

QUOTE

“‘Bidoun’ means ‘without’
in both Arabic and Farsi. In
our contemporary context, it
connotes the statelessness
in which many of us find
ourselves—sometimes
voluntarily, sometimes not.”

From the [website](#) of Bidoun



Sranan Art Xposed

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Dear reader!

Keeping you posted ... The fifth edition of *Sranan Art Xposed* is out ... SAX number 4 was the first edition designed by Wendy Alberts with her graphic design company **Moksi Graphics** which is located in the Netherlands. She did a beautiful job and it once again proves that geographical borders are becoming less and less important. Limitations are there only for those that choose them. The Surinamese SAX-editors also worked together with a foreign-based designer for another project, *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event*, to come up with an innovative result.: Richard Mark Rawlins from **CMB Creative** in Trinidad. And now in SAX 5 a gentleman has joined us to strengthen our editorial staff: Dan Dickhof. Welcome!



Maybe it is because of this lack of boundaries, or better yet, the fact that we now so easily go beyond all borders, that an exhibition announcement that particularly touched me in the past months was: Stefanie Kettel's *Anywhere is Somewhere Else*. This German artist did a residency in London which she concluded with an exhibition. More can be read about it [here](#). With collage techniques and by converting computer images to canvas, the artist creates alienating landscapes.



Our SAX-platform which aspires to offer a place to the world between somewhere and nowhere, the ever-changing world, the transforming world, currently consists of a web magazine, a **blog** and a **photo-account**, which are both updated more regularly. Up until now the – absolutely no strings attached – sponsorship comes primarily from **Readytex Art Gallery**, although several writers and photographers make a substantial (partially) voluntary contribution to make the blog and the photo-account possible.



Much reading- and viewing pleasure,

Marieke & the SAX Ladies & Gentleman!

Colophon *Sranan Art Xposed*

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Stefanie Kettel, *Nebenumstände haben verwirrend eingegriffen* [Secondary circumstances have confusingly intervened], 2011
PHOTO Courtesy Stefanie Kettel, 2011

SAX is made possible by



Gran tangi!

TEXT Marieke Visser

NOT EVERYBODY LOVES



A thought in advance.

Years ago I drove away, away from the house where my father used to live until shortly before his death. My younger sister and brother looked at me and asked how I had experienced it. I could not answer, no: I didn't want to give them an answer at that moment. Later on I understood where that unwillingness to put my thoughts into words was coming from. To me, too hastily putting my thoughts, my feelings and my ideas into words, would have been the same as pouring all that is in my head, into unyielding, unpliant concrete. By not immediately expressing an opinion I give myself the opportunity to first look at things from another perspective. Thus my memories of that confrontation with my father's final days in this earthly existence have not solidified in mournful images full of sadness, but are in fact a reflection of that wonderful man with all his silly peculiarities that are so dear to me.

Back to the here and now. Paramaribo, July 6th 2011.

With the words "It is for Suriname, from Suriname and by Suriname" **George Struikelblok** concludes his speech that day, during the unveiling of the concrete version of his I♥SU-monument, at the entrance of the Fort Zeelandia-complex.

The case history: in the night of November 24th of 2010 artist George Struikelblok takes the initiative to place a wooden artwork by the 'Waterkant' (water side), close to Fort Zeelandia. On the occasion of 34 years of independence, Struikelblok wants to make a statement. With this impulsive, playful action he hopes to engender a sense of nationality that will ultimately lead to nation building. It was intended to stand there for a day; a few days at the most. But passersby react enthusiastically. One after the other, groups of tourists and passersby take pictures with the Independence-monument, which corresponds so seamlessly with the other I♥SU-hype. Struikelblok moves the wooden colossus to the Fort Zeelandia premises and close to Queen Wilhelmina it remains to stand until it is finally felled by the elements. Struikelblok receives countless requests to once again set it up and he decides to do exactly that, but now in a concrete version. And this is how a poorly thought out concept which was originally meant to be a one day statement, a sort of guerilla-art action, suddenly receives a very definitive shape. The artist obtains permission from the Directorate for Culture to place the concrete work at the place where it now stands for a few months. Sponsors willingly contribute. During the opening toddlers spontaneously chant 'I love Su', a lyrical Peter Waterberg speaks, and Hillary de Bruin from Culture studies gives an emotional speech in which she expresses gratitude.

And then ... All hell breaks loose. On several blogs, in the newspapers, on the street, through the mail, via Facebook: on all those forums artists, art connoisseurs, art lovers and

many others fall all over each other in order to express their displeasure. Anger, disbelief, sadness and other heated emotions find their way. **Rolf van der Marck** and **Henry Carbière Falls** speak out on their blogs.

Ellen Ligteringen reacts on Facebook. She thinks that the fierceness of her reaction can have something to do with the karma of George's sculpture. "To me the sculpture is a block laden with intense aggression; A contradiction because it professes to be about love."

Patrick Tjon Jaw Chong distributes a mail in which he shares the definitions of the terms 'monument' and 'logo'. His conclusion: "A logo cannot be a monument!"

People are in the first place indignant about the artwork itself: is it even a work of art, the concrete version, the fact that it is a plagiarism, the quickly running paint, the finish, the design, the use of the abbreviation SU for Suriname. But almost equally incensed are they about the choice of location: at the place that holds such a central position in the history of our country, the Independence-monument proves to be an intolerable thorn in the eye.

Pim de la Parra offers the following in a mail he circulates: "I would gladly like to assist in the final dismantling of this work, so that this place can be free once again and it will no longer mar the historical surroundings."

Thus evaluating the 'battlefield', I can identify a number of points. Time for a To Do List:

- Enter into an agreement with each other about what is allowed to be placed in the public space, and especially also: where. Do we leave certain historical location undisturbed? Does a work of art always have to be in harmony with the surroundings?
- Evaluate how an assessment institute can be established that can evaluate matters of this nature in an objectively flexible an independent way. Not an institute that looks at whether the correct stamp is used or whether the project documents are placed in the right envelope.
- Get large public discussions going about what art is and what requirements a monument or another work of art in the 'public space' has to comply to. Learn to distinguish between art and applied art; think about terms such as design, arts and crafts, workmanship, amateurism, memorials, monuments – all of this can also result in a larger appreciation for visual expressions. Ultimately this will hopefully lead to a greater meticulousness which will become visible in the surroundings.
- One positive thing about the commotion was, in my point of view, the fact that so many people expressed their opinions. Being critical of each other is good. The artist says that up until the moment of unveiling he had heard not one word of criticism. Now you could counter that he should have asked for comments in advance, but the fact remains that it would be good to strive for a larger degree of openness and honesty towards each other within our society.
- To the artist I would like to say: think your ideas through very carefully. Not because an idea CAN come to fruition means that you HAVE to do it. And if you have to make compromises in execution because of certain limitations: take a step back and ask yourself whether you can give your public anything less than the full one hundred percent.



PHOTO Cassandra Gummels-Relyveld, 2011

NEW TALENT!

Xavier Robles de Medina

A short time ago I noticed a new collection of artworks in the **Readytex Art Gallery**. Never before had there been work of this artist in the gallery, but I did know who he was, because I had seen some of his work previously on Facebook. The artist in question is Xavier **Robles de Medina**. He is a grandson of the well known Surinamese artist Stuart Robles de Medina and he can certainly be referred to as a talented and promising artist as well.

In one or two years Xavier will have in his possession two degrees from **SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design)**; a popular university for creative professions in Savannah, Georgia, USA. One in 'Painting' and one in 'Animation'. He initially chose animation as his major. This would, according to Xavier, offer a bit more security with regards to job opportunities in the future. A safe decision thus... Because of his passion for painting however, he did choose to make painting his minor. It did not take long before Xavier came to the realization that he could not give his First love, painting, an inferior position within his study. The decision to study painting as a second major was quickly made.

"In my 'painting' classes I felt right at home. There I felt so much more appreciated, embraced almost, and I knew that I was in the right place. I think that I make more of an impression during those classes, because there I am doing what I am

really good at. Painting also has significantly less students compared with animation, which means that the contact between students and teachers is much more personal" When Xavier speaks about drawing and painting it instantly becomes obvious where his passion lies. His portraits, whether drawn or painted, are indeed exceptionally well executed. Xavier paints in a realistic style and his theme most often involves people. With his work he tells a story. The **prints** of Xavier's work which are currently on display at the Readytex Art Gallery, are a good example thereof. One of the series is called 'The pursuit of perfection' and is the result of a project that Xavier had to complete for one of his classes. He was inspired for it by Oscar Wilde's book **The Picture of Dorian Gray**, a story about a young man who sells his soul in exchange for the eternal youth and beauty of his image as captured in a portrait of him, done by a famous painter.

In this particular series Xavier makes reference to the apparent perfection of mannequins. He is fascinated by the magnificent anatomical sculptures from the masters of olden days and sees mannequins as a sort of modern, adapted, though perverted version of these masterpieces. He creates a series of works, including a **video performance**, in which he presents himself as searching for the perfection that the mannequins represent. As part of this process he shaves his head bald. In oil on linen he paints a portrait of himself in accompaniment of several

mannequins. "But mannequins are in no way perfect. They are a product of commercial, plastic reproduction and my work is intended to show that contrast".

