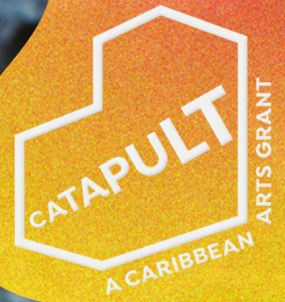


ISSUE: VOLUME 4  
DATE: MARCH 2021

# CATAPULT

## Caribbean Artist Showcase

VOICES OF CONTEMPORARY CARIBBEAN ARTISTS

A photograph of two women with dark skin and curly hair, wearing white tank tops. They are covering their eyes with their hands, looking down. The background is a textured, greyish-blue surface.

# *Caribbean* AWAKENING

10 Caribbean  
Contemporary Creatives



# Welcome to the Caribbean Artist Showcase



As we moved through the range of work presented for the Caribbean Artist Showcase it has become evident that the Caribbean creative is filled with both the agency and the will to implement social changes. In this edition we look at creatives who through spoken word, photography, various types of performance and interventions, are seeking to activate a new state of being Caribbean. The creatives featured in this volume are highly vocal and have invented their own micro-systems for reaching audiences and sustaining their craft. They are highly concerned with the future they are facing and their role in bringing about the needed change and reflection at a wider level.

An interesting point to note is how many of these creatives not only maintain their own practice but are also creating opportunities and resources for others within their field. While living in their present moment they are involved in future-planning the cultural landscape and broader dreams that they would like to see realised. Minori Izumi Russell in her podcast series 'The Creator & The Creation' creates digital resources of wisdom and knowledge by her interviews with music industry professionals who have been long standing in their field. The aim being to provide both herself and fellow early career musical artistes the information that was not readily available to music professionals before this. This is often knowledge which her interviewees have had to learn on their own.

## EDITOR'S NOTE VOLUME 4: Caribbean Awakening

Akeem Chandler-Prescod writes and performs poetry meant to activate consciousness and awareness of the underbelly of social systems. While Lisa Lej creates costumes from recycled materials and performs in the natural environments of Portland, Jamaica she is also engaged in teaching creative skills to the women in her community. Claudette Thompson has prepared an anthology of poetry directed at women to provide encouragement in relearning approach to assumptions about roles in relationships, self-awareness and self-esteem. Self-described artist Rica G. describes in her podcast how she has travelled back to reside and create physically in Jamaica as a way of regenerating and replenishing the Caribbean home she is connected to through her family.



We at the Catapult Arts Grant have been proud to produce these four magazine volumes on these forty one diverse, talented and engaged creatives for the Caribbean Artist Showcase. Through this work as an editor my own arts initiative Tide Rising Art Projects has had the chance to interface with Caribbean creatives in ways that have deepened our commitment to the artists of the region. Like these creatives we invite you to once again look through these lovingly crafted volumes and join these awardees in considering pasts, fictions, tales, experiences and future directions of the Caribbean and its creative culture.

Oneika Russell, Editor

## MAGAZINE TEAM

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Khadijah Chang

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**DIANA MCCAULAY**

Environmental Specialist

**SIMONE HARRIS**

Queer Artist, Activist & Creative Consultant

**JUAN FRANCISCO PARDO**

Caribbean Filmmaker



**Cover Image**

**Title:** My Pandemic 10

**Year:** 2020

**Medium:** Digital Photography

**Credit:** Meredith Andrews

**IG:** @meredithphoto



Nowé Harris-Smith  
**Title:** Flamingo  
**Date:** 2020  
**Medium:** Digital

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**Title:** My Pandemic 4  
**Year:** 2020  
**Medium:** Digital Photography  
**Credit:** Meredith Andrews  
**IG:** @meredithphoto

# MEREDITH ANDREWS

Photographer  
Bermuda

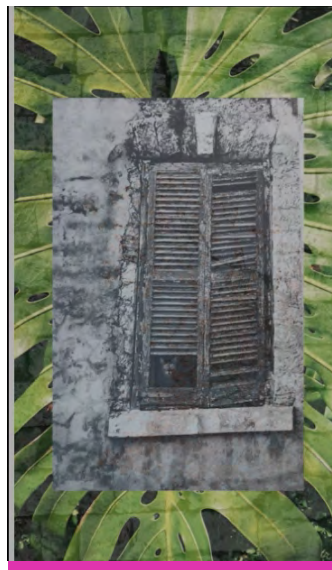
My photographic work is varied in style, theme and content. Projects in process include examining issues of identity in the region, the movement for racial equity on our island; my emotional turmoil during the Covid-19 lockdown period; a series of portraits looking at community in the pandemic; and the scourge of ocean plastics plaguing our planet but more specifically the Caribbean region.

