



REFUGEE



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Refuge.

An open call exhibition of Bahamian art following Hurricane Dorian.

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Cover: *Mystery in da Mangroves, 2019 (New Providence)*

Lemero Wright

Acrylic on canvas

48" x 60"

Collection of the artist

Pages 6–7:

Visitor viewing the artwork "Specimen" by Cydne Coleby.

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AFTER THE STORM: WHY ART STILL MATTERS

Amanda Coulson

Executive Director, NAGB

Like everybody on New Providence and across the other islands of our archipelago, all of the team members at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (NAGB) watched and waited with a rock in their bellies and their hearts already broken, as the storm ground slowly past the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

With co-workers who have close family in both of those places, as well as the artists and teachers with whom we have close ties and connections, and not forgetting team members here on New Providence who suffered the loss or damage of their homes due to flooding—the full NAGB team gathered at our “outdoor conference room” on the NAGB’s veranda, on September 3rd, 2019 a few days after Dorian’s passage, struggling to find a way to cope with how to move forward.

How could we channel our expertise to support the nation at this time? How could we continue to keep art meaningful through this tragedy? To make our work still feel as important as ever?

The NAGB team came up with several thoughts:

We have a facility, a building, that has space and staff. So, the easiest function was to be a site for the collection of donations. Working with Equality Bahamas we were able to serve hundreds of families, often those persons who had fallen through the cracks.

We have networks of artists, creatives and teachers all over the archipelago. We used those networks to compile lists of missing and found artists and art teachers, and we strategised how we could support these people in rebuilding their lives and their economies.

We have always been, and will always be, a space that is not only a sanctuary and a site of healing for all Bahamians and residents, but is also a location for facing difficult issues head on. Through our exhibitions we have grappled with hard topics that plague our community. Now we were prepared to work towards surviving trauma—not only for those who had actually experienced immense suffering during the storm, but also for those who were not physically

there, who watched and imagined their own future within these new climatic landscapes.

In addition to conceiving this particular show “Refuge,” in order to create space for artists to speak to their fears, experiences or imagined futures, we have also facilitated regular mental health sessions, visited shelters and schools accompanied by an art therapist, and travelled to the affected Family Islands themselves. Our commitment to create programmes that will help to heal the nation will continue.

All Bahamians were traumatised in one way or another by this event. We recognize that there MUST be some way to provide an escape from the harrowing images that bombarded us resulting in a constant reliving of the horror and creating “compassion fatigue.” On the expert advice of many mental health professionals who stressed how vital it was for those affected to “take a break”—we offered the NAGB as a site where this could happen. So, apart from our regular Free Sundays, entry to the museum was made FREE to all Bahamians and residents from September until the end of December 2019.

“We Gatchu” is the NAGB’s overarching hurricane relief campaign, which will provide focus to all of our efforts in the coming months or years by continuing the important work of the institution in response to the specific needs of our nation.

We have always done this work—as have many other artists—for example with the “Hope is a Weapon” campaign that we supported in the last national exhibition, long before the passage of Dorian. After the storm, we partnered with the artist Angelika Wallace-Whitfield to extend this campaign with the addition of a new stamp “BahamasStrong” on special limited edition T-shirts in order to raise money for the relief effort. Another young creative, Jodi Minnis, organised the auction “Alleviate” which was held at NAGB to raise funds for relief efforts; Kachelle Knowles and DC Pratt also presented ideas on how to use their talents and connections to assist; whilst Baha Mar and PopopStudios are working with us to create free studio space for displaced artists.

The NAGB, along with the Antiquities Museum and Monuments Corporation (AMMC),

coordinated a special Cultural Heritage Rescue Mission trip spearheaded by the Smithsonian Institute's experts to assist in triage and care for damaged art works. They met people on the ground, and gave advice, assistance and support to those persons desperately trying to remediate their precious items.

Many people might ask, "When people are hungry, or trying to repair their homes, why would this be a priority?" The answer is, in the words of the Smithsonian's Distinguished Scholar and Ambassador-at-Large, Richard Kurin who lead the trip, "When people are in crisis, the first thing they cling to is their culture." He has witnessed this need to hang on to one's humanity again and again—both in war zones and disaster zones.

This is why art still matters and why this work must continue for us. Art is, as it forever will be, a way to find solace and to heal. 🏠

Page 11:

Limited edition "Hope is a Weapon – Bahamas Strong" T-shirt by Angelika Wallace-Whitfield, as worn by Natalie Willis, NAGB Assistant Curator and proud Grand Bahamian, on the NAGB Campus with original "Hope is a Weapon" art intervention piece by Wallace-Whitfield, which appeared all over New Providence during the 9th National Exhibition, NE9 "The Fruit & The Seed".
Photo by Jackson Petit, NAGB.

Pages 12–13: 1932 or 2019; They Search The Wreckage, 2019 (Abaco)

Leanne Russell (with collaborators Jack Mertland Malone, Brent Malone's grandfather, and Ashrica Gardiner)
Photo collage on canvas
18" x 26"
Collection of the artist







CURATOR'S NOTE

Holly Bynoe

The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas acknowledges the dawning of a new chapter in our country's history after the passage of Hurricane Dorian. Collectively, we made a decision to suspend our planned exhibitions for the end of the year and chose instead to extend an open call to our creative community, to start a larger conversation on the personal and collective impacts after the passage of this tempest.

This new era has led us to explore the mission and values of the NAGB even further and to examine what it means to be a socially responsible institution in the age of climate crisis. We are a population on ground zero of this transformation, and as we work to regroup, reconcile and rebuild—now and into the future—the NAGB commits to providing sanctuary and respite for all who rise within the nation's borders in order to heal, and to be seen and heard through the act of creating.

In this moment, how can we channel what we do and direct or focus our expertise to support our vulnerable creative communities at this time? How can we continue to keep art relevant as a purposeful conduit of emotion in the wake of this national tragedy?

While we have not turned away from difficult conversations in our exhibition programme, in this pivotal moment we are asking ourselves how best can we face, fight and articulate this level of loss and still find a space of hope. We acknowledge that this moment has been devastating to most—and for some, it might be too soon to think about creating, whilst for others, not soon enough—as creative outlets have been proven to alleviate and give space to other ways of belonging and healing, something that we need as a nation, now more than ever.

Artists need a safe outlet to share their experiences, nightmares, dialogues and thoughts on the future of our vulnerable nation, and to determine how we fit into the global schematic, as we deepen our faith to begin to build our future again.

The frontline of climate injustice knows no colour, creed, national status nor import. These natural disasters are great equalizers that force us to look at certain truths about how we build

our countries, lives, legal frameworks, policies and relationships. They also speak to us about resilience in the overwhelming and dynamic stories that have drawn shape in our memories, connect us to the ways in which our ancestors managed survival and to the rituals that they have left for us to ponder. In all of it, what we know is that the stories, visions and inspirations emerging in the aftermath and during recovery need to be recorded, seen and witnessed by one another, the nation and the world.

“Refuge” began as a call to our community to think about this tragedy and these moments, and to use them as therapy in an opportunity to reflect on how we pull ourselves up and bring the pieces back together. Our hearts and nation have been splintered, but our spirit is now called to do the important work of healing and becoming grounded even deeper in our communities and our humanity.

“Refuge” supports the work of 42 creatives with a collection of 71 visual manifestations and writings. Participating artists include Caroline Anderson, Dede Brown, Kristin Brown, Jenna Chaplin, Lisa Codella, Cydne Coleby, Ashley Comarcho, Claudette Dean, Eva Dehmel, Ritchie Eyma, Tamika Galanis, Yutavia George, Thomas Hairston, Ken Heslop, Lucas Kaighin, Lavarrick King, Boryana Korcheva, Alton Lowe, Anina Major, Dylan Miles, Nicole Minnis-Ferguson, Roshanne Minnis, Frecinda Mullings, Dyah Neilson, Matthew Rahming, Alisa Robinson, Jordan Russell, Leanne Russell, Heino Schmid, Laurie Tuchel, Christina Wong, Lemero Wright and Xan-Xi.

Writers include Kevanté Cash and Dorothy-Mae Eldemire, Bernard Ferguson, Faith Hall, Angelique Nixon, Nastassia Pratt, Ashleigh Rolle, Maelynn Seymour-Major and Ide Thompson.

The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas would like to thank all of the creatives who have positively responded to this moment of transformation and challenge. 🇧🇸





Pages 14–15

NAGB Executive Director, Amanda Coulson (far right), exhibition curator Holly Bynoe (middle, back facing) and Associate Curator, Richardo Barret (middle, front facing), leading a tour for The Most Honourable Prime Minister of The Bahamas, Dr. Hubert Minnis (second from left) and NAGB Chairman, Lawrence Bascom (far left).

Pages 18–19: Home, 2019 (New Providence)

Heino Schmid

Acrylic, graphite and oil stick on wood with found palm leaves

70" x 96"

Collection of the artist

Pages 20–21:

Exhibition curator Holly Bynoe with the Most Honourable Prime Minister of The Bahamas, Dr. Hubert Minnis.

