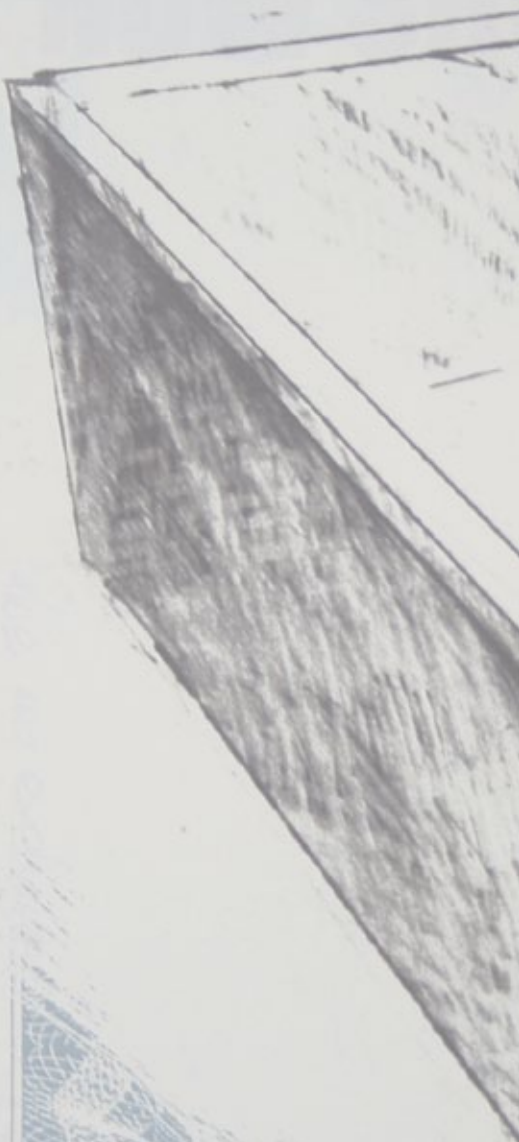


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JULY TWENTY TEN

DRACONIAN SWITCH



13

NOW SHOWING 4 **rmr**

INSIDE THE ARTIST STUDIO (video) 7 **mrb**

MIRROR IMAGES 10 **dow**

LET US PREY 32 **rmr**

THE BAGS PROJECT 38 **online**

LUCKY 13 features Artist Christopher Cozier's new work 'NOW SHOWING', Photographer Alex Smailes' gritty self-exposing Gangland Photos, interviews with Animator Luis Vasquez, COBO Masman Ashraph Richard Ramsaran and artist Adele Todd gives a posthumorous response to bookbinder, performance artist, designer, character Richard S. Bolai's passing.

Cover: **Detail from Christopher Cozier's**

Now Showing 2010. Contributors:

DESIGNER EDITOR Richard Rawlins,

WRITERS Dave O. Williams, Tracy J.

Hutchings, Richard Mark Rawlins, Adele

Todd **PHOTOGRAPHY** Alex Smailes,

Brianna McCarthy, Rodell Warner,

Georgia Popplewell, Richard Mark

Rawlins, Richard S. Bolai **VIDEO** Mariel

Brown

JEEZ LUIS 40 **tjh**

RICHARD S. BOLAI 42 **at**

NOW SHOWING

“The image has both topical and conceptual ideas of the moment or of my general concern...it tries to capture a moment or the moment ...so there is a time bending in that the world this work describes is any place like this, but also, this place...the recent “Dudus” event and similar ones here and in other parts of the hemisphere make that clear.” - Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

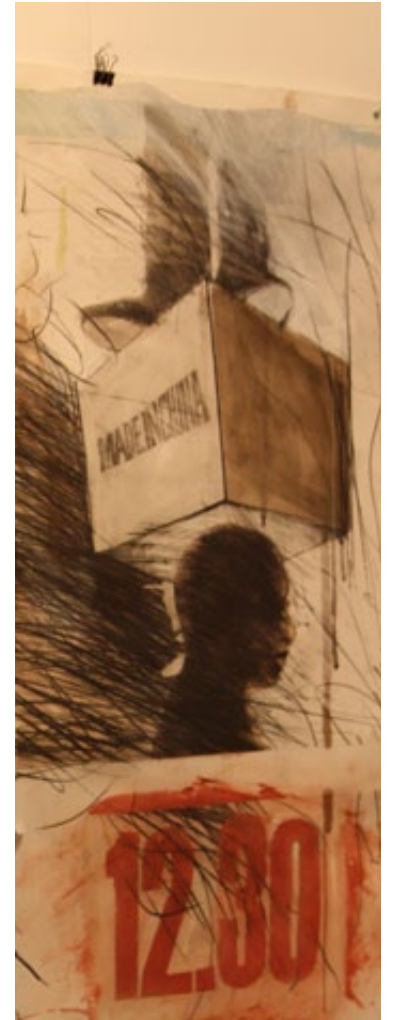
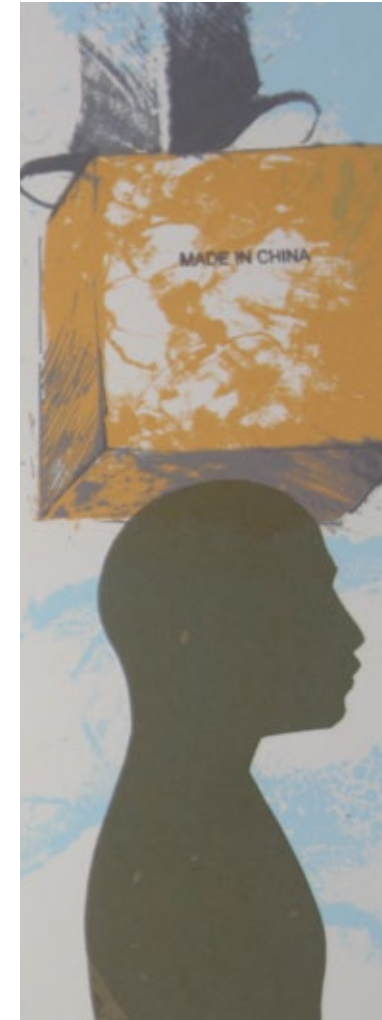
BY: RICHARD MARK RAWLINS PHOTOGRAPHY: RMR

