

An Intro to “A Diaspora in Self-Isolation: Black Womxn during the Covid-19 Pandemic”

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This series is not meant to serve as proof.

This series is meant to serve as documentation.

The difference between proof and documentation is this:

To prove something means that there is the chance that there is something that *might not* be real.

To document something means that you are simply recording what is real and what is actually happening.

I think this is a chance for Black womxn to seize this moment in time, in *our* time,
and to reframe the way we remember.

Over the past year, I've had multiple conversations with Black womxn that explore the following concept:
In crisis, disaster, and apocalyptic times,
Black womxn historically have been,
are,
and will be
the last ones standing.

We are Masters of Understanding and Surviving Crisis.

I am a Black womxn in the United States
and it's been about 6 weeks into this global pandemic that is Covid-19.

Anyone that is a non-essential worker
has been mandated by the government to stay at home and self-quarantine.
To self-isolate.

For the first time in an *actual* forever, I might be able to avoid having to deal with my stress and anxiety spiking
because of my interactions with people in-person.
I wouldn't have to worry about performing.
Or accommodating.
Or being heard.
Or facing “microaggressions” (which is a word made up by white people that wanted to find a way to diminish
the act of aggression towards marginalized people).

But, of course, there are other stressors that may come up for myself and others,
often in areas of our lives based in necessity,
like
whether or not income will stay the same,
if rent can be paid,
will there be food on the table this time next week,

how will children be educated,
or will a loved one die next?

And,
these types of questions may be more or less relatable to each person, each Black womxn, in this pandemic
as there is also a diaspora of privilege.

So, understanding how Black womxn of different ages and classes are engaging with this time of crisis
is an important thing to document in our living history
because we of all people really know how different and unique each and every one of us are.

So,
for this moment in our history,
because this lack of human physical connection is so rare,
I want to know if for us as Black womxn
not having to be thrust into in-person interactions and to be in our own spaces
might, in any way possible, be beneficial to us on an emotional and mental level, and maybe even a physical one.
I want to know if, in any way possible, this time can allow us to redirect our constant giving to
giving that is focused on ourselves.

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**Note: I am in no way trying to diminish the atrocity that is and the pain that comes with this global pandemic
with this documentation. Some people may see the end of this unchanged, while some people may see the end of this
having undergone a transformation they either did or did not ask for, a transformation that was either embraced
with open arms or a transformation that called itself an intruder. I have no expectations for how interviewees will
respond; I am not looking for a particular response. If during his time, someone found the greatest joy ever, that is
what happened. If during this time, someone faced their biggest trauma ever, that is what happened. I am simply
here as a vessel to make sure these womxn's stories are told.*

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This documentation will combine documentary photography with interviews paired with each photograph.

My mother, Marie (43), and my little sister, Mari (8), are the subjects of the photographs;
and, maybe sometimes you might see me.

Or, maybe sometimes you might see some men in the background.
Maybe even my dog, Cookie.

Black girls and womxn of varying ages and classes are the subjects of the interview.
Interviewees are asked to respond to open-ended prompts that tell their specific stories.
And, their responses are recorded in many ways, like
speaking their response to create an audio recording,
typing their response,

or even with the world's new favorite—a video call over Z o o m with me.

It is not my *goal*,
but rather my *duty* and *responsibility* to ensure that
we remember exactly how *we* remember it.