



Facing Locality

March 6 - April 4, 2009

contemporary art exhibition curated by Luis Camnitzer

The exhibit takes place in two venues:

Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts

www.cmcarts.org

10 Strand Street, Frederiksted, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands

opening **March 6** (4 to 8 p.m.)

Walsh Metal Works Gallery

www.walshmetal.com

14AB Peters Rest, Christiansted, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands

opening on **March 7** (4 to 8 p.m.)

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About the exhibition

"Facing Locality" intends to raise the issues of locality, frame of reference, ingrown resonance and tacit understandings that in art often are sacrificed for the sake of external conventions and expectations. Local artists around the world look towards the cultural and marketing centers for inspiration or try to satisfy the expectations of foreign visitors who look for the signals of exoticism. Thus true locality is often completely erased from the art repertoire, or is translated and misrepresented.

The exhibition asked for a review of these issues in the Caribbean and challenged artists to face locality in two possible ways:

- 1) **Critically:** from the point of view of colonial symbolism and cultural conditioning by the tourist trade, or
- 2) **A utopian constructive way:** offering possibilities for a reaffirmation of locality by isolating and expanding on elements seen as inextricably connected with local everyday life.

21 artists and 2 collaborators, mostly from the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico and born between 1936 and 1978 were chosen to "face locality".

The paintings, photos, sculptures, drawings, installations, videos, mixed media and multimedia art works were created by Stanley Coll, La Vaughn Belle, Javier Cambre, Janet Cook-Rutnik & William Stelzer (collaborative work), Nanna Debois Buhl, Cynthia Hatfield, Tomas Lanner, Monica Marin, Carmen Mojica, Mark W. Mulherrin, Nora Quintero, Vimarie Serrano and Carmelo Sobrino & Lisa Ladner (collaborative work) who will exhibit **at the CMCArts**, and by Florine Demosthene, Doug Frank, Sara Lee Hayes, Hilda M. Muñiz, Erik Pedersen, Quintín Rivera Toro, Nelly Toledo and Mike Walsh who will exhibit **at Walsh Metal Works Gallery**.

Artists and artworks

(by last name in alphabetical order)

Stanley Coll

* 1954 Cayey, Puerto Rico / lives in Bayamón, Puerto Rico

Stanley Coll studied in the School of Plastic Arts in San Juan where he majored in painting, working under the tutelage of Professor Frank Cervoni. He graduated in 1984 with honors. Afterwards, he worked as an illustrator for the local TV Channel 11 and in other mass media. He joined El Nuevo Día newspaper in 1986 as an illustrator and was rewarded with various international prizes. Culminating his phase as illustrator in 1995, Coll dedicated himself to painting. This has gained him the fast recognition of critics and art collectors. His work is part of important collections; he has participated in auctions of prestige at the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico and at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Puerto Rico, and carried out exhibitions in art galleries in the island.

In a continuous search to define his artistic language, Coll has carried his work toward the creation of a peculiar naive style that nourishes itself of images and real situations that he encounters in the streets. His paintings show everyday insular situations and let us discover the beauty and the social struggles of people who are trying to maintain their identity.

The Dream of the Wide - Awake, *Painting (Acrylic on wood)*, 22.5" x 25 5/16", 2008;

The Magician, *Painting (Acrylic on canvas)* 20" x 24", 2009;

there might be a third, smaller painting in the show, 2009

Stanley Coll's proposal is directly focused on the excessive consumerism and how mass media use their selling strategies and how they catch and manipulate the consumer. The concept was born out of a common goal among artists who sought to awaken curiosity and interest on the artist and his/her trade. It all began at a very popular shopping mall, Plaza las Americas in San Juan, Puerto Rico. During an event, over twenty artists met to paint the public (in public) and to share experiences with them. Coll focused on painting people while they were shopping, observing their reactions and answering their questions when they saw the development of the painting during that week. In "The Dream of the Wide – Awake" the artists shows the dream of all capitalists who want to make a lot of money disregarding the consequences. In his naive style he portrayed mostly middle class consumers walking as if they were submerged in a dream, the dream of buying and spending. All kinds of people are shown but in particular there is a boy with only one open eye, which means that he has not been touched by this malignity. The title contains a paradox in the dual meaning of the word 'dream'. It refers to the dream of the businessman of making more and more money and the dream of those asleep consumers who buy excessively. The general idea or message is a direct criticism towards capitalism, where the political and economical structure pushes people to buy even if they don't want to. It also criticizes the emptiness and the lack of real values that create of the consumer weakness, inviting advertisers to capitalize by means of deceptive advertisements.



works by Stanley Coll (*The Dream of the Wide - Awake* and *The Magician*)

La Vaughn Belle

* 1974, Trinidad and Tobago / lives in St. Croix (USVI), www.lavaughnbelle.com

La Vaughn Belle studied at Columbia University in NY and the Institute of Fine Art in Cuba. Her work has evolved from figurative and symbolic explorations in painting to variety of modes that include video, performance, installation and public intervention projects. The emphasis on her work, however, does not lie in the medium, but in creating a dialogic space to explore the relationship between art and daily life. Along with four personal shows, she has participated in several group exhibitions throughout the Caribbean including the 4th and 5th Biennale of the Caribbean in Santo Domingo and the 8th Biennale of Havana.

Moving Pictures

Video

This project is an investigation on the Hollywood films that have been filmed in the Caribbean, in particular the Virgin Islands, like "Weekend at Bernies II" and "Trading Places", which typically use the islands as a backdrop, ignoring the people and culture. I plan on deconstructing some of these films and reconstructing them to look for other possible narratives.