In recent months the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the island have been a focal point. The virus has accelerated the issue of inequality in our society and requires our small community to make changes and question the status quo. This critical time begs for documentation.

Furthermore, our planet is in crisis with plastic pollution being a startling reminder of irreversible damage we have done. The collection, sorting and image-making of ocean plastics has become a very important part of my work. My camera lens is normally drawn to people and their stories, but witnessing the increased levels of plastic washing up on the island's shores meant it could no longer be ignored.



My work has been exhibited widely, including in London's National Portrait Gallery and Photographer's Gallery, and the Bermuda National Gallery. Identity and culture are the compelling central themes in my work. Varying from documentary reportage to staged narrative images, my work is intrinsically linked to a sense of place, the place being my island home of Bermuda.



“

**The virus has accelerated the issue of inequality in our society and requires our small community to make changes and question the status quo. This critical time begs for documentation.**

”



**Title of Piece Being Performed:** "Plucked"  
**Date:** 2020  
**Medium:** Online Performance



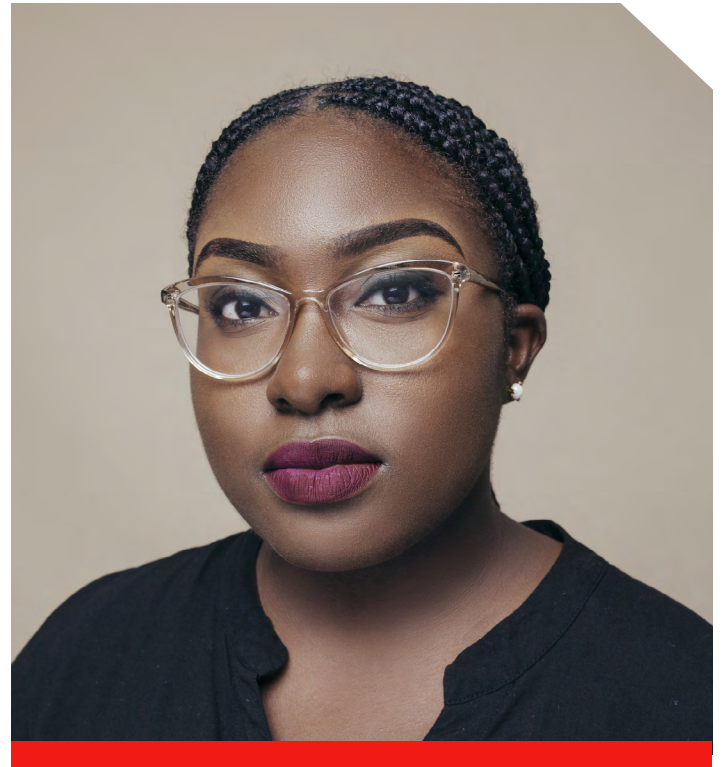
# JODI MINNIS

Interdisciplinary Artist  
The Bahamas

“Plucked” centres the notion of black woman liberation while waging war against the expectations of women dictated by our societies. Wearing a white dress and pantyhose, I attempt to tweeze the hair off of my legs through the pantyhose while seated. As the video goes on, I repeat a recording of a monologue also titled “Plucked”.

I drew inspiration for this work from The Combahee River Collective’s “A Black Feminist Statement”. They write, “our politics initially spring from the shared belief that black women are inherently valuable, that our liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to somebody else’s but because of our need for autonomy as human persons. We realize that the only people who care enough about us to work consistently for our liberation is us.”

In The Bahamas, some argue that patriarchal systems do not exist because we have a “matriarchal” society. Yet, although women are pillars within our communities, their achievements are often overlooked unless they are in proximity to a man. Therefore, this performance is an act of severing my sense of self from its current parallel to the patriarchy. It is a declaration of the lengths that I will go in order to assert myself as a person and to exist in the non-binary. It is a reintroduction and a closing statement. It is pain and bliss and clumsy but possible.



