

CATAPULT

Caribbean Artist Showcase

VOICES OF CONTEMPORARY CARIBBEAN ARTISTS



Caribbean

SENSATION

11 Caribbean Contemporary Creatives



Welcome to the Caribbean Artist Showcase

EDITOR'S NOTE
VOLUME 2: SENSATION



The Caribbean is a special place. In every island and landmass that makes up the region, there are cultures and subcultures which are layered, nuanced, complex and tell the story of how the region was peopled and how it continues to develop. This multiplicity and mix of cultures and traditions that are at the same time similar as well as varied and diverse.

To live and work in the Caribbean; to observe and make and thrive in the Caribbean involves receiving and processing the sensations in our environment. With this volume we present artists, writers, performers and cultural workers who in their art forms, disciplines and initiatives are acting as lovers by making us conscious and making us see that which exists and that which needs to be addressed.



To live and work here is also a special experience. Which is a matter of moving between the frustration with the gaps in institutional structures as well as the support and development systems. It is also the experience of seeing this as a great creative opportunity. The gaps are where innovation is found and work that emerges often further shapes the culture of this space. To be a Caribbean creative is to thrive on the energy that comes from such a diverse and complex history and the quickly changing present. It is also to take these experiences and make them your own; to preserve them and to point out and involve oneself in what needs to be changed. James Baldwin describes it best:

'The role of the artist is exactly the same as the role of the lover. If I love you, I have to make you conscious of the things you don't see.'

The Catapult Arts Grant along with its supporting stakeholders and organisations have stepped in to assist the Caribbean creatives in providing solid opportunities to move beyond dancing between the gaps during this period. The project has further facilitated creatives involved in innovative practices to make that which we don't see visible. It is through this partnership that we have arrived at a collection of several projects and documentation of practices which we have gathered for this volume.

Adrian Young presents a video documentation of the Future Jumbies school that he runs in order to expose children to the art of dancing on stilts in order to pass on the performance culture and tradition of Mas; Sharelly Emanuleson describes how she balances running Uniarte, an arts organisation, in Curacao and her socially-focused practice in film and video; A-dZiko Simba speaks about wanting to normalize that young Caribbean boys have rich inner worlds and through her novels seeks to further represent their emotional depth and capacity for sensitivity; and Erik Alfredo Martinez captures specific vignettes of often overlooked aspects of his city to create a very personal vision of his city Santiago.

By looking through the work presented in Volume 2 we seek to showcase creative visions which capture, examine and analyse the textures and sensations of the Caribbean. We present projects which reveal the complexities of The Caribbean - as it is and not as it is believed to be. For it is in the sensations captured, documented and commented on by our creatives that we will be able to truly understand this moment.

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JUAN FRANCISCO PARDO

Caribbean Filmmaker



Artist: Renard Harris
Title: Yeng Culture
Year: 2020

Cover Image
Concept & Performance Artist: Waldane Walker
Photographer: Neil Waithe
Year: 2020



Artist: Awilda Sterling-Duprey

Title: 'Lacks Criticality' (solo performance)

Date: 2018

Photo credits: Johnny de los Santos

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Featured Artist: Awilda Sterling-Duprey
Title: Still from 'En-cierro'
Year: 2017
Duration: 6:12 min.

AWILDA STERLING-DUPREY

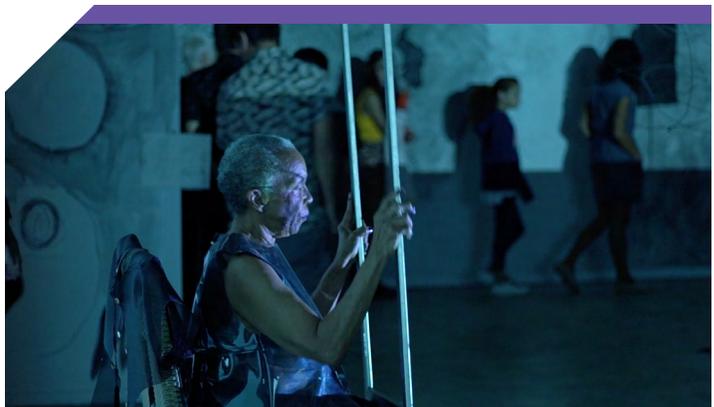
Visual Artist/
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Puerto Rico