**WRITERS:
ESSAYS/POEMS**

**KEVANTÉ
A.C. CASH**



Ushered on earth by Neptune to bring teachings on radical self-love, kevanté a.c. cash (b.1996) is an Afro-Bahamian creative writer and arts journalist from Nassau, The Bahamas based in Manchester, England. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Journalism from the University of The Bahamas, and is currently in pursuit of a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. Her poetry and meditative essays explore the identity of self through spirituality, sexuality, Black womanhood, Caribbean upbringing and pop culture these works exist on The Reign XY and Black Girl In Om publications. Her journalism captures the voices of creatives whose stories go untold, published through the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas and The Union at her current university. She writes for healing and self-liberation, as this functions as a form of resistance for her, in hopes to inspire introspection, self-healing and emancipation within the lives of those who encounter her work. Kevanté is part of a women writers' circle in Nassau conducted by Maelynn Seymour-Major and Yasmin Ginton. She has been writing creatively for as long as she's known how to write, and professionally, for the last six years. When she's not listening to neo-soul, sipping on lemongrass tea or twerking to Afrobeats, you can find her at a beach (back home), journaling, making poetry or mashin' down on some conchy conch fritters.

**DOROTHY-MAE
A. ELDEMIRE**



Dorothy-Mae A. Eldemire is a writer with a distinct love for the environment. She currently resides in St. Petersburg, Florida and holds two bachelor's degrees from Eckerd College—one in Environmental Science and the other in Creative Writing, and plans to eventually obtain masters degrees in Environmental Policy and Creative Writing. In her writing, characters become forces within their localised natural environment. She places them in worlds filled with landscapes that consume the eye, spectacular oceans—beautiful and uninhibited—and things that pique their curiosity. These worlds have a kind of beauty that is fresh and unexpected. They are able to find solace in the landscapes they come to love, leaving readers drawn in not only by plot and motive, but by all that was not initially visible. Also an avid music listener and critic, her album reviews have been acknowledged by Florida's Sunshine State Journalism Awards for three consecutive years. In between writing, she enjoys eating rum and raisin ice cream, sitting on empty beaches early in the morning, creating new playlists to match her moods and driving long distances to quell her never-ending wanderlust.

Artists' Statement

Sometimes we need a hand to hold to help us through our tragedy and trauma. The act of confronting our inner struggle is a difficult one, and it often takes courage to admit to ourselves that we need to heal. Processing, however, doesn't have to be done alone and this collaborative effort is a manifestation of that truth. In "a call to refuge: healing isn't linear," poets kevanté a.c. cash and Dorothy-Mae A. Eldemire sit and reason with their emotions amidst the echo chamber of calamity transpiring within the country post storm. They place their focus on two main elements: Mother Earth and anarchy, and the relationship thereof.

Divided into three parts, "calypso's lament," "Gaia's guidance" (written individually by the poets) and "fool's paradise" (written collaboratively by the poets), this series shows how sometimes, there are no definite resolutions to clearing the confusion surrounding us. Like poetry and healing, life isn't linear. Often, we write to make sense of the nonsensical things, and maybe that is good enough. 🏠

kevanté a.c. cash

GAIA'S GUIDANCE

solace to carry the dreams of many
courage to bear their bones

seated on heads like crowns of glory,
kept in baskets filled with hope.

prayers kick up in exhalation;
feet trudge through streams of doom.

they follow the chanting constellation
of Gaia's love steering them home.

Dorothy-Mae A. Eldemire

CALYPSO'S LAMENT

from the crest of a wave,
the daughter of the cerulean tropics wept.

the ocean was her heart, pumping life
into the hurricane ravaged shoreline.

in her youth, she crafted the island in the palm of her hand,
sprinkling hibiscus and poinciana to flourish,

palm trees to welcome island visitors, mangroves
to protect her masterpiece. in the aftermath, she wept for her people,

her creation. and in her tears, created
and re-created, and brought life to

the islands that called out to her.
palm sprouts surfaced, hibiscus trees pushed

towards sunlight's call. in her weeping,
they found solace.

kevanté a.c. cash + Dorothy-Mae A. Eldemire

FOOL'S PARADISE

1. they couldn't see it coming—
the way the storm nestled
between cracks of fingers,

making a home in their chests,
flooding earth, ingesting stories
our ancestors rooted in soil.

2. as waves crashed against
the mangroves, they dove
between the hearts of cupboards,

silencing the uproar of the split
of paradise. bodies formed into
oysters, palms clasped into solace;

and in the crease of elbows
stood the plea of sunlight.

3. yet in the calm, still silence,
chaos entered prudent minds
turning aftermath into anarchy,

and strife to pandemonium;
stagnant minds and hearts
working together as one.

4. they hope for justice but are served
the rifles of our tongues; hope for love
but are given the remnants of rooftops

of dreams that once stood,
now standing on silent

unfound bodies
that watch as loved ones cast blame
on those designated strangers;

still flinching at the sound of "sak pase."
one boat ride away from "s'gern on bey,"
unable to exchange pride for asylum.

BERNARD FERGUSON



Bernard (he/him) is a Bahamian poet, essayist, and MFA candidate at New York University. He's the winner of the 2019 Hurston/Wright College Writers Award, the 2019 92Y Discovery Contest, the 2019 Cincinnati Review Poetry Prize, winner of the 2019 Breakwater Review Peseroff Poetry Prize, and the 2019 Nâzım Hikmet Poetry Prize. He is also an Adroit Journal Gregory Djanikian Scholar. He has work published or forthcoming in *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *The Southampton Review*, *The Common*, *SLICE Magazine*, *Pinwheel*, *Winter Tangerine*, and the *Best New Poets 2017* anthology, among others. He's currently working on a book about hurricanes and climate change, and he wants you to riot about the climate crisis. Please tell him about your wonder.

Artist Statement

2019 was a terrible year for The Bahamas. A terrible year for me. I lost two friends, Blair and Alrae, in Italy in June and the grief has been awful. Then, in September, Dorian hit and changed the lives of so many people in the citizenry of love. It's been a hurricane year—both emotionally and quite literally.

For these poems, I wanted to reflect on the events of June in some way, while also speaking directly to the crisis that unfolded in Grand Bahama and The Abacos. I also wanted to make sure the work was open, and gestured outward. I wanted the poems to pull in artifacts and language from history, and I wanted them to have a conversation with different pieces of art that have already tried to speak to what it means to live on an island, what it means to face climate change in the Caribbean. For the first piece, I spent a bit of time talking about grief and hurricanes while also tracing the origin of the word back to the indigenous Taino people that once inhabited these islands and islands all across the Caribbean. For the following two pieces, I took my prompts from other art pieces. One takes a scene from *Moonlight*—where a boy is held in water as the waves lap and lick, and the man holding the boy says “you're in the middle of the world right now”—and tries to use that image to talk about a similar instance I had with a cousin once when I was younger. Another piece takes a prompt from Jason deCaires Taylor's *Ocean Atlas* sculpture off the coast of New Providence.

It is my hope that these poems communicate my own complicated grief while also imagining, gently and carefully, how we might grow to understand hurricanes and an Atlantic that we now know first hand are so capable of such terrible devastation. 🏠

Bernard Ferguson

IT MIGHT BE A HURRICANE YEAR

said my Caribbean professor when I told her something terrible happened to Blair and Alrae and so i could work and be academic no longer. *Blair* and *Alrae* i said as if she knew them personally, the way i thought the world must have known them, personally now, how i seemed to see their names stretched across the Hudson just like their bodies were pulled across the Po. and she was right—*hurricane* being the name of the feeling, the twist of it, the knowing my friends died in a country that was not ours, not theirs, not mine. though it seems she said *hurricane* and meant it, said it, *hurricane* year, as if she knew, months before Dorian arrived, that Dorian would arrive and pull a cousin out to sea. the twist, the knowing of it, i watched and held my phone to the faces of my friends in Brooklyn and said see, said sea, as they saw the video of the woman screaming to heaven, the ocean thick and many tongued at her feet. said *these people are me*. furican, maybe, the Arawaks would have called it. furicane, juracán, hurricaino, though none of them survived that storm of men that arrived on their shores, the men and women that brought the men and women dark as me, the ones that would lead to me and the ones i love now and the storm that took some of their names. *hurricane* i say in a park in Brooklyn and i think of Blair. *hurricane* i say in the sentence where i list the names of dead. *hurricane* i say once more before a prayer, the one where i beg to never say it again.

GOODMAN'S BAY, 1997

after Moonlight

before Dorian, before Irma and Matthew, before Ike and Floyd, cousin Chrissy held my neck in the water, held me at the bend of my knees as if i were a bride. hallowed out like the bones of a bird, clean and light, i could have taken off as if with wings. and when he removed his limbs beneath mine, i began my sinking, pulling water into my nose, into my chest, though it should be easy, Chrissy said before catching me again, the ocean thin and flat over my face and mouth. i choked and cleaved salt from my lungs as he put his lips to my ears and told me we were in the middle of the world. told me the water had me like he had me in the way that it would never let me go. told me to be calm and breathe easy and let the ocean push me up with its palms. so i breathed easy, and let mercy buoy me. i dried in the sun, atop the muscle, rocking forth and back in his lie.