I investigate the intersection of gender, race and culture through a multi-media practice inclusive of photography, video, painting, printmaking, and performance art. With this practice, I scrutinize the representation and social status of black women, specifically Bahamian women. By investigating the personal and political aspects of those themes, I use my practice as a means of questioning, defining and exposing the socio-economic and historic challenges within my social environment. I also define my practice as a reclamation and/or an ownership of the totality of black womanhood. I reclaim and redirect the imperialist gaze by using traditional Western portraiture as my genre even though I grew up in a formerly colonized country.

“

**...I use my practice as a means of questioning, defining and exposing the socio-economic and historic challenges within my social environment.**

”



**Featured Creative:** Akeem Chandler-Prescod/ Stoned with Cupid performing at Barbados Connect  
**Date:** December 2020  
**Photographer:** Stephan Marshall

# AKEEM CHANDLER -PRESCOD

Spoken Word Artist  
Barbados

Cult-Chore, the feature I have prepared for this Caribbean Artist Showcase takes the form of an Edutainment podcast that discusses religion, gender bias, drug addiction, crime, juvenile delinquency and the racial history of the Caribbean. The audio features three spoken word pieces that follow discussions about the aforementioned topics.

This production highlights the social dynamics within Barbados and showcases parallels and differences with other cultures internationally. It also gives the listener a glimpse into what Barbadian poetry is like. Poets are social commentators who can often be found providing insight or a new outlook on various matters. It is my hope that this podcast will stimulate a conversation amongst the listeners and cultivate an interest in Barbadian poetry which can lead to the growth of the art-form locally and regionally.



Also known as StonedwithCupid, I am a 26 year old Barbadian Spoken Word Artist who weaves Hip-Hop, Theatre and Storytelling into my poetry to create a unique poetic fabric. This poetic fabric is then designed into genres such as Ambient Poetry, Hip-Hop Musical Theatre, Soul Poetry and Social Commentary. These poetic outfits explore social themes that are present in today's society. The range of topics include race, depression, sexuality, climate change, gender bias, sex, colonialism and spirituality. Poetry has long been known for its emotional impact and heavy subject matter, and so I attempt to add refrains, melodies and musicality to assist the public in digesting what can be a very tough performance to swallow.

“ **Poets are social commentators who can often be found providing insight or a new outlook on various matters.** ”



**Featured Creative:** Nowé Harris-Smith

**Title:** Solace

**Date:** 2020

**Photographer:** Nowé Harris-Smith  
and Spurgeonique Morley

# NOWÉ HARRIS SMITH

Mixed Media Artist  
The Bahamas

Gender within the Caribbean diaspora is strictly limited to the biological assignment one received at birth. These series of photographs and illustrations explore gender within the binary and how one chooses to appear to the world. Androgyny is still considered foreign in the region, however, embracing this identity can lead to inner self-acceptance for those within queer communities.



Harris-Smith's work is fueled by humanism within the environments she occupies. Fascinated by bodies, life, and cultural practices within her diaspora, Harris-Smith captures fragments of everyday realities. Whether abstracted forms to realistic photographs, Harris-Smith's work is driven by human perception and existence. She seeks to use her aesthetics to provide a window into this realm of human life. Her aim as a mixed media artist is to provide a platform for discussion in relatable contexts.

“Whether abstracted forms to realistic photographs, Harris-Smith's work is driven by human perception and existence. She seeks to use her aesthetics to provide a window into this realm of human life.”

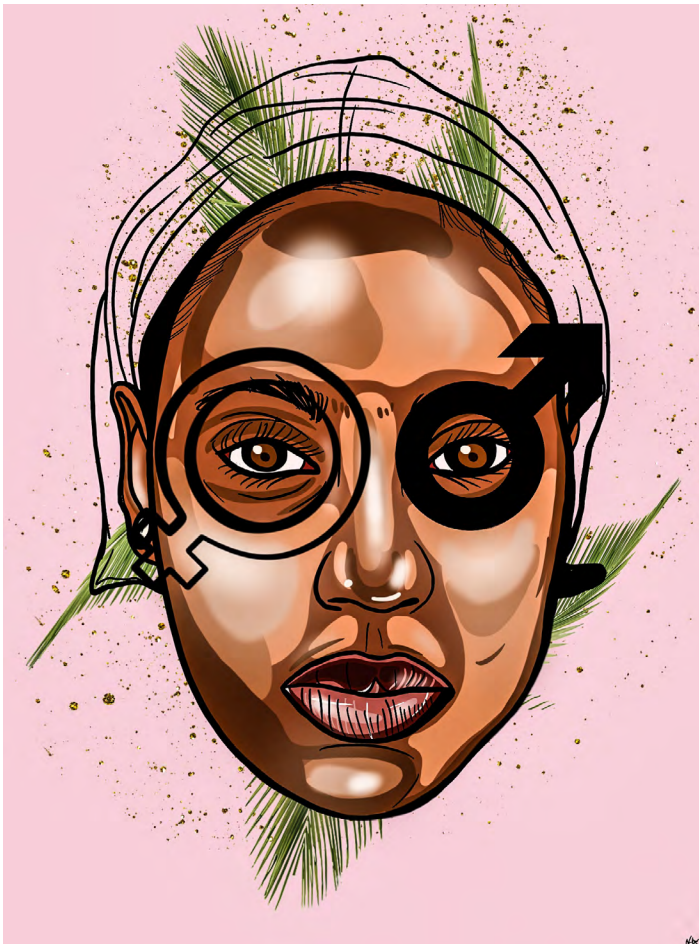
# Androgyny in the Caribbean - Existing beyond gender