Christopher Cozier returned home on Friday July 16th, 2010. Not that Cozier has been actually MIA mind you, quite the contrary, actually. Cozier has continually shown his work out side of Trinidad and Tobago (most recently, “Tropical Night” at the Tate, Liverpool, for Afro Modern (which just opened at a new venue on July 16th in Santiago de Compostela At Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea , Spain), is one of the collaborator facilitators of the Alice Yard artspace project, is an editor/ writer/ contributor of the literary magazine, “Small Axe”, is curating shows here and abroad (notably the recently concluded “Paramaribo SPAN”), is a mentor to a new generation of visual artists seeking to etch their brand on the storytelling of our times, is a University of Trinidad and Tobago fellow and most importantly, a thinker.

Cozier’s first local showing in a decade was, ironically, in the same place his parents first took him to for art classes: the annex of the National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago. And on this Friday – surrounded by a mixed bag of a few contemporary peers, some emerging artists, the odd film maker, film enthusiasts and a ‘visibly absent’ number of ‘genius elders’ – Cozier held court. This was the launch of his most recent work: NOW SHOWING. The work was commissioned by The Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival, their third collaboration – in the same number of years – with a prominent contemporary artist for the prestigious Festival Image – Doig and Bowen having gone before. The Festival Image is commissioned to reflect the art of film or the cinema experience as it relates to the Caribbean. The image will eventually be translated into the festival poster and various other forms of merchandise.

While NOW SHOWING the print, was clearly work of the moment, it was supported by an installation of drawings and process notes from Cozier’s highly developed ‘contemporary visual vocabulary’. If you know anything about Cozier, you would expect that he would mount an installation that ‘throws out a challenge’ to you the viewer to continue the discourse on your own within the context of your own space. This, as I expected, did not disappoint.

The box on the head of the silhouette which comes up again and again in my work....with the “made in china” stamp and the mysterious figure that stands on the box..like Cipriani statue or like the contemporary politician who thinks that development status could be bought ... - Christopher Cozier (from his notes)



Fans of Cozier’s “Tropical Night” series will see the familiars and comfort of his dialogue through the use of the bread on wheels, the box on the head of the silhouette etc. But it is the new syntax he brings to the visual words old and new that intrigue.

The image has both topical and conceptual ideas of the moment or of my general concern...it tries to capture a moment or the moment ...so there is a time bending in that the world this work describes is any place like this, but also, this place...the recent “Dudus” event and similar ones here and in other parts of the hemisphere make that clear.) - Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

In my own metaphysical meanderings on work, time, space and visual vocabularies, I’ve often wondered if age was a main component in the deciphering of the visual hieroglyphic. Cozier’s work answered that question. The answer is different for everyone.



There exists a visual interpretation of the “Mad Man’s Rant,” by Rudder, which the artist and myself discussed in great detail over time. This print is a follow on in some way.- Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

NOW SHOWING is as much a milestone in this ‘so called’ return to Trinidad as Cozier put it, as it is about process. Artists of a certain age have had the benefit of creating and understanding art with what may seem today to be more outmoded forms of technology: the Photostat machine, Rubylith, use of acetates, the Ben-Day screen and a host of print-making techniques that may guide the process. This is a far cry from the expedient digital manipulations of today that tend to cut down the process of thought, creating a whole new dialogue around ‘component, context and honesty’.

While this work was begun here in Trinidad many years and months ago within Cozier’s head, the actual print, the limited edition of 100, was created as the sum total of his knowledge and mastery of his craft and design sensibilities. The work took on new meaning in New York where, working with the printer Luther Davis at Axelle Fine Arts in Brooklyn, he further physically manipulated the image by smearing, drawing on and erasing off acetates during the process.

