Kummer continues: "The residential transformation has two facets of significance: it reflects first the extraordinary population growth in the city due to industrialization, and second, the increasing ethnic diversity of that population."

“The summer I turned fourteen I got my first job working on a farm outside Hartford,” the Vietnamese-American author, Ocean Vuong explained in his 2019 epistolary memoir, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. In *Connecticut Valley Vernacular: The vanishing landscape and architecture of the New England tobacco field*, James F. O’Gorman explains that starting in the early 20th century, “new groups successively arrived to work for the farmers and the corporations in the field and in the shed, and chief among them came Southern blacks, West Indians, and Puerto Ricans.” Set in the late 1940s and early ‘50s, Mildred Savage’s novel, *Parrish*, is a white boy’s coming-of-age story played out among the ‘Indian gold’ tobacco fields of the Connecticut Valley. A passage reads: “As an old woman says of it:” a 1958 New York Times Book reviewer excerpted, “Tobacco like a baby. Grow inside until big enough. Then you get it out and it’s the boss. Gotta keep it warm. Keep it sheltered. Water, hoe, suckle. All the time, care. It never leave you alone and you can’t leave it alone. All the time work for it. Worry about it. Too hot, too wet, too dry. Hail, bugs, disease. And it grow fast and in the end give you nothing but trouble.” Connecticut shade tobacco grown in the Connecticut River Valley is used to bind and wrap premium cigars. I wonder if Vuong has read *Parrish* or seen the movie adaptation. *On Earth*, a transgenerational coming-of-age story, shares *Parrish*’s landscape in part. Once picked, like the young worker, the tobacco leaf is suspended for a time. It changes, develops its golden brown color. It comes of age. “Most people don’t realize tobacco can grow this far north,” Vuong writes, “but put anything near water and it’ll green itself to the height of a small army.” To what extent is ‘coming-of-age’, for Black and Brown kids in New England or anywhere in the colonized Americas, an awakening of racial identity at the intersection of gender and sexuality? Vuong makes the same observation as Gurdon Russell about the greenness of the Connecticut River Valley and its draw for generations trying to settle and arm themselves. For Vuong and other immigrants, or descendants of the enslaved, or any alienated or dislocated person, I wonder how much of racial or ethnic consciousness is an effect of weathering? It is acquired or inherited with time. As subjects of colonialism, we learn our place, explore its limits if not through observation, history or independent study, than through affect. The North End is a vibe, with its troubles and hardships, its traditions and peculiarities, its remembrances of families, its stories, its lies.

In a *History of Hartford streets: their names with origin and dates of use*, published in 1911, the authors, Albert Washburn and Henry R. Buck conclude that Clark Street is “Named for George H. Clark, or after Henry Clark who lived in [the] first house on the street.” Their project is ambitious. Comparing insurance maps to first hand accounts like Gurdon Russell’s, combing through genealogies to see whose oldest son of whose oldest son might have inherited land, finding centuries old descriptions of where that land was located, and who built what relative to the dusty pent road, the muddy rivers, the soldiers field, or the Neck, to understand the reasons why a half-mile square block of city streets is named and divided the way it is, is challenging. To do it accurately for all the streets in the seventeen square miles of the whole city is impossible. History is hard to do and hard to do perfectly. You have to have a lot of time. Which only certain people have.

George Henry Clark was a clergyman in Georgia in the lead-up to the Civil War. He protested the state’s secession from the Union and was asked to leave by his congregants. In 1861 he returned home to New England. His family can be traced back not to Hartford’s Founding father, but to Clarks who stayed in Massachusetts or went further north. I do not think he is the settler I am looking for.

I cannot find the “Henry Clark who lived in [the] first house on the street” anywhere. A house on Barbour street, the very one that John C. Clark made his funeral parlor in the 20th century, is without citation described by another amateur historian on his blog as having been built around 1875 by a John Clark. I want this to be true. I look back through everything. I retrace my steps and turn down faintly trodden spurs I did not notice before.