By: Nowé H. Harris-Smith

Gender within the Caribbean diaspora is often held to one's biological assignment. Existing in the realm of androgyny is often viewed as taboo. Hailing from a patriarchal society, it was often expressed that being a woman entailed portraying the stereotypical semblance of femininity.

"Wear a dress, fix ya self," were phrases echoed throughout my childhood and young adult life. How one chooses to appear to the world should not be strictly regarded to his/her genders.

Images (What Are You? {left} and Solace {right})



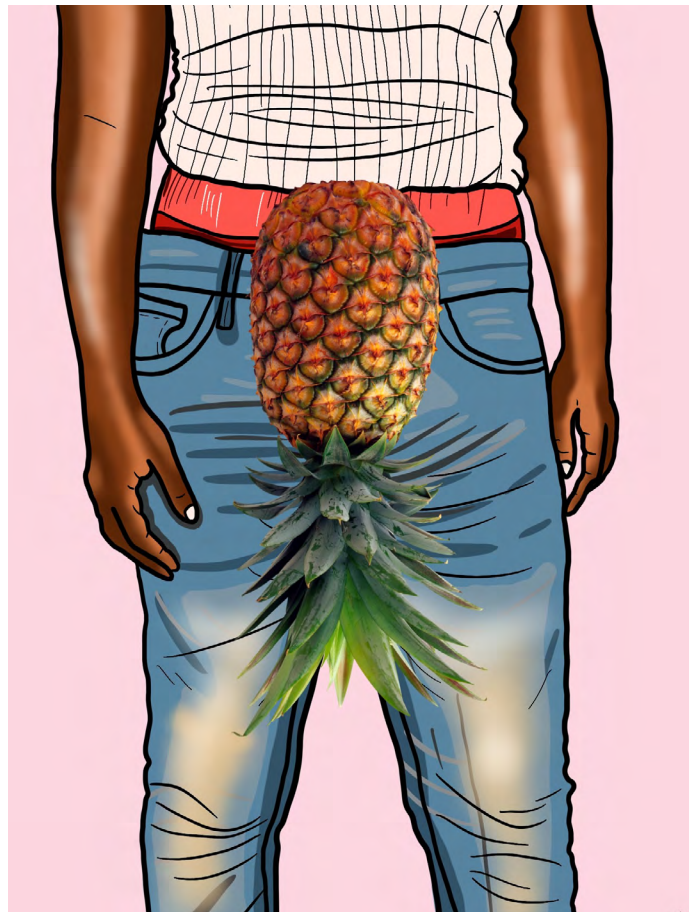
Within queer communities, self expression was a valid way to exist. Freedom and acceptance can directly correlate to one's chosen identity. As Caribbean nationals, we should begin to look beyond archaic stereotypes of what masculinity or femininity is. Adornments are one of the most powerful facets of human creativity.

