

## **Writing Club: Jehan Roberson on Traces**

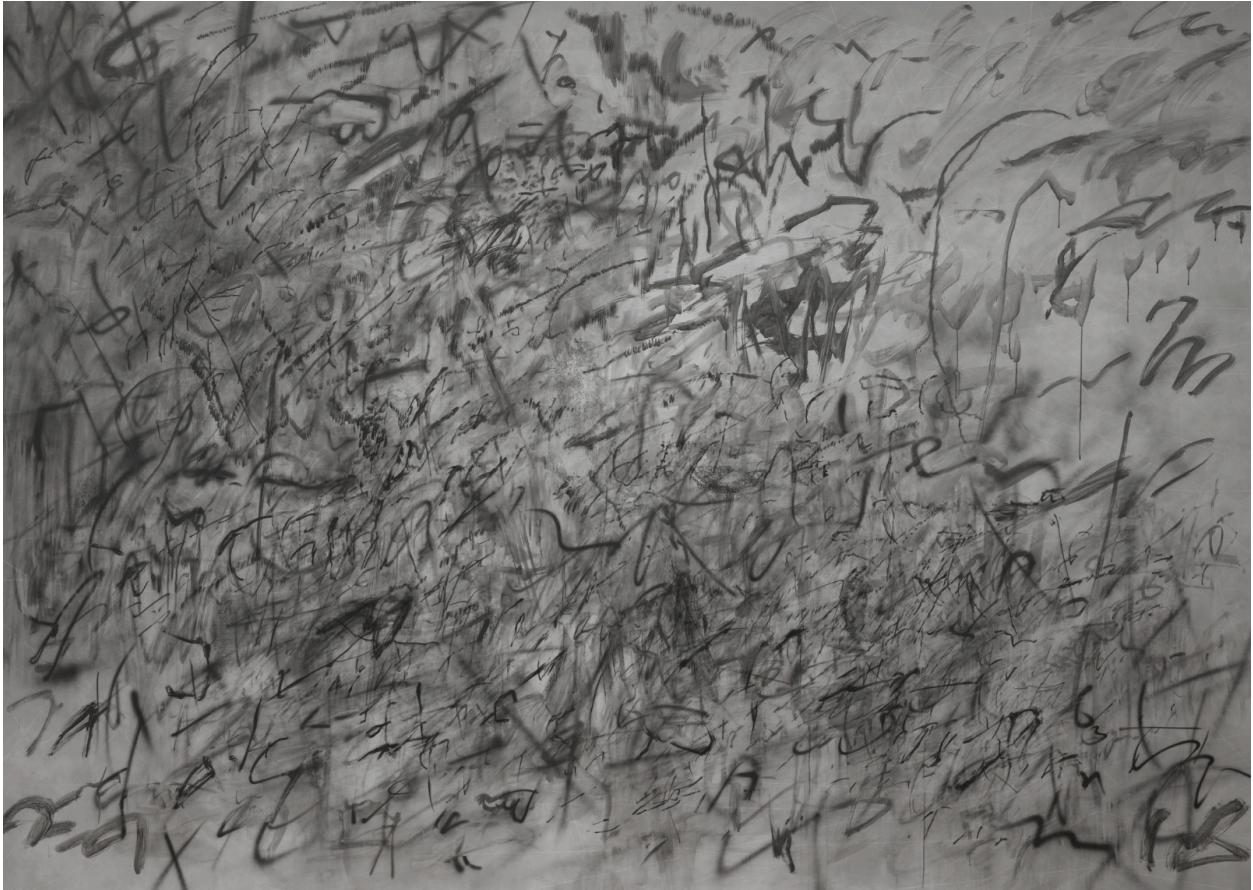
### **July 2022**

#### **Guiding Quote:**

“I cannot be a complete stranger to the past or to a place such as this. These woodlands and I are partly effaced palimpsests. Altered in the passage of time, yes, but still retaining traces of earlier forms and origins. [...] To understand the storying of any place, I must also understand the storying of myself. I must follow traces beneath familiar surfaces to where ancestral structures lie.” Lauret E. Savoy from *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape* (pg 68)

**Warm-up Prompt:** What words do you associate with *traces* or *tracing*? Write down all the words that come to mind.

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**Artwork 1:** Julie Mehretu. [\*Invisible Sun \(algorithm 5, second letter form\)\*](#). 2014. Ink and acrylic on canvas. Gift of the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation, Eugenio Lopez Alonso, and Committee on Painting and Sculpture Funds.

**Prompt:** What do you notice? What stands out about this work?

**Prompt:** Think about how you define trace, as well as the other definitions you've heard today. What traces do you see in Mehretu's work?

**Prompt:** Choose 2-4 words, descriptions, or phrases from each list and write a new narrative (poem, short story, whatever you'd like!). Feel free to craft a narrative around *trace(s)* or to go in a completely new direction.

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**Artwork 2:** [LaToya Ruby Frazier. \*Edgar Thompson Plant and the Bottom\*](#). 2013. Inkjet Print.

**Prompt:** What do you notice? What stands out about this work? What *traces*, if any, do you notice?

**Prompt:** Let's think about *trace* as a verb, as making an imprint or an impression. If you were to trace this image, what objects or features would you highlight? What might you exclude?

**Prompt:** Choose words/phrases from each list. Using these words, write a creative piece that explores *trace(s)* in your own life.

**Reflection** prompt: What discoveries or new lessons have you had today? What surprised you in your writing?