The Future of Visual Anthropology in the Wake of Black Lives Matter

A dialogue among

SHAWN SOBERS
University of the West of England

DEBORAH THOMAS
University of Pennsylvania

and

SIREITA MULLINGS
University of Bedfordshire

The realm of the visual has been the handmaiden of the West's will to know, its categorization and simultaneous surveillance and terrorization of "the rest" (Browne 2015; Campt 2017; Sharpe 2016; Thompson 2006, 2015). From the *casta* paintings of the 18th century to the late 19th and early 20th century evolutionary portraits, visual representations of racial science positioned Black people (alongside, but somewhat differently from, Indigenous communities), as simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible. They were romanticized as part of a picturesque natural landscape, and criminalized as always existing beyond the boundaries of the human (Wynter 2003). These visual representations reflected governance strategies that negated the sovereignty of the subject toward the realization of the sovereignty of the nation-state, the empire, and the normative systems of authority that obtain within a global context of white supremacy. Some scholars have argued that destabilizing these representations requires empathetic attention to the quiet, quotidian, and affective resonances of images. That these resonances are not merely visual is something Black feminist theorist of visual culture Tina Campt (2017) has argued, insisting that seeing requires not only looking but also listening and feeling. With this conversation, we are interested in image-making in another register, in moving visual anthropology in a direction that would reconfigure the dynamics of gaze in relation to Black bodies and Black communities (Jacobs-Huey 2002). Much has already been done in this regard. Older notions of ethnographic film have been expanded by scholars interested in the media worlds and digital nonlinearities linking us to our interlocutors (Ginsburg et al. 2002; Jackson 2004; Walley 2015), and this has helped us rethink the social relations of ethnographic time and space in our research, writing, and extra-textual practice. Moreover, recent attention to the dynamics and challenges of participatory image-making (Shankar 2019; Takaragawa et al. 2019), to the broad realms of the sensory (Castaing-Taylor 1996; Lee 2019; Strohm 2019), and to the world of ethnographic media beyond film (Atalay et al. 2019; Collins et al. 2017; Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón 2019) have transformed conventional practices of visual anthropology.

The dialogue reproduced in edited form here was organized for the March 2021 Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival. It was designed to feature critical Black visual anthropologists discussing their approach to the discipline and their thinking through the key lessons from 2020 in the wake of the global Black Lives Matter protests. Each participant shared a film clip or photograph from the past year as a provocation to challenge our thinking about the

discipline today. Together, we read mediated forms relationally in order to think through the ways the images we chose spoke to gaps (in experience, in representation), without necessarily seeking to resolve them into seamless narratives or easy solidarities. For us, this was a mode of refusal, here a practice rather than an event, a creative, "nimble," and ultimately unpredictable modality through which subjects are "refusing the terms of negation and dispossession" (Campt 2017, 96), rebuffing the reduction of their lives to pathology.

In what ways, we asked, can image-making be a mode of walking alongside the subjects who appear within them in order to honor the everyday mattering of their lives—yesterday, today, and tomorrow? What webs of relation (with each other, with history) do we develop when we do this, and how do these destabilize the violence of everyday being? The images we chose for this conversation were parts of archives that were oriented toward producing a kind of affective recognition. They did memory work and political work (themselves related, but often in complex ways); they honored ancestors and mourned compatriots. In doing so, they spoke to the racial reckonings that gripped the world last summer, while also drawing attention to the *longue durée* of the processes that produced them.

In Dialogue

THOMAS: So many images from this past summer have become iconic, and that have given voice to the various aspects of struggle against the forms of state violence and structural violence that have been ongoing among black communities, globally. As visual anthropologists, we are also always conscious of the risk of exacerbating these forms of violence through the hyper-visibility of black pain. We walk a fine line between the act of witnessing and the act of refusing in seeking to use images to perform a kind of care and accountability. That is what has been compelling to me about working through film.

MULLINGS: This alludes to the changing definitions of anthropology, as well as emerging disciplines like visual sociology, and how within these fields we must be responsible to communities. These conversations that have surfaced within the past year are not new. It's our responsibility to bring those to the surface. For me, it's about making sure that these stories are heard.

SOBERS: What has been happening in the past year is building on a momentum from what has come before. As a post-grad student studying anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 1999, I witnessed the discipline trying to wrestle with its colonial past, and how it could be made relevant for the future. Ever since I made the decision to study anthropology, and to call myself a visual anthropologist, I have been negotiating these questions, of how to make anthropology relevant, and ethical.