OCEAN ATLAS

after Jason deCaires Taylor's underwater sculpture

low and blue, beneath the blue dark water,
the form of a girl chiseled into stone.
the blues atop her head bright and shifting
and darkening down the length of her,
the blue so blue it became a kind of black
and full of shadows moving and not moving
at once. this was the ocean: a porous swell
of dark that turned the color of jewels
when light gleamed through. the girl on one knee.
her head pulled to the side and shoulders low
as if she were carrying stones, a burden
we could not see but for the water.
somewhere north, & so far north, so white
that there is little green, there are stones
made of water though the girl
has never touched herself, felt their touch
cool as metal, the rocks not rocks but stones
of ice and soon to be softened to water,
the water soon to swell and the girl's burden with it.
and though the girl knows she remains and refuses
to move. though made of stone the girl could gather
or want to gather but does not. she does not turn
with will. she does not turn her stone to flesh
and wish the burden away.
stone girls are like stone men and stone
men do little more than duty.
the girl was large as if she were made
of one hundred, arranged and tight, one hundred girls

fastened into shape and all refusing to not move.
when a storm rumbles above land, when the wind whipped
with rain pulls an ocean to shore, when a girl on land
is unfastened and pulled out into the solvent night,
the girl disappears `til found again, found
and placed into a grave, a grave that is inside the earth
the way the ocean is of the earth. the girl comes back
as stone. there are girls there lining the deep, lining the shadows.
women, men, children with stones brewing on their backs.
girls growing darker beneath the weight. not even them,
the legion of them, can change our fortune.

FAITH HALL



Faith Hall is a Bahamian writer, author, poet, consultant and strategist. She was born in Eight Mile Rock, Grand Bahama on June 13, 1975, to the late Moses Hall (Attorney, M.P.) and the late Nurse Anna Hall, a midwife, who although Jamaican born, holds the record for delivery of births in The Bahamas. Ms. Hall is a 2001 Law Graduate with Honors (LL.B Hons.) from the University of Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, with undergraduate studies in Psychology and Sociology. In 2012, Ms. Hall served briefly, as the Editor-in-Chief for the Bahamasair inflight magazine, *Up and Away*. She is also a biographer, and sought after, autobiographical ghost writer. Most notably, Ms. Hall appears as a writer and spoken word artist on, "Black Current Jam", the recently released album of seven-time Grammy winner, bassist Robert Hurst (www.roberthurst.com). Ms. Hall is presently researching and writing on the subject of climate change.

Artist Statement

Hurricane Dorian hit The Bahamas two days after the death of my mother. Mummy died in her bed with me laying right next to her. She weighed less than 60 pounds and was quite tired of a cancer-riddled existence. She and I (as her primary caregiver) had endured 12 rounds of chemotherapy every three weeks since mid-January 2018, 6 weeks of radiation, 6 weeks of recovery from radiation in hospital and 6 months of at home convalescence, which ended with her death on the evening of August 28.

Around the same time we started chemotherapy, I was contracted to write the story of Aline LaBassiere and her family, which included her 5-year-old autistic grandson, Noah, who were temporary environmental refugees in Nassau after being displaced from Dominica after Hurricane Maria. Aline LaBassiere's story, which now has my attention again, is personally inspiring because she is a seemingly ordinary woman who has endured many a storm of life, inclusive of the Nigerian Biafran War and the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Her resilience is symbolic of the strength of women the world over, and gives hope for the future survival of all who may be displaced because of climate related disasters. My mother is/was also one of these symbolic women. Although born in Jamaica, she followed love, moved to the tiny settlement of West End, Grand Bahama, married my Dad and gave her entire life to nursing in a country that always branded her a "Paper Bahamian." My Mummy was the greatest Bahamian I've known to date, delivering or assisting in the delivery of over 3000 babies well into her 78th year of life. Her early years, 1972–1986 when she was the community nurse in West End recorded her working for 14 years with no weekends off or vacation. By the time she applied for back-pay, it was decided

by the Government that she had waited too long to apply. Still she loved The Bahamas, the profession and its people as if her roots were buried here.

My piece, "Refuge + Refuse = Refugee" was inspired by the collision of these stories, these storms of life and these women. Their human condition is not unlike so many Haitians who either died or were deported because of Dorian. I don't condone illegality but I do believe in nonviolent resistance to injustice until a society evolves. Sometimes it is that foreign element among us, who quietly works to help build us up—certainly not all of them—but some! Additionally, we must also be mindful of how the world may treat us if ever some or all of our citizenry are forced to become environmental refugees. Karma is real! Hurricanes tend to strip us to our basic humanity. May they one day make us better human beings. 🏠

Faith Hall

REFUGE + REFUSE = REFUGEE

No refuge—refugee, refused per ancestry, like refuse;
Junk status—though your blood be red, and you're human bred;
Shipped back south, like your kindred dead,
To rot in an unknown condition, scapegoats for seeming acts of contrition.
We take your labor, sexual prowess, and pork grio;
Pickalese, Barbancourt and xenophobia make an explosive trio;
Today inhumanity for you but tomorrow Trump will remind;
Check Trudeau's Canada—maybe they will be kind.

Refuge for me—a Bahamian born, ga dead, half bred;
Dorian inspected my passport and my sovereignty, dread;
8 Generations 8 mile rock, Grand Bahama paternal—
Paper Bahamian Jamaican, national record midwife—maternal.
The winds howled, the waters rushed (kaliking Kalik), the concrete fell;
Hundreds of undocumented souls returned home to heaven and hell.
No nationality there, amazing grace determines how we fare;
Beyond the angry skies, where peril rises with despair.

There goes my refuge, like the ships which brought refuse;
But my ancestors refused to be reduced to an excuse;
Whether 400 years ago—or 400 days you know;
Self hatred is - as self hatred go.

One can't find true refuge—while others are treated like refuse;
REFUGEE—YOU THEN ME!

Dorian has spoken ...

ANGELIQUE NIXON



Angelique V. Nixon, Ph.D. is a Bahamas-born, Trinidad-based writer-artist-scholar-activist-poet. She earned a Ph.D. in English with specialisation in Caribbean literature, postcolonial studies, women and gender studies from the University of Florida. Her work in mixed-media art began through poetry and a desire to make silences visible as a path for healing and community building. She is a self-taught interdisciplinary artist whose practice includes mixed media, collage, digital and literary art, photography and mas making. Angelique's artwork has been featured at exhibitions in The Bahamas, namely Transforming Spaces 2012 and 2014 and the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas NE7 and NE8. Her work was also selected for exhibitions in Europe—"Nassau Calling" at the BROTKunshalle Gallery in Vienna and "Overseas—Cuba and The Bahamas" at the Halle 14 Centre for Contemporary Art in Germany. She is author of the art and poetry chapbook *Saltwater Healing—A Myth Memoir & Poems* and the scholarly book *Resisting Paradise: Tourism, Diaspora, and Sexuality in Caribbean Culture*.

Artist Statement

I wrote these words grieving for home in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. I live and work on another island in the Caribbean (Trinidad) equally vulnerable to the climate crisis and the unsustainable development we are all living in, and so I watched Dorian being outside but inside. All I could do was write from a place of deep sorrow and despair. All I could do was share my grief through words. Months have passed and nothing will ever be the same for The Bahamas and indeed for the region. I offer these words pulled from two articles I wrote for "In The Diaspora" column with Stabroek News as a call and response for action (a decolonial uprising) and to make visible the connections between climate crisis, unsustainable development and small island disasters. I share these in love and solidarity across the region in hopes that we can rise up—together across our differences—to rage more and make furious our survival. 🏘️

Angelique V. Nixon

NO REFUGE (WHEN THE APOCALYPSE IS NOW)

Excerpts from “When the Apocolypse is Now—Climate Crisis, Small Island Disasters & Migration in the Aftermath of Dorian” (9 September 2019)

Too many people are traumatised re-counting the stories of watching loved ones being pulled away by the tidal surge or drowning in attempts to get out of flooding homes and shelters. The stories are beyond heart breaking and filled with apocalyptic horror—as people await rescue and relief, share how they survived and how they watched others perish. It is almost too much, but we must bear witness and share in this grief and sorrow so that healing and recovery are possible. This is small island disaster.

We must understand that the most vulnerable or marginalised communities (poor and working class folks, persons living with disabilities and severe health conditions, elderly, migrants and those caring for others) before the disaster will be the most needy in the aftermath. This is how disasters work. They are not the great equalizer as some say. All they do is unearth and exacerbate the inequalities and vulnerabilities that existed before. We have seen this again and again even in the United States—from Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans to Superstorm Sandy in the Northeast and the continued failed response and relief for Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria—the most vulnerable are made more vulnerable.

