



Cimarron, collage, Felix Ciprian (artist, Bronx NY)

DARK RURALITY :

Blackness, Sacredness, & Landedness in the Hudson Valley

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GSAPP Adv. IV Spr 2021

DRAFT 08 Jan 2021

STUDIO OVERVIEW

This course will interrogate the African American presence in the Hudson Valley both past, present, and future as an inspiration and impetus for developing new spatial, aesthetic, and communal practices. Our work will engage and celebrate Blackness not only as a racial group or identity, **but as a set of aesthetics, attitudes and ethical practices of Land / Landedness** which conflate the **sacred** and the **everyday**. This agitating of the sacred and everyday binary opens up new approaches to form, program, and modes of practice. This design studio is conceived of ideally as the first of a multi-year exploration of these themes.

The studio will be looking at a network of BIPOC farms as our starting point. Their primary effort is farming and food justice, however our projects will seek to push and hybridize outward from this core mission into expanded functional and spatial territory. Working trans-historically, the studio will develop speculative projects and archival, spiritual, or communal infrastructures. The (black-owned) farm as both a place of **sustenance**, and **refuge** from violence will serve as a starting point for projects which will operate at multiple scales : the regional, compound, and individual. Building on prior studios and work on Black and indigenous erasure, dispossession, and futurity in the greater Hudson region, the studio will draw connections between indigenous/ancestral land stewardship to antebellum Freedman villages and current Land in Black Hands Movements in the countryside and beyond.

This course will explore the opportunities and challenges of producing *time-released architecture*, engaging a new set of outputs and community partners at the intersection of food justice, reparations, and design. Other themes will include intersectionality and cross culture practices and religiosity, and kinship between Creole and indigenous tribes and others.



Wild Seed Farm, Millerton, NY (image courtesy Wildseed Farm)

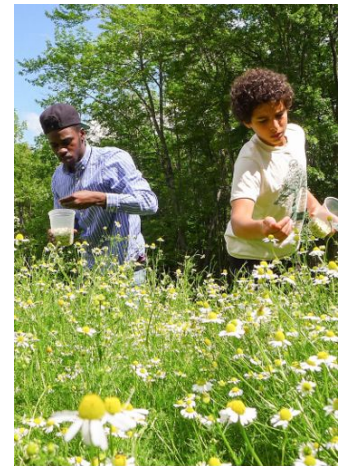


SoulFire Farm, Grafton, NY (image courtesy Soulfire Farm)

STUDIO APPROACH

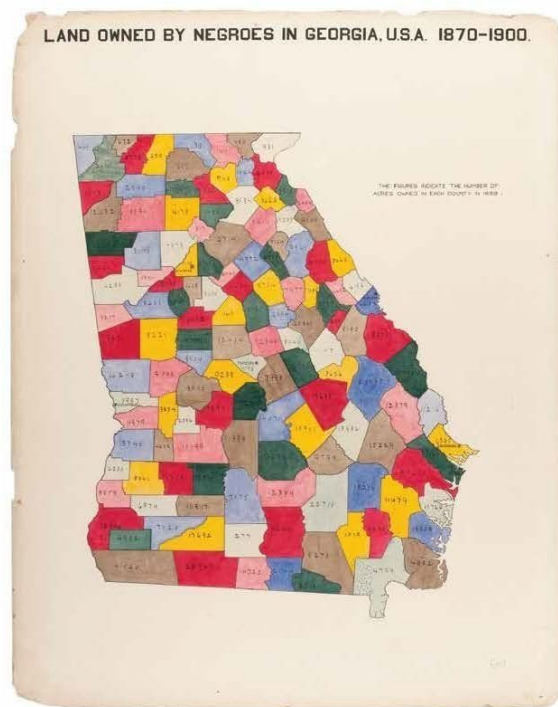
Previous pedagogical themes of Time, Archive, and the Ground will take on new meaning, and students will be tasked with positioning new themes of **Aesthetics**, the **Land**, and **Sacredness** within their own project for a possible future that is instigated and anchored by the design of a new spatial concept for the BIPOC operated farm or landscape which embodies the sacred and the everyday. While previous studio questions the Living Memorial and Territory of Care, the Dark Ruralty studio will question the **Liberatory Infrastructure**. The designs produced will depict how re-configuration of the site can connect to larger systems, imagining the proposals as part architecture / part temporal processes. Proposals may site at the farms themselves, or consider the expansion of land and mission into new territories and spatial typologies.

