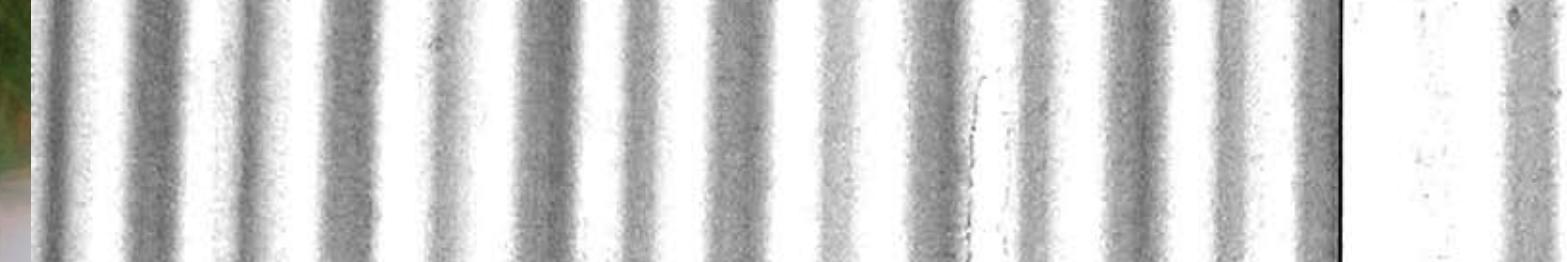


big river '06 access denied

FEB23RD - MAR12TH
international artist workshop
TRINIDAD. W.I.

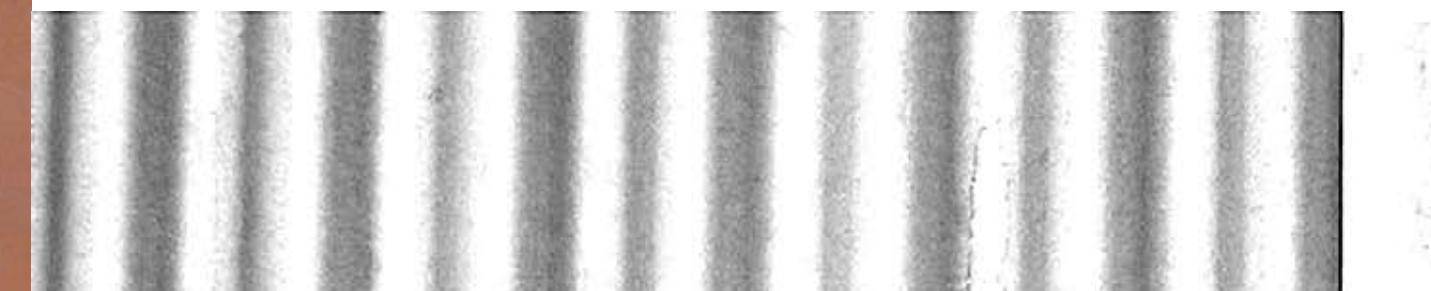


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participating artists

Akuzuru	Trinidad
John Beadle	Bahamas
LaVaughn Belle	U.S Virgin Islands
Smitha Cariappa	India
Hamlet Lavastida Cordovi	Cuba
Yingmei Duan	China/Germany
Marlon Griffith	Trinidad
Mauricio Ianes	Brazil
Gabrielle Hosein	Trinidad
Mohammed Muwakil	Trinidad
Ingrid Mwangi	Kenya/Germany
Naima Thompson	Trinidad
Corey Wallace	Trinidad
Dave Williams	Trinidad



Discussion

In keeping with its aim to facilitate fruitful interaction and constructive exchange and in attempting to capitalise on the various modes for realizing that aim; Big River 3.

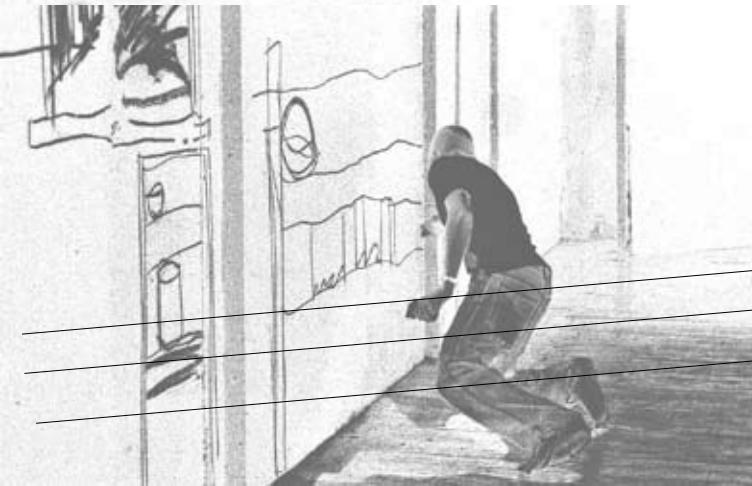
This international artists' workshop has incorporated as part of its itinerary a discussion which also used the theme 'Access-Denied' as a catalyst for discourse.

The theme access-denied evolved through a sense of inclusion, at many levels and in many spheres, which are integral to configuring the course of development in our and other societies.

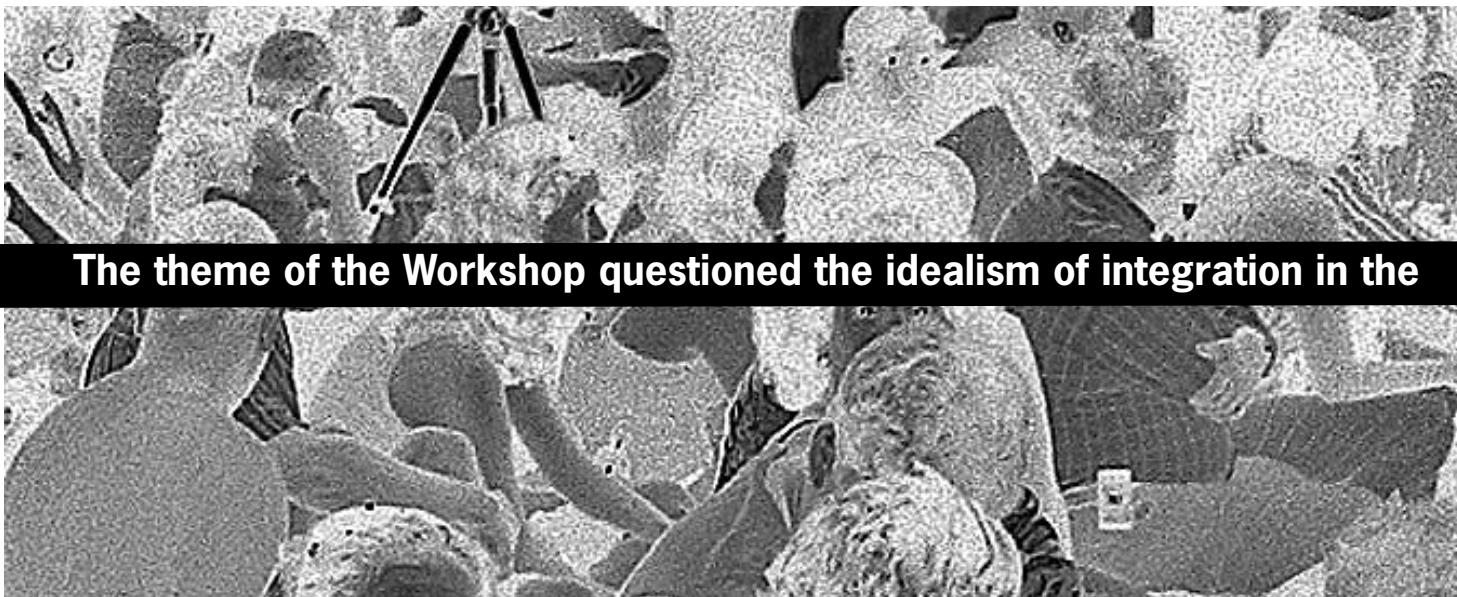
In its cursory reading, Carnival presents a picture of multiple inclusion and kindred spiritedness. The discussion however asks the question whether there are alternative conversations, mechanisms and agendas that actually feed and feed on the festival, and whether these are in fact a reflection of the active dynamic and systems that form and configure our larger society.

