

CATAPULT

Caribbean Artist Showcase

VOICES OF CONTEMPORARY CARIBBEAN ARTISTS



— *Caribbean* —

HEALING

10 Caribbean
Contemporary Creatives



Welcome to the Caribbean Artist Showcase



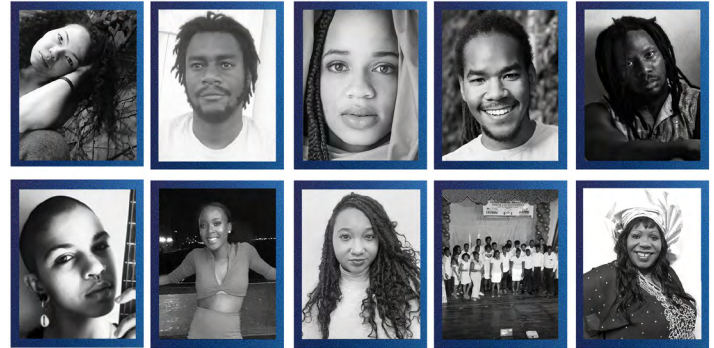
At this point in time, Healing is a theme that is foremost in the thoughts of many. The ongoing Pandemic has seen many fall ill and succumb to the virus. For many others this time has also been an experience which has provided the opportunity for regeneration and recalibration. This time has provided a chance for many to reconnect with

themselves, their families and their communities in nurturing, supportive and renewing ways. Through digital platforms and virtual spaces, creatives, cultural workers and creative organisations alike have been able to launch new projects, write, reconsider their social and organisational systems. They have also been able to facilitate conversations and collaborative thinking which in turn builds the momentum of activities which often leads to the development of the critical mass needed to drive and develop regional cultural industries.

Often in the Caribbean we think of culture as tradition, staying in the same place and doing and thinking the same things, even as the world changes around us rapidly. This duality is part of the ways in which we must function as both a fairly young but also constantly evolving hybridised culture. It is our task to seek to shape a history even as we invent new ways of living in the present. Settling on and fixing a culture in a stationary position also fixes the problematic aspects within the cultural tradition. Our desire to create traditions of culture don't always provide a chance to do what we have been able to do during this pandemic: regenerate and renew.

EDITOR'S NOTE VOLUME 3: Caribbean Healing

Featured in this volume are ten contemporary creatives who are focusing on self-regeneration and community-level regeneration. In the work of Helen Ceballos we see an artist using the circumstances of her identity to reconnect with nature as a healing source. In her work she tackles immigration, sexuality, gender politics through photography, performance and community-centred cultural work.



Nwanna Sorzano created a mixed media painting which re-enforces black pride, strength and womanhood and links this to ways of thwarting the scourge of sexual assault against women that has become normalised in our societies.

Both Steve Whittaker and Neil Waithe use their particular talents and insights to help understand and alleviate the anger, loss of self, trauma and self-worth young men and women can feel when experiencing emotional neglect, abuse and isolation. The former a scientist turned illustrator & social researcher and the latter a Drama major who now works in youth education. Their work, though realised in different formats, assists in creating clear pathways to open communication and expression of internal pain.

Each creative has tapped into their own particular needs and focused on areas they view as needing attention within their world to assist the care and growth of our societies. Such is the role of the contemporary creative in acting as mediator, visionary and healer.

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Cover Image

Concept and Performer: Helen Ceballos

Title: Hablar de la Prola

Date: 2017

Medium: Performance

Photo credit: Kairiana Núñez Santaliz



Featured Creative: Neil Waithe in the production, 'Man Child'
Date: May 2018
Photographer: Duvaughn Burke

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Artist: Helen Ceballos
Title: Golpe de Agua
Date: 2020
Medium: Performance
Photo credit: Ali Petru Gerena

HELEN CEBALLOS

Visual Artist & Cultural Worker
Dominican Republic

I am a transdisciplinary performance artist and self-taught photographer, born in the Caribbean during the 80s. I am a queer woman of Afro-descent and an art worker and cultural manager. I am 33 years old, I have lived in 11 cities, 7 countries and 34 houses, which means that I have more changes in where my body is located than years in the world. It is precisely those transfers that mark one of the thematic lines most present in my work : The migration.

I use my body as a subject and object of study to extend signs. I see the performative instances that I design as sequels of experiences from my daily life. I work with what happens to me as the material of the work. There is truth as well as fictionalized truth in my work.

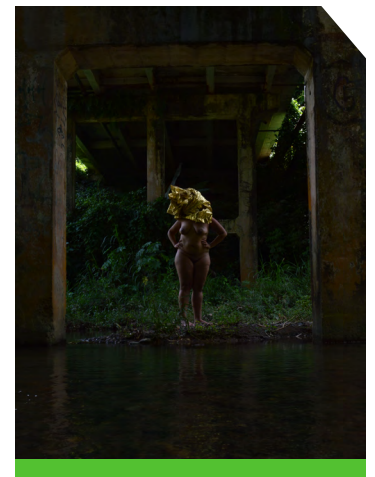
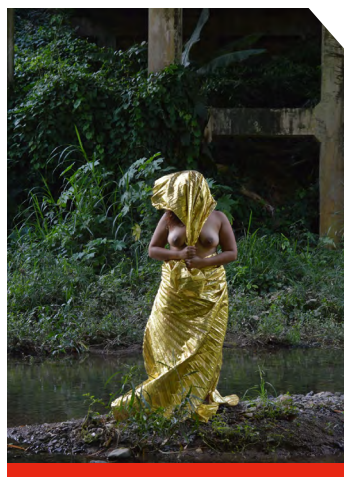
In my profession as a transdisciplinary artist I make performative pieces, installations and actions for the camera through photography and video art. These last two languages I approach in a self-taught way. I love my condition as a student very much, achieving a certain command of new techniques excites me and in a certain way refreshes me. I like buttons, instructions, discovering commands and letting myself go with trial and error. As the great Yuderkys said, "I am above all an apprentice" (Espinosa Miñoso 2020).



“

I use my body as a subject and object of study to extend signs...I work with what happens to me as the material of the work

”



La producción como obra: prácticas artísticas desde la gestión horizontal comunitaria

Helen Ceballos



Fotografía: Laura Patricia RA, Lau Pat. 2018

“Lxs artistas no hacemos obra. Inventamos prácticas. La obra es secundaria a la actividad artística que hacemos. Lo que hacemos es inventar prácticas sensibles. Cualquier práctica fabricada en la actividad artística es una práctica de mutación subjetiva y enganche social. Las prácticas que inventamos, los afectos que hacemos pasar mediante ellas no nos dejan indemnes. Descolonizarse del campo donde nos movemos implica, a veces, cierta soledad para componer nuevas alianzas y afectos-conceptos que nos dejen respirar.” -Silvio Lang

La invención del “soy”



Serie 2020. Fotografía: Helen Ceballos

Soy una mujer cuir, afrodescendiente, migrante caribeña, gestora cultural y productora.

Soy una obrera. En mi oficio como artista transdisciplinaria realizo piezas performáticas, instalaciones y acciones para la cámara a través de la fotografía y el videoarte. Estos últimos dos lenguajes los abordo de manera autodidacta. Amo muchísimo mi condición de estudiante, lograr cierto manejo de técnicas nuevas me entusiasma y de cierto modo me refresca. Me gustan los botones, las instrucciones, descubrir comandos y dejarme ir en el tanteo, acierto y error. Como dijo la gran Yuderkys, “Soy sobretodo una aprendiz” (Espinosa Miñoso 2020).

Después de pasar un par de añitos entre grupos de teatro callejero, escuelas de arte, talleres, residencias, mentorxs, un bachillerato transdisciplinario, una maestría, y con el ñeñeñé dedicarle más de 20 años de estudio y trabajo al teatro, el performance, la producción y a la gestión cultural comunitaria; he comenzado a escuchar con mejor definición y confianza la teoría que traigo pintada en la piel, o dicho de otro modo he llegado por fin a los benditos treinta. Agradeciendo lo leído, priorizando lo andado.



Reconozco en mis rutas y sus reverberancias la escuela que continúa permitiéndome afinar el oído para que este oficio/pulsión se desarrolle.

El trabajo que hago desde el arte ha estado atravesado por una vocación al servicio social comunitario que como todo apego por momentos puede abrazarme, apoderarme y *asfixiarme* simultáneamente.

Con los años comprendí que cada uno de mis oficios informa y nutre al otro. Creo en las redes comunitarias como canales de fuerza común, en los nexos que se amparan en viabilizar espacios para fortalecer nuestras autonomías vecinales e isleñas¹, desde el respeto a la diversidad y la empatía como vía. Creo con fervor en el poder que tiene el arte intrínseco como herramienta de transformación social.

