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DR. SHADY RADICAL

## *THE RADICAL ARCHIVE OF PRESERVATION*

**T**he *Radical Archive of Preservation* or *T.R.A.P.* is a preservation service and performance-based research collective. The research project asks if today's professional archival and preservation practices are adequate for the identification, preservation, and accessibility of Black epistemologies materialized through performance. Traditional/Western archives prioritize objectivity as a measurement for a record's evidentiary value. Material that has survived its primary administrative function is considered more truthful and valid, as it was created prior to influences that could affect the record and/or memory making process. However, tracing Black performance requires a different approach since the cultural material is embodied and resistant to material preservation.

T.R.A.P. has a 3-prong approach to the preservation of Black performance. First, we provide archival services to underserved communities. We work directly with artists to document, organize, catalog, and find resources for preserving their work and legacy, as well as, facilitate relationships between individuals and institutional repositories by acting as a third-party advocate. Part of this approach includes conducting interviews, creating soundscapes, and family tree illustrations of the company's network. Second, we conduct workshops and present lectures on preservation strategies, theories, and methods in schools, at conferences, and with community-based organizations. Lastly, we are a repository for radical scholarship, literature, ephemera, and audiovisual material. With Spelman College students, we collect digital and physical resources for the benefit of people interested in the history of life of radicalism in different epochs, periods, places, and practices.

Occasionally T.R.A.P. creates new performance work out of research into the company or individual's historical records. In the past year, we were commissioned to produce three works with the City of Atlanta's ELEVATE program, 7 Stages Theatre, and T. Lang's Movement Lab. These projects were designed to gain new understandings of trace, discordance, and improvisation in Black performance; approach archival materials differently; and provide access to historical records in new, exciting, and engaging ways.

*BRASS WIND HOT TONGUES* embodied improvisational production culture; explored the sensual excesses of Black femininity; and produced a wealth of archival material. I worked with professionally trained female dancers and male musicians. Each participant was asked to keep journals and completed post-production interviews to supplement the photographic and other documentary materials collected throughout the process. We used movement and sonic phrases to make meaning during the performance. As the speaker, I used scating, stuttering, laughing, screeching, low tones, and repetition to encode the text with auditory ruptures to reflect the emotional labor buttressing the words which created accents for jazz moves. Like Abbey Lincoln's screeching in "Protest" song with Max Roach and Oscar Brown Jr. we were able to tap into the emotional chamber of the audience. The place that attaches meaning to sound.

*Washing Our Mothers* was a performance and installation piece presented at Day/Night Gallery as part of City of Atlanta's ELEVATE. This was a collaboration with cinematographer, Colbie Fray, film director, Olamma Oparah, sound artist, Shanti Om; poet, Allen; and choreographer, Kerri Garrett. In 2020, filmmakers Olamma Oparah and Colbie Fray released *Laundry Day*, a short film about generational trauma, motherhood, and ritual. This film inspired us to explore the relationship between Black mothers and daughters through curatorial performance practices. It included a visual installation of letters to mothers on large and small pieces of fabric, portraits of the collaborators with their mothers, and a dynamic audiovisual performance in which the poem used in the film was read aloud, movement capturing a range of symbolic ideas collected over the course of production; and body as a site of resistance articulating how the Black body processes the range of emotions found in the letters.

WITNESS: Pearl was commissioned by 7 Stages Theatre for their Curious Futures Encounters festival. For this archival performance, T.R.A.P. collaborators visited Georgia State University Archives, Atlanta History Center, the archives at Emory University, and 7 Stages on-site historical materials. From this collection process, we gathered material related to two performances staged at 7 Stages Theatre in 1982 and 2006 written and directed by Pearl Cleage. Cleage is a living playwright and author and is currently in residence at Alliance Theatre. This project wanted to explore aspects of trace through objects, spaces, and rituals. T.R.A.P. designed two 10-minute performances in the dressing room areas behind the main stage.

T.R.A.P. is currently working with Ballethnic Dance Company in East Point, Georgia to help establish an archive for Atlanta's Black dance community and presenting workshops with Society of Georgia Archivists. T.R.A.P. was founded as part of a dissertation research project in 2020 and is led by certified archivist, Dr. Shady Radical, who teaches Art History through modes of Black performance and preservation as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Spelman College.

For more information

[www.theradicalarchive.com](http://www.theradicalarchive.com)

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# DR. SHADY RADICAL WRITER *DON'T MISS A BEAT!*

Sign up with your email to get updates from The Disruptive Quarterly. Her practice is inspired by ritual, resistance, and movement in Black women's labor practices. Dr. Radical earned a PhD in the Moving Image Studies program at Georgia State University, a MA in Curatorial Studies from New York University, and a BA in Art History from The College of Saint Elizabeth. Her professional experience includes working as a costumer in Atlanta's film and television industry, establishing the costume archives of Tyler Perry Studios, and curating exhibitions at Southwest Arts Center, Day & Night Projects, Hammonds House Museum, and Atlanta Contemporary. Currently, Dr. Radical is teaching Art History as Visiting Assistant Professor at Spelman College; archiving the work of Derron Cherry and Balletnic Dance Company; and serving as Assistant Chair of the Education Committee for Society of Georgia Archivists.

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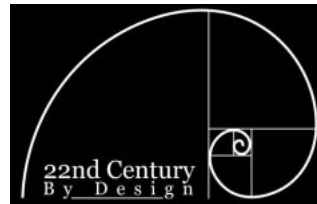
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