What is the connection of this dynamic to the determination of value, worth, interpretation and aspiration?

- sean LEONARD



INTROduction



The theme of the Workshop questioned the idealism of integration in the

After the success of the first ‘big River’ workshop in 1999, CCA was asked to initiate and co-ordinate workshops in the Caribbean and Latin American regions in partnership with the Triangle Arts Trust a UK based, international organisation that has initiated workshops in over 23 countries worldwide, with over 2,500 participating artists. Our joint primary objective is to initiate and facilitate the exchange of ideas and practice between an extensive network of artists around the world.

The big River 3 International Artists’ Workshop occurred between the 23rd of February and the 10th March, which closed with The Final Show at The Little Carib Theatre on Sunday the 12th March 2006. Performances ranged

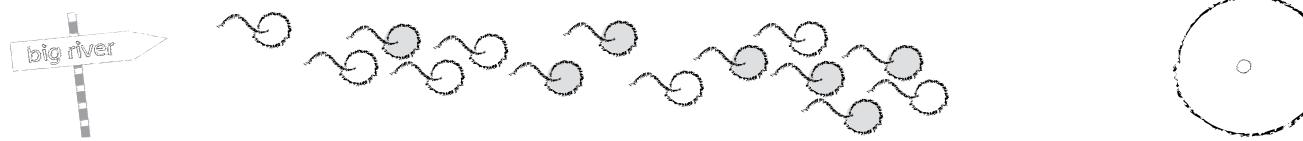
Caribbean in a time of territory marking and boundary staking,

from dance, music, and oral poetry to the use of the body as an installation or a moving piece. As part of CCA’s Education programme a public discussion was hosted at The Little Carib Theatre on Friday the 10th March.

Invited speakers included Wendell Manwarren (3 Canal- local rhapsody group), Dave Williams (choreographer and dancer), Chris Cozier (artist and writer), and La Vaughn Belle (participating artist on the workshop from St Croix). There was also a participating audience which included representatives from various schools and youth members from the YMCA.



Fourteen artists, Seven local and seven International) participated in the Workshop. Following the heartbeat of Carnival it focused mainly on the performing arts.



The big River workshops had previously been held in Grand Riviere, North Trinidad. big River 3 broke this mould. For the first time the workshop entered the urban arena, with Carnival 2006 forming the creative platform for participants. For the first week of the workshop artists were totally immersed in Carnival, which provided the workshop's creative catalyst. All artists participated in several events over the Carnival weekend, and International artists performed with Peter Minshall's Sacred Heart Mas presentation. On Ash Wednesday morning, the artists were transported to the seclusion of the forests of Aripo to The Aripo Cottage, where they created and collaborated work, guided by the core theme 'ACCESS DENIED'.

where missions of cultural diversity are placed high on the agenda. 'You're

The theme of the Workshop questioned the idealism of integration in the Caribbean in a time of territory marking and boundary staking, where missions of cultural diversity are placed high on the agenda. 'You're either in or you're out,' bringing to light the question, "Are our Caribbean, and even our individual identities being forged by exclusionism hidden under the façade of 'diversity' rather than the idealism of integration?