Quiero agradecer la invitación a este espacio que defiende y llama a la reflexión de nuestras prácticas artísticas y al activismo, así como abre un espacio para otras conversaciones de gran valor desde nuestras comunidades y organizaciones. Es un honor ser parte nuevamente de las conversaciones que promueven a través de esta plataforma el equipo de

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American Friends of Jamaica, Kingston Creative y Fresh Milk Barbados.

Procederé entonces a compartir parte de mi incursión y desarrollo en el activismo, optaré por entrar a lugares que abrieron canal a repensar los saberes desde la no jerarquía, la revisión y la escucha activa que tanto puede costar entre el ruido cotidiano. Abriré parcialmente algunas consideraciones más lejanas que me han servido para pensar el oficio y los modos de atender el tiempo en los procesos de producción. ¿Qué significa producir desde una colonia? ¿Qué podemos aprenderles a las comunidades que practican la autogestión? ¿Qué relación hay entre las comunidades organizadas y

¹ A quienes nos ha tocado nacer en una realidad colonial, nos puede sentar bien ensayar y probar el desarrollo de nuestras autonomías personales y colectivas, a niveles micro y macro. Sin olvidar que en las pruebas a pequeña escala encontramos fórmulas que *luego* nos permitan trabajar con más confianza perspectivas multitudinarias.

autónomas y los proyectos sociopolíticos a nivel de país? ¿Qué reverberancia trae a las comunidades lograr cambios que aporten a sus autonomías fuera de las condiciones del Estado Nación que las invisibiliza? Y por último, traeré brevemente algunos apuntes sobre la producción vista como obra artística², desde lo que considero un continuo ejercicio hacia prácticas horizontales y descoloniales para, desde y a pesar de nuestras comunidades.

La formación, el tanteo y error.

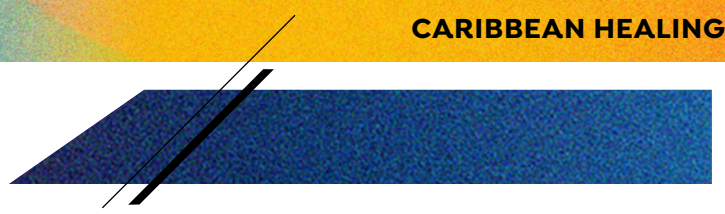


Serie NYC 2015. Fotografía: Kamila Sánchez Viñas

“Quienes nos mantenemos firmes fuera del círculo de lo que esta sociedad define como mujeres aceptables; quienes nos hemos forjado en el crisol de las diferencias, o, lo que es lo mismo, quienes somos pobres, quienes somos lesbianas, quienes somos negras, quienes somos viejas, sabemos que la supervivencia no es una asignatura académica. La supervivencia es aprender a mantenerse firme en la soledad, contra la impopularidad y quizá los insultos, y aprender a hacer causa común con otras que también están fuera del sistema... La supervivencia es aprender a asimilar nuestras diferencias y a convertirlas en potencialidades. Porque las herramientas del amo nunca desmontan la casa del amo.”

- Audre Lorde

² A este punto ya no separo un oficio del otro, hace un tiempo empecé a mirar lo que hago como un mismo trazo con diferentes intensidades y propósitos, pero un trazo al fin.



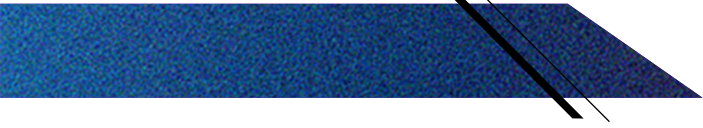
Recuerdo mis primeros años estudiando teatro en el Centro de Adiestramiento y Bellas Artes de Aguadilla (C.A.B.A.) en Puerto Rico. Temprano en mi práctica noté que no me interesaba memorizar y repetir los textos fabulosos del teatro siglo de oro español ni el clásico isabelino, conocerlos sí, pasar por ellos, pero representarlos me llamaba poco. Hecha un dilema con 11 años, fui donde mi maestro Joe Álvarez, a explicarle mi resistencia a esos textos tan lejanos, a lo que él contesta:

“Está bien no querer...incluso está bien no saber lo que se quiere todavía. Paciencia. El mundo es grande y ancho.” Seguí caminando y entré a la Escuela de Bellas Artes del pueblo de Bayamón, al terminar 4to año de escuela superior ya había tomado decenas de talleres. Cada disciplina fue un mundo de información. En todas escuché que el rigor era esencial y lo creí. Conocí sobre las tareas en y detrás del escenario. Desde el trabajo de mesa, la eterna recaudación de fondos, el diseño de escenografía, vestuario, luces, sonido, difusión, los estrenos, la casa llena de afectos, no hacer ni un peso, y celebrar agendando ensayos para la siguiente obra. Años de gloria y mucho hacer.

Así entré a la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras y continué con mi relación de paciencia y goce en las tablas. Un verano viajé a Nueva York, me invitaron a audicionar para una obra gringa. Ahí conocí la técnica estereotipada que emplean algunos colectivos, mediados por una mirada blanca norteamericana, quienes a la hora de hacer audiciones se dejan llevar por el aspecto de lxs actorxs, entiéndase su color de piel, apariencia, procedencia, acentos, para de ese modo atribuir a lo que ven, formas generalizadas de conductas, habilidades o rasgos, supongo, y así asignarles o no roles dentro de sus producciones.

Esa mirada blanca para las mujeres caribeñas afrodescendientes como yo, tienen una noción inmutable y muy específica. Un molde en el que no habría manera de hallarme cómoda. Entendí rápidamente que esa lectura racista me quedaba corta y que se encontraba lejos de mi búsqueda, me retiré de inmediato. Conocer fue importante.

Aproveché los días restantes del viaje en Nueva York para vagar por los museos de la ciudad. Escuché palabras que hoy forman parte de mi práctica artística: performance, videoarte, acciones site specific. Vi mucho arte pop, conocí a Warhol y probé las sopas

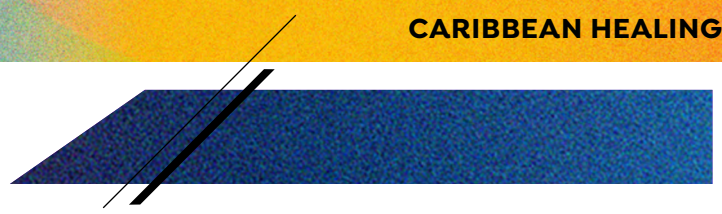


Campbells, todo por primera vez. Volví estimulada y recordé las palabras de mi maestro: “el mundo es grande y ancho”. Yo continuaba sin saber hacia dónde me iba a dirigir después, pero al menos sabía donde no.

Muy intuitivamente quise referirme a mis tránsitos para conceptualizar acciones e intervenciones performáticas desde un lugar más cercano a mí. Quizás no lo hubiese podido apalabrar de este modo en aquel momento, pero hoy que me miro de lejos, me sé. Algo quise apostar, aparecieron colegas con deseos similares y seguí mi búsqueda junto a ellxs.

Recuerdo que en una clase nos pidieron que hiciéramos un dibujo de nuestra columna vertebral, una especie de autorretrato con rayos X. Terminé haciendo dos dibujos, primero calqué una columna vertebral que encontré en una revista, luego me avoqué al autorretrato que no me habían asignado. Verme fue un ejercicio poderoso. Me desnudé y traté de reproducir con una técnica bastante rudimentaria todos mis pliegues. Acto seguido entendí que el dibujo no era lo mío, pero el hallazgo de haberme visto por horas frente al espejo sí. Me encontré con un cuerpo poblado de signos e historias que me resultaban más convocantes de narrar que las historias del siglo de oro español que me había negado a representar.

