

Stay Home Artist Residency

RESIDENT BLOGS

Issue 2, Vol. 4

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Jamaica
Post #4









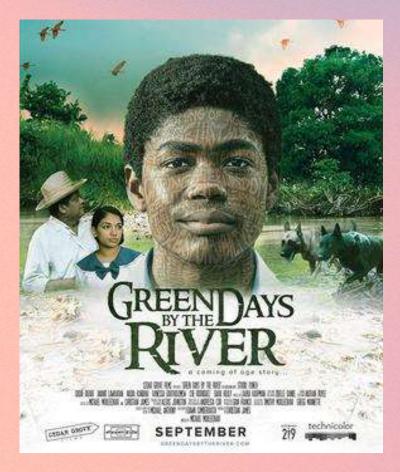




Lisa Allen-Agostini

Trinidad & Tobago Post #4

Switch



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It can be jarring to switch from writing fiction to writing for the screen. At first you think, what's the difference? A story's a story.

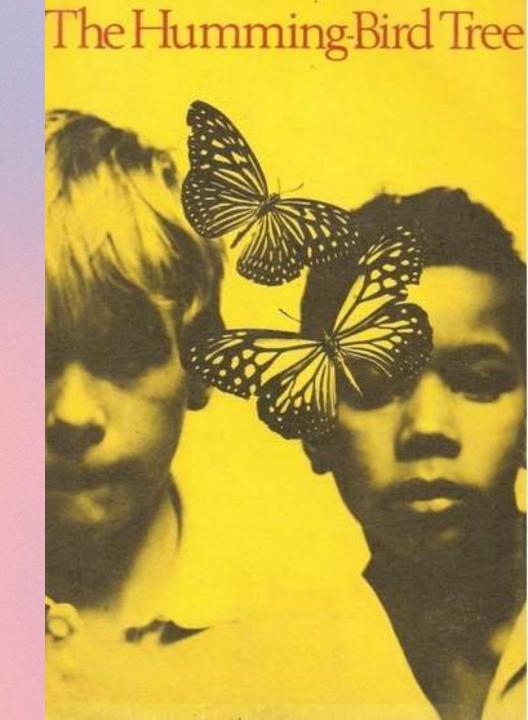
And that's true to a certain point. However, as I realise more and more, medium matters. The plot of the work of fiction and the film might be the same, but the way it's written is different. Fiction presents the outside through looking inside. Film presents the inside through looking at the outside.

Photo: The film adaptation of Michael Anthony's novel Green Days by the River was written by Dawn Cumberbatch.

Though as a fiction writer I know the cardinal rule "Show, don't tell," I still have the luxury of writing in a story, for example, "John furrowed his brow in concentration, thinking of"... whatever's on John's mind. The writer can explicitly tell you characters' thoughts in fiction. In film, unless there's a voiceover giving an interior monologue, you can't express thought, only gesture, speech, facial expression, movement or dialogue. "John furrows his brow." The tricky thing in film is showing the inside. How to convey what is bothering John without having him say it out loud?

Fiction and film both require pacing. Pacing's a writerly term for how fast or slowly action progresses in the work. I've never paid as much conscious attention to this as I am now that I'm writing a film. I take for granted that in my fiction there's a rhythm, each story moving with its own trembling or barreling step. Perhaps it's because I've written fiction for so many years that I take it for granted. Film is newer to me, so I'm feeling out things like, "What's a scene?" and "How many beats does every scene need?"

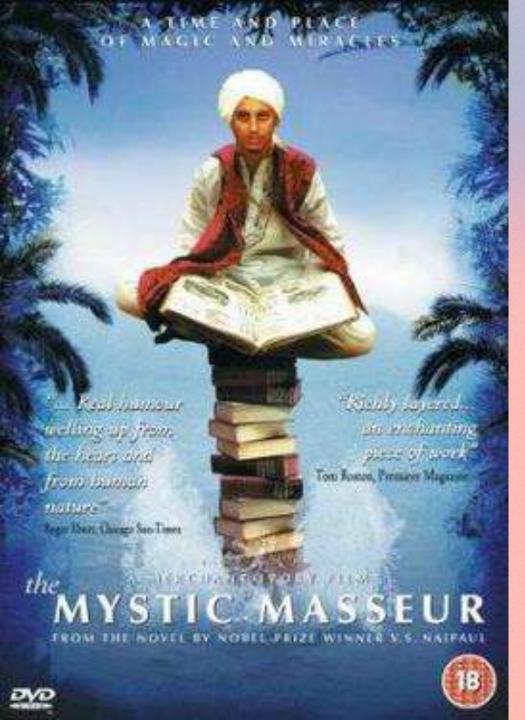
Photo: The Hummingbird Tree was adapted by Jonathan Falla from the novel by Guyanese writer lan McDonald.





Fortunately, over the past few weeks I've had support to think through my script ideas. CATAPULT's Stay Home Artist Residency, which I'm on, includes a meeting with a mentor. I was assigned Janet Morrisson, a Jamaican filmmaker. Like me she came to film after another career. She also has grown children. I felt seen when we talked.

Photo: Jamaican writer/director Janet Morrison. Photo courtesy: <u>Jamaicans.com</u>



I was sure I was going to finish a first draft of the script by the end of this residency. I haven't. I've actually gone backwards: I am starting a new treatment based on the conversation with Janet and the one I subsequently had with Angeli Macfarlane, who is a script editor based in the UK.

I have new questions about the story I want to tell and who will be telling it. I also got challenged on why I and not some other writer should be the one telling this story. It was a good question, forcing me to really consider my positionality as a black woman writer living in Trinidad.

Photo: The Mystic Masseur by VS Naipaul was adapted for the screen by Kittitian-British writer Caryl Phillips.

Though the CATAPULT residence ended on November 27, I'm continuing with writing the script project with God's help and guidance. I've been carping for years about the dearth of Caribbean feature films. This is a chance to add one to the list.