As a person embraces an artwork, so should one embrace a person's identity.  
 Images (Flamingo {Left} and Solace Close-Up {Right})

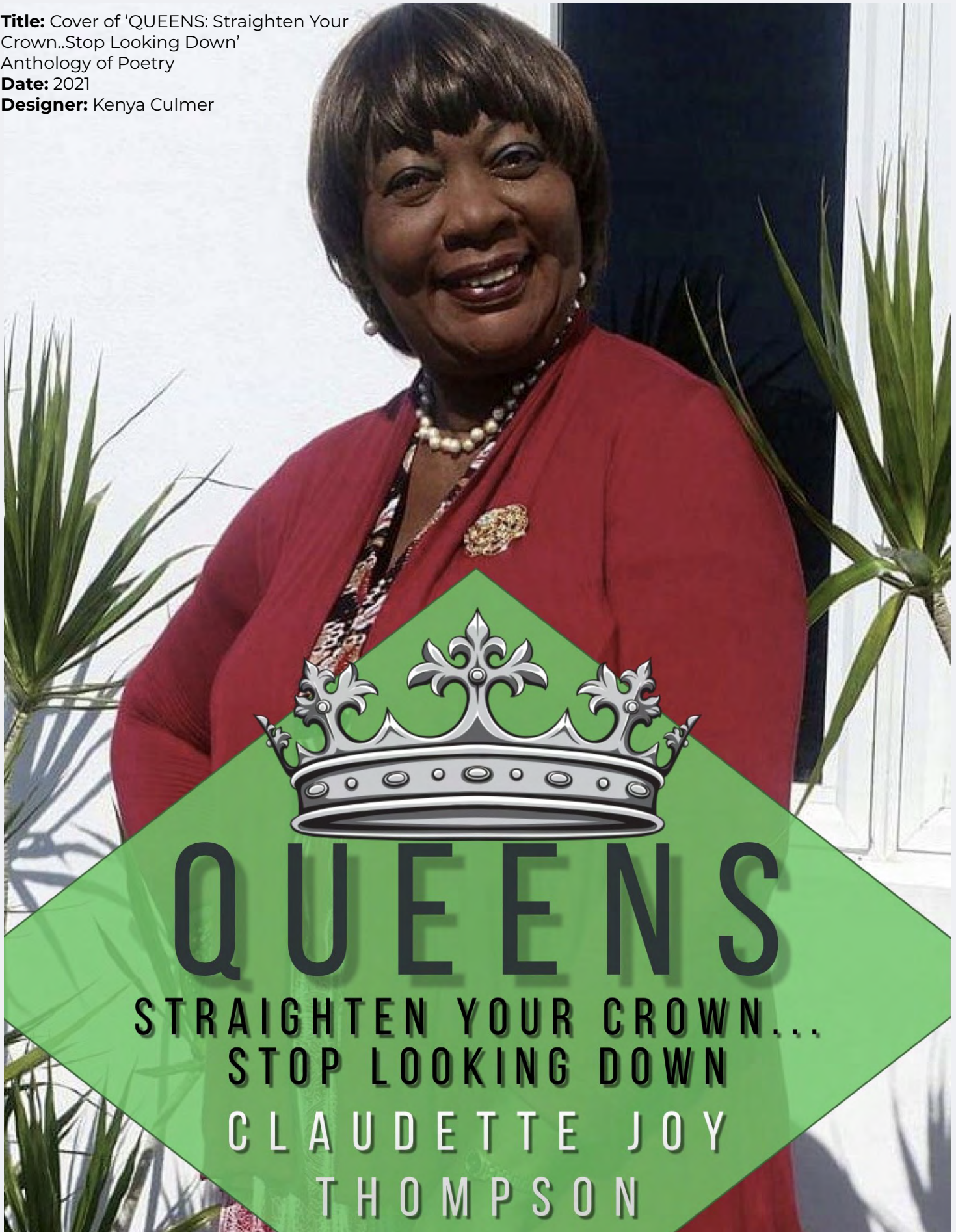


One recognizes their power through authenticity. A masculine presenting woman can be sensitive, kind, or soft. Her/Their beauty exists beyond the gender binary. Living as an androgynous woman in the Caribbean poses challenges, however providing platforms for education can dismantle long held beliefs. This can allow for various communities to exist harmoniously.

Image (She still Sweet)



**Title:** Cover of 'QUEENS: Straighten Your Crown..Stop Looking Down'  
Anthology of Poetry  
**Date:** 2021  
**Designer:** Kenya Culmer





# CLAUDETTE THOMPSON

Writer  
The Bahamas

My work often addresses the plight of Caribbean women. It is hoped that by highlighting the challenges we face, more women will come to realize that they are not alone and will subsequently find hope and healing. This can become possible if we, as women, were to interact more with those who have a similar story to share and also those who can offer advice and counselling.



Take a stand and assume your rightful place

Take a stand as a dignified member of the human  
race

Take a stand holding your moral standards high

Take a stand regarding honesty, there's no need to  
lie.

Woman, take a stand.

