

Artists-Talking-To-Artists: Katherine Kennedy, Shari Phoenix and Ronald Williams

Katherine Kennedy

ABSTRACT

Between March 23rd and April 20th 2022, The Department of Cultural Studies in the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus presented a three-part series of online conversations titled 'ARTISTS-TALKING-TO-ARTISTS'. These talks facilitated a selection of conversations between Barbados-based artists, working across different media and at different stages of their career, moderated by Dr. Therese Hadchity. Dr. Hadchity conceived this series based on personal interactions with artists, intrigued by their capacity to isolate or extract details or themes that she herself had not noticed. These artist-led conversations therefore allowed the audience to consider alternate perspectives, understand what some artists are seeking, and learn more about the visual arts community.

The second event featured emerging Barbadian artists Katherine Kennedy, Shari Phoenix and Ronald Williams. The following is a modified "transcript" of the artists' original engagement with one another and the moderator. By interrogating the lived experiences and creative processes of practicing artists, in their own words, this transcript broadens the access to contemporary insights on the interconnections between arts practices, allowing for expansion on poignant questions pertinent to the region's complex cultural, racial and present-day realities and challenges.

SPOTLIGHT: Shari Phoenix



Figure 1 - Shari Phoenix, *I'm Not Your Nigger*, Watercolour on paper, 11"x13", 2020.



Figure 2 - Shari Phoenix, *Positively Sure I'm Still Not Your Nigger*, Watercolour on paper, 11"x13", 2020.

RONALD WILLIAMS: Looking at the Not Your Nigger works, there is a focus on certain traits that people of African descent have been maligned for: big lips, broad nose, 'pickaninny'¹ hairstyle and overly dark skin. Is there a level of defiance, acceptance and/or ownership when it comes to these features, or does the work act mainly as a springboard to discuss racial issues?

SHARI PHOENIX: The Black caricature has long been used to racially ridicule the collective Black identity. Caricature by nature imitates a person's physical appearance through comical and grotesque means at their expense. This series Not your Nigger seeks to reclaim the physical attributes used to mock Blackness. There's a strong cadre of artists who also take this approach to tackling stereotypes, for example, African-American artist Kara Walker: "Drawing on the vicious humor of racial stereotypes, Walker finds in such imagery the potential to disrupt and challenge dehumanizing depictions of the black body..." (Raymond 361). Notably however, while there is a similar level of defiance between works addressing Black stereotypes in a place like the USA and in Barbados, my work ties in notions of acceptance as well. I think this furthers the conversation around agency and ownership of these features that are often used against us, features which are deemed unbeautiful or unprofessional, even in a Black majority Caribbean island.

In reclaiming these features, I'm attempting to dismantle the position of power held over Black people – by colonial ideals as well as in our own minds – living with the self-deprecating legacy and aftermath of colonisation. As the name suggests, no matter what I am or may be, I am definitively not your nigger. I belong to me. Your insults cannot make me change how I feel about myself.

KATHERINE KENNEDY: Something that intrigues me about your bold use of stereotypes, such as in *Say that to my face*, is that the same level of technical detail and depth is given to the exaggerated and offensive tropes as is given to the grandiose European imagery in which it is incorporated, rather than simply perpetuating a flat caricature. Is this attention to detail an intentional part of confronting and dismantling these racist portrayals?

SP: The fact that just as much care detail and care has gone into the caricatured Black faces as it would a traditionally rendered portrait, I believe, adds to the insult. At first it was just a technical challenge for me as I honed my skills, but it has transformed into the caricature becoming a fully-fledged whole character, aware of their position in the piece, knowing they are not where they are accepted or welcomed; it is every bit as important and complex as a portrait of a white historical figure. This is why they are always smiling or sticking out their tongue at you – to offend the viewer, and mock anyone who does not want them to be there; those who are to be offended, will be offended.

The deliberate disrespect of the classical representation of whiteness becomes an entry point to question the use of racist imagery and to encourage discussion on how the caricature continues to be used to belittle and disrespect us and our icons. Would the viewer be equally angry at these stereotypes if they had not been portrayed in direct association to paintings that are traditionally of the white elite?

¹ A derogatory word usually used to refer to a small Black child, used to caricature Black features and offensive stereotypes.



Figure 3 - Shari Phoenix, *Say That to My Face*, Watercolour and acrylic on paper, 12"x15", 2021



Figure 3 - Shari Phoenix, *Say That to My Face*, Watercolour and acrylic on paper, 12"x15", 2021

RW: Was the decision to cast *Grotesque Eve* with a background of manmade infrastructure where she looks so jarring intentional, versus a backdrop of a more natural landscape where she wouldn't look so displaced? And if it was, apart from the racial overtones of the work, is there a general statement being made about the pressures placed on women to look 'perfect' in today's cultural and social landscapes? For example, natural female bodies are often seen as undesirable when displayed in the media and on social platforms such as Instagram.