As with many of my images, the idea that my thoughts, visually, feel like a smearing or a staining of a pristine surface or field of art making (historically/internationally as a mere “native” who does not know better?) This is also implied locally as I do not come from the “Culture-producing-caste/cast” in the narrative of nation. –Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

This collaboration between Cozier and the screen printer created an image that has multi-layered nuances of tone and texture, supported by print production tricks surrounding the use of alternate metallic inks, manipulated plate colour and varnish dispersal.

Somewhere in there is also a lady in patterned maxi- dress looking like those from the early 70s. This like many of the other images came from the newspapers. It is an image of our past national spiritual adviser. –Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

NOW SHOWING doesn’t stop there at process though, it also reveals Cozier’s humourous and lil’ mischievous nature. Hidden at the centre of the print, ghosting between layers of metallic ink and varnish is a former Prime Minister’s ‘spritual advisor’, an amalgamation of 70s Kung Fu actor Wang Yu’s legs, recent local political icon Percy’s crossed hands and a host of other 70s film characters.

The cut tree (cut-nature) is, of course, the one outside the Forensic Center in Federation Park. I have been looking at it for some years now - and especially so - since the rise in daily murders in our city. I find it interesting that the tree was cut down, the trunk burnt out but it’s sprouting again. To me this says something about history - about persistence and hope. But, it also says something about how the tree in the sun, in a “tropical” sense, can have different meanings based how one encounters it. In this image I am more interested in the topical than the tropical. –Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

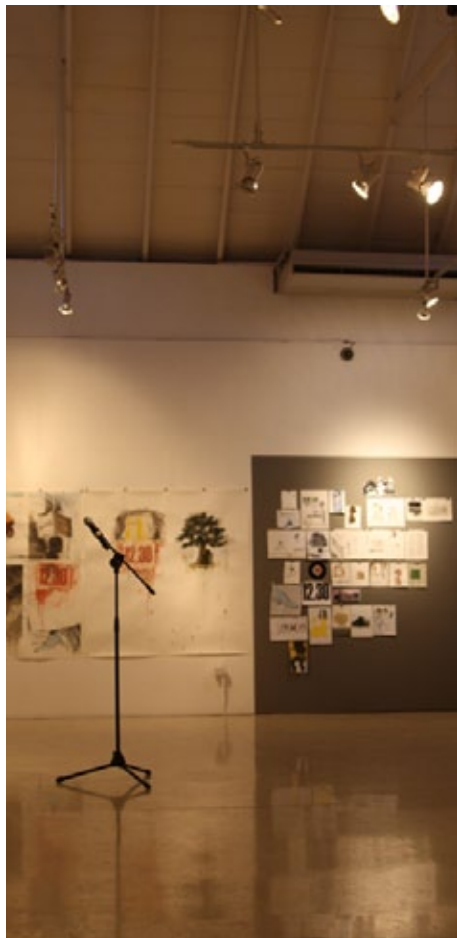
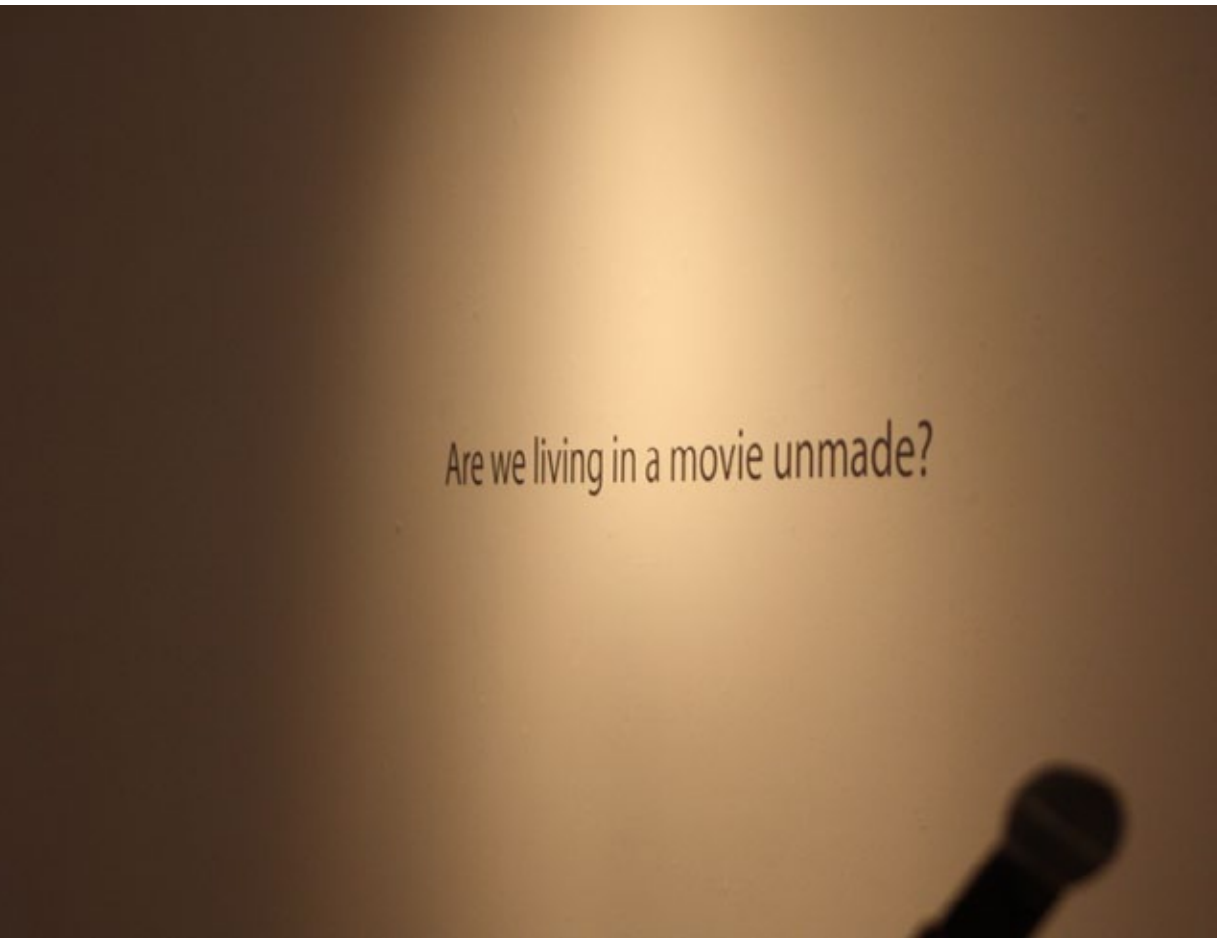
Cozier’s entwined scripting of this “12.30” is more than just a memory lane reminiscence, it keeps us very in-touch with our modern realities of crime and social displacement. A cut tree in the work represents the now iconic tree outside of the forensic centre. In his notes and a support documentary short which chronicles the making of **NOW SHOWING** created by Mariel Brown, Cozier makes reference to what this tree means. More than just shade or a pillar of strength, it may mean the passing of another youth at violent hands. (<http://vimeo.com/13418812>)