THOMAS: I was a professional dancer, prior to go into graduate school. I was able to track my own lineage within the field through figures like Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham, and other Black women performers and artists. Artists and community workers who found within the field of anthropology a methodology that fit what they were already doing, but they did not become central to the field as a whole. I always had to suspend disbelief, not only because of the ways those texts were written or the theories they were propounding, but because I was never the

audience, they were not writing with me in their minds. For those of us who are so-called "native anthropologists," whether it's in what we write or produce, we have a much more targeted sense of audience and a way of working that is collaborative and participatory. So much of the work of decolonizing, for me, revolves around audience.

MULLINGS: Having majored in Graphic design and Photography at the Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts and Arts Education at the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Jamaica, I returned to the UK where I was raised in Brixton to find things had changed. As I embarked on an MSc in Multimedia at the University of Westminster, I was invited to develop creative projects with Lambeth's youth advocate program and youth offending team. It became apparent to me that a government strategy was implemented to use the arts to regulate, govern, and control young people. Despite the fact that youth were producing work that could generate interesting and important conversations about their lived experiences, government funded projects had limits. This work led me to ask: Are governing bodies facilitating regulation within a liberatory arts-based framework? I hadn't intended to embark on a Ph.D., but I wanted to push these questions forward in a structured way.

SOBERS: Entry points help us understand how we got here, why we're here, and what we're trying to do in the spaces we occupy. When Black and brown practitioners work within anthropology and sociology and when we put our work in the service of community this can often be labeled activism. The very presence of being a Black body in a space can be seen as political. One of the things I started to take notice of during my time at SOAS was that Black people were already in this space, people like Jomo Kenyatta, whose anthropological monograph *Facing Mount Kenya* was published in 1938, and has a preface written by Bronislaw Malinowski! For me, this question of the future of visual anthropology raises the idea that we no longer have to see ourselves as new in this discipline. This makes me think about methodology, and how we're trying to make the discipline ethical, and meaningful, and that we're working *with* people, not doing things *to* people. We're trying to change the discipline as we're doing it.

THOMAS: While it has been an ongoing pursuit for Black and brown scholars, for many people the need for accountability became clearer last summer. I sit in one of the oldest anthropology departments in the United States, one that is housed in one of the oldest ethnographic museums in the United States, a space that employed some of the originators of scientific racism, and so there are many, many layers of problems. One is at the level of curriculum. I happen to be teaching both intro classes this year, both the undergraduate "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology," which is now called "Anthropology, Race, and the Making of the Modern World," and the graduate student cultural core course. With the undergraduates, we focus attention on the moment of contact in the New World as the moment in which new hierarchies of humanity were developed alongside new forms of global socio-economic integration. We try to undo the idea that anthropology is about studying *other* people, and instead help them to understand that we are studying systems of power and that we're implicated in the development of these systems of power. The undergraduate project was to create the website for a conference we're hosting in October called "Settler Colonialism, Slavery, and the Problem of Decolonizing Museums." For the graduate core course, the final assignment usually has something to do with outlining the research project they will conduct, but this year I decided their final paper should be an extended reflection on methods and approaches. I am asking them to think about why they

are the person to conduct this research, what kinds of relationships they will need to build in order to ethically conduct the research, what kinds of questions they need to constantly be asking themselves that have to do with the forms of collaboration and accountability that need to emerge through the research process, et cetera. I want them to interrogate why they're interested in their projects, what it is about the question and their own experiences that can come together in a productive way.

MULLINGS: I learned about the British Black Arts Movement at Edna Manley College. Joyce Harrisonwho came from Birmingham was passionate about sharing the work of Keith Piper, which led to producing a pastiche of "Another Nigger Died." Imagine, I've Had to leave Great Britain, go across the Atlantic to learn about the British Black Arts Movement. I was grounded in Caribbean and Jamaican art history, from classes taken at the National Gallery of Jamaica, but it was disturbing when I realized I hadn't been familiar with the relevant narratives within Black British work. When I went to Jamaica, I was told not to speak about coming from Brixton, because it was seen as a place of "trouble," a ghetto, and it wasn't until returning with that art history knowledge that I was able to connect dots with systems of power that explain what the 1980 Brixton insurrections were about. Drawing upon artwork that I have been exposed to and finding ways to engage young people in making sense of their own social positions through interrogating these works, and producing their own visual response is key to my community arts practice. I'm having to carve out these "new" ways of working. It is relevant for students to be able to draw upon the visual to situate, unpack and apply some of the theoretical content relevant to units I teach, like Globalization or Race and Ethnicity.