El tiempo me clarificó que eso que **no** quería hacer de chica, venía acompañado de una pulsión más honda, quizás se trataba de una resistencia inconsciente para ayudarme a dar con mis propias dramaturgias. Muchxs crecimos, posiblemente sin reparar en ello, insertxs en una maquinaria de desmemorización colonial torcida, que prioriza ciertas historias, invisibilizando las nuestras. Dijo Boaventura que “Aprender un determinado conocimiento puede implicar olvidar otros tipos de saberes o, en realidad, ignorarlos.” (de Sousa Santos 2018, 229). Me reconocí inmersa en un sistema de formación que nos distancia con alevosía de fuentes autóctonas y esto no es un hecho fortuito, por el contrario, nos debilita. Macabro saber que ni siquiera se trata de un proyecto educativo mediocre, sino más bien de un andamiaje estructurado que nos impide reconocernos y



por eso nos corresponde detenerlo. Dirigen lecturas a discursos siempre blancos³, con la intención de borrar nuestras narrativas, desarrollos, prácticas artísticas e históricas. Desestimando la teoría de la vida, por la del papel. Nos borran. Me ha funcionado apostar a una *ecología de saberes*⁴ diversos. Prefiero pensar que esa resistencia que de niña tuve a tragarme los libretos blancos europeos correspondía a una lucha heredada por rescatar y visibilizar las historias de mi manada.⁵

Tomé un par de talleres con lxs que parecían ser lxs maestrxs correctxs y nuevamente por intuición comencé a recuperar cuentos sobre lxs cuerpxs de las mujeres de mi familia; mi mamá, mis tías, abuelas. Mujeres racializadx, empobrecidas, migrantes, algunas de ellas analfabetas, trabajadoras sexuales, todas madres. Lamentablemente insertas en la médula del patriarcado misógino, viviendo desde la precariedad en espacios racistas, algunas repitiéndose en la mente el discurso machista con el que crecieron.

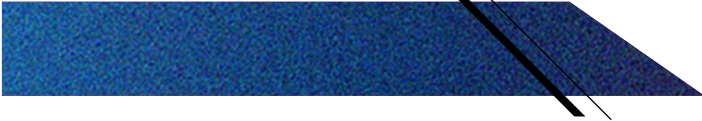
Hubo instancias de niebla, por momentos no supe cómo abordar el material.

Me conmovía. Por otro lado, no sabía cómo traducir esas historias a un lenguaje artístico. No quería hablar de otra cosa. Era mi tema, pero al parecer no contaba con las herramientas para trabajarlo. Otra vez el no saber, tocó esperar.

³ “Blanco no es un color. El blanco es una definición política, que representa los privilegios históricos, políticos, sociales de determinado grupo que tiene acceso a estructuras e instituciones dominantes de la sociedad. La blanca representa la realidad y la historia de cierto grupo determinado. Cuando hablamos de lo que significa ser blancx entonces hablamos de política y ciertamente no de biología.” Entrevista a Grada Kilomba. Disponible en <https://abagond.wordpress.com/2012/03/16/grada-kilomba-on-racism-in-europe>. Citado y traducido por Yos (erchxs) Piña Narváez (2017, 38).

⁴ Véase Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2018.

⁵ “Abrazo a hermanxs negrxs, racializadx del sur global, que intentan hacer una reencarnación, un re sentir de lo cuir y sé que ha sido un intento de re/pigmentar el cuerpx blancx hegémicx, universalizadx de las disidencias sexo/género. La rarefacción de lxs cuerpxs, lo cuir, **amerita ser leído desde la manera en que se construyen colonialmente los cuerpxs otrxs/exotizadx/bestializados por la mirada blanca.**” Extracto de una conferencia presentada en “El porvenir de Revuelta” por Yos (erchxs) Piña Narváez- artista trans-fronterizx, activista, antirracista y performer. Madrid, 2017.



Siempre me han interesado las nomenclaturas. Saber nombrar (nos). El arte de nombrar lo entiendo como un modo sutil y efectivo de visibilizarnos y presentarnos ante lxs otrxs y viceversa. Cuando el otrx se nombra le veo.

Comienzo a hacer intervenciones performáticas y trabajos desde la auto referencialidad. Empezó a acompañarme una especie de seguridad mientras accionaba, un sentido que no ha perseguido nunca la lógica, pero sí la escucha. Comencé a disfrutar la escena y a sentir poder en ella. Desde entonces cuando me paro en un escenario⁶ no solo sube a escena una artista del performance, sino que viene conmigo toda la historicidad que porta este cuerpo de mujer cuir. Que es también una artista fronteriza, caribeña, que nació en el marco de una economía proveniente del trasiego de drogas, que fue la primera persona de su generación familiar en completar estudios de escuela superior, que creció con un padre preso, una madre migrante y luchadora, que me inculcó un capital de supervivencia por sobre cualquier otro, y quién no necesariamente ha entendido lo que yo he elegido hacer, sin embargo, me apoya en lo que soy y he sido. Ahí frente al otrx, con todas mis yoes, empiezo a entretejer signos y armar sentido a través de acciones e historias de muchxs. Viniendo del lugar que vengo, entiendo el escenario como un espacio político donde las que son como yo, no siempre tienen acceso.

⁶ En este escrito el término escenario será usado como un concepto sombrilla para referirse a todos los espacios de muestra que elija para presentar mi trabajo. Augusto Boal dijo en su libro *Teatro del oprimido* (1974) "Todxs pueden hacer teatro, inclusive lxs actorxs, se puede hacer teatro en todas partes, inclusive en los teatros." Sucede lo mismo con las intervenciones performáticas.

El activismo



Serie 2017. Fotografía: Kairiana Núñez Santaliz

Soy artista, a través de este crisol miro el mundo y lo agradezco, verlo desde aquí me ha enseñado a mirar con compasión.
-anónimx

Llega el activismo en ese instante en que no le es indiferente al artista creadorx el mundo paralelo que le encarna, o dicho de otro modo en el momento en el que no puede obviar lo que pasa alrededor de la práctica artística que nos inventamos. Ese mundo que puede tener todo o nada que ver con el adentro que la práctica propone. Cuando ese afuera que convulsa, ofrece data que puede llegar a nutrir el contenido de lo que se va gestando en la obra. Cuando esa información nos interpela, nos volvemos artistas. Cuando lo externo se manifiesta dentro de la escena y hace sentido, y somos espejo y nos prestamos a mirar de cerca la grieta, el veril de las contradicciones y las perversiones de la humanidad. Desde ese hoyo oscuro y jodido que la modernidad quiso hacer ver como un púlpito. Desde ese lugar menoscabado el artista se enuncia, filtrando con su arte las porquerías que producen los tiempos que suenan al compás de la desigualdad, la xenofobia, la homo, la trans, la aporo, y la melanofobia. Tantas fobias digerimos que terminamos padeciendo de panofobia como el menor de los males. Sin mucha fe en lxx otrx. Amando inconmensurablemente a seres taciturnos y a algunxs niñxs.

¿Cómo es el trazo?



Serie 2016. Fotografía: Carlos Rodríguez

Lo que gesto desde la producción abraza las pulsiones y creaciones de lxs colegas artistas que admiro y circundan la escena del arte independiente y autogestionado donde me formé y continúo formándome. Por otro lado, mi tarea desde la gestión cultural diseña y fomenta programas artísticos y ofertas culturales donde se integra a la comunidad. No lo gesto sola, el programa parte de un estudio de campo donde **es la comunidad quien dice lo que le sirve y necesita**, incluso los modos en los que le conviene que suceda. Luego me llevo esa información y regresamos con un borrador. Un tanteo que combina las búsquedas nuestras con eso que a ellxs les funciona. Ahí negociamos con agenda abierta y empieza la fiesta.

Muchas veces partimos de la precariedad para levantar los proyectos. Situaciones donde no hay absolutamente nada salvo la voluntad y el interés del barrio. Eso nos ha llevado a insistir y escarbar hasta dar con las vías para desarrollar lo que a todas luces puede ser visto como una misión imposible. Reafirmo lo político y radical que es el oficio de lxs



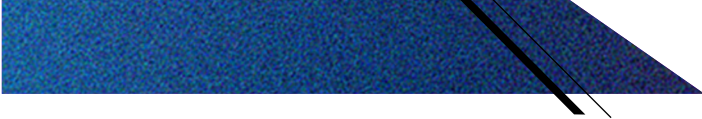
líderes comunitarios, que más allá de apoyar un recogido de fondos, e incentivar prácticas de acción, acompañan a la comunidad en procesos de apoderamiento. Una tarea encomiable que me recuerda que se nos ha dicho por años que no íbamos a poder y pudimos. Podemos. Corran la voz.

El panorama contemporáneo lo hábito, me obsesiono con la idea de torcerlo y metaforizar entre sus pliegues. Me veo capaz de desaguarme en cualquier esquina hablando del oficio, la gestión y los modos de resistir. Sufro y celebro mis tiempos y sus luchas.

Sin embargo, la falta de ofertas asequibles que promueven el arte como parte integral de la vida de los ciudadanos en Puerto Rico sigue siendo escandalosa.

Luego de un largo período de ver y conocer la precaria situación del arte en Puerto Rico, decidimos modificar las reglas del juego, ahora **gestionamos lo que queremos que suceda**: si queremos festivales los coordinamos, juntas de sanación, conversatorios, ciclos de cine, mercados agrícolas, feria de salud holística, programas de arte comunitarios, intervenciones performáticas, piezas teatrales para la comunidad, brigadas de apoyo para las comunidades del sur y visitas a las égidas. La consigna fue desarrollar una escucha activa, trabajar en equipo, casi en serie, poner el oído en tierra e inevitablemente resuena todo ese lado que el gobierno olvida.

