

AYCD Collaboration/Columbia College

Aymishlemi's Journey, 2005

Mixed media book / installation

12" x 3' x 2'

AYCD/Columbia College

Artistic Statement

This artist book titled *Aymishlemi's Journey* was created as a class project. Participants from the Youth in Arts and Community Development Graduate Program at Columbia College Chicago, worked for three hours to create this book. Giselle Mercier, SAIC alumna, is the instructor of this class. Jesus Macarena-Avila, also an SAIC alumnus, was the guest artist and presenter in the class.

Participants: *Ayesha Jaco*

Michelle Arnold

Shawn Lent

LeeAnn Norman

Miranda Grisales

Documentation: Nicole Gameau

Class guest: Adriana Grisales

All the participants are either dancers, community activists, theater professionals, musicians, writers or arts managers. None of them are visual artists. The purpose of the workshop was to get them to visualize text by using images or symbols. The fast pace of the workshop, allowed for students to concentrate on broad concepts that they felt would tell the story of a "modern Cinderella".

Our book told the story of *Aymishlemi* (the first two letters of each of the first names of the participants put together) a female figure who forges her destiny by making her own choices (unlike Cinderella who depends on the "magic powers" of her fairy Godmother). A self-actualized, self-determined, strong woman who would be the author of her own transformation. All the participants felt that the book they had created as a collaboration, rejected the tale type #510, by indicating that the "shoe" no longer fits their realities.

The experience brought us together as a community of artists, and allowed us to express our creativity in a medium seldom explored before. As part of this experience, students had to write

an e-journal reflecting on the experience. I have included with the lesson plan a copy of one of the participants comments.

***Please refer to the lesson plan so you can see the process involved in the creation of this collaborative artist book/installation.*