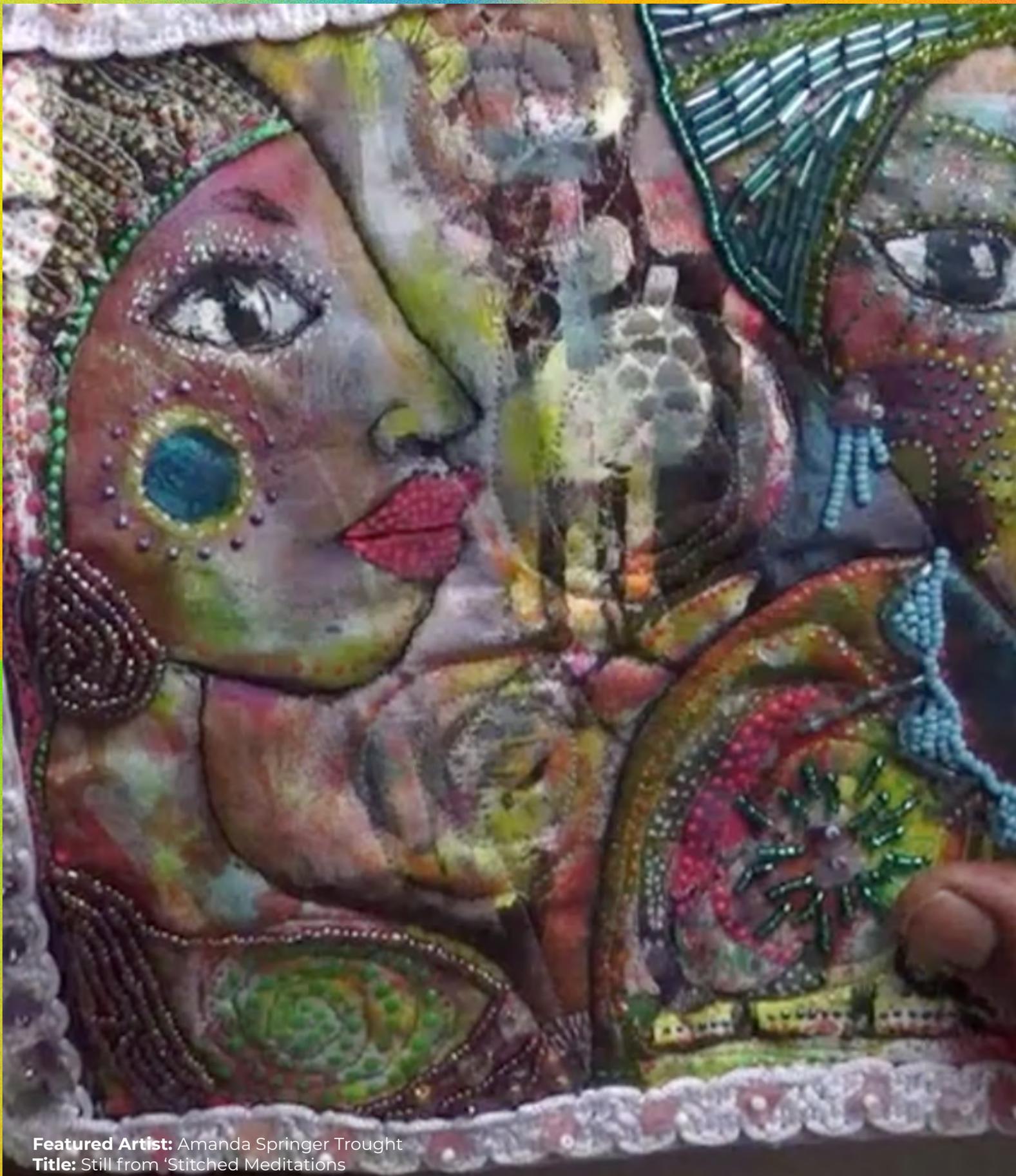
My artistic practice developed in Puerto Rico, as an extension of my daily life, where aesthetic concerns expands from modernity to postmodernity within the context of postcolonial studies, themes of marginality, invisibilization and resistance. Uncertainty is a consistent platform where the work sustains itself from precariousness, the ephemeral and the debris. Curiosity reflects a practical challenge to the conventional parameters within painting in Puerto Rico. I challenge the two-dimensionality of the pictorial plane through the three-dimensionality of the performance action. I am strongly driven to gesture and I also like to think of my body as the moving element in space. I use the three dimensional space as an imaginary canvas.

I have also found in installation, an ideal space to sustain a performatic practice of resistance. Marginalities are part of my self-representation. I point it out and take aspects of the living conditions of the marginalized sectors to the exhibition space. Through my performatic actions, I manage to make them visible. This is why at first instance I think about the production of my work from precariousness, the ephemeral and debris.



“
Uncertainty is a consistent platform where the work sustains itself from precariousness, the ephemeral and the debris.”





Featured Artist: Amanda Springer Trought
Title: Still from 'Stitched Meditations'
Year: 2020
Duration: 19:02 min

AMANDA SPRINGER TROUGHT

Mixed-Media Artist
Barbados

The video that was submitted, documents her practice and is entitled 'Stitched Meditations'. As a mixed-media artist, Amanda looks at working with painted fabric, stitches and embellishments to create a meditative practice around what is being called 'slow stitching'.



Amanda has been creating for over 20 years and collaborating with a variety of artists and projects from around the world in both group and solo exhibitions in London UK, Barbados, and Montserrat. She has received awards for her sculptures and textural wall hangings in the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts and in the 2018 Central Bank Crop Over Visual Arts Festival.

Her interests lie in using a variety of materials such as clay, fabric, recycled materials and collage to create the art and tell a story that impacts the viewer through the use of colour and texture. She explores how art and creativity can impact on health and well-being and how creative expression is used as a means of communication.



She curates the Arts in Health Network alongside writing for her website and blogs. She has been called upon to speak at a variety of conferences and seminars and small workshops on the impact of dementia on a care-giver. She produces weekly episodes for her podcast (Realityarts), blog and YouTube Channel sharing tutorials, talks on art, creativity, wellness and reviews.

“ She explores how art and creativity can impact on health and well-being.

”



Artist: Sharelly Emanuelson
Title: En Mi Pais (installation)
Year: 2020

SHARELLY EMANUELSON

Filmmaker, Visual Artist
& Cultural Worker
Curaçao

Through my work I try to explore and understand what it is I feel and see as a Caribbean reality. I experiment with aesthetic ways and signatures to represent the many stories that are available in the Netherlands Antilles and the Caribbean region and that add to a new visual narrative from my own Caribbean perspective. I emphasize the coexistence of people with different voices and explore the various reasons for conflicts, stereotypes and experiences in a society and materializes my experiences and observations. In my work, I visualize the effects of colonial times and the subsequent period of hyper-industrialization in the Caribbean. I also question the (im)possibility to visualize the current Caribbean reality and sensibility and my work reflects this struggle from an opinionated artistic perspective. Apart from my own practice I founded Uniarte, an artist-run foundation that enhances the visibility & development of emerging professional artists in the Caribbean region.



I wrote about my journey as an artist and how it was for me to move from the Caribbean to study in the Netherlands and then to have started with my own artist-run organisation that is still ongoing and is also having its 10th year anniversary.



“ I also question the (im) possibility to visualize the current Caribbean reality and sensibility... ”



“MAMA LAGAMI WAK”

By Sharelly Emanuelson

For as long as I can remember, I have always been fond of seeing new things and observing people in my surroundings. As an adult, I am still deeply curious and my surroundings now include the wider Caribbean and our collective as well as uniquely individual Experiences, which oftentimes is universal in nature. I am moved by the many ways in which we express ourselves culturally and strive to portray our Caribbean Experience in various ways through lens-based media. As a teenager I decided to be a storyteller and to transform my observations into representations of Caribbean people. In my twenties and thirties I grew into a filmmaker, an artist, and the founder of an artist-led organization. In this written feature, I gladly share parts of my process and trajectory in the creative space, navigating my multiple needs of creation, expression and connection, wrapped up in challenges and lessons I have encountered so far.