Decidimos corrernos del oficio de espectral. Parecería más necesario incidir a nivel micro, a escala hormiga en este movimiento que nos invita a mirarnos, reconociendo la fuerza que nos ha sido quitada. Hablo de escalas pequeñas sin desmerecer la importancia de estas gestiones que no se cuantifican en capital sino en la continuidad que pueda tener en las comunidades que interpela. Hablo de proyectos que se cocinan a fuego lento, que tienen que ver con el estar y reconocernos en ese estadio. Hay mucho pasando: El movimiento para la creación de huertos comunitarios en terrenos baldíos, la gestión titánica del colectivo de Comedores Sociales, con la repartición de comida a las comunidades. La construcción de techos solares. Los proyectos emergentes de



construcción de casas de barro y adobe y el rescate de espacios en desuso para familias en situación de calle. La creación de escuelas abiertas, luego de los terremotos en enero 2020, cuando el Estado no estaba ni cerca de señalar una solución, llegó el proyecto Escuelas Sin Paredes en Peñuelas, brindando una opción de educación a cientos de estudiantes que se encontraban sin escuelas. El proyecto de Ecodesarrollo, IDEBAJO en el pueblo de Salinas, que busca conservar el ambiente y desarrollar microempresas comunitarias en el sur. Circuito Queer mostrando un compromiso sostenido en generar programación educativa y cultural para la comunidad LGBTTIQA+. El centro cultural El Bastión y el Taller Comunidad La Goyco son grandes ejemplos de cómo líderes comprometidxs pueden habitar edificios en desuso y generar proyectos que beneficien a la comunidad. El Hangar en Santurce, espacio de sosiego y catarsis para muchxs actuantes de la lucha en resistencia. El Cuadrado Gris, punto de arte e intercambios en el medio de barrio Obrero. El Centro de la Mujer Dominicana un oasis de información y apoyo para mujeres migrantes. Taller Libertá, en el oeste, espacio de arte, creación y encuentro. Taller Malaquita, casa abierta para la creación. Espacios de exposición como El Lobi, la Casa de Cultura Ruth Hernández Torres, un punto neurálgico de arte y cultura para la comunidad riopedrense. Casa Taft, UrbeApie y La Maraña,< entre muchos otros.

Actualmente dirijo la Plataforma Eje un proyecto sombrilla donde incentivamos programas y eventos de diversas colectividades. Por ejemplo encuentros educativos y culturales para la comunidad LGBTTIQA+, apoyamos el Programa de Estudios para Personas Confinadas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, proyectos de justicia racial junto al colectivo llé, programas de arte para la comunidad de personas con diversidad funcional, mientras creamos proyectos como el Encuentro de Performance del Caribe Mar de Islas, junto a Marina Barys Janer e Isil Sol Vil, que sucederá en Puerto Rico en mayo 2021 y plantea un espacio de cruce y reflexión sobre nuestras prácticas artísticas desde el Caribe. Buscamos potenciar nexos entre las colectividades y apoderar nuestras autonomías. Mientras en la calle, asistimos a marchas multitudinarias donde exigimos la renuncia del gobernante de turno y nos preparamos para sacar lxs políticos corruptos que restan.



Podríamos pensar que corresponde estudiar(nos), volver al rigor y pensar cómo seguir haciendo sin egos jodidos, ni delirios de grandeza.

La autogestión es un movimiento poderoso e indetenible. Es poder en manos del pueblo, que debe ser abordado con responsabilidad, desde acciones horizontales, inclusivas, empáticas con la justicia y la equidad socioambiental.

Comparto reflexiones que parten de ideas que no quisiera olvidar. Dejo aquí justo lo que más me ha costado ver.

¿Cómo serían nuestras gestas si nos corriéramos de actuar desde la política de la reacción? *Trabajando con urgencia y no desde ella.* Sin olvidar que *las comunidades saben lo que necesitan*, sin asumir que vamos a salvar a alguien.

Hace falta compromiso para lograr que cualquier cosa enraíce en tiempos tan líquidos. *Nuestro trabajo toma tiempo. Saber con quién vincularnos es casi tan importante como vincularnos.* Estos proyectos dejan huellas profundas y cada organización de base tiene sus modos de encarar la faena.

Me consta que en estos espacios el pensamiento se hace plural y polimorfo. Hay tierra fértil para que emerjan realidades que apuesten a fortalecer nuestras autonomías. Agradezco a lxs organizadores de este foro que fomentan espacios que representan una proclamación de nuestra existencia al sistema.

Intuyo que estamos en un buen momento para tumbar el muro, deshacer los tratados, desandar los convenios y cuestionarlo todo. Nos veo re imaginando un nuevo andar. Que la historia se adecúe, que el lenguaje se trastoque, es un gran tiempo para no saber y derrocar la jerarquización de saberes desde su lado más ecológico, sin purismos.

Vamos a limpiar la casa.



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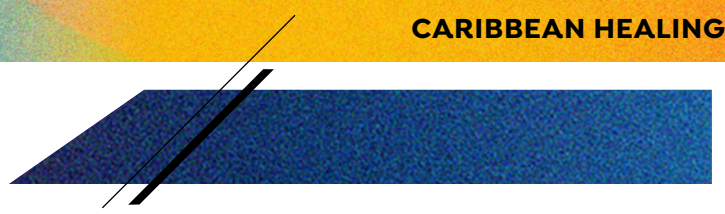
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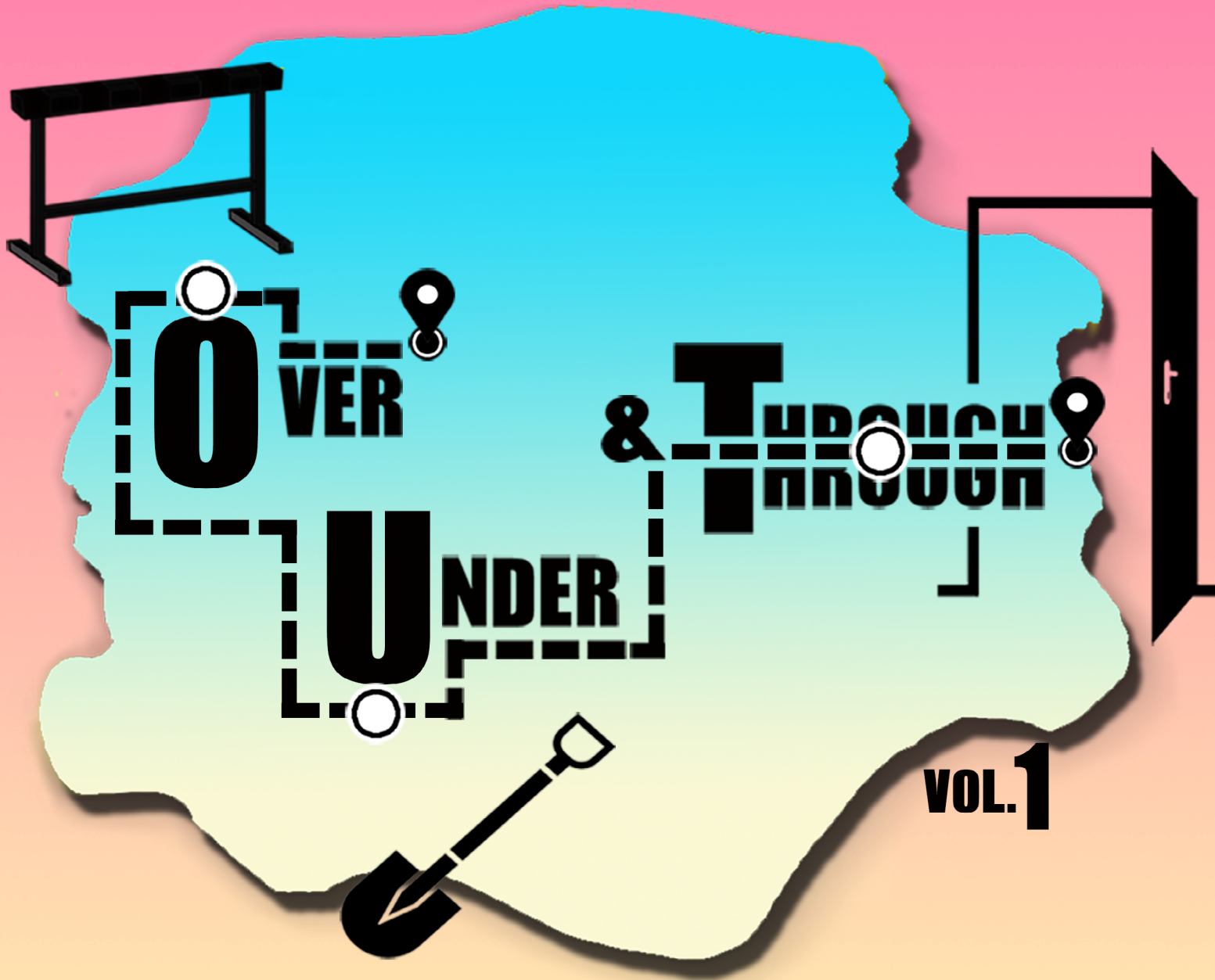
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*Algunas partes de este escrito provienen de la charla magistral que presenté en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, recinto de Mayagüez, en marzo 2020, como parte de la celebración del **Coloquio del Otro Lao:**

Perspectivas y Debates sobre lo cuir. Arte y Activismo cuir en el Puerto Rico contemporáneo.



