

PERSPECTIVES ON
THE CONNECTIONS
BETWEEN
LATIN AMERICA,
THE CARIBBEAN
AND AFRICA

EDITION 02
C&AL 2019
AN ART
MAGAZINE

C&

AMÉRICA LATINA

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C&AL

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FRONT COVER

Alberta Whittle, *Studies in Welcome V*, 2015.
Photograph. Photo: Nick Whittle. Courtesy of the artist

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EDITORIAL

The aim of C& América Latina (C&AL) is to reflect the artistic production and debates around Latin America and the Caribbean in relation to Africa. This means that we are constantly considering the many different and complex artistic perspectives.

This also includes thinking about different ideas of what “identities” can mean. The term “identities” is complex and may seem overused in the context of the “global art world”. Nevertheless, it seems important to make a point of trying to at least grasp the diverse meanings of what Latin America and the Caribbean can be in relation to Africa. Why is Jean-Michel Basquiat defined as an African American artist even though his father was born in Haiti? “The future is Latinx” is a phrase that has been floating around for a while now, but people are still wondering what this word means and who it includes and excludes.

This second C&AL print issue reflects on little discussed biographies and practices such as the Afro-Mexican modern painter José Antonio Gómez Rosas. It also features projects from Martinican and Brazilian perspectives and talks to Barbadian artist Alberta Whittle.

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Contemporary And América Latina (C&AL) is a dynamic, critical art magazine focusing on the connection between Afro-Latin America, The Caribbean and Africa.

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WHAT IS “LATINX”?

By ALDEIDE DELGADO



The term “Latinx” is an update of traditional labels such as “Hispanic” or “Latin”, which emerged around the mid-twentieth century to describe Latin American migrant communities in the United States.

ALDEIDE DELGADO looks into the implications and opportunities of the new expression.

Yali Romagoza, *Monument to the Great Living Artist*, 2018. Performance.
Photo: Javier Caso. Courtesy of the artist

“America’s Most Expensive Artist Is Latinx – But No One Knows It.”

ARTSY, JUNE 2017



While the debate about whether or not to build a wall along the United States southern border continues, Latin pop surpassed all popularity records among the youngest people and some even claim: “The future is Latinx”. But what does this word mean?

The publication of the article “America’s Most Expensive Artist Is Latinx – But No One Knows It” (*Artsy*, June 2017), sparked a reexamination of artist biographies such as Carmen Herrera or Jean-Michel Basquiat from a “Latinx” perspective. According to the author of the article, Naiomy Guerrero, Basquiat is known primarily as an Afro-American artist, although his father was born in Haiti and his mother is of Puerto Rican descent. The exclusive positioning of Basquiat as a black artist, Guerrero adds, demonstrates the continuous invisibility of “Latinx” artists on the art market, as well as the historical absence of research on the Latin American experience in the US.

In August 2018, *Hyperallergic* published an article titled “Latinx Artists Are Highlighted For The First Time In A Group Show at the Whitney”. The article referred to the exhibition *Pacha, Llaqta, Wasichay: Indigenous Space, Modern Architecture, New Art* curated at the Whitney Museum by Marcela Guerrero. For the first time, the museum, dedicated as it is to living artists in the US, presented a show in which contemporary artists of both Latin American and indigenous descent shared the same space.

“Latinx” refers to individuals of Latin American origin living in the US who don’t identify with the gender binary. According to Google trends, the “x” initially gained popularity in the LGBTQIA+ community and in academic circles around 2004. From 2016 onwards, popularity increased and the expression became widespread throughout the US and appeared among others in the exhibition catalogue for *Radical Women: Latin American Art 1960-1985*. In their introduction, Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Andrea Giunta affirm the use of categories such as “Chicana” and “Latina”, instead of “Chicanx” and “Latinx” considering that the discussion was not relevant for the historical period encompassed by the sample.

The term “Latinx” is an update of traditional labels such as “Hispanic” and “Latin”, which emerged around the mid-20th century to describe Latin American migrant communities in the United States. The term “Hispanic” was adopted in the seventies to denominate communities whose language and historical heritage was associated with Spain. The term “Latin” – which met greater acceptance in the Latin American community – transcended the linguistic barrier by including, both from a geographical point of view the Spanish-speaking, but also the Portuguese-speaking groups as well as indigenous dialects. Later, the use of the endings “o”, “a” and “@” sought to create an inclusive space; feminine and masculine.

“Latinx”, like “Latino” and “Hispanic”, is a socially constructed concept and a product of the conditions that they were in; the community was marginalized. They are problematic notions in that they assume a homogeneous “Latin” identity. Nonetheless, these notions generate very interesting discussions on the means of access and artistic consumption for a community that lives between two, three or more cultural environments in the United States.

