

## A Restorative Arrangement

This past summer  
Justine asked me to participate in a project.  
She asked me if I would help her create a *kind of* space for rest.

She said that she had created a beginning,  
and asked that I be part of a constellation of women  
who would contribute to the making of a whole;  
and when making it, she asked that I  
consider the ways that I could make a place of rest for others.

We had only known each other for a few days when she asked me,  
and I was touched by the risk and tenderness of her invitation.  
She had shown me grace and strength as I journeyed to  
the haunted sites of my past life home,  
and so, I didn't hesitate to support my new sister-friend.

And now we are here,  
basking in the radiant glow of *The Origins of the Universe*  
in Justine's restorative proposition;  
both situated in this place of white supremacy built on stolen land,  
in this room amongst rooms seeping in thick layers of hostility and contempt.

I came here before, to prepare for your visit  
and as I sat in the space, I saw two white men dis-regard  
Mikalene's assertion of Black Woman Power.  
I felt rage as I watched them exercise their privileged ignorance  
and thought of the hundreds of years of white supremacy inferiority  
that supports their actions, which then informs systemically oppressive cultures  
that breed in society and in institutions around the globe,  
including *here* at the University of Toronto.

I realized today, that I can only partially fulfill Justine's request as I will not rest until these systems are dismantled and I have no interest in educating those men (or others like them).

I would prefer to use my power and channel my energies back to my sisters and friends so that we may find rest.

Someday(s).

So, I am here.

To respond to Justine's provocation.

I am here to create an intimate arrangement that works to protect

Mikalene's black body

by denying future voyeuristic spectacles,

which then serves as an extended gesture of care

for the many black bodies in our collective constellations

that may require support,

here and everywhere.

I have no instructions for how you should respond to the space that I have created,

nor can I promise that you will find a place of rest within it.

But I have left extra blankets for you

should you decide to use your power

in a similar gesture of solidarity and care.