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ABSTRACT

On the Subject of Needs: Indebted Gestures and Other Acts of Inclusion

Weaving together her experiences as an artist and scholar in the academy—where she literally grew up on her mother’s lap, Dr. De Berry explores the paradox of diversity. Although acts of diversity are worth celebrating, she asserts, we ought to return our attention continually to what such acts may also obscure. In the second part of the conversation, through gentle movement exercises and guided writing prompts, Dr. De Berry shares insights from her current project which takes up the relationship between structures of debt and the use of everyday aesthetics in the lives of Black women. She argues that institutional apparatuses like diversity or debt are embodied everyday performances. Taken by how such routine behavior can harm the lives of Black women, she asks how might we engage everyday behavior—from individual breath, movement, and perception, to collective care and the sharing of space—in order to re-imagine alternative modes of collectivity, inclusion, and social redress?