The world is yours to conquer, this is no time to  
retreat

Stand with courage, rise to your feet

I have always been concerned with social issues. To a large extent my work focuses on gender inequality, crime and poverty. In addition, I feel the need to ensure the perpetuity of cultural norms and practices as it is important that the culture of a people be passed from one generation to the next. I have used the spoken word to highlight aspects of my country's culture. In general, I use my writing to bring awareness to these various areas.

Let no man pass his place

By letting you live a life of disgrace

Woman, take a stand.

You don't have to depend on their measly dollar to  
survive

Be self-sufficient. Do more than exist. THRIVE!

Woman, take a stand.

**“ It is hoped that by highlighting the challenges we face, more women will come to realize that they are not alone and will subsequently find hope and healing. ”**

# THE CREATION & THE CREATOR

IG LIVE INTERVIEW SESSIONS  
HOSTED BY MINORI



**FRIDAY 30TH OCT**  
**@MINORIMUZIK**

**ARTIST**  
**NATTALI RIZE 3:05 - 3:20**

**PRODUCER**  
**TANDRA JAGROO 3:20 - 3:35**

**LAWYER**  
**KRISTEN LEWIS 3:35 - 3.50**

**Title:** Flier for 'The Creator  
& The Creation' podcast

**Date:** 2020

**Designer:** Minori Izumi Russell

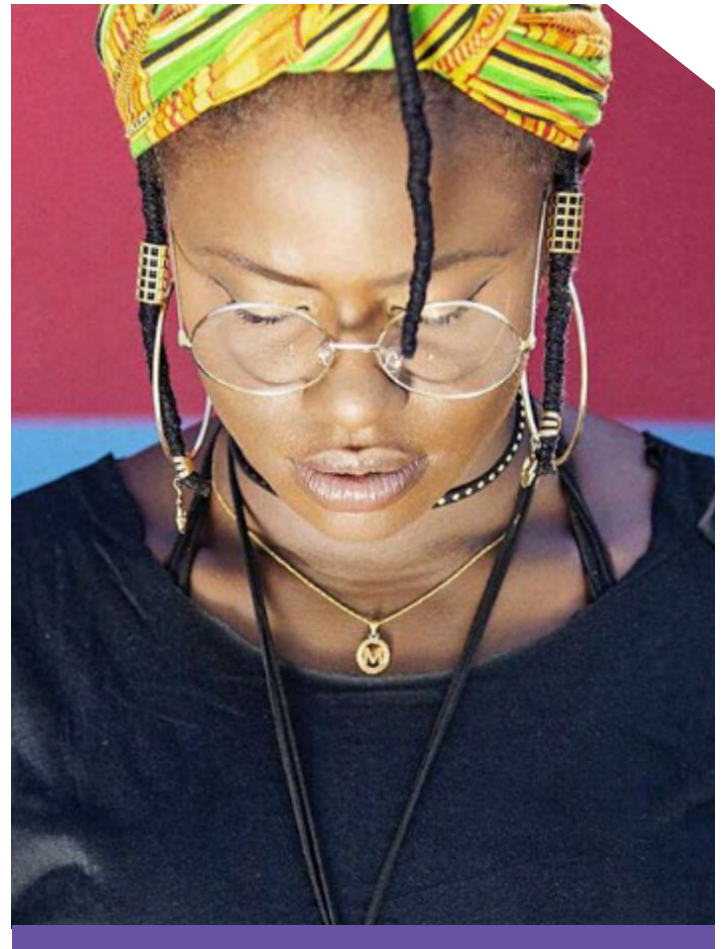


# MINORI IZUMI RUSSELL

Singer/Songwriter  
Jamaica

I am a firm believer that knowledge is power and this fuels my mission to provide information to other creators through this digital series "The Creation and the Creator". In this episode I speak to three guests who play very important roles in the music industry: Natalie Rise (Artiste), Kristin Lewis (Attorney at Law), and Tandra Jhagroo (Studio Engineer).

My main creative areas are songwriting and musical performance. I am a Vocalist/DJ and my music is a heavy fusion of Roots Reggae, Dancehall, and Hip Hop. I was a past contestant in the Magnum Kings and Queens of Dancehall as well as a graduate and valedictorian of the USAID-funded project Fiwi Jamaica, a training course held at The University of Technology, Jamaica that focused on songwriting, sound engineering, performance, and artist management. I have worked on a number of initiatives with well-respected Jamaican producer Mikie Bennet, the most recent project being The Appleton Jamaica's Album "Heart of Jamaica". On this project I was featured as both a performer and a songwriter.