And, in the meanwhile, the novel's author Monique Roffey's new book has been shortlisted for two significant UK literary awards. It's good news and I hope it makes our project even more marketable to buyers.

Photo: Monique Roffey Twitter





Both these noms have me feeling grateful, incredulous and proud. Stickers too! @CostaBookAwards @GoldsmithsPrize #fiction #caribbean #WritingCommunity #amwriting #Mermaid

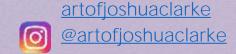


Manchester Writing School and 2 others

9:26 AM Nov 30, 2020 - Twitter for iPhone



Joshua Clarke



Barbados *Post #4*

This has been an ultimately bizarre and rewarding journey for me. This year has been a combination of alarming stress and surprising opportunity.

At the close of this residency what I'm most thankful for was honestly the moment of respite. When it boils down to it my work has been laser focused on speed and productivity. But this residency has been a chance to breathe, both literally and metaphorically.

I truly believe that art cannot be separated from the political, but this year has really been a catalyst to let go of self doubt and cast explicit defiance into the teeth of the roiling maw of reality. The pressure cooker of 2020 has been abrasive in remarkable ways. Otherwise supportive folks will look at the active evil of men like Trump and attribute to mental illness what is merely active disregard for others. In the face of Nelson's removal, white Barbadians have been more blatant and insistent in their racism than ever. Across the globe the fallout of climate misconduct of colonialists is hammering their former colonies - and yet, we create and we persevere. That anger is what I channel into my work, it's what my friends hear in my voice when I discuss any of these topics, it's what roils in my brain as the stories that anchor these pieces rattle around my head.



This one I'm most proud of in a way because the changes that I've made have been most directly influenced by events as they'd unfolded. I'd originally envisioned the empire under siege by those who sought to dethrone the idols of empire but with Nelson actually taken down I had the idea to show the act of dethroning in the moment, a flash of light, a blast of heat, a burned idol cast into the long dark.

This piece was always going to be the most personal to me, even as I write this I'm considering the fact that I'm in a depressive period of bipolar disorder. I've achieved much despite (and in this specific case because) of my illness. But the addition of the rain was definitely something that felt especially relevant in the moment.



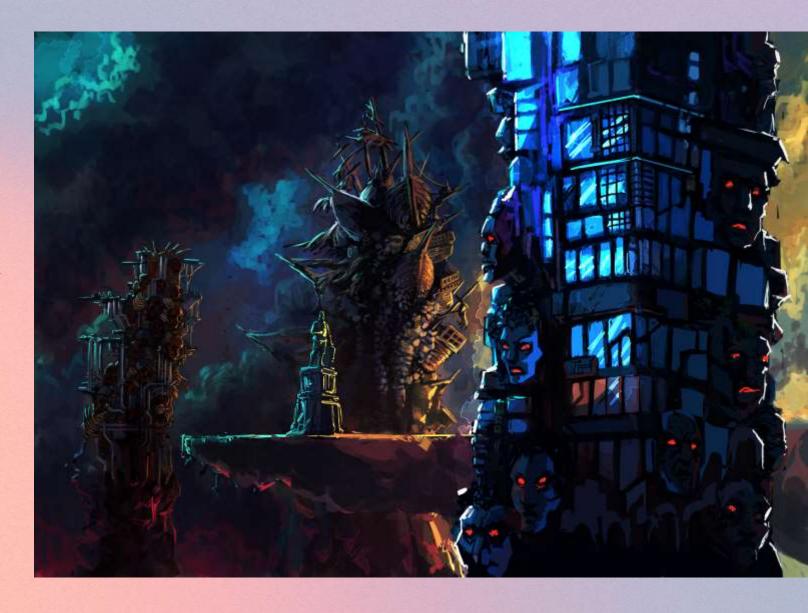
Madnesses 2nd Movement 2nd Stanza - Unshed Burdens View the GIF of the piece here



This is another one that metamorphosed as more details of current events struck me, but most significant was the looming threat of the oil tanker threatening to obliterate our oceans, and the unrelenting hammer of hurricanes pounding island nations. This one was the way my mind linked the two, the oily miasma leaking into not just the sea but the very sky - and hauling all the fury of nature behind it, beautiful and terrible.

This one is just a more distilled expression of my feelings of the current state of much of the world. A monument to death, precariously on the edge, weighed down by the trappings we cling to venerate a cruel past, and surrounded by evidence of crimes celebrated instead of avenged.

I am eternally grateful to Fresh Milk, Kingston Creative and the AFJ for allowing me to go on this journey. And for the friends who suggested, nay demanded, that I take this trip.