Fundamentally, the arguments against the term “Latinx” focus on the linguistic construction of the word which is not constricted by the obligatory gender rules in Castilian Spanish. However, “Latinx” is a concept that does not pertain to Latin America, nor does it pretend to define the artistic or social processes in the region. It does however facilitate the inclusion of these debates in the discourse on Latin America and the Latin American diaspora. “Latinx” includes

people who have been born, educated or naturalized in the United States. Hence, their speech reflects the cross-over between Spanish and English, among other possible combinations. During his years of exile in New York, Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica invented his own language between English and Portuguese. His notebooks, *Newyorkaises* – meanwhile relatively forgotten in comparison to his previous stage – reveal influences from Gertrude Stein, Brazilian concrete poetry, Vito Acconci and Yoko Ono.

“Latinx” is a flexible term that does not require a definition as such, but rather opens another category of (self)identification for people who do identify with the male-female binary. In the artistic context, the term includes a heterogeneous group of artists marked by migration, multilingualism and creolization, whose work illustrates mixed identities of diverse origin. In the *Mercado* series (2017), artist Lucía Hierro explores her bicultural Dominican-American identity in the form of large shopping bags filled with coupons, objects and everyday products, usually consumed by Latino communities in US-American supermarket chains. For Hierro, the bags portray her mother’s trips to the Dominican Republic carrying supplies for her grandmother and the return of the same bags to New York, now filled with local Dominican products.

Puerto Rican artist Miguel Luciano appropriates elements from popular culture such as Schwinn bicycles to commemorate the traditions of the Puerto Rican clubs in New York. In *Pimp My Piragua* (2008-2009), Luciano celebrates the innovations of Latino street vendors by transforming a standard crushed ice cart into a hyper-modified tricycle with a built-in hi-fi sound and video recording system. On the other hand, the artist Yali Romagoza, after immigrating to the United States from Cuba in 2011, focused her work on the exploration of identity, power and feminism in an intercultural space. In the installation *Monument To The Great Living Artist* (2018) Romagoza plays Cuquita, “the Cuban doll”, while she dances “Se acabó” (“It’s over”) by La Lupe and recites the essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”. At the end of her performance, Cuquita leaves the following messages: “American Feminism as it stands is a white middle-class movement” (Ana Mendieta) and “The Choice is yours. Say it, but with an accent” (Cuquita, the Cuban Doll).

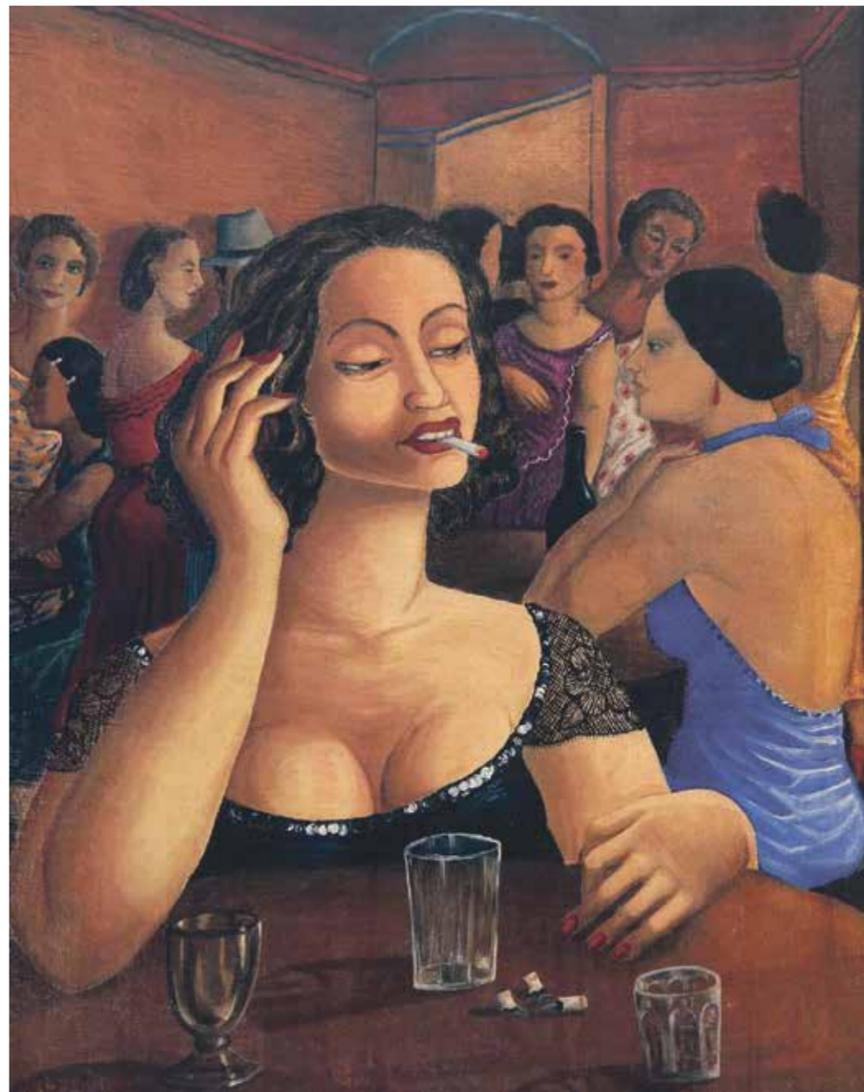
Latinx artists recover shared cultural experiences to reflect on class, migration and identity issues. Latinx art does not define a monolithic identity, nor is it about single story or experience. Rather, this art is marked by various factors of gender, mobility, migratory status, skin color and access to cultural and economic capital. Studying Latinx art involves recognizing the influence of these artists on the history of American art, as well as generating a space for dialogue and discussion about the politics of access and participation of the Latino communities in US society.

