

LANDSCAPES

Tia-Simone Gardner

**A MOUNTAIN OF IRON
BIRMINGHAM**

in the settler colony of the United States, the landscape became a weapon.



THIS IS A TREELINE

THIS IS A COLORLINE

FAIRFIELD, ALABAMA 2020

Image courtesy of Tia-Simone Gardner and J. Whitson

Landscape is both a noun and a verb, although, the noun — its thingness, is often given the most attention.

These days, I am thinking about the verb.

HOME » NEWS

A Black Lives Matter mural is set to be removed in Tulsa after the city received a request for a pro-police painting

Taylor Ardrey Aug 1, 2020, 2:09 PM



People gather for a Juneteenth rally in Tulsa, Okla., Friday, June 19, 2020. Juneteenth marks the day in 1865 when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to take control of the state and ensure all enslaved people be freed, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. AP Photo/Sae Ogroch

- Tulsa City Council decided to remove the Black Lives Matter painting located in the Greenwood District after the mural was not granted city approval.
- Tulsa World reported that the painter and organizer of the mural, Ryan Rhoades, did not get city approval for the street painting.
- "Never heard from the city. Never for permission, and never for after the fact, nothing," said Ryan Rhoades, Tulsa World reported. "I was like, with us having Black Wall Street here and Juneteenth and Trump coming to town, we just seem like the most likely city to do this next."
- KJRH-TV reported that during the council meeting, Tulsa City attorney David O'Mellia said that "paintings for city streets are only allowed for safety reasons" and "allowing one group to paint messages on the street means everyone would be able to do so."

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by

"Landscape results results from human intervention to shape or transform natural phenomena, of which we are simultaneously a part."¹

I have been thinking about geology, and race, and terror.
I have been thinking about scraping.

¹ Wells, Liz, 2011. *Land Matters: Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity*. London: I.B. Tauris.



TULSA, OKLAHOMA 2020

Image courtesy of Tia-Simone Gardner

ARCHER STREET/GREENWOOD AVENUE
CURRENT GREENWOOD DISTRICT



ARCHER STREET/DETROIT AVENUE
FORMER GREENWOOD DISTRICT
CURRENT ARTS DISTRICT

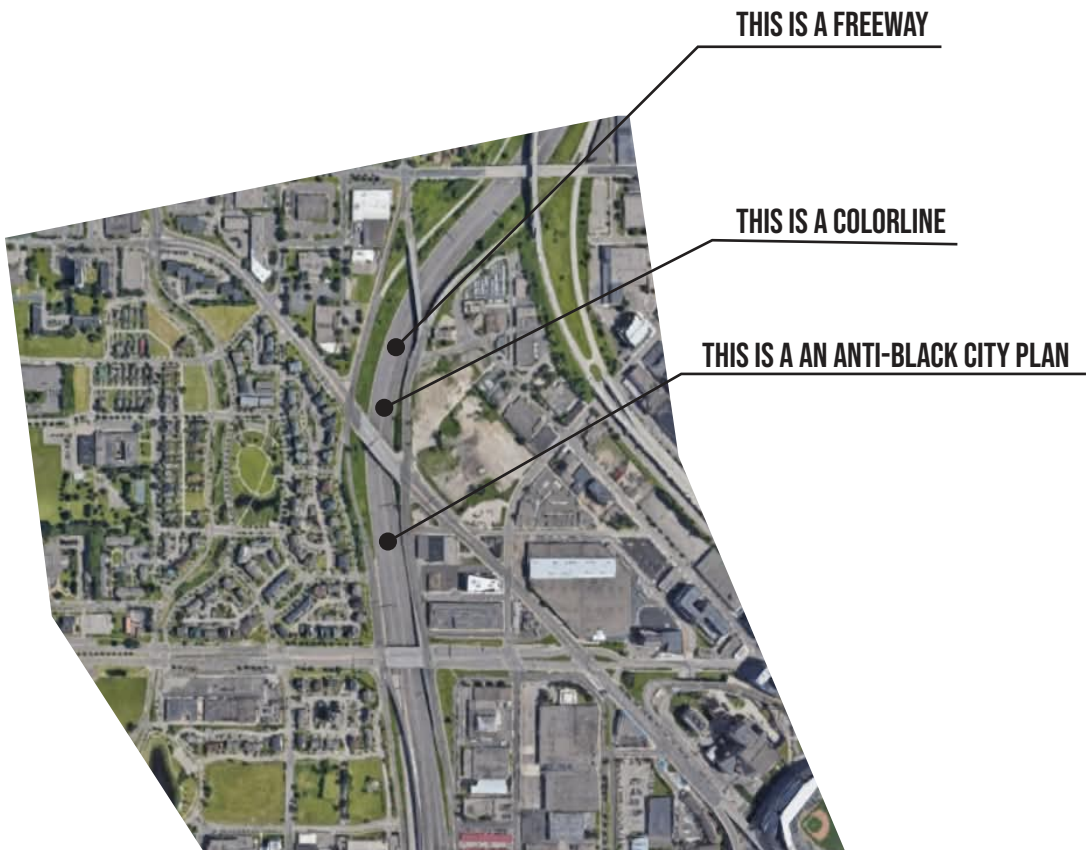
Living between three haunted Black landscapes, Birmingham, Alabama, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Minneapolis, I am sometimes, and sometimes not, sure which traumas are mine to mine.

So I think, I observe, I witness, I photograph, and I write.

I try to unsettle these settled places. To re-member the *spatial stories* that are unseeable and perhaps unspeakable.²

I find myself suspicious of people who are. How can they, I wonder, be so certain that the affect of our fear, pain, anxiety, and shame, are collectively shared and shareable?

² Certeau, Michel de. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Isoke, Zenzele. 2016. *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, US.



MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 2020

Image Google, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2020

Scrape.

They found what they think are mass graves here. Three sites. The landscape will need to be split open again for evidence of a truth we already possess.

Another scrape.

On daily walks I pass small markers, nameplates for the burned and scraped away shops that were Greenwood, Black Tulsa. But, in the gentrified concrete sidewalks some signs are older, than others. Some signs are double, a new sign sits atop the old one, larger and less weathered. These seem to be scraped regularly, to clear the sidewalks for the newer, increasingly more expensive developments, housing, niche businesses, and of course art. I wonder as I walk, when they are taken away, do they make it back? What will happen in 20 years, where there is more oil money and less memory. Is this what will be come of Lake Street and Chicago? Scraped, cemented, commemorated, scraped.

