

Christie Neptune

***Ah New Riddim***

Supported by Artists Alliance Inc

Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space

On View Aug 5 - Sep 16, 2023

## *Education Materials*

### **Exhibition Overview**

*Ah New Riddim* (2023) is the third and final iteration of the multimedia series *Constructs and Context Relativity* (2019-2023) by interdisciplinary artist Christie Neptune. The installation and interactive documentary examines the spatial-temporal relationship of memory and place embedded within the implosion of dancehall culture in East Flatbush. The film utilizes 80's dancehall archival footage, the quiet of black subjectivity, and concentric interactive storytelling to expound the relationship between black globality and dancehall in the American urban. In a pivot around her embodied experience as a black Caribbean American, Neptune considers the potential of black popular culture in marking space. Can the axiologies and stories oscillating at the margins mark the discourse of Western logic positioned at the center, and how might this marking register in visual representations of the urban?

### **About Ah New Riddim**

In *Ah New Riddim*, concentric storytelling registers a cacophony of black perspectives. Neptune's subjective experience in the American urban and the migration stories of community members in East Flatbush pivot around dancehall home video of Neptune's father. Research, writing, and art produced from this series work to frame an artistic intelligence around Marked Axiological Shifts, a concept introduced by Neptune in a recent essay that defines a new language in visual culture grounded in African world-making cosmologies.

Marked Axiological Shifts are nonlinear and interactive artistic approaches that register a perpetual reimagining of black futures across space and time. It marks the decorum of modern cinema and visual culture with the conventions of African temporality to foster multiple planes of perspectives and fields of movement within concentric forward-moving narratives mapped across moving images, sculpture, performance art, and print. In this exhibition, six channels of video interface with scaffolded speakers made of mirrors, LED monitors, and wood. The speakers, a re-articulation of the Caribbean Sound System tradition, add further nuance to the filmic encounter in space. As material, screen, haptic surface, and sculptural unit, the sound system transmits information that doubles the spectator's spatial perception. Upon contact, the spectator experiences temporal disjuncture caused by the collapse of their point of view, embodied form, and projected media upon the unit's reflective surface. The gesture fosters multiple fields of viewing within a single expressive form, an element integral to African frameworks of temporality.

*Ah New Riddim* demonstrates the potential of black popular culture within representational practices that speak across both dominant and marginal spatialities. This new framework of understanding considers the

agency of marked axiological shifts within discursive urban space, an intervention that superimposes a wide aperture of black subjectivity(s) upon the narrow plane of the American urban.

## **Reference**

**Locality:** low·ka·luh·tee

The place where someone or something exists. For example, we talk of the brain as the locality of thought.

**Spatial-Temporal:** spay·shl - tem·pr·uhl

Relating to both space and time.

**Marking Space:** mar·king/ spays

A form of taking up space.

**Axiology:** ak·see·ah·luh·gee

study of the nature, types, and criteria of values and of value judgments, especially in ethics and aesthetics. These values in ethics are concepts of good and bad, moral and immoral.

**Marked Axiological Shifts:** maarkt/ ak·see·o·log·i·cal/ shifts

“are nonlinear and interactive artistic approaches that register a perpetual reimagining of black futures across space and time. It marks the decorum of modern cinema and visual culture with the conventions of African temporality to foster multiple planes of perspectives and fields of movement within concentric forward-moving narratives mapped across moving images, sculpture, performance art, and print” (Christie Neptune).

**Black Popular Culture:** blak/ pah·pyuh·lr/ kuhl·chr

Describes a part of black culture(s) centered on pleasure, enjoyment, amusement, and entertainment. Representing the identity and politics of black culture(s) according to each cultures' values, experiences, beliefs, and social institutions. This can be expressed through aesthetic genres and codes.

## **About the Artist**

**Christie Neptune** is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist working across film, photography, mixed media and performance arts. Neptune investigates how constructs of race, gender, and class limit the personal experiences of historically marginalized bodies of color. Critically aware of both self and subjectivity, Neptune illuminates the personal and emotional aftermath of a society that disregards and delegitimizes those that endure the brunt of historically upheld supremacies.

More information: [Christieneptune.com](http://Christieneptune.com)

## **Artist Narrative**

“The film and installation have a consistent palette of reds, greens, and yellows. To some degree, this is very intentional. However, it has more to do with maintaining continuity than color theory. Archival footage of my father is tinged with deep reds, pale yellows, and dark greens. In contrast to the overall film, the archive's aesthetics was a matter of circumstance. It was simply a reflection of my father's interior



documented within an uninterrupted shot of dancehall. Unlike contemporary footage within “Ah New Riddim,” the archives are stripped of the conventions of traditional filmmaking. It lacks the formal praxis of composition, lighting, tone, etc. And that is what I find so compelling about it, even paradoxical. The color palette of the archives in color theory evokes a feeling of belonging, warmth, youthful naivety, and passion. It is very befitting of the film’s timeline, social history, and narrative.”