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ALDEIDE DELGADO is an independent historian and curator. Her interests include gender, racial identity, photography and abstraction in the visual arts.

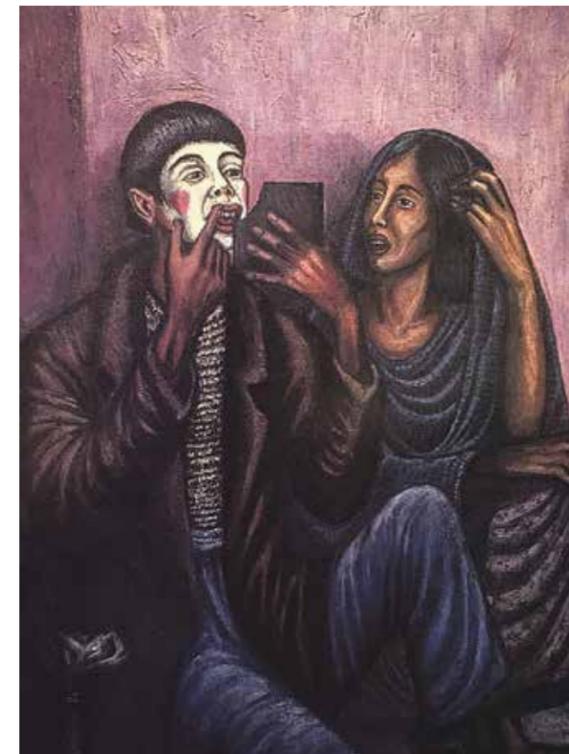
An air of legend and mystery surrounds the life and work of **JOSÉ ANTONIO GÓMEZ ROSAS**, known as "El Hotentote", and contemporary of **FRIDA KAHLO** and **DIEGO RIVERA**. In Mexican art history, only vague traces of this extraordinary personality linger.

A GIFTED GHOST KNOWN AS "EL HOTENTOTE"

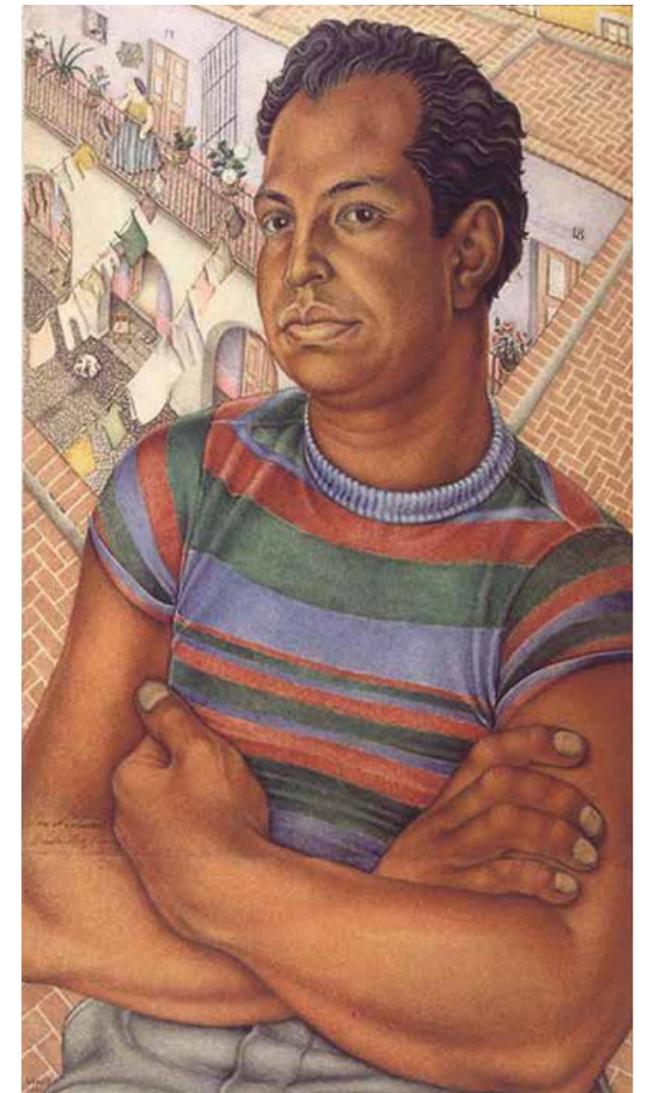
By **HERIBERTO PAREDES**



José Antonio Gómez Rosas, *Portrait of a prostitute*, year of creation unknown. Oil on canvas.
In: *La mano incontinente* (eds. Tomás Zurian & Rafael C. Arvea), Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico, 2002