SP: While the decisions around using an outdoor, everyday street as a setting – just as Kadooment² would take place along the road – were intentional, there are more universal statements being made about body positivity. The idea of *Grotesque Eve* is to interrogate ideas of perfection and beauty in a variety of settings.

"Eve," as she is often represented by predominantly male artists over the years, stands for an idealised image of femininity and seduction in the form of white skin and Eurocentric features, yet she is still tainted by and vilified for committing the "original sin." Here, her physical form is recreated through deformity and defilement in the time of the carnivalesque, blending Caribbean carnival fashion and Grotesque realism. Ultimately, the character is designed to be jarring regardless of the background, interrupting our interpretations of perfection and the idea that a woman's body is either pure or shameful.



Figure 5 – Examples from the 'Paintings of Eve and the snake' category of Wiki-media Commons.

KK: One of the influences you name in your work is Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. A quote of from his writings on 'carnivalization' states "opposites come together, look at one another, are reflected in one another, know and understand one another" (qtd. in Clark and Holquist 176). Your Grotesque series addresses stereotypes around beauty, femininity and Blackness, complicating their representation. If these costumes were to become a Kadooment band, open to the public, how might they be impacted by persons of different genders, races etc. embodying these characters?

SP: I am not sure how they would be impacted by different genders, races and multiplicities of identities – but I think that unknown factor is part of what would make the band compelling. During my Carnival, I do not want religion or ethnicity to play a role or have an

impact on the revellers underneath the costume. Carnival in my work is a free space, utilizing not only Caribbean origins of festivals but the dualistic nature and topsy-turvy world of medieval Carnival³ to become whatever you want, whether that be to play the fool or to become the king. *Grotesque Eve* and the costumes transcend the ideas of societal beauty and embrace dualism. Perfection became flawed as a result of the fall of man; the costume occupies the middle ground in which we all dwell one way or another, regardless of the labels and identifiers we assign to one another.

Also of note, is that the performer wearing the *Grotesque Eve* costume in this image (Figure 4) is actually male – putting the duality and inclusiveness behind Carnival and the ability to transform into or reflect one another into practice.

SPOTLIGHT: Katherine Kennedy

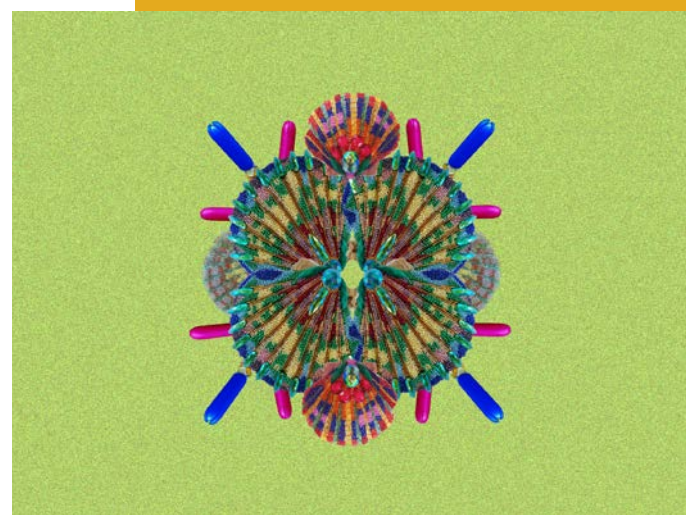


Figure 6 – Katherine Kennedy, Still from *Plexus*, Stop motion animation with hand-beaded seashells and mixed media sculpture, 2021.

SP: Why did you choose to use shells and tampon applicators? What do they represent?

KK: The first kinds of organic materials I began experimenting with were actually leaves. It started with fallen autumn leaves I gathered overseas, and then a palm leaf sometime after I returned home from university. The palm leaf became a symbol of the tropicality I was increasingly interested in unpacking, so I started thinking of other natural objects that tend to be associated with those stereotypes:

The complex diasporas of plants and peoples in Caribbean history render the term 'natural history' into an oxymoron if we define it as a space hermetically sealed from human alteration. Reading imperialism into the environmental imagination of the Caribbean shows the ways in which natural history is implicated in and in fact cannot be disentangled from the multiple settlements of human history (Deloughrey 308).

Eventually, shells became central to the environment I was building. There were practical considerations too – shells are much more durable than fragile leaves, and I think that's worth mentioning because part of our work as artists and makers is marrying concept and materials in a way that does not compromise the integrity of the work, but also takes physicality and longevity into account.

The beaded shells grew to represent life cycles in this series, subverting expectations of what is considered 'natural'; the decorated shells become animated only when covered in synthetic material, becoming still and lifeless after reverting to their natural states...a somewhat ironic depiction of how decay works in this fictional environment. I've realised that my use of these objects is situated within a wider history of shells being critical to human existence, predating even homo sapiens. The oldest known engravings in the world were inscribed into shells: "...before people even mastered the art of making fire, someone created beauty by drawing on a shell, projecting some part of themselves onto the natural world" (Langlois).