Concept and Performer: Helen Ceballos
Title: Hablar de la Prola
Date: 2017
Medium: Performance
Photo credit: Kairiana Núñez Santal



*Reflections of Trauma & Survival
By and For Peoples of the Caribbean*

Artist: Steve Whittaker

Title: 'Over, Under & Through' cover illustration

Date: 2020

Medium: Digital

STEVE WHITTAKER

Graphic Designer & Creative Writer
St. Kitts & Nevis

The project is a collection of short narratives which builds on efforts to use semi-fiction with limited original illustrations as a vehicle for engagement, reflection and response to traumatic events. We will focus primarily on incidents and intersections of interpersonal violence in the Caribbean community. With the permission of survivors and the appropriate community partners, the transcripts of survivors of trauma have been transformed into semi-fiction i.e. short stories or long poems. Each piece is followed by a thought exercise e.g. reflexive inquiry, similar to those used in some mindfulness activities and scenario training modules.

Owing to respect for privacy and overall concern for confidentiality, many narratives have been rendered with significant omissions of personal details such as names, titles, pronouns, etc. Additionally, in showing concern for how peoples, places and values are portrayed, the setting and identity in the original accounts are often altered in the created narrative. However, the situations retain critical aspects from the accounts such as the voices of the brave survivors who contributed openly to questions around challenge and survivorship. Honoring their descriptions, dialogues, reflections spoken out loud and written confessions remains as important as protecting identities and preventing individuals from harm. My aim now more than ever is to collate and adapt with the appropriate community and artistic partnerships the years of accounts that speak to the reality and survival of persons who have experienced emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The endgame will be an invitation to support survivors and to disrupt the processes of trauma pervasive in our Caribbean societies. This is done by first hearing and looking at the narratives and then reflecting on the all-too common issues that challenge us.



I'm a graphic designer and creative writer who uses semi-fiction and illustrations to comment on a range of issues such as debilitating chronic illness to interpersonal violence to shared community losses due to extreme weather events. As an artist interested in social commentary, I have leveraged years of experience as a biomedical researcher, social science trainee, public health scholar and friend who listens in order to develop techniques of social inquiry. I have refined a process of how to ask questions, how to listen to answers, how not to respond and how to transform lived experiences into palatable summaries. The most persistent concerns include but are not limited to:

- (i) doing justice to the descriptions, dialogues, reflections, confessions and illustrations of survivors; and
 - (ii) potentially triggering those still processing trauma.
- I do hope that the value of my outputs are anchored in my acknowledgement of vulnerability and some proffer of opportunities for recovery.

“ The endgame will be an invitation to support survivors and to disrupt the processes of trauma pervasive in our Caribbean societies ”



*Reflections of Trauma & Survival
By and For Peoples of the Caribbean*



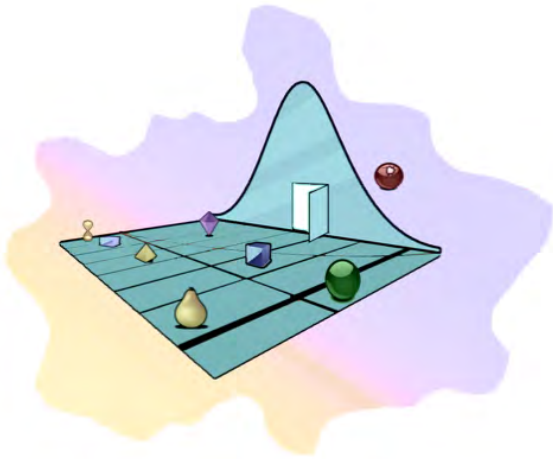
*"Happiness isn't just paradise without pain...
It often requires the right umbrella when it starts to rain..."*

Why is it expected that partners or spouses should always be willing and ready for sex? Why is sex sometimes given more weight/importance than trust, respect and autonomy in relationships?



**Even In Love
(Or Something Like It)...**

How does romanticizing first kiss lead to behaviors that could put those involved at risk?



Learning Curves

Do you remember being taught how to advocate for yourself as a child? What do you wish you had learned back then? Do you feel you have the support to learn these lessons and work on self-improvement now?



Stolen Dance Steps

How do we view or treat those who have been harmed vs people who (often, narrowly) “escaped” those experiences? If there is a difference, how does this affect others?



Same Difference

What are some ways we can work on accepting someone’s feelings (or lack of feelings) about us?

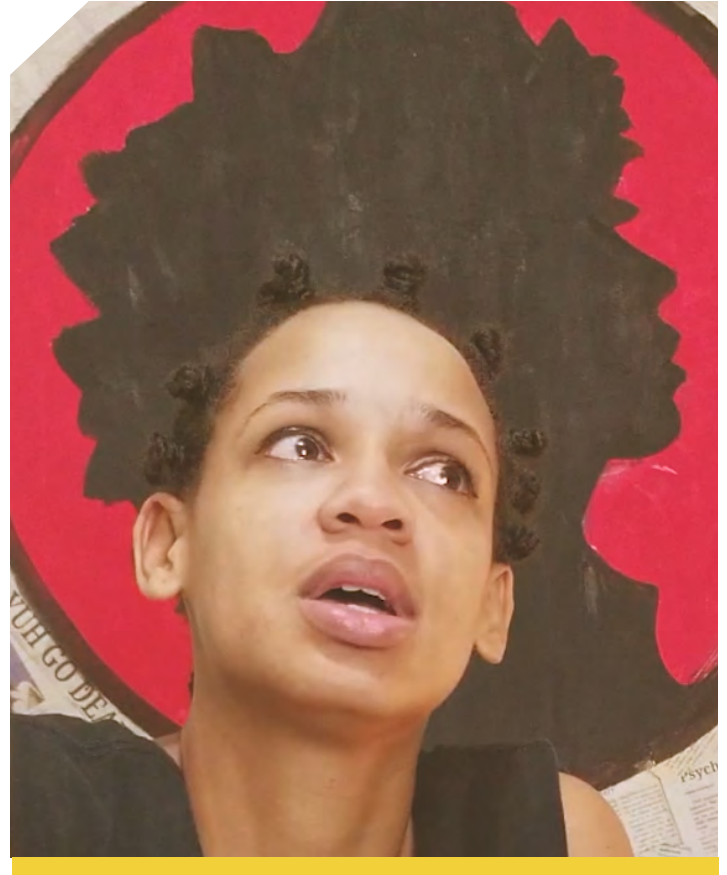


Artist: Nwanna Sorzano
Title: The Black Madonna
Date: 2020
Medium: Mixed Media
Photographer: Nwanna Sorzano

NWANNIA SORZANO

Artist & Fashion Designer
Trinidad & Tobago

'The Black Madonna' is a mixed-media piece from the artist and fashion designer Nwanna Sorzano. It is inspired by the inherent beauty of the people of mixed African, Asian and European heritage from the Caribbean. It is symbolic of strength, empowerment, femininity and cultural pride. She stands above a backdrop of newspaper headlines and reports of heinous sexual assaults and gender based violence. In triumphant defiance, she leaves her mark claiming healing and victory.



'The Black Madonna' has become an icon many activists and socially conscious people in Trinidad and Tobago have identified with especially in these times of change and activism for change.

“ In triumphant defiance,
she leaves her mark
claiming healing and
victory

”



Title: Girl's Black Hair
Date: 2016
Photographer: Nina Strehl

KALEB D'AGUILAR

Director & Writer
Jamaica

For this showcase, a written piece of short prose with the title "My Mother's Mother and Me" was completed. It follows a grandmother who returns to Kingston to rescue her daughter and granddaughters, but storytime with granny is a must. What starts as something innocent soon develops into a painful retelling of family love, loss, and the secrets mothers keep to protect their children.