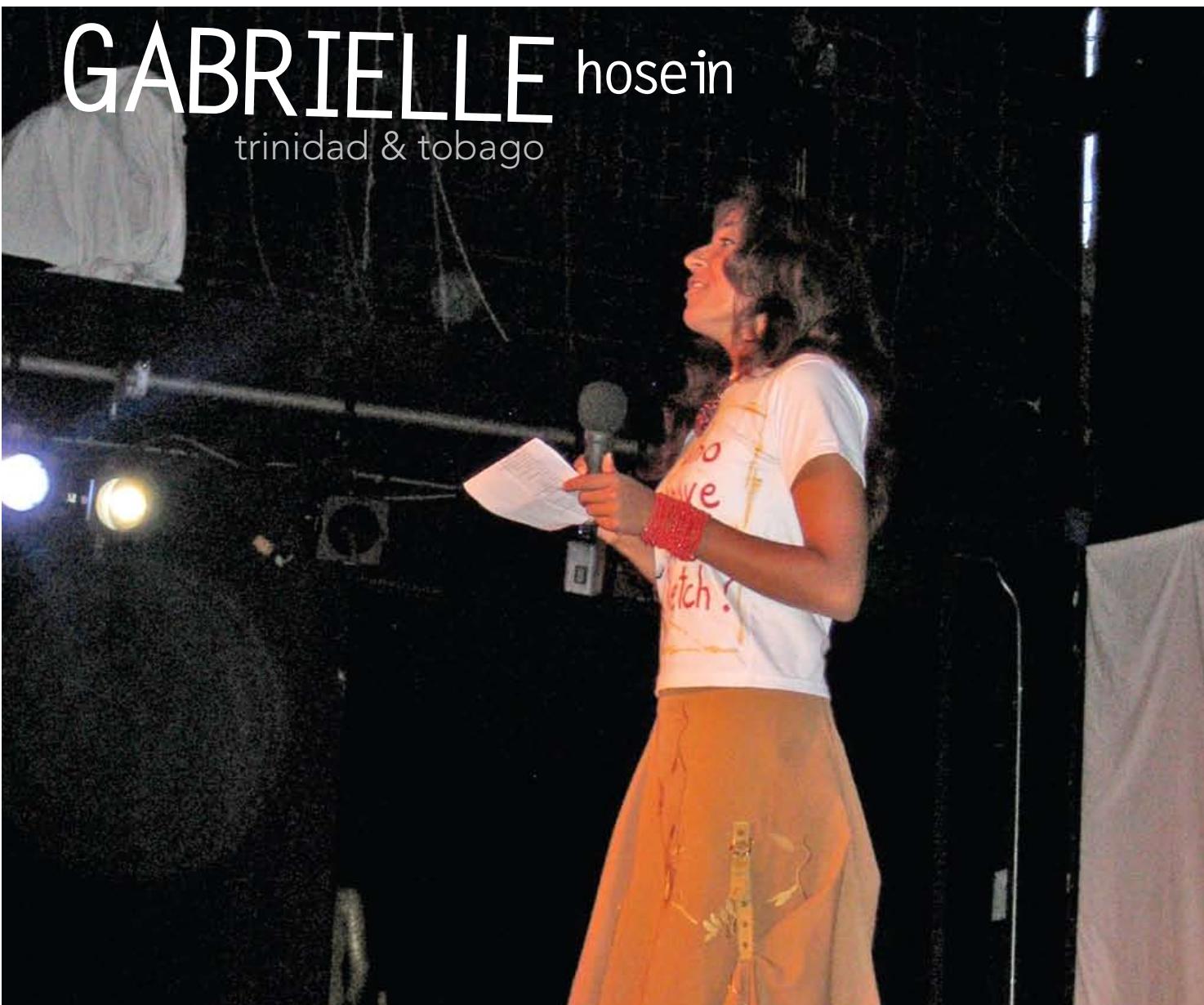
the work and the words

akazuru john beadle la vaughn belle smita janes gabrielle hosein mohammed muwakil
naima thompson corey wallace dave mauricio cariappa hamlet lavastida yingmei duan natalie griffith mwangi



GABRIELLE hosein

trinidad & tobago



In my activist and feminist work, people often deal with debates about human rights, choice and respect for difference by emphasising that ‘somebody have to draw de line’. This view suggests that not all people should have their rights equitably respected, and that some people have more right than others to decide who will have full citizenship and full sovereignty over their body. Yet, when we observe the lessons that nature teaches us, we see how arbitrary and unnecessarily alienating lines drawn between us can be. Look around. Clouds, air and rivers are one in different forms. Waterfalls are made of lines endlessly merging and crossing. Light and shadow share every space. The power relations we live in may

than the idealism of integration?

divide us from each other and stop some from accessing sharing, compassion and solidarity. Still, the world around us - in the simple forms of sound, light, water and air - reminds us that we are also interconnected through desire, need, emotion and expression of who we are and what we want for ourselves in the world.

INGRID mwangi

kenya/germany



This Big River International Artists' Workshop was exactly that: firstly, a wonderful group of truly International people, open-minded and inquisitive, coming together in the Heights of Aripo to interact, discuss and communicate to each other their different outlooks on art and life. Secondly, all were Artists, who took turns presenting their works and displaying their skills within an array of mediums - voice, word, image, object, sound, movement, light, music - surrounded by equals who were engaging daily in rituals of creative activity. Thirdly, there was Work being done, as work should ideally be viewed - playful while meaningful, productive even when non-efficient, being executed dedicatedly despite the uncertain outcome. Then Big, as large as life itself, being caught in the very moment of breathing, existing, questioning, researching, acknowledging and achieving understanding.

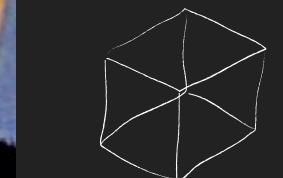
And lastly, the River, the place, the atmosphere, the moment, the time, the possibility. I spent my time capturing as much I could of this on video with the intention of producing a documentary about the workshop, the participants and the specialness of such an endeavour.

I successively dived with various clothes into the river and shed them while swimming under water. Later, I wrote with charcoal on the driveway of the guesthouse, in cryptic, self-invented characters. Both acts were recorded on video. The material builds the basis for a project that is about communication and involvement with a place as opposed to consumption of that place. I developed the performance.

“The hum”, in which I moved to the layered sound of my own cajoling, humming voice towards an arrangement that consisted of a table, with accompanying chairs, on which glasses of water were precariously placed. I entered and disrupted the setup, then broke away, performing laborious and vehement movements to seemingly release my body from an invisible burden.

HAMLET lavastida-cordovi

cuba



One more interesting aspect of the theme is the dialogue that emanated about the exclusion. I think that at this moment I revolve around the theme of access denied, a symptomatic expression becomes of all that type of immersed work in the alternative manners of creation to close to the poetics and aesthetic with a different perspective, trying to close more and more the social problematic's. It is interesting how the majority of the artists at the workshop of different nationalities have a similar social background.

Here they are artists born in India, Brazil China, Africa, Virgin Islands and Cuba, many of these roots incorporated in the idiosyncrasy of Caribbean happening. Everyone in that concept called by Fernando Ortiz, transculturation . Those all these manners to understand the exclusion that they have been relegated. These are cultural practices for over five centuries and leaving now when the global culture this one behind all aesthetic reaction. Example of that is the incorporation for part of many nationals in cultural projects with the enthusiasm to earn publicity. It is something similar to the socialist system, when it trade to incorporate all that syncretic background within the politic world and enclosure in his official discourse .

Close of these behaviors are the incursions of many artists with his same problems of the underdeveloped people asking oneself about his of one's own responsibilities in front of a decadence ideology, socialist or capitalist. It is this case of many of biennial that they have come over celebrating in Latin America, but the problem is like these biennial himself are surrounded front of the tacks of so-called global culture. Is a little different but similar to the case of Cuba and the consequence of failure of biennial build by the regimen with the need to show the world a multicultural vision. I believe that the multicultural vision always exist like an alternative manner where they forge for themselves different perceptions of an alone world, an alone ideology and a language.

YINGMEI duan

china/germany



For me everything can be Access and Denied.

One thing in Trinidad has impressed me: The mixed culture. Actually I wanted to find some way to do about it, but the Mosquitos in Trinidad...