Sonia Farmer

The Bahamas

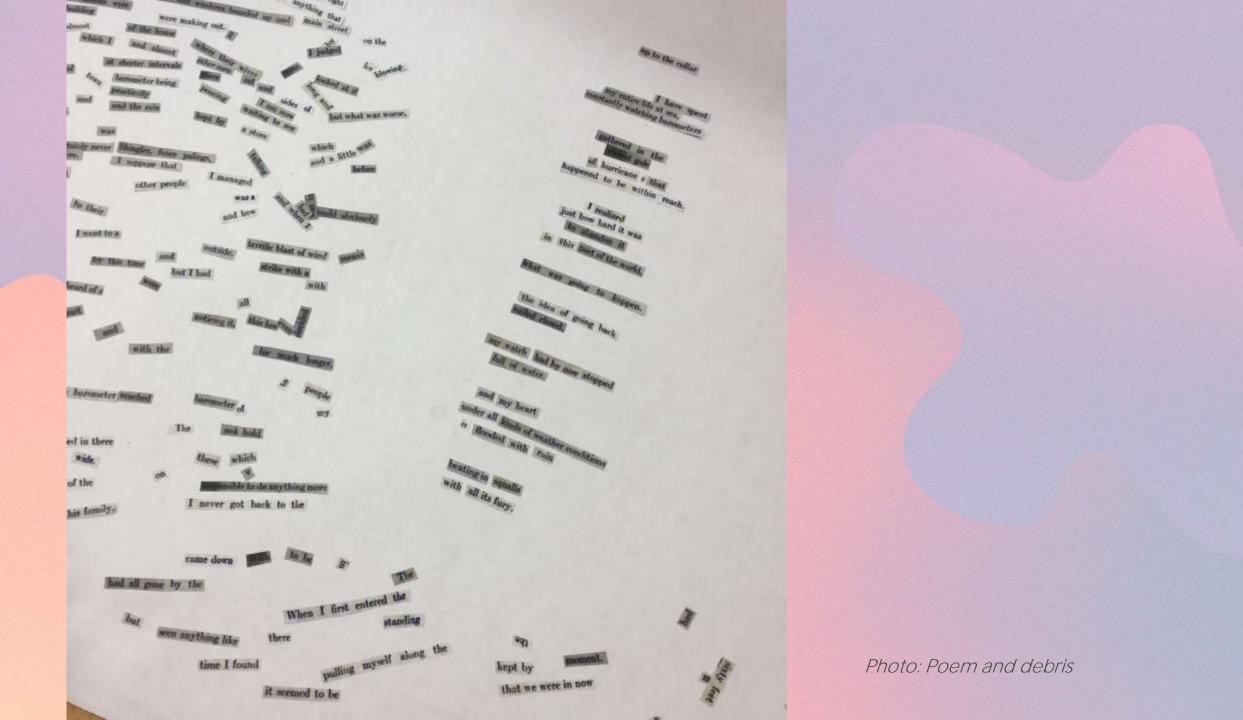
Post #4

So this is how it ends—like any other day.

This "stay-at-home" residency was the best solution for a year defined by social isolation, but with it came many personal difficulties of creating hard boundaries around my creative projects, work projects and the demands of home to meet my own expectations of how much work I should complete in a "normal" residency where we relocate with only our creative project in mind to nurse, contend with, and grow with undivided attention. Reflecting on the past eight weeks, I find myself wishing I had done more, but trying to remind myself—in all things 2020—that one can only do their best in a pandemic, and that I have been very lucky to get the chance to start something new and exciting in my practice. I would not have gotten this far on my project without it.

In the past two weeks, I had the opportunity to speak with one of the CATAPULT visiting curators/mentors, Debra Providence, an educator, writer and researcher who teaches creative writing and literature at the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies. Well, if I'm being honest, I did most of the speaking—something I didn't realize until we neared the end of our time together. I think I am also missing that aspect of a traditional residency where one creates in a space alongside other artists, and therefore constantly engages in illuminating conversations about craft or informal workshops/reflections. I had few people to speak to about my creative process in this residency, and found I had a lot pent up to say or work through out loud. So even though, when Dr. Providence could get a word in, I left with some key resources for further research she suggested, I found the most helpful aspect of the visit was just the chance to lay everything out and clarify, out loud, this project. I am relieved to say it all made sense, when I heard myself. I am grateful for her attention and thoughtful responses!

I end my residency with clarity and direction on a project that I couldn't have moved off the backburner without the support of this CATAPULT initiative. I'm so grateful that my practice has been able to take a few steps in a new direction concerning itself with climate injustice in exploited and vulnerable places like the Caribbean. As we move into the uncertainty of 2021, I am glad that I have a project that I can continue to shape and finalize. Finally, I owe so much to Leanne Russell, who has been so generous in sharing her creative practice and resources and trusting me to engage with her work via "The Things We Inherit". I hope our collaboration will endure long after the book project has been editioned.





Jorge González

Puerto Rico

Post #4



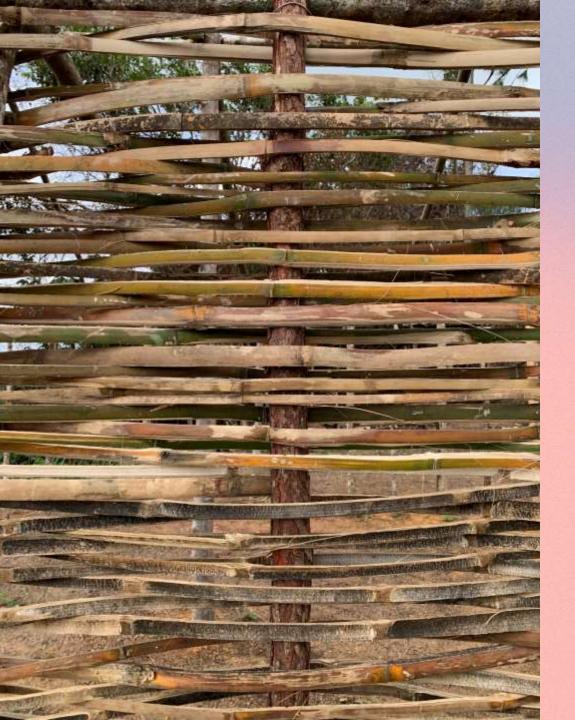


Limaní (place of many waters)

Over the course of the past two months we have delved into the realization of a house that extends from the generosity of knowledge and resources from master weaver and Afro-Boricua healer Edwin Marcucci, his family, and their barrio Limaní, located in the central town of Adjuntas, Puerto Rico.

Founded on principles of collective learning and mutual support, this process carries special significance, given the historical moment where the opportunity arises to deepen the bond with a family that has supported Escuela de Oficios initiative from an early start. Together we have put forth exchanges to enable other ways in which we can relate to an alternative education in the arts, by way of weaving, as a source that compliments varied knowledge in relationship with the land. Since the beginning of our working relationship with Edwin there has been a guiding element that sheds light on the lives of those not physically present, but among us in the voices and wisdom of teachers, that like him, makes us aware of the necessity to grow strong, proud, and open to develop skills for our self-sufficiency.