“Mama lagami wak”, is a common phrase of my childhood days, which means “mom let me see” in the Papiamentu language spoken in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao. I wanted to see what she was seeing, from behind that thing she held in her hands, close to her face, pointed at us. Now I feel very fortunate that the combination of my mom’s love for her kids and her creative nature, led to many childhood recordings and photographs that were captured. These recordings my mother made of me as a child, illustrate my deep curiosity. With my inquiring mind and the experience of a camera, came an understanding of the purpose and power of an image being captured for others to see.

I remember sitting in the backseat of our car, sometimes my mom would be driving and sometimes my dad. As I looked out into the streets, I would observe many cars in one area, I would hear music and see people gathered around each other. These groups of people on the streets lining up at snack bars or barber shops where music was being played represented an island custom during Christmas time that I did not quite understand as a kid. As was typical for me at that time, I blurted out my question of what was happening with intrigue and excitement. My father responded matter-factly that those people were playing Tambu. I knew by his answer that he was not interested to get out of the car and entertain my curiosity.

Needless to say, my childhood wonders and desire to wander were hardly satisfied. Yet, I was always **determined** and had a strong will to explore and discover things on my own. I persisted and did not let the fact that my parents’ interests and opinions did not always align with mine influence my thinking. Deep down, I knew that behind the traffic jam of people parking randomly on the street and the diversity of people surrounding the performance, this event was noteworthy and resonated with me.

Ironically, during my adolescent years, my father ended up **supporting my decision** and aspiration to study and become a filmmaker. He did this by worrying like most Caribbean parents would do, but also by searching for art institutions and guiding me with applications at schools in the Netherlands. We had several bench sessions where he would answer my questions and explained to me that if I wanted to obtain a goal, I must plan for it, strategize and have a budget in place to reach the desired objective.



Figure 1-My dad and I at my film premiere Su solo I playanan in Curacao

I believe that our parents, our surroundings and a series of circumstantial events influence how we perceive the world and think about ourselves and others. In a similar way, culture teaches us, and informs us about who we are, where we fit within a larger context, helping to form our identity. Much like my parents underestimated the importance of cultural expression in my daily lives, I think many islanders in our region undervalue culture and the creative industry.

Looking back, I can recognize that many childhood moments informed my way of looking from the outside while on the inside feeling connected to what I was observing. From my perspective, one feels

cultural experiences through a particular connection, a frequency through the body and soul, a spiritual feeling. I am still exploring and discovering this natural connection with collective memory and culture that I experience from the **position of an outsider and insider**. From my position, I have not always had access, though I have learned to navigate the space(s) and show respect for all the differences amongst us.

As a kid I mainly observed “from a car seat window”, whereas as an adult, I am finally able to park my car and step out and experience various cultural events for myself, without being denied permission. I came to the realization that I had to be **away from home** in order to **move more towards home**. At this point I really started asking myself what is my culture, where do I fit in that culture, and how do I want to contribute to that culture? I think that our colonial history has had implications and has led to negligence of our own cultural realities, distraction of foreign influences and ignorance of our own value in exchange for an appraisal of the outside, “what is foreign is better”. Throughout my youth in Curaçao and Aruba, I was confronted by foreign representations originating from the United States, Europe and Latin America, which still dominate the Caribbean mediascape. In the beginning, this fueled my desire to open up new perspectives on Caribbean stories and experiences.

As I gained more knowledge and access to our local cultural events, I found it problematic that when culture was celebrated it oftentimes meant looking back, almost like being stuck in time. Maintaining this backward-looking narrative is primarily caused by the fact that there is a small group, who are the only ones with the uber “awareness of cultural importance” and they tend to continuously re-enact history in a very traditional, victimized manner. Personally, I envisioned moving forward from a place of strength, film would be my way of contributing to our self understanding, self love and forward movement.

Another important reason why I chose the field of documentary is because I felt that the “real” world was so rich and bizarre that I did not have to make up a fictional world if it was all right there in front of me. I thought to myself, life itself is interesting enough, I don’t need fiction to represent a compelling story that people can identify with. In retrospect, I was also acutely aware that if I wanted to make films in the Caribbean, I would not be able to make much fiction due to the financial restrictions. So, my choice for documentary was a very solid one. “Su Solo I Playanan”, my first film, was made with little to no budget, but with lots of creative measures - like turning my room and that of my brother into a mini hotel for the crew - and recruiting help from peer graduates who operated as crew members free of charge.

After I graduated, I could not take the same approach anymore. One of my methods to overcome constrictions of resources was to make sure I **can wear all the hats** on the set, which meant being able to operate the camera well enough myself. I also taught myself to edit, which meant that I would not have to depend on having a crew in order to make films. This is the path I took with my second film: “Mighty Lords, Kings and Queens”, for which I was approached by Gregory Richardson, who was a Phd student at the time, researching Carnival culture on Aruba. This documentary was made with a really small budget, where I directed, produced, did the camera and editing work myself. Upon

reexamination, this was also not the ideal way of operating as it puts a lot of strain and pressure on myself as I needed to wear many hats in addition to directing the film. I learned that I should **wear the hat(s) that fit me best**. Fortunately, my third film was a collaboration with a local film producer on Curaçao, Michel Drenthe from Caribbean Filmcom, who was impressed by my graduation film: "Su Solo I Playanan". He believed in me and asked me to direct what has become "Yamada", a portrait of the local musical group Grupo Serenada, which has existed for 40+ years, an ensemble committed to the preservation of Papiamentu songs. Another shift for me was when I tried my hand at fiction, I created my first short film: "Juni", which taught me to **be open** and **embrace genres** beyond documentary because this enhances the delivery of the stories I want to tell.



Figure 2- Still of Documentary "Yamada"

Through constantly testing and trying new ways of working, I have managed so far to make about 7 films, 5 installations and 1 single screen work. The duration of my film projects is approximately from 1 to 3 years from idea to finish. The reason I was able to make these films was because I tend to start with making films even if funding is not there. I really **believe** in each one of my films **and just start**. Besides just starting, **collaboration**, in the form of working with others to achieve an end goal, has also become a very important aspect of my success. I definitely do need others as I specialize in directing and others are great at other skills necessary to create a good film.

As I opened up to working with others, I quickly realized that **giving and receiving feedback** is a crucial part of progress. Receiving feedback is something that was challenging for me at first, but over the years I have learned to appreciate it and it is during moments of truth in projects that I learn much

more than if I would let my fears take over. My stance became that my work and style will evolve, each production will be an exercise to develop and grow upon. As I produce more work, I learn to live with the uncomfortable feelings of insecurity, of not knowing if things will work out, and knowing that those feelings might always be present.