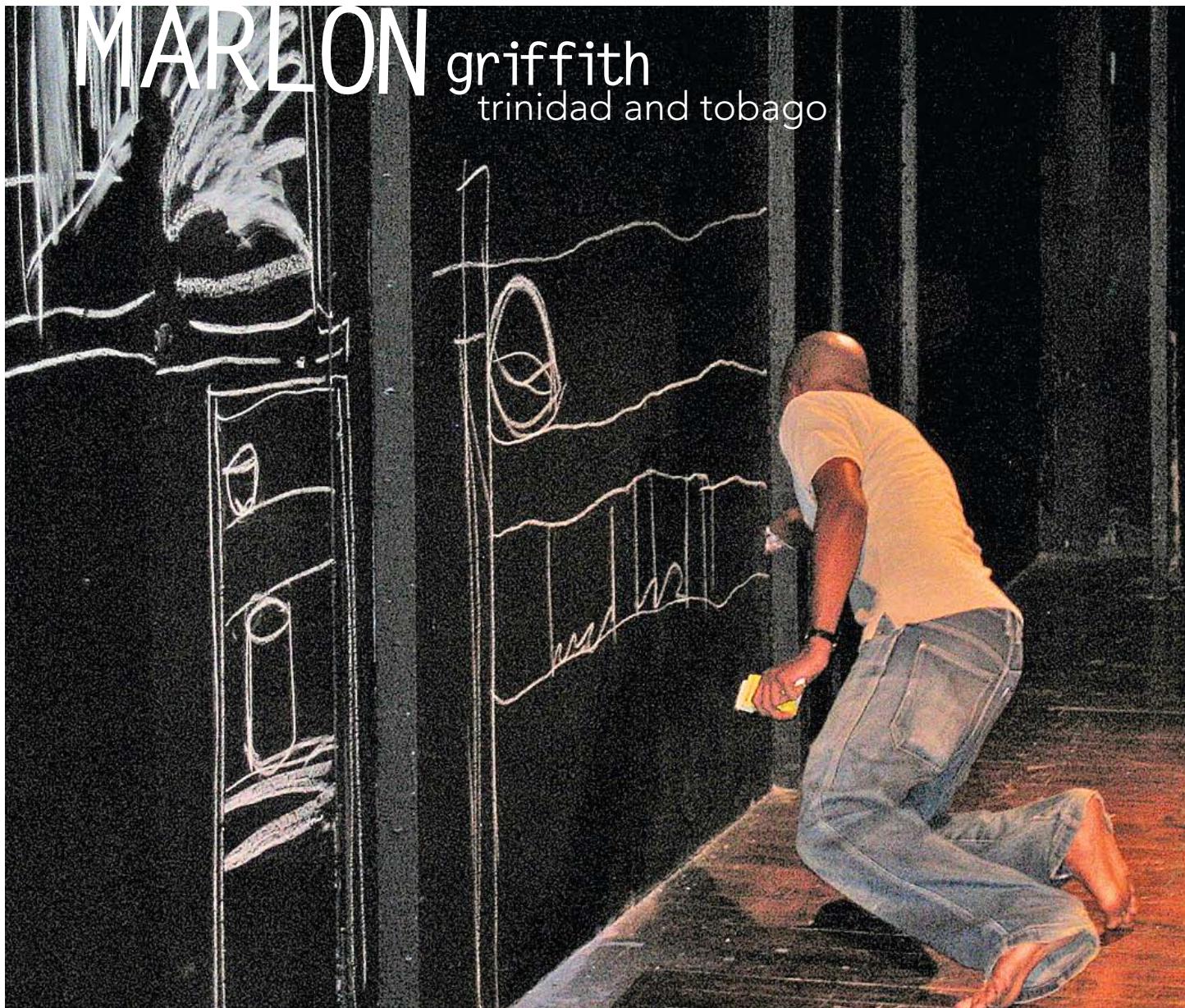
The Mosquitos always woke me at 4:00 O'clock in the morning, as I lived on the mountain in Trinidad. Then I had to get up, in order to do something against itching. The Mosquitos gave me inspiration to do one performance.

During the performance I flap my legs and scratch the Mosquito bites. I "dance" everywhere. During the time two men bring me to their car and want to drive me to the hospital, because they believe that I have strong allergy... Many of the public help me when I am flapping and scratching... "All artists, who take part in the 'big river' Workshop, come to get some experience from the Carnival in Trinidad." The CCA7 organisation wrote us. For me it is very great ART CONCEPT.

I come from China. Before I come to Germany I have never experienced the Carnival in my life. Since in Germany I visit Carnival every year. I have never had the feeling to get connection with Carnival, but in Trinidad I have the connection to Carnival...

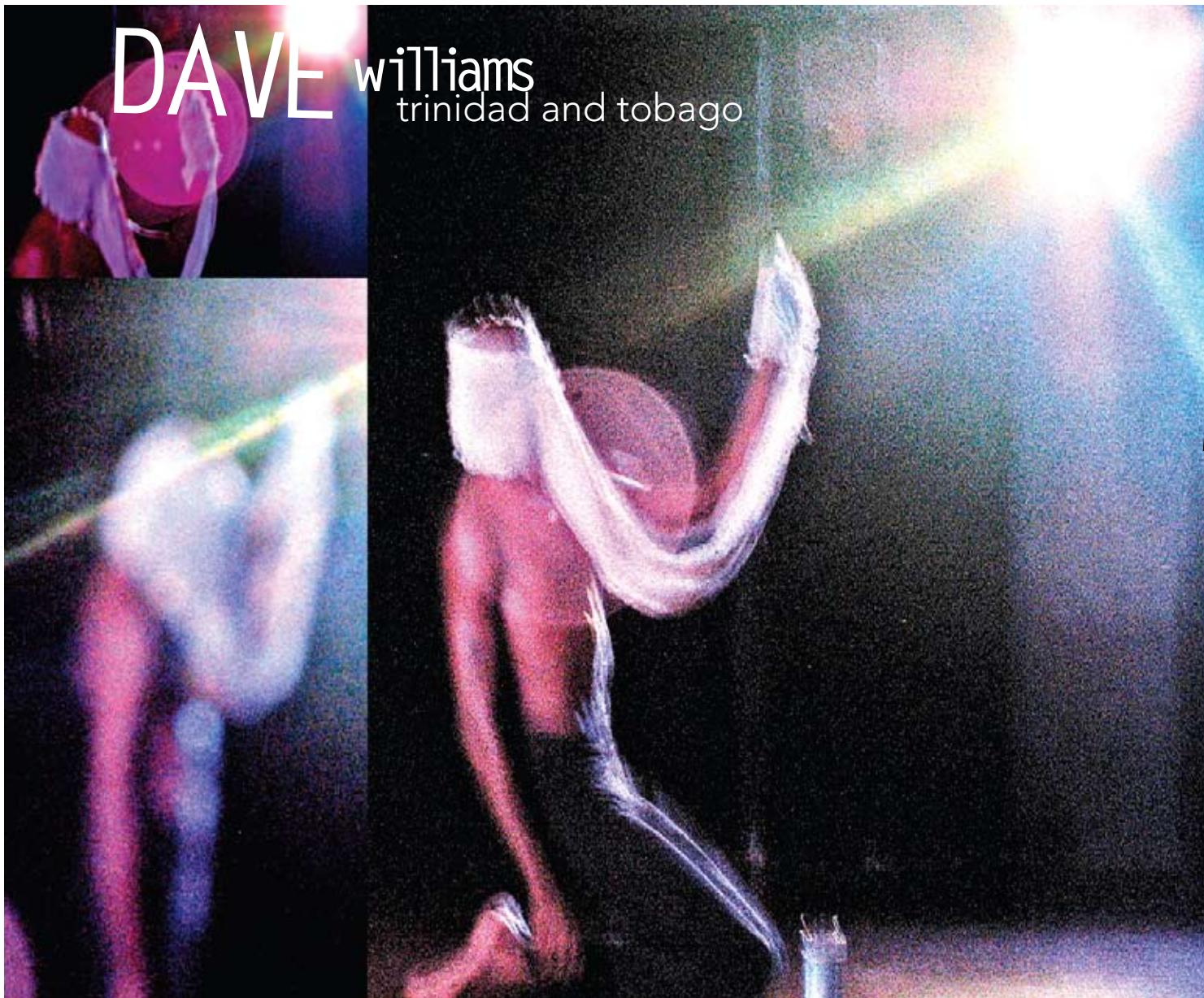
In the Carnival I experience "the sexy dancing" in the high point during the Carnival. It is very interesting and special feeling.