While relief efforts are mobilising—donations and funds collected from across the region and world—and disaster agencies are operating, there remains disparity in access to relief and rescue. Across Grand Bahama (with the second largest population in the country, over 50,000 people)—from the city of Freeport to settlements like High Rock—there is widespread devastation. The people of Grand Bahama are saying they feel ignored and forgotten in the relief efforts—for days, weeks, and even months after the storm—as survivors searched for loved ones, led their own rescue operations with people who lost less, who helped those who lost everything.

My elder aunt and uncle, and a family friend who is disabled, survived the hurricane and the flooding in a one-story concrete house far from the coast, inland in Freeport, Grand Bahama. They watched in fear as the flood waters rose into the yard then up into their home, where they

had to sit waist deep in those waters for hours. Many areas of Freeport flooded from the storm surge and hours of hurricane rain. While their house is still standing, most of their belongings are damaged or destroyed. They say there are just happy and blessed to be alive. My cousin says they are both traumatised, as are so many people in Grand Bahama. Theirs is just one story out of the hundreds of families who are struggling now in the aftermath.

Entire settlements in Abaco have been destroyed—from the largest town of Marsh Harbour to the almost forgotten shanty town of Haitian migrants and Haitian Bahamians called The Mudd and Pigeon Peas, with an estimated population of 2,600 or more Haitian migrants and Haitian Bahamians. They are one of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities in The Bahamas—too often ignored and treated inhumanely by the state and by Bahamians generally. It is likely that many undocumented Haitian migrants in Abaco might have been fearful to seek shelter in the storm even with the mandatory evacuation. Haitian migrants have escaped one set of unliveable conditions to find themselves facing another.

Hurricane Dorian is the most powerful storm ever to hit the Northern Bahamas with 185 mph winds, 220 mph gusts and 20 feet tidal surges. It was/is unimaginable. The slow moving massive storm ripped through the Abacos and then sat stationary over Grand Bahamas for more the 40 hours. There is no way to prepare fully for this. Even for a country whose people are accustomed to hurricanes, have strict building codes, know storms and have planned for hurricanes every season for generations, and increasingly in the past decade of more frequent and intense storms—nothing could prepare us for this and its aftermath. The Bahamas is not prepared. Neither is any of our island-nations and countries in our vulnerable region. And neither are most countries really prepared for this kind of disaster—a disaster fueled by climate change, injustice and inequality. This is the apocalypse now of climate crisis. In the past decade, we have witnessed and experienced the strength, intensity and frequency of hurricanes fueled by climate change, season after season—not only in The Bahamas but across the Caribbean region.

This is the latest being on the front lines of climate change and small island disasters, impacting all of us in one way or another across this Caribbean region. Mass migration and devastation

has already happened because of widespread disasters after hurricanes and earthquakes—Haiti, Puerto Rico, Dominica, Barbuda, Virgin Islands, St. Martin, and on and on. And so we must plan for this now future and figure out how to best prepare, support each other and think about what will happen when we all become climate refugees.

Excerpts from “What Does It Mean To Survive After Dorian? On Caribbean Disasters, Development and Climate Crisis” (30 September 2019)

The stories of rescue and relief in The Bahamas since Hurricane Dorian have left me and so many in heartbreak and reflecting on what it means to survive—from the man who rode out the entire storm hunkered in the mangroves of Abaco, to the people who held onto trees during the storm surge, to the sick baby found in The Mudd with a father who didn’t leave for fear of being deported. The injured survivors (Bahamians and Haitians) at the Princess Margaret Hospital in New Providence telling doctors that they don’t want treatment, they don’t want to live, because they have lost everyone—sole survivors of families drowned or swept away in the storm. The Haitian migrants (now twice displaced) calling for the bodies of their loved ones to be found and buried with respect and dignity. Haitian migrants living in fear of deportation and hiding even with the promise of the Bahamian government that deportations are supposedly on pause. Bahamians trying to enter the United States to visit family and get away in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian and being denied entry. The explicit xenophobia and framing of our people as “very very bad,” “drug dealers” and “gang members.” Haitian children being deported by the Bahamian government. These stories are hard to hold or imagine, yet we must.

Where is our regional climate action, our regional uprising? Perhaps it is being in the midst of relief and recovery from Hurricane Dorian just a few months ago, still in recovery from Hurricane Maria just two years ago, from Hurricane Matthew three years ago, from the earthquake in Haiti a decade ago, and on and on. But perhaps the disasters we don’t talk about enough or even at all are the most dangerous—the disaster of tourism development, over reliance and dependence on foreign investment, continued exploitation of migrant labour and the failures of our post-neo-colonial states. Maybe we are too afraid to speak or act. Maybe we haven’t done enough to educate the public about climate change or social and environmental justice as one connected struggle. Maybe we spend too much time blaming individual consumers instead of placing more blame and accountability on private sector, industries and governments. Maybe the environmental movement in the Caribbean has failed with its middle and upper class politics. Maybe other movements have failed to show the connections between

social inequalities and climate change. Maybe it’s easier to blame “immigrants,” “gays,” and all those scary “others” for our social problems.

Maybe we have no plan B for economic development, and so we continue to build a tourism industry that does not care about our sustainability or future outside the usual recipe of sun, sand, sea and festivals. Maybe we fear calling out the ways tourism dependent small islands rely on the bits of income from cruise ships which pollute our waters and leave their garbage. Maybe we have not learned lessons from the disasters of structural adjustment policies that leave our countries in debt and too many of our people in poverty and despair. Maybe those of us with oil and other natural resources still believe that will save us. Maybe we still believe the lies of globalisation, development and progress in the pursuit of a place in the global capitalist market. Maybe we believe that our (post-neo) colonial masters will save us. Maybe it’s all too overwhelming and unimaginable as we live in the apocalypse of climate crisis now.

Entire lives are on hold across The Bahamas—from those evacuated and displaced at shelters across New Providence to those in Grand Bahama cleaning up and clearing out what is left of their homes. Imagine being a poor or working class Bahamian family. Imagine being a family or sole survivor, having lost everything or almost everything, and trying to pick up the pieces. Imagine the grief and suffering, the psychological trauma, of survivors. Imagine being the most scorned in this country, the ones blamed and scapegoated for almost every social problem. Imagine being a Haitian migrant right now living in The Bahamas, or living elsewhere across the region. Some of us don’t have to imagine any of these—either we know people experiencing this or we are experiencing it—the proximity to disasters, the trauma, of being treated as other, less than, not equal to, expendable or deportable.

And so I ask all of us in the Caribbean—where is our collective outrage, our climate action movement, our migrant rights movement; where is our action against unsustainable development and neoliberal agendas; where is our intersectional politics and action?

We know we are in crisis. We feel it with each hurricane and rainy season and rising temperatures and seas. We see it as we drive along our coastlines with erosion and destruction of our mangroves; we experience it with dry season and forest fires, with clearcutting for tourism and other development projects. We hear it with each report of coral reefs bleaching, fish disappearing, record-setting heat waves and storms, mass extinctions and rain forests on

fire across the Amazon and Sub-Saharan Africa. We smell it with the pollution and garbage burning in our landfills, across our small islands—where we produce less than we import, where on the smallest islands we import way more than we need for tourists and migrants with status and money, who consume more than we do.

We touch it in one way or another through the reliance on migrant labour needed to fuel our externally dependent economies, to do work that nationals don't want to do, and to rebuild in the aftermath of disasters. We know it when we hear of yet another deal on a development project, a new cruise ship port, a set of condos, a new hotel or more exploration for oil and gas. We understand it in the aftermath of hurricanes when new development deals are signed before recovery has even started for locals who have lost their homes. This is happening now in Abaco and Grand Bahama weeks/months after Hurricane Dorian. Bodies are still buried under rubble, islands devastated and there are already plans to sell land to the highest bidders.

We are complicit when we don't call out all the ways our small islands are made more vulnerable and marginalized in these unnatural disasters, the ways we are exploited and then exploit others.

But no one in paradise is supposed to talk about the ugly truths of exploitation, environmental destruction for development, competition over scarce resources, the limited supply of fresh water or the diversion of resources (water and electricity) to hotels and foreign-owned wealthy homes. Nor are we supposed to talk about the ways limited jobs in "development projects" turn us against each other, or the horrifying untold stories of migrants fleeing one set of unlivable conditions only to find themselves abused and exploited. We see this with many Haitian migrants living in The Bahamas and Dominican Republic, as many Venezuelan migrants seek asylum right now in Trinidad and Tobago, as many Guyanese migrants experience hardships in Barbados—it is too many. We can keep this going all the way back to all the ways our Caribbean people have had to move and relocate in search of something better. Isn't that what we all want? Something better?

We need these harsh truths and untold stories to be spoken, analysed, and understood, in the face of the many unnatural disasters we are living. We are in this together, our survival depends on it—our region, our people, our vulnerable islands of complex, unique and shared histories. We need honest reflections, sustainable solutions, tangible empathy and reasonings, regional actions and uprisings and revolutionary decolonial justice-visioning in our Caribbean to survive. 🏡

Pages 48–49: So Close Yet So Far, 2019 (New Providence)

Christina Wong

Acrylic on canvas

40" x 30"

Collection of the artist



NASTASSIA PRATT



Nastassia Pratt is a creative, writer and researcher who has held the positions of assistant curator and graphic designer in the museum and educational sector in The Bahamas and Canada. She has contributed essays to several exhibitions, the exhibition catalogue *Amos Ferguson: Bahamian Outsider* and the art journal *Caribbean InTransit*.