The house is a flexible verb, as my partner, Alejandra Domínguez, wrote during of this early stage in the realization of this site, which searches for the essential, as a way to heal, sustain, and care, for the living and the dead.











Gwladys Gambie

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Martinique *Post #4*

Broderie Composée 2

Les coutures opérées sur les feuilles de banane étaient également une expérimentation. La feuille, vivante, elle se replie ou encore comme la feuille de bananier. Telles des archives, diverses photographies ont été prises pour suivre l'évolution de la feuille ainsi que la broderie durant le séchage.

Le rouge pourrait être le sang. Les empreintes de mon corps sur le tissu sont comme des traces de coup. Des mots les accompagnent, comme un chant, une déclaration, des cris. Dans cette exploration graphique, le corps est un doux paysage sensible, mais aussi terrain miné, violenté, dominé comme il est écrit sur le tissu. Dans mes écrits, le corps féminin est contrôlé, censurée, désirée, et pourtant, il est également terre érotique, territoire secret, paysage sauvage, onirique où se déplace le frisson, île à explorer dans toute sa sensualité. Ces tissus, ces peaux, sont comme les pages d'un livre.



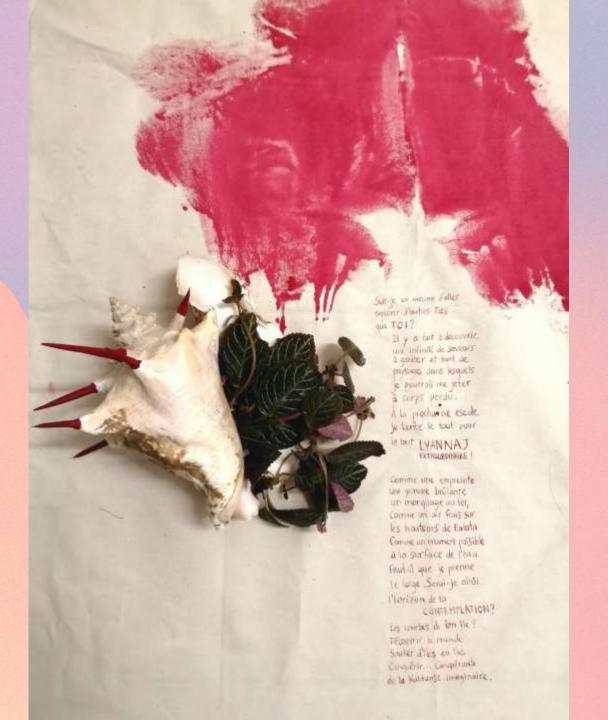






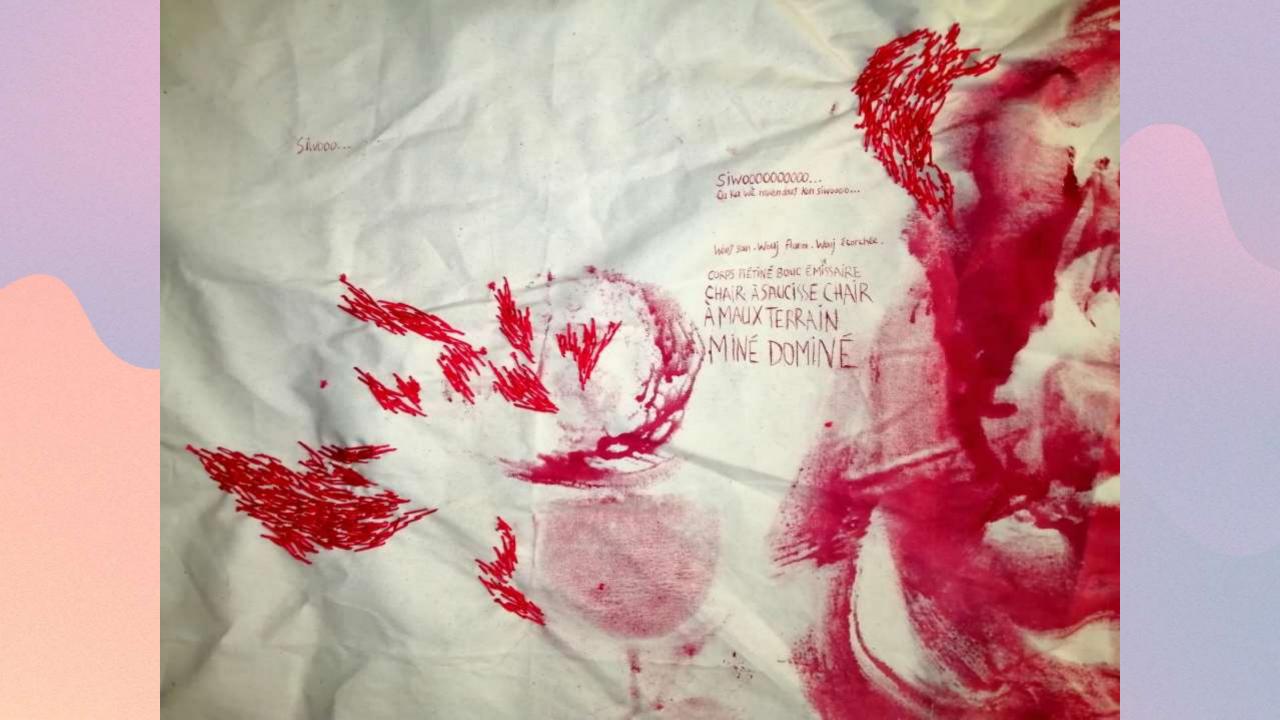






Avec Matilde Dos Santos, nous avons vu la broderie comme un langage politique, comme un acte de résistance, de dénonciation, de mémoire, à travers la pratique de diverses artistes comme Rosana Paulino, Lia Mara Barreta. La broderie, symbole d'asservissement, de sexisme, devient un langage puissant et violent.