My music touches on issues I believe should be the most important in the world and mostly focuses on positive change in the areas of Child Protection, Climate Change, Equality, Female Empowerment, and Love.



**“...knowledge is power and this fuels my mission to provide information to other creators..”**

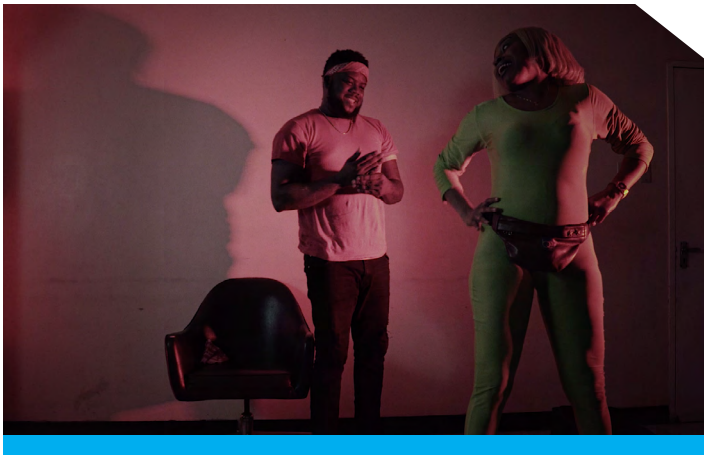


**Producer:** Fabian Barracks  
**Title:** Still image from 'Corona vs HIV'  
**Date:** 2020

# FABIAN BARRACKS

Playwright/Director  
Jamaica

'Wi Gone Viral' is a limited series of short plays streamed on YouTube created by the team at Barracks Entertainment and directed by Fabian Barracks. This feature submission is the first in the series and presents a controversial social commentary on the Corona Virus and HIV pandemics.



Fabian Barracks is a Writer, Director, and founder of Barracks Entertainment, a theatre company established ten years ago that empowers youth through the arts. He has done 10 commercial productions, some of the most recent being Wah Sweet Nanny Goat, Black Sheep and Ananda Alert. Fabian is extremely passionate about youth development and focuses on producing plays that explore some critical themes affecting young people. The Barracks Theatre established in early 2020 serves as a youth hub for theatre arts. His recent achievements include Actor Boy Award 2018 for Best Comedy for Black Sheep, and Youth View Awards for Favourite Local Theatre Play in 2017 for Wah Sweet Nanny Goat. A graduate of the University of the West Indies Entertainment and Cultural Enterprise Management Programme, Barracks continues to stay true to his vision of bringing out the best in youth through the arts and nurturing young talent through quality theatre.

**Fabian is extremely passionate about youth development and focuses on producing plays that explore some critical themes affecting young people.**

**Featured Creative:** Lisa Láj  
**Title:** Upcycled Plastic Bottles Wearable  
Art - A Go Green Initiative  
**Date:** April, 2020  
**Photographer:** Honi Media



# LISA LÉJ

Multi-disciplinary Artist  
Jamaica

“Pandemic Plight 2020” is a presentation incorporating dance, social commentary, and art, and looks at the impact of the world's collective mismanagement of the environment and its similarities and differences with the current pandemic.



Art is Healing. Art is a universal language that helps bring people together and I use art to find solutions to our social, environmental, and economic issues. This is my life and dream which I have been pursuing in various ways over the years. The dance movements in the presentation are movements of healing which I learned while living in an ashram and with families in India. The movements incorporate postures of healing with symbolism of ancient reiki movements. This is a way of channeling high vibration from the heaven through my body and dispersing it onto the world. It is also a combination of native African dance moves from the people of Ghana where my ancestors are from.

My dream is to see my country become sustainable and improve dramatically (in her society, ecology and economy) to the point where we can help other Caribbean and or developing countries. Life is not a destination it is a journey. Selah!