She is also a self-taught watercolour artist and has had several solo exhibitions and contributed to group exhibitions in New Providence. Her art practice is mostly concerned with portraying the older and more historic buildings in The Bahamas. After completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture, Nastassia is now exploring and researching the use of heritage sites and public spaces as cultural infrastructure.

Artist Statement

This essay is about the use of memorial spaces as a way for Bahamians and residents to heal after the trauma of Hurricane Dorian. I believe that we should design and construct these spaces intentionally, as viable additions to our cultural infrastructure. The main purpose of these memorial spaces should be providing public spaces for healing and communicating universal truths about the pain, loss and trauma of Hurricane Dorian through the built form. 🏛️

MEMORIALISATION: AN AVENUE TO HEALING

In the face of unprecedented catastrophe, incredible loss and the seemingly impossible road to rebuilding and recovery, I find myself consistently returning to the question of how those who have lost and those who have witnessed loss are healing post-Dorian. How do you come to grips with losing loved ones, your home, every possession that you own? How do you even begin to understand the loss of entire communities? How do those who have made incredible sacrifices during the storm, or those who were saved and watched others get washed away, grapple with the conflicting emotions that are undoubtedly crashing over them daily?

I do not have answers for even one of those questions, but I will offer that memorialisation may be a path to some answers and possibly a path to healing. There is a need to create memorial spaces dedicated to Hurricane Dorian that can communicate the words, "I am sorry for your loss," in a universal and visually coherent way. I believe that these memorial spaces are an important area of our cultural infrastructure that our country has historically neglected. These spaces need to be intentionally planned for and woven into the fabric of our communities for several reasons: for remembrance, acknowledgement of loss, reminders of injustices and to provide spaces for reflection.

We will need these memorial spaces for remembrance. September 1st, 2019 has been burned into the memories of countless people as this was the day that the eye of Hurricane Dorian landed on Abaco. The first day of a lingering storm that felt like it lasted forever. There are some who can never speak of that day again and others who need to speak about that day every day—this space needs to be for both.

We need memorial spaces that acknowledge the immense loss that so many have faced during and after Dorian. The loss of family, friends, pets, identity, homes, security, trust, safety and faith. It should communicate that this loss is overwhelming and incomprehensible. For many, much of what was lost can in no way be replaced.

We will need memorial spaces that remind us about the injustices surrounding Hurricane Dorian. To remind the world that our nation is and will remain on the frontlines of the effects of climate

change. We need to remind ourselves and the Caribbean community that hundreds of stateless men, women and children, along with their identities, being washed away is not "okay". We must be reminded of the unknown and unclaimed dead.

We will need memorial spaces for reflection for those of us who were oceans, continents or miles away and were stuck in the sinking sand of our own helplessness. We need spaces where we can reflect on that day and what it meant to those who were lost and those who survived. We will need spaces to reflect on what is now a national memory.

We need these memorials to be accessible public spaces that speak of shared truths after Dorian. The post-colonial monuments and busts found in the tourist-centered areas in New Providence are not enough. Instead, these should be spaces thoughtfully designed to spark healing for Bahamians and residents. The success of any memorial correlates with the appropriateness of its selection committee and this is where the input of Dorian survivors, the museum sector, academia, design professionals and our artist community will be of crucial importance for creating spaces that will beautifully and coherently tell these shared stories through the built form.

I believe that the first of these memorial spaces should be designed for and constructed on the islands impacted: namely Grand Bahama and Abaco. Accessibility will be important in their locations and design. Will we create memorials for everyone across socio-economic demographics to experience and understand? Will we design spaces that can successfully weave a variety of competing ideas about Hurricane Dorian, memorialisation, memory and healing? These should be our goals. In the absence of public parks and dedicated public spaces, Bahamians do not have spaces where we can simply reflect. After Dorian, when combined with the ingrained shunning of mental illness and psychological trauma the need for these types of public spaces has become imperative to our societal wellbeing. The public and private sector has a responsibility for creating these spaces and ensuring that they add value to our cultural infrastructure.

Are memorial spaces the definitive answer to our country's healing post-Dorian? No they are not, but there is a need for them and it is a viable avenue to healing that we should engage with and explore as soon as possible. I do not believe that we can wait a moment longer when it comes to healing our nation.

Page 55: Rest In Peace Dear Child, 2019 (Grand Bahama)

Laurie Tuchel

Oil and acrylic on archival paper, mounted on board

30 ¾" H x 24" W

The Dawn Davies Collection



ASHLEIGH ROLLE



Ashleigh Rolle is a Bahamian native who currently resides in Grand Bahama and is dedicated to showcasing its worth. Since 2011 Ashleigh has volunteered her time and efforts to the international organisation Global Dignity, whose mission was in sync with her vision of a school system that was based on the dignity of others. In 2014 she was appointed as the Bahamas' Country Chair of Global Dignity by Prince Haakon of Norway.

She is also a One Young World Ambassador having acted as a Coordinating Ambassador for Central America and the Caribbean for two consecutive years. Ashleigh is a Shaper with the World Economic Forum's community of Global Shapers having acted as the former curator of The Nassau Hub and being one of the youngest Shapers to do so. In 2014 she was the recipient of The Ministry of Youth's Most Outstanding Youth Award and she was also chosen during President Obama's Inaugural Young Leader's of The Americas Initiative in 2016. As a writer, her work has been featured on CNN, The Huffington Post, MindThis Magazine, Fodor's Travel and the popular Bahamian site, 10th Year Seniors.

Artist Statement

As a writer I've found it very difficult to put into words all of the emotions I've felt since the passing of Hurricane Dorian. My mind felt cluttered with conflicting narratives and as such, I wanted to write a piece that would help me make sense of my thoughts surrounding the destruction of my home island here in Grand Bahama. 🏠

Ashleigh Rolle

MENTAL DEBRIS

Home

There is no home.
I fantasise and theorise
on how life could be better
if only I dream a little harder
and sing a little better.
But I look out into the valley
containing remnants of happy memories
in a middle-class neighborhood
far to the East of the island.
Mold-covered debris
separated into piles of
“maybe we’ll keep it?”
and
“there’s nothing to salvage”
and I realize,
there is no home.

God

Thank God for life.
This is a phrase
that makes me cringe
and yet still,
as unfeeling as I am,
I find it difficult
to not feel ungrateful.
My house,
a yellow beacon atop the hill
that faces the valley
that holds the devastation
that created the debris
that is separated into piles of
“this cannot be happening”
and
“that’s where this floated!”
These are not my woes.
I am a spectator to this sport of tragedy
and as such,
I should only revisit the mantra,
Thank God for life.
Who even is that?
I sit here thanking the being
that created us all
for sparing my life
and that of my family’s
and even as I call God a woman
I have come to the conclusion

that I am more than likely agnostic.
Yet all the same,
Thank God for life.

Help

“How can I help?”
The soft whisper
of the strangers
that were once friends
echoes across the digital landscape
in a time where the definition
of tangible
has seemed to shift.
Don’t ask me.
Your question gives me pause
and then more questions
because in truth
I need everything and nothing all at once.
I need the building blocks of life.
Air,
Water,
Space,
Love.
I need the recluse’s dream.
Air,
Water,
Space,
Time.
Your question bounces
around in my head
and I stop in awe
because I was unsure
that my head had space

for such a nuanced question.
The time has ticked by
and I have yet to answer
and so you prompt me again
with your insistence
thus restarting the cycle
“How can I help?”

Now

Where do I begin?
There has never been a time in my life
where fear hasn’t tinkered on the edge of
my purview.
Masking all sense of logic
and bending all rules of reality.
I’ve seen things in the dark
from T.V. shows my mother insisted
that I should not watch.
Ghouls and goblins.
Lions and Bears.
Butterflies with their many eyes
creepily watching me
as they graze hauntingly
into my dreams.
I feel no fear now, however.
Or maybe I do.
Maybe the fear I feel is so great
that it blankets my body
in all-encompassing darkness.
Making the darkness my new reality.
And I wonder if I too was broken
like a concrete wall
in the surge of the storm.
Can I trust myself to put one foot
in front of the other
as I boldly take on a new day
with a scourge of new emotions

that I surely must have
but I am unsure of how to feel?
Where do we begin?

MAELYNN SEYMOUR-MAJOR



Maelynn Seymour-Major is a Bahamian writer who obtained her BA (Hons) in English Literature and MA in Poetic Practice from Royal Holloway, University of London. Her MA dissertation focused on poetics and the body, specifically the way the body tells stories. She is published in the online journals *Anthurium*, *Tongues of the Ocean*, and *Lucayos*, and in print in the anthology *Yinna*. Her work has been featured in three art exhibits: “Jack So Burn Side Junkanoo” appeared in “As We Knew Him: One Family’s Tribute to Jackson Burnside” at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, February 2012; “Bahamian Woman Long Island Roses” in “Bahama Mama” at the Public Treasury Art Programme, September 2011; and “Historic Nassau Excerpts from a Life” in “Historic Nassau,” Transforming Spaces 2018, at Hillside House.