Often, I am driving past this location. The people standing around it may have lost a son, a father, a brother or relative, for example. While waiting, they are hearing gunfire from the police shooting range over the wall. It’s the background of our ongoing and often denied violent history. The mysterious cracking sound in the back of Chekov’s play, The Cherry Orchard comes to mind.. the something that makes people build higher walls or more burglar bars or stay home at night....but now its playing out for a different class and group in another place. It impacts upon the promise of mobility and liberation. – Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

There is a moment in the film, which is quite poignant for me: as Cozier crosses the road to talk about the tree he looks both ways. Many of my generation would have grown up on the Sesame Street video of Batman telling Robin to always cross streets at the corner and look both ways first. Cozier looks both ways, crosses the street, and in mid cross double checks. Ironically this was shot on a Sunday without traffic.

...but the head is also “carrying-load” which is also a reference to previous works... I wanted to express something by comparing our past with our present. –Christopher Cozier (from his notes)





This simple act shows you the honesty of the artist, never taking anything for granted, always keeping an eye out on society, always recording, always being surprised at having more than ten people gathered in a room to see his work, always looking at his past and present in the same time.

The “12.30 show” from Walcott and the Vybz Kartel Clarks song meet or collide within my visual vocabulary therefore bringing together the vernacular and the formal. Again, it is about the spaces I navigated growing up here and remain curious about when I travel. .- Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

The bare feet and Clarks shoes could be dancing feet stepping to an urban beat. Bare feet may mean impoverishment in one narrative or folk-ish rural fortitude from old national and socialist forms of representation and the shoes - a kind of grassroots stylish-ness or bling.- Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

Cozier’s blue Clarks shoes juxtaposed by bare feet end the print brilliantly, if there is such a thing as an end to a Möebius of visual engagement and dialogue. In the simplest of interpretations it may seem to pay homage to an entire age of Vybz Kartel/ Movado violence-worshipping youths, but in a wider sense this actual string of visual syllables represents Cozier’s ability to fold and bend time, telling individually interpretive stories all at once.

I wore Clarks in my youth and my kids now do so also. It’s funny how these conservative Brit shoes have been co-opted into Caribbean macho narratives. The feet could also be the feet of shot youth sticking out from under a cloth at a crime scene on the side of the road. The feet also could be the feet of marching protesting workers carrying placards as was the case in my earlier “intersection” series from Johannesburg. I could also be the feet of a vagrant in the city sticking out from under cardboard as you walk by. Its patterning is like the fringe on a dress or the pompoms on a Midnight Robber’s hat. A friend who works in emergency services once told me that they are always puzzled by why the left shoe it always seems falls off first when someone runs or becomes injured. So one shoe on and one shoe off is suggestive in that sense. .- Christopher Cozier (from his notes)

Cozier sums it all up best in his notes on the project: It’s not a new question this collision of art and life. The words “Now Showing” are layered into the image. Are we living in a movie unmade?