Always one question in my mind until now: We have party place in the workshop, but we don't use it. Most of the time we are talking, but I think I like more the international language "Party". For me talking art is important, but doing art is more important. "Party" brings me more passion to do art.



MARLON griffith
trinidad and tobago

Sometimes to make a connection,
we need to detach ourselves from the everyday things.
Here the connections are clearly being made...
in this pure place.

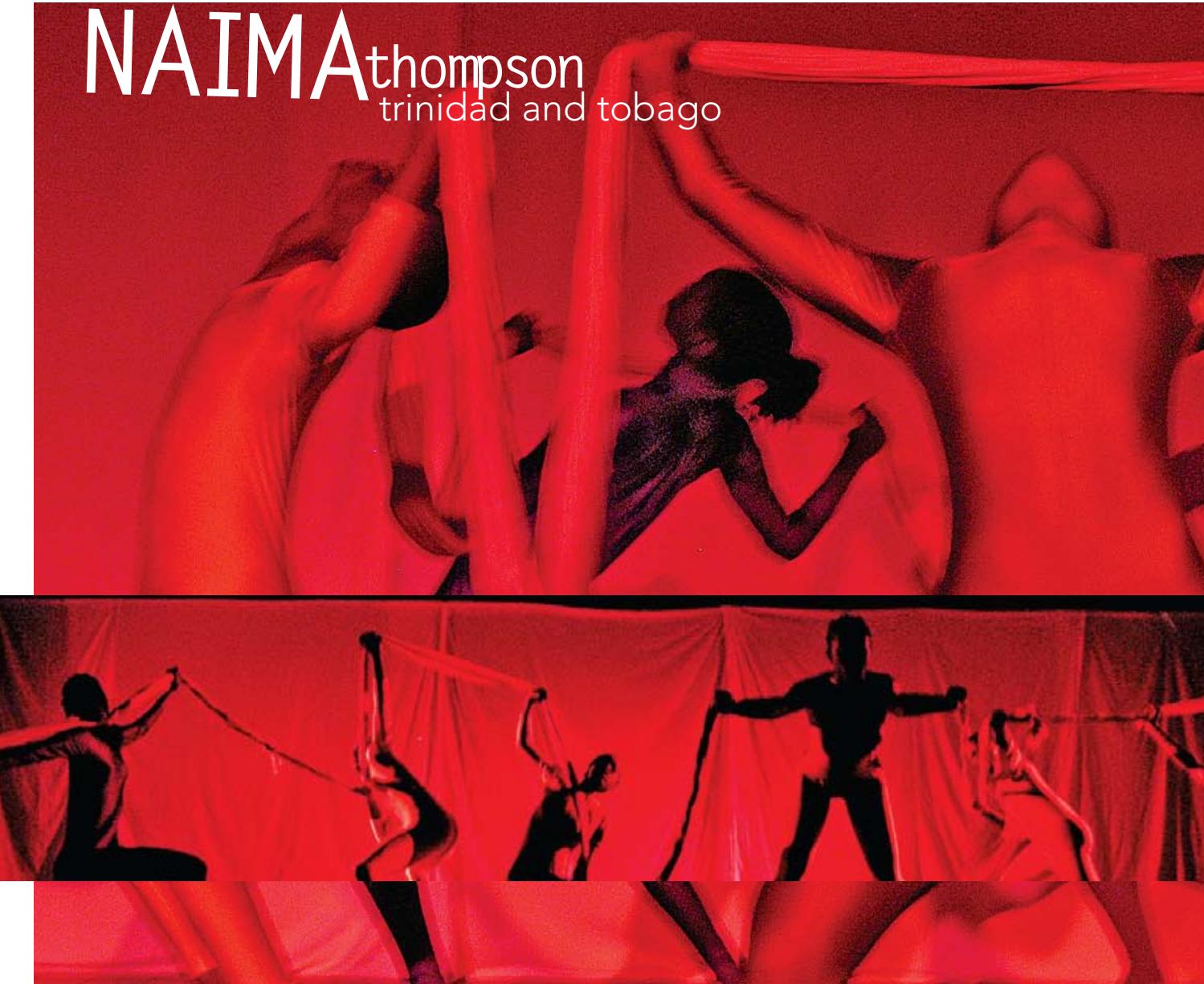


DAVE williams
trinidad and tobago

Dave has always explored the theme of being accessed denied. We live in this interesting society with it's 4 levels of..., its VIP and WVIP and more recently the WVIP. He has been a participatory member of each tribe at one or more time in his life and still doesn't get it. The big question we must all ask ourselves is what does it all mean?

NAIMA thompson

trinidad and tobago



The heights gained in the Heights will forever sustain me in the depths of my valleys.
The experience was like none other and could be like none other.

Self- affirmation for ACCESS to NEVER be DENIED:

I am who I am
I am who I be
I am who I am
Alone with me
Don't try to block the truth from me
The truth lives within
It lives deep within
The boundaries of my skin

The Big River experience set in the Heights of Aripo brought many of us from diverse backgrounds together. We were to fashion our thoughts and ideas alongside the theme of Access Denied. And so, I for one, set to work as soon as I settled in. The thought of writing occurred to me as I walked down to the natural pool for the first time. The sight of the pool in the distance raced anticipation through me as my eyes saw for the first time, Gods creation. It was amazing. The need to write came to me almost instantly and so I began.

The collaboration with Corysan, a fellow Trini and resident sound master, made big River 3 the most memorable moment of love expressed only through the Devine. The love overflowed all over the place and everyone bathed in it whether they knew it or not.

MAURICIO lanes

brazil



“The idea of the title of the exhibition, Access/Denied, relates to me in a more private, individual way, rather than a in a wider social one. The different backgrounds and private histories of each individual might sometimes create a barrier which blocks communication between this individual and the other. This same idea can be applied to different groups of people, cultures, countries, etc. In my performance I addressed this question, and how the artificiality of language is not sometimes the most adequate tool to break through that barrier, leaving us with the silence of the unspeakable.

Having had time to spend with all the artists involved in the workshop, and to learn about the local culture (or should I say cultures?), was a very special thing, that was most important to build the performance I've presented, as well as develop new ways to think my work from then on.”

AKUZURU

trinidad and tobago



CHASM

a performance & photographic Spatial Work

The honest question is thus: Have I been 'denied access' during my sojourn in Aripo?

The honest answer to that is that the circumstances of what the workshop constituted enabled me to arrive at a point of confluence so that whatsoever I was not able to 'access' in actuality became part and parcel of the work produced consequently. I wanted to bring another dimension of 'performance' in art making and art presentation. In the lush green, raw natural environment of Aripo, my space of contemplation was presented in a way that I had to 'make' the studio happen for me, in order to make it conducive for the process. This is not romanticism, but a bringing of one back to the SELF. And all I had was paper and a monkey in a cage in the middle of the jungle.....paradox?...