Ce travail n'est pas encore achevé. Il s'agira probablement d'un triptyque composant une installation, avec quelques objets dont la conque de lambi, élément récurant dans mon travail plastique.

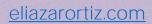






Comme une empreinte, une gravure brûlante au souffle chaud. Comme un air frais sur les hauteurs de Balata, comme un moment paisible à la surface de l'eau. Faut-il que je prenne le large ? Serai-je l'horizon de ta contemplation ? Voir d'autres horizons, découvrir le monde, sauter d'îles en îles.

Conquérir...Conquérante de la kaldanse imaginaire.





Eliazar Ortiz Roa

Dominican Republic

Post #4

En español:

Mi motivación principal para crear un proyecto como Nigua es ese afán de descubrir el misterio de donde vienen mis orígenes africanos. Hice un ejercicio de memoria y recordé que el primer encuentro con esas raíces fué desde temprana edad yendo a las fiestas de palo y presenciando el Vudú dominicano,

recuerdo especialmente la dualidad de género de los espíritus en el Vudú, Metresa cuando es femenino, cuando es masculino se llama Luá ().

Ahora reconozco que siempre estuvo presente en mi vida la riqueza espiritual que nos han dejado nuestros ancestros africanos.

i. Apuntes sobre el origen y práctica del Vudú: Noticia Diario Hispaniola

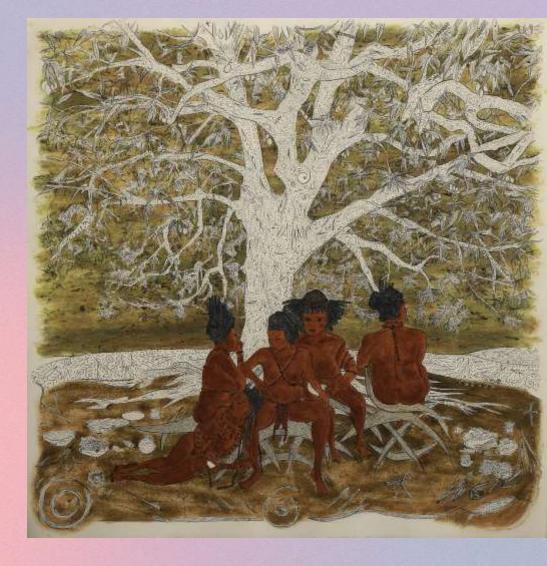


En la pieza de La Coronación de Ana María vienen rondando por mi cabeza dos referencias antagónicas, una que no solo me influenció a mí, pues calo fuerte en la cultura popular dominicana, fue la telenovela brasileña de los 90's Xica da Silva (ii) y la novela de Maryse Condé, Yo, Tituba, la bruja de Salem (iii). Ambas protagonistas me dejaron huella. De Xica quería desmontar todo lo colonial que esta historia representa, reflejada en la repetición de la violencia y el afán de ella en querer ser blanca. Tituba quería enaltecer su conexión con la naturaleza, lo mítico de ser bruja.

Prefiero dejar en la memoria la huella de la victoria, donde no se identifica cuál de ellas es Ana María, porque todas ellas pueden serlo y todas llevan la corona. Me imagine una celebración-ritual emulando tribus de diversas partes del mundo, pueblos que comparten una historia colonial.

ii. Xica da Silva, telenovela brasileña del 1996 dirigida por Walter Avancini y Jacques Lagoa, su popularidad transcendió a África, siendo la telenovela más famosa sobre la esclavitud. Cabe destacar que su protagonista, Taís Araújo visitó la Republica Dominicana tras el éxito televisivo, llenado el estadio olímpico de una multitud de fanes.

iii. Yo, Tituba, la bruja negra de Salem, Maryse Condé, 1986, Fondo Editorial Casa de las Américas.



Arriba: La coronación de Ana Maria, 2020, Petalos de flamboyan, hibiscus, pigmentos de hoja de nigua, corteza de guayaba, café, jiquilite, semilla de aguacate y bija, tinta sobre papel, 66 cm x 66 cm



La pieza de los amantes en la Zafra, es como un recordatorio de la transgresión de los cuerpos en medio de la opresión. Las masculinidades negras y la trasmutación del lenguaje son pistas que desvelan esta pieza. Cambie el nombre del dibujo a La petite mort nan Zafra la, Inspirado en la evolución de la lengua. Posiblemente el acto más importante de nuestra cultura caribeña fue descolonizar la le gua que dio nacimiento de forma natural a nuestros creoles, códigos de protección colectiva que también me inspiran a continuar mi lenguaje de signos, mis sellos o sigillum que recién los he nombro Guari Kreyol.

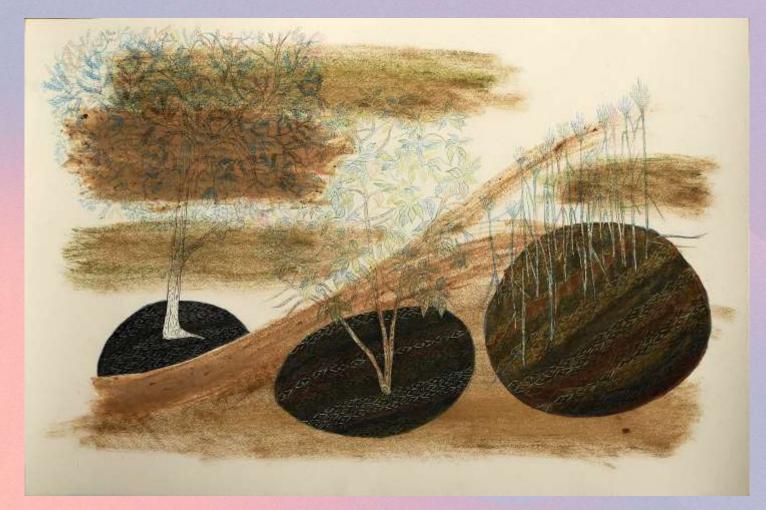
Izquierda: La petit mort nan Zafra la, 2020, Pétalos de flor de algodón, tulipan africano, pigmento de hoja de nigua, jiquilite, escamas de alas de mariposa mármol haitiano y voladora del golfo, tinta sobre papel, 70 cm x 55 cm. Las Antillas son territorios contenedores de lo foráneo. El jícaro es el árbol que da el fruto que sirve de vasija desde tiempos ancestrales. Estas formas recipientes dan inicio a una serie de dibujos de nuestra flora foránea.