Going back to my early filmmaking days, just after my first feature: "Su Solo I Playanan", there was a decisive moment that pushed me towards my Art practice. It started with a paradigm shift caused by my attendance and participation at the "Africa in the Picture" 2012 Film Festival. I remember being blown away when seeing "Ava & Gabriel" for the very first time, a seminal film of Curaçao, directed by Felix de Rooi in the 80's. The AITP festival made me more aware and critical to what I was making and how I would continue to go about it. This was the pivotal moment when I moved my practice beyond filmmaking and shifted my process to more research-based art works. I have an open and experimental approach that leads me to making audiovisual installations where I convey stories in a more active and immersive way. I established that representing the Caribbean reality by means of the documentary genre had limitations and fell short for me.

In my work, I seek a continuous balance between concepts, visual mediums and a combination of aesthetic forms that are natural and familiar to the Caribbean. My previous installations and films are characterized by a multitude of voices and sounds. I create spaces for specific experiences, my cinematographic installations create immersive experiences of life in the Caribbean. I like to create work where the audience can be a co-author and decide things for themselves like where they walk, what they experience and for how long. I am aware that the audience might not understand everything, especially when I present multi-lingual work to an International group, yet it remains important to me for them to create their own interpretation. I am always curious about how the audience interacts with others in the space while experiencing the work.



Figure 3- Still from "Doh Mix Meh Up: We Always Negotiatin" (2014)

The work: "My Doh Mix Meh Up: We Always Negotiatin" (2014), represents another important moment in my career because I was **open to experimentation** and abandoned the conventional method of filming based on a previously written script. Additionally, I decided to film the Lighting Parade, held at night, with what would be considered an incorrect camera exposure setting, which gave me a different result. This non conventional approach allowed me to conceptually construct the work afterwards. Instead of departing from a script, I worked from an idea and I worked without a film crew. The goal was to capture the intensity of the party from within, with the camera. In Aruba, many people from various cultural backgrounds come together and co-exist, which makes it challenging to put a finger on the national identity of the island. During Carnival the diversity within the community is negotiated over and over again: whoever experiences it, gets an understanding of the community. My recordings were informed by literature research and resulted in a spatial multi-screen installation that reflects the celebration of diversity. In "Doh Mix Meh Up", I experiment with the interaction between elements such as the capability/incapability of representation, presentation and understanding of a postcolonial time and space. In the work I used Calypso and Road March songs together with recordings of the discussions surrounding Carnival, both serving as a metaphor for negotiations on Aruban identity and nationalism, which keeps reinventing itself.



Figure 4- working on the edit of "Mighty Lords, Kings and Queens" documentary with Gregory Richardson and Omar Brown

Fortunately, my openness to experimenting led to multiple benefits and lessons. I learned that **one work can serve different purposes** and be presented in various ways and media, which all get a life of their own while being intricately linked to each other. To illustrate, the "Doh Mix Me Up" experiment and work was born while I was also filming the "Mighty Lords, Kings and Queens" documentary in a traditional way. Also, while embracing both Film as well as Art/Video Installations as ways in which I can tell stories,

Fast forward to 2018, my artistic journey in Aruba continues, as I was invited to create and present work at Caribbean Linked. The residency ended with a presentation at Ateliers '89 in the Academia di Bellas Artes, where I showed the installation "En Mi Pais" (2018). The residency reaffirmed the importance of having a **peer group** and the benefit of being in a **new environment** with creatives, immersed for a short period of time can lead to new creative heights. The work that was created invited viewers to reflect on questions around the divide between historical knowledge about one's island and the stories created to tell others. I aimed to challenge the notion of repeating dictation, sharing stories with island visitors without having self-awareness or truly understanding the context.



Figure 5- Picture of "En Mi Pais" Installation

To my good fortune, "En Mi Pais" (2018) later got selected to be part of an exhibition (2020) in the Netherlands for the Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst yearly nominations at the Schiedam museum, where I won the audience award. It is incredible to realize that my art work speaks to an international audience and resonates. I came to understand the importance of having a proper infrastructure to operate in as an artist who is trying to tell stories. With the **proper infrastructure** I refer to **local as well as international connections** within the industry. But also having people that believe in you and are willing to push you forward is very important to help you progress beyond your own means and imagination.

I was not always granted opportunities like I am now in this moment, and looking back it was tough being the only "foreigner" in class, at film school, feeling lonely and misunderstood. It was more than just the color of my skin, or the fact that I came from Curaçao, from the Caribbean, a place that they had very little knowledge of or understanding for. It was the fact that my perception and reality of back home had formed me differently, had informed me about life and possibilities differently. At times it felt like I was 10 steps behind and had to catch up. I was longing to connect with peers that knew what I was going through or were from the Caribbean region and that were studying film & arts

in the Netherlands as well. I remember knowing intuitively that a foundation was the best way to create a sustainable infrastructure that could also let you apply for **non-profit project** funding so in 2010 I did it. I founded Uniarte, not knowing all too well what it all entailed. I visited a notary and from the salary of my part time job I paid to set up a legal foundation.

Initially, the main idea I had was to create a platform with a Dutch Caribbean focus, which would enable the space and time for us Caribbean creatives studying abroad to get together and get to know each other. There weren't many of us in the Netherlands, but we were dispersed and living in different cities. I was at the same time also looking for ways to make myself and the people back home understand the importance of respecting art & and life experiences within our diverse communities. This led to several events that were organized whereby we brought together an exhibition, performances and educational talks.

From my experience as a filmmaker and artist I knew I needed space. A **space** to work, to breath, to gestate, to explore, to process. A safe space, not an establishment approved blue print, but a bottom up space, run by artists for and with fellow artists or just a room of one's own. The artist needs to be able to explore, to work their way through the chaos of uncertainty, to allow their art to be born in violent throes or serene meditation, or both. The artist needs to be able to face the potential of any situation or work of art with an honest and daring approach, irreverent of public opinion. This is the only way the artist can reach a form of security within themselves. This is the reason why Uniarte experimented with running a physical art space for a few years after starting off with occasional events. By offering a space, Uniarte also tried to influence and increase the way innovation and creativity is encouraged across social agendas and different generations. Around the world artist run spaces initiatives have proven to bring communal, cultural and economic benefits to break new ground.