Leaves...Wings , , , , , , , , Rain

Chasm IS AN HIATUS IN THE CONTINUITY of what should be a natural process and progress of social development. The 'have nots' in this colonial 'nation' are denied access to EVERYTHING - daily. The winged creature emerges- painfully, painstakingly-only to find that its new environment DOES NOT WANT it. It is immediately assaulted by you/we. This is not a DANCE. This is a TRANCE.

B000ooooooooooooommeeeeee,,,HHHHhhhhhhrrrrreeeeeeeee
chhhhhhkkk!!!!!!

The Dark and the Light.

The colonial legacy pervades every nuance, every gesture of our social and psychological interactions. That is the historical reality. Is the earth okay? Are we taking care of its people, animals, insects,.....? There is a fissure in Volatility.....Division
New life returns to its cocoon.

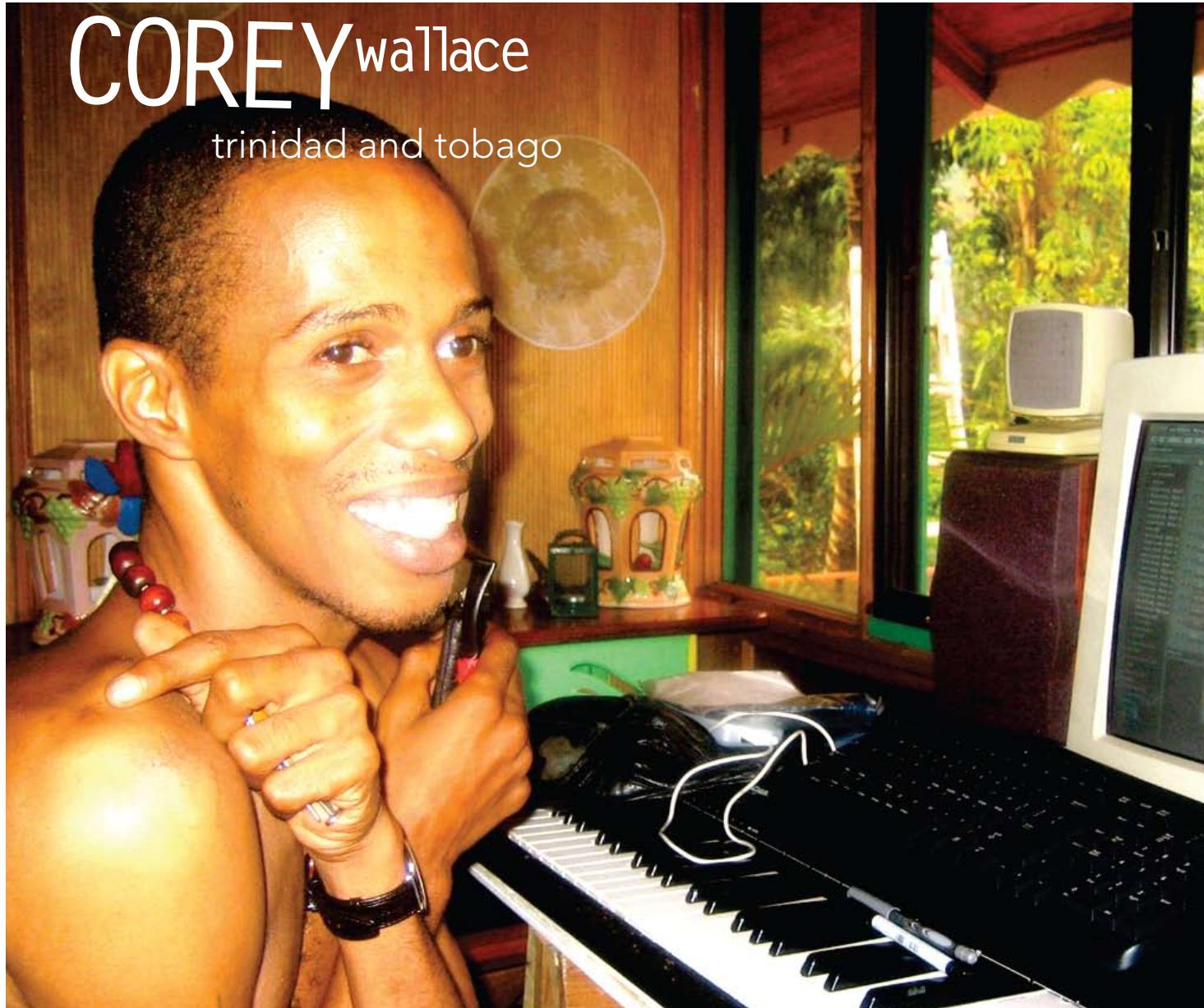
We are duly warned.

Thus but not finally, a photo-story of actions were shot in a natural environmental space, where the cocoon-less lifeform finally made its entry into a world reality where it can finally merge and inhabit. It has found Self.

PS: Corey san, Nagode

COREYwallace

trinidad and tobago



“Access is denied when you've never tried to open your eyes”.

Where are the boundaries when 14 completely different individuals can co-exist in harmony and create things of beauty?

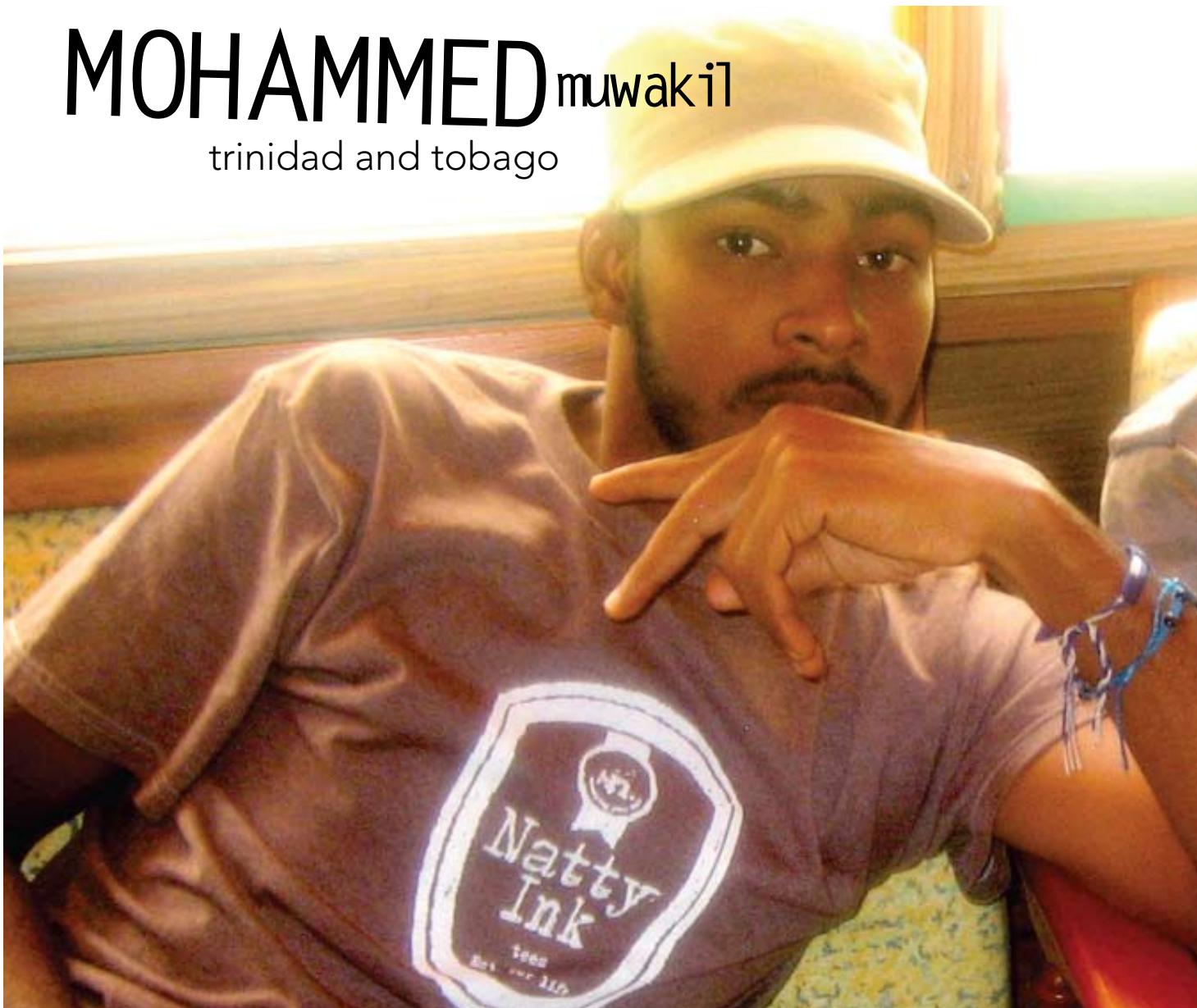
Where are the limitations, when cultural difference enriches our global consciousness as human beings?