SOBERS: This photograph (Figure 1) was taken in the city of Bristol where I am now. The photographer is called Keir Gravil, and it's an image of an event that a lot of people are now familiar with. On 7th June 2020, a Black Lives Matter protest was happening in Bristol, and the protest culminated in the toppling of statue of Edward Colston, who was Deputy Governor of the Royal African Company and one of the leading figures in Britain's involvement in the slave trade. The statue stood for 125 years, and now it was pulled down, rolled through the streets, and thrown into the river. It became a huge moment globally, and inspired the toppling of statues in other countries.

I've been working on the history of Bristol's involvement in the slave trade and Edward Colston for the last 20 years. The reason I've chosen this particular photograph is because of its scale. I love the detail of the people who were there. Often when we talk about the history of the slave trade, the discourse gets reduced to a black and white binary, but when you look at this photograph you see so many white people in that space being proactive. This event polarized the city, there are people in the city who did not agree with the statue getting torn down even if they don't want slave traders being memorialized, but there is quite a bit of nuance.

It reminded me of Émile Durkheim's idea of *anomie*, the idea of a lack of usual social and ethical standards of a group (1984, 291). It speaks to what we consider to be norms, and to then think about why people act against these norms, even if it's just a one-off event. There's a collective consciousness or set of values that makes something seem like the right thing to do at that moment.

Anthropology can very much be a discourse that makes things static, that turns events into an object that you then study, what James Clifford (1989) called the "salvage paradigm," freezing them in time. We've got a macro-representation, and you could also talk about grand narrative representations of Bristol, of the history, of the statue. My approach to anthropology is "small anthropology" (Sobers 2016): the micro, the specific. Anthropology has been conducted on my people and it's been misrepresentative, and I know there are huge flaws in grand narratives and universals. I tend toward a much humbler approach, where I don't attempt to make universal claims. I want to get into the small anthropology of this moment.

In 2000, Rob Mitchell and I made a TV documentary called "Under the Bridge" (Sobers 2000) which he presented and I directed. It was about this very history of Bristol, Colston, and the transatlantic slave trade. On the evening of the protest, we went there with another friend and colleague Louise Lynas, who has also worked with us both on projects about the same topic. I started taking photographs, and we were there for about 15 minutes. I wasn't happy with any of the images I had taken, and was about to give up and put the camera away. Then out of nowhere, Rob ran and climbed up on the plinth, did this pose, and I quickly took a photograph before he almost immediately climbed back down. (Figure 2).

It was a completely spontaneous moment, with a series of serendipitous incidents that led to it. I only made sense of after the fact as being a legitimate autoethnographic visual anthropology response to this event, and how it spoke to what I feel about research: it could be messy and responsive, the sort of Deleuze and Guattari rhizomic approach as opposed to a neat methodical process.

These photos make me think about Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. He says that "To take part in the African revolution, it is not enough to write a revolutionary song. You must fashion the revolution with the people, and if you do this, the songs come by themselves and are of themselves" (Fanon 1963,166). It's a ground up mentality. Because it was a groundswell coming from the people, in an anomic way, it was spontaneous, but it made sense in that moment, in the way that the second photograph made sense in that moment. But if we try to foreground theory, and rationality, then these moments would have looked and felt very different, and different things may have resulted. So, I foreground an anthropology of serendipity, an anthropology in the spirit of not planning. When we're not planning, we're responding to a situation and that's coming from the ground up. Through the traditions of Fanon, through to Paulo Freire (1972), who foreground praxis, co-creation, ground up methodology rather than top-down agenda setting.

THOMAS: I often find that serendipity happens when things are right and just, otherwise you get roadblocks and resistance.

MULLINGS: The idea of messy research speaks methodologically to the work I've embarked on. I've been doing some work looking at the power of the anecdote, the power of the narrative, because in this context of messy research and serendipity, sometimes it's difficult to foreground that idea of "scientific rigor."

THOMAS: The focus of my own work, both artistically and in terms of scholarship, has been on creating and assembling archives of violence in Jamaica. This practice has been geared toward generating difficult conversations about the relationships among personhood, politics, and violence, and toward opening new spaces in which people can connect with each other across both time and space. Space could be geographic, generational, socio-cultural space, or political—for people to think through their own relation to these archives and to then elaborate new foundations for sociality and liberation. This has meant working with existing archives (difficult because these are colonial, or otherwise surveillant). It has also meant developing new archives; these archives are narrative, performative, sonic, and visual. Archiving, in this way, is for me a decolonizing practice.