Across the street from the funeral parlor, until very recently, was another shuttered school, The Fred D. Wish Elementary School, where many Clark students were sent when their school was closed. Wish, on 350 Barbour Street, was built around the same time as Clark on Clark Street. Wish likely contained the same PCB materials. But the building is gone. Bids were made to renovate the school or demolish it and start over from scratch. New construction was decidedly cheaper with no public mention of PCB contamination or remediation. A source from inside the school system speculates that the new building will in fact never be built. A push to consolidate schools in the North End of Hartford will, for financial and political reasons, have the intended but unspoken effect of leaving the North End with no schools at all.

When, from deed records for the Clark, Bell & Bell, now Howard K. Hill Funeral Services building, I see that the house was built in 1920, not 1875. I also see that the surrounding neighborhood is densely populated with registered sex offenders. A population who, in the absence of schools, can make the North End home.

This trail loops. A man's name attached to a building whose purpose and meaning is complicated by the coming and going of people through this particular neck of the world. I cannot keep up with all the flight, arrival, forced migration, displacement, settling and reestablishment, unrest, resistance to capture, failure to register except in death, conditional admittance, vague recollection, unmarked burial, and obliteration.

The sprawling site of the former Wish School is also the site of the 1944 Hartford Circus Fire. On July 6th, a Thursday, some 167 people died and 700 injured when a Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus tent caught fire. Children were in particularly high attendance. People were burned, suffocated, trampled, and fell from bleachers in the chaos that still haunts the region. A memorial, installed in 2004 behind the Wish School, was inaccessible to survivors and their loved ones commemorating the event during this summer's demolition of the school.

In doubling back, I found a 2011 document summarizing the origin of the names of all the Hartford public schools. Clark Street School was originally housed in a three-story, 1920s gothic style building on Clark Street. I know the building. It had originally been a parish school, associated with the Catholic Church beside it. It was St. Michael's then, it is a Haitian Church now. The city took over Saint Michael's schoolhouse and made it the Clark School. When the new school building was built next door, the Clark School, named for Clark Street, was rededicated in honor of John C. Clark Jr.

In 1975, the old Clark School building became home to the Artists Collective. Founded in 1970 by jazz musician Jackie McLean, his wife Dollie, another musician, Paul Brown, dancer Cheryl Smith and visual artist, Ionis Martin, the Artist Collective has, for over a half-decade, provided arts education, "skills for living," and cultural enrichment to youth in Hartford. While Arien was bused from his North End home in the mid-nineties to the Plainville School District, as a participant in a then already three-decades old voluntary busing program, his classes at the Artists Collective connected him to Black culture, he has explained to me.

There was documented resistance to busing throughout the years. A suburban resident in a 1968 school board meeting said, to applause, that her neighborhood is a nice, wonderful, middle-class town. "I do not wish to share this with anyone from Hartford. What we have, we have earned and want to keep. What is mine, is mine."⁷

That same year, the North End of Hartford, exploded with anger at the news of Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. The year before he had warned students at Stanford, that "social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention." Businesses were burned. Some residents say that the neighborhood never recovered.⁸

Psychologically and socio-economically, the North End is hard to escape. School is a way out. But, those portal doors have almost all been shuttered, demolished, or displaced. Where, for generations, the safety nets have been falling and on fire, how are children supposed to get out? How do they vault from here?

Don't tread on me. Let there be a riot.

A description of a holding, in one of at least two Clark family genealogies, offers the most satisfying explanation as to why the Clark name is so sticky, stubborn, and viral: "February Anno Dom. 1639. Several parcels of land in Hartford upon the River Connecticut belonging to John Clark & to his heirs forever." Forever like PCBs, forever like a lesson learned the long way, forever like trying to decolonize your house, your school, your neighborhood, yourself, 'forever' will take more time than we have. These are monumental projects that take forever.

"Some people," Ocean Vuong writes, "say history moves in a spiral." This is where I am with the North End's dark history. I am no further in or away than when I started. But, I am not the same. Something, like a poison, weakens my faith in justice, in progress. If I live, I will be stronger, for sure. "The tract of country between Clark and Vine Street was mostly covered with woods." Gurdon Russell describes the location in 1825 where the John C. Clark Jr. School still bleeds her toxic chemicals into the earth.