One must applaud The Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival on this initiative as well as its partners in this project: FLOW, the National Museum, and the Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism. Vel Lewis, acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism in his address praised the work of the TTFF and ensured a continuation in this collaboration with special interests in the visual arts of Trinidad and Tobago.

Cozier in his submission also recognized this collaboration and noted that the art community and wider public have come to excitedly expect and anticipate the festival image and are already looking forward to ‘COMING SOON’.

CHRISTOPHER COZIER, NOW SHOWING (2010), *(click above to view enlarged print)*

The annual creation of a new limited edition print is a fund-raising activity for the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival. Cozier’s print (a limited edition of 100) is available for purchase from the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival. Enquiries should be made by phone at 868 621 0709 or via e mail to emilie@trinidadandtobagofilmfestival.com



Top left: Artist Cozier asks the question: Are we living in a movie unmade? Bottom Left: Emilie Upczak, Creative Director TTFF with artist Christopher Cozier Top Right: The installation Bottom right: Art Director TTFF Melanie Archer presents print 1/100 to Assistant Museum Curator Naima Mohammed.

ALEX MIRROR IMAGES SMAILES

commentary by DAVE WILLIAMS

Mirror images

Whether they become objects of journalism, historical documentation or of art, this collection of images (Gangs of Morvant) explores a larger sum of dynamics than the total of their physical composition or social exposition - more simply, there's more than meets the eyes.

The man behind this all-access camera is Alex Smailes. By composition - he is an accomplished, well-paid, foreign, locally-based, photographer and business owner of mixed race. And, he may live what many of us may decide and describe as an enviable middle-class life. What does this bio-data have to do with the work or with good, objective, credible writing? Everything, in our society.

These photos speak of access. For many, poverty and crime are functions of access, or more specifically the denial of access. In these images we confront, face-to-face, the people and lives we're afraid of and whom we would

rather deny existed - people we want to have as little access to us as possible - right from their lives in the "crib" to their entombed resting place in graves or cells.

The amazing thing about this selection of photos, taken from a larger collection, is not just the undeniable denial of access of the subjects and of the access we've been denied of this world that looks nothing like our world; but the access that was granted - the access which we now have to these lives that have been mutated by denial.

The same factors and combination of factors that may have allowed Alex access to this world; and to the pursuit and development of the ability to skillfully capture it; are the same things that the subjects of these photos most probably denied - the bio-data that socially escapes them.

In fact the subjects of these photos may never even see these images published or exhibited,

simply because the vehicles in which they will travel will most likely always only ever pick up passengers with bio-data that we share - we the viewers of these images. For me - and I cannot propose to tell anyone how to view art or news or even life - one of the most amazing things about good art is that it can simultaneously illicit judgement and reflection, and fear and caring. But many times the beauty of this simultaneity can slip us - sometimes because of fear, sometimes sympathy, sometimes morality. Sometimes these impulses are directed at ourselves and sometimes at the subject d'art we're privileged to view.

Sometimes we find ourselves in the strangest places. Where will the subjects of these images find themselves? Where do their reflections come from? These images challenge us to find ourselves in them. If these images are unfamiliar, have we too been mutated by denial.

Gangs of Morvant

Since 2001, Trinidad has experienced the worst murder rates in history, each year outdoing the next. 2008 saw over 550 people murdered making us second in the Caribbean next to Jamaica. Much can be attributed to the gangs of Laventille and Morvant, driven by the usual urban issues facing any city today. I have been privileged enough to be allowed into the belly of the beast, one small area in Morvant. Everyone I know has been effected by murder. This is being replicated all over the island. Behind the figures published in the papers are real people, families, wives, children who are left behind. -AS

Alot About Alex Smailes

Alex Smailes studied photography in the UK, although he left early due to a job in the Arabian Gulf in 1996. He spent 13 months with the Arabian Seas Expedition, a documentary film crew making an underwater documentary film on the Arabian Gulf environment. With experience in the region he returned several times to work on book projects for the UAE Government through Trident Press in London.

In 1997, he moved to Papua New Guinea and undertook a personal assignment, which took 5 months to document the effects of deforestation in the unique Rainforests in New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The images were used for a book on PNG by the International Institute of Environment and Development, Greenpeace

and also Geographical magazine and WWF. Due to his knowledge of local language, he accompanied a Channel Four film crew and was one of the only British photographers to cover the Bougainville war. The film, Coconut Guerrillas, was nominated for several international media awards and the images have been featured in magazines worldwide. He returned via Asia and covered social issues in Indonesia and Thailand, street children with HIV, recycling on Java's rubbish mountains, lady boy dance troops and Kareni refugees from Myanmar.