This approach undergirded the "Tivoli Stories" project, for which I collaborated with Deanne Bell (a community psychologist) and musician and composer Junior "Gabu" Wedderburn. We wanted to bring attention to the "Tivoli Incursion" in 2010, when Jamaican security forces, supported by the United States, entered the Tivoli Gardens community in search of Christopher "Dudus" Coke, who had been ordered for extradition to the U.S. to stand trial for gun- and drug-running charges. The search for Coke resulted in the deaths of at least 74 civilians at the hands of the police and army, though community members put this number closer to two hundred. The project spawned a variety of formats, but in the 40-minute documentary film, *Four Days in May*, mothers describe watching their sons being executed; a brother mourns the killing of a sibling shot "execution style" next to his step-father; an aunt talks about having to identify her nephew's body, part of which had been burned beyond recognition; other young men describe being taunted by soldiers, made to run while shots were fired after them, being tied to other men and kept in a leaky bathroom overnight, not knowing whether they were going to live or die.

As the COVID-19 curfews wore on through May 2020, the tenth anniversary of the "Tivoli Incursion," threatened to pass without remembrance. The evening of the anniversary, the 24th of May, we received a phone call from a relative who works at one of the national television stations. She asked if they could screen our documentary since they had neglected to organize commemorative programming related to the anniversary. As *Four Days in May* aired on TV Jamaica the evening of May 25th, George Floyd was being killed by police in Minneapolis. And as Jamaicans decried this act of police violence across various media, the police and army incursion into Tivoli Gardens was rarely mentioned, generating a loud and resonant silence.

Anti-black state violence has sometimes been an illegible formulation because Jamaica is a majority Black country. Police violence and extrajudicial killing are not typically seen as part of the global phenomenon of anti-Black racism. BUT, if we understand raciality as not merely tethered to physicality, instead as grounded in both historical-ideological and onto-epistemological phenomena that produce whiteness as the apex of transparent and universal humanity, then we must see practices of law and security—designed to protect a liberal postcoloniality that sanctions whiteness, class hierarchy, and heteropatriarchy—as being always and already racialized.

While my focus has been on moments of state violence that have either been forgotten, or that are disavowed in various ways, in both *Bad Friday*, and *Four Days in May*, the purpose has been to create different affective relationships to violence. This has had everything to do with the

different audiences we want and expect to address with different formats. I have written about this as a practice of "Witnessing 2.0," which I have defined as a quotidian practice of watching, listening, and feeling that is relational and profoundly inter-subjective. Witnessing 2.0 is a moral practice that involves exploring our complicity within contemporary events, what Avery Gordon has called "response-ability."

We have also been concerned to develop archives of *life*, not only of violence. People have always created spaces in which they can refuse the terms of anti-Black violence, and where they can generate love and care, alternative modalities of reckoning personhood, and alternative formulations of community. One of the things I've been working on over the past few years with my friend and collaborator Junior "Gabu" Wedderburn is a project called "Bush Music," which has spawned a number of things, including an annual kumina festival called Tambufest. Kumina is a Congolese-derived tradition that brings together musical, linguistic, movement, and spiritual practices connecting folk to the ancestors. During the period of plantation slavery and the post-emancipation era in Jamaica, these kinds of practices were denigrated by colonial authorities, in part because they served as spaces for communion, gathering, and the elaboration of counter-hegemonic worldviews among poor, Black Jamaicans. While practices like kumina have been codified as part of the backbone of Jamaican national identity, today they are not well known outside of practitioners, even though kumina constitutes the roots of contemporary reggae and popular dancehall music.

The goal of "Bush Music" is to amplify awareness of these ritual practices, understanding that people constantly innovate what are seen as "traditional" forms based on contemporary experiences, the availability of other instruments, and familiarity with drumming traditions from other parts of the Caribbean and Africa. We have been professionally recording elder practitioners of these traditions, and in collaboration with the St. Thomas Kumina Drummers Collective we have hosted "Tambufest" as an event that brings practitioners together while also creating the space for discussion about issues that are important to the community as a whole.

The following clip was edited by Farrah Rahaman, who along with Gordon "Dee" Asaah and Joelle Powe, also shot the footage; Farrah and Dee are graduate students at Penn who work with CAMRA, a graduate student Collective for the Advancement of Multi-Modal Research Arts. This collective is affiliated with the Center for Experimental Ethnography (CEE), which I direct.