above left José Antonio Gómez Rosas, *Mime With Partner*, 1951. Oil on canvas.
In: *La mano incontinente* (eds. Tomás Zurian & Rafael C. Arvea), Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico, 2002
above right Emilio Baz Viaud, *Portrait of El Hotentote*, 1941. Watercolor.
Courtesy of Collection of Andrés Blaisten, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)



The Mexican filmmaker Julio Pliego (1928-2007) once said, that El Hotentote was like “a monster”. But in today’s Mexico, that word could obscure the affectionate connotation of the description. In his adult age, José Antonio Gómez Rosas, born on October 16, 1917 in Orizaba, Veracruz, and also known as “El Hotentote”, reached a height of almost two meters. But also in other ways this Afro-Mexican artist was a “monster”: an artist full of vitality and creative genius, someone who, after eating and drinking abundantly, would go on to embellish walls and screens with extraordinary strokes. The Hotentote always stood out, both for his talent and acute vision of his native Mexico, as well as for his impressive stature and size. Certainly, he never went unnoticed.

Those who knew him, either at the art school where he created most of his work or who encountered him on his frequent walks through the Mexican capital, all asserted to the fact that he was ambidextrous. Painters and sculptors recount that it was a proper spectacle to watch him work: he would pass the brush or pencil from one hand to the other, or sometimes even use both hands simultaneously. With his critical vision of the great Mexican artists of his time, Gómez Rosas consolidated himself as an uncomfortable, mocking, acid and everything but docile painter on an art scene that was being consumed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which governed Mexico for 72 years. A contemporary of legendary artists such as Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, El Hotentote expressed his criticism in ridiculing paintings.

José Antonio Gómez Rosas lost his father when he was just a young child. Together with his mother and his siblings he moved first to the Mexican state of Guerrero. Later, the family settled down in Mexico City in the blue-collar neighborhood La Merced. Even today, one encounters aspects of traditional popular culture in this neighborhood that are scarcely found anywhere else.

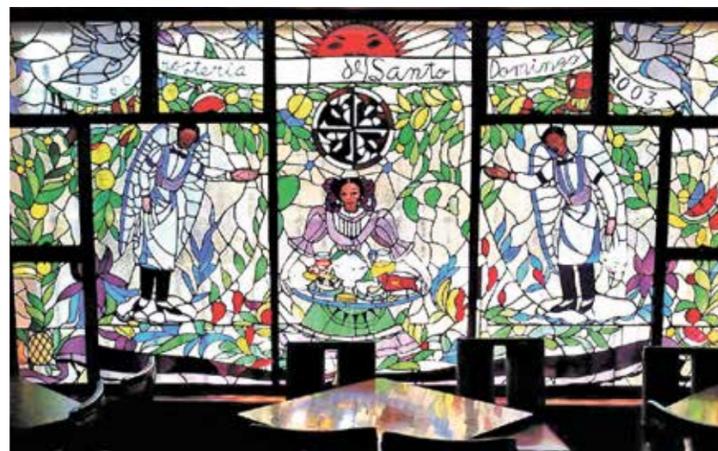
Originally an indigenous neighborhood, the Merced became home to hundreds of migrants and Lebanese refugees, fleeing from the Ottoman Empire and bringing with them their customs and their culinary traditions. They mixed with manual laborers, indigenous

women selling food in the street and entire families who each year organized the most colorful imaginable religious celebrations. The streets of La Merced, brimming with bars and brothels, became an intimate and decisive reference for the artistic vision which El Hotentote later developed as an adult. One central aspect of the neighborhood would be central: the inequality.

In 1936, an uncle helped José Antonio enrol in the National School of Plastic Arts, the mythical place from where the leading Mexican artists emerged/graduated. Very soon, the artist began to rebel against traditional artistic and pedagogical forms, and even complement them with his own experiences. But today, El Hotentote’s work does not appear in the main pages of the catalogues of Mexican painters, apparently not worthy of great tributes. Many of his murals in bars and popular “cantinas” have been lost. This highly controversial character is almost a ghost: sometimes there is a faint trace, sometimes only the sensation of a fleeting presence.

And yet, in his work it is possible to determine some characteristics that place El Hotentote in an outstanding position in Latin American art. What stands out in his paintings is the capacity to ironically comment on the contradictions of the society in which he lived. He presented contradicting characters in close relation, always with indigenous or mestizo features. A rich range of colors gave strength to the lines and thematically it recreated environments that were not in line with the official discourse of progress and instead reflected the inequality of the city in which it moved.