Maelynn has a keen interest in writing about and exploring the theme of Caribbean and/or Black experiences of love. She experiments with book arts and paint and is an avid reader. She works at the University of The Bahamas as Chief of Staff.

Artist Statement

The poem “Calamity Theatre” is a response to the recent devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian in the northern Bahamas, specifically Abaco and Grand Bahama. This poem has mined images from interviews I heard and snippets I saw on television. It also looks at the responses of those of us who were not immediately affected by the hurricane, and how the whole situation became a kind of production for us: A horrific tragedy. The poem deliberately avoids the use of names—the hurricane’s and the dead/affected—so that the hurricane is not celebrated; to symbolise those that are lost to us forever; and finally to demonstrate how widespread the devastation is. 🏠

Maelynn Seymour-Major

CALAMITY THEATRE

they spin
in the wind
hair caught
in a death dance
whistling grey breath
whipping clothes
on bodies into sails
over the sea
backs
arched in surrender
arms
a ghastly hallelujah
we watch
transfixed
with open arms
mouths choking on
prayers
trifling talk
repeating
blessed and
fortunate and
rebuild
empty empathy
easy truths
for lazy tongues
after the dance
there is no applause
no curtsies or
calla lilies or
curtain calls

just the horror
of the dark monster's
whistling grey breath
hearts he pierced
on plywood stakes
for us to find
luckless heroes
brave and broken
for an audience
that will laud in
canned goods and
used clothing and
media coverage
that will dry up
like the flood waters
we mix
love and prayer
with frustration
and anger
and action
and after
sit in the dark theatre
salt drying on our cheeks
for the nameless
bodies
their purpling flesh
a perfume mixed with
sea water and salt air
that some will wear
forever

IDE THOMPSON



Ide Amari Thompson, born in 1993, in Miami, Florida, is a 26-year-old senior at the University of The Bahamas studying English and History. His work tends to focus on questions of place, identity and what it means to personally and socially inhabit different shifting ideas and circles. He grapples with questions of colonialism, independence, nation, identity and love. His primary medium is written works, particularly poetry. His written work has appeared in the *PREE* online journal; the first issue of *Onyx* magazine in 2018, a creative journal for diasporic black writers based in the UK; and in NE9: "The Fruit & The Seed" exhibited at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas. He was also a participant in the Double Dutch exhibition "Hot Water" at the NAGB in 2018.

Artist Statement

In response to the call for "Refuge" I decided to turn to my practise-writing. Writing about Dorian has been difficult not only because of the emotions it brings but because I am helping to bear witness to people's pain through poetry. Any artist knows this is not an essay task: it comes with responsibility. It takes a lot of effort and requires an artist to confront the subject matter head on. Whatever emotions that brings up. That is how I approached the poetry I wrote for "Refuge" on, regardless of the emotions that may surface.

Writing can be deeply personal. It can reveal hidden depths of engagement and uncover relationships between joy and pain. These poems come from a place of pain and immense sorrow, but at their conclusion, from a place of overwhelming hope and resilience. With these poems, I hope to give space for others to be open about their pain and their hopes. To remind them that although we—as a nation, a people, a family—have been through a difficult time, we are not alone, those we lost will not be forgotten and there are others who face the threat of raging storms. The process of healing begins here. 🏠

Ide Thompson

CANTICLE FROM A DESERT REFUGEE

It doesn't start easily,
or come all the once,
similar to the tang
of salt on tongues
It doesn't move
dragging
across the roofs
our islands picking
Bodies of birds'
long decaying
down in a swarm

At night desert turns blue
under moonlight
You wake up drenched
You didn't know
scorpions could swim
that cacti could bloom
into a lighthouse,
on waveless currents.
You melt into the sand.

Your memories
haunts for all

people taken
into the water,
you move foreign
land to escape the Sea
the wind won't be as loud
the water not fresh with salt.
You go live in desert
give into its beauty
your words

Even now you feel the pull
of sea & sand disguised
touches of sun into your flesh.
don't you feel, emptiness,
that you can't go back
to the waters where your cousin
threw you off the dock to your birth.
You watch the news,
the trees pushed up and rumbled.
You imagine, God said:
In a blender
take the island
let it spin for days.

TO CALL: FIRST YOU SPEAK,

their names back
through the tides.
The water, covers
does not bury
muffles not silent,
the song

we march on edge of the sands,
etching syllables into our soles
their names beaten out
by rhythm of memory
they will rise
a storm on water

singing. We can hear them
at the shore. Bubbling up
their spirits fleshed
in coral, salted mangrove
weaved into hair.
the leaves don't burn
so much as vibrate
On new flesh

RECLAMATION BY WATER

This is how it went that the people reclaimed themselves:

One heated summer when it was clear the world was ending, but no one knew—

We went about, oblivious like we always did,
in conviction of our own helplessness,
aware that the sea was rising, but saying the land will rise to meet,
aware that the sea was emptying of food, but saying,
the sea will bring us a better harvest than before.

There were no riots in the streets,
no calculated plots to blow up our Parliaments, one by one
till we the people could reclaim our rights to our own creation.

We did forget that we are part of the sea,
that to remove ourselves from the flow of the currents,
thinking to take and take and take and not give back was good and natural,
thinking that the seas at our shores stretching beyond sight,
that they didn't reach another similar shore of similar people to us.
When the lights went out in our overcrowded cities,
the water eating away at our coastlines
that had long become paradise-parades of
the same white sand,
the same old lady braiding hair with swollen knuckles,
the same young men selling mamey sapote,
the same gleaming hatchet slashing the crowns of coconuts,
gleaming with our water of life.

It should have come as no surprise,
in the end there would only be the sea,

still, resplendent, motionless,
if we did not reclaim our water.

The reclamation began with the people,
different groups, all at once,
bearing the hope of their people,
embracing that while we were not independent
we are in dependence to each other.
Remembering, it is water that connects not divides
that water is a bridge
that water is a book with no end.



Pages 72–73:

“Refuge” writing contributor,
Nastassia Pratt (left), with her sister.