Volviendo al misterio, para mi la palma de coco, al ser de origen aún desconocido, representa esa esencia, esa cosa recóndita que no se puede explicar, una mata que posiblemente colonizó tierras por sí sola desplazándose por el mar. Esto me da paso a fantasear y crear un espíritu, una entidad hibrida que proteja la naturaleza.

Derecha: Flamboyanes, 2020, Pétalos de túlipan Africano, pigmento de hoja de nigua, lapíz sobre papel, 39 cm x 42 cm







Izquierda: Rulo, 2020, Pigmento de hoja de nigua, jagua, cúrcuma, lapíz sobre papel, 29 cm x 42 cm

Arriba: Yerba de guinea, Noni y Tamarindo, 2020, Pe'talos de tulipan africano, hoja de nigua, pigmento de jagua, curcuma, lapíz sobre papel, 57 x 38 cm

Estoy muy agradecido con la oportunidad de me han dado en el acompañamiento el proyecto de Nigua. Lo único que no quiero perder es la esperanza. Este periodo de pandemia es para mí una experiencia de introspección. Creo que reconocer y valorar nuestro entorno natural es también respetarnos en nuestra propia naturaleza humana. Esa misión parte de lo individual para poder conectar con la comunidad.



Proyecto Nigua Informe IV. Click arriba para ver en YouTube



In English:

My main motivation for creating a project like Nigua is that desire to discover the mystery of where my African origins come from. I did a memory exercise and I remembered that the first encounter with those roots was from an early age going to stick parties and witnessing Dominican Voodoo. I especially remember the gender duality of the spirits in Voodoo, Metresa when the spirit is feminine, when it is male it is called Luá (i).

Now I recognize that the spiritual wealth that our African ancestors have left us was always present in my life.

i. Notes on the origin and practice of Voodoo: <u>Hispaniola</u> Newspaper Article

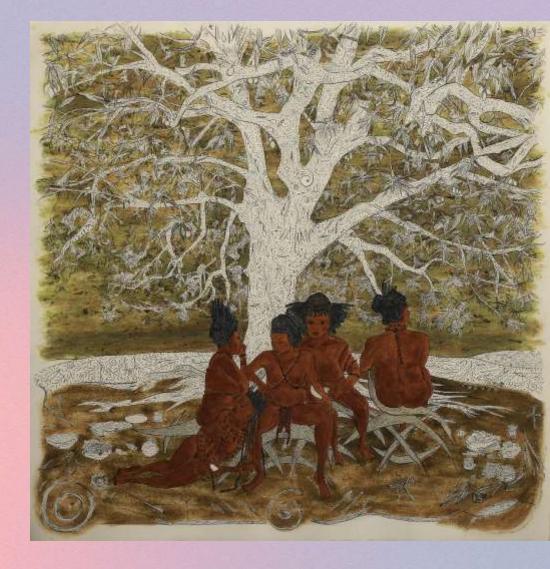
Photo: Luá Kokoye

In the piece of The Coronation of Ana María, two antagonistic references have been hovering in my head, one that not only influenced me, as it was very popular in Dominican popular culture, was the Brazilian telenovela of the 90's Xica da Silva (ii) and Maryse Condé's novel I, Tituba, the Salem Witch (iii). Both protagonists left their mark on me. De Xica wanted to dismantle everything colonial that this story represents, reflected in the repetition of violence and her desire to want to be white. Tituba wanted to enhance her connection with nature, the mythical aspect of being a witch.

I prefer to leave the trace of victory in memory, where it is not identified which of them is Ana María, because all of them can be and they all wear the crown. I imagined a ritual-celebration emulating tribes from different parts of the world, peoples that share a colonial history.

ii. Xica da Silva, a 1996 Brazilian telenovela directed by Walter Avancini and Jacques Lagoa, its popularity transcended Africa, being the most famous soap opera on slavery. It should be noted that its protagonist, Taís Araújo, visited the Dominican Republic after the television success, filling the Olympic stadium with a multitude of fans.

iii. I, Tituba, the Black Witch of Salem, Maryse Condé, 1986, Casa de las Américas Editorial Fund.



Above: La coronacion de Ana María, 2020, Pétalos de flamboyan, hibiscus, pigmentos de hoja de nigua, corteza de guayaba, café, jiquilite, semilla de aguacate y bija, tinta sobre papel, 66 cm x 66 cm



The piece of the lovers in the Zafra is like a reminder of the transgression of the bodies in the midst of oppression. Black masculinities and the transmutation of language are clues that reveal this piece. I rename the drawing to La petite mort nan Zafra la, Inspired by the evolution of the language. Possibly the most important act of our Caribbean culture was to decolonize the law that naturally gave birth to our Creoles, codes of collective protection that also inspire me to continue my sign language, my stamps or sigillum that I have just named Guari Kreyol.