Our approach will situate the design of architectural form within the larger orchestration of aesthetic and environmental systems. How is built form itself part of a system (or systems) and that system is part of a culture, which in turn is embedded in that form, etc. **Students will perform independent and group research, and eventually work in groups of two or three on their final project (TBD, this may change).** The work done in the studio will expand beyond the scope of the classroom, engaging stakeholders and farmers in conversation and dialogue to further the design work. Contacts at SoulFire Farm, The African Roots Center of Kingston, and the Northeast Farmers of Color Community Land Trust and others intend to be part of our visioning process and reviews. Additionally, historical figures George Washington Carver (agricultural scientist) Octavia Butler (science fiction author), Sojourner Truth (former slave and black liberation leader), and contemporary land and food justice leaders like Leah Penniman (Soulfire Farm, *Farming While Black*) and A.J. Williams Meyers (author) will be spiritual protagonists to this effort.



Farming While Black

The Hudson Valley is home to several farms that make up a larger network of intergenerational, BIPOC, queer, communal live / work settlements that are part of a larger movement back to the rural countryside. Farms such as Soulfire Farm and Wildseed Community Farm fully integrate ancestral practices and restorative ethics into a cultivation and ownership model which is counter to the settler colonial imaginary.



Infographic Data Portraits from *Visualizing Black America*, W.E.B. Dubois, 1900

Radical Reparations

In *Farming While Black*, Penniman states that Land is the key to liberation. The contemporary move towards rural land stewardship by people of color is tied to various discourses of reparations. We will explore this context and notions of reparations that center the Land as broker rather than state governments or private individuals.



Offering for Azaka (SoulFire Farm), *Farming While Black*, 2018



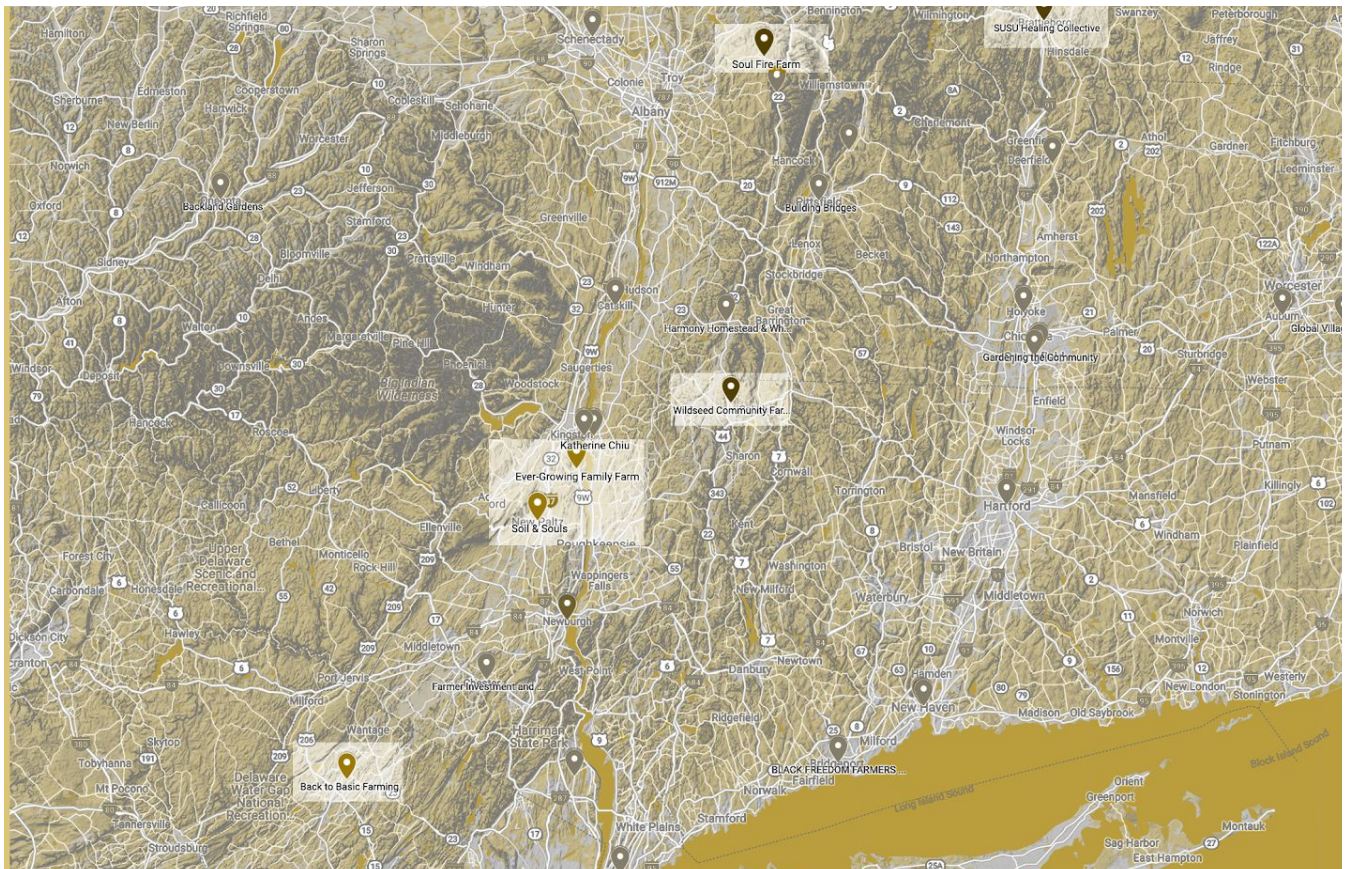
Ancestro Poder / Ancestor Power (series), Felix Ciprian, 2019