ARTISTS: WORKS/PLATES

CAROLINE ANDERSON

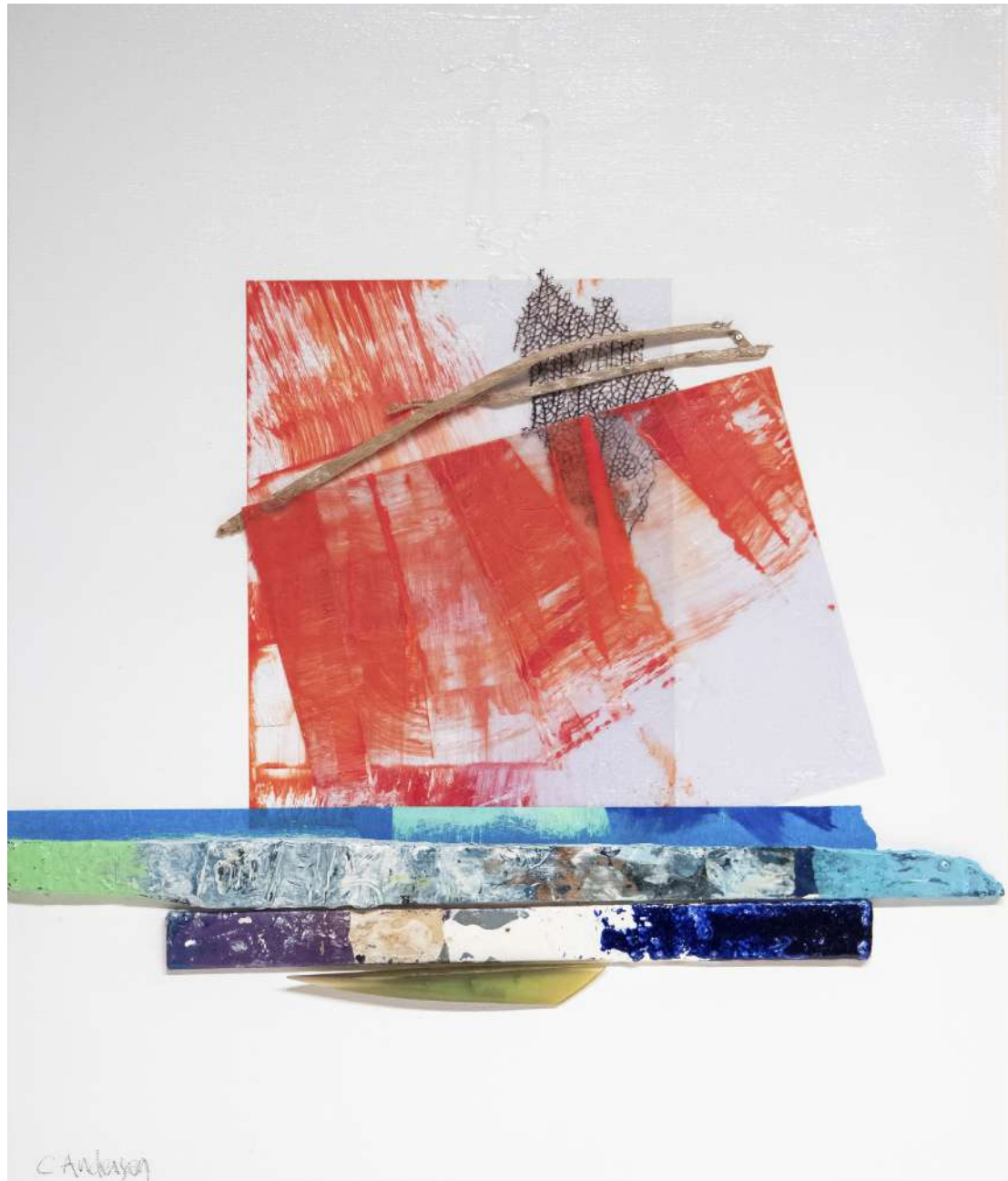


Caroline Anderson was born in Charleville, France. She attended the National School of Fine Arts (Beaux-Arts) in Paris from 1968-72, enrolling in the Plastic Arts department and The Duperré School of Applied Art from 1972-73. She was involved with The Factory in New York in 1980 and was also, for many years, the lighting designer for modern dance companies. Her line of jewellery "ACCES-OCEAN" started in 1974. Her jewellery line, which tells its own story, was featured in publicity shots for Christian Dior, Helmut Lang, Christian Lacroix, Jean Paul-Gaultier, Lancôme, and Guerlain. Her artistic work is a receptacle of emotions: She states, "I call my work, 'The Moment of Abstraction'. It's a space where emotions can be free and even contradictory or confused. Each material that I use contains openings, possibilities. It's fascinating how the painting responds to the means employed and is evolved around confronting what I don't know. When I arrive in the workshop, I don't know what will happen, I simply use what arises". This work is for people who are open to what they usually don't see. Her preferred mediums include resin, metal, wood, polyurethane, acrylic and plexiglass. Her work has been sold in galleries in Paris, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. Following the trail of the dolphins, she came to The Bahamas to identify and study those wonderful water creatures and, after spending a few years in Abaco, she now lives in Freeport with her husband Tyrone and continues her work.

Artist Statement

During the unleashing of Hurricane Dorian, which turned the landscape into a war zone, I soothed myself with my work which was, in itself a refuge. In the middle of the event, I was able to capture unique moments in real-time. This work is a continuation of the work that was exhibited at NAGB in the eighth national exhibition, the NE8.

The piece in "Refuge" is called *Rescue Boat* and comes from a series of three pieces entitled, "Under Dorian's Influence," "Destruction," "Destroyed House." The latter two are dedicated to Maisie and her five sisters whose house was destroyed in Abaco. It is important for me to meet the people who experienced Dorian's fury and who lived it from the outside. The NAGB has brought us together under the banner of "Refuge": Mission accomplished. 🏠



Under Dorian's Influence (Rescue Boat Series), 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Caroline Anderson
Wood, acrylic, resin, seafan, fiber, transparent plastic sheet
20" x 24"
Collection of the artist

DEDE BROWN



Danielle (Dede) Brown, (b.1984, Freeport, Grand Bahama, The Bahamas) has a BFA in Interior Design and a Minor in Photography from The Savannah College of Art & Design (2006). Through social experiences and observation, Dede's curiosity has led her to investigate themes related to human behavior and existence—specifically social stigmas surrounding gender roles, sexual and racial identity in The Bahamas and more broadly, The Caribbean. She hopes to use her ability as an artist, to create beautiful and meaningful works that can shed light on these topics and ignite dialogue. Dede is an interdisciplinary artist who works in painting, photography, mixed media, sculpture and installation.

KRISTIN BROWN



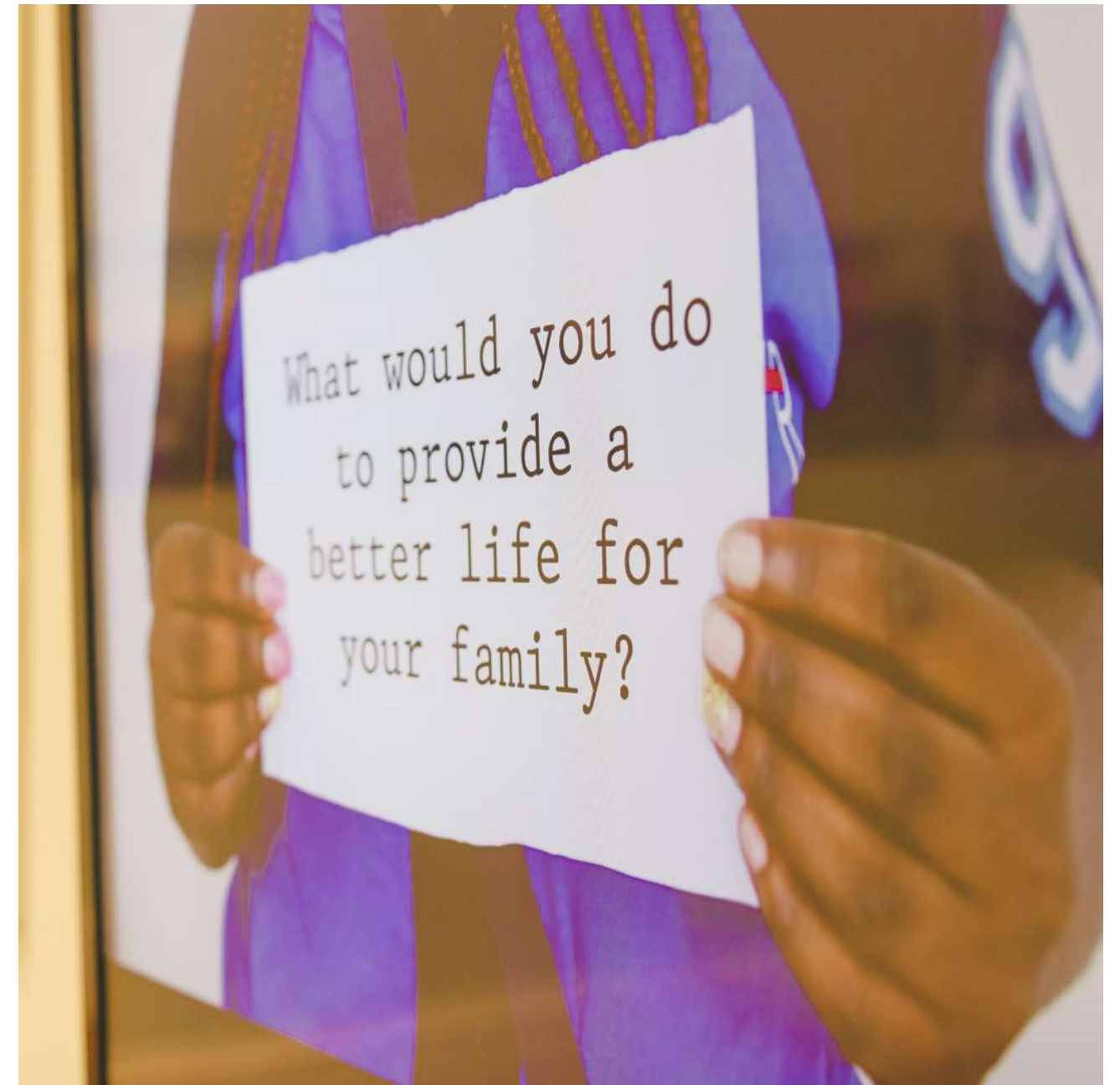
Kristin Brown (Born 1987—Nassau, The Bahamas) has a Bachelor of Environmental Studies from York University, Toronto Canada. Within the realm of environmental studies her main interest has been sustainable agriculture and food security; She has worked locally as a lab tech propagating orchids and in hydroponic and organic outdoor vegetable production. While she does not have her own art practice, within the arts she has co-managed and assisted on numerous projects including mixed media installations, metal work and painting. Kristin has worked as an assistant manager at a local hand screen-printing company and as a photographer for events and weddings.