[CLIP: https://vimeo.com/503426541]

The clip captures the energy of a community event; one that features a practice with which attendees are likely familiar but maybe not involved, but in which they nevertheless take part since it's what's going on in one of the main gathering places in the area on a Saturday night, and this speaks a bit to the question of serendipity! There is a lack of clear boundaries between ritual practice and everyday practice, and these boundaries have sometimes been too solidified within anthropological renderings of phenomena are generally more fluid.

It is doubly mediated; that is, our students are shooting it, and they are also filming people in the audience who are making their own videos. This is characteristic not only of our moment, but of the ways Caribbean people participate in Black public spheres across diasporic locations. Krista

Thompson has argued that these technologies of vernacular photography facilitate a "spectacular visibility" that produces embodied memories in the face of disappearance or invisibility, while also potentially reconfiguring the surveillant or categorizing functions of the visual archive of black people globally.

As a former professional dancer myself, I love that when the women are seated in the beginning, you can see the kernel of what the movement is even as they are resting, and that what propels them to rise up is that the kernel grows and grows until sitting can no longer accommodate it. Reggie Wilson, choreographer and director of the Fist and Heel Performance Group (and one of our CEE fellows this semester with whom I am co-teaching a class called "Kinesthetic Anthropology"), would draw attention to this in terms of the language of time, space, and movement; that is, he would say that we can understand the choreographic dimensions of a dance, or indeed of an event, or of a social movement, in relation to an exploration of the time it takes for something to happen, the space in which that thing happens, and the actions through which the thing happens in time and space.

SOBERS: You started off talking about archives, and it made me think about the early anthropological images I saw of African bodies, before I even knew anthropology was a discipline, not realizing that those images were captured in a violent way (Barbash 2020, 418). When you start talking about the archives of life, and then thinking about the everyday life practices and the embodied knowledge in that kumina space, it made me think about the idea of kinship, not in traditional terms, but in a looser way that encompasses the familiarity of Black people across the diaspora. The Sankofa image on their t-shirts is also hanging on my wall, and is also tattooed on my leg, so this mark links me to them.

MULLINGS: The energy from the film struck me, and my own experience of going to the Queen of Kumina's "nine night" gathering, in part because this was the first time I came to respect and understand spirituality outside of Christianity. Some of the things that came up for me had to do with gatekeepers of knowledge, and wanting to understand the knowledge that is produced in that space. As researchers and artists, we can't always access "true meaning" entirely. Sankofa is embedded throughout Jamaican culture, even in the grillwork of the houses. I'm also very interested in the Hall's (2001) idea of a living archive, archive beyond the object, and how we can engage living archives.

Following on the idea of a living archive, I will talk about the *Voices from the Frontline* (2019) project, and how I got involved in it. This project reflected on the 1980s, a period of high unemployment, when a number of Caribbean men and some women decided not to be part of a system that they felt was not serving them. I wanted to know about the gravitational pull of Railton Road, the front line, an iconic street, and how we might rethink activism through the role of a "hustler". This is a process I describe as activism without a placard. People would visit the road to enquire about others who arrived in the UK to feel connected to "home." What did the space represent globally, and how we can better understand the road as a living archive?

Throughout my time working at the 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning Gallery, there were various projects that would deal with the politics of space. The archives came alive when we took a group of young people to the National Archives in Kew Gardens and saw a letter

addressed from the Rastafarian house in Kennington, England, signed by Ras Naphtali. The young people were blown away by the fact that the Lion of Judah headed this letter with a Haile Selassie salutation. For them, that kind of stuff isn't supposed to be there, it exists in particular places, informal places. It spoke volumes about our place in British history, and the fact that we needed to identify other significant moments and talk about them. The messiness of the methodology, right? The project was very much a nonlinear and multimedia interrogation of the road.

We conducted a series of interviews with members of the Brixton community who had an experience of the road during the 1980s. Participants spoke about what the road meant to them. We asked them how they would describe the road on their own terms, what occurred was a dialogical process whereby memory was used to inform.