"Just north of the slaughter-house was a tract of two or three acres, more or less, called the 'Sand blow.' Its surface was made up of patches of smooth, white sand, with here and there a white birch, scraggy apple tree, bunches of tall, coarse grass, and masses of low, running, blackberry vines.

The locality was also a noted habitat of black snakes—the common black snake *Coluber Constrictor*; and his congener *Coluber Alleghanensis*, or racer, characterized by a white ring around its neck. A resident of the neighborhood once attacked one of the latter of large size, and was in turn attacked by the snake and driven from the field. He used afterward to say that he never before believed that the black snake would attack a man, but this experience had soundly converted him."



ALIENATION

Alienation

Alien in a nation

A nation is
a lie

Dis is

alien on

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Notation

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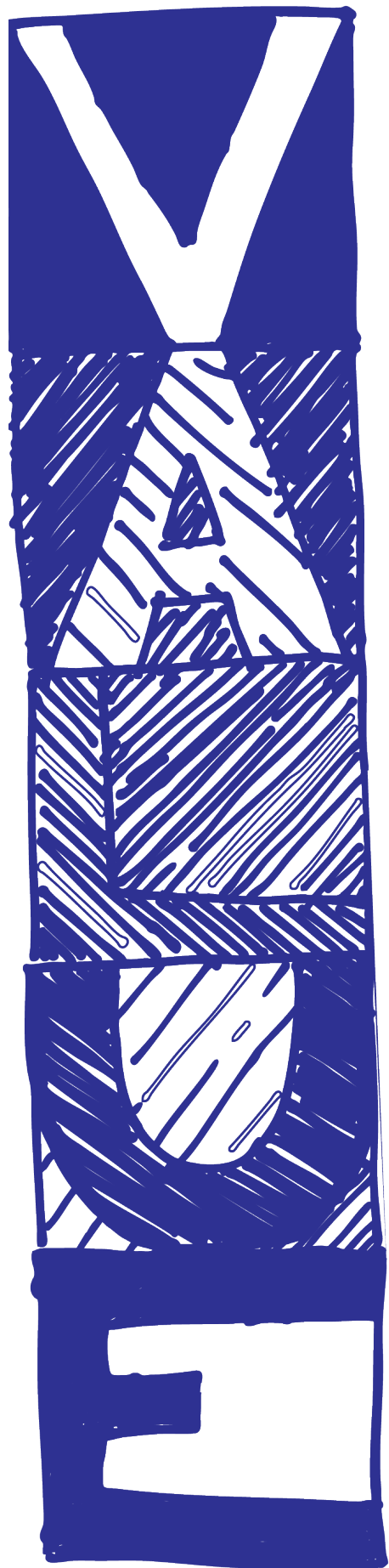
location. Dis is
no lie

Dislocation

DISLOCATION

I have become a night person because I wanted a full life outside of the surveillance of my family. I didn't want them to see what I was up to so the night became, I guess metaphorically and literally, an obscure environment for me to hide inside of in solace. I sort of want to see what implications this behavior might allegorically contain when overlapped with VAULT. Like perhaps the school (personified) just wanted people to stop looking at its activities. It wanted to be more low-key. It had aspirations to not be seen. It wanted to practice its little song and it couldn't hear itself among all the chatter that comes with housing half the city's children day-to-day. Maybe it also wanted to (OMITTED) (OMITTED). VAULT will forever remain an idea, a predilection and a curse, as we cannot destroy or renovate the building. John has been made a zombie barred from resting in peace. I should just break in, extract and wring out the remaining value from the school. I should live in there and breathe in the PCBs until my lungs break in half.