And so with my artist organization, I had come to realize the most important thing, which is that **it is a process**. The finished artwork should not be the result by which success is measured. The development of the artist while exploring, gestating, failing, succeeding & innovating is. In this, the artist needs a supportive environment. An environment free of corporate or even semi-governmental & institutional interests. The artist needs room to work on their art without having to put labels, expected results or budgets on their unique material. And those thoughts became the first Uniarte statement made during the first year being active in Curaçao.

We all face challenges as artists and creatives, some of which can be alleviated by having artist organizations in place. For me the challenges started young, growing up on a Caribbean island with a curious spirit and creative mind and continuing my life journey towards becoming an artist and filmmaker was not an easy road, but I am grateful for the learnings and growth. To me the idea of coming back home and giving back to your country, meaning something for the next generation, has guided me so far and I feel that I am living in alignment with my purpose. I often ask myself: "who is investigating, documenting, narrating and showing our multiple selves and social/human needs?" The corresponding answer usually is a resounding statement "I must represent the beauty and complexity

of my Caribbean people". Ultimately, I want to have a profound and lasting contribution to the dialogue and artistic production that explores and documents the intricate nature of our Caribbean existence.



Figure 7- Film nights at Uniarte



Figure 8- Lectures Reclaiming history
by Margo Groenewoud



Figure 6- Albert Schoobaar providing theater lessons at Casa Moderna Project of Uniarte



Figure 9- Malsam Collective using the space at Uniarte



Artist: Sharelly Emanuelson
Title: En Mi Pais (installation)
Year: 2020



Featured performer: Adrian Young - Canboulay
Photographer: Shaun Rambaran
Date: 2020

ADRIAN YOUNG

Traditional Mas Performer
Trinidad & Tobago

In collaboration with graphic designer Kriston Chen, Future Jumbies helped facilitate the project called 'Sticks In De Yard'. This project encourages healthy play and community through stilt-walking which is an art form that has a cultural base in Trinidad. Part of 'Sticks In De Yard' is an initiative called #1000mokos. It's our growing Moko Jumbie community which includes friends and supporters of Traditional Mas. #1000mokos connects to various schools and under-resourced communities that are involved with the tradition of Moko Jumbies — both locally and in the wider Caribbean diaspora. The project extends into Carnival with affiliations to various Traditional Mas and Carnival bands. For 2021, we're looking to partner with community organisations (cultural, creative, faith-based, etc) to create opportunities for young people to teach and engage in their own communities. Together, we're working on building a more resilient, more playful, and thoughtful world to make and play Mas.



Traditional Mas is part of Trinidad and Tobago's national identity. That said, Mas depends heavily on not only Carnival Season, but every industry including Tourism, Sports and Entertainment. It also depends on seasons such as Christmas, Easter and Cricket celebrated in Trinidad and Tobago. Throughout the year, events such as conferences, weddings and workshops are held that sustain the livelihoods of many young individuals involved in the Moko Jumbie community. Many of these youth come from 'hot spot' areas. Mas therefore acts as a significant source of income and livelihood for individuals.

“

Together, we're working on building a more resilient, more playful, and thoughtful world to make and play Mas

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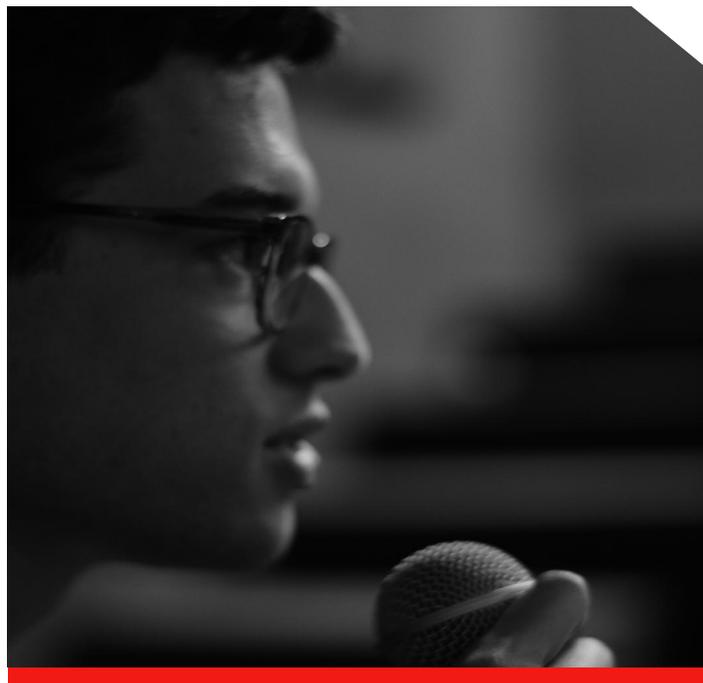


Artist: Erik Alfredo Martinez
Title: UN DÍA CUALQUIERA
Year: 2019
Duration: 00:13-00:27 seconds

ERIK ALFREDO MARTINEZ

Filmmaker, Animator & Writer
Dominican Republic

“UN DÍA CUALQUIERA” (2019) is a series of Super-8 loops that portray the everyday life of my native city, Santiago de los Caballeros. I attempted to convey the impression of a city in a rapid process of change and narrate through its kinetic montage of images how odyssey-like everyday life can be.



Un Día Cualquiera (Uno) Un Día Cualquiera (Dos)

Coming from a formation in film and media, I am interested in the intersection of disciplines and so I have jumped constantly from one medium to another. Because of my interest in the complexity of memory, culture and identity, my work is nurtured by the concepts of collage, the episodic and the eclectic. The creative practice is vital for me because it allows me to share the questions that I have —and more importantly— the ones that I lack, with others. It is the method of communication both with myself and the world around me.

Un Día Cualquiera (Tres) Un Día Cualquiera (Cuatro)

Un Día Cualquiera (Cinco)

“ I attempted to convey the impression of a city in a rapid process of change... ”



Artist: Renard Harris
Title: Yeng Culture
Date: 2020
Medium: Cardboard Sculpture
Photo credit: Romario Reid

RENARD HARRIS

Visual Artist
Jamaica

My work consists of three 3-dimensional Yeng Yeng CG 150 motorbikes made entirely from cardboard. Each bike is life-sized having the first and second style of bikes display a host of printed texts from various dancehall songs about bikes and other related themes. The third bike style displays a colourful body with red, yellow, blue and purple paint plastered on a black background. This design is used to reflect the current pop-culture era in which we live, where bright colours are mostly considered when decorating or representing ideas on surfaces. The work presents the bikes as a strong symbol that functions not just as a vehicle to transport people but as a valuable tool exploited for its features which are sometimes modified for entertainment purposes.



