



Mapping Indigenous, Black and Asian Resistance in NYC by Betty Yu

Mapping Indigenous, Black and Asian Resistance in NYC is a work-in-progress multimedia installation that honors the under told stories of decolonization, liberation, and uprisings against white supremacy led by people of color on Lenape land (currently known as New York City) spanning the last 400 years. The installation currently features three organza banners, a 75-minute video and a selection of research materials.

I started work on this project during my residency with KODA on Governors Island this past Fall 2021. This project has provided a critical creative outlet for me as I reflect on this last year of racial justice uprisings in the wake of the police murdering of George Floyd and in the face of COVID related anti-Asian violence. As a longtime activist and avid student of history, I know that the white supremacist power structure has always pitted us, people of color against one another. I also know that Black, Indigenous, Asian and Latinx communities have a lot more in common than differences.

I wanted to provide a visual portal into those stories of resistance that are rooted right here in New York City. I specifically focus on the stories in Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn. As a lifelong New Yorker, I knew little about these histories.

I spent countless hours researching, looking through newspaper archives, books, and records, desperately trying to find oral histories and direct accounts told through Indigenous, Black, and Asian voices, but found very little. When there was a slave rebellion or indigenous uprising it was almost always told through the colonizer, the oppressor's lens. Rarely, could I find an account from an emphatic witness, or someone directly involved. Sadly, most of these uprisings ended in tragic death and execution. And of course, we know this is how the dominant narrative gets shaped and fed to us as the "official" history.

The stories I cite are not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive, just a snapshot of what I've been working on. The stories span nearly 400 years - from the first account of enslaved people of African descent stolen from their homeland and forced onto New York soil in 1626 then organizing rebellions in 1712 and 1741, to the stories behind today's Astor Place was one of the larger Lenape gathering spaces known as "Kintecoying" a major inter-tribal crossroads to the founding of Chinese Equal Rights League, one of the first groups formed in 1892 to fight for the equal rights of Chinese-Americans at the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

My aim was to uplift these often under-told parallel and intertwined histories of resistance

Closing with this quote from Chief Denise Stonefish Kihkay from the Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit Council Lenape Delegation Visit to New York in 2019 "Both the blacks and Chinese are natural allies in our work to bring greater attention to our place in our homelands."



City Of Trees by Sari Carel

New York City is home to over 8 million people, but it is also home to an expansive urban forest of 5.2 million trees. These trees help us breathe more easily, keep us cool when the weather is hot, and protect our streets and homes from the rising waters of big storms. *City Of Trees* explores the reciprocal relationship between New-Yorkers and the leafy community of trees we share our city with.

Harkening back to the time when art and natural sciences were intimately intertwined, this work is inspired by the 19th century artist/scientist Anna Atkins. An article in the magazine *Lady Science* captured much of what drew me to Atkins' work: "She worked at a time when the line we now draw between science and art was much less firm and her prints reflect the truth in that collapsed boundary. Atkins navigated the boundaries both of "acceptable" science for women and anonymity. And through her work also navigated and further blurred the boundaries between art, photography and science".

In an homage to Atkins, this work explores New York City's urban forest through the tactile medium of cyanotype sun prints. My inquiry developed in a kind of double register: the first delving into the NYC Parks Department's tree map – A "living, breathing" map of the city's urban forest. The map is interactive, and records acts of care or stewardship residents have given to the trees living within it, as well as the changing landscape as trees are dying or being planted. Nestled within these images is another photographic inquiry, based on walking the urban forest and collecting different leaves, green matter, and detritus from trees all over the city.

Melissa Dubbin, a fellow artist working in cyanotype, said to me recently that one of the interesting things about this photographic process is that it exits the darkroom and moves out and into the sun. Indeed, these prints have all been made on Flushing Avenue, with lots of cars, trucks and joggers zooming by, surrounded by the fall leaves from the trees above.

As part of *City Of Trees*, A public engagement program running in November and December highlights through workshops the urban canopy as an urgent political and social-justice issue as well as hands-on experience with caring for our city trees.

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