“

**Art is a universal language that helps bring people together and I use art to find solutions to our social, environmental, and economic issues.**

”



**Featured Creative:** Rica G. performing "theme song"

**Date:** 2019

**Medium:** Spoken Word Performance

**Photographer:** Calvin Maurice



# RICA G.

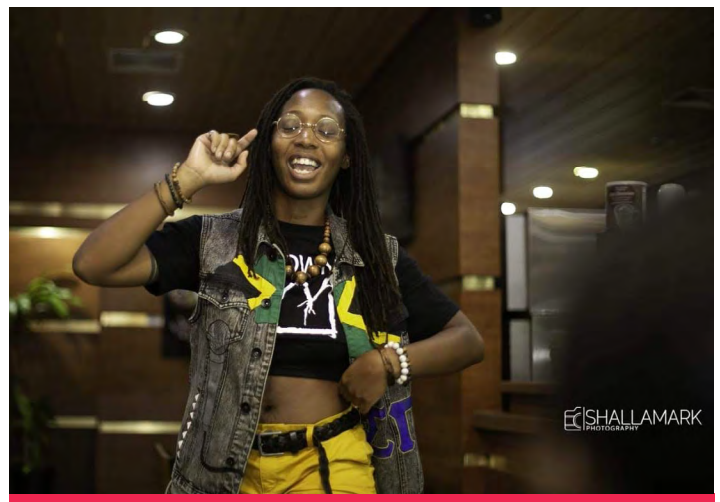
Spoken Word Poet/Activist  
Jamaica

My feature is a 23 minute interview titled “Sistren on a Mission”. In it I speak of my transition from Atlanta to Kingston and how I use my diverse skill set as a culture worker to serve those who deserve better access to greater resources, while also hustling to maintain my creative freedom. My life is Artivism. This is a call to action, not just for creatives, but for everyone in the region’s diaspora to reassess what we value and where we invest our efforts. I know my story is special because I understand my mission. There is power in the spoken word.

Whether you know me as Miss Rica or Rica G., you know me definitively as an educator, lyricist, and youth advocate. On my mission to serve as a catalyst for liberation throughout the diaspora using fellowship, technology, and the arts, I strive to ensure our stories are told and preserved with integrity. Everything that I am intersects with everything that I do.



Lyricism is my primary art form. I come alive in the moments when the audience or a group of students connects with my work. That’s the oneness of the craft. I believe in and employ the power of the spoken word. Any lyrics that leave my tongue or my pen have been birthed with the purpose of upliftment. I’m a talk-walker. I don’t just write about our collective need to do better, I live the example. Education is key and most of our colonial systems don’t cater to our needs, so I make it a point to speak history and consciousness to all generations when I rhyme.



“  
**Education is key and most of our colonial systems don’t cater to our needs, so I make it a point to speak history and consciousness to all generations when I rhyme.**  
 ”



**Producer:** Lucinda Audain  
**Title:** Still image from 'Funtopia:  
Growing Stronger and Better'  
**Date of production:** 2020

# LUCINDA AUDAIN

Creative Entrepreneur  
Sint Maarten

Enter the mind of the Creative Director of 'Funtopia' Sint Maarten, Lucinda La Rich Audain. This video feature is part of a web documentary series that showcases the work of the young entertainers of Funtopia and tells the journey of the organisation and its members from 2014 to 2020. Funtopia is a showcase of young local talented teens and professional performers based in Sint Maarten.



"Art is who I am, it is what I am and it is all I have ever dreamt of being. It is the rhythm of my soul, the essence of me." Lucinda Audain has been busy making her mark on St. Maarten from a very young age. Through art exhibitions, poetry recitals, and now creative productions, La'Rich has become a very familiar name. The Artist is the Creative Director of her own company, Dream Chasers Limited where she manages her brands La'Rich Arts, M.A.D.E. Promotions, and Funtopia Sint Maarten, which caters to promoting artists and creative productions in the community.



“

**Art is who I am, it is what I am and it is all I have ever dreamt of being. It is the rhythm of my soul, the essence of me.**

”



## CATAPULT TEAM

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Caron Chung/Wendy Hart

**Project Manager:**

Karen Hutchinson

**Assistant Project Manager:**

Katherine Kennedy

**Project Administrator:**

Khadijah Chang

**Magazine Editor:**

Oneika Russell

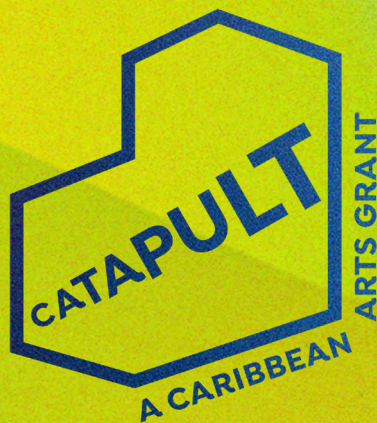
**Graphic Designer:**

Narada Fearon



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.