Figure 6 – Katherine Kennedy, Still from *Plexus*, Stop motion animation with hand-beaded seashells and mixed media sculpture, 2021.

I first started collecting the tampon applicators in 2014, and I wasn't immediately sure whether I would end up using them. Their marketing strategies, usually using bright colours, are geared towards making them more appealing, which is ironic because they are intended for private, one-off usage and then thrown away. I find them to be visually fascinating objects, and I always felt like they wanted to be something more; I could always see them fitting into some kind of strange, otherworldly environment. But for a long time, I didn't use them, because I was battling with a feeling of self-consciousness or embarrassment...an unfortunate side effect of the society we live in.

We don't talk openly about menstruation, and both the biological process and the products associated with it are generally taught as something to be hidden, like we're meant to be ashamed. I reached a point or an age – I'm not sure which – where I just decided I didn't care to be self-conscious anymore. These were objects that felt right for the work, straddled that manmade/organic barrier perfectly, and

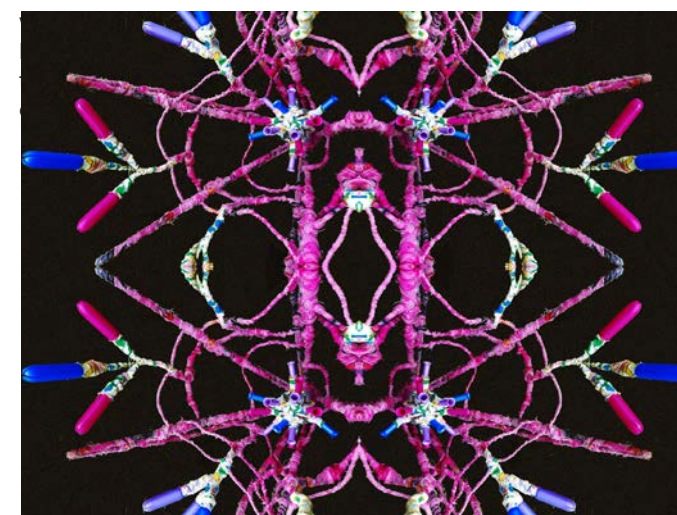


Figure 8 - Katherine Kennedy, Still from *Plexus*, Stop motion animation with hand-beaded seashells and mixed media sculpture, 2021.

RW: Both pieces are chilling in their own right, and there are clear similarities visually where dualities of growth and decay, expansion and contraction loop endlessly. Sonically though, they carry different vibes. *Enmeshment* sounds like the ocean and a beacon, like a haunting siren seeking to be found, while *Plexus* feels like a ghostly husk of what once was. Could you elaborate on these differences?

KK: For sure, *Enmeshment* was meant to have that echoing, pleading quality amidst the ocean-like audio and to be a kind of a distress call, which relates to the title – 'Enmeshment' is a psychology term for an unhealthy, co-dependent and symbiotic relationship. I wanted to increase that feeling of desperation and entrapment with the audio. I continued to play with ideas of what is natural and what isn't in the audio; what deliberately sounds like the ocean is actually a generic, brown-noise static audio file that I sourced, while the otherworldly echoing call is a heavily edited recording of whistling frogs at night. So, I wanted to use noises that were familiar in the local environment, but their origins and context were warped.

Plexus, like you said, leaned more into an empty or cavernous quality, because I wanted it to be less like a distress call and more like being stuck in a difficult and eerie moment, not sure how to navigate your way out. This work was finished during one of our lockdowns last year, and I think that significantly affected the direction it took. The audio comes from a distorted recording I made of two screeching budgies that I was housemates with during said lockdown, next to a noisy metal fan. Sometimes, they were background noise I could tune out; other times they felt deafening, but I could not be anywhere else. I tried to capture those claustrophobic feelings in the edit of the recording, combined with enduring ideas of "the caged bird"⁵ and experiences of constriction happening locally and globally.

SP: Why use video, in contrast to other mediums? And in choosing to

² Kadooment is an event that concludes Barbados' festival season of Crop Over; it takes place on the first Monday in August in the form of a carnival that parades and celebrates along a set route through the streets.

³ In European cultures, Carnival in the Middle Ages blended Christian practices with medieval rites and folklore, with notable traits including role reversals, temporary social equality, revelry and masquerade.

⁴ A national 'lockdown' with restrictions on mobility and an enforced curfew issued by the Government of Barbados in an attempt to curb the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic.

⁵ In reference to Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969).

add an audio component to the visuals, what is the significance of the change in music between the shells and other images?