Liberatory Aesthetics and Sacred Practice

The sacred takes many forms across cultures and times. The ancestral practices and neo-spiritualism of spaces like SoulFire farm and EverGrowing family farm converge on the contemporary sociographic landscape to produce emergent forms of spatial practice, as well as forms of liberatory aesthetics. Some of the traditions include Voduo, We will explore this particular fusion of spirit, everyday labor, and BIPOC / queer cultural expression as aesthetic practice in the studio.

Refuge / The Great Dispossession

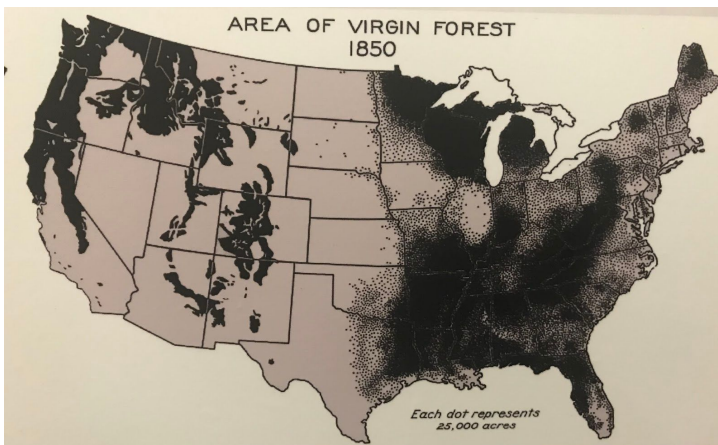
The flight to urban centers of the North during the Great Migration period (1916-1970) was part of a larger process of terrorization and mass dispossession of millions of acres of land held by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in the first part of the 20th century. Today, black-led rural farms and other spaces function in part as spaces **healing** and of **shelter from violence**. This will be one of the programmatic layers of our projects.



Reparations and Rematriation Map showing Mid Hudson Valley (New York City metro at bottom of map), 2020

SITE

The Hudson Valley is a post-slavery landscape. Students and teams will research and ultimately **select a site and stakeholder for the projects** from a network of BIPOC-led farms and rural-reintegration landscapes in the mid-Hudson Valley. Depending on the project narrative, proposals may stay hyper-localized to one site or expand its breadth beyond existing territory or to multiple sites.



FREE LECTURE!