“Marked axiological shifts in theory are nonlinear and interactive artistic approaches that register a perpetual reimagining of black futures across space and time. It marks the decorum of modern cinema and visual culture with the conventions of African temporality to foster multiple planes of perspectives and fields of movement within concentric progress narratives mapped across moving images, sculpture, performance art, and print. As an artistic intervention, this approach superimposes a wide aperture of black subjectivity upon the narrowed plane of the American urban.”



### **Recommended Questions for Discussion**

#### ***Before Your Visit***

1. Think of a time when you were young, when your parent(s) or guardian(s) took you to an event or space that shaped who you are today. How did you feel growing up in that environment?
2. When was the last time you visited an event like the one you experienced when you were young?
3. How did it impact you and your family? Did it have any cultural significance?

#### ***During Your Visit***

1. How much impact does music have in your life?
2. Listening to the audio in the exhibition, how do you feel about it? What do you think of the rhythm?
3. How do you think time will shift your locality?

#### ***After Your Visit***

1. How do you define “place”?
2. What are some spatial practices (everyday routines/experiences) and language that are permanent to your locality?

## **Syllabus**

Neptune, Christie. "Ah New Riddim: A Marked (Black) Axiological Shift Across Space and Time." MIT: Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Department of Architecture, June 2023.

<https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/151230>

Wright, Michelle M. *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*. 2015.

Kasinitz, Philip. *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*, (Cornell University Press, 1992).

Campanella, Thomas J. *Brooklyn: The Once and Future City*, (Princeton University Press, 2019).

Krase, Jerome. "NAVIGATING ETHNIC VERNACULAR LANDSCAPES THEN AND NOW." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 19, no. 4 (2002): 274–81.

Lefebvre, Henri. "Social Space," *The Production of Space* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1991), 68-92.

Manuel, Peter, and Wayne Marshall. "The Riddim Method: Aesthetics, Practice, and Ownership in Jamaican Dancehall." *Popular Music*, vol. 25, no. 3, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 447–70.

Marshall, Paul. *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, (Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1981).

Stanley, Sonja Niah. "Dis Slackness Ting': A Dichotomizing Master Narrative in Jamaican Dancehall." *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 3/4, (University of the West Indies, 2005), pp. 55–76.

Stanley, Sonja Niah and Hope, Donna P. "Canvasses of Representation: Stuart Hall, the Body and Dancehall Performance." In *Culture, Politics, Race and Diaspora : the Thought of Stuart Hall*. Kingston. ed. Brian., and Stuart Hall et al (Ian Randle Publishers, 2007), 221-244.



## *Accessibility Information*

### **Visitors Who Are Deaf/ Partially Hearing/ Or Have Sensory Sensitivity**

The current exhibition gallery includes the main room and a smaller room that can be accessed through the opening in the left-hand corner of the gallery. Both spaces include large street-facing windows. This exhibition includes two projected videos on the gallery's left and right side walls. In addition to the projection on the right wall, a TV is displayed with media content. Towards the center-back of the exhibition space, there are two speakers and two monitors. Please be advised the monitors located on top and below the speakers display abstract images with flashing lights. The audio in this exhibition may also cause some discomfort or overwhelm. These audios are experimental sounds the artist played with and included in their artwork. Those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or sensitive to sound may also have difficulty enjoying this artwork.

### **Facility Accessibility**

Baby strollers are welcome in Essex Market and Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space. Both facilities are wheelchair accessible, and service animals on a leash are permitted.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about accessing Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space or attending programs, please contact Jodi Waynberg at [jodi@artistsallianceinc.org](mailto:jodi@artistsallianceinc.org) or 212-420-9202.

### **Restrooms**

Restrooms for visitors are located on the second floor of Essex Market, which is accessible via elevator or stairs.

### **Visitors on the Autism Spectrum**

The current exhibition gallery includes the main room and a smaller room that can be accessed through the opening in the left-hand corner of the gallery. Both spaces include large street-facing windows. In the gallery, some artworks implement visual, auditory, and tactile interactions.

Please refer to the pages below for a visual guide to accessing Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space:

# Visual Guide: Accessing Cuchifritos Gallery

Hello, today we will visit the Cuchifritos Gallery in Essex Market at 88 Essex Street in New York City. Walking down the street, you may be able to recognize us! At Artists Alliance Inc., we show contemporary artworks by new and emerging artists.



Our Cuchifritos gallery is located inside Essex Market, where many shops are indoors. This means that many people are walking and touring the shops and the people who run them. You will most likely hear the sounds of chopping from the vendor's food prep, the smell of food, and the voices of people talking and interacting with the stores. It is a comfortable social space, and entering our gallery is as open and welcoming.

