Lens 6

Transmedial

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I decided to draw a picture for Orange Houses because this is something Mik does. As a young adult, drawing or painting was never the art form I sought for catharsis or for a kind of escape for my really world. Instead, I tended to write and read. Therefore, I wanted to experiment with this art form to try and understand a different form of expression that Mik prefers and some of my future students might prefer.

In the picture, I took care to use absolutely no black because in the beginning of the book Mik mentions that she has run out of black paint. Also, the book constantly uses color imagery and so I wanted to make my picture highly colorful. I built two of the buildings out of money, the liquor store and Joe Knows’s store, to show that I felt like that was where a lot of the money is coming from and going to in the book. I drew the American flag as the road and then the subway tracks to show Fatima’s struggles in America and how ultimately, America takes her away. In the blue part of a flag I drew a shark fin which also symbolizes Fatima’s escape from Africa and travel to America. Fatima is a traveler or visitor figure in this story so I chose to represent her in my picture in the transportation. It was hard to show in art but I wanted it to come across as a visually stimulating word but without much sound. I drew a street performer radiating music because that seems to be one of the only sounds Mik actually enjoys hearing. Depicting the title of the book in sign language was also inspired by Mik’s hearing impairment. I tried to show a war scene behind Mik and Jimmy when they are in the subway to show how pervasive these memories seem to be in Jimmy’s mind. Finally, the angel clouds show Fatima and her white angels and her capture by the government as well as Jimmy and his physical hanging but also his contemplations of suicide.

Overall, I enjoyed experimenting with this form of art. I am not very talented with it so it was often frustrating to try and get the images I had in my head out on the page. However, interpreting a text in this visual way was a unique experience for me from which I learned a lot.