I also want to smuggle in all of the knowledge I have garnered through researching Michael Levin, Donald Hoffman and Rupert Sheldrake's findings on the nature of Morphology, bio-electricity, existence, and consciousness directly into the process of creative works for VAULT|KAJE. Everytime I take long bouts of consuming their stuff it is almost a tell-tale sign that I am having a manic episode. Mania aside, it completely enlivens me and connects me to both religiosity and derealization. Every time I show Arien Michael Levin's work she just says, "they can do all that high-level research while trans women still have no rights and are killed everyday." I think VAULT is precisely about this poignant critique Arien holds. So, this is not a socially engaged artwork. This is an anti-socially resonant research project about how a neighborhood that many people don't care about can hold all this dissonance. Artists want to make little dances around it, others see its sheer condition as an extraordinarily sad and astounding thing, and others literally couldn't give less of a shit because they are too poor to pay it, or us, any attention.





VALUE

How is language easy?

How do you maintain your playfulness?

What are the driving mechanisms for your particular tastes?

What is simultaneously yours and not yours?

What toys do adults need to survive?

What parts of culture do you find most crucial?

What creates greatness?

What may hinder someone from being great?

How is greatness in dialogue with access, power, and ease?

Can you buy dance?

Where is competition leading you?

What limiting traditions do you uphold?

How do you smuggle a particular experience into this world that continues to develop ?

How might we organize ourselves outside of the system of buying and selling?

How do you comport yourself around strangers?



found article titled ETR

At the heart of modern finance lies a paradox that entraps 99% of people in an extractive system disguised as a service. Banks do not lend out pre-existing money; they create new deposits the moment you sign a loan agreement. Your promise to repay becomes the bank's asset, and with a few keystrokes, they conjure purchasing power into your account, then demand it back, plus interest. This is where the extraction begins. The principal is created, but the interest is not. The economy compels constant expansion, new debts must always be issued, and money must forever circulate just to keep up with the compounding claims of the banks. If growth slows or defaults rise, the illusion shatters like in 2008, when reckless lending, and fraudulent inflation of housing valuations met reality, and the public was forced to rescue the very institutions that engineered the collapse while being denied the bails they were forced to provide the banks. Keep this in mind: Collapse is engineered. For the individual, the effect is even more visceral. You may repay the entire principal you borrowed, yet you remain shackled to interest payments that never end - payments that are, in effect, pure rent charged on money that the bank never truly had in the first place. Even if it ends for you it does not end for others and this is on purpose. The bank benefits from and depends on your irresponsibility. The bank risks little but gains endlessly; we shoulder the risk of job loss, recession, medical emergency, homelessness, criminalization, social shame. Bailouts socialize losses while profits remain privatized, the real social welfare receivers are enriched, wealth-obsessed elites. Banks privatise the right to create money, monetize human need, and enforce compliance through the threat of foreclosure, bankruptcy, ruin. All blue-collar crime is bred by higher-order white-collar crime. Crime trickles down and wealth trickles up. Debt-based money is not designed for balance, but for perpetual imbalance, benefiting those who control the levers, while ordinary people run just to stay in place. The world is run by a meta-cartel, sustained and bred from the banks, that acts with impunity and zero accountability. Money is the promise and architecture for corruption created

and systematically perpetuated by this cartel. Banks created money in order to ensure that people relate to the world only through the legitimatization and forced consent to a debt-based financial system. There is no free market, no equal playing field. At lower levels of entrepreneurial activities it may be about hard work but at higher levels it's about being connected to networks of power to influence grants, subsidies, tax breaks, tariffs, wars, regulations that keep competitors out, access to cheap funding to buy up the most productive assets in the economy.