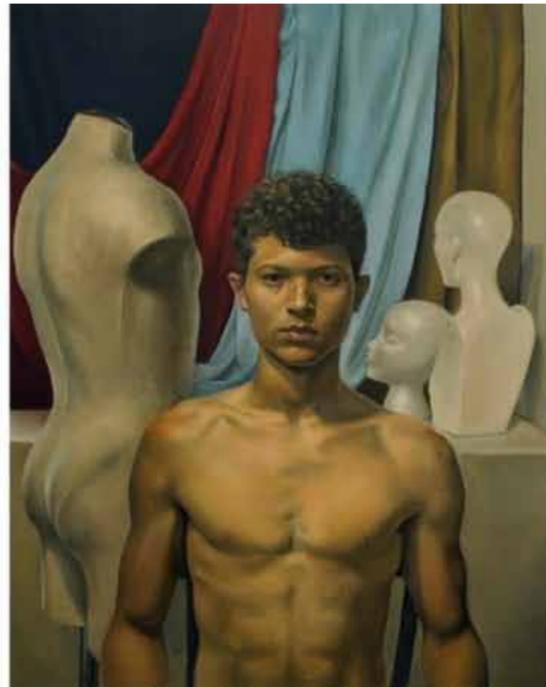
Does Xavier consider himself to be a Surinamese artist? "I have actually never thought about that before. I had a rather protected youth in Suriname and left at a very young age (16) to go to school abroad. But my grandfather Stuart Robles de Medina has always been my greatest source of inspiration and I am proud of that. So yes, I would not mind it if others described me as a Surinamese artist. But personally I don't want to place myself in a certain category. I just want to do what I like to do best and right now that is the most important thing to me."

Xavier does follow the developments in the Surinamese art world as closely as possible, and he is much impressed with many Surinamese artists. "Although I prefer to work realistically, I have great appreciation for many other art forms. When it comes to art I don't judge something according to its style, but according to the feeling that I get from looking at it; it has to do something to me, appeal to me. I am for example very interested in work from the artists **Kurt Nahar** and **Dhiradj Ramsamoedj**. They work from a concept and principles that they strongly believe in and that is something that I find important".

What does the future hold in store for Xavier? There is as yet no answer to that question. To keep on studying after his bachelors' degrees is something he would like to do, but his professor's advice against doing that right away. He is still too young they say; he has to "find" himself; it is too early to for him to determine what he wants to specialize in. That is certainly good advice. Because no matter how talented and how skilled he is, for Xavier this is only the beginning. His current work is, either consciously or subconsciously, still influenced or affected by his current education and his experiences at the university. So whether his work already exhibits his own unique and individual style as an artist ... No, most likely not. Xavier himself cannot as yet predict what the future holds for him.

"I am thinking of moving to New York for some time after I obtain my bachelors' degree." In the immense and varied 'art scene' of New York Xavier Robles de Medina hopes to continue his development as an artist. He will search for art Institutes where he can possibly join as artist in residence. Living and working in New York, is thus, as it seems right now at least, the next step for Xavier Robles de Medina. Who knows what else the future has in store for Xavier. Only time will tell!!!!

Pursuit of perfection, Xavier Robles de Medina, 2011
PHOTOS Courtesy Xavier Robles de Medina



Cassandra Gummels-Relyveld is a freelance writer. Aside from her work for *Sranan Art Xposed*, she writes primarily for the **Readytex Art Gallery** in Paramaribo, Suriname. She writes press releases, website texts and takes care of the publicity materials surrounding the exhibitions and other activities of the gallery.

TEXT Steve Ammersingh, Cassandra Gummels-Relyveld,
Didi Samwel & Marieke Visser
PHOTOS Sranan Art Flickr Account

Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event | solo-exhibition Marcel Pinas | KKF, Paramaribo | June 21-28 2011

Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event | solo-exhibition Marcel Pinas | De Hal | June 29-July 3 2011

Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event | solo-exhibition Marcel Pinas | Moengo | July 30-October 30 2011



On the website of *Starnieuws*, June 25 2011, art critic **Rob Perrée** says: "There is currently so very much going on in the area of visual arts in Suriname. More and more exhibitions are being held and they attract a large public as well. I am however under the impression that the part that involves writing about these exhibitions, is staying behind on this development." Within the framework of *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* Rob Perrée held the workshop 'Critical writing about visual art'. A group of about ten people participated, among which several spectators. Four people wrote reviews of the exhibition(s) by Marcel Pinas: Steve Ammersingh, Cassandra Gummels-Relyveld, Didi Samwel and Marieke Visser. Those can be read below. Cassandra Gummels-Relyveld, Didi Samwel and Marieke Visser individually processed the comments that each of them received from Rob Perrée separately. Steve Ammersingh made a second version as well. In addition to the comments he got from Rob Perrée he also received feedback from Luciel Becker, art philosopher and Wildcoast Art-artist.

Report on Workshop 'Critical writing about visual art'

The original idea was to hold a workshop about art criticism for starting writers or for specialized students who are considering taking on writing about art (semi)professionally.

For whatever reason, it did not seem possible to find participants for this initial set-up. Instead a group of professional writers cordially stepped in to take on the discussion about the lack of art criticism in Suriname.

That became a special and useful gathering. A start at which a serious attempt was made to put the problem into words and to identify the possible causes.

That gathering resulted in an unexpected assignment. Why don't we all try to write a review about the exhibition(s) of Marcel Pinas? This could perhaps provide us with specific points of departure in order to continue the discussion in the future.

Those reviews were written.

Although I would prefer to personally explain my comments in a subsequent meeting, I would still like to make a view remarks in advance.

1. The advantage of this group was that the actual writing itself was not a problem (or did not seem to be). One might write better or nicer than the other, but all participants have good command of the field. In the original set-up this would undoubtedly have been different.

2. The main problem remains to be the fact that the substantive foundations of the arguments are

mostly lacking. Many times an opinion goes no further than a reaction, emotional or not, to what the writer sees or experiences. Particularly that last point. Interpretation is lacking.

3. An attempt to place the work of Pinas within a context is also missing. That, I have to admit, is already difficult if you do have an actual art historical background, but it is nevertheless important in order to provide a good sense of, or an opinion about, the level of the exhibition.

4. Sometimes admiration can stand in the way of a critical judgment. Then a personal 'story' becomes a story about yourself and no longer about the work of the artist.

Like I said, I would prefer to elaborate further on certain aspects verbally. Hopefully this will still be a possibility in October.

I am very happy though that a start was made with regards to the discussion on an important theme: the lack of art criticism.

I would like to express my thanks to everybody that contributed to this.

Rob Perrée

Amsterdam, July 2011



TEXT Diederik Samwel



Comprehensive exhibition Marcel Pinas

A silver cloud full of whispering voices

All of a sudden the hall is filled with a soft and warm sound. It sounds more subdued than the alarm clocks that go off every minute in the adjacent space. It comes from the thousands of silver colored spoons that hang suspended from the ceiling by nylon threads. They sway gently in the sultry breeze that blows in through the massive sliding doors. A tinkling sound when the spoons come in contact with each other. Those who look closely will notice that there is a symbol engraved in every spoon. Those that don't look closely, see a slowly swaying silver cloud. "It's as though it's alive. It sounds nice. It's as if you can hear whispering voices", says my son (11).

What the artist tries to convey with the alarm clocks? "Well yes, tsk, tsk", sighs one of my daughters (14), "That it's time of course! High time apparently, because a grouping of alarm clocks goes off every minute. That it's time to die maybe. Just look at all the skulls lying next to it."

But high time for who? We go in search of the answer in two video cubicles cordoned off with black screens. Shown inside are films from years ago. They deal with logging, the exploitation of palm oil and gold and with the fact that the people who work in the jungle don't have much regard for the environment. "They are not very happy about that in the interior", thinks my youngest daughter (nine). "Could that be why they tied up all those Barbie dolls? The strings are pretty tight; they might just suffocate."

My eldest daughter (16) is standing a bit further down. She admits that the checkered plastic bags, in which films from Africa

("just like Suriname right?") are projected, hold a certain appeal as well. But in the end she falls especially for the enormous display of cloth-wrapped bottles. "All those different colors make it so cheerful." While her brother walks all around it and calculates that it would have to be roughly three thousand, she considers that it must have been a tremendous task to wrap all those bottles in pangi cloth.

As it happens, I know that for several weeks the artist has gotten help from schoolchildren. Just like they have also helped, with their entire class, to paint and decorate the totem poles that are set up outside in the parking lot and also with the engraving of the spoons. "Then those kids are also a bit like artists", concludes the youngest. Immediately thereafter she decides that it's time to go to dinner.

In the restaurant we continue with a short evaluation. General impression: They did think that the comprehensive exhibition of Marcel Pinas was rather beautiful, arranged in a pleasant and spacious manner and altogether not that complicated. Like this it's actually not that bad to go to an exhibition every once in awhile. And what the artist could possibly try to convey with it all? Simple: more consideration for the environment and for the people from the interior. Before you know it, everybody will die.