But it is in his monumental paintings, known as “telones” (“curtains”), that Hotentote criticized with greater force the contradictions of his contemporaries, who received large sums of money from the government to paint the revolution. On his curtains, Gómez Rosas painted not only Diego Rivera as a huge balloon about to burst, and Frida Kahlo, whom he put in the body of a deer. He also pointed out those who were in charge of the cultural institutions or who in some way constructed the “National Culture”. A native of the suburban environments and of the night, El Hotentote was also invited to decorate such emblematic bars as Salón México, the Ba-ba-lú and other famous establishments of the forties and fifties.



José Antonio Gómez Rosas, Stained glass window of the Hostería de Santo Domingo, year of creation unknown



Those who knew him, either at the art school where he created most of his work or who encountered him on his frequent walks through the Mexican capital, all asserted to the fact that he was ambidextrous.

There is still one legend related to his work: the invention of the mythical dream figures of Mexican popular culture, the “alebrijes”. Everything seems to indicate that the planning of a mask dance forced Gómez Rosas to look for a person with perfect mastery of certain techniques used to make paper figures. He had created a design which combined parts of different animals and for this project, he chose Pedro Linares, one of the most representative creators of this zoomorphic art. “Give this devil wings”, El Hotentote supposedly told Linares, and asked him to create his design with paper and cardboard. According to the story, Linares was so inspired that he continued to create these figures until they became a Mexican tradition. Whether or not this story is true, the ingenuity of El Hotentote is still alive, in its own way, in the popular character of an art embraced by millions of people all over the world.

The “monster” Gómez Rosas, tall, corpulent and vital, and who preferred free art and free learning to creative and political commitments, died on January 1, 1977. It is time to rediscover him and recognize him as an extraordinary artist he was in more ways than one.

above José Antonio Gómez Rosas, *Rooster Crowning in the Sun*, year unknown. In: *La mano incontenible* (eds. Tomás Zurian & Rafael C. Arvea), Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico, 2002

HERIBERTO PAREDES is a Mexican journalist and photographer. He writes about art and stories of resistance.

MEMORIES IN A CARDBOARD BOX

By MIRIANE PEREGRINO

Traveling initiative shatters the museum concept, fosters visitor encounters, and facilitates, with stories narrated through images, the exchange of experiences in the Maré favela, in Rio de Janeiro.

Brazilian photographer Francisco Valdean walks the streets with a cardboard box under his arm. Printed in capital letters on the box's lid is the acronym for the Maré Traveling Museum of Images: MIIM. During the week, Valdean mostly takes his museum to students at schools inside and outside the Maré Favela complex, in Rio de Janeiro, and on weekends, he opens the museum at bar tables. Valdean takes a notebook from inside the box, where each visitor records their name and the date. He then gives a guided tour, presenting the museum's three permanent exhibitions: mini slide viewers, photographic negatives, and stories of community life in Maré, all curated by Valdean, MIIM's creator, director, guide, and curator.

To facilitate viewings of the negatives, Valdean carries a small light-box, but visitors can also view them using a cellphone screen. Images in the mini slide viewers fascinate children and teenagers unfamiliar with this photographic medium, while simultaneously stirring feelings of nostalgia among their elders who have used the device in the past. The images reveal the history of Maré, from the community's formation in the 1940s, to today. MIIM tells residents important stories, such as the picture of former Maré resident Marielle Franco, the Rio city councilwoman and activist, who was photographed by Valdean in 2018, three months before her assassination.

The MIIM collection is not yet complete, but Valdean expects to have about 100 images in each of the exhibits. After launching in 2019 with a simple, modest post on the photographer's Facebook page, the museum had increasingly attracted the attention of interested visitors. Everything about MIIM shatters the museum concept, fostering visitor encounters and facilitating, with stories narrated through images, the circulation and exchange of experiences in the Maré community. And for anyone who may have doubts, this museum inside a cardboard box is to be taken very seriously.

MIIM is the result of Valdean's daily encounters as a resident of the community, his work as a photographer and his academic studies – Valdean has worked for years discussing the ways images about Maré are produced by internal and external agents. The MIIM collection brings together old and recent photographs about the culture, daily life and politics of the 16 favelas that form Maré, a territory occupied by over 140,000 inhabitants. Maré also has the largest number of museums in a favela in Brazil (and probably in the world). There are a total of three museums in Maré, two of which are linked to local NGOs: the Museu da Maré opened in 2006 as a traditional

(brick-and-mortar) museum and the Maré a Céu Aberto (Maré Open Air Museum), which is an experiential museum currently under development.

MIIM, however, is a different kind of museum in the sense that it goes to where the residents are. "It's a roving museum," says Valdean. The experience of roving around has marked photographer Valdean's own story in many ways. One was when he moved as a teenager from Cachoeira Grande, a village in the interior of Ceará, to Rio de Janeiro; the other was his job as a street hawker in downtown Rio before enrolling in university.