Most economic growth is driven by credit, money supply, interest rates and not waking up at 6:00 a.m every morning. World central banks collude with billionaires, organized criminal enterprises and corporate interests. This is an ancient game of the ones that embody greed to do greedy things. For a long time, billionaires have been exercising the logic of war and they wage war consistently. Billionaires-to-be created America & made it forever tied to themselves through loan certificates made to finance the first American revolution. Every single contract can only be fulfilled with a threat attached to it, ultimately this threat is a cage, torture, and/or death. If you decide not to obey the written or oral contract, then you face a gun pointed at you. A thirst for domination is how this country was born. 10 million plus Native Americans colonized, slaughtered and pillaged. Now we have this class of people called "corporations" who deflect personal accountability while enabling monopolization and the perfection of war-logic. The entire intent of corporations is growth. Exponential growth is cancer in the body. Corporations, and their articulation of a perpetually insatiable unit of the whole, is the perfected manifestation of the vampiric essence of capitalism. The US is no stranger to slavery and in fact still upholds explicitly legal forms of slavery through the thirteenth amendment, and this does not include the manner in which the government colludes with globalized corporations that utilize slave and child labor to produce every good that can be found on God's earth, especially the food and the precious minerals. The biggest threat to corporate growth is true egalitarianism. The essence of egalitarianism is the old saying: sharing is caring. Many of Jesus's teachings were of an essentially egalitarian nature. The DoD, or rather, the Department of War handles many layers of alien Tech and intelligence. The department of war has already figured out morphological freedom, the elixir of youth,

and body regeneration through bioelectric fields manipulation via ION channel modulation, exotic communications in which the body with its electromagnetic field can be logged into using electronic interfaces. The body is an interface, they can implant thoughts in your brain because your body can be logged into. They have figured out free energy, also known as 0 point energy, through nuclear physics. They have figured out exotic propulsion systems which defy the limits of space and time. If for instance the Department of War decided to showcase this technology unannounced to the public, the entire world would interpret this Tech as aliens and has in the past multiple times already. Jesus was persecuted and found to be guilty of blasphemy, was kidnapped and turned over to authorities because he naturally possessed this knowledge and interlocked it with love and kindness instead of power and control. The US working class always had to advocate for themselves with rhetoric and arms and protest in order to gain more rights. The billionaire class has always seemingly acquiesced since they still extract value from the workers through fiscal systems. This false sense of security and development into more liberal systems is a rug perfectly tailored to be pulled away at any moment. We don't have rights, we have conditional privileges. World War II begins with fascism which is the syncretization of authoritarianism and communism. World war II ends with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing between 150,000 and 246,000 Japanese people. In September 1947 the CIA was formed through cooperation / recognition between former ostracized Soviet Zionist Jews and American secret intelligence agents. The deal was Palestine in exchange for intel on Soviet and communist operations, all in the name of propagandizing "Democratic values." Roy Cohn, prosecutor of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in their trials in 1952–53, Senator Joseph McCarthy's chief counsel during the Army–McCarthy hearings in 1954. The deal forecasted the fulfillment of Christian Zionist prophecies by elite, anti-egalitarian white christian nationalists. The price to be paid for this end-times, sadistic fantasy are semites themselves or Arab and Jewish descent. The deal forecasted the fulfillment of Christian Zionist prophecies by elite, anti-egalitarian white christian nationalists. The price to be paid for this end-times sadistic fantasy are semites themselves of Arabic and Jewish descent. Most Jews have no more power than most Americans, and the Israelis

that take issue with compelled enlistment in the military, and the continual pillaging of land and establishment of an apartheid ethno-state are the ones that are most suppressed and most vulnerable in their nation-state in the heart of the Levant. The Iran-Contra deal, the civil war in El Salvador, Afghanistan poppy production, the funding of anti-Soviet terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al Qaeda, the list goes on and on in all the ways the US has legitimized moral corruption and war-logic in the name of spreading Western values throughout the world. So we have the colonization of Natives, the enslavement of Africans, dropping two atomic bombs on Japan, the maltreatment of immigrants and the queers, apartheid governments, coup d'état orchestrated by the US, and vested interest in bringing about eschatologic prophecies. Eschatology is just war-logic, a practical benefit to the military industrial complex. War washes money, war washes corruption, war erases memories, war brings in extremism, war distracts, war feeds on obedience and sacrifice. The reality is that we are literally on a genetic level the product of single cellular organisms. We are all technically semites through bloodlines. We are all Sumerians. We all can be traced back to Africa. We are all created with the ability to be good Samaritans. We all have a common ancestor. We all belong everywhere, and anywhere we are as long as we can live in peace with the people surrounding us. Fast forward to 2020 we are living under a covid virus which does kill people but was likely produced in a lab to generate a set of militaristic procedures. Many people apparently whistleblowing the idea that the vaccine is actually a biological operating system. How would the common person know either way? During the lockdowns there were mass protests happening that were racially motivated. Calls to compel the American public to see humanity in every person by bringing attention and value to the most racialized of people. Both covid and the protests are clear starting points for the surveillance of the leftists through drones, social media content, the data market, open symbolic demonstrations and contact tracing. The first Trump administration came to be through the implementation of technology produced by a company named Cambridge Analytica. Cambridge Analytica created fun surveys for people to do on Facebook. The surveys would require the user to give up certain privacy rights such as sharing all of their contact information as well as the contact information of everyone in their friend network.