The two youngest understand quite well why Pinas is a bit angry. Last week they heard him say, on the '10 Minuten' news program for young people, that he is proud that the public in Paramaribo can now see what he has made. But that at the same time he does not understand that these works of art first stood in exhibitions in America, the Netherlands and Germany. The children also think that to be quite peculiar. Isn't it a tremendous hassle to pack and ship all those bottles, pangi's, spoons, bags, school benches, Barbie dolls, shoes, alarm clocks, skulls and slingshots? He should just keep putting together new things in Suriname; then at least the people over here can enjoy it too. ©





'Wi' gains in importance

Ten thousand hanging spoons, engraved by hand one after the other; hundreds of bottles wrapped in pangi cloth; a heap of children's shoes; a significant amount of dangling shopping bags; rows of matapi's, elongated cassava presses, that sway back and forth in the wind; enough slingshots to bombard an entire flock of birds ... The work of Marcel Pinas does not only fill the surface area of the large hall of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, but it fills the entire space. With objects, with images, with color, with sounds. But also with more intangible, more indescribable aspects, such as surging energy, intense sensation, quiet thoughts.

Over a year ago Marcel Pinas discloses his dream to show all the large artworks with which he has gained much appreciation all over the world, here in his home country. All of the installations under one roof. Way back in the beginning, when the dream was still a dream and when their realization was in no way guaranteed, the question arose: "Where?" And then Marcel is confident as he says: "KKF". I cannot envision it at all; those beautiful, to me so meaningful, works in that horrible concrete space with its sheet metal roof.

During the construction of *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* in KKF, I walk in. And then, I too see it, I too experience it. How the space conforms itself, adapts itself, willingly allows itself to be filled ... Dozens of volunteers, friends, colleagues, family members and passersby, lend a helping hand. To tie spoons to threads. To arrange bottles. To put up the scaffolding and take it back down. To allow the light to shine. And from time to time those people, those helping hands, those that help make the dream come true, wander about. Try to find their way within the space. They look, listen, experience, take photographs. As do I. Once again I feel how the works reel me in. How I enter into a deeper layer. How the door to another world opens up ever much more. 'Wi' gains in importance. It is no longer somebody else's culture for which I am willing to take on the world. No, it is 'our' culture, 'our' knowledge that we should all cherish: the heritage from each of our forefathers. And 'wi' becomes even more comprehensive. As part of 'wi' I want to use the wisdom that we can gather from our past and apply it to our time, enrich it with our knowledge and pass it on again.

The work does not only offer an insight into another culture, does not disclose only the vision of the artist about the legacy that culture holds within. *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* is much more than
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exclusively an – impressive – aesthetic experience; more than that, it is a spiritual experience. A confrontation that inspires thought. Not an entirely pleasant confrontation though, because the work literally indicates that there is no time to waste, that carelessness and negligence have already done more damage than we realize.

The installation *Kibii Wi Koni* is at the center of the exhibition, although the installation with the thousands of tinkling spoons, *Sanfika*, makes the largest impression on the majority of visitors. *Kibii Wi Koni*. The silhouettes of the ancestors who were shipped from Africa across the sea. These figurines sway in the wind above the striking bottle composition. Sometimes they are black, sometimes they are white. It depends on how you look at them. Does it even matter? The shape remains obvious: they are people. People to whom we have much to thank. People who deserve our respect. Respect that we should also deserve.

When I visit the exhibition with my children I ask what they liked best. Jeenah, she is eight, does not have to think about it long. "That everybody was so happy. And so nice to each other. That was the most beautiful thing."

And one more thing ...

All the way at the beginning, by the entrance, stand two large totem poles. Behind those, five boat tips, gathered in a meeting. *Kuutu*. The five 'boto ede's' (boat tips) symbolize the five maroon tribes. Earlier this year I had already seen this work in French Guiana, in Saint Laurent du Maroni. There, where it was centrally located in the middle of the exhibition, *Kuutu* already made a deep impression on me. Various objects from the Winti religion are part of this installation. Several leaves, pemba doti (kaolin), some lemons. *Kuutu* is about that which has been lost, also the Kromanti-language. I think to myself that it is not always necessary to speak a language in order to understand the message. On the opening night, I catch part of a conversation. Whether it would not be beautiful to place a glass sheet upon the five boat tips, wouldn't that make a fabulous dining table? For one moment I am shocked, thrown into confusion, in Babel-like confusion? Does the message get lost in translation? I get visions of do-it-yourself -*Sanfika*-packages, spoon installations in any required dimensions, for all your balconies and arbors. The alarm clocks from *A libi* ring loudly and wake me back up. This time around they don't give me that harried, nervous sensation that it's already too late. But I know, relieved, that even a dining table version of *Kuutu* does not have the capacity to diminish the power of this exhibition. At least some people were found in translation.

Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event

The two exhibitions that were part of *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* in Paramaribo are over. Marcel Pinas finally had, especially in the first one, the opportunity to make one of his long aspired dreams come true. In a large comprehensive exhibition he could finally share with the Surinamese public all the work that he had previously exhibited in other countries. He could finally share with the entire Surinamese community his story, his message and his mission for his birth district Marowijne.

He turns his dream into reality in the large covered hall of the KKF building at the Kernkampweg. Within a week, and with the help of a substantial amount of fellow artists and volunteers, he transforms the cold and empty hall into a living, breathing space where art and culture melt into one, each just as important as the other. On June 21st, the day of the official opening Pinas presents an intriguing space where image, sound and something else that is not visible or audible, but certainly tangible, come together to create a charged and striking atmosphere.

I must admit that I have known Marcel Pinas for many years and that I have been writing about him for quite awhile and am thus very familiar with his work and his mission. When you are that closely involved it is almost unavoidable that you are swept along, infected even with his drive, his passion and his plans for the youth of Marowijne. But would you then not also expect that by now I would be a lot less affected by it all? I had after all, seen all the magnificent installations many times before on photographs. Why would they still make such a great impression on me?

But in the case of Pinas, it is precisely because there is so much more to the work than just the impressive visual that it presents. Don't get me wrong,

I find the works in and of themselves outstanding! In that sense Pinas is in my opinion a master in composition, in spatial design and in creating work with a maximal visual impact. He achieves this among other things, by working with clever combinations of dimension, simplicity and multiplicity. There is a lot, but never too much, there is a quiet balance, a sense of space and no unnecessary distractions that could possibly interfere with the effect. This is especially obvious in installations such as *Reconnecting* with the checkered bags, in *What is left* with the black water bags, in *Feti* with the slingshots and not to forget in *A Libi*, with the skulls and the alarm clocks placed in front of wooden panels carved throughout in one repetitive motive.

In each of these works of art Pinas works with one or very few visual elements, but in large quantities. In *Reconnecting* for example he hangs countless checkered plastic bags, with nylon threads in different lengths, from the ceiling. Small TV screens have been mounted in several of the bags, showing films of market scenes recorded by the artist during his stay in Cameroon. These plastic bags immediately struck him there in Africa, because the same bags are often seen in Suriname as well. "But in China they can be seen all over the place too", a Chinese friend of mine remarks as she looks at this work with some puzzlement. So that this to Marcel symbolizes a link between Africa and Suriname does not really speak to her. Nor does she see the artistic value of it. To her it looks like no more than just a bunch of cheap, ordinary plastic bags. Oh well, everybody has the right to their own opinion, right?

A libi, with the many skulls that Marcel made from ceramics at the Rijksacademie is another such an example. But whether you get the exact message or not, just the image of the almost realistic skulls spread out in a seemingly haphazard way, and the small groups of shiny alarm clocks in between ringing shrilly at set intervals, make a significant impression. Against the background stand several overlapping wooden panels in which a simple traditional motive has been cut. These three simple, though powerful visual elements form, due to their large quantities, an installation of significant proportions and impact. The shrill and repetitive ringing of the alarm clocks makes this work into an even larger attraction.

The only thing I did wonder about during the construction of the exhibition is if certain installations would not have had much larger visual impact had they been placed against a white background. Especially in the case of *Feti* with the slingshots and *What is left* with the black water bags I am confronted with this feeling. But Pinas had the majority of the walls in the giant hall covered with black





cloths. Later on it dawned on me that by doing so, he had consciously shifted the attention away from the purely visual to the emotional. With the black background he creates a certain tension and redirects the emphasis to the urgency of the message, the meaning behind the work.

That meaning contributes significantly to the strength of the work. The fact that in *Sanfika* for example, all the thousands of spoons engraved with symbols from the Afaka script, quietly tinkling against each other, are symbolic of the transference of knowledge and culture between men and women, mothers, fathers and children, generation upon generation, does make this work extra special. And when you actually stand beneath it, see the softly swaying motion, hear the gentle tinkling sound, admire the shimmering light and marvel at the sheer dimensions of it all, it matters not in the least that you have seen this work countless times on photographs. It is, and it will always be, a special experience.