Kaleb D'Aguilar is a Jamaican writer and director. His background is in theatre and performance but after completing his BSc. in Anthropology at the UWI Mona Campus, Kaleb transitioned to writing and directing for film. His curiosity in culture and the tensions between the individual and society drive his storytelling. He draws inspiration from his Caribbean community and writes to reflect the beauty in our humanity. He most recently completed his MA in Directing at Goldsmiths, University of London, and his latest project "No Entry" is a short film which explores how a mother and her son deal with the trauma of the Windrush Scandal and the British Government's Hostile Environment Policy.

As a performer, Kaleb has always been interested in the written word, specifically poetry and short prose. He was the recipient of the Michael Cooke National Award for Poetry in 2019 is featured in the National Library's latest anthology, "New Voices: Selected by Lorna Goodison, Poet Laureate of Jamaica, 2017-2020. His first published piece of short prose, "Cruising on Wrangler Avenue" is also available in the online magazine PREE.



“ His curiosity in culture and the tensions between the individual and society drive his storytelling. ”

My Mother's Mother and Me

In concrete Kingston, people don't air their problems. They cannot pass through all that smog and metal. City-folk erect high walls to keep their secrets inside, never leaving it to hang-pon-line and breeze out. In the country, the vast green allows for memories to flow freely, and secrets very often travel. The 'real stories' usually spill out in ply board bars slurred over red stripe beer. Or they're whispered between the scrips-scrips of soap powder and river water, each bubble carrying a piece of suss downstream to pop and scatter in the open sea. Many stories are childlike and jovial, bound to be forgotten with age and dementia, but others are so heavy, they must be dropped, buried and covered over with lies, years and so many tears.

Once a month, Granny takes the morning bus from Saint Grene and travels two hours into town to wage war with her daughter Liz to see her grandchildren. In this family, war between mother and daughter is common, and the crossfire is bound to catch and burn someone. But Granny tells herself that one day there will be no spark to catch a flame, and Liz might say "I love you too" so maybe then they can mend old fences.

This two-bedroom house in Kingston was bought in cash by Granny's father, Uncle Sammy, when Granny got pregnant at 18. Without a man by her side, Granny was determined to start life with Liz right. For many years, this house was filled with laughter and song, but as Liz got older, and her questions about the past got more intense, Granny got colder and distant. When Liz left school, Granny's mystery was too fleeting to ground the home, and Liz ran off to find a man to give her stone and metal. Ten years ago, she came back with a belly and a husband. So, Granny left the two-bedroom house to Liz, so she can start life with her daughter right. Granny moved to Saint Grene, a small town in the country, which Liz hadn't heard of till Granny's bags were packed and she left. But this Saturday afternoon, Liz calls Granny crying, and she knew to take the evening bus into Kingston.

At night, the city is bright with billboard lights and cars and houses patched over asphalt and concrete, and Granny wonders if it is the darkness that swallows the people. As she approached the two-bedroom house, she could only hear the distant dog in the background, and was not sure if this was a welcome or a warning. Before Granny could knock and announce herself, Liz opened the door and collapsed into her mother's arms.



Granny held her daughter close, shushing her while the memory of her first night at this house rocked into her consciousness.

Back then, the street was quiet, just like it was on this night, the house was lit with kerosene lamps and candles, and Liz was a baby, staring up at the visible stars, comforted by her mother whispering, "I have a plan". Thirty-five years had passed, but Granny remained a woman with a plan.

"Is he here?"

Liz quickly shook her head, while making sure to avoid her mother's stare for fear of judgment again. This ongoing war between mother and daughter is fueled by a man's heavy hand, and the daughter's forgiving heart.

"And my babies?"

Without falter, Liz protested "Safe", but it was as if the four letters spilled out too fast for her to keep the lie intact. Her stomach dropped causing her knees to shake, but before they could buckle and fall, Granny shifted her position to hold her daughter up. When a woman faces the eye of a storm, and the brick and mortar fracture into rubble, she must ground herself into a doorframe to roof her children from danger. Hand in hand, Granny looked Liz in her eyes, and reached for the woman in her daughter,

"Go get your things."

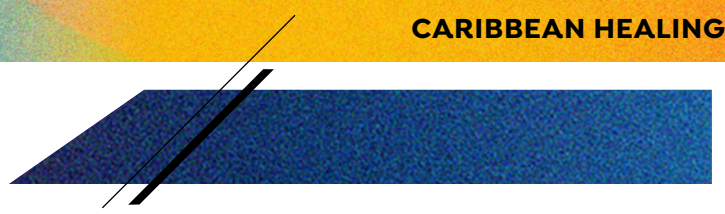
Nestled under bed sheets and evening moonlight, Granny crept into her two granddaughter's bedroom with a scare, followed by loud screams and echoes of laughter. Granny never liked being serious with her little ones. She always said, "pickney must be pickney" and her evening tales to them were usually colourful like the country, cunningly animated like Ananci, and filled with so much hope for their future. But after the excitement in hello, Granny slowly took a seat on their bed.

"All right. Teeth brush?"

They nodded.

"Ears clean?"

They nodded.



“I want to ask you two a question.”

Their energy shifted.

“Do you think we only have one house?”

And they did not what to say.

“If you could leave this house, would you? It has to be your choice.”

And out of silence, the younger grandchild hushed, “Granny?” with a face full of confusion and worry.

Granny realized that children cannot give an answer to a question they don't understand. At seven and ten, her granddaughters knew their Granny to carry a back arched into a rainbow of proverbs and laughs, but this time, her fixed posture made them know this was something serious, something real. For them to understand, she had to be recognizable.

“Okay. I going tell you two a story.”

“Ananci?”

“No. This one is about Tilly.”

The two grandchildren clenched their bodies together, ready to devour a real story. Something not told in their books, but one they imagine only Granny from country can conjure. As the younger sister got comfortable under the covers, the older shifted from hiding, ready to face Granny's tale. And the bedroom light revealed the dressed cut on her arm, which Granny saw before beginning,

“When I was a little girl...”

Back home in Saint Grene, Papa was a shepherd, and I was his little helper. Every morning before school, I had to open the pen for the goats to walk and graze in the bush behind our house. By the time I got them all out, Papa would finish his breakfast, come kiss me for my job done, and then walk with them for miles, to make them big and strong. When I came home from school, I would help Mama with supper for Papa, so he can be big and strong too. On the weekends we would go to the market, us three, and sell some of



the goats to other families; until the sun started going down and we would go back home to do it all over again.

“Granny this is boring!”

“I’m already asleep!”

“Didn’t you two say you wanted a real story?”

“Yeah but this...”

“...Is really boring!”

“Hmph! Shine yeye picney is trouble. Hush up and let me continue.”

So, one night I’m in my bed dreaming...

I’m in the goat pen after dark singing and playing in their hair, then out of nowhere, I see a big buck’s fur turn red, and his horns start twisting like the Devil grab hold of him. Then before I know it, all the goats look the same way, grunting at me ready to charge. I run inside to tell Papa, but as I reach the kitchen door, I see him take a machete and chop Mama in her face as she turned to serve supper. The plates drop and shatter, and I let go the biggest scream as the blood spew all over Papa and stain him too. And as I try to run away, the ram goat comes charging after me and I jump out of my sleep.

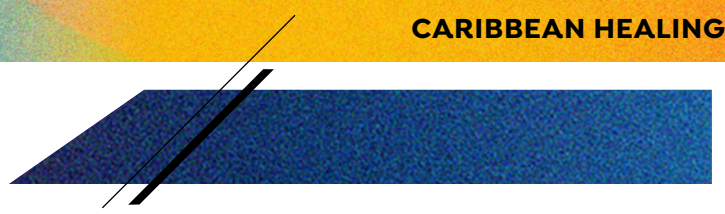
The grandkids’ eyes were wide with fright and their mouths panting ready for more. Granny’s eyes were strong, her mouth twisted up into her nose while her creased hands crunched up at her furrowed eyebrows.

“My God!”

“Okay it’s getting good now!”

And a quiet squeak from their bedroom door made them know Liz was standing there listening too. Granny looked at her daughter with a bag in hand before continuing...

I wake up screaming as Papa came running into my room. And as he turned the lights on, that’s when I saw that I was bleeding all over my white sheets. And I felt my insides twisting with a pain piercing my stomach as if it’s trying to burst through. And I thought that the buck had actually got me and that my blood was going to drain out too. I’m kicking the sheets off the bed, trying to rid myself of all the blood in this nightmare. But then out of nowhere I felt Mama grab me and I fell in her arms as she held me close and tried to calm me down. She looked at Papa who stayed in the shadow of my bedroom door, saying nothing. I then felt Mama’s hands get tighter around my body as if she feared to let



me go and right as I began to struggle for breath, she eased, held my face to hers, smiled and whispered,

“My daughter, you are a woman now.”