MIIM's impact has encouraged residents to revisit their own personal archives and memories. Valdean says he has come to realize that "every person has their own 'museum'". During a visit to MIIM, one student at a Maré public school stated that his "grandmother is a museum." Despite the student's joking tone, the statement reveals that the experience of visiting MIIM provokes a rediscovery of the word "museum" and its space.

MIIM makes visitors question what a memory device or space is, and provokes a certain awareness in residents about their role as a living museum and guardians of the memory of their community, something Malian writer Amadou Hampatê Bâ brings up in discussing orality and memory of African traditions. Valdean, in turn, takes photography as a memory device and, through that, establishes a dialogue with MIIM visitors where the individual memories of each person – guide and visitor – meet the collective memories of Maré.

— FRANCISCO VALDEAN *studied photography at the Escola de Fotógrafos Populares. He has a bachelor's in Social Sciences and a master's degree in Visual Anthropology, both from the State University of Rio de Janeiro. He is currently a PhD student in the Arts at the same university. Part of his work as a photographer and curator is described on the site "Escritas Visuais" (Visual Writing): francisovaldean.com.br/*

— MIRIANE PEREGRINO *is a researcher, journalist and cultural producer. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and she is currently conducting a research residency at the University of Mannheim, Germany.*



MIIM tells residents important stories, such as the picture of former Maré resident Marielle Franco, the Rio city councilwoman and activist, who was photographed by Valdean in 2018, three months before her assassination.

**SLAVERY IMAGES
- THE IMAGE AS
TESTIMONY OF THE
UNSPEAKABLE**
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above/ top Media from image collection: slide viewers, photographs, and negatives. Photo: MIIM Collection

above/ below Visitors at MIIM. Photo: MIIM Collection

EXCELLENCE, AUDACITY AND TRANSGRESSION

By WILL FURTADO



FIAP is Martinique's own festival dedicated to performance art. The festival is a meeting point for local and international artists to create site-specific performances together while strengthening non-institutional networks. C&AL spoke to the curators ANNABEL GUÉRÉDRAT and HENRI TAULIAUT about performance as the artistic medium most accessible to the public and bringing the Worlds of Aqua (water), the Iguana, Afropunk and Techno Shamanism into this year's festival.

Lara Kramer and Marvin Fabien, duet performance, *Dream installation*; Savane des Pétrifications.
© 2019 CieArtincidence, FIAP 2019 Martinique. Photo: Jean Baptiste Barret



Marvin Fabien, duet performance with Lara Kramer, *Dream installation*; Savane des Pétrifications.
© 2019 CieArtincidence, FIAP 2019 Martinique. Photo: Jean Baptiste Barret



above Lara Kramer, duet performance with Marvin Fabien, *Dream installation*; Savane des Pétrifications.

© 2019 CieArtincidence, FIAP 2019 Martinique. Photo: Jean Baptiste Barret

below Nyugen Smith, Savane des Pétrifications.

© 2019 CieArtincidence, FIAP 2019 Martinique. Photo: Jean Baptiste Barret

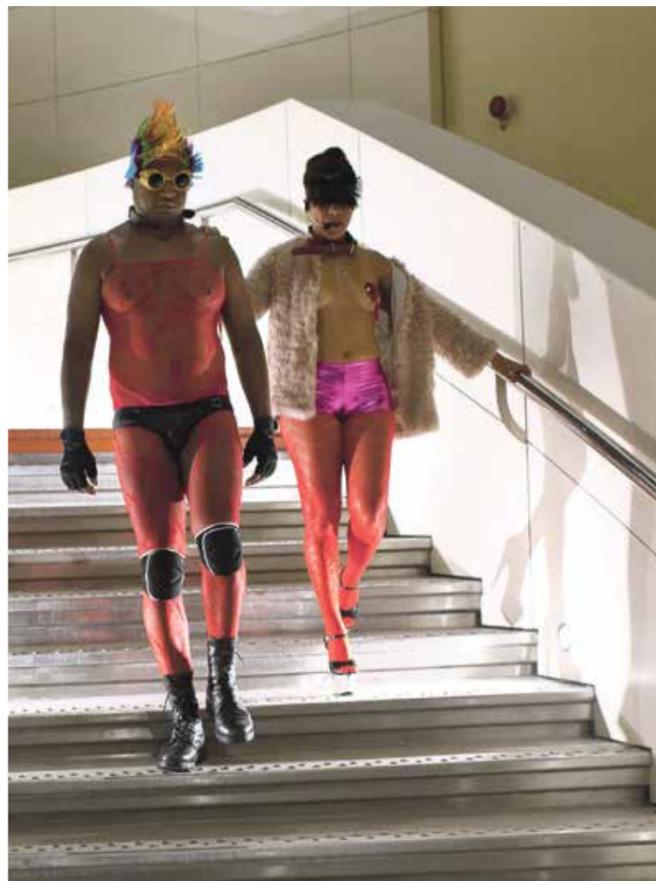


Performers: D'Jessey Pastel, Jérémie Priam, Alicja Korek, Alex Côté; Savane des Pétrifications.