SOJOURNER TRUTH,

Who has been a slave in the State of New York, and who has been a Lecturer for the last twenty-three years, whose characteristics have been so vividly portrayed by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, as the African Sybil, will deliver a lecture upon the present issues of the day,

At On

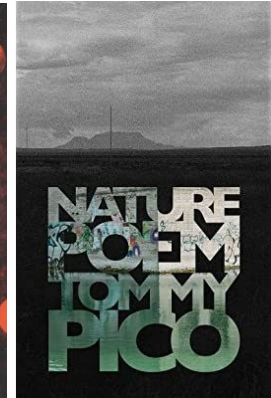
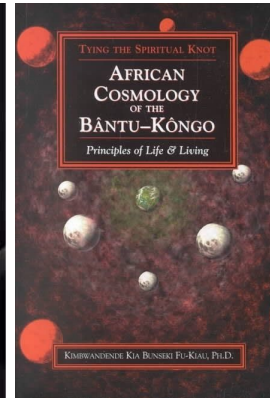
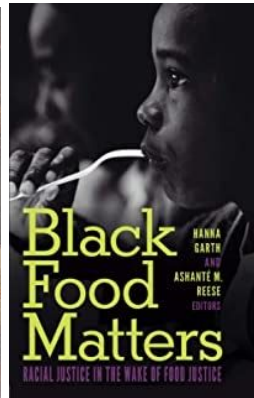
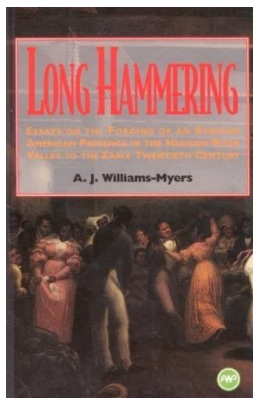
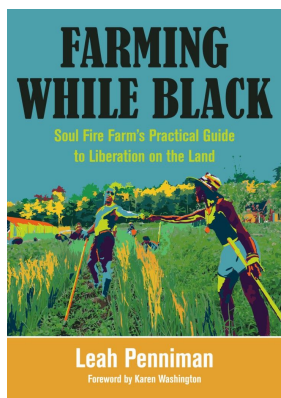
And will give her experience as a Slave mother and religious woman. She comes highly recommended as a public speaker, having the approval of many thousands who have heard her earnest appeals, among whom are Wendell Phillips, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, and other distinguished men of the nation.

At the close of her discourse she will offer for sale her photograph and a few of her choice songs.

RESEARCH : THE HUDSON VALLEY

While the anchor of the studio will be these Farms, the broader historic and contemporary context will require us to engage two expanded sets of “protagonists”, including 1) figures and sites that are linked through the history of the Hudson Valley as a post-slavery landscape, and 2) specific present-day spatial, infrastructural, or programmatic processes that intersect these farms and their movement community either directly or indirectly.

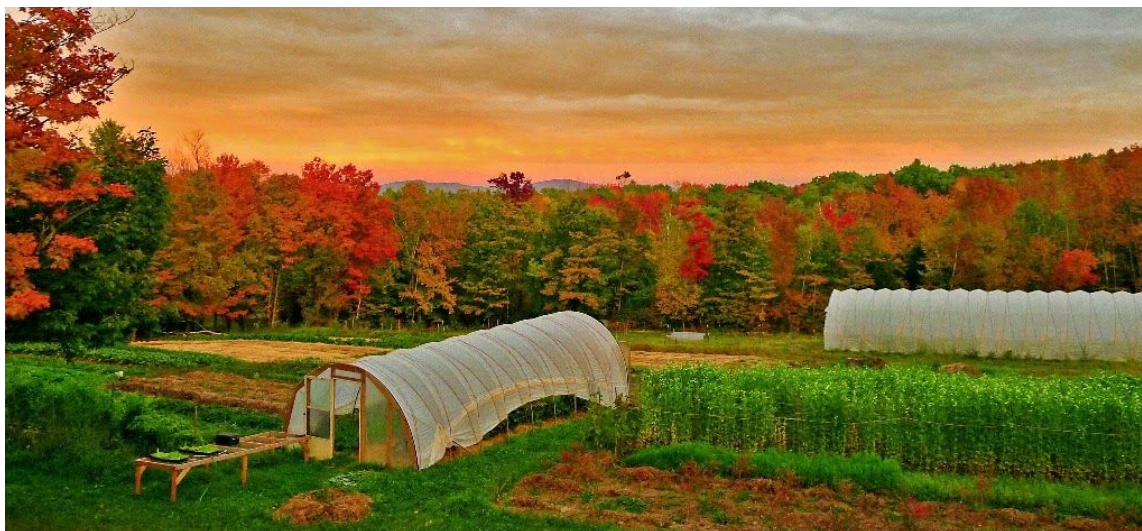
Some of the historic protagonists and research that will help us build this trans-historic and trans-spatial network intersecting each project include important regional figures like Sojourner Truth, traditions such as Vudou and Creole and Lenape spirituality, related **sites** of thematic importance such as the Maroon Villages and Freedman Towns in the Lower and Mid Hudson. **(forthcoming list)**