The Castle on My Skin

Projection

The title is a play on George Lamming's famous book "In The Castle of My Skin" and this project is an investigation into the topography of the colonial mind and our colonial landscape. The evidences of 250 plantations makes it difficult to be anywhere on St. Croix and not see the sugar mill. On St. Croix we have also used jewelry to create a sort of collective identity in the form of the "Cruzan Bracelet". This project comprises of a projection of a golden pendant of the sugar mill (sold in many stores) worn on my neck but projected in a manner that the mill appear to be close to life-sized.

Javier Cambre

* 1966, San Juan, Puerto Rico / lives in Newark, NJ (USA)

Javier Cambre is a contemporary artist working in diverse media such as video, photography, collage, text and sculpture. After earning an Associate Degree in Science and Mathematics, Cambre studied architecture at Universidad de Puerto Rico and at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Colombia. In 1998 Cambre graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a Master of Fine Arts. He has exhibited his work at the 2002 Whitney Biennial, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, the Brooklyn Museum, the Sculpture Center, the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and the Moore Space in Miami. He has also exhibited his work in museums in Spain, Puerto Rico, Russia and Argentina. Cambre has been awarded residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, CA, and at the National Studio Program in P.S. 1/MoMA, as well as artist grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, the New Jersey Council on the Arts and the Research Foundation at the City University of New York. Cambre is currently an Assistant Professor at QCC-CUNY. His work is in the collection of the Whitney Museum.

Tristes Tropiques

3 prints, 18 ½" x 48" each

Using a aesthetics reminiscent of Modernism (Constructivism, De Stijl) the prints display with a sense of parody a long haired revolutionary juxtaposed with images of the tropical style created by architect Heinrich Klumb (1905, Cologne - 1984, San Juan) for the campus of the University of Puerto Rico. The prints ironically evoke a revolution that never occurred in the island as well as the collapse of a past utopia.



works by Javier Cambre (Tristes Tropiques)

Janet Cook-Rutnik & William Stelzer (collaborative work)

Janet Cook-Rutnik, * 1946, Albany, NY (USA) / lives in St. John (USVI) since 1969,
www.cookrutnikart.vi

Cook-Rutnik has completed undergraduate art studies, sculpture with Richard Stankiewicz at SUNY (graduate level), printmaking at Skidmore College in New York and residencies in public art and sculpture, installation and new media at the School of Visual Arts in New York (2006). Her extensive list of exhibitions includes a solo show at Museo de las Americas in San Juan, participation in Biennials in Santo Domingo, Cuenca; Caribbean Art shows in museums in France, Germany, Washington DC and NY. Current work involves collaborative and solo projects in video, digital images and installations dealing with migration and journeys in a personal and collective way.

William Stelzer, * 1965, Southfield, Michigan (USA) / St. John (USVI) resident since 1992

Stelzer is a freelance artist/filmmaker who has worked on numerous commercial film and video projects in the Virgin Islands. Prior to living in St. John he worked as Graphics Director for the ABC-TV affiliate in Central Texas during the First Gulf War and as a Special Visual Effects Director using computer and model animation for accident reconstructions. He was also part of a research expedition into the Venezuelan Amazon to study burial cave artwork, has taught computer graphics in West Africa as part of an AIDS project and shot footage high on a Peruvian glacier to help document the human effects of its melting. In addition he did design work on the prototype of a first generation game controller for computer train simulators. Over the past year he has helped set up pilots and produced a series of mini documentaries in Haiti, Nicaragua, St. John and Florida for Waveplace, a non-profit foundation designed to teach Caribbean school kids using OLPC's revolutionary children's laptop computer. Stelzer received his education at Michigan State University (Industrial, Computer and Graphic Design) and at the University of Texas at Austin (Radio-Television-Film).

The Rock/Transfer

Intervention, video

The Rock is about the weight of history – collective and personal. It is also about the way in which we “carry” our history and transport it from place to place within the Virgin Islands. A large rock will be transported (“transferred”) from Annaberg – the historic sugar factory where rum was made during the Danish colonization – to Cruz Bay by donkey; to St. Thomas by boat; to St. Croix by seaplane and to the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts by car. This symbolic journey also illustrates the unique way in which we live; inter-island travel is a part of our daily lives. The intent is to engage people’s thoughts on the “weight of history” – colonial history and personal history – reference to the “Transfer” of the islands from Denmark in 1917 to the US – how does that weigh in one’s memory or is it a forgotten fact of VI history - family issues, unresolved legal, social, personal issues – economic issues – the cost and reality of local travel – how is this perceived...as something to be taken for granted, appreciated as unique or just a bother.



“The Rock/Transfer” is a collaborative work by Janet Cook-Rutnik and William Stelzer.

Nanna Debois Buhl

* 1975, Aarhus, Denmark / lives in New York (USA), www.nannadeboisbuhl.net

Visual artist Nanna Debois Buhl works conceptually with film, drawing, photography and sound. Her most recent projects have focused on how national and individual identities are constructed through narratives and writing of history. She received her MFA from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, Denmark in 2006 and is currently participating in The Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, New York. In 2008 Debois Buhl was an artist in residence at the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts in Frederiksted, St. Croix.

There is This House

Video

This work combines 16mm footage from an abandoned house in Christiansted with a story about the Moravian Brothers. The Moravian Brothers came from Germany to the Virgin Islands in the 18th century to baptize the slaves, and the film addresses how the islands through history have been used as a laboratory for empires elsewhere. The Moravian Brothers had some remarkable procedures for decision-making: all decisions were taken by the drawing of lots. Hence many unexpected decisions were made those years.

Florine Demosthene

* 1971 New York / raised in Haiti and New York / lives in Brooklyn (New York), NY (USA)

The visual artist earned her BFA from Parsons the New School for Design and her MFA from Hunter College. Her artwork has always examined how black culture is commodified and fetishized. Whether through paintings or drawings, she seeks to magnify the subtly of racial constructs and how viewers have become comfortable with derogatory images.