© 2019 CieArtincidence, FIAP 2019 Martinique. Photo: Jean Baptiste Barret.



We wanted to develop the art of performance here in the Caribbean since it seems to be the best medium to reach the audience locally. Painting, sound and sculpture in contemporary art remain elitist.



above The artist Marvin Fabien invited by FIAP 2019, performance en duo with Nyugen Smith, *Lest We Forget*. © Nyugen Smith & Marvin Fabien

below The FIAP curators Henri Tauliaut and Annabel Guérédrat. Performance *Nus descendant l'escalier*, 2015, Mémorial ACTe, Guadeloupe. © 2015 CieArtincidence, Photo: Robert Charlotte



The Kingdom of Ice, performance of Ludgi Savon.

© 2018 Novas

C& AMÉRICA LATINA How did you develop the thematic structure of this year's festival?

ANNABEL GUÉRÉDRAT & HENRI TAULIAUT Just like the 1st edition in 2017, there is no theme for the new edition of the Festival, FIAP2019 Martinique. However, there are two important features this year:

AG As curators, Henri and I encourage artists to create an exchange, an encounter. We stimulate new collaborations, new interconnections and non-institutional networks between artists from Martinique and the artists who will be coming from abroad. Thus, we offer participating artists the opportunity to pair with another artist, in order to create a duet performance in situ, outdoors (at a research and investigation laboratory set up in a natural environment near the beach on the southern tip of the island, at the Savane des Pétrifications) and indoors in Fort de France.

HT During a one-day creative workshop, we invite and encourage scientific debates among researchers, academics, artists, art critics, curators, engaged activists and the audience to open avenues for reflection on the importance of performance art, its subversive side and the taboos questioned through this genre.

C&AL Could you tell me more about how the artists were selected?

AG There was no open call or call for applications. Henri and I selected the participating artists whom we already knew

as friends, as we are part of the same big family of performers. We appreciate their work, which we have seen performed live, during our artist residencies all over the world or at festivals where we'd been invited. Many artists we chose talk about ecological issues, or queer identity or postcolonial issues.

C&AL You are artists too. How does that sensibility play into your role as curator?

AG/HT As curators, it is important for us to maintain a family atmosphere at our festival. There is no star. Everyone is at the same level, in a good-natured atmosphere, serene, where we take care of each other.

C&AL The Caribbean has a very particular relationship to performance. How do the traditions relate to performance as an artistic medium?

AG/HT We wanted to develop the art of performance here in the Caribbean since it seems to be the best medium to reach the audience locally. Painting, sound and sculpture in contemporary art remain elitist. Performance art is more easily accessible to the audience, who is attracted by living art and knows the concept of the ritual via local magico-religious practices and via our Carnival.

Moreover, performance art in the Caribbean is a mixed practice, incorporating visual arts, sound, dance, theatre etc. Like during our Carnival, or in our sacred practices which do not derive from the Western world. That's why the interconnections are easier, between performance art and the audience here. The body is at the center. There is no

representation. It is real. The audience is more touched and moved by this specific artistic practice with the body, which is performance art.

C&AL How does Martinique's performance culture relate to other cultures in the Caribbean?

AG/HT We use three words to describe our festival of performance art here in Martinique (which is part of the French West Indies in the Caribbean): excellence, audacity and transgression. Performance art is totally adapted to what we want to transmit and express. As a ritual practice that incorporates the body, time and space in performance art and culture, we use our bodies to involve and affect the audience, for instance, by moving in extreme slow motion or by walking. We invented four worlds through our performance art practice (the Aqua, Iguana, Afropunk and Techno Shamanism Worlds). During Carnival, which takes place every year during five days, we did a performance, and it was one of the best examples of what we're doing with our performance art in Martinique. Many other Caribbean islands have their Carnival at the same time, and their Carnivals also question the art of performance.

The Festival International d'Art Performance (FIAP) took place in Martinique from November 5-11, 2019.

—
WILL FURTADO is the deputy editor of *Contemporary And (C&)*.

The artist from Barbados addresses colonial history and traumas, searching for dialogues and compassionate interactions. We spoke with **ALBERTA WHITTLE** about the need for collective healing, frightening legacies and the Caribbean artistic scene.

ARTISTIC WORK AS A FORM OF HEALING

By **RAQUEL VILLAR-PÉREZ**



Alberta Whittle, *Between a Whisper and a Cry*. Film still, 2019.
Courtesy of the artist



COLLECTIVE
NACIONAL TROVOA -
"WE DON'T ACCEPT
SCRAPS FROM THE
WHITE ART CIRCUIT"
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Alberta Whittle, *Recipe for Planters Punch*, 2016.
Performance. Courtesy of the artist.