At age 26 in 1998, he was the youngest photographer in UK to be signed with Paris's Sygma photo agency. On assignment for Greenpeace he visited the Gold mining towns of Venezuela and recorded the enviro and socio problems concerning the local Pemon Indians. He also reported on rare plants found only on 6000ft mountains. Back in the UK his first major news assignment was to cover the problems in Belfast and Drumcree in Northern Ireland.

In 1998 he undertook a assignment for International Rescue Committee of New York and CARE International in Bosnia, and stayed to cover the unfolding war in Kosovo in 1998 and early 1999.

Later in September 1999, he obtained an exclusive for Le Figaro, with rebel leader Shamil Basayev and snuck into Chechnya. He also obtained footage documenting a village

and a children's hospital hit by Russia's bombing campaign. In 2000 was assigned back to the Caucasus to cover Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia for Oxfam UK. Later in the year he was in East Africa for Wild Aid looking at the East coast shark fishermen.

In 2001 he covered the start of conflict in Tetovo in Macedonia for Out there News. Out there News continued assignments in Pakistan after 9/11 and Afghanistan borders.

In 2002 he signed major book deal with Macmillan Caribbean to produce his first solo book on Trinidad and Tobago, which took several years to complete. He still occasionally does hard news, for clients like BBC during Haitian revolution in 2004 and was a stringer for Reuters in Grenada after hurricane Ivan 2005. His personal ongoing projects can take up to a year to produce.

CURRENTLY

He is a partner in Abovegroup a regional branding company of over 15 staff, based in the Fernandes Industrial Centre.

AWARDS

Twice nominee finalist for Amnesty International Media Awards for reportage of inside Trinidad's Jails 2001 and for Haiti's secrete modern day slave trade for Colors magazine 2003

EXHIBITIONS

Permanent print in Time Life building NY from Benetton magazine Colors, one man show of exclusive reportage of war-torn Bougainville Island coverage at The Commonwealth Society Pall Mall UK 1999.





















BY: RMR PHOTOGRAPHY: GEORGIA POPPLEWELL

LET US PREY

I am 43 years old – that means I’ve seen a lot of mas...and some good mas too. My familial home at Carnival time was my grandmother’s house on Baden Powell St, Woodbrook, smack-dab in the middle of it all: Minshall’s Mas Camp or rather distribution point on Ariapita Avenue to the South, right behind us on Buller St was George Bailey’s Mas Camp and to the North of us D’Midas

and Associates. It was the perfect location, bordered by four main Carnival arterials, Ariapita Avenue, Colville Street, Tragarete Road and French St. I’ve played mas as well. The last major band I played in was Minshall’s M2K (2000). It was my first and only experience with the spectacle and performance art that was synonymous with Minshall. After a long ten year sabbatical from playing mas, in 2010, I

returned like a prodigal son longing for the comfort and belonging of that I’d experienced all those years before. I found it in a young band, ‘CAT IN BAG’ productions, headed by artist Richard ‘Ashraph’ Ramsaran.

Ashraph or ‘Ash’ as he is fondly called, is a ‘Minshallite’ (one who has, in some way, been heavily influenced by the indelible stamp of carnival

designer, Peter Minshall). Ash is a Carnival artist. In recent years he has taken to making a small part of the streets of Port of Spain his canvas. In 2009, he and fellow artist, Shalini Seereeram, marked this canvas with ‘T’in Cow Fat Cow’, a band which can loosely be described as ‘thirty something people dressed like cows holding placards and singing rapso songs by the trinidadian group 3 Canal’.

In 2010, Ash and Shalini led a merry band of the socially liberated, rapso chantwells, gay people, straight people, metro people, visual artists, writers, journalists, film-makers, new media specialists, poets, aspiring politicians, ex-Minshallites, fashion designers, young people, old people, black people, white people, chinese people, indian people, style conscious shopaholics, a pair of

street music pirates and me to the freedom of Trinidad Carnival’s fabled promised land. Here I was in the middle of it all. This is what I’d paid \$475 for. This was COBOTOWN. I was happy. I was home, playin’ mas.

I’ve returned to Ashraph, in this issue of Switch, for him to tell it like he saw it and describe the Cobotown experience. And maybe to let another proverbial cat out of the bag.





“A creative voice often bears a protest tone. We are neither old mas nor protest mas, we are consciousness-raising mas, with exploratory elements rooted in the traditions of mas



DS: What was Cobotown?

ARR: A mas loosely based in the intuitive artform. Cobotown as a mas, was a metaphor for the decay and death of the city of Port of Spain, the city of Arima, the city of San Fernando...

DS: Why the Cobo?

ARR: The Cobo is a scavenger whose survival relies on feasting on the decaying and the deceased. The cobo, an unsightly creature, was a fitting metaphor for the waste, neglect and mismanagement the population of T&T has endured at the hands of various governments over the years. And let's not overlook the don't-care and do-what-you-want mentality of the people.