The Exquisite Corpse Series

Paintings

This series began as an exploration of the unpredictable nature of the cyanotype process and evolved into the investigation of the black female body as just a series of parts.



works by Florine Demosthene (The Exquisite Corps Series)

Doug Frank

* 1959, Queens (New York), NY (USA) / moved to St. Croix in 1964 / lives in Vermont (USA)

Doug Frank graduated in 1982 with a BFA in visual art from Georgia, and studied printmaking and marble carving in Cortona, Italy. Since college, he exhibited book art and mail art domestically and abroad, taught art in Georgia, St. Croix, and in New England and has lately been exhibiting drawings and photographs. "The Ghost of Fungi" is Frank's first performance of spoken word and his first art work on an audio CD.

The Ghost of Fungi

Spoken word on audio CD

Fungi's channeled dialog was recorded onto CD for your listening enjoyment. Fungi talks in raw Cruzan, and is exemplary of the spoken tradition found in the Caribbean.



spoken art work by Doug Frank (photo by Noah Frank)

Cynthia Hatfield

* 1949, Bethesda, MD (USA) / residing in St. Croix (USVI) since 1979

Hatfield has completed undergraduate studio art studies, working at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, DC through George Washington University and the University of Maryland (1972). She exhibited at the Washington Women's Art Center before setting sail for the Caribbean and working out of Saba in the Netherlands Antilles. Hatfield has a Masters in Art Education from Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore (2004), and has worked as a fine artist and art educator in the Caribbean for the past 20 years.

Transplanted Be-longing

Collaborative garden mosaic installation

Looking at the theme of “Facing Locality” brings up issues of identity for a lot of the re-located human beings in this twenty-first century world, myself included. To take a visual look at this from an islander's point of view, I am asking the viewing public (collaborators) to inspect the assemblage of pyramids that have been transplanted into the garden. They can gain a distant perspective, if they wish, by climbing to the balcony and looking down the “wrong” end of the telescope that's waiting there. Finally, I ask them to peruse and handle the collection of ceramic markers, then choose one to represent the “self” and affix it to the abstracted landscape wherever feels right.

We all know that one work of art can elicit entirely different responses from different people. Meanings are constructed personally, so the communication that happens through an art piece is a give and take, an organic process, ever changing and dependent upon context. Also – there's something wonderful in breaking down the barriers between the “audience” and the “artist”. In this proposed process the one becomes the other. Hopefully the individuals participating in this piece will help define themselves facing the locality of St. Croix – what do they look like? where do they stand? Who “belongs” and who is the “other”? As a member of one “other” category, a privileged descendent of a colonizing culture I have my questions concerning the validity of my participation in this exhibition at all.

My approach is a constructivist one – I lament the loss of diversity that globalization produces and believe we can fight it with the other side of the same coin: the unification that comes from communication, collaboration, transportation, education and the cultivation of multiple perspectives – as illustrated in the production and presentation of this art piece.



work by Cynthia Hatfield (project study for *Transplanted Be-longing*)

Sara Lee Hayes

* 1951, Providence, RI (USA) / lives in St. Croix (USVI)

The self-taught clay artist creates functional wheel thrown pottery as well as hand built sculptures, mirror frames and other artwork reflective of the island's community and the tropical Caribbean environment in which she lives.

Keepers of Culture

Clay sculpture

Moko jumbies are stilt dancers who have their origins in Africa. In parts of the former Kingdom of Congo and of Nigeria, a “moko” (diviner) was a god. “Jumbie” derives from the Congo language word “zombie” (zombie, ghost, spirit). Moko jumbies were supposed to scare away evil spirits, foresee danger and watch over a village. Due to the slave trade under colonial rule, you can find stilt dancers wearing colorful garbs and carnival masks at street festivals and carnivals throughout the Caribbean - especially in Trinidad but also in St. Croix.

This clay moko jumbie is adorned with images of Crucian culture. The images chosen represent the fight for freedom, justice and equality that was manifest on St. Croix - Queen Mary, Buddhoe, David Hamilton Jackson and the conch blower. The mirror behind is intended to make the viewer a part of the piece as a reminder and reinforcement of the importance of culture to our present day and that we all are keepers of this heritage.

Tomas Lanner

* 1970, Sweden / lives in St. Croix (USVI)

At age 25, after studying Business Administration at the Uppsala University in Sweden, Lanner started photographing and painting abstract portraits and cityscapes. Having lived in California and Connecticut he moved to the hillside of St. Croix and remains inspired by the chaos of nature and the joys of social confusion.

Who belongs?

Ten photographs, 8.5" x 11" each

Trough testimonials and photos of ten people living in St. Croix, this project attempts to highlight how similar our moments of loneliness are, regardless of background, social standing, gender or other differences. The testimonials will be interchangeable so the public may see clearly our similarities.

AJ of the Living

Digital video, 7 minutes (collaborative film project by Tomas Lanner and Mike Walsh)

AJ Simmonds is a Christiansted street artist. "AJ of the Living" examines the influence of the buildings and people of Christiansted in AJ's paintings. The short film also reveals, how the artist deals with negative influences and how his lifestyle and artistic ambitions help him to relentlessly create. The film will be uploaded to youtube.com so people around the globe - everyone in another locality - can watch it at the same time as the visitors of the exhibition.



video still from "AJ of the Living", work by Tomas Lanner and Mike Walsh

Monica Marin

* 1979, St. Thomas (USVI) / grew up and lives in St. Croix (USVI)

Monica Marin received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2002) in Painting/Drawing and Art History Theory and Criticism. She currently is teaching middle/high school art at the St. Croix Country Day School and pursuing a MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work tackles environmental and social issues through a variety of mediums including photography, printmaking, performance, installation, public intervention projects and most recently video. She has participated in several group shows, most recently including "America's paradise" and "Isla Del Encanto: Contemporary Art from the Caribbean (SMFA, Boston, 2007), "Overdragelse - Transfer" (Overgaden Institute of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, 2008), "Nature in the Everyday" (Ox-bow, School of the Art institute of Chicago, 2008).