As I stand there in the KKF, I am also transported back to the beginning of the *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* project in Villa Zapakara. To how the school children diligently wrapped bottles and dolls in pangi cloths, engraved personal messages and symbols in spoons, painted and decorated totem poles. I can still see Marcel together with the children and hear him talk with them about culture, about the knowledge of the ancestors, being proud of who you are and about what children's rights are. And then I too am proud. Because I know that '*Kibii Wi Koni*' is so much more to Marcel Pinas than just a fitting title for his work or his exhibition. It is his dream, his mission, but it does not end there. It is his heart and soul and it is at the core of his art and all that he does for the communities from Marowijne.

It is with mixed feelings that on Tuesday the 28th of June, the last day of the exhibition, I step into the KKF for a final look. I had to say goodbye. So many people had worked hard to make it happen and it was all over with, much, much too fast. But the second exhibition, one with new paintings by Marcel Pinas, would already be opening the very next day in De Hal. And the container with objects and installations was packed and ready to be transported to Moengo for the exhibition that would open there on the 30th of July. *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* would not be over for a long time to come.

It is, and it will always be, a special experience.



TEXT Steve Ammersingh

Kibii wi koni; an appeal to the home front?

From the 21st until the 28th of June 2011 we witnessed the exhibition *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* form our internationally renowned artist Marcel Pinas in de KKF-hall. The exhibition presented in this case, an overview of the work for which Marcel Pinas had become so well known in recent years, and with which he also acquired several prestigious awards.

or art connoisseur anywhere in the world, even without being familiar with the ethnic origins, the pure experience of the abovementioned would be no less significant. From his work his deep connection with his (maroon) culture becomes clear.

His work attests of his deep connection with his (maroon) culture and the title of the exhibition refers to the "koni" the groups own traditional wisdom or knowledge. With his work, as stated in the promotional messages, the artist tries to emphasize the importance of culture for the development of his native district.

The familiar associations with pangi-cloths and other typical cultural symbolisms to us Surinamese, are no longer really of any consequence. Besides, simply because of the dimensions of some of the best works, any comparison to, or reminder of the austerity of a traditional maroon village would completely disappear.

Quite impressive are a number of his installations, built with regular utensils, maroon art objects, typical building materials etc. The artist thus derives the construction elements for the works in this exhibition from the traditional arts and crafts, but also from the lifestyle of his own community.

This is contemporary visual art in its purest form; it is autonomous, and is in and of itself no traditional form of decoration or magic religious expression. The elements are thus removed from their original functionality and context. The -in this instance visual- "rhythms" of the frequently repeated patterns, might possibly have reminded some visitors of the rattling drum salvos of maroon celebrations. The clever method of arrangement lies in the envisaged use of balance, contrast, rhythm, play of light etc. You would indeed have to know at least something about Suriname and maroons in order to realize that the often re-appearing symmetry, is a particular maroon preference.

With these elements he composes monumental works of art that, as quite aptly stated by art curator Christopher Cozier, transform the entire space.

For the viewer the intensity of the sensory experience also makes it into a spiritual experience. The image that Pinas manages to create is so penetrating; the overwhelming plentitude of form, color, but also the three dimensional effect and particularly the large dimensions. For a museum guest

It is striking how Pinas manages to combine simple implements such as spoons and other kitchen utensils, kerosene lamps, or shopping bags of cheap Chinese make, to create a vibrating, shimmering sea of form, color and brilliance.



Input for **Sranan Art Xposed** is welcome! Photos, texts, artworks, tips, ideas: the floor is yours! Mail to srananart@gmail.com



Nevertheless not all the items allow themselves to be reduced simply to shape, but with their intrinsic meaning they raise probing questions: "what would be the theme/title here"? An example thereof is the installation with hundreds of slingshots that carry with them the hallmark of real, committed small-plantation boys' craftsmanship.

Of several of the in my opinion less successful pieces it can be said that they could just as well stand in a cultural/ anthropological institute such as the Tropenmuseum or a

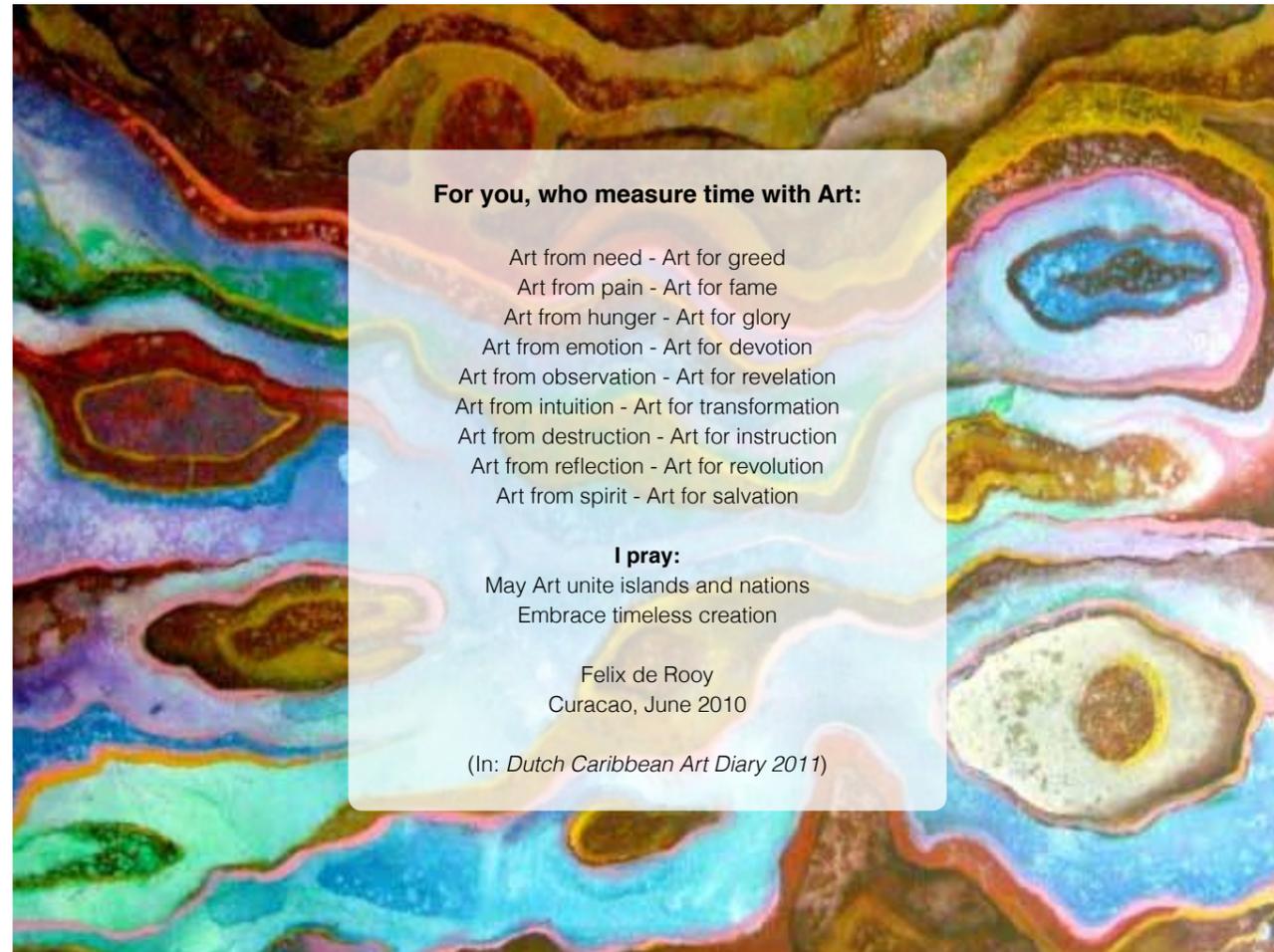
This is contemporary visual art in its purest form

historical museum such as Fort Zeelandia , because they seem to have more of an informative purpose. With this in mind I mention the arrangement of a kettle and other kitchen utensils, woodcarving panels, the façade of a traditional hut. It is true that of all the works, these are the ones that most directly relate to the title of the exhibition: "preserve/cherish

our achievements". This might well be an appeal to the home front now that the legitimacy of the cultural descent has been confirmed by a global forum.

It does have a hint of nostalgia and romanticization within the current advance of luxury articles, designer clothes and high-tech electronics. The life of the people in the interior is just as anywhere else, susceptible to the influence of "modernity" and all its characteristics. It is to be expected that in the coming years much will change and that traditions and customs will increasingly be reserved for touristic purposes and folk festivals.