[CLIP: https://youtu.be/AP2BXRbsHXw]

Linton Kwesi Johnson gives the context of how activities along the road were aligned to what was happening in Mozambique, and to what was going on with apartheid in South Africa, and the fact that those of Railton Roads Front Line felt like they were under the same sort of oppression and needed to defend their space. Project interviews like this gave young people insight into what young women and men during that time were experiencing. There's still a lot of work to be done. I have come under scrutiny by some community members for leaving out voices, and certainly there were a lot of women who were also a part of that road. Melba Wilson, who spoke of OWAAD (Organization for Women of African and Asian Decent) worked with women in Palestine and closely with Olive Morris, on Railton Road.

Jemmar Samuels, one of the young people who was part of that project also lives on that road. Now 25, she was thinking about her 11-year-old self, walking along the road, not realizing the social and political histories that were embedded there, and not realizing that Linton Kwesi Johnson had frequently visited her parents' Caribbean restaurant situated on the road. She wrote "if you were to ask me five years ago what Railton Road means to me, I'd say, well that's where my yard is, innit?" She goes on to say, "imagine going to see Akala talk about the Haitian Revolution, and how C.L.R. James was the first person to give an accurate account of what happened." These excerpts demonstrate how she was immersed in, and shaping, Black British history whilst growing up. She produced a film titled What Do You Mean I Can Not Change The World (2018) that was nominated for a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award that speaks about colorism and the politics race and identity. We have a young person who has continued her activist journey.

[SHOWING IMAGES
Figure x Jemmar at home on Railton Road
Figure xx Letter from the archives
Figure xxx Chery Groce Memorial Pavillion Windrush Square]

You see Jemmar sitting on her wall on Railton Road reflecting on her childhood (Figure x). In 2014 one of the archives collected from Kew, was a letter from Metropolitan Police, in which

they gave a public apology to the family of Cherry Groce. Cherry Groce was in her house with her children in 1985, and the police, who were searching for her son, went inand shot her in front of her children. She was paralyzed as a result of the shooting and died in 2011 (Lawrence,2020). This is something else that young people weren't aware of in terms of what contributed to the insurrections of the 1980s. They know that their community is described as a place where rioting occurred, but they didn't know what sparked the riots in 1981 and 1985. What's happened as a result of the family's continued commitment in seeking justice is the erection of the Cherry Groce Memorial Pavilion, in Brixton's Windrush Square. This speaks to statues coming down and memorials going up. The "natives" are indeed gazing back (Hue, 2002). It is a full circle engagement with cultural history, an intergenerational project with young people and community members making sense of what's happening in their communities. These moments that are very much alive and they serve as an archive.

SOBERS: We've all been speaking about in terms of a living archive and embodied knowledge. Memories of that space raised for me the term that is now in use, intangible cultural heritage, the idea that within our communities there are everyday archives of life. Even though Brixton is often known as a Black community, there are many buildings there that we didn't own in that space, but there are huge amounts of memories that we own in that space.

MULLINGS: It was actually the gentrification that catapulted me to get this going, because it's all (the people and few Black owned premises) disappearing. Brixton is no longer seen as a Black space.

THOMAS: Regarding gentrification, my grandmother, when she migrated from Jamaica, ended up in East London, which at the time was primarily East and West Indian, but is now very hipster. It's gentrified so rapidly and it feels so strange. I appreciated how the projectgives the youth working a better and more personal sense of what was going on at the time. When we read about protests or uprisings in the past, we don't have a real sense that the sparks that create the kind of collective mobility are actually quite personal stories. Sparks turn a series of individual actions and collective planning turn into something of another scale.

Conclusion

Our dialogue has brought forth a number of key registers and critical frameworks, through which our respective practices and current ways of working subvert old ideas about anthropology being a study of *other* people. It highlights how people from within respective communities are responding with counter narratives to historical modes of injustice, violence and misrepresentation. The visual works shared demonstrate the varied and nuanced ways through which images that serve as archives, referencing processes of decolonization, have been created and exist as parallel modes of knowledge to the lives of the participants and the communities from which they emerge. They live as provocations that call for a continuous reframing of unpredicted modalities and that which negates a preassigned disposition of displacement and marginality. They also serve as a net, capturing unsaid and tacit knowledge.

Postscript

On March 23, 2021, Shawn, Deborah, and Sireita engaged in conversation with Judith Aston, discussing what this kind of work means for the consideration of digital media production and the handling of multi-perspectival thinking and transcultural understanding. To watch the video, visit this link: [LINK]

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Figure Captions

1. Colston Statue being thrown in the River Avon. Bristol, June 7, 2020. Photo by Keir Gravil.
2. Rob Mitchell on empty Colston plinth. Bristol, June 7, 2020. Photo by Shawn Sobers.

Figure Alt Text