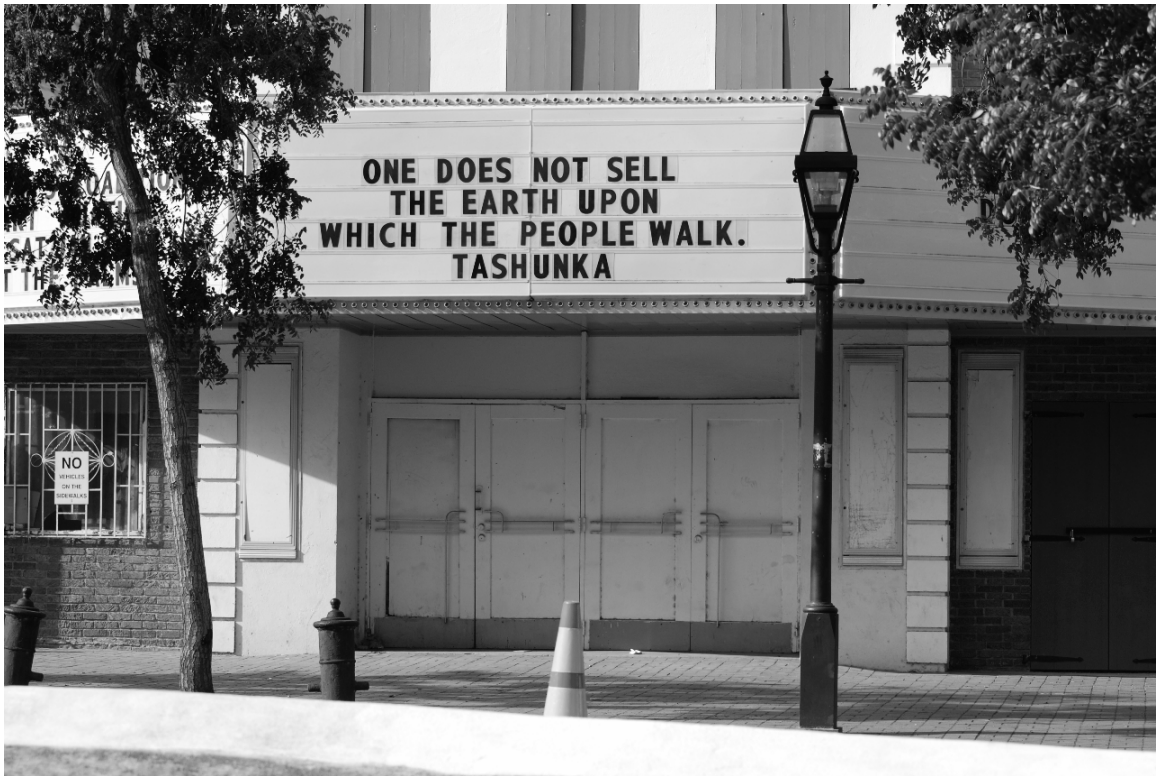
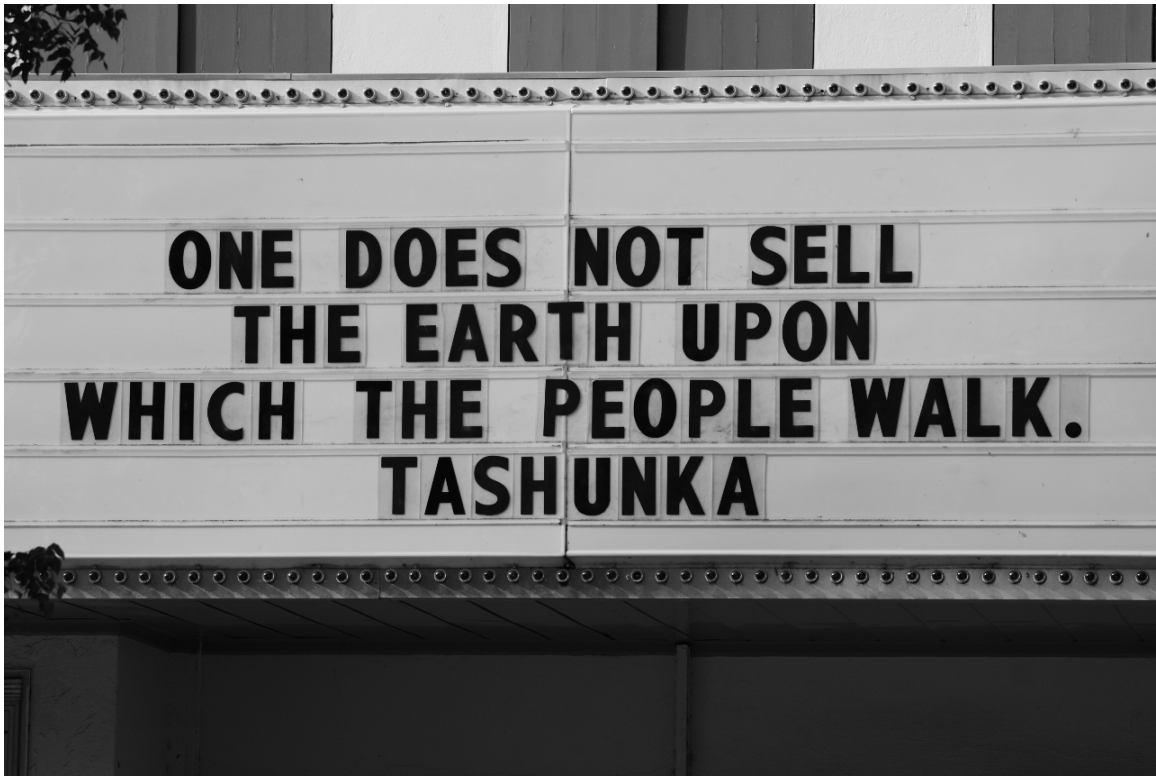
The artist has also curated and organized several local art exhibitions featuring the work of Caribbean and African Artists to help raise money for communities in need in Uganda and Haiti.