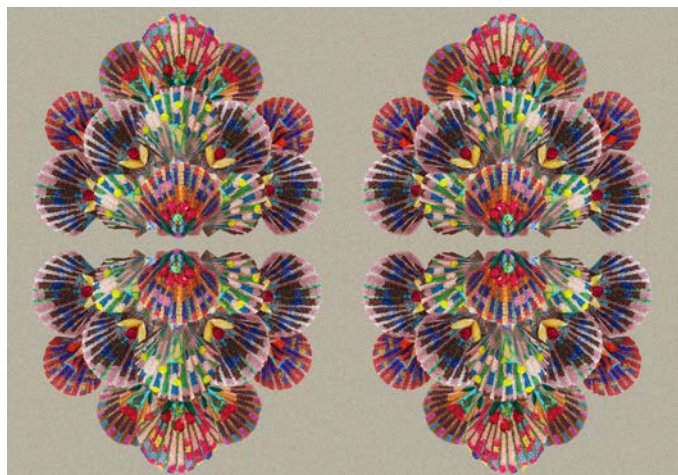


Figure 9 - Katherine Kennedy, Still from *Enmeshment*, Stop motion animation with hand-beaded seashells and mixed media sculpture, 2020.

KK: I don't think that any of my work would make sense to me without first having a sculptural foundation – some type of physical manifestation as the starting point has always felt best to me, and from there, the work can have several lives. Some of my very early work included kinetic sculptures with pieces attached to motors, because I wanted a sense of movement to be incorporated. I wouldn't rule out trying this again one day, but expanding my practice to include video was another way of creating movement, a sense of life and growth that I could work with more readily. The moving shells are all hand-beaded and exist in physical form. Similarly, the moving 'webs' or 'stalks' in the videos are all three-dimensional objects I made from scratch. The idea that everything can be photographed, multiplied and manipulated digitally opened up a lot of possibilities. I see the sculptural or installation side and the videos as working together, to help one another create an immersive environment that can be experienced concurrently.

Regarding the sound, I wanted the audio to fade in and out with both works for a couple of reasons. The idea of movement reoccurs, because there is a sense that you are witnessing a passage of time when the sound is not constant, instead associated with different stages of the videos. Sometimes, I wanted the entire focus to be on the visual, and other times they work together and build to crescendos, in a way that is meant to be overwhelming. And then both pieces have moments, when the shells have vanished, that you are just left with a sort of 'web' on the screen, while the music continues to play over it for a few seconds. I wanted to include these moments of pause, to allow the eeriness of the audio to settle in and to let the empty stillness of the webs – whether trapped and hollow like *Enmeshment* or more intricate and complex like *Plexus* – be the focus against that backing track.

RW: When working, do you compile the visuals beforehand and then generate the audio afterwards or do you work on them in tandem and let one inform the other as you go along?

KK: It was different for each video. The first two videos I made with shells were called *Biorhythms* and neither had audio; the focus was entirely on the cyclic movements of the shells which

exuded an almost hypnotic quality. *Enmeshment* also didn't have sound initially, but whereas *Biorhythms* were more about showing lifecycles, *Enmeshment* came from a different, more turbulent or emotional place. It felt unfinished without the sound. As I mentioned before, I knew I wanted to play with expectations or assumptions of what the sources of the noises were, so I recorded a number of sounds and listened to open-sourced audio files online, to see what I wanted to integrate. The oceanic/static sound came first, and I wanted something haunting to accompany it; that's where the editing and distortion of the whistling frogs, to the point of being unrecognizable, came in.

Plexus was a bit different. I went into it knowing that I wanted it to have sound, and I knew I wanted it to fade in and out at different points, but I still created the visuals first. Then it was a matter of recording sounds from my environment – limited at the time by COVID restrictions – and landing on the shrillness of the birds. I considered layering them over another sound, but when I listened to the recording, I realized that the monotony of the metallic hum of the fan worked really well as a constant presence behind the budgies, especially when distorted in the editing programme.