READINGS (list to be expanded)

Penniman, Leah, *Farming While Black : Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*, 2018
 Mabel Wilson and Torkwase Dyson, *Black Compositional Thought (interview)*, 1919 : Black Water Catalogue, 2019
 Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo*, 2001
 Robert Ferris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit : African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy*, 1984
 Michael E. Groth, *Slavery and Freedom in the Mid Hudson Valley*, 2017
 Tommy Pico, *Nature Poem*, Tin House, 2017
 A.J. Williams-Myers, *Long Hammering : Essays on the Forging of African American Presence in the Hudson Valley*
 Van R. Newkirk II, "The Great Land Robbery", Article, *The Atlantic*, 2019
 Adrienne Marie Brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 2017
 Butler, Octavia, *Parable of the Sower (Earthseed Series)*, *Kindred*, *Parable of the Talents*, *Lilith's Brood*
 Gooden, Mario, *Dark Space : Architecture, Representation, Black Identity*, 2016
 Cronon, W, *Changes In the Land : Indians Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, 2003
 Yusoff, Kathryn, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes Or None*, U. of Minnesota Press, 2018
 Levine, David, *The Hudson Valley: The First 250 Million Years*, 2020
 Haferd, Jerome, *Archaeology of Architecture : The Harlem African Burial Ground*, Log 48 (Winter 2020)
<https://www.blackfoodjustice.org/>

"Buddhism and bell hooks : Liberatory Aesthetics and the Radical Subjectivity of No Self"



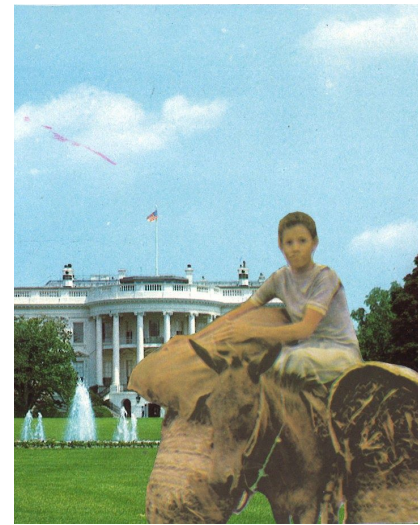
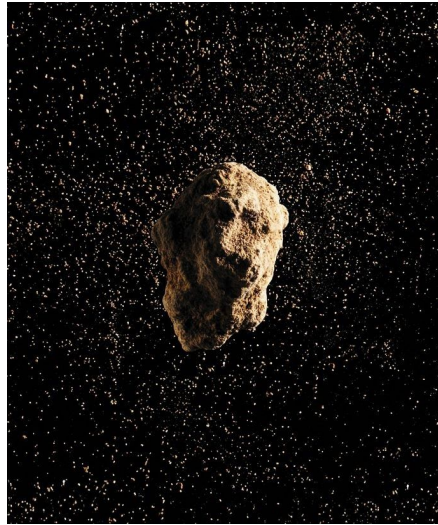
SoulFire Farm, photograph

PROTAGONISTS / POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS (list to be expanded)

SoulFire Farm, Grafton, NY
 Wildseed Community Farm, Millerton, NY
 Ever Growing Farm, Esopus, NY
 Northeast Farmers of Color Community Land Trust
 AJ Meyers African Roots Library, Kingston, NY
 Ancestral Heart Zen Monastery, Millerton, NY

others:

Sojourner Truth, W.E.B Dubois, A.J. Williams-Meyers, George Washington Carver, Harambee of Kingston, Kingston Land Trust, Felix Ciprian, Connor Stedman,



WEEKLY SCHEDULE, M/TH 130pm-630pm* *REMOTE via ZOOM (subject to adjustment)

**Note All Studio meetings, stakeholder sessions, pin-ups, and desk crits are REMOTE via ZOOM unless otherwise noted. PENDING individual schedules and final studio roster, schedule may adjust or utilize optional in-person classtime currently scheduled for Wed 1p-4pm slots.*

Schedule below is subject to revision throughout the course of the semester.

W1

Tues 01.12 LOTTERY, followed by first studio meeting

- Introductions, Intro Lecture, Read Syllabus
- Research Assigned, Aesthetic Analysis Exercise 01 Assigned

Thu 01.14 Studio

- Initial Research Table Review, Desk Crits, Aesthetic Analysis Exercise

W2

Mon 01.18 Studio

- Mini Seminar : Readings Discussed, Analysis Exercise 01 Pin-Up
- Site Research Pt 2 Assigned.

Wed 01.20 Lecture : Richard Plunz

Thu 01.21 Studio / Guest Conversation (TBD)

- Readings Discussed, Analytic Drawing Pin-Up,
- Territory Exercise 02 Assigned

W3

Mon 01.25 Studio

W 01.27 Workshop : Josh Jordan

Thu 01.28 TBD : Guest / Stakeholder Visioning Session #1

- Pin-Up, Exercise 02, Groups Formed, Semester Project Assigned

Saturday 01.30 Remote / Optional Site Visit(s)?

W4

Mon 02.01 Studio

- Desk Crits

Wed 02.03 Lecture : Lindsey Wikstrom in conversation with Karenn Gore

Thu 02.04 Studio / Guest Conversation (TBD)

- Project Pin-Up

W5

Mon 02.08 Studio

- Desk Crits

Thu 02.11 Studio

- Desk Crits

W6

Mon 02.15 MID REVIEW

Thu 02.18 No Class (Mid Reviews)

W7	
Mon 02.22	Studio
Thu 02.25	Studio / Guest Conversation (TBD)
W8	
Mon 03.01	Studio
Thu 03.04	Studio
W9	
Mon 03.08	TBD : Guest / Stakeholder Visioning Session #2
Wed 03.10	Lecture : Anna Deitzch
Thu 03.11	Studio
W10	
Mon 03.15	Studio
Wed 03.17	Lecture : Iheb Guermazi
Thu 03.18	Studio
W11	
Mon 03.22	Studio
Wed 03.24	Adv IV Studio Exchange Pin-Up
Th 03. 25	Studio
W12	
Mon 03.29	Studio / Guest Conversation (TBD)
Thu 04.01	Studio
W13	
Mon 04.05	Studio
Thu 04.08	Work Session - No Class
W14	
Mon 04.12	No Class (Final Reviews)
Thu 04.15	FINAL REVIEW
W15/16	
TBD	OPTIONAL Final Class Meeting, Stakeholder Sessions, Exit interviews

GRADING/ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND STUDIO CULTURE

The submission of all exercises is compulsory to pass the course. Class attendance is also mandatory. Any absence must be adequately justified. Any student nonattending to more than 3 classes won't be able to be graded. Two assessments will be made during the course. After the mid-review, the student will receive an orientation assessment of the evolution done up to that moment. To assess the exercises, the coherence of the student's response to the demands of the exercise, the virtue and adequacy of the proposal made, the correction of its graphic and material representation will be taken into account. Exercises submitted after the delivery designated date, will not be evaluated.

Apart from the final outcome of each exercise, the final grade will assess the student's effort and evolution during the course as well as their critical attitude. Active attitude will also be valued, such as participation in classroom discussions, collaboration with classroom colleagues, expansion of the contents of the course with own research, attendance at conferences and alike. In relation to grading, see more in the following link:

<https://www.arch.columbia.edu/grades>

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