And a tear fell from Mama’s eye as she struggled to smile.

And a tear fell from Granny’s eye as she struggled to smile.

Granny fixed her eyes back on Liz still standing in the bedroom door as if it were Papa and the people in her story were real and in the room.

“Mom?”

Liz dropped her bag and stepped out of the silhouette to kneel beside her children on the bed. And Granny looked down at the two generations of girls seated before her.

“Mom we don’t have time for this.”

Her daughter’s eyes filled with fear, while her granddaughters were filled with an excitement as if listening to Ole Higue sucking blood in fairy tales. Granny always wanted to shield her family from this island’s history of war and blood, but it was as if her tongue could no longer hold. Granny protested, silently,

“You must know.”

And she touched the bruise on her daughter’s face before continuing...

A week had passed and Mama taught me all the secrets to womanhood. I learned that my bleeding was natural, and that it would be my duty to carry others inside me. And it was then I began to know how I came into the world, and that I would one day take my mother’s role and serve. She always said,



“We are the kid, soft and delicate, submissive to the buck.”

And one day, after I opened the pen, one of the bucks stood staring at me, so I didn't go to sing or pet any of the goats that morning. And Papa didn't eat his breakfast, or kiss me as he passed in his old long-sleeved army jacket. And I didn't go to school after he took the goats in the bush to get big and strong. Instead, Mama quickly packed a bag for me and her, and she put me in this pretty white dress with satin bows to tie my hair as if it were the first day of school. And she put on a flowy green dress and rushed me to the front of the house, where we stood pacing and waiting.

And Granny stopped.

“What happened next?”

“Yeah don't stop now!”

And a 1958 Chrysler sped up the dirt path up to the house and Mama clenched my hand so tight I flinched. And when the car pulled up and a fair skin man in a crisp shirt and shorts stepped out and took our things, I stood in the doorway of the house not wanting to move. And I held the doorframe screaming as Mama tried to get me into the car. And that's when I saw Papa running from the field back up to the house shouting. And Mama stopped pulling me. And the fair skin man went back to his car. And they stood frozen as I ran to my Papa.

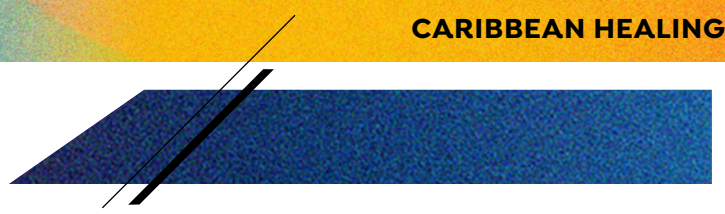
And Granny stopped again.

And her granddaughters did not know what to do. They weren't sure if this was just a story anymore, for Granny seemed distant, and they could see that her eyes were filled with water. The room was silent and they wanted their mother to say something, or to tell Granny that it was okay to stop the story, but no one said anything. Until, Granny's mouth opened again and her voice cracked to continue...

And Papa grabbed my hand and dragged me back to face my mother and the stranger parked in front his house.

Papa, “Lisbeth, what is going on here?”

Mama, “Harpo, please! Give me my daughter and make us go.”



And Papa squeezed my hand even tighter.

“So you leaving me for this white man?”

And Mama stared at the machete in Papa’s right hand twisting as he asked the question. But I’ve seen them fight before with blade and board and Mama always wins.

“Harpo. This is not London. I’m not your enemy. And Tilly cannot grow afraid of her own house.”

And I looked up at Papa to see his face but the sun was shining so bright it burned my eyes. And I felt that sharp pain in my stomach again. And I looked to see if I was bleeding but I wasn’t. This was real! So I pushed Papa’s grip off my hands and I ran to the goat’s pen crying, trying to rid myself of this nightmare. And I heard Mama shout my name over and over as Papa ran after me and got me before I could drown myself in the buck and fur. And he was dragging me through the dirt. And the dust was catching my dress. And I was kicking and screaming trying to get out of Papa’s grip. And I saw the fair skin man hop in his car about to leave and I think I safe, but Papa started screaming “Fine! Take her” You want her take her! But you not getting my wife. You not getting my wife!” And Mama followed behind Papa begging him to stop and to let us all go back in the house. “She’s my daughter! You can’t do this! Sammy don’t make him do this.” But Papa’s voice rose louder than hers. And that’s when I saw how small and young Mama was. And she fell right there outside the house wailing. And her tears mix in with the red dirt and stain her dress. And Papa threw me in the back of the fair skin man car before dragging Mama back inside the house. And the man looked at me from the driver seat just as confused and scared. And he drove off with me screaming. And I never saw them again.

“And I never saw them again.”

The grandchildren’s faces were scrunched up into a question mark as the younger shook her head in disapproval.

“You could have made the ending happy.”



“But then it wouldn’t be a real story.”

And a silence crept over their young faces as they searched Granny’s eyes for a better answer. Liz shielded her face, to wipe her eyes before chiming in,

“But the story does have a happy ending. The little girl moved to Kingston, and eventually had a daughter of her own who she made big and strong. And she had two little girls of her own. We are a family of queens and princesses.”

And Liz looked at her daughters as if she was trying to make herself believe what she just said. But Granny added,

“We are a family of warriors.”

And these answers satisfied the younger’s childlike fantasies, but not the older. At ten, she knew what had to be done. And she finished Granny’s line as she looked on her own bruise...

“We are a family of warriors...who have to leave”.

And she got out of bed and began taking her younger sister’s clothes out to pack. And Liz held back tears as she watched her daughter become a woman in front of her. And Granny called a taxi to carry these four warriors on the run to the bus stop, to take the last bus out of Kingston on route to Saint Grene, to find home safely and breathing easy.



Featured Creative: Neil Waithe in the production, 'Man Child'

Date: May 2018

Photographer: Duvaughn Burke

NEIL WAITHE

Artist
Barbados

I created this podcast with my father to discuss his book as well as my play. His newly released book, "Managing Anger: A Handbook for Students" and my final year play, "Man Child" are both laced with many parallels. In the play, I investigate the rites of passage of the Caribbean male. In his counselling practice spanning decades, my father provided students with practical tools towards coping with their emotions; primarily anger.

This project has been life changing for me. Although I have lived with my father in Jamaica for the past five years, we have not spoken to each other for longer than a minute or two at a time. We do not have a tumultuous relationship, but there is so much that has not been said. Ironically, we both work professionally with children and guide them towards making sound decisions and clear communication. I believe this podcast has the potential to help many. Primarily the support is being provided for males to help them deal with their buried burdens and also help them grow from the discussion in the podcast. This project allows me to both share my work and also be compensated for the creative output.



By my measurement of manhood, I feel like a failure. Most people might perceive me as a man, but I do not. How does a boy know he is a man? What are the Rites of Passage for the Caribbean male?

These were the central questions of my thesis towards the development of my one-person play entitled, "Man Child". The presentation of the written and performed research received the Louise Bennet award at the 2018 Edna Manley College Graduation Ceremony for Most Outstanding Performer.

Since graduating I have had the distinct honour to continue the research. I have taught and facilitated Drama and Life Skills at the Joy Town Community Development Programme in Trench Town, Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre in Spanish Town, Social Development Commission in Downtown Kingston, and finally to the St. Andrews High School for Girls.

“ Primarily the support is being provided for males to help them deal with their buried burdens and also help them grow... ”

BREAKING THE BINARY



Artist: Moon (Dominique Vendryes)
Title: "Breaking the Binary" book cover
Date: 2020
Photographer: Naomi Johnson (@naomitj)
Creative Director/Stylist: Moon (@_moonheartist)

Moon

JHERANE PATMORE

Literary Curator
Jamaica

For the showcase, I have created a podcast interview with multi-disciplinary artist, Moon. Moon is currently working on a collection of poetry & photography inspired by interviews with queer Jamaicans from across the island as well as their family and friends. We had previously hosted Moon for an online reading with just under fifty attendees in the Zoom meeting. In the podcast we had the opportunity to hold a deeper conversation with her. We will discuss her inspiration, the process of creating this book, her craft and her approach as an artist that flows through the visual, literary and performing arts. The podcast features a discussion with Moon about her upcoming anthology. Rebel Women Lit also submitted a video on Neila Ebanks who is a Jamaican dance practitioner, choreographer and dance educator in modern and experimental forms.



