

Little Lights

Little Lights is a performance. Like **Written Objects** requires me to act as a medium, much like the Espiritistas I grew up with who (I've never been able to ask whether intentional or not) act as equal parts (respectfully) performance artists and psychiatrists. Little Lights poses a question that is repeated continually and then answered by its own voice. Again themes of time being simultaneous and cyclical, I light candles in a counterclockwise fashion because this speaks on death. This motion is typically used in ritual to guarantee one is connecting with the past/dead. This explores how individual identity occurs in the presence of collective experience, and this ritual explores the motion of this movement of one into the other. That consciousness is concurrent, and successive. While keeping in mind art being defined by art history, queerness defined as a "deviation of heteronormativity", Blackness described through the trauma of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade, Puerto Ricaness as proximity to the island.

Where does the individual identity start and the collective identity end? The spirit/consciousness for so long has been believed to be inviolate but can a self be wholly original and unaffected by histories? What is the soul and how can it be defined without its body? How is Queerness, Blackness, Bori-ness and Art defined without the body? As the initiator of the question, its product and its medium I conclude by consuming the flame where I will recall it whenever necessary.

Little Lights is presented in an enclosed room, outside of its door is a constructed waiting room. This waiting room features a playlist of music that references either returning to a single greater source, the cosmos or are funerary songs. The waiting room also hosts **The Curio: La Letra Con Sangre Entra;** **this** is an art piece that is non-permanent, disassembled and reassembled when needed.

It is the curio/china cabinet/shelving unit found in the homes of older women. It becomes its own type of altar that holds the **Artist Statement** & information regarding Ariel Mercado's work. **They do not explain their work to audiences without an exchange.** This action is a response to the culture that exploits Black creatives narratives regarding trauma without aftercare. This is inspired by the Espiritistas within their life who do not work without compensation. Within the unit you will find **If this World were Mine**, a photo project that pairs true and false family narratives and albums filled with abandoned family photos of Black people.

Fundraising

This art piece is typically used as a platform for exchange between the artist and the audience, occasionally the artist will use this site for a specific fundraiser.