The freedom to choose is a power that most wield with their eyes closed, bound in new and improved shackles for the mind. Where the world of truth is a key in our hands and the door is in front of us.

Access to this limitless inner world will be denied if we continue to refuse to see beyond division and religion. To see that we are all just one human race, on planet earth, given life through one Great Spirit. And all that we have to do is just open our eyes.

MOHAMMED muwakil

trinidad and tobago



To me it manifests itself physically in this time but is rooted really deeply in the mentality of people who have been told that they are inferior by the actions of the world for so long. They live in abject poverty because this is their lot, and white gods tell them that they will inherit the earth if they remain in this state, that the poor are the sheep of good and the meek will inherit the earth.

Then the wolves who rule this planet slaughter them at will and steal their wealth culture and souls for their own devices, you want to talk about access denied, lets talk about third world solidarity, lets talk about the deception that is neo - colonialism disguised as globalisation, lets talk about the “third world” and its independent nations who still grovel at the feet of their former colonial masters.

Let's talk about systemic depravity and racism perpetuated through generations of inherited preconceptions, we as a race , the human race, have been denied access to the vision and foresight that will lead us to one and one conclusion only...tucopa moja! We are one. 3rd world is a mentality. Peace!

JOHN beadle bahamas



I found Big River 3 at Aripo a beautifully profound experience because of its focus, theme, and the relationship of the workshop with the Carnival space. Aripo as a location has been an inspiring space.

Access/ Denied. I had set out, once on the ground in Trinidad to use the Carnival as my point of departure for any work produces.

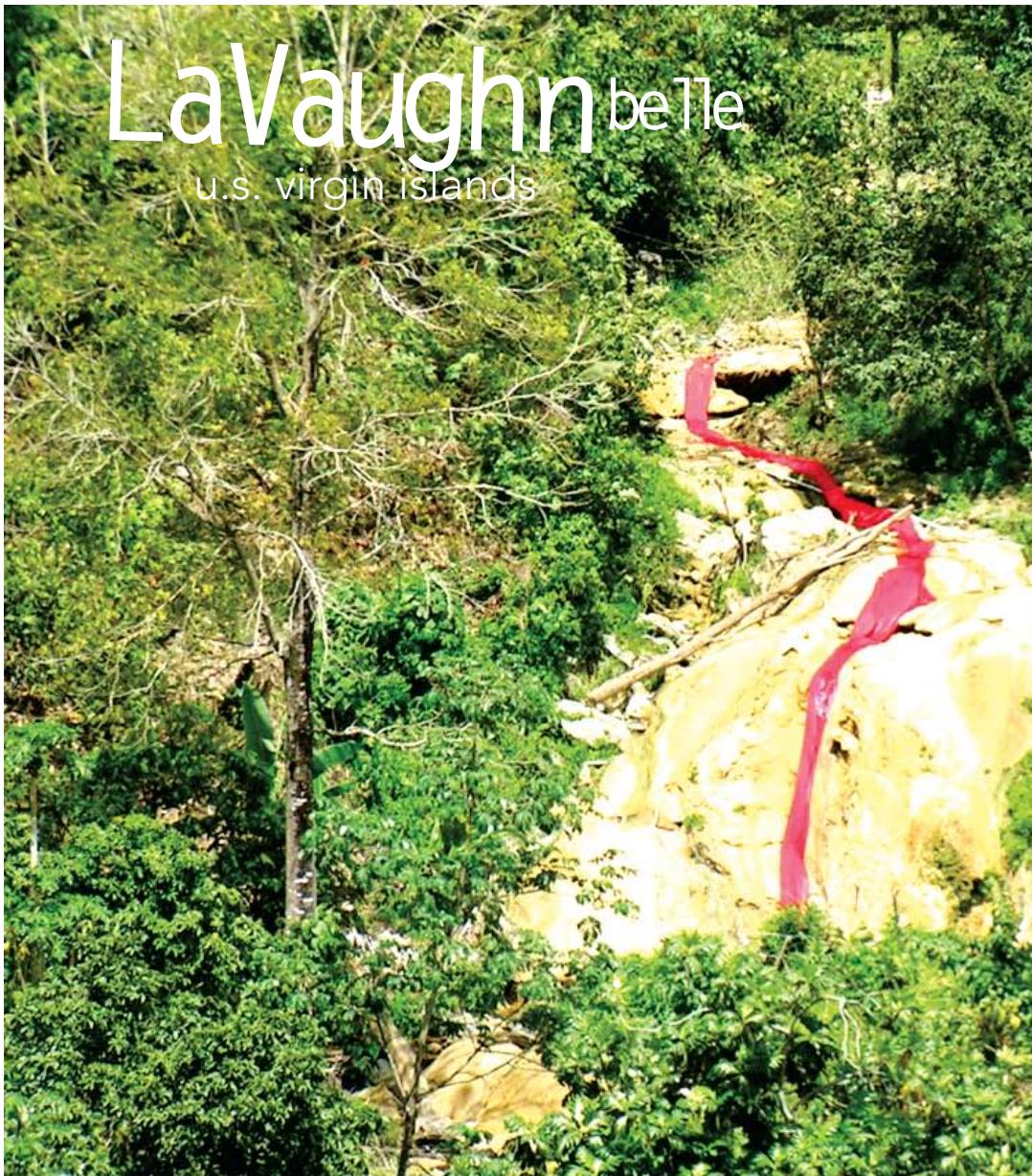
In retrospect, the Carnival as a starting point was problematic for me because I personally did not find, mentally, an entry into the festival space I thought I saw and instinctively knew was there. I wanted to engage the Carnival space in a much more profound manner, more than a superficial act of adornment/ decoration, and jump and dance, this access did not present itself, I think because of how I was introduced to the space. For me the deeper side of the festival is the ritualistic exercise of creating the “mask” and its show off.