It All Will Be Taken From Us...

Installation, photography

During several weeks, artist Monica Marin has rented a billboard in Time Square, a town square of St. Croix' capital Christiansted. There she published "ONE DOES NOT SELL THE EARTH UPON WHICH THE PEOPLE WALK" a quote by Tashunka (aka Crazy Horse).

This public art piece is an investigation into issues concerning the development of the northwest coastline into a \$550 million dollar Foxwoods Tribal casino-resort and the illegal transfer of a "public road" of cultural/historical significance "Emancipation Drive" to a private entity.



installation by Monica Marin

Carmen Mojica

* 1956, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico / lives in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico

Carmen G. Mojica Martínez is a photographer, painter, printmaker and co-founder of Club de Fotos y Artes Plásticas in Puerto Rico. She started her photographic curriculum in 1976. Since then she participated in numerous group shows in Puerto Rico and abroad, starting with her participation in "Mujeres 9" at the Museo del Barrio in New York (1979). Solo exhibitions were held in New York (1982) and in Puerto Rico, for example "Semillas", a series of children's photos that she took between 1976 and 2000 (Museo de Arte de Caguas).

Recent exhibitions include "Código 3: 10 K de 100", Puerto Rican Collective of Women Artists, 2008; "The Last Book" (curated by Luis Camnitzer, National Library, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2008), "Green it aint easy" (Exit Art, New York, NY, 2008), her participation at CIRCA 08 and at "El Pulguero de los Artistas" (both San Juan, PR, 2008); "Terraño y paraíso perdido: diálogos con la obra de Carlos Osorio" (Museo de Arte de Caguas, PR, 2008) and many more.

She gave lectures in historic photography at the Universidad del Turabo, Gurabo, Puerto Rico. She is currently studying in the "Superarte" program of the Escuela de Artes Plásticas in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The artist also organizes exhibitions with social and cultural subjects and promotes female artists in collective shows.

Piña Colada = Puerto Rico se vende / Puerto Rico is for sale

Collage (floor installation, 7'x3'), 6 photos (wall installation, 16" x 20"), performance (Piña Coladas for sale)

A collage consisting of approx. 135 photographs taken in San Juan, San Lorenzo and Vega Alta, combined with newspaper clippings, printed-paper images, typography and other images of "for sale" and "for rent" signs shape the form of the Puerto Rican map. The collage and other photographs talk about a foreigner's perception of Puerto Rico: an island for sale to outsiders - today more than ever. Is our land, our culture for sale? Are we endangered of extinction? Pineapples (piñas), that go well with coconuts, as every tourist knows from trying our famous Piña Colada, appear in the collage, too. They represent the exotic stereotype and symbolize what attracts tourists to spend their vacations in Puerto Rico.



work by Carmen Mojica (draft for Piña Colada = Puerto Rico se vende)

Mark W. Mulherrin

* 1959, Boston, MA (USA) / resided in St. Croix 1989-1999 / lives in North Adams, MA (USA)

Mulherrin grew up on the New Hampshire seacoast. He studied painting at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. where he received a B.F.A. in 1982. For several years after that he lived in New York City and worked as a musician and performance artist. It was after moving to the Virgin Islands in 1990 that he resumed oil painting as a means of artistic exploration. In 1994 and 1996 he represented the Virgin Islands at the Biennial of Latin American and Caribbean Painting in the Dominican Republic and in 1998 he represented the Virgin Islands at the International Biennial of Painting in Cuenca, Ecuador. Among other projects, he was scenic designer for the Caribbean Dance Company when the troupe performed at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, N.C.

Since returning to the states he has had exhibits of his work at the Southern Vermont Art Center, Plum Gallery, The Contemporary Artists Center, the Norman Rockwell Museum, ZieherSmith, and Gallery 51. He is an instructor of Visual Art at the Austen Riggs Center, a private psychiatric facility in Stockbridge, Ma. For the past eight years he has been working out of studio 401 at the Beaver Mill.

Four Proposals for Immodest Developments

Four paintings (“Buck Island Expressway”, Acrylic on canvas, 24”x30” and others)

“Four Proposals for Immodest Developments” is a series of four paintings in the style of architectural renderings as proposals for outlandish development projects on the island of St. Croix. Using satellite photographs of the island, the projects are placed on the sites with a maximum disregard for both their cultural or environmental surroundings.



work by Mark W. Mulherrin

Hilda M. Muñiz

* 1958, Río Piedras (San Juan), Puerto Rico / lives in Bayamón, Puerto Rico

The youngest of nine siblings, Muñiz went to Catholic School and then entered the University of Puerto Rico during the tumultuous 1970s. "With much luck and an adventurous spirit" she passed by many Universities including the California University at Long Beach and the School of Visual Arts in New York. In 2008, she finished the "Superarte" Program at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico with a B.A. in Painting. She has participated in exhibitions such as "Masterstrokes", DSO Fort Buchanan, PR, 2003; "Embotellarte", Rums of Puerto Rico, Galería Raíces PR (2004); "Oncology on Canvas", Royal College of Art, London UK (2004); "Expo Anual Estudiantes", EAP, San Juan, PR (2005); "Guindalejos", Noches de Galería, El Farolito, San Juan, PR (2005); "Expo Anual Estudiantes", EAP, San Juan, PR (2006); "Esencia de Mujer", Collective Show ,Manatí, PR (2007), "Universidad del Este", Carolina, PR (2008) and "El Pulguero de los Artistas", San Juan, PR (2008).