Incidentally, I do not believe that an artist has any choice but to depart from his own personal position, and that within his socio-political, cultural and psychosocial contexts. Pinas has completely succeeded in the creation of authentic, contemporary art in the works that I have previously described as very impressive. I do however find that at this otherwise very special exhibition, the impression sometimes arises that ethno-cultural values are exploited as a curiosity, which is something I would rather leave to the entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. ©



For you, who measure time with Art:

Art from need - Art for greed
 Art from pain - Art for fame
 Art from hunger - Art for glory
 Art from emotion - Art for devotion
 Art from observation - Art for revelation
 Art from intuition - Art for transformation
 Art from destruction - Art for instruction
 Art from reflection - Art for revolution
 Art from spirit - Art for salvation

I pray:

May Art unite islands and nations
 Embrace timeless creation

Felix de Rooy
 Curacao, June 2010

(In: *Dutch Caribbean Art Diary 2011*)

TEXT Cassandra Gummels-Rolveld

THE DARKER SIDE

The weight of darkness | solo-exhibition Sunil Puljhun | De Hal, Paramaribo | August 16-21 2011

In the work of his first solo-exhibition **Sunil Puljhun** explores the darker side of human character. His work deals with this darkness, but he also portrays it with dark colors. With charcoal, pastels and black and white acrylic paint he creates small and large works of art on paper in which black, grey and white are the prevailing tones.

Aside from the particular use of color, the work of Puljhun also stands out because of the unique style and technique that the artist has developed. His technique involves among other things, adding water, actually to the point of almost soaking his paper in it, burning segments of his work, the drawing, painting, cutting out or applying of silhouettes, layer upon layer of collage materials and incorporating subtle texts in the background. Because of this rather different way of working, the textural appearance of his work can vary from smooth and fluid to rough and structured. One large piece for example shows the silhouette of child's face, its surface covered with a collage of old war story comic book pages, which because it has been set on fire by the artist, has a rough, black and charred appearance. One eye is covered with a thick blob of red paint that drips down a chubby cheek like a bloody tear. Childishly written words and numbers and black crows all around, increase the sense of urgency and the violation of innocence that the work symbolizes. With this work he refers in particular to the youth in the interior that due to the past war in the interior have had to do without so much, including adequate education.

The style and technique employed by Puljhun strengthen the sense of drama and yes, 'the weight of darkness' that his themes already carry within themselves. Death, violence and abuse, slavery, suicide and war are some of the subjects that Sunil incorporates in his paintings. He wonders what it is that actually motivates man to do such destructive deeds. He sees his work as a warning; he urges all of mankind to carefully consider the consequences of its actions now and in the future.

The exhibition of Puljhun was organized by **Readytex Art Gallery** and was on display in De Hal from the 17th until the 21st of August 2011.

Sunil Puljhun, *Untitled*, mixed media on paper, 2011
 PHOTO Ada Korbee, 2011





Dhiradj Ramsamoedj: From Art Zuid to Alice Yard

From May 27th until the 28th of August, the international sculpture route **Art Zuid**, was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. At **Art Zuid** sculptures from contemporary and classical artists, from past and present, from many countries throughout the World, were on display. The sculpture route with as title 'The World Around, Equality in Diversity' is put together by writer and artist **Jan Cremer**. Especially exiting was that there were also sculptures on display from world famous artists such as **Salvador Dali**, **Auguste Rodin** and **Niki de Saint Phalle**. A highlight was the work *Heureka* of the Swiss artist **Tinguely** who passed away in 1991. This **kinetic artwork** is located in Zürich (Switzerland) and was moved to another location for the first time in its history.



A special moment
PHOTOS Jan Willem Kaldenbach, 2011

Suriname was also represented at the exhibition with work from the artists **Marcel Pinas**, **Dhiradj Ramsamoedj** and **Roberto Tjon A Meeuw**. Shortly after the opening, Surinamese Facebook-circles, beginning with the page from **Readytex Art Gallery** rapidly started spreading a link, including photograph, to the website of the **Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsdeel Zuid**. The featured photograph showed Dhiradj Ramsamoedj in conversation with Holland's Queen Beatrix by his 'Mighty Man', his work of art that was included in 'Art Zuid'. On the evening of May 26th, the day of the official opening of 'Art Zuid' the newspaper 'Het Parool' immediately placed an article on the event featuring also a great snapshot of Dhiradj and the Queen by 'Mighty Man'. **Art Zuid** has been a valuable experience for our Dhiradj and on different levels. Loaded with new ideas and inspiration and with valuable new contacts in the art world he returned to Suriname with great satisfaction. Dhiradj is hard at work to expand his networks even further. On August 25th he leaves for Trinidad. By invitation of Trinidadian artist, writer and curator **Christopher Cozier** he will spend a number of weeks at **Alice Yard**, an independent space for creative experiments in Trinidad. What exactly he will be working on over there is still being worked out, but he has plenty ideas. He is currently working on an extension of his project with the figures he makes from thousands of brightly colored pieces of cloth. He plans to add a performance-element to it and has for that purpose made a *flexible man*-costume in his own size. He is taking this costume along to Trinidad and he will undoubtedly do something interesting with it there!

And also very noteworthy: **Dhiradj Ramsamoedj** is the first Surinamese artist with his own **blog**! Congratulations!

On the following web pages more information can be found about **Art Zuid**:

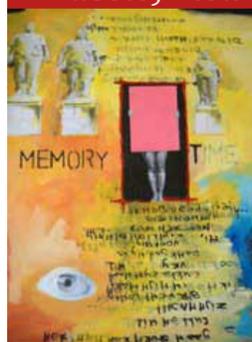
- <http://jaargetijde.wordpress.com/2011/06/03/bij-artzuid/>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsdcollection/page9/>
- <http://adambeeldenva1900.blogspot.com/>
- <http://arcthemagazine.com/arc/2011/05/dhiradj-ramsamoedj-participates-in-artzuid-2011/>
- <http://soulpixes.nl/artzuid-2011/>
- http://www.artdaily.com/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_new=47723
- <http://www.at5.nl/gespot/62954/jan-cremer-op-art-zuid>
- http://www.switchimage.org/ArtZuid_2011.html
- <http://www.zuid.amsterdam.nl/@423866/koningin-beatrix/>



'What do I see?'

The second *Kunst- en Kijkroute (Art-and Viewing route)* had as its theme: 'Wat zie ik?' ['What do I see?']. Participating artists: Armand Karsoredjo, Dorothea Nuyken, Erlan Brasdorp, Tapasia Darnani, Ludwig Ijzer, Arti Abhelakh, David Linga, Jennifer Baldwin and Vanessa de Vries. From August 11-17 2011 the public could visit the route at the following locations: Hotel Royal Torarica, Nola Hatterman Art Academy, AHKCO, Zus & Zo, Het Park and Lekker! (Van Sommelsdijkstr.) in Paramaribo. Also included in the route were: *The weight of darkness*, solo-exhibition of Sunil Puljun in De Hal and *mixed creations*, solo-exhibition of Leo Wong Loi Sing in the Kerkelijk Museum. The *Kunst- en Kijkroute* was held for the first time last year.

Passie, kleur en emotie



Invitation
PHOTO Ada Korbee, 2011

Fabian de Randamie held his first solo exhibition from August 20 – September 11 in Fort Nieuw Amsterdam: *Passie, kleur en emotie* [Passion, color and emotion]. In *de Ware Tijd* from August 19 he calls art a journey of discovery for the soul. "The pleasure of painting lies not within the result, but in doing and discovering. It helps me to overcome my fears and my limitations."

Waidi Sontowidjojo - June 2, 1937-July 26, 2011

Waidi Sontowidjojo was known best by his first name. This artist of Javanese origins was active in the visual arts for more than forty years. He is recognized especially for his emotional and expressive wooden sculptures. Characteristic for Waidi as a person were his relentless creative ambition and perseverance. He has acquired an honorable position in the Surinamese art world. On the Sranan Art-blog is a **post** dedicated to this artist who has gone before us.



Untitled, Waidi Sontowidjojo, year unknown, wooden sculpture
PHOTO Marieke Visser, 2011

Regional cultural experience

From August 26 – 28 the first *Inter Guiana Cultural Festival* took place in Paramaribo. The OAS has declared 2011 as the **Inter-American year of the culture**. In relation to this the first edition of the *IGCF* was held in Paramaribo. The FVAS participated actively with several workshops. There was also a combined exhibition with thirty artists from the three countries: *Togetherness*, in De Hal.

Tipi-experience in Misgunst, Saramacca



Martha Tjoe Ny
PHOTO Wim Verboven, 2011

Almost fifty people visited the special exhibition of Martha Tjoe Ny on Sunday July 10th at Plantation Misgunst, Saramacca. In the garden of her father Tjoe Ny had put up a tipi in which there was space for poetry, recitals, speeches and naturally visual art. The one-day exhibition was called "Na Mi M.I.T.": "It is I, Martha I. Tjoe Ny". The artist looks positively towards the future and hopes for a sequel next year, but then along with more colleague artists joining in.

Contemporary Art Museum Moengo a fact

The old hall of the EBS at the Abraham Crijnsenweg in Moengo has been reopened on July 30th as a museum: the Contemporary Art Museum Moengo (CAMM) is a fact. The first exhibition in this museum is the third in a series which altogether form the exhibition *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event*. With this yet another dream of artist **Marcel Pinas** becomes reality.

