

Aesthetic Grammars of Social Justice: Sex Work Reimagined

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ABSTRACT Against a backdrop of the persistence of coloniality through structural forms of privilege and bias across socio-economic manifestations, inequality and racial stratification of labour in South Africa, creative activism offers a lens, voice and perspective of sex workers. We relate these glimpses to rehumanisation and re-membering, challenging historically distinct modes of turning humans into objects as part of decolonial possibilities. We seek to make decolonization a praxis of making human and hence we ask two central questions: what provocations arise from aesthetics of creative activism? And what might rehumanizing/re-membering concretely mean? We consider these questions through an analysis of the activism, exhibitions and performance with participant sex workers that formed part of the GlobalGRACE project launch in South Africa. Ultimately, we argue that art practices fundamentally engage the imagination and open up possibilities for re-imagining, re-storying and re-centering marginalized knowledges.