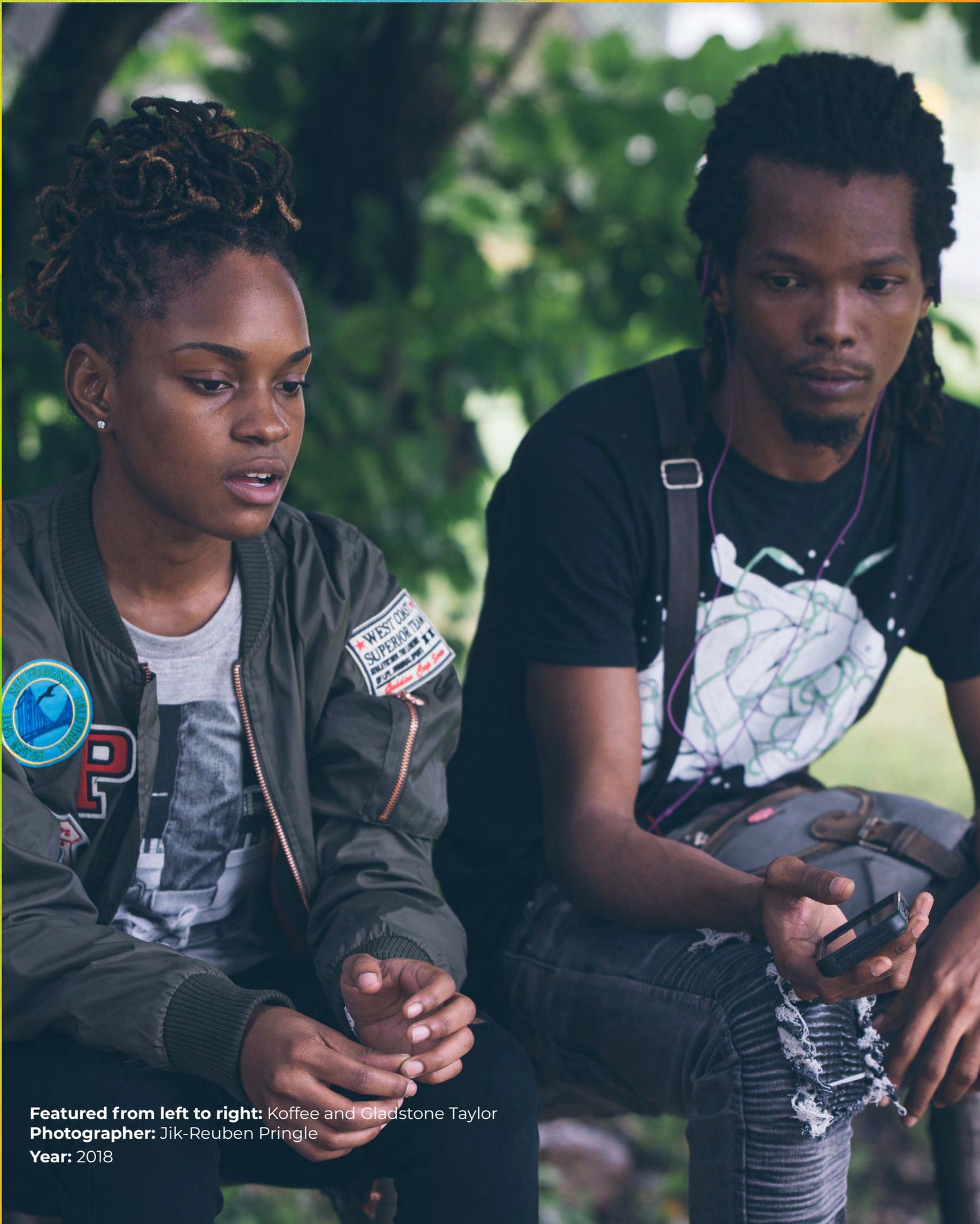
My cardboard sculptures form an installation which seeks to highlight the various aesthetic qualities that drives bike culture in Jamaica, such as design, sound and mechanism. The work looks at how each aesthetic function in the society in regards to the Yeng Yeng motor bikes which have recently become the most popular bikes in Jamaica. These printed texts appear between the lines of fingerprint designs which overlap each other covering certain areas of the bikes. Given the fact that fingerprints represents identity, this design is used in this sense as a metaphor highlighting identities shaped through motorbike culture.



“ My work is an installation which seeks to highlight the various aesthetic qualities that drives bike culture in Jamaica, such as design, sound and mechanism. ”







Featured from left to right: Koffee and Gladstone Taylor
Photographer: Jik-Reuben Pringle
Year: 2018

GLADSTONE TAYLOR

Music Journalist
Jamaica

The intention for the grant was to create an audio podcast called 'Momentum'. Momentum is a work-life podcast meant to strike at the core of creatives and crafts people who manage to find the balance and or harmony and excel at what they do. The goal is to share my experience as a freelance journalist living and working in Kingston, Jamaica but also to provide a place for creatives to check in and share some of their lives. For this episode I intend to share some audio recordings of interviews I've done with artists like Skillibeng, Tarrus Riley and more. In the last 15 minutes of the episode I share some of the things I've learned on my journey as a writer, and some stories to help put them in context through a stream of consciousness.



“ My work focuses on how the contemporary Jamaican reveals and is revealed to themselves through craft, art, movements of resistance, love and community.

”

My work as a freelance journalist living in Kingston, Jamaica has been the motivation behind creating this kind of podcast. My most recent works include stories on music and culture for Syfy Wire, Popdust, The Fader, Bandcamp and more. You can find my portfolio and samples of my work on Muck Rack. My work focuses on how the contemporary Jamaican reveals and is revealed to themselves through craft, art, movements of resistance, love and community.