Process. The process that I undertook was to collect material/ knowledge for some future undertaking that would take into consideration the Carnival space.

The piece. The idea was to create an object, constructed of material found, mainly natural but not exclusively. Mount this object in a space where it would loom as a constant presence... to some annoyance.

LaVaughn belle

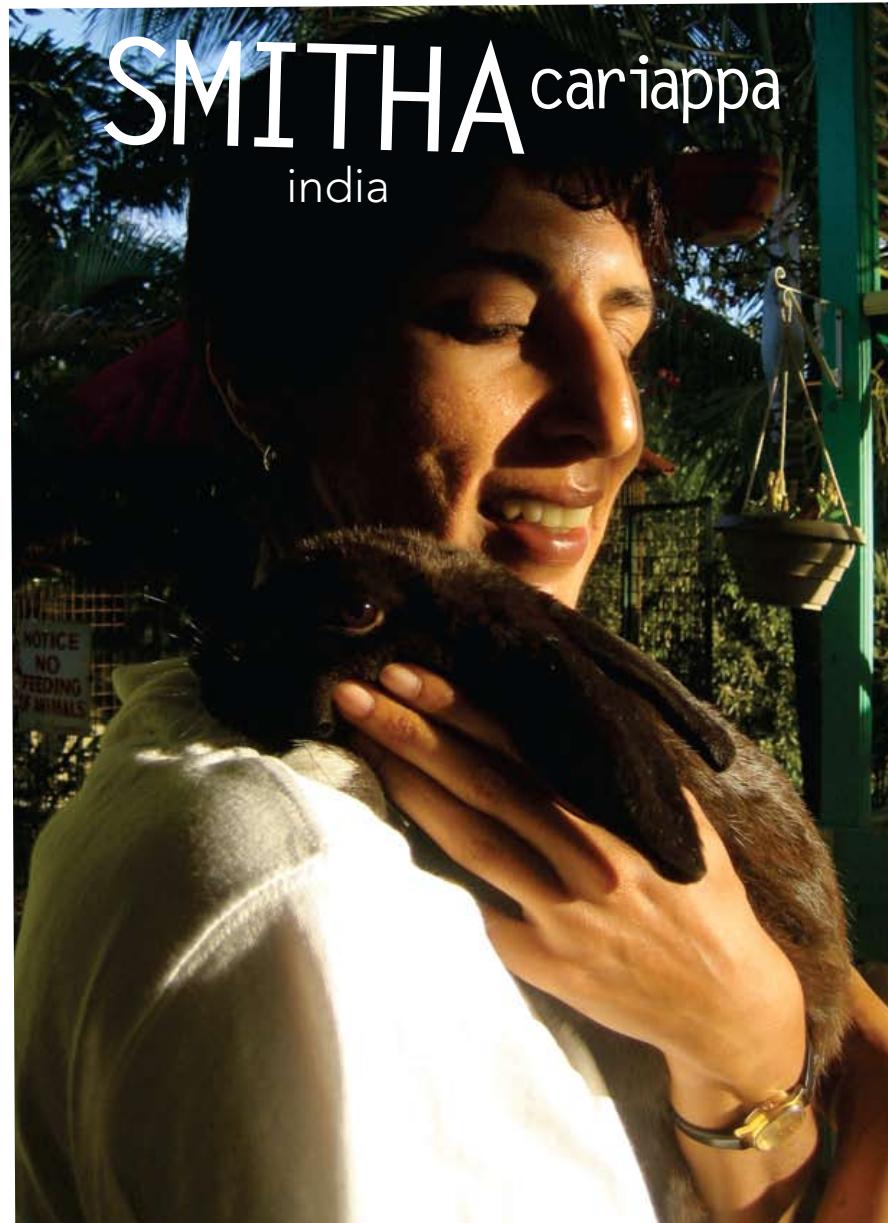
u.s. virgin islands



My work generally begins with a question about how art can intersect our real everyday lives. I am fascinated in particular with the blurred lines between that which is public/private, real /virtual/ and the individual/social. But what happens when we are completely removed from our real everyday lives? No phone, no TV, no spouses, no dishes. Without many of these quotidian elements that normally define my life I was able to produce work from a completely different space.

That space was loose, lazy and ambiguous. For me it was a profound experience to give myself permission to not have an idea completely worked out. To play, put, move, tape, watch and listen was glorious and even scary. I rarely have access to such stillness. Yet at the same time there was an ironic state of disorder.

Vertigo began in the forest rambling with a video camera, in constant motion, letting the camera access images and angles that I never could with my own eyes. The piece changed in the Little Carib Theater as I both separated and duplicated the piece. I chose to project the video across the 3 palm trees in the lobby while spinning in circles on top of the roof. It created for me an alternative state inspired by the frenzied and dizzying nature of the carnival experience.



SMITHA cariappa

india

you can Wish.....
for me or for yourself
i,belong to the hills
the river, the mother goddess

Aripo, reassured me
with ,the flowing river

the fresh mountain air
in my lungs.

the rich carnival experience
still not far

rushing through, like
the rivers water

in ascendancy
in crystal light

the wish done
in the holy waters

cradle
warming my bare
hands and feet assuringly
my body dressed
in white robes
interrupts, my movement.

i,re-think
through the mirror

the reflection
of self, is myself,
i,become the self

the self in me
yet,see, the self in others
the otherself.

the access
to be in self,

the self,in the others
the otherself the access

enjoyed, remains
yet the experience
accessed,
is possessed
the possessed is
processed, and
exhibited, the
exhibited, is the access
'X' rayed,
the denied is accessed
with a stitch on me
with paper
through a' WISH '
the wish
is accessed or
is in denial

the river flows
the future is in
question?

THANKS/CREDITS/acknowledgements

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CCA Mission:

CCA is a facilitator of Contemporary Art practice in Trinidad and the wider Caribbean.

Working Group - Sean Leonard, Dave Williams, Akuzuru

Workshop Coordinator: Jaime Lee Loy
Programme and Development Director: Charlotte Elias

Panel for The Public Discussion:
Chris Cozier, Dave Williams, Wendell Manwarren, LaVaughn Belle
Moderator: Marina Salandy-Brown

Production Manager of The Final Show: Annabelle Ove

Overall Photography: Charlotte Elias, Jaime Lee Loy, Dave Williams, Akuzuru
Photographs taken by individual artists will be indicated

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