The surveys would create a permanent link between the servers of Cambridge Analytica and these accounts and then they would scrape the accounts to identify individuals who were in swing states who were neither Republican nor Democrat and who were found to be highly impressionable. Cambridge Analytica produced websites, video content, social media users and advertisements that were directly and specifically constructed for each user in order to slowly indoctrinate them to MAGA ideology. Most of these people are white, racist, misogynistic, but most importantly, under-educated, poor, and receiving the least amount of pity across the rest of the population, regardless of the fact that they too are as good as slaves to billionaires. And so this leads to a nation that is highly atomized, mean spirited, distrustful, lacking in good faith, and highly usable. Fast forward now to 2025 and we have extremely advanced quantum technology that is extremely advanced, UAP disclosure bursting wide open, an asteroid passing by Earth named 3I/Atlas, a genocide in the form of mass child sacrifice rituals for the entire world to witness, whistleblowers left and right coming out of the government explaining that the US is the most important contributor to global drug and human sex and child trafficking rings, housing and health corruption, and an explicitly mafioso executive branch that is accelerating full blown fascism, disobeying due process laws, creating overtly eugenic propaganda, stripping away health and economic safety nets and civil rights, crashing the economy and health departments, enlisting white supremacists and unqualified people to senior roles nationwide. America was always bastardized. No taxation without representation is how it started. Persecuting protesters and politicians. Building encampments, sending more funds towards I.C.E. than ever before. Everything done strategically chaotically to ruin all existing systems. Systems that were long ago already corrupted, and now perfected in their alienating capabilities. When everything collapses then the nation will be explicitly bought by billionaires. Privatization is what they call it. Creating privatized States that operate under the logic of the Smart City run through a digital control grid that utilizes signals like wifi and Bluetooth, cameras, microphones, and body area network devices to take full account of the bodily and linguistic actions as well as the feelings and thoughts of every one of its citizens.

We are now encroaching on the age of thought crimes. The information of all Americans, and then globally all citizens, will be centralized through companies like Palantir Technologies and Paragon Solutions. Palantir alone holds contracts through the department of war, DHS, ARMY, NAVY, CIA, FBI, VA, FDA, SSA, NHI, CDC, DMV, IRS, BANKS, phone carriers, SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECH COMPANIES. Their main goal is to aggregate all data points of citizens, collected through and then use AI to make predictive policing determining whether or not to take legal action or worse to play God with people's lives. Risk profiles, assisted by artificial intelligence, will dictate people's bodily autonomy. Match that with potential compulsory uses of body area network devices and if a device finds that your heart rate is too high or low then a police drone can be automatically called to you in an effort to gather more information and act accordingly. Think a certain thought and your smart car might refuse to turn on or you get locked out of your bank account, or that automatic sliding door at the local supermarket will not open for you. Protest the wrong thing, and you are denied access to open society and commerce. My high school required all students to apply to college in order to graduate, then when we got to college we were exposed to the righteous teachings of climate science, radical Black liberatory traditions, feminism and gender studies and critiques of capital along with alternatives for a more equitable and peaceful society. Then the tech bros collude with the politicians to designate any arbiters of this tradition of egalitarianism under the dog whistle of "woke ideology" as enemies of the state and domestic terrorists. I guarantee you, if you are standing in this room, and understand what I am saying, you may very well be identified as a domestic terrorist sometime in the future if we allow this state-sanctioned organized crime syndicate to continue. The syncretization of digital control grids and total surveillance is to finally expose the fact that we were always slaves all along. The game was not natural, it was foreclosed with the creation of the banking system. The surveillance companies plan to indoctrinate people into factions that they can then demonize and criminalize. They can automate kill chains that rid critical thinkers who are not afraid of asking questions and prodding at assumed prescriptions of reality. The Communists they describe as an enemy are people who learned about colonialism and climate change and hope for a world where mutual aid reigns as the natural sensual law.