Guindalejos

Objects

Hilda M. Muñiz has assembled a group of "guindalejos" as reminders of the status of her native island Puerto Rico. "Because we live in an island we are constantly assaulted by foreign merchandise, customs, languages and traditions that reflect on our culture, thus making us a mixture of all that surround us. I chose to represent this feeling of lack of identity with different bottles that have been rescued from the shores of Culebra and San Juan. I encased them in old wooden boxes, most from wine and wrapped them with wire and beach glass. These pieces are made to hang on the ceiling, to be able to move freely and reflect their lights and beauty on each other and their surroundings."

The word "guindalejos" or "colgajo" means "cualquier trapo o cosa despreciable que guinda / any rag or piece of junk that hangs". The artist uses the colloquial Puerto Rican word to emphasize the mixture "that make us who we are". All of the pieces have names that evoke a different feeling or state of mind.



art works by Hilda Muñiz

Erik Pedersen

* 1936, St. Thomas / lives in St. Thomas (USVI)

Virgin Islands born artist and architect (BFA, Philadelphia Museum School of Art, 1959; M.Arch., University of Pennsylvania, 1979) whose intellectual and professional life has been dedicated to the study of art and building and its cultural environment. Of particular concern is the West Indian ethic and its impact on art and design. Pedersen honors the collision of cultural and aesthetic traditions in his work. He focuses on the tension, the moment when time stands still between birth and death, creation and destruction, love and hate. To express this he incorporates elements from traditional African and diaspora art as well as figurative and linguistic references from the European traditions. Of particular significance to him since his return to St. Thomas from Philadelphia in 1983 was, his inclusion with a group of Virgin Islands artists, in the first Biennial of Caribbean and Central American painting in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, in 1992. LAMENT (when will we stop youth violence?), a mixed media assemblage confronting youth violence, was shown in VIA Colectiva at the Museo de Las Américas, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2002. In 2006 and 2007 Pedersen was named a Mid Atlantic Creative Arts Fellow and was in residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in Amherst, Virginia. In 2007, he was selected to be one of eleven artists to participate in "America's Caribbean" at the Grossman Gallery, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Buried Truth

Mixed media installation,, 10'6" x 10'6"

The mixed media installation consists of a "grass piece" anchored by a mahogany tree in one corner and mahogany tree stumps in the other three corners. In the center of the "grass piece" is an open burial mound revealing the contents of a mass children's grave. The children, victims of domestic violence and rape, documented by newspaper clippings, are shown by the presence of bound body parts indicating the power and intention of the perpetrator and the inability of the child to help herself/himself. Innocent eyes look back at us, emotionless.

A "grass piece" is the word used years ago to describe pasture or grazing land. The tree and tree stumps are antique Virgin Island bed posts, discarded and when found, had begun to sprout new growth (represented by other bed parts) as sometimes happens in the dark. The mound itself is straight forward, papier-mâché on plywood with random vegetation and pebbles included to show nature's stabilization after erosion. The vegetation comes from dormant seeds awakened by the excavation. Will the children also awaken from their nightmare to heal and grow? What happens to a spirit after molestation? Are their souls simply in hiding? Why does love and trust have to hurt? The discovery of this site takes place sometime in the future regarding conditions in the present time.

The open grave is rich in multi-cultural references indicating the richness of our community. As the subject is horrific, the grave is abundant in the variety of gestures of affection and love to the deceased: from symbols of the roman church - the first communion silver rosary, blessed medals of the Virgin Mary, and prayer cards -, to Shango beads of the Yorba and diaspora, mirrors and other reflective gifts, all representing a deep belief in the spirit world. And flowers everywhere.



image of a similar work by Erik Pedersen

Nora Quintero

* 1951, San Juan, Puerto Rico / lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rican artist and educator studied under Carmelo Fontanez and Luis Hernández Cruz in the late 1960s and has ever since continued to paint and draw. Later she studied ceramics and printing, illustrated books and worked in theatre scenography and as a costume maker for theatre. Quintero holds a BA in Art Education and teaches adults at the Liga de Arte in San Juan where she is also a member of the gallery board. Currently the artist is involved in several exhibition projects related to the 40th birthday of the Liga de Arte. She has exhibited in Puerto Rico and in the USA.

Muñecas de papel

Six torsos, 30" x 15" each, mixed media

Quintero's "paper dolls" all come from the same mold and were created with papier mâché. Four she altered by painting over, two were treated with pelt. They are from a series of 20, each of them standing and speaking - so the artist hopes - not only for herself but also for the many different women that live in the Caribbean.



Muñecas de papel by Nora Quintero

Quintín Rivera Toro

* 1978, Caguas, Puerto Rico / lives in Puerto Rico

Quintín Rivera Toro holds a B.F.A. in sculpture from Hunter College, New York (2001) and a B.A. from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico (2007). He has shown his art work in Puerto Rico at the Museo de Arte de Caguas, Museo Dr. Pío López Martínez in Cayey, the Museo y Centro de Estudios Humanístico in the Universidad del Turabo en Gurabo, el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo and Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico both in San Juan.