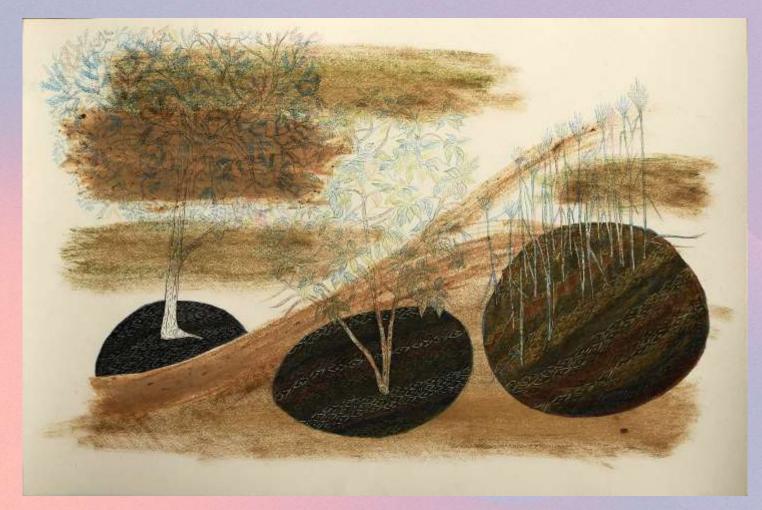
Left: La petit mort nan Zafra la, 2020, Pétalos de flor de algodón, tulipan africano, pigmento de hoja de nigua, jiquilite, escamas de alas de mariposa mármol haitiano y voladora del golfo, tinta sobre papel, 70 cm x 55 cm. The Antilles are container territories of the foreign. The jícaro is the tree that bears the fruit that has served as a vessel since ancient times. These container shapes start a series of drawings of our foreign flora.

Returning to the mystery, for me the coconut palm, being of still unknown origin, represents that essence, that hidden thing that cannot be explained, a bush that possibly colonized land by itself by moving through the sea. This gives me way to fantasize and create a spirit, a hybrid entity that protects nature.

Right: Flamboyanes, 2020, Pétalos de túlipan Africano, pigmento de hoja de nigua, lapíz sobre papel, 39 cm x 42 cm







Left: Rulo, 2020, Pigmento de hoja de nigua, jagua, cúrcuma, lapíz sobre papel, 29 cm x 42 cm

Above: Yerba de guinea, Noni y Tamarindo, 2020, Peítalos de tulipan africano, hoja de nigua, pigmento de jagua, curcuma, lapíz sobre papel, 57 x 38 cm

I am very grateful for the opportunity to accompany the Nigua project. The only thing I don't want to lose is hope. This period of pandemic is for me an experience of introspection. I believe that recognizing and valuing our natural environment is also respecting ourselves in our own human nature. That mission starts from the individual to be able to connect with the community.



Proyecto Nigua Report IV. Click above to view the video on YouTube



Carol Joan Sorhaindo

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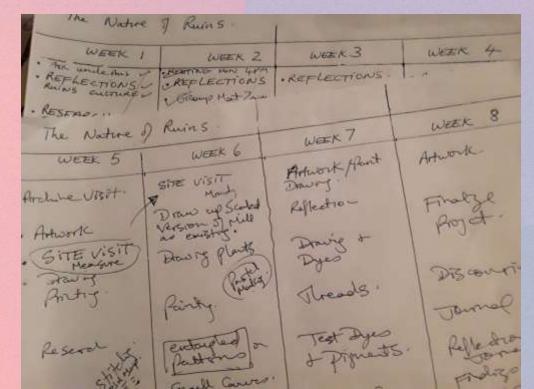
Dominica

Post #4

Stitching a Story, findings and artwork

This is the fourth and final blog post of this project. I have thoroughly enjoyed the process and focus on the Richmond mill ruin. The research is ongoing and so are the artworks.

I am interested in the definition of 'ruin' which applies to the human psychological state. What affects our mental wellbeing? What have I learnt? What stories can I stitch from my findings on this journey?



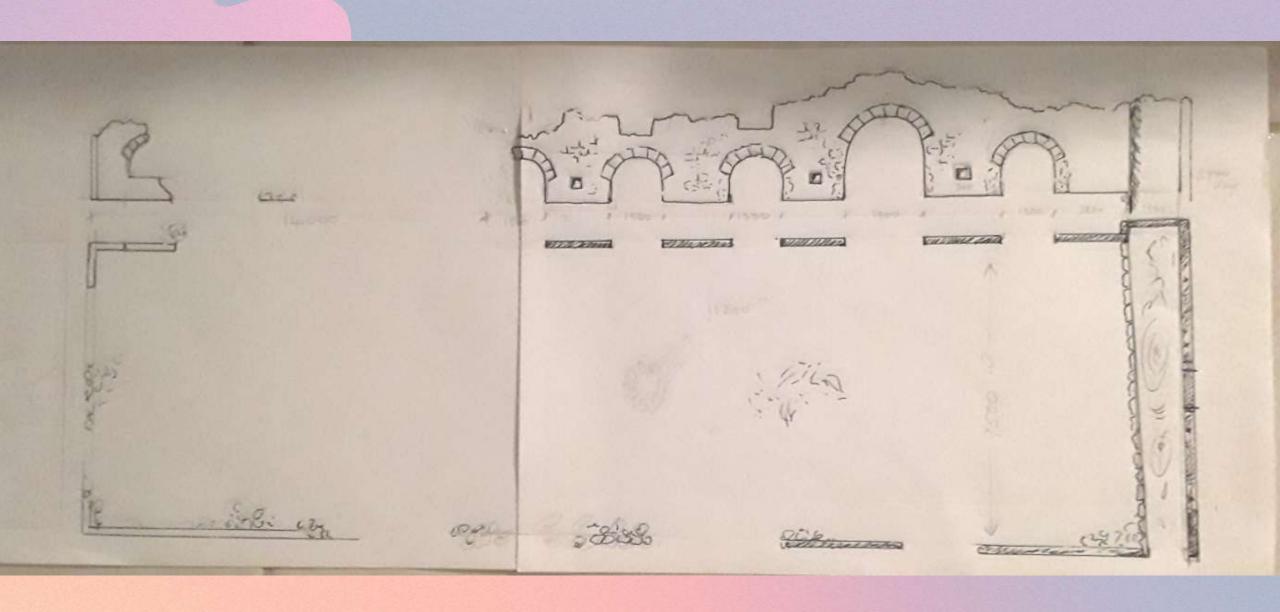
Project action plan

One major realization is the importance of being mindful in my process and I am thankful I am not under pressure to produce finished work. The subject and the methods used require a reverence and a slowing down of pace. I feel a protectiveness for this history and of this site which is now in slumber. I am reluctant to disturb its peace.