The protesters, the mentally ill, the homeless, the liberators, the revolutionaries, the handicapped, the indigenous, the racialized, the queer in sexual preference and gender identity are all fallible beings too but intuitively live in balance with nature. These billionaires are purposely filling the government with criminals to enforce their ideologies, projections and aspirations for their futures against 99% of the human population. They want the new dynamic to be a social caste system made of three categories of people: slaves, soldiers, and billionaire families. I believe the exotic technologies are now seeping into the public awareness and this marks a new era of dominance, precarity, and possibly hope. They see freedom as a freedom to enact their will of making the most money and fortifying the best security so that they are now the super humans with exotic communications, antigravity propulsion, zero point energy, morphological manipulation through bioelectromagnetism and advanced weaponry. And we are the test subjects. We were always an experiment in their eyes. We were always material. By the way, zero point energy alone would mean a world with no use for burning fossil fuels. They believe in their freedom to control, right now it is themselves versus everyone else. Billionaires are the true living anarchists. Eventually it will be them versus each other. Or we may bring about a world in which it is impossible to be a billionaire. The only way out is to make it impossible to be a billionaire. This is the way out of slavery. The American Imperial Experiment has failed and we MUST create a future where children feel safe entering. The only way there is through love, and a collective spiritual awakening.





We do not need to develop a new language for ourselves because we have ALWAYS had this language in us our entire lives. We need to uncover this language that has consistently been suppressed by all the powers bearing their weight upon our physique. This PARALOG calls us to use our body to take action, restore, regenerate or generate, activate, turn, step, move and transform. Unlike a catalog, which offers a complete list of items arranged systematically often built upon givens that only a privileged few can understand, this paralog is made alongside the art, by the artists and for the disenfranchised utilizing knowledge to self in all different angles.

DRAFTING

4th draft

PARALOG

This document serves as a list of affirmations, reminders and acknowledgements for our collective meditation of VAULT, the John C. Clark elementary school and the hardships that the Hartford citizens face everyday. Divided into 4 sections: SUBJECT, LANDSCAPE, AUTONOMY, and VALUE, the PARALOG is written for the collective student body that attended John C Clark elementary school. Intelligence is stored in their bodies, the space around them, and the spaces we all cannot see but contribute to how we relate to the world and one another. There ARE truths to be shared and these truths are in the schools and its people. For far too long dominant art institutions have upheld the grips of neoliberalism, elitism and White supremacy against every person of color of every age that has lived in areas largely contaminated, colonized and profoundly affected by whiteness. This document is decisively created to help in developing a BIPOC/LGBTQAI+ art canon. Art can only be a liberative field of study for us as long as it is founded upon and maintains the lens that centers but does not inundate our most vulnerable. VAULT is not composed of distinct healers but rather folks asking for us all to try healing together, as a code of ethics that refuses to leave anyone behind. VAULT was made to help create something new out of ruins. Many other Hartford public schools are also suspected to be exposing Hartford students and teachers to harmful carcinogens that are known to cause chronic health problems, thus making something new out of future ruins is also part of the VAULT mission. We do not need to develop a new language for ourselves because we have ALWAYS had this language in us our entire lives. We need to uncover this language that has consistently been suppressed by all the powers bearing their weight upon our physique. This PARALOG calls us to use our body to take action, restore, regenerate or generate, activate, turn, step, move and transform. Unlike a catalog, which offers a complete list of items arranged systematically often built upon givens that only a privileged few can understand, this paralog is made alongside the art, by the artists and for the disenfranchised utilizing knowledge to self in all different angles.