This is the entrance to the Essex Market facing Broome Street between Essex and Norfolk streets. Before entering, we should put on our masks!



Once we enter through the glass doors, we should head to the right. We can check if we're heading in the right direction by following the vendors: Top Hop, Puebla Mexican Food, Cafe D'Avignon, Dominican Cravings, and Zerza (in that order). Once you hit Zerza, you can take a left turn and we should be right next to the gallery!







Now, we can enter the gallery through the glass doors (which are always open during visiting hours!). Someone at the desk will greet you, but we can freely walk around the space to see what we like. On the desk, you'll find a stack of paper that includes the names of the Curator and/or Artist(s) in the show. We can take these with us to better understand the artwork.

Upon entering the gallery, flashing lights may be seen coming from the projections and screens at the center. The flashing lights can range from green, red, white, and some other colors. The audio coming from the center speakers is set to a comfortable volume for most visitors; however, the sounds can be disorientating for those with certain audio sensitivities.





The speakers on the floor, located at the center of the space, play a series of sounds the artist has experimented with. The speakers on the ceiling, located on both the main room's left and right walls, play audio synced to the projected videos. The audio coming from both locations plays simultaneously, overlapping with one another; this might be overwhelming to some visitors.



The monitors at the center of the gallery display abstract artwork like the one pictured above. These monitors play on a loop and show a series of artwork in rapid rotation, switching from a rapid and, eventually, slow pace. If you suffer from seizures, please be aware of this when visiting the gallery.

## Guide to the Bathrooms

To enter the bathrooms, we can head back toward the entrance we came through initially. Just beyond that, we should be able to see a staircase leading up to the mezzanine. We can walk up these, or...