With his **Kibii Foundation** Pinas has been working on the realization of his dreams for over two years. The **Tembe Art Studio (TAS)** in Moengo is for over a year now, the center of several educational art- and culture activities. Together with other local and international artists who come there as artist in residence and as part thereof leave behind large spatial artworks in the public space, Pinas' envisioned art park is also starting to take shape. The opening consisted of a lively procession of invitees under the accompaniment of a brass band and majorettes, starting from TAS, past the objects of previous artists in residence, Jhunry Udenhout and **Charl Landvreugd**, to the museum.



Children from Moengo are looking at *A libi*, by Marcel Pinas
PHOTO Marieke Visser, 2011
The sign is being unveiled
PHOTO Marieke Visser, 2011



PHOTO Courtesy Memre, 2011

Memre, symbol of traffic safety

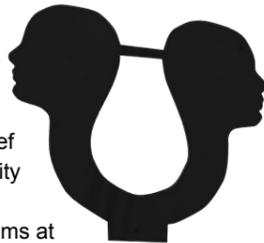
All of a sudden I would see something turn up, in a flash, while driving by. Then again at the Anton Dragtenweg, then again on a pole at the bridge across the Parakreek. A kind of harp-shaped symbol with two heads on either side facing opposite sides. Each time the thought would come up: "What could it mean?", but in the same second my mind was back on the road, on the traffic.

Then one day the symbol reappeared, but now as the profile picture of a friend. I asked her what it stood for and thus learned something everybody should be aware of. This symbol that has been designed by **Kurt Nahar** is part of the Memre-project of Odette Miranda and Nathalie Haynes, whom with this project want to ask the attention for traffic safety in Suriname.

On locations where a human life has been lost as the result of a traffic accident, such a Memre-traffic symbol is placed to remind those on the road to take care with regards to their behavior in traffic. By placing the symbol an attempt

is made at reducing the number of casualties from traffic and to show respect towards the victims. There are also bumper stickers with the slogan "Geef Voorrang aan het Leven" (Yield/give priority to life), billboards and since shortly also a commemorative monument for traffic victims at the Onafhankelijkheidsplein.

On the website of *Starnieuws*, July 25 2011, it says that the bottom part of the monument symbolizes a road that splits in two different directions. This split is the moment of the fatal accident. The top part consists of two heads looking in opposite directions which symbolize the victims and the survivors. The opposite directions symbolize their parting of ways. The head with its face turned towards the left represents the surviving relative who looks back upon the loss of a loved one. The head with its face turned towards the right stands for the deceased who has left this earthly existence.



..... Marieke Visser (Bennekom, the Netherlands, 1962) studied journalism and language and literature in the Netherlands. As publicist she writes a lot about art, culture, history and tourism. Two large art projects to which she has recently contributed are: **Paramaribo SPAN** and **Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event**. She is currently editor in chief of *Sranan Art Xposed*.



Input for
Sranan Art Xposed is welcome!
Have you been to an exhibition?
Send your remarks and/or
photo's to
srananart@gmail.com

Atelier Struikelblok Amsoistraat 49, Nieuw Charlesburg, Paramaribo, +597 (0)851 0525 / 547090, [e-mail](#), [website](#)

Contemporary Art Museum Moengo (CAMM) EBS-Hall, Abraham Crijnsenlaan, Moengo, +597 (0)856 5738 | *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event* | Solo-exhibition Marcel Pinas |
Open: July 30 - October 30, Sat & Sun 09:00-13:00 and 16:00-19:00

Fort Nieuw Amsterdam Wilhelminastraat, Nieuw-Amsterdam, Commewijne, +597 (0)32 2225, [website](#) | Open: Tue - Fri 09:00-17:00 and Sat, Sun and holidays 10:00-18:00

Gallery Singh Koningstraat 63, Paramaribo, Tel.: +597 492608, [e-mail](#)

Gudu Oso, koto- en angisa-museum Paltan Tewarieweg 8, Livorno, Paramaribo, 10:00-17:00 | Christine van Russel-Henar, de misi of the museum, says: "It should give visitors the feeling that they are stepping into a house from the past."

De Hal Grote Combéweg 45, Paramaribo | October 11-16 2011, Exhibition *Positions* Kurt Nahar & Remy Jungerman, org: Readytex Art Gallery | December 2-3 2011, Sabine Ensberg | Deember 9-11 2011, Henna Brunings | December 16-18 2011, Art market

Mini museum SMS pier Waterkant 5, Paramaribo, +597 (0)820 9210 en (0)854 0558

Museum of Fine Arts Paramaribo Zwartenhovenbrugstraat 107 -109, Paramaribo | Open: Wed-Fri: 11:00-16:00

Numismatisch Museum (Centrale Bank van Suriname), Mr. F.H.R. Lim A Postraat 7, Paramaribo, +597 520 016, [website](#)

Ons Erf Prins Hendrikstraat, Paramaribo | October 27 - November 06 2011 | *National Art Fair 2011* (NK '11)

Readytex / Readytex Art Gallery Maagdenstraat 44-48, Paramaribo, +597 421750 / 474380, [e-mail](#), [website](#) | For exhibition schedule of Readytex Art Gallery see De Hal

Royal House of Art Royal Torarica, Kleine Waterstraat 10, Paramaribo, +597 473821 / (0)855 3525

Surinaams museum Fort Zeelandia, Paramaribo, +597 425871, [e-mail](#), [website](#)

Villa Zapakara on the premises of Ons Erf, Prins Hendrikstraat 17-b, Paramaribo, +597 422212, [e-mail](#), [website](#) | The theme of the current exhibition *Ster in de stad* is the present day culture in city of millions, Mumbai (previously Bombay) in India. The interactive exhibition in which children can participate deals with life in this metropolis. Furthermore there are workshops, children's movies and even birthdays can be celebrated at Villa Zapakara. The program is on the website.

TIP!

An extraordinary exhibition of sculptor Iwan Verwey and others, in Waterland Art Garden, just past Domburg, in the district Wanica. The opening is somewhere in September. More information? Contact Myrza Axwijk: waterland.sr@gmail.com or call +597 (0)37 0711 of (0)878 1927. Other participating artists/persons/organizations: Ray Daal, Ro Heilbron, Celestine Raalte, Chef Tony and On Stage Productions.



TIP!

Rainforest Art Festival Fort Zeelandia premises & Onafhankelijkheidsplein / October 20 – 23 2011

A visit with Kurt Nahar

When I visit **Kurt Nahar** in the beginning of August at the **'Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten'** in Amsterdam, he has been in the Netherlands for about a month. His workspace attests of his productivity. On a table lie stacks of photographs, in pieces or not, and magazines with multiple pages ripped out of them. Hanging on the walls, are Works which are to become part of installations: toilet seats framing the pictures of several prominent political figures and 'The Last Supper', one of Nahar's most confrontational works that was recently shown in Brussels.

Nahar's work can be typified by a number of characteristics: confrontation, sexuality and power. With his work he gives expression to what he feels, but his message is relayed in a manner which does not immediately become visible. Nahar prefers to work with objects that symbolically portray his message. For 'The Last Supper', a piece that refers to the sexual abuse of children in the Roman Catholic Church, he used twelve vibrators. His message is simple: breaking through the taboo.

Nahar is best known for his works that refer to the December murders in Suriname. Reason for this is because this period of Surinamese history had great influence on his life. During the revolution he was a small boy and he grew up during the difficult times of its aftermath. He remembers heavy tanks in the streets, the imposed curfew and the gloomy atmosphere that reigned.

After completing the Nola Hatterman Art Academy in Suriname, Nahar resided in Jamaica for a while to attend the **Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts**, where colleagues such as **Marcel Pinas** and **George**

His message is simple: breaking through the taboo.

Struikelblok have studied before him. Initially Nahar had a hard time finding the direction he wanted to go in. Due to violent social unrests in Jamaica, Nahar was reminded of the difficult times in Suriname's history. He grabbed hold of the times surrounding the Revolution. He still had some trouble developing his own style, but now he had something to go on. He became engrossed in Surinamese visual art of which

Kurt Nahar at work at the 'Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten'
PHOTOS Priscilla Tosari, 2011

primarily the work of the 'Wakatjopu' Collective inspired him. Aside from this he found what he was looking for in **Dadaism**. This movement which was born out of the disillusionment of artists with the First World War, fits Nahar like a glove. He managed to give his frustration over Suriname's involved past a place by way of his Dadaism inspired installations. But also poetry, an art form dear to Nahar's heart, could be integrated into his work in a typical Dada-like way.

Back to his workspace. On the floor lies what is probably Nahar's most personal work to date. A sneak preview of an installation in which a portrait of his father, who passed away just last year, will play a prominent role. Twelve photographs of his father are lying on the ground. On each photograph his image fades, until all that remains is an almost completely white sheet of paper. The disappearance of dear and valuable memories is almost literally reflected in this work. This time around the source is not the history of a country, but Nahar's own personal history with identity as its earmark.

From September 11th 2011 there will be a flash exhibition of Kurt Nahar's work at **Galerie 23** in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Priscilla Tosari (Paramaribo, 1978) is art historian. Aside from her work at **'Stichting Beeldende Kunst Amsterdam'**, she also does freelance writing of art related articles. She lives in Almere and works in Amsterdam.