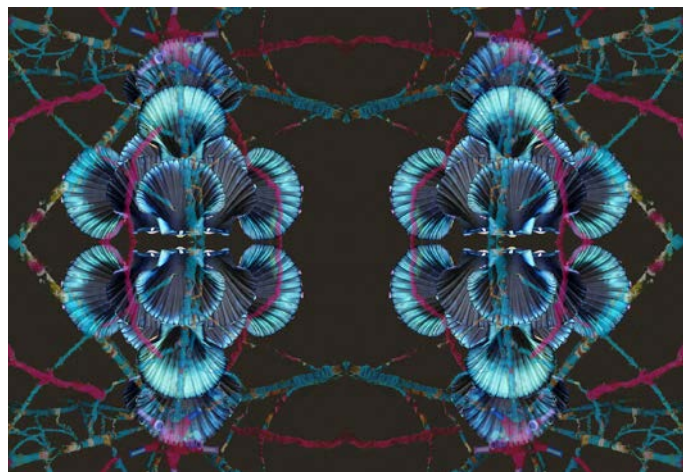
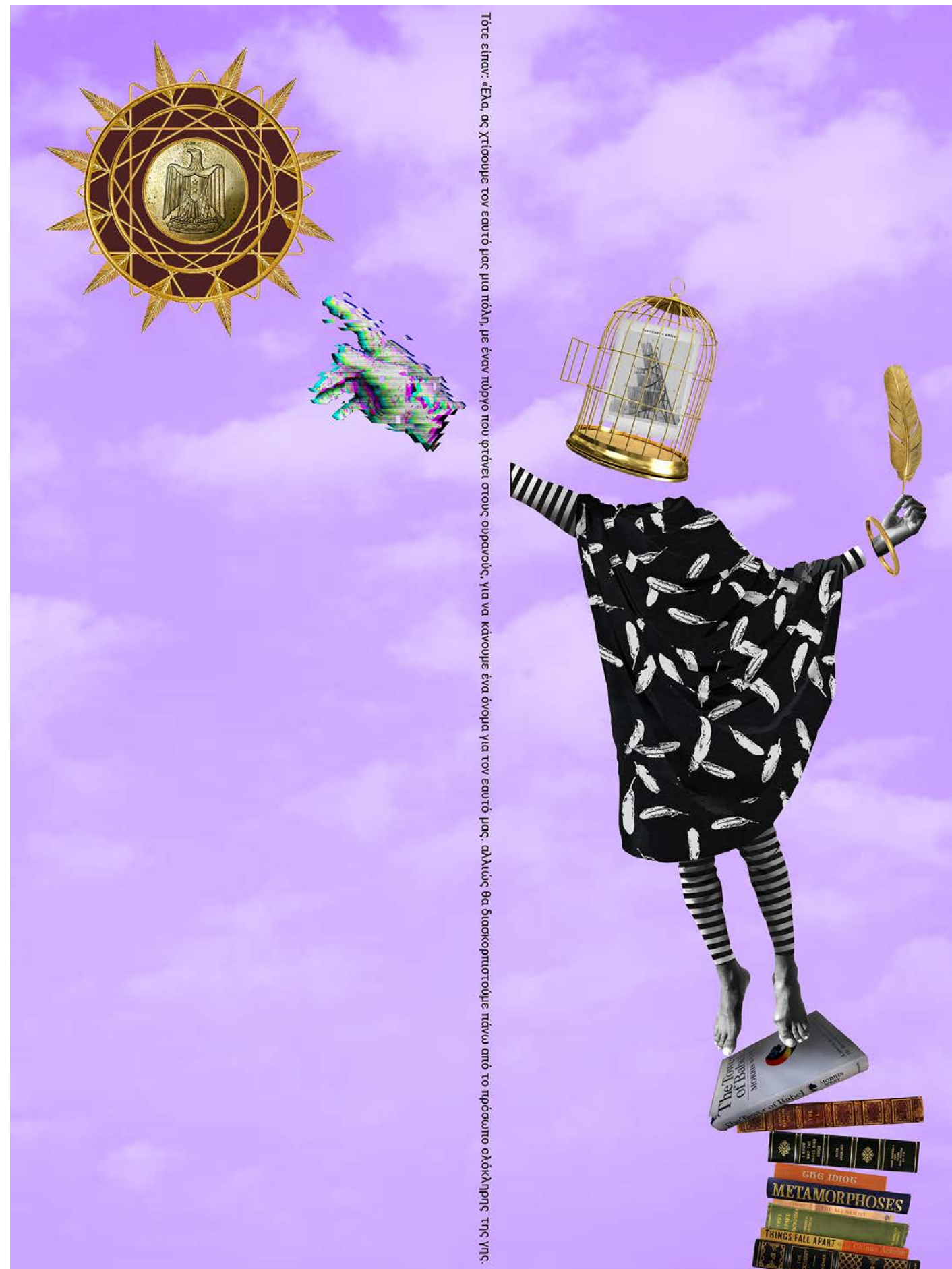


Figure 10 - Katherine Kennedy, Still from *Enmeshment*, Stop motion animation with hand-beaded seashells and mixed media sculpture, 2020.

SPOTLIGHT: Ronald Williams

SP: How important is symbolism within your work? Do certain images carry their meaning through a series of work, or are they subject to change? For example, does the clock signify time in one piece, but possibly change its meaning in another?

RW: Symbolism is very important in my work. I like that there are certain ideologies that we consciously/subconsciously interpret when confronted with visual stimuli. More importantly, I love how the relationship between an artist's intentions and what the audience receives fluctuates based on factors such as religious background, race, era and individual personality. Generally speaking, each symbol has its own specific meaning which I try to keep consistent. It's a personal code more than anything else. So, a clock would usually



Τότε είπραν: «Εβα, ας χτίσουμε τον εαυτό μας μια τράνη, με έναν πύργο που φτάνει στους ουρανούς, για να κάνουμε ένα όνομα για τον εαυτό μας, αλλάζω θα διασκορπιστούμε πάνω από το ηρόδωρο ολόκληρης της γης».

Figure 11 – Ronald Williams, *Hubris*, Digital collage and image, 30"x40", 2021.

be a reference to time/the inevitability of something, a skull means certainty of death/decay or transience of life, and books indicate some form of knowledge.