DS: I describe your band as socially all inclusive encompassing all the nuances of race, class and sexuality, how do you view this?

ARR: Our brand of all-inclusive doesn't place priority on commercial enterprise and affecting status. We are a band that doesn't discriminate, but we also don't place emphasis on any particular orientation or socio-economic status. We tend to attract people who enjoy individuality and unleashing their creative expression, that's what fuels the broad diversity seen in the band.

DS: How does the socially conscious rationalise the use of 'music pirates' for Musical accompaniment?

ARR: Who say because we is socially conscious that we can't also support brethren surviving the best way they know how, for now. The entrepreneurial spirit in the white collar world bears many similarities to the entrepreneurial spirit of the streets.

DS: Are you 'old mas' or 'protest mas'? Why the heavy protest element?

ARR: A creative voice often bears a protest tone. We are neither old mas nor protest mas, we are consciousness-raising mas, with exploratory elements rooted in the traditions of mas.

DS: Do you see yourself as a Minshallite? Tell me about your involvement with the Minshall movement.

ARR: Peter Minshall is a celebrated mas man. I admire his work, and, thus, I am a Minshallite. My involvement is largely based in quietly supporting the creative process of the Callaloo Co. And THANK YOU MINSHALL FOR DE MAS.



“We tend to attract people who enjoy individuality and unleashing their creative expression, that’s what fuels the broad diversity seen in the band.”



DS: Tell me about your collaboration with Shalini.

ARR: Shalini is a dear friend and colleague. Our collaboration in this venture of creating art for the street theatre we call Carnival, supports our individual interest in expanding the mediums we use for our creative expression.

DS: How do you feel about the major commercial space that ‘beads and bikinis’ have appropriated in Trinidad Carnival?

ARR: Our band articulates our dismay and disappointment with the lack of imagination employed to illustrate an engaging storyboard in the mas these days--even if that mas uses beads and bikinis as its foundation.

DS: Do you see ‘Cat in Bag’ as a template for a new contemporary type of Mas?

ARR: Not really a template, because we’re only drawing inspiration from the very best mas template there is--the traditional mas of Trinidad and Tobago.

DS: Okay, let the cat out of the bag. What’s next ?

ARR: Snake in de Grass. We can’t always see them, but they’re everywhere...in we bedroom, in we Ministry, in we family. All ah we, is snake in de grass. See you all in 2011.

contact cat in bag:
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Cat-in-Bag-Productions/148720279986?v=wall>

the bag project online only

www.richardmarkrawlins.blogspot.com



in the context
of genetics,
the utterance
"good jeans"
may mean
one thing, but
within the
sphere of
our local ver-
nacular rid-
dled with its
creative use
of the "dou-
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dre," the
concept
takes on
a whole
different
meaning.

[animated]

Luiz Vasquez lives on earth. His point of origin is Venezuela. His last known coordinates were the island Republic of Trinidad & Tobago. He is a twenty something year old performance/installation artist whose work works because there is a process that leads to ideation. check out *Luis's work at*

Interview with an Émigré

I thought of a great deal of purple prose and drivel to start this interview with, but the truth is **Luis Alberto Vasquez** said it best when when you look at the top right hand corner of his blog [http://luisvasquezlaroche.blogspot.com], "My hands translate my mind and my thoughts..." - Excerpt from "Hi, I'm a brain. And you are...?"

TH: "Human existence as a process of perpetual falling" - tell us about you.

We feel the pain, but not the absence of pain, we feel the fear but not security, we feel the sickness but not health, we feel the desire and longing, as we feel hunger and thirst, but when they are fulfilled, it's all over, like once we swallow the bite it ceases to exist for our senses. We don't realize the happy days in our lives until they are substituted by pain.."

TH: Your work has both social and political undertones. Do you then consider yourself to be a well balanced artist?

Venezuela is this wonderful girlfriend who broke up with me and even if we get back together it would never be the same... so at the moment I am dating Trinidad.

TH: Describe for me, YOUR process of creation to completion.

LV: If I am working on a body of work that carries a concept I would write in my journal my initial thoughts, later on followed by research which leads on to more writing. This writing would

TH: In your journals, you said "Love like life cannot be fully defined... so I love because I know no other way" - (Wednesday, March 10th 2010) - do you still feel that way?

LV: To describe love in a million words I think it would not be enough to explain the feeling. So it is easier to do it rather than explaining it. Love's blurry edges keep me guessing of what she might really be.

JEEZ LUIS

LV: "Falling" Installation Philosopher, Martin Heidegger, described human existence as a process of perpetual falling, and it is our responsibility to catch ourselves from our own uncertainty. This prognosis informs my work. We constantly live in a world that tests our equilibrium; we live in a world that constantly tests our stability in various other forms...

