



Creative Intervention

Untitled (2019)

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The broken clay is of a *deeya*, a vessel I grew up using in Trinidad every Divali. Oil would be poured into each, then a cotton wick dipped in and lit. Over the years, this act has become akin to putting up a Christmas tree – religious for some, a secular cultural act for others, available to all. This lighting of deeyas has travelled throughout the world with various attachments and effects. When deeyas are lit in Trinidad and Tobago, regardless of the lighter’s religion or ethnicity, it feels like an

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acknowledgment of the history of indentureship, the system that brought Indians to become replacement plantation workers in the Caribbean following the abolition of slavery.

Because of the persistence of acts of racialized violence we encountered after migrating to Canada, I remember being scared of what lighting the deeyas on the steps of our Oshawa home might incite. (Nothing ever happened.) I broke the deeya with the intention of making the two parts fit to resemble a ship or, rather, a shipwreck. That is the story of Caribbean peoples' history; we are working from/with wreckage.¹

The glass beads reference the long-established art of beadwork developed in many First Nations communities, and I've chosen red, pink and yellow – “coolie colours” that are intentionally used in my other work to refute the derision of them as evidence of rural Indians' poor taste. The action in the image is literal – stitching together futures from the shared wreckage of colonization. The people shipped to do plantation labour in the Caribbean (including the waves who then migrated to Canada), and the First Peoples whom have been systematically displaced and exploited since the beginning of the colonial project: our past, present and futures are entwined.

Reference

- Gosine, A. (2016). “My mother’s *baby*: *Wrecking work after indentureship*. In G. Hosein & L. Outar (Eds.), *Indo-Caribbean Feminist Thought: Genealogies, theories, enactments* (pp. 49-60). Palgrave Macmillan.

¹ In “My Mothers Baby: Wrecking Work After Indentureship” (Gosine, 2016), I use the metaphor of the shipwreck to also underline the productive possibilities of wreckage as well.