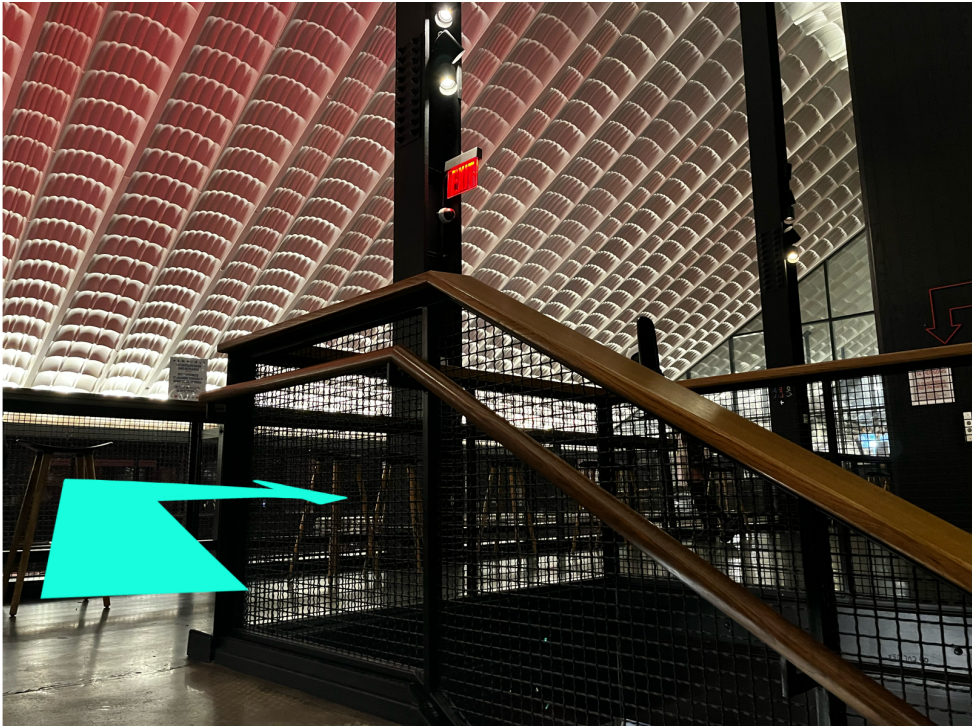




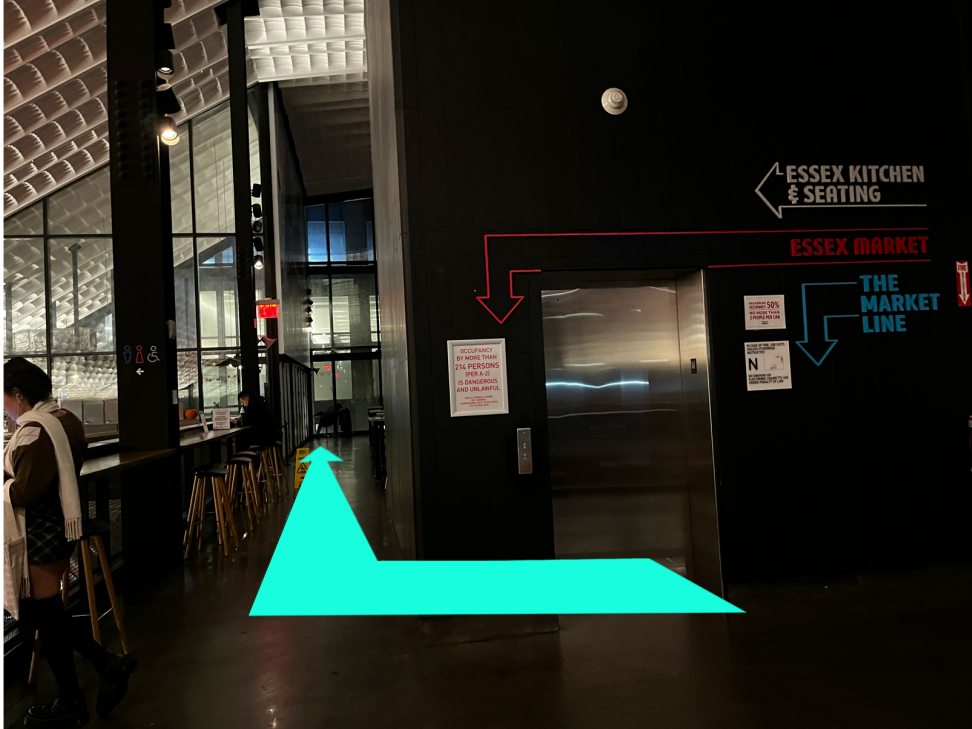
We can use the elevators, which you might have noticed on the right side when we first entered the market.



If we took the stairs up to the mezzanine, we can head toward the right.

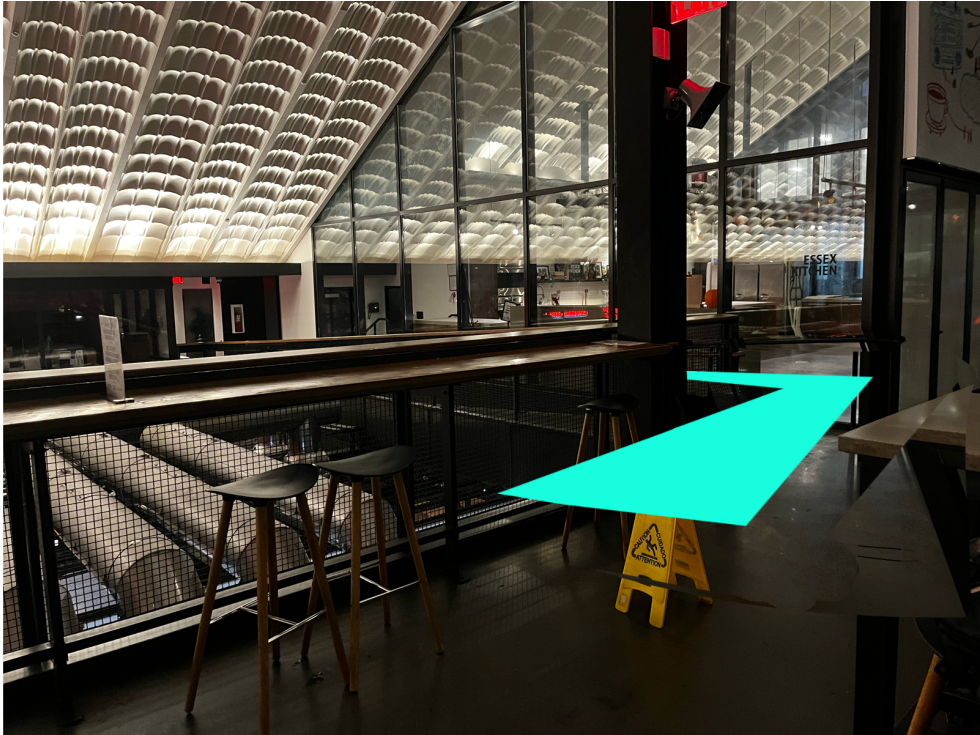


If we took the elevator, we should make two right turns





Then, we should keep walking along the counters and stools to the left, until we see a long, declining ramp. We can follow it straight down until we reach the end of it by the multiple doors and a glowing exit sign overhead.



Once we reach this area, you can turn right toward the hand sanitizer dispenser.





There are the bathrooms! The one on the left with red is for women, and the one on the right with blue is for men. To use them, you will need to put in the bathroom code: 80220#



When we're ready to leave, we can exit through the gallery doors and retrace our steps to the large glass doors of the market. Or you can also explore the other amazing Essex Market shops and installments!

I hope we can meet again at the Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space.