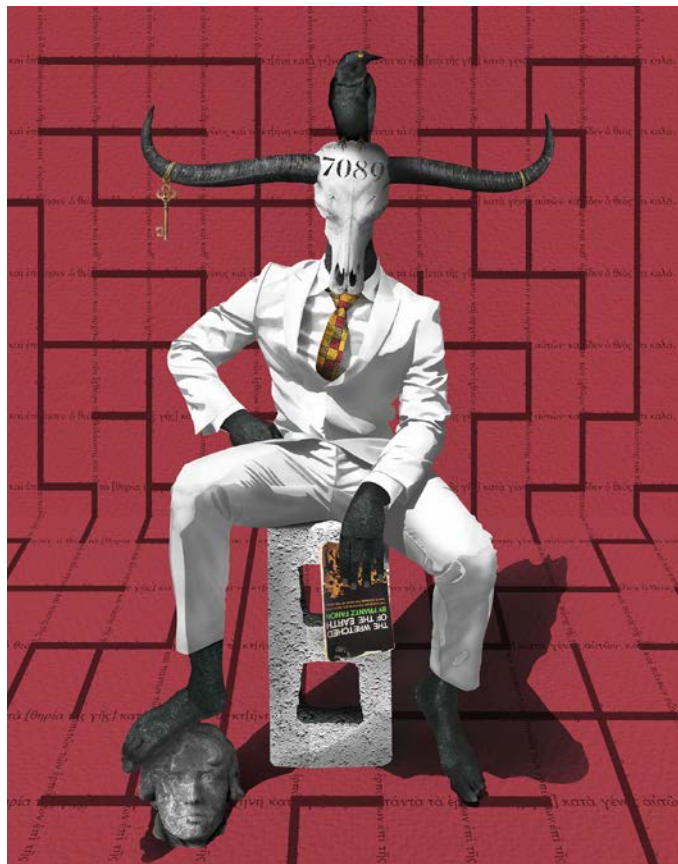


Figure 12 – Ronald Williams, *Wretched Ones*, Digital collage and image, 30"x40", 2021.

KK: I also find your work to be a fascinating example of Symbolism in contemporary practice, and it has a way of being incredibly layered with coded visuals while still resonating with broad audiences in its use of allegory and clean, striking compositions. Pieces like *Wretched Ones* are prime examples of this; can you share more about the development of this piece, both conceptually and in terms of its layout and balanced compositional elements?

RW: Conceptually, *Wretched Ones* is based on some of the ideologies of Frantz Fanon's work, certain biblical themes and the Greek myth of the Minotaur. As the myth goes, the part man, part bull Minotaur dwelled in a labyrinth/maze and devoured the humans who were sent to him. He was essentially a boogeyman, who was eventually slayed by the Greek hero Theseus. This tale could be seen as an allegory for the dominance of brain over brawn or the triumph of the upright, civilized man over the primitive monstrous brute. In that sense, I've used the Minotaur as a reference point to illustrate how the black male, chiefly the lower status black male, has been characterized in the West as a subject to be kept in check.

Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* wrote about the state

of the colonised world and neo-colonisation. In it, he describes the divided state which the white colonisers (and their successors the black bourgeoisie) occupy as light, and that of the peasant masses as dark. If we look at the Minotaur again, we see Fanon's divided state. He played the role of executioner for enemies of the state, yet he was shunned and lived alone in the literal darkness of the underground maze. Fanon went on to further describe these peasant masses, in particular the lowest of the low; the criminals, the prostitutes, the delinquents... 'ghetto people', for lack of a better term, as the ones who would spearhead the revolutionary fight. In a sense, the piece is meant to be a Fanon fantasy of sorts, with an educated, enlightened 'block-boy' sitting on a literal and figurative block with Lord Nelson's head, an enduring symbol of colonial power⁶, under his foot.

We once more come up against that obsession of ours—which we would like to see shared by all African politicians—about the need for effort to be well informed, for work which is enlightened and freed from its historic intellectual darkness. To hold a responsible position in an underdeveloped country is to know that in the end everything depends on the education of the masses, on the raising of the level of thought, and on what we are too quick to call "political teaching" (Fanon 197).