ON-SIGHT | BEYOND BORDERS

What was there to see, outside of Suriname, beyond borders, during the past months? On the **Sranan Art-blog** as well as in the **Sranan Art-photo archive** there are wonderful reports available.

Agnosia | Curator: **Charl Landvreugd**, Artists: Brian Coutinho, Avantia Damberg, **Faranú**, Rose Manuel, **Tiquestar Illuminat Rex**, Felix de Rooij and Patrick de Vries | July 14 - September 24, 2011 | Opening hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00-17:00 / Thursday 11:00-20:00 / Saturday 10:00-17:00 | **Centrum Beeldende Kunst Zuidoost**, Anton de Komplein 120, 1102 DR Amsterdam, the Netherlands, ph. ++31(0)20 2525401, info@cbkzuidoost.nl

In **Agnosia** guests curator/artist **Charl Landvreugd** explores different expressions in the imagery of Black Dutch artists. For this Group exhibition Landvreugd selected artists who were born and/or raised in the Netherlands. He wanted to showcase in which ways their positions as Black Europeans is visible in their work.

Agnosia is the incapacity to recognize something that the senses are capable of detecting. The term gains in significance with the questions that Landvreugd raises: Are extra signs and symbolisms in the imagery of the artist understood by the viewer/critic and is it even intended that they are understood? On September 22th 2011 there is an art café at 17:00 hrs with guest curator Charl Landvreugd, Egbert Alejandro Martina and the participating artists. In the near future a contribution on **Agnosia** will appear on the **Sranan Art-blog** written by **Rob Perrée**.

BITS & PIECES | BEYOND BORDERS



Since recently **Carlos Blaaker** gives painting lessons at **Landgoed Bloemhof**. Carlos Blaaker is a well-known Surinamese artist who has lived and worked in Rotterdam for years. He has been living on Curaçao for some time now. He gives the course: 'Basic Oil Painting Techniques'.

Landhuis Bloemhof | Santa Rosaweg 6, Curaçao | www.bloemhof.an | info@bloemhof.an

Input for
Sranan Art Xposed
is welcome!
Have you been to an exhibition?
Send your remarks
and/or photo's to
srananart@gmail.com



AGENDA | BEYOND BORDERS



What: *La Biennale di Venezia* – 54th International art exhibition – ILLUMInations

When: June 4-November 27, 2011

Where: Venice, Italy

What: *SURINAME* – Group exhibition from Atelier Opo Aye, Regillio Benjamin, **Kenneth Flijders**, Cathleen Jong, **Rinaldo Klas**, Denny Legion, Matoekoe, Mareen Moehamad, Aad Nicolaas, Nola Hatterman Art Academy, Albert Roessingh, Abigail Sharpe & Kunstwerkplaats Lutmastraat. Org.: **Amsterdam Outsider Art** with **Olof Art Galerie**

Where: Nieuwe Keizersgracht 1a (in: Van Limmikhof), 1018 DR Amsterdam, bschoonhoven@gmail.com, +31 (0)6 4549 0577 / (0)20 3302083

When: July 30-September 10, 2011. Open: Mon: 11:00-15:00, Tue-Sat: 11:00-18:00, Sun: closed

What: *OUR MAGIC HOUR* - How Much Of The World Can We Know?

Where: Yokohama, Japan

When: August 6-November 6, 2011

Yokohama Museum of Art, 3-4-1, Minatomirai Nishi-Ku, Yokohama 220-0012, Japan

What: *Kibii Wi Koni* – Solo-exhibition **Marcel Pinas**

Where: **Beddington Fine Art Gallery**, Les Remparts – 83830 Bargemon, Var, France

When: August 24-October 22, 2011

What: *Harmony*, duo-exhibition of **Sri Irodikromo** (wall objects) and **Hortence Brouwn** (sculptures)

Where: **Gallery Alma Blou**, Landhuis Habaai, Curaçao

When: August 31-September 17, 2011

What: *mer à boire*, solo-exhibition **Wouter Klein Velderman**

When: September 10-October 22, 2011 (Opening: September 10th 2011, 18:00-21:00). Opening hrs: Thursday thru Saturday 11:00-18:00 hrs.

Where: **C&H Art Space**, Tweede Kostverlorenkade 50, 1053 SB Amsterdam

What: *In de hoeken van de stilte*, **Kurt Nahar**

When: from September 11, 2011

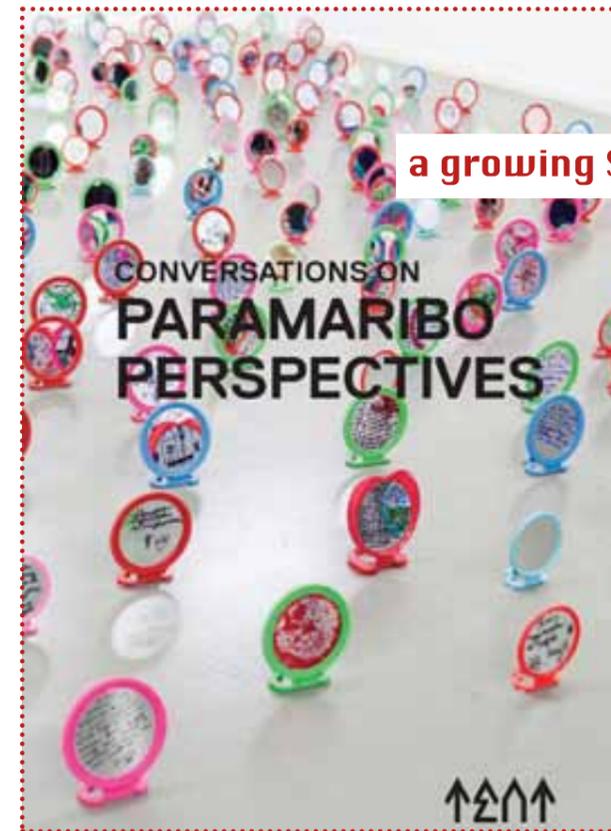
Where: **Galerie 23, Hedendaagse Afrikaanse Kunst**

What: *ReMap3* - An international contemporary art programme

Where: Kerameikos-Metaxourgeio, Athens, Greece

When: September 12-October 30, 2011

TEXT Dan Dickhof



a growing Surinamese cultural self-awareness

No longer within the margins of the 'Western' art:

For Surinamese artists such a theoretical framework will for example be helpful for the development of a more mature form of art criticism. It will also strengthen the cultural self-awareness of the Surinamese, lead to interesting discussions and possibly serve as inspiration. An important step in the creation of a theoretical framework is the recent publication of the book *Conversations on Paramaribo Perspectives*. It is a collection of essays, based upon debates which took place in the winter of 2010 in response to the exhibition *Paramaribo Perspectives* in **TENT** in Rotterdam. This Dutch-Surinamese exhibition was in some sense a continuation of the exhibition *Paramaribo SPAN* which was previously held in Suriname. Surrounding the Dutch exhibition, debates were organized about the exhibition itself, Surinamese contemporary art and about the book by the English sociologist Paul Gilroy *The Black Atlantic* in full *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). The exhibition itself was not set up around the theme of *The Black Atlantic*, but the debates did focus on the influence of the book on contemporary Surinamese and Dutch art.

Until quite recently art history was written (read: created) from Europe and America, the main focus thereof being on the so-called 'Western' art tradition. This has since changed and there are initiatives from inside as well as outside of Europe and America that strive to undermine this hegemony of the 'Western' art. But there is still much to be done. The Caribbean art world for example is generating significantly less attention than upcoming economies such as India and China, of which contemporary art from recent years has already been followed extensively and of which much is being written and theorized. It is precisely this theoretical framework that is important for the development of a more self-aware and respected local art world.

The Surinamese art scene is showing some interesting developments in recent years and holds a lot of promise for the future. But artists, gallery owners and curators are working harder than the development of the art historical theory is able to keep up with. For this is largely lacking. There is however a great need for this previously mentioned theoretical framework, not only for the Surinamese, but also for all others who work in the field of contemporary art. The dividing lines shaped by the colonial history are still of influence, but due to the modern globalization it has become clear to everyone that there exists not just one (art)history, but several (art)histories which have to be told. Even now contemporary art from the former colonies is still more readily found in a folk museum than in one for modern art. There has to be an end put to this historically originated artificial divide between 'Western' and 'non-Western' art and culture.

With this interesting series of debates an important step was taken for the Netherlands as well. In the country where proverbial endless discussions are known to be held about big and especially small matters, the deafening silence surrounding the post-colonial debate is still quite striking. In Great-Britain, the United States of America and a number of other countries the international post-colonial debates are already taking place. Within this framework there is also a debate about 'Blackness', a subject which has everything to do with Gilroy's study. In *Conversations on Paramaribo Perspectives* the artist Charl Landvreugd further examines the meaning of 'Zwart'. He consciously uses the Dutch word, because in the Dutch language the word for 'Black' does not have the same connotation as it does in the Anglo-American language. There, a whole area of research exists about the role of the Creole transnational culture.