Since the year 2002 he has been awarded with the DAAD Travel Grant, with which he travelled to Cologne and Berlin in Germany; Full fellowships for residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, in Johnson Vermont and the National Academy of Design in New York; An internship at the Chinati Museum in Marfa, Texas; The Lexus Grant for artists in Puerto Rico; In 2005, he executed the public art project "Un espacio libre" which has been shown aside from its original site, at the Museo del Barrio for the S-Files biennial and the art fair Pinta, both in NYC. The project was also shown in the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico. He was also selected to study with the Escuela internacional de Teatro de América Latina y el Caribe (E.I.T.A.L.C.) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. He worked as the Creative Director of ÁREA, lugar de proyectos in Caguas, Puerto Rico (2005 - 2007).

His video work has been invited to the San Juan Cinema Fest in Puerto Rico; the Fundación de Arte Contemporáneo in Montevideo, Uruguay; the Museo de Antropología y Arte Contemporáneo, Guayaquil, Ecuador; the School of the MFA in Boston, MA; twice at the Instituto de Arte Moderno in Valencia, Spain; Exit Art, NYC; the OEA Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC and the Yesou International Arts Festival in South Korea.

Untitled

Single channel video, 3.06 min, 2003

Quintín Rivera Toro's video deals with the remnant elements of the U.S. Navy presence in Vieques, Puerto Rico. This digitally altered performance takes place inside one of the many artillery storage spaces left unlocked.



video by Quintín Rivera Toro

Vimarie Serrano

* 1976 Río Piedras (San Juan), Puerto Rico / lives in Dorado, Puerto Rico

Vimarie Serrano has collaborated as artist and multimedia instructor with the Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico in the VAE project (Vive las Artes en la Educación). She has exhibited in Puerto Rico and internationally and mostly works on projects with social, political and ecological contents. A multi media artist, Serrano uses digital photography, video art, performance, installations and public interventions. She works and studies at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas in San Juan.

Amigo?

Multimedia installation

The core of the installation is a shopping cart full of goods bought at “Amigo”, a former Puerto Rican supermarket chain that was taken over by the US American giant Wal-Mart in 2004. As also Sam’s Club is owned by Wal-Mart, local companies have almost no important outlets left for food and other goods produced on the island. The autonomous development of the local economy is endangered. In “Amigo?”, the “amigo” (“friend” in English) helps himself with imported and recycled products.



“Amigo?” by Vimarie Serrano

Carmelo Sobrino & Lisa Ladner (collaborative work)

Carmelo Sobrino (born Carmelo Martínez Arroyo), * 1948, Manatí, Puerto Rico / lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico, www.carmelosobrino.com

Most famous for his paintings and prints, Sobrino is also a muralist and a recycling artist who loves to experiment with materials and medias. He has traveled extensively, has held board positions in several cultural institutions, worked as an art professor in universities and art schools and offers workshops in primary schools and nursing homes. His artistic work evolves around the everyday life in a tropical colony: landscapes and news, relationships and consumerism, traffic and violence. The artist is a walking encyclopedia who's range of styles stretches from abstract to figurative and from expressionistic to conceptual. Having exhibited in Puerto Rico, the USA and Europe, his work is included in all important institutional, corporate and private collections in Puerto Rico and in numerous private collections in the USA and in Europe.

Lisa Ladner (born Elisabeth Nora Ladner Fernández), * 1969, Zurich, Switzerland / lives in Zurich, Switzerland and San Juan, Puerto Rico, www.lisaladner.com

The Swiss-Puerto Rican cultural investigator, producer, communicator, curator and publisher, known in Puerto Rico for her web portal "el-status.com" and the events "El Pulguero de los Artistas" (with Carmelo Sobrino) and "FAS - Feria de Arte Sonoro" first went to business school, then toiled in advertising and as a journalist, later studied film at NYU, worked as a director for Swiss Television and ran an internet company. She holds a Master of Advanced Studies in Cultural and Gender Studies from the Zurich University of the Arts and has lectured in communications and new media, contemporary art and post-colonial studies. A photographer since the age of 12 and a "computer tamer" since the late 1980s she's just started to exhibit her conceptual and photographic work.

Seven Windows / Siete ventanas

Appropriation art installation, 7 banners (digital four color print), 35" x 52" each

Spain and the USA in the case of Puerto Rico and seven different nations in the case of St. Croix have invaded and occupied our islands. On the top floor of the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts there are seven windows facing the Caribbean sea. Just as our eyes are called the windows of our soul, these windows normally let us peak into this region's culture. But the seven windows were mutilated and now project what we fear as cultural nations: the invasion of global brands. Locals and tourists immediately recognize these brands. They will make them feel "at home". But why do we trust Kentucky Fried Chicken's Colonel Harland Sanders? Why do we crave for Burger King menus, Coca Cola and Pepsi (with ice)? What goes through our minds when we see McDonald's golden arch, Wendy's ever smiling freckled face or the sober typography of Subway? What do we get from substituting local tastes with "fast food"?

Fake shop windows lure the passer-by's into the museum and make them think that inside the historic building, located next to a mall, they can find a food court. Isn't it a miracle, that this building is not a commercial space? In this sense, "Seven Windows" also celebrates the museum's resistance by showcasing the potential invaders.

By using a fabric that is commonly used for advertising banners, the logos - even though reduced to enlarged details - could be mistaken for billboards. But we are only appropriating the materials of the consumer industry. Seen from inside the museum, the banners actually serve as blinds and help keeping out mosquitoes.



collaborative work by Carmelo Sobrino and Lisa Ladner (project study for Seven Windows)

Nelly Toledo

* 1952, Arecibo, Puerto Rico / lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Full-time painter Nelly Toledo worked as an industrial designer in the USA for 20 years; Toledo was the first Puerto Rican car designer (GM, Ford) and initiated the BA in industrial design at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas in San Juan.