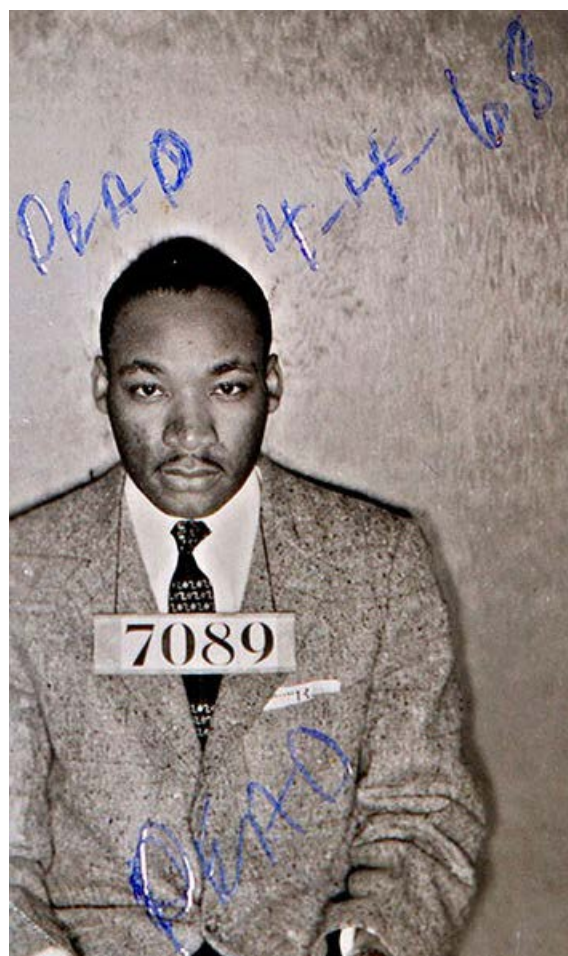


Figure 13 – Martin Luther King's booking photo, taken February 22nd 1956. Courtesy of the Montgomery County Archive.

⁶ The statue of Lord Nelson holds particular significance in Barbados, as in 2021 after a decades-long debate, the monument was finally removed from a place of prominence in Heroes Square, located in the island's capital city, Bridgetown.

In terms of layout and compositional elements, I leaned on a number of themes for inspiration. The numbers engraved on the figure's skull have a dual reference. At once, they reference civil rights leader Martin Luther King's 1956 Montgomery, Alabama mugshot while also heavily alluding to chattel slavery. To directly reference the Minotaur for the final time; he was born a 'beast' and as such was 'perfect' in his nature. However, his position in society, and his treatment by said society are what cemented his characterization of 'monster'. In that same vein, the black male born at the bottom of the social ladder and treated as such often follows a predetermined path. The white suit the figure wears, from a religious standpoint, is a symbol of purity and innocence given that he's a perfect product of his environment. To extend that idea of a perfectly created being a step further, the background text which composes the maze-like pattern is a Greek translation of Genesis 1:25 which states, "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth on the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

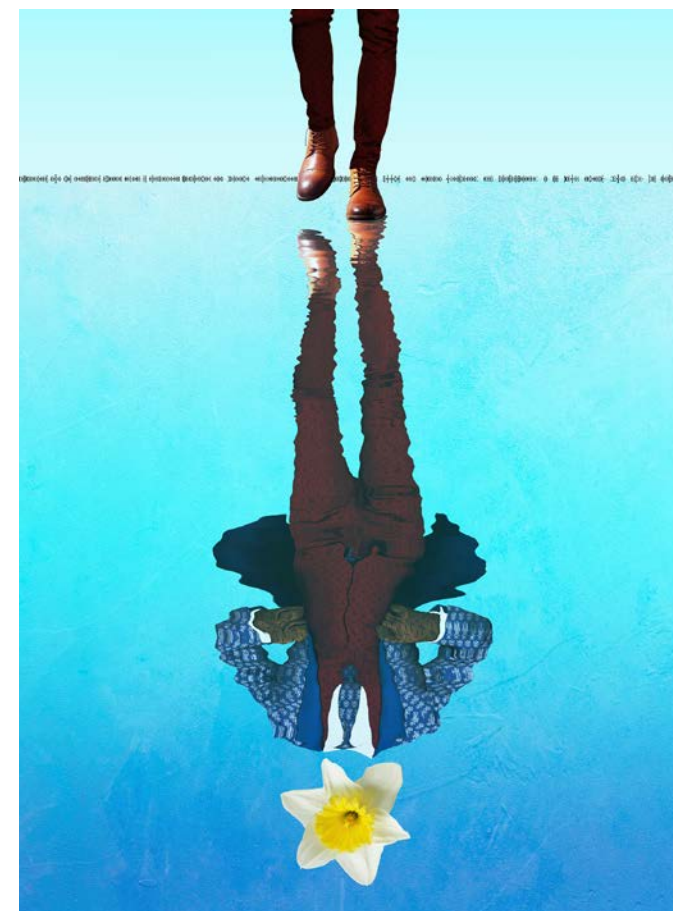


Figure 14 – Ronald Williams, *God's Gift*, Digital collage and image, 30"x40", 2021.

KK: Works like *God's Gift* and *Hubris* seem to touch on themes of pride and bravado, while revealing a complexity to these traits. Can you speak more to these themes in relation to issues of masculinity, expectations and power structures displayed in the works?

RW: I think there are certain things that we associate with men in

our society: bravery, toughness, strength etc., but in my opinion, especially within the demographic of males my work focuses on, these things point to a craving for power in order to feel valuable and garner respect.

In *God's Gift* I looked at two contrasting extremes to play with that nuance. I compared the story of Jesus walking on water taken from Matthew 14:26 and the Greek mythological tale of Narcissus, who was a man so enamored with his own reflection after seeing it in a pool of water that it led to his own demise. On one hand, Jesus had supreme control and power over nature and remained humble while on the other, Narcissus only held power over himself and ultimately self-destructed. These two displays of power seek to touch on the key role ego plays in handling power. To symbolize the ego, I used the daffodil/narcissus flower as it's sometimes called. It's the softest, most fragile element of the work (much like the ego can be), and with its dual symbolism of rebirth and vanity, it characterizes how if we nurture the ego to unchecked levels, it can become an entity unto itself.