SUBJECT - To have a body is to be and share a

Kinesthesia - awareness of the position and movement (proprioceptors). Examples of Kinesthesia: eating, using

Position our bodies towards John C. Clark elementary, v other things, that also involves trespassing. There is an move.

As we walk, we locate as many points in our body that ourselves around ourselves. We hug our bodies then sw We find that this is extremely hard to do. Bodies take ti happens in tandem to our fight against the violence we Our lungs carry PCBs, we breathe them in and out with We let our lungs carry our attention to our rib cages.

We expand our rib cages like a puffer fish remembering and back.

We reach our hands high, so high that they begin to fee

LANDSCAPE

What ancestors loom around the buildings you find yourself permeating?

What specific effects on your emotions and behavior does the geographical environment generate?

What narratives have been created around your love for the land which you occupy?

How did you come to occupy this place?

Who does not love the place you occupy?

What does the space of conflict look like?

Can you imagine a peaceful landscape?

What can be found at the limits of your attention?

What obstacles can love not penetrate?

VALUE

How is language easy?

How do you maintain your playfulness?

What are the driving mechanisms?

What is simultaneously yours and

What toys do adults need to survive?

What parts of culture do you find n

What creates greatness?

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Can you buy dance?

Where is competition leading you?

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How might we organize ourselves

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divine tool.

nt of the body through sensory organs
the bathroom, driving, brushing one's teeth.

ve walk. We do what comes to us, among many
eye hovering above us, it is watching our bodies

have had been inflicted with violence. Wrapping
lightly flick away the pain through our fingertips.
me to rejuvenate, and the rejuvenation process
still and will experience.
intention.

to breathe and release the tension in our torso

as if they are going to pull part from the ground.

AUTONOMY

Can you control the relationship between the environment and your emotions?

How do strangers control?

How may autonomous zones expose the tricks of any given social structure?

How have you been trained to be who you are?

Do you consciously live your life towards attraction and away from repulsion?

How do you respond when you are addressed?

How often do you find yourself pretending in public or private?

Who taught you how to act?

What effect does pretending have on your emotions?

How easy is it for you to distill your thoughts and emotions?

A list of affirmations, reminders and acknowledgements for our collective meditation.
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END NOTES

1 Emily DiSalvo, “After Possible PCB Exposure in Hartford Schools, Cancer Concerns Grow for Former Students,” *CT Insider*, May 1, 2023 (updated May 2, 2023), <https://www.ctinsider.com/news/article/hartford-clark-school-pcb-lawsuit-cancer-concerns-17791200.php>

2 “Connecticut Weekly: Conserving Treasures from Hartford’s Past Agency,” *The New York Times*, January 13, 1980, sec. “Archives,” <https://www.nytimes.com/1980/01/13/archives/connecticut-weekly-conserving-treasures-from-hartfords-past-agency.html>

3 Young British Artists is a loose group of visual artists who exhibited together in improvised art spaces (warehouses and factories) in London in the late 1980s and 1990s. They were known for using found objects, thrown-away materials, “shock tactics”, camping out in rough spaces, and a combative, DIY, anarchist attitude.

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5 “One of the basic situationist practices is the *dérive* [literally: “drifting”], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. *Dérives* involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. From Guy Debord, “Theory of the *Dérive*,” *Les Lèvres Nues*, no. 9 (November 1956), trans. Ken Knabb, in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), 62–66.

6 “CT 109 – Phyllis,” *Witness Stones Project, Inc.*, accessed October 6, 2025, <https://witnessstonesproject.org/phyllis-ct109/>

7 “Project Concern: A School-Busing Experiment That Changed Lives,” *Hartford Courant*, June 29, 2014, <https://www.courant.com/2014/06/29/project-concern-a-school-busing-experiment-that-changed-lives/>

8 Ryan Lindsay, “Black Business Owner in Hartford Seeks Change for Community,” *CT Public*, September 8, 2020, accessed October 6, 2025, <https://www.ctpublic.org/news/2020-09-08/black-business-owner-in-hartford-seeks-change-for-community>

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Layout and Type
by Aamina Palmer of
AmiPalm Studio

