

The *Translation* Audit.

What you're currently explaining or defending in your practice. Where the explanation is costing you. The single first refusal you're going to make this year — the explanation you'll stop offering.

A WORKSHEET BY MORIAH ALISE · DEAR GLORY · MAY 2026 · [READ THE ARTICLE](#) →

At some point, you stop *translating*.

The work doesn't need a defense anymore. The audience that requires the explanation isn't the audience the work is for. Refusing to translate is not stubbornness — it's a position.

The audit below names what you're currently translating so you can decide what you're going to stop translating this year.

How to use this. Be specific. Generalities don't help. Name the moment, the person, the platform, the work. The audit becomes powerful exactly when you write things down you wish you hadn't.

SECTION I · THE AUDIT

Six areas. *Where translation is happening.*

Each area is a place where artists routinely soften the work for an audience that may not deserve the softening.

01 WHERE YOU TRANSLATE

The specific moments where the explanation happens. Studio visit, artist statement, panel, interview, gallery opening, dinner.

- I can name the three settings where I most often explain my work
- I have an artist statement I'd rewrite if I could stop apologizing in it
- I have studio-visit talking points I've used for years that I'm tired of
- I've defended a specific body of work in a press interview in the last year
- I have one panel or talk I said yes to where I knew I'd be asked to translate

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

02 WHO YOU TRANSLATE FOR

The audiences that have asked — explicitly or implicitly — for the translation. Not all of them deserved it.

- I have one collector or buyer I've over-explained the work to
- I have one curator I've shaped the framing for, against my own instinct
- I have a family member or close non-art friend I keep simplifying it for
- I have a press outlet or platform whose framing I've quietly accepted
- I can name one audience I no longer need to win over

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03 WHAT YOU DEFEND

The choices, materials, subjects, refusals, and methods you've found yourself justifying. The shape of your translation.

- I have defended the subject matter of my work in a public setting
- I have justified a medium or material choice that didn't need a justification
- I have explained why I refuse to make certain kinds of work
- I have defended my pricing — up or down — more times than I should have
- I have justified a slow output to people who don't understand the practice

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04 THE AUDIENCE THAT DOESN'T NEED IT

The audience that already gets it. The one you're protecting attention for by refusing to translate to anyone else.

- I can name the audience that gets the work without explanation
- I know what they read, where they gather, how to reach them
- I have at least one collector who buys without needing the framing
- I have at least one writer who sees the work without my coaching
- I have at least one peer who can describe my work better than I can

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05 THE COST OF EXPLANATION

What the translation is taking from you. Time, energy, posture, work you didn't make because you were defending.

- I can name a body of work I didn't make because I was defending the last one
- I have lost energy or time I needed for the studio to translation work
- I have a posture toward the work I'd shed if I could (apologetic, didactic, anxious)
- I've stopped writing or speaking publicly because the translation got exhausting
- I have a project on hold because I don't have language for it yet — and don't need to

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06 THE FIRST REFUSAL

The single explanation you're going to stop offering this year. Specific. Dated. Public.

- I have a clear sentence I will no longer say in interviews
- I have a paragraph I will no longer include in my artist statement
- I have a question I will no longer answer when asked
- I have a setting (panel, podcast, dinner) I will no longer translate in
- I am willing to lose *one* opportunity over this refusal

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

The *explanation* you're refusing.

Look across the six areas. Find the single explanation that, by refusing it consistently for a year, would most change how the work is read.

What refusing to translate *actually does*.

It thins the audience. *The people who needed the explanation drift away. It strengthens the audience that remains. They self-select on the work, not the framing. It changes what you're free to make next.* You stop building defenses into the work itself. The translation refused is the practice freed.

THE TRANSLATION YOU'RE REFUSING THIS YEAR

The *one explanation* you're going to stop offering —

Three *refusals*. The next time you're asked.

Three specific moments — or three specific phrasings — where you'll refuse to translate the next time the opportunity comes. Write the actual line you'll say (or won't say).

A translation refusal is specific. Not “I won't explain my work” — that's vague. It's “The next time a curator asks me to summarize Black leisure in 90 seconds, I will say 'I don't summarize.’” Three.

1 REFUSAL ONE

BY WHEN _____

2 REFUSAL TWO

BY WHEN _____

3 REFUSAL THREE

BY WHEN _____

CLOSE

You don't owe the room an *explanation*.

The right audience finds the work on the work's terms. The audience that requires a translation is, by definition, not the audience the work was made for. Stop translating. Make the next thing. Come back to this in thirty days.

Moriah Alise

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