Featured Artist: Kenneth A. Melendez Padilla
Title: Still from In Shot (How to make a mask)
Year: 2020
Duration: 20:22 min

KENNETH A. MELENDEZ PADILLA

Teaching Artist
Puerto Rico

As an artist, I enjoy creating traditional masks with diverse materials. I have exhibited artwork in the following venues: McDonough Museum of Art in Youngstown, Ohio; Esqueleto Gallery in Oberlin, Ohio; Lorain County Community College Gallery, Lorain, Ohio; Jazz Gallery, San Francisco, California; American History Museum, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Puerto Rican Culture, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Museum of Art, Ponce, Puerto Rico; etc.



I make masks and characters with giant heads. I use materials such as coconut, plastic, paper mache, gourd, wire mesh, wood, metal, leather, cardboard and foam. Currently, I am teaching children, teens and adults the importance of their Puerto Rican cultural traditions through the Arts. My emphasis is especially directed towards art and music.

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I am teaching children, teens and adults the importance of their Puerto Rican cultural traditions through the Arts

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Featured writer: A-dZiko Simba at Bocas Lit Fest
Photographer: Tanya Batson-Savage
Year: 2014

A-DZIKO SIMBA

Writer
Jamaica

I have worked as a creative artist for over 30 years. My written works have been published across media platforms including; an award winning novel, anthologies, television, live theatre and radio. I began my creative life as a writer-performer with Munirah Theatre Company in England and since 1992 I have used my skills in writing, storytelling, performance and workshop facilitation across the Caribbean working for private, governmental and non-governmental organisations and The University of the West Indies. I now reside in Jamaica where I use creative arts to facilitate the delivery of curriculum topics and social interventions, in the fields of gender violence, literacy, cultural retention and sexual reproductive health.



I am currently working on my second and third novels, both aimed at young adult readers.

My main concerns centre on finding ways to continue to support my ability to create as well as to earn from my creative skills.

In the interview I present two readings, the first from my debut novel 'All Over Again' (1st prize winner of the inaugural Burt Award for Caribbean Literature) and the second from my forthcoming novel, 'Deep Water'. Both novels are set in the Caribbean and target young adult readers. 'All Over Again' is a coming of age story



accompanying the torturous journey of the 12-year-old male protagonist as he attempts to negotiate the bewildering transition from childhood to not-quite-adulthood. I interspersed readings of excerpts with short discourses on my writing process, the impetus for the story and reasons for writing this story given the dilemma many of our Caribbean youth face in today's climate.

The protagonist of the second novel, 'Deep Water', is a 15 year old female who is shipwrecked on an island off Jamaica's coast along with 4 friends. The story's theme is not only about survival in a natural environment but also about the survival of the spirit of our ancestors and the importance of following their ever present voices coming to us from the spiritual realm.

“ **The story's theme is not only about survival in a natural environment but also about the survival of the spirit of our ancestors and the importance of following their ever present voices coming to us from the spiritual realm** ”



Artist: Adele Todd

Title: Documentation of performance on domestic abuse

Year: 2000 (rephotographed in 2021)

ADELE TODD

Visual Artist
Trinidad & Tobago

In my present body of work I look at children and all levels of armed security. I have been juggling this work along with every other aspect of life that continues to go on. I am very grateful to be able to do everything that I do. The body of work presently consists of four large pieces (over two feet high) are full colour embroidery pieces. I am interested in showing innocence contrasted against power and control. As parents we do our best to protect our children but do we ever really give the kind of protection that we believe we do? Our children still have to go out into the world and venture into all manner of issues on their own. I am looking at those messages that are sent without the awareness of signs, symbols, actions and subtle variations of meaning. I find that working on this topic at this time is important to me. With developments like the Black Lives Matter movement occurring there is even more fuel for this work.



I look at hard topics using soft materials as well as through Performance. I work in both Embroidery and Performance and I occasionally blend them together. I am presently working on a new body of work looking at children and their interaction with the armed forces. I believe that by showing the development of my work from sketches through to fruition, I can provide a great learning opportunity for the viewer.



“ I look at hard topics using soft materials ”

THE PROCESS OF DISCOVERY

Children and Police

Many of the collections or series of embroideries that I do have always been pulled from the pages of our local newspapers. In the year 2000 I was motivated by the spate of domestic violence cases that shouted out to me in bold black and white sans serif text of women murdered by their boyfriends and husbands. I chose embroidery at that time as a way to make some sort of dent in the landscape of Art in Trinidad and Tobago.

At the time the sort of things you would see at exhibitions was very commercial. Even the Artists who were successful enough to be working at home and abroad I felt had not been interested in addressing the issues that tore at our social fabric. I also felt that if I did not speak out through my work, I would be remiss. I would have been yet another creative person with no mark of what our world was. Most of all, I did not want to be another Artist papering over what to me was real world problems faced on our idyllic island spaces.

What was this cognitive dissonance as Franz Fanon would attest? How could I or anyone be pretending not to see what we perceive? Or feel what we feel? The unique spaces of the Caribbean is to be addressed. Having gone to school in the United States, the difference of growing up on an island as opposed to America or London, I realised that I had to clear my path and make my voice heard in my work. So I was motivated by a sense of helplessness and I began asking many questions through the medium of thread.

I started by asking, why was it that we did not represent our daily struggles in our work? Why was it that we did it very well in our Calypso and Soca renditions, in the writings of two of our Laureates, Walcott and Naipaul, yet, was so bankrupt in our Arts?

Art is a choice, but in 2020, I still find the questions that I asked then, even more relevant today. It was that niggling question that leapt out at me as I looked at the face of a young woman in better times with her ex-husband at their wedding. A young woman who had loved and been cherished once and now lay dead .

It was then that I decided to read all that I could about the Domestic Violence Act that at that time was being extended and argued in Parliament.

I began that body of work with the Act as the base to the fifty six pieces I would eventually exhibit. From felt silhouettes to tea towels, jewellery and kitchen towels with the Domestic Violence Act stitched into the weave.

After that show created an unexpected reaction from the public, I knew that I was making work that resonated. I was making work that meant something more to me and it would be my path.

My embroidery is always affected by life in my island. It is always impacted by the images seen in the pages of The Trinidad Guardian, The Express or Newsday. I honor the Photographers who capture life and bring the stories to us the citizens. In fact in my first show I sought out the Writer of the article and she was moved by my acknowledgement of her and by what I achieved in putting the work together. That too was another layer to the making of HIT! A visual documentation on Domestic Violence. An Artists' place is within the struggles of the day to day and the mundane. It is left to us to make sense of what is absurd.