Alberta Whittle was born in 1980 in Barbados, in the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, and currently works between Barbados, Scotland and South Africa. She is an artist, researcher, author and curator. In 2018 she was a RAW Academie Fellow at RAW Material in Dakar, and was the winner of the Margaret Tait Film Award for 2018/9.

C&AMÉRICA LATINA Tell me about what drove you to become an artist.

ALBERTA WHITTLE I've always felt driven to be an artist. I am very lucky to have very supportive parents who also went to art school. My dad is an artist and we have collaborated a number of times. I have fibromyalgia and I was diagnosed as I was a child. Often I spent time in my room drawing, painting, making collages. In some ways I feel like as if I am still looping back to some of the ideas that I was working on when I was on my own in my bedroom.

C&AL Your work addresses notions of colonial legacies, in order to create awareness about collective healing and reparations. Can you expand on what do you mean by collective healing and reparations?

AW What I pursue within my artistic work and within my curatorial practice is the hope for meaningful conversations, where we can come together, listen, and share openly. We need to enter into a state of collective listening, which hopefully will lead to moments of healing. In terms of recognition of how crucial radical listening can be in working through uncomfortable issues, in particular reparatory justice, Niv Acosta's work on resting as a form of resistance has been influential. Niv suggests that healing can be achieved through taking time for "black power naps", that is for black bodies to make time to prioritise rest, since they have historically always been pressured into a dynamic of over-production and excessive labour. Contravening these racialised expectations for black labour has become a big concern within my practice: how do I make sure that our interactions with each other are more compassionate, as well as critical?

C&AL How does your origin and upbringing nourish your work?

AW I'll tell you two stories. The first story is that my parents had a membership at the

Barbados Museum & Historical Society, so as a child we would go there often. I remember being in one of the rooms, and there was a family of British tourists. Their two sons kept asking "Why do we have to look at this history? It has nothing to do with me." The second story is that shortly after I arrived to the UK as a child, Steven Lawrence was murdered. [Editor's note: Lawrence was a black British teenager from South East London, who was murdered in a racially motivated attack while waiting for a bus on April 22, 1993.]

These two instances happened within a year of each other and they had a big impact on me. The first story made me realise that there is a sense of alienation and ambivalence from Britain towards the brutal history between Europe and the Caribbean, and this relationship represented in the Museum in Barbados was perceived by this family as having nothing to do with them. Slavery, colonialism and even the lives of black people: this had nothing to do with their everyday. When I moved to the UK, I realised that there was no knowledge, no history being taught about what happened during the British Empire in the Caribbean or in the Commonwealth. I found that quite frightening. I realised that my life and my history was so unimportant in the UK.

With the loss of Steven Lawrence and a system that supported the erasure of his life, I learnt that black lives and black death meant nothing. A lot of the reasons why I make my work are a response to the terror that my life may not matter, and that my history is disposable.

C&AL What are your strategies to make past stories/histories relatable to the present day?

AW I think past and present stories are interrelated. If you look at the speech by David Lammy in my piece *Sorry, Not Sorry* (2018), he is talking about events that happened three hundred years ago and insisting that they are connected to how we understand our conditions today. If you look at the untold story of the Windrush generation that is just now being revealed by the press, we discover how the British Government had not fully prepared for these Caribbean British citizens to come to the UK nor did they welcome them. The British Nationality Act was not for black people or People of Color; it was for white people wanting to be able to move more easily across the Commonwealth. All this is connected to

how we understand the Other and how the Other is read, which is related to histories of colonialism and slavery. This significantly impacts the ways certain bodies and certain histories are consistently rendered disposable.

C&AL Do you know of any art events in the Caribbean that help shaping up a "Caribbean art scene"?

AW I am particularly aware of the initiatives in the Anglophone Caribbean. For instance, Alice Yard, initiated by Chris Cozier, Nicholas Laughlin and Sean Leonard in Trinidad; Fresh Milk in Barbados, founded by Annalee Davis, fosters conversations across the Diaspora between local and international artists. Davis, alongside Holly Bynoe, created the Tilting Axis research project, a moveable gathering that travels with the intention of opening up networks. There have been other movements such as Carifesta, which began in the early 1980s and travels across the Caribbean every two years, although there have been a few times that it has been delayed because of lack of money or environmental issues. These gatherings span everything within Caribbean creativity, from dance and performance, to visual arts, crafts, and literature.

C&AL Is there a sense of Caribbean artist identity?

AW Yes definitely, the depth and sprawl of important research that has been happening in the Caribbean has been gaining greater traction internationally and we are beginning to see support from international museums and institutions, and especially financial patronage for artists living outside of the Caribbean. If there is an opportunity abroad, most artists will probably take the chance to be elsewhere; however, there are people making big commitments to stay and work locally, which I think is laudable.

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Alberta Whittle, *Derecho de admisión*. Performance. Desde 2014. Cortesía de la artista

Alberta Whittle, *Right of Admission*. Performance. From 2014. Courtesy of the artist