From their own background as artist, writer or academic, the authors present their vision on the significance of Surinamese contemporary art and the idea of 'The Black Atlantic'. In a clear text Marieke Visser talks about her vision on the recent developments in the *Paramaribo SPAN*-exhibition and *Paramaribo Perspectives*, and talks about several artists. With regards to SPAN it is remarkable and regrettable that she does not clarify that at that time the Surinamese artists themselves suggested the Caribbean curator-artist **Christopher Cozier** to the Dutch partners. It was a unique step they took, not just by independently choosing a curator, but especially by consciously choosing for somebody from the region instead of someone from the Netherlands. In the

growing cultural self-awareness, this was an important step, one which insured that the influence of the Surinamese on the exhibition was one of a more equal standing.

Visser makes a good point by stating that the reception in the Dutch press regarding the exhibition in Rotterdam is greatly focused on politics (the developments surrounding president Bouterse and the freedom of expression). "The work becomes much more heavily charged than it is in Suriname," she states. She goes as far as to question whether the exhibition can actually be considered successful at all, because it had to live up to so many different high expectations and points of departure.

In those diverse and high expectations a certain danger is hidden. Because there are few large exhibitions of Caribbean art in Europe, there is an understandable, yet undesired tendency to be too all-encompassing. The well-known British academic **Leon Wainwright** points out that because of this, exhibitions run the risk of staying within the general sphere without actually coming to a point. Yet still he sees an important point coming to the foreground; that of Surinamese and Dutch works being portrayed at this exhibition in a manner of equal standing. But on the other hand he still sees the problem from the image of 'lagging behind' Caribbean art. This persistent image is still too strong, because the role of the 'non-Western' artist in the creation of modern art expressions is not yet sufficiently acknowledged. There are artists who played an active role, who sometimes even moved in the same circles as more famous white artists, but whom for the most part did not even make it as far as mention in a footnote in art history.

The artist argues for a larger 'Black consciousness' in the Netherlands

Wainwright focuses in particular on 'The Black Atlantic', on the role of the Creole artists and the mutual cultural ties that these people share with each other internationally. The author does point out that in this specific Surinamese case it should be taken into consideration that 'black art' refers to Creole art, and that as such many other large groups are left out. With this, another important point of this exhibition is brought forward. The core is not the role of the African Diaspora, but the meaning in the broader sense of 'The Black Atlantic'. An idea, that can not only be applied to Creoles, but that in a certain sense can just as well be applied to for example the descendants of Asian indentured laborers. Specifically, that inter-cultural and transnational connections caused by the colonial history are of influence to art and that the role of the 'non-Western' person has to be acknowledged in an equal manner, and yet not by trying to make too much of a separate history of it, which could then again cause it to be set aside

Comment from Marieke Visser:

The choice for a second curator was initially an idea of Thomas Meijer zu Schlochtern from the 'Centrum Beeldende Kunst Rotterdam'. Talks with, among others Marcel Pinas, then led to the choice for a co-curator falling on Christopher Cozier. For the other participating artists this was a pleasant surprise, though not something in which anyone other than Marcel Pinas and the organizers in Suriname had a deciding role to play.

from *mainstream art*.

The texts in the book are done in various styles of writing and deal with the theme in a sometimes clear and sometimes not so clear manner. Despite the amount of information in the text by Wainwright, it is for the most part easy to follow for outsiders. Landvreugd's impassioned text however, is possibly a bit more difficult for those who are new to the theme and the issues. The artist argues for a larger 'Black consciousness' in the Netherlands, but also sees difficulties in looking at 'Black' art from a 'Western' point of view. Certain culture specific things such as for example Winti are not understood; there is little room for similar spiritual issues. People don't know how to deal with the interpretations of the artist.

An interesting matter that **Özkan Gölpinar** touches upon, is that also the cultural funds should open themselves up more for newly developing areas such as South-America and the Caribbean. This is increasingly manifested with all kinds of recent exhibitions in the Netherlands about Suriname, and that is a positive development. Still the article by Gölpinar raises more questions instead of becoming specific and thus does not really end with a conclusion.

The final text from **Aspha Bijnaar** falls short. It is more an account of a debate and has very little added value to it. To me this text was not really necessary, other than the fact that it again places the other essays within the context in which they took place as discussions.

All in all *Conversations on Paramaribo Perspectives* is a valuable step in the development of the discussion about

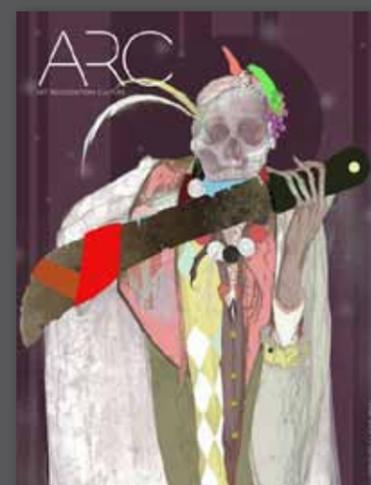
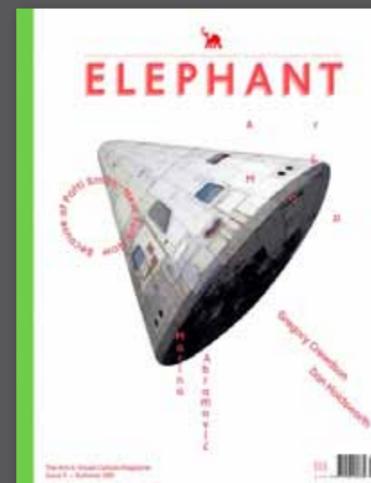
contemporary Caribbean art and that of Suriname in particular. It emphasizes the growing cultural self-awareness of the Surinamese art world. The publication will hopefully also contribute to get the postcolonial debate in the Dutch society going. It might not directly be a book for the general art lover, but it should, because of its large themes, still be read by everybody.

Conversations on Paramaribo Perspectives, Mariette Dölle (red.), TENT, Rotterdam, 2011

On the website of **Framer Framed** there is also a short review on the publication and also in the April 2011-edition of the Surinamese newsmagazine *Parbode*.

An interesting blog about *The Black Atlantic* by Sibö Kano can be found [here](#). ©

Dan Dickhof writes about old, modern and contemporary art for various media –such as *8WEEKLY*, *kM* and *Atelier*, worked in the area of auctions and helps with creating exhibitions. He studied at the art academy in The Hague and also works as a young **artist**. He is currently studying art history at the Universiteit Leiden.



Also in the Surinamese press ... / Bart Krieger

Caribbean In Transit is a digital Caribbean art magazine.

On the **website** people can register for the news brief. It also includes a 'call for papers' for the third edition of this magazine. A quotation from a recent post: "The arts is a form of action," wrote Caribbean intellectual and choreographer Rex Nettleford. As action, the arts can be an effort inclined toward a pursuit of social change. The arts can be political acts. The arts can liberate ways of being and refashion ways of thinking in our world. The arts can be used to transform communities and transfigure societies".

While searching for ways in which we can maximize what we can achieve with *Sranan Art Xposed*, we recognize the same desires, the same needs elsewhere in the World. Two examples are **ARC Magazine** and *Bidoun*. ARC Magazine is a new glossy quarterly magazine about Caribbean art and culture. ARC stands for "Art. Recognition. Culture". It is published from St. Vincent & the Grenadines by the artists **Nadia Huggins** and **Holly Bynoe**. In the third edition an article by Melanie Archer about Marcel Pinas: 'Where We Still Belong. The Gradient Marcel Pinas'. *Bidoun* functions as a platform to inform an increasingly large public about art and culture in the Middle East. The magazine and the **website** are an inspirational source for artists and art lovers who are interested in occasionally looking at things from another point of view.

Two other websites we would like to bring to your attention are those of **Repeating Islands** and **Elephant Magazine**. Repeating Islands is a blog with news and comments about the Caribbean culture, literature and art. Ivette Romero-Cesareo from Puerto Rico and Lisa Paravisini-Gebert, also from Puerto Rico, are the initiators of this blog. *Elephant Magazine* is a magazine that is, according the mission statement, direct, sincere and multi-disciplinary. "Elephant looks for its ethos in the time before the 'art world' and the 'creative industries' took over, a time when artists didn't value their work according to the auction prices, but by the reaction of their peers to their ideas".

Also the Surinamese press shows attention for art. In the newspaper *de Ware Tijd* especially Stuart Rahan makes a good contribution from the Netherlands. In *Times of Suriname* every Friday includes something about art and culture. Every month in *Parbode*: the column 'Kunstschatten' (art treasures) by Bart Krieger. On the radio, Radio 10 (FM 88.1) on every Thursday afternoon at 15:30 hrs, Carla Tuinfort has an interesting program, 'Egi Du Magazine', about art and culture. And finally on every Monday at the end of the afternoon, work from the **Readytex Art Gallery** can be seen on 'STVS Monday Live' with Thea Valk.