To want is essentially to suffer, like to live is to want, so every life is by essence pain. Life is fighting for existence, with the certainty of being defeated. Life is a relentless hunt, where people, sometimes are hunters and sometimes hunted.

LV: I grew up in a very unstable country. So social political issues are how we would say "pan de cada dia" (an everyday situation), it impacts me personally, so it would also impact my work.

TH: We may reside in any one geographic location, but do you think an artist really has a home? If so... where is it?

LV: When I got to Trinidad I used to wake up every day thinking I was going to go back, and after 2 years I finally went back to my country and it was not the same. So I felt out of place, out of home. I came back to Trinidad and with the passing of the time I found shelter in the idea of what it was before I left.

let you know when it's necessary to start making the words become a visual. I usually write in my journal in Spanish and English. It's interesting how some words or phrases work only in Spanish and some others only in English. For example the meaning of a word in English would have a very strong meaning, but when it is translated to Spanish and carried to another context, the word may lose its power.

After, the word / research it will become a visual/ a collage/ a sketch. I experiment with different materials and configurations until it begins to take shape and the work can speak by itself.

TH: Would you want to give us any spoilers/hints about upcoming projects you're working on or are involved in?

LV: Sure...I am involved in two Erotic Art Week 2010 projects. One with a fellow artist and partner Alicia Milne and the second one with my friend Arnaldo James. I am also doing a project on taxi drivers and my experience with public transportation. As for now it is just stories and illustrations so far.

BY TRACY
J HUTCHINGS





1962 - 2010
RICHARD S. BOLAI

BY ADELE TODD

Writing about my closest friend in the past tense has the sense of the absurd about it. But it is a good starting off point to describing the work of the late, great, artist Richard Bolai.

I started to write about our history, but it was simply not appropriate to give a listing of experiences. Richard and I were much more. We had known each other for our entire adult lives and part of our teenage years, and we connected completely.

The Bookmann, as a project and as a name, came from two places. The name, from mas' man Peter Minshall, because Richard was an excellent Book Binder who called himself a Book Binder before any of his other attributes. Peter Minshall had ordered seven diaries in every colour of the rainbow, and called Richard "the bookman", and the name stuck. We had decided to do a book which we titled Caribbean Aesthetic, after we had met a doctor at CAREC where I had gone to do some research, and we had had a great chat about the quirky things that we in Trinidad and Tobago call our style, our culture, ourselves, and an idea was born.





Manet - observing Manet's famous works and parodying it.



Caravaggio - Achieving the color and atmosphere of the famous painting and actually giving it greater life by playing on the light within the face.

We started out by taking pictures of Lapeyrouse Cemetery and old, derelict houses of character. This was in 2002. We then moved on to street signage, vendors, graffiti (the work of the people who really do live on the streets). We spoke to average people and we shot rum shops, barber shops and anything that could meet our idea of our island's uniqueness.

I had been blogging for quite some time, and I suggested to Richard that we use the blog concept to store our images for the book *Trinidad Aesthetic*, and from that came another blog, *Sexypink* and then, *The Bookmann*. The work went very well, but eventually, we both began to find that art writing and collecting imagery on Trinidad and Tobago, though enjoyable, was also quite limiting to us. We wanted to do much, much more. This was around 2003 to 2004.

Richard began with self-portraiture, and he decided that he would not only play the character, but art direct, edit and write text to accompany the images and explore concepts outside simply doing portraiture.

So, he took the opportunity to do himself in a series of



Shirin Neshat - A man parodying a woman who looks at the austere measures of Islam.



Peter Doig - Looking at the work of Peter Doig (an interpretation)



Madonna - Parodying the work of Chris Ofili making the Madonna larger than life.



Betsy Ross- A look at Patrimony. What of our own Betsy Ross? (Performance)

images as well as look at a number of famous men and women throughout history. By embodying them, he read their histories, considered their psychological profiles and attempted to capture their very essence. He soon moved on to looking at contemporary art practice, and was very curious about the way society looks at art. His goal was to create important and controversial works using only the things he had around his home. For this, he again researched the topic, and on his site he hinged his work to samples of the artist's work that he was parodying. We found the work so important that a word Feinin was coined to describe what he was doing. Richard registered this new art style to join the art vernacular with Wikipedia.

To say that Richard was wearing many hats is an understatement. Conceptualizing, creating from scratch, staging, directing, writing, researching, getting into character, lighting, shooting, then editing what he was doing was quite laudable, with no budget.

He also had his bookbinding practice, graphic design freelancing and the care of his mother to attend to.



Perfect Death - Superimposition Performance.

YOU CAN CALL ALL OF IT PERFORMANCE, BUT SOME TOOK ON PAINTING ABOVE PERFORMANCE AS TECHNIQUE.



SOME TOOK ON THE IDEA OF ANIMATION AND FILM, AND OTHERS WERE ABOUT MORE THAN ONE TECHNIQUE.



KING SAILOR. A look at our 'old mas' characters using found objects.