

Art as Information: Re-Reading Quicksand

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ABSTRACT

“Art as Information: Re-reading Quicksand” is a micro-study of an African American cultural narrative through artmaking. My subject is the autobiographical and fictional novel, *Quicksand* by Nella Larsen (1928). Larsen’s life and creative storytelling provide paths for how we may attend to cultural heritage knowledge gaps about Black womanhood by engaging with the informing processes of art. This especially highlights artwork concerning self-definition and self-determination while navigating life within a racialized, classed, and gendered body. I re-present *Quicksand* as an autobiographical artifact and living artwork to explore how we may produce an ever-emerging archives on Black womanhood from rereading cultural auto/bio/fiction. This critical and cyclical exploration involves making artworks that reiterate and interpret knowledges that emerge from reading Larsen’s narrative—modeling a framework of how Art as Information (AAI) may be engaged to reexamine personal narratives.

This dissertation also reintroduces AAI as a subfield of Information Sciences that engages artmaking as an information technology. It involves the study of arts’ roles within knowledge production: how we craft, document, process, and circulate information through making art. I intertwine Information Sciences with art pedagogy and auto/bio/fiction studies. I also lean on cultural-attentive lenses, such as Black Feminist Material Culture and Culturally Situated Reader Response Theory, to examine how we may tend to cultural knowledges that are historically silenced and disfigured—exploring the liberatory aspects of artmaking to intercept and dismantle exploitative depictions (i.e., visual violences) historically committed against marginalized groups under the guise of neutral documentation and curiosity.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Reading and reading practices; Data visualization; Archives; Social justice; Pedagogy.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

cultural heritage; artistic practice; critical archival studies; information behavior; material culture.

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