What is Black Art?

As an artist, and a curator, I find the question of definition to be both paramount and insignificant all at once.

What is something?

What is anything?

Does finding its definition capture its essence? Or does it simply give one an idea of what to look for when you see it?

If you know what you’re looking for, you can’t miss it right?

But what if you find it? Will you know what to do with it?

Example: If I define to you the exact contours of hip-hop, will you then know what to do when a hip-hop song plays? Will you feel the flow of the song and understand the essence of the creator’s soul? Or will you simply be able to identify that this song is, in fact, a part of the hip-hop body?

But without definition, one is lost is infinity. Without guidelines, there is no greater body of work, but points in space, which do exist simultaneously, but do not correlate.

If one cannot pinpoint the elements of art which make it art, how will one know how to continue the Work? How will one know what to do in the next generation?

To define Black Art, we must examine what it means to each and every person, we must allow ourselves to be wrong, to be disagreed with, because in the discussion of a net so wide, and a heritage so rich, everyone is kinda right, and kinda wrong.

Black Art, more specifically the art of the people who are members the African familial tree, refers to the creative progeny of individuals around the world, and influences every individual it is exposed to. While this is true of all art, Black Art has an element of allure, which causes all who experience it to want to imitate it.

Musically, the varying heritages and regions of the African diaspora all have their own individual sound. Most of which have been exported globally, for enjoyment as well as inspiration.

Jamaica: Reggae

Puerto Rico: Reggaeton

United States: Spirituals, Gospel, Jazz, Hip Hop

Black art encompasses both originally inspired work as well as the art created in an effort to conform to Western artistic standards.

In Black communities worldwide, art is the life force, and a motivating force to help those who consume it endure and overcome the challenges which they face each day. Each song has a message to convey to the listener, each painting gives the painter freedom to express their vision, and each poem allows the poet to make sense of the inconceivable.

Black art is a release to the artist, but also an experience of release to the consumer. The consumer is allowed to experience the artist through a connection that is inert between people of common understanding, it uses that connection to say something to the consumer, to comfort the consumer, to enrage them, or simply to expand their mind.

Art is a tool of cultural progression, and the progress of the many Black Cultures can be mapped through our music.

Thus the only true definition which can be reached for Black Art, is that it is the essence of the people in which it created it, and the road map to the culture within which it exists. Black Art contains the mentality of the muses who created it, and forms the memories of those who immortalized it.