I have looked at the Police, the Army and the Judiciary over my two decades of Art making with Embroidery and Performance and now I am moved by a new series of images I have collected over a decade. I was struck most recently with this new body of work by the framing of the picture of a toddler holding the hand of his mother as an Army man stood with his gun at his side. The contrast between the vulnerable woman and child against the hard steel and the protectiveness yet separation of the officer was one that I wanted to create as a large embroidery piece.

Although I focus on the realism and copying as the main source of what I do, I interpret what I see in grainy or colored newspaper clippings as one would a memory. I do not stick to colour or positioning doggedly. My process uses the action of piercing the canvases' surface, working one thread at a time as a form of discipline and meditation on topics that are not the typical ones that are imagined in thread.

I am about the Technique of threads as Drawing, and of Storytelling.

There is an unexpectedness in choosing to labor over achieving the stance of a little girl or little boy in a uniform and juxtapositioning images of authority in their uniforms. This first came to light for me after I had done a body of thirty- two embroideries on red linen for a show I called Black Guard. That show dealt with the disillusionment of our perceptions of our Armed Forces and Police against the colours of our national flag. I decided to continue to look at Authority with greater scrutiny.

When I take up the references from the newspaper that I collect, my Graphic Design training comes into play as well. I am conscious of the overall impression I glean from both my Design and Art practices being married in my tendency to work on ideas as a Collection.

The first image for Children and Police started a determination to ask questions and when I do that, the drive to make Art begins for me in earnest. For our children we have our greatest dreams. We want them to be safe. We want them to have good lives. We do whatever we can to protect them. But they have to go out into the world. I present along with this essay images that I repeat, and I do so to show the tension faced between children and authority. It is a tenuous divide. Are children really protected? Can they really be cocooned in a world that they have to traverse, sometimes daily? This collection features children in environments that officers walk through. I interpret the toys by using crochet thread for guns. I look at the rituals of childhood that we take for granted.

Two little boys walk swiftly by a group of Officers who are casing a block, the Officers are on the job, protecting the neighborhood. The children do not linger. They are getting to school. The moment captured shows that instance that can be interpreted in more than one way.

For Catapult, I decided that instead of featuring past work, I would welcome the viewer into the world of work in progress in all of its facets of insecurity and shifting perspectives. Why not take the opportunity to bring the viewer along this path of discovery?

I am in the second stage of completion. My intention is to make seven embroideries that vary in size from three to six feet. I shall also include soft sculptural pieces.

My objective is to compare and contrast the stillness and literal aspect of the embroidery pieces against the organic forms of the sculptural elements

Embroidery on Canvas - Size: 24 1/2" height x 26 1/2" width

A look at boys traversing the space

DETAIL

Photo Journalist: Nicole Drayton



School boys walk towards police officers the scene of the murder of Nigel Francis inset, in San Lito, Port-of-Spain, yesterday
PICTURE: NICOLE DRAYTON



LEFT: Embroidery and felt on Canvas - Size: 25 1/2" height x 25 1/2" width

Little girl among soldiers

DETAIL

Photo Journalist: Anthony Harris

and the piece that started it all: The little boy and his Mother
Embroidery on Canvas - Size: 25 : height x 17" width

DETAIL: and rough sketching

Photo Journalist: Michael Bruce





Embroidery on Canvas - Size: 25 " height x 27 1/4 width
The little boys against guns
with a view of the back of the canvas.

DETAIL (Front and Back)
Photo Journalist: Robert Taylor



Embroidery on canvas - Size: 24 1/2 height x 26 1/2 wide

A look at boys traversing the space
DETAIL





Artistic creator and Performance Artist: Waldane Walker
Photographer: Chadrick Barnes
Year: 2020

WALDANE WALKER

Performance Artist
Jamaica

The 'Actors After Dark' podcast was established to facilitate a creative space wherein budding, established and veteran thespians could join in sharing laughter, stories, mentorship for developing actors, assist in the navigating of the creative industry and fostering the creation of new stories, thus rewriting the narrative that clouds the sacred art of Theatre. With the declaration of the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic placing restrictions on gatherings, the plan to have a physical space for these activities was dissolved and the birth of this podcast emanated.



The podcast seeks to provide a platform, not only to share stories yet, seeks to facilitate fellowship between thespians. These collaborations and hopeful future partnerships, we affirm will continue to support the action towards the amalgamation of creatives across the Caribbean region and internationally.

"Bifoe gud food pwile, meck belly bus" – Before allowing good food to go to waste allow the stomach to burst. A common proverb tendered to me during my early years. The artist I represent today is grounded by this Jamaican expression. Firstly, highlighting the traditional practices, employed to articulate my artistic expressions and secondly denoting the fondness in a well-told story. For me the art that lies inside the communication of an efficacious story equates to the potency of Art as a revered discipline.



The artistic embodiment for which I am fervent represents a juxtaposing fusion. Amalgamating the performing and visual arts, toward supporting an aesthetic dynamic. Within a practice-led, process-based explorative methodology, my investigations and discoveries aim to provoke a dialectic that infects and interrogates socio-economic concerns. These concerns are addressed specifically with the individual reflecting upon the work as a mirroring of themselves. Thus, intrinsically placing them in a state of discomfort with self, leaving them to either address themselves or to continue masking...

“...my investigations and discoveries aim to provoke a dialectic that infects and interrogates socio-economic concerns”



Artistic creator and Performance Artist: Waldane Walker
Photographer: Chadrick Barnes
Year: 2020



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THE AMERICAN FRIENDS
OF JAMAICA





Caribbean Artist Showcase

CATAPULT | A CARIBBEAN ARTS GRANT

COVID-19 Arts Grant Supports 1,200
Creatives in 25 Caribbean Countries

CATAPULT | A Caribbean Arts Grant is a COVID-19 emergency relief conceptualised by Kingston Creative (Jamaica) and Fresh Milk (Barbados) and funded by the American Friends of Jamaica | The AFJ (USA). Designed as a capacity-building initiative, it provided direct support to over 1200 Caribbean artists, cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs impacted by the pandemic and working in the themes of culture, human rights, gender, LGBTQIA+ and climate justice.