The paintings Nelly Toledo is presenting at this exhibit, continue expanding the theme she has been investigating intensively for the past three years in Puerto Rico, which is the sensations we perceived while looking or observing the ephemeral reflections on the shining skin of the cars. She places her subject study in the colonial urban landscape of Old San Juan. A 500 years old city, built by the Spaniards first as a citadel for their soldiers, an later for their citizens and "criollos" and the streets designed for people walking, horse riding, and horse drew carriages. Today is the favorite spot for Puerto Ricans to visit and live in, houses the government capitol and the governor's living quarters. The narrow streets are constantly flooded by passersby, immigrants, political manifestations, cars, big SUVs, mendicants and all sorts of tourists.

Eye witness, *Painting (Acrylic on canvas), 30" x 40"*;

Jag on Sol Street, *Painting (Acrylic on canvas), 30" x 40"*;

Jaguar Metafórico, *Painting (Acrylic on canvas), 24" x 18"*;

Yellow-Holiday, *Painting (Acrylic on canvas), 36"x 24"*

About her paintings, Nelly Toledo says: "In my paintings, I deliberately force the observer to look intensively at the reflected images on the vehicles, and to encourage them to question "what is going on or what is happening there" to an otherwise unperceived and unimportant event. It is my understanding that most of the human beings are not trained (or has been untrained) to capture the importance of a split second in the reflection of an image. Because of that, I do believe that the reflected images can be capture only by a very sophisticated eye, artists, designers, photographers, detectives/spies and or a very naïve but inquisitive eye, children, scientists and non native people(do not confuse with tourists) among others.

It is very interesting for me as an artist to observe the joy, the sense of discovery and sometimes the incredulity of the spectators when they look at what is reflected on the cars I painted. I like to eardrop and listen to their talking and questions ¿Do cars reflects all that?! They are running mirrors! One of my intentions is to prolong that visual experience and to encourage the spectator to look in a different way the reflected images and to go out and observe his surroundings, in another word, to be aware. But as a Painter and ex Car Designer I'm going beyond, into explore the impermanence of the reflected images and what is the reality of their existence. Their relationship with the historical background of my subject (cars) to its surroundings and the impact as silent witnesses of our time and space.

Cars are my perfect painting subject to study cultures, emotions, perceptions and sensations. Their reflective surfaces sometimes give us a distorted, unreal glimpse of our whereabouts. Images with short life span that gives us a sensation of not being where we are and of unknown destiny. And yet it is their very reflective skin that allows them to perfectly blend to their surroundings almost invisible to the human urban dweller eyes. Cars are definitely the motorized mirrors of their times and surroundings. We do not know how long we are going to have them running around, but at this moment, there is no other moving object in our developed world/economies (and some emerging ones) that can be a better witness to our contemporary urban landscape historical reality. And for some of us, fortunate and unfortunate, that takes cars for granted, a great symbol of our impermanence in this life."



paintings by Nelly Toledo

Mike Walsh

*1948, Council Bluffs, IA (USA) / lives on St. Croix (USVI), www.walshmetal.com

Michael E. Walsh spent his childhood in Long Island, New York, studied at Creighton University, Omaha, NE (BFA 1971) and moved to St. Croix in the late 1970s. He currently works primarily with fabricated metals, cast bronze and mixed media and runs a gallery for contemporary art.

Cane

Mixed media

Sugar cane was the economy of the West Indies that had significant global impact through slavery and by the wealth it created. This piece uses the plant itself in a presentation meant to stimulate appropriate consideration of the many and extensive ramifications that changed the world.

AJ of the Living

Digital video, 7 minutes (collaborative film project by Tomas Lanner and Mike Walsh)

AJ Simmonds is a Christiansted street artist. "AJ of the Living" examines the influence of the buildings and people of Christiansted in AJ's paintings. The short film also reveals, how the artist deals with negative influences and how his lifestyle and artistic ambitions help him to relentlessly create. The film will be uploaded to youtube.com so people around the globe - everyone in another locality - can watch it at the same time as the visitors of the exhibition.

The curator

Luis Camnitzer was born 1937 in Lübeck, Germany, moved to Uruguay at age one and settled in the USA in 1964. In 1988 he represented Uruguay in the Venice Biennial and in 2002 he participated at the Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany. He is Emeritus Professor of the State University of New York and presently the pedagogical curator of the Iberé Camargo Foundation in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Exhibition spaces

The Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts (CMCArts) was founded by Candia Atwater, an Assistant Attorney General at the USVI Department of Justice who settled in St. Croix in 1988. The Museum is located in a historic waterfront building in *Frederiksted* and offers exhibitions, art residencies and workshops. The CMCArts mission is to collect, preserve and exhibit the visual arts of the Caribbean community and to provide an interactive environment that encourages children, youth and adults to explore and learn positive forms of expression. The CMCArts is funded by donations, grants and memberships.

www.cmcarts.org

The Walsh Metal Works Gallery is a large exhibition space located in an industrial metal fabrication facility in *Christiansted*. It was initiated by Mike and Barbara Walsh who saw a need for a contemporary arts space that could accommodate large artworks, installations and art events in the Caribbean. Since 1998 the gallery has been host to performance art and dance as well as large scale sculpture, installation art and large artist retrospectives.

www.walshmetal.com

USVI and Puerto Rico

Wikipedia:	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Virgin_Islands http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico
CIA World Factbook:	https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vq.html https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rq.html
Tourism Websites:	www.usvitourism.vi www.gotopuertorico.com

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Thank you

Virgin Islands Council on the Arts, www.vicouncilonarts.org
Virgin Islands Humanities Council, www.vihumanities.org
El Status - Independent Platform for Contemporary Puerto Rican Art, www.el-status.com

... and many other private and institutional supporters!