Rebel Women Lit is an open book club, turned literary community, based in Jamaica. We focus on stories from women, non-binary persons, queer persons, and other voices that have been traditionally marginalised in publishing. Rebel Women Lit has a podcast, book store, free community library, YouTube channel and enjoys a strong social media presence. We're primarily focused on engaging millennial and Gen Z readers, and storytellers of all ages to engage with the literary arts. Our audience spans various demographics across the Caribbean and the diaspora such as individuals identifying as women, black and queer people. We encourage everyone in our literary community to read books that speak about the human condition in critical and original ways. Yes, everything we do is political, queer and deliberate.

“We encourage everyone in our literary community to read books that speak about the human condition in critical and original ways”

Artist: Danielle Gennard

Title: Interlaced

Date: 2020

Medium: Oil Painting



DANIELLE GENNARD

Visual Artist
Jamaica

The artwork showcased is entitled 'Interlaced' and was completed on a 12 by 16 inch canvas over a period of approximately eight days with the use of oil paints as my primary medium. The process of creating this piece was documented in a twenty minute time-lapse video with narration and background music. The video gives insight into the creative process, my life as an artist and how I maintain mental equilibrium during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender is explored in this artwork through the creation of a portrait with two persons. Symbols that are both hidden and in plain sight are used to target topical and critical gender issues such as toxic masculinity, gender fluidity and gender stereotypes within Jamaica and the Caribbean. In this painting, I utilize prior research, reference images, physical appearance and dress to convey these gender issues. A dichotomous concept of effeminacy of the male and masculinity of the female is used to challenge the societal narrative of gender stereotypes and sexuality in a visually appealing format.



My artwork is intended to evoke thought and reasoning with subliminal creative ideas, symbols and arrangement through the themes of culture and gender. My studio practice involves the utilization of different mediums such as oil paint, acrylic paint and other mixed media. A unique story is usually centralized around my artwork and colour, value, contrast, emphasis and unity are employed to convey these themes. As a visual artist, I often highlight a relationship between Realism and Surrealism with the focal point of each artwork being a portrait of a male, female or both. Inspiration is drawn from the styles of the Old Masters as well as from Contemporary Art. My artwork is driven by human anatomy, aspects of Caribbean culture, social constructs and repressive social conditioning. Through my work I am empowered to be able to challenge theories about societal norms and stimulate a continuous and needed conversation about these issues.

“
Symbols that are both hidden and in plain sight will be used to target topical and critical gender issues such as toxic masculinity, gender fluidity and gender stereotypes within Jamaica and the Caribbean
 ”



Featured Content Creator:

Cherdai Hassell

Content Title:

Art Effects: Art Full Circle - Episode 15

Date: 2020

GHERDAI HASSELL

Visual Artist & Podcast Host
Bermuda

Writer, architect, singer, painter, poet, musician, dancer, intellectual, griot - these are the makers of the world. The world is beautiful because they have lived; without them, labouring humanity would find less joy in life. Art is a spiritual transaction. It is the expression of the invisible by means of the visible. Art can be found in everything we see, touch and hear. Art shapes and beautifies the world in which we live. Art-making as human expression has been a part of Black cultures since antiquity.

Black Caribbean artists have been engaged in this art-making practice since the beginning of time. It is our way of life, how we communicate, pay homage and celebrate. It is what connects us back to ourselves. Art is the bridge between ourselves and our ancestors.

For some time now, I've believed artists were constantly in conversation with one another. Directly and indirectly, via inspiration, research, and citation. It's an important part of the artistic practice to be engaged in the art making of others. Art gives rise to art. I spend much of my time researching art, and the artists who make the work. I'm particularly curious about the inspiration and processes of creatives within my artistic family, black artists of the African diaspora. This is the impetus for creating this podcast.



I am in conversation, every other week, with black intellectuals, thought leaders, and contemporary artists working in various genres such as literature, painting, drawing, design, photography, poetry, music and fashion design to name a few. We chat about all aspects of being creative such as inspiration, life experience, artistic process and art entrepreneurship. We also explore how the different layers of the arts intersect and inform the world in which we live. In the podcast, all elements of the culture of Art and Design are celebrated. The purpose of the podcast is to serve as a vessel connecting intellectuals of the African diaspora and the Caribbean to the magic that can inspire them to create the shit we want to exist in this world.

When I am not podcasting in conversation with artists of the diaspora, I am in my studio, making art. I am a Bermudian multi disciplinary artist and a masters degree candidate at the China Academy of art, in Hangzhou. My current work explores present day linkages with the colonial archive. From an Afro futurist perspective, my work constructs contemporary narratives weaving individual and collective memory, cultivating new explorations of identity and place. I have presented works in group exhibitions in Bermuda, China, and the USA. My first solo exhibition inspired by the African Diaspora, "I AM Because You Are", opens March 5 2021 - Sept 2021 at Bermuda National Gallery.

“ It is what connects us back to ourselves. Art is the bridge between ourselves and our ancestors. ”



Featured Community Project
Coordinator: Margaret Lawrence
Event: MERUNDOI/M.A.R.C.H.
Project Audition for Actors
Date: 2006

MARGARET LAWRENCE/ MERUNDOI INC.

Behaviour Change NGO
Guyana

Caribbean Artist Showcase Awardee, Margaret Lawrence, submitted a report on the activities of her NGO titled 'MERUNDOI M.A.R.C.H. Forward'. Her submission is a written feature which describes the work of Merundoi Inc, an NGO which seeks to change behaviour through the use of drama. The report tells of the beginning with its involvement in the fight against HIV in Guyana and shows the progression of an organisation that can boast multiple awards and the production of over twelve hundred (1200) radio plays since 2006.

Merundoi works towards strengthening communities, especially young adults and vulnerable populations, to take ownership of their attitudes, actions and behaviours and to work together for their mutual benefit. Our mission is "...to model, foster and reinforce healthy choices and lifestyles through innovative public education to facilitate positive behaviour change by utilizing drama and other media " and facilitate attitudinal and behavior change related to good health, environment, economic, social and governance practices.



The MARCH (Modeling & Reinforcement to Combat HIV/AIDS) Project was established in Guyana in 2006 as a 5-yr PEPFAR Project specialising in Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) with an Edutainment (education-education) strategy. This Project was registered as an NGO, Merundoi Incorporated in November 2007.

The programmes aim to facilitate positive behaviour change utilising the Creative Arts and Mass Media platforms. Merundoi's BCC edutainment strategy comprises Modeling and Reinforcement of behaviours and messages. Modeling of behaviours is done in the award-winning Radio Serial Drama ,”Merundoi”, the longest running radio drama in Guyana and The Caribbean . The reinforcement of the messages is done at the individual and community levels through Listening and Discussion Groups , In School-Drama, Public listening sites and Street (forum) Theatre.

Over time Merundoi has included other social issues and expanded its services base to include training workshops and a variety of multi-media productions. These include Playwriting and Stage Production, Street/ Forum Theatre, education and sensitisation Infomercials, Documentaries, jingles and more recently a full length film on Suicide.

Using Edutainment through the Arts is an effective way to model patterns of behaviours and show how change can come about. During the COVID-19 period, it is useful to use Radio Drama as an effective platform to disseminate public awareness messages.

“ **Merundoi works towards strengthening communities, especially young adults and vulnerable populations, to take ownership of their attitudes, actions and behaviours and to work together for their mutual benefit** ”





2005/0





Featured Creative:

Oshun Trim in Glenda-Rose Layne's production,
'Community Treasures - Recognition'

Date: July 2015

GLENDA-ROSE LAYNE

Storyteller & Dramatist
Trinidad & Tobago

This presentation entitled "Out of the Bowels of Anancy" highlights excerpts, clips and performances, and discusses my work and how Anancy influences my practice as an artist. It brings to the fore how growing up as a child in the Caribbean in the 1970's facilitated my development as an artist.

I am a professional storyteller, actress, playwright and director. The focus of my work is based on history, cultural traditions and beliefs through the use of the traditional and indigenous arts of the Caribbean. I am a certified practitioner in Theatre and Drama in Education as well as a Researcher with specific focus on the indigenous and traditional Arts. I am also a strong believer in Edutainment.



“

The focus of my work is based on history, cultural traditions and beliefs through the use of the traditional and indigenous arts of the Caribbean

”



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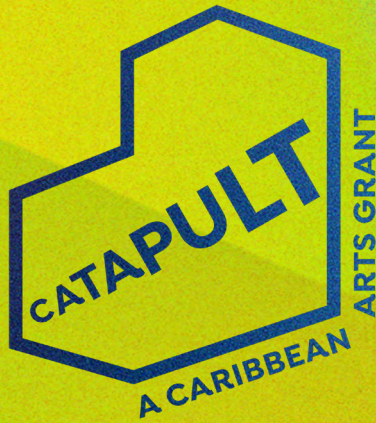
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THE AMERICAN FRIENDS
OF JAMAICA





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.