My studio visit with Holly Bynoe highlighted that views on culture, identity and history are very personal, fluid and ever changing. The virtual nature of the residency and Covid 19 have made me more aware than ever that I should find strategies that work for me in order to ease anxiety when engaging with technology and the virtual world to best promote and engage with others.

It surprises me that elders in the family do not have much to tell of the ruined mill. Snippets of interest emerge. Mortar made of burnt coral and molasses, plantain leaves used to filter molasses, numbers of enslaved people; males 78, females 76, males imported from Africa 6, females imported from Africa 7...dead men don't talk, white cocks and candles on dark nights, walls broken down to build houses, childhood playground for some. Limes and vanilla were planted by my grandfather before bananas then became the crop of the day. The project sparked interesting conversation and encouraged a friend to do personal research to support.

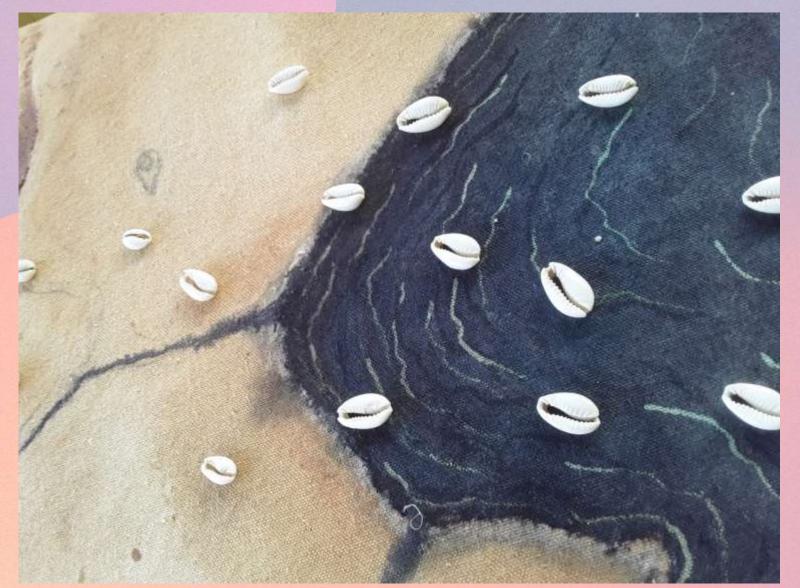
Through measuring, drawing and being in the space the mill is reimagined.



Scaled plan and elevation drawing of the ruins



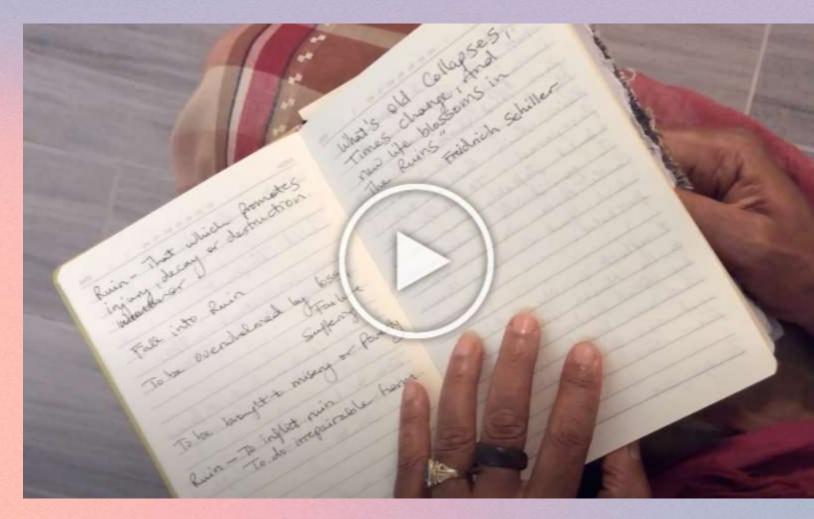
Pen ink and natural plant and earth pigments







Left: Map, natural dyes and cowrie shells - work in progress



I have kept a journal throughout which documents my thoughts, research and ideas.
Click above to view the video on YouTube

Journal entry 26th November 2020

I am in a slow and melancholy mood this morning as I prepare cowrie shells for sewing, traditionally units of currency. According to the African legends, the cowrie shells are a gift from the Ocean Goddess (Mami Wata).

The first batch got smashed as I wrapped them in cloth and take a hammer to them to remove the shiny backs in order to sew them to the fabric. I need to slow down my pace.....the word respect comes to mind. I need to do this one by one in a slow manner which reflects my mood to achieve success. As I carefully arrange the cowrie shells for stitching, they reminded me human souls. The smoothness has a calming effect as I arrange them, tracing a journey across the ocean, through the plantation, a few making it to the hills. Today, 26th November, a friend sends me a BBC video of the Zong massacre when in 1781 a total of 132 African bodies were tossed overboard into the ocean as an insurance claim. Today is a day for re-memberance and preservation. For weeks, I have been preparing banana fibres, soaking, cleaning, detangling, dyeing....some will be threaded into the artwork. Impulsively I create a series of nests using the banana fibres. This seems to be a circular journey as I mould and weave and place objects from my studio space into the nests.... a bead, a shell, a tiny African drum and carving.





CATAPULT | A Caribbean Arts Grant is a COVID-19 relief programme 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 will directly provide financial support to over 1,000 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.

<u>kingstoncreative.org/catapult-arts-grant</u> <u>freshmilkbarbados.com/catapult-arts-grant</u>