Hubris is more about the drive and struggle to achieve status in order to break a seemingly infallible power or a socio-economic structure/system. Many of the books which the figure is tip-toeing on make a general reference to a revolutionary journey and self-awareness found through peril, struggle and oppression; many times with political undertones. Just like the other works in this series, there's a convergence of Greek myth and biblical tale; namely the tragedy of Icarus flying too close to the sun and the consequence of building the 'Tower of Babel' in order to reach God. In both tales, the protagonists were met with a seemingly justified downfall due to their pride and audacity. Here, the figure has built himself up to a great extent in an effort to elevate his status and have a chance to grasp a bit of power; symbolized as the sun or an empirical coin. While the piece in general speaks to 'overreaching' and its pitfalls, the inspiration behind it came from the economic and racial disparity we have due to slavery, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, and the countless reminders we have of what happens when those who have been oppressed try to fight for what they should be entitled to. To that end, it shares the bitter metaphor of Maya Angelou's singing caged bird.

People whose history and future were threatened each day by extinction considered that it was only by divine intervention that they were able to live at all. I find it interesting that the meanest life, the poorest existence, is attributed to God's will, but as human beings become more affluent, as their living standard and style begin to ascend the material scale, God descends the scale of responsibility at a commensurate speed (Angelou 121).

KK: *The Reaper* feels somewhat different to me than the other pieces shared. In addition to being the only work whose composition is not strictly divided by straight lines, the muted colours give the piece an aged, worn quality. When coupled with the name, it seems to suggest an inevitability that as the sands of time wear on, certain societal structures too might deteriorate; can you tell me more about the commentary this piece offers on familial relations?

RW: This was the first piece of the series and was started when



Figure 15 – Ronald Williams, *The Reaper*, Digital collage and image, 30"x40", 2021.

we were heavily into the lockdown. I can't think of the number of relationships (familial, romantic and platonic) which were put under strain, either from being together too much or being apart too long. One thing that kept coming up was a desire for freedom – and this may be a common theme in all the works – from the figurative prison of home. As I was playing with this idea, conversations I've had with friends and family over the years kept resurfacing, and I invariably circled back to a constant in those discussions: an absence of the father in the household and the breakdown of the family structure.

It felt/feels like a persistent generational cycle and the watch/clock here symbolizes that apparent inevitability. As a father who matured without my own father around, the pandemic gave me another angle to look at this patriarchal absenteeism from. In the end, there were a few nuanced questions I still haven't fully answered. If the home is no longer a place of peace and love, how long will there be a yearning to keep things together? Who is qualified to judge whether or not destruction is really just a form of self-preservation?

MODERATOR'S CLOSING QUESTION

THERESE HADCHITY: One thing you all have in common is a preoccupation with stereotypes – whether racial, gendered, cultural or geographical. While you are keen to display and pick these stereotypes apart – in some sense saying, "we are not that," I wonder if you ever feel compelled to offer up a counter-narrative. Instead of deconstructing negative stereotypes, is there a need to hold up something else in its place? Something we can collectively endorse and work towards?

RW: I do think there is a need to offer an alternative, but I'm unsure what that should be or be like. As I've gotten older, age has given way to a level of hypocrisy and necessary pragmatism. While there are many things structurally that can be improved on, there's still an innate desire to protect the things I do have. Although I'm not totally optimistic in our ability to strive for the collective betterment (at this point), I'm confident that the younger generations will continue to push us in that direction. I'm already seeing a change in their mentality, and if they continue to lay the groundwork for their progeny like our forefathers did for us, then we'll get there at some point.

KK: Maybe the first step towards reconstruction of anything is deconstructing it down to its components; I think in many ways, we are still figuring out both individually and as a society, what we are and what we can be when not under the weight and stigma of racial, gendered, cultural or geographical stereotypes. I do think that in addition to breaking down negative stereotypes, each of us are offering alternate points of view on society that counter these tropes and, while maybe not holding up something idyllic in their place, we instead hold up something real, something that reflects and comments on the current moment we are in along this journey.

Shari's work uses stereotypes to reclaim power over a racist narrative and physical attributes that have long been used to cut Black people – primarily Black women – down; Ronald's work does not just show negative stereotypes, but offers critical thought from an often overlooked Barbadian/Caribbean perspective, and creates awareness and access to scholarship about Blackness and masculinity. And my work, as well as critiquing false depictions of paradise, allows for reimagining what paradise is, hopefully beginning conversations that counter misogyny and lessen the taboo on certain gendered topics. It's an ongoing process, and it's interesting as well that all

three of us use techniques such as collage, superimposition and sculptural/wearable works – all of which require the act of building, and the assembly of something new.

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