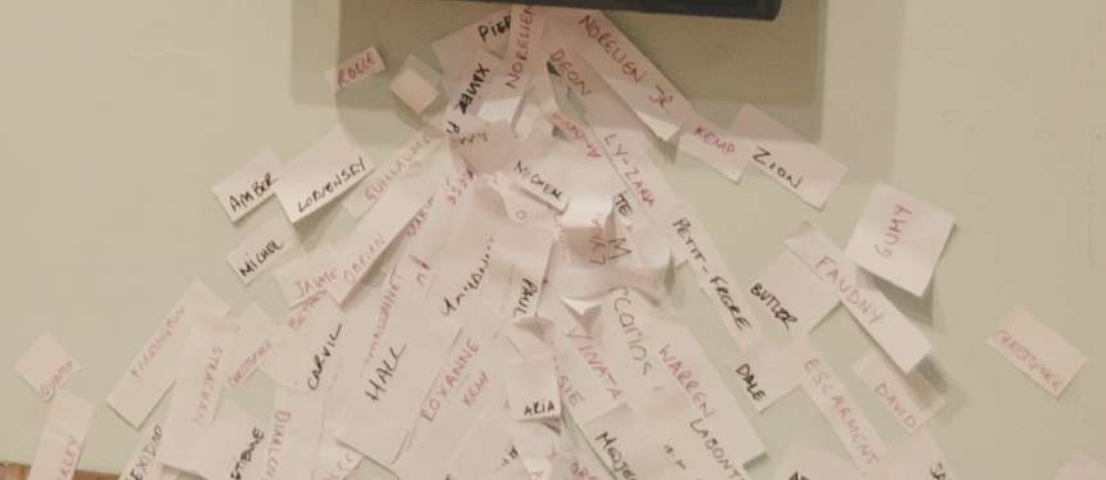
Artist Statement

On September 6th & 7th 2019, following the passage of Hurricane Dorian, we volunteered along with several other photographers, to assist with the documenting of individuals being evacuated from Abaco, who arrived by private boats at Three Island Dock in North Eleuthera. Upon arrival, evacuees they were guided to one of six stations set up in front of the Government Building—each station had a data entry volunteer, a volunteer to ask questions, a translator when needed and a photographer. There was a set list of questions to be asked of each person; What is your name? Do you have any ID? What is your date of birth? Which settlement are you from? Did you lose any family members? ...

As information was collected, each evacuee's name was spelled out and written onto a piece of paper. The photographers then guided the evacuees around the corner to their photo station—a position along a wall marked with a station number. Each evacuee was asked to stand against the wall, holding the paper with their name on it in front of their chest, for an identifying photograph to be taken. For many evacuees this seemed an uncomfortable moment, almost as if they were having a mugshot taken. Some asked why? Some were concerned about their clothes or hair. Some smiled and said thank you. Some said nothing at all. Once photos were taken, individuals and families were directed to a tent where there was food, water, clothing and a place to sit. There they waited to be collected by buses, and taken to North Eleuthera Airport and on to Nassau, or to temporary housing in Eleuthera. This process was repeated over three days as the evacuation continued.

What seemed critical questions at that time were asked. Now, some time has passed and the list of questions and statements has shifted and grown: Where do I go? What do I do now? Where will they live? Are they legal or illegal? Deport them or let them stay? How will we support those who have been displaced? How do we rebuild? What will Abaco and Grand Bahama look like in one year—ten years? What role does climate change play and what can we do about it? What will our country look like in 10 years, 50 years? What kind of communities and lives do we want to build for ourselves? While there has been so much love and connection, there has also been anger and division, fear and uncertainty, about what could have been, what is happening now and what may be.







Untitled, 2019 (Eleuthera)
Dede + Kristin Brown
Photography and mixed media installation
Dimensions variable
Collection of the artists

JENNA CHAPLIN



Jenna takes inspiration from the landscape of The Bahamas where she was born (1990) and raised. Jenna currently works as a landscape architect at Terrain Design & Management in Nassau, Bahamas. In 2017, she completed a Master of Landscape Architecture degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She also holds a BFA in Studio Art from the University of the Pacific (2013), in Stockton, California. There Jenna concentrated her studies on painting and 3D design. She works primarily in painting both realistically and abstractly, often using vibrant, bright colors. However, she also enjoys drawing, printmaking and ceramics. The ocean, in particular that of The Bahamas and Caribbean, is a constant source of inspiration to her as she spent her childhood aboard her family's sailboat travelling the region. During this time she learned to navigate by reading charts. *Light of Abaco* links directly to Jenna's childhood sailing, and to Abaco where her parents, grandfather, aunt and uncle weathered Dorian. While her family all survived the storm, unfortunately her aunt and uncle's house and her parents home/boat did not.

Artist Statement

Navigation charts guide sailors to safe harbours, helping them to avoid shoals and reefs. For my family, they were our road maps. Our home and refuge was on the sailboat but our location changed frequently. Our home was only ever as safe as the anchorage we sheltered in. The Abaco islands has been home to my family many times in my life and, in recent years, my parents' permanent "base." This particular chart drawing was made a couple of years earlier to represent a particular haven, special to my family and many Bahamians as a symbol of hope, refuge and safety.

Using real navigation charts as the artifact on which I draw is as important as the image I depict. Charts are graphic representations of places in space and time. Geographies change over time, especially that of small islands, as map making technology improves throughout history, populations grow and cities change and now as climate change affects the very land-sea boundaries that define the island itself. This chart of Elbow Cay, Abaco, overlaid with the symbol of Hope Town represents refuge in more ways than one: Lighthouses historically guided sailors to safe harbour. The Hope Town Lighthouse has weathered the worst of storms and remains a symbol of steadfastness in the worst of times for Bahamians nationwide. 🏰



Light of Abaco, 2019 (New Providence)
Jenna Chaplin
Coloured pencil on navigation chart
16.5" x 23"
Courtesy of The Liddell Collection

LISA CODELLA



Born in The Bahamas, Lisa spent her childhood in the capital city, Nassau, where she first encountered a love for working with ceramics at 12 years old. An alumna of The College of The Bahamas and the University of Miami, she spent over 20 years as a corporate public relations practitioner until finally deciding to shed all fears, embrace her creativity and fall hands first into her love of mud. Today, she calls Grand Bahama home where she is a full-time studio potter balancing her time wheel throwing and hand sculpting low-fire clays at 143 Pottery (her home studio), and Coastal Mojo—her retail outlet for her ceramics and other artwork.

“My message in clay echoes my message on paper and canvas: We are loved, our flaws are a part of our beauty, and we are connected. I feel that each one of us is a unique piece of the jigsaw puzzle called ‘existence’ and the puzzle cannot be complete unless we embrace and nurture our true selves. My hope is that more people will see that the right approach for unity in this world is not to make everyone the same, but to give the same importance to all of our glorious differences. Balance is only achieved through providing equal weight to seemingly opposing forces. I believe that the more we share our stories, understand each other and expect rather than fear differences, the more we will see a shift in our personal energy and a restoration of balance to this planet that we share.”

Artist Statement

For many of us, the scars, hurt and doubts of our journey are often hidden behind the polite mask that we show most people we encounter. Some choose to take refuge behind a veneer of projected perfection which is removed only around a select few. Others go so far as to never reveal the pain until they are consumed by it. *Nobody Knows* portrays the mask of one who wears the map of her pain unapologetically, unflinchingly for all to view. Her wounds are her story—your reaction to them is yours. 📖



Nobody Knows, 2014 (Grand Bahama)

Lisa Codella

Hand sculpted lowfire clay

17" x 9"

Collection of the artist

CYDNE COLEBY



Cydne Coleby (B. 1993, Nassau, Bahamas) attended The College of The Bahamas (now University) where she received her Associates degree in Art in 2012. Afterwards, she went on to work as a freelance graphic designer, specialising in identity brand design. She has worked with numerous companies including Adworks, the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, Poinciana Paper Press, Popopstudios International Center for the Visual Arts and The Island House, and currently serves as Creative Arts Design and Communications Manager for The Current: Baha Mar Gallery and Art Center. In 2018, Coleby reintroduced her art practice at the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas as a part of their Ninth National Exhibition with a body of work entitled "A God Called Self". Since then, she continues to produce digital collages and mixed-media paintings that engage themes of personal and Caribbean identity, sexuality, and gender. Her work is a part of private collections locally and internationally, including the private collection of acclaimed art advisor and curator, Mario Brito. Coleby is currently focusing on making artwork for her first solo show at Galerie Julien Cadet, set to open May 2020 in Paris, France.

Artist Statement

I was in New York when Dorian made landfall in The Bahamas. It was a surreal experience to say the least. Whilst I watched my country be ravaged by this beast of a storm through the tiny screen in my hand, the world around me carried on as though nothing was happening. I felt alone; very distant from those around me. Originally, I was scheduled to return home while the storm was still looming over Grand Bahama—and thus my stay was extended. Serendipitously, this extension allowed me the time to visit my grand uncle. In his spare time my uncle acts as a family archivist and researcher. Visits with him have always been synonymous with reconnecting to family roots. This time was no exception. I spent my night with him and his family flipping through old photo albums, diaries and documents, exchanging stories and discovering new bits of my heritage.

Within the duality of this experience I found a deep appreciation for having access to these family stories. Dorian took so many lives, stories and histories, as it washed away personal archives. In the wake of this destruction we were forced to embrace a new narrative. This hurricane marks a turning point in our lives, forcing us to categorise memories within two boxes, those "before" and those "after" Dorian. Consequently, the way in which we are viewed was changed as well. The Bahamas' public image has been streamlined to focus on specific aspects. We're a beautiful country, with beautiful island people. Conversations with visitors usually are light hearted but working in the hospitality industry I witnessed first-hand the shift in these exchanges. Since the storm, casual banter and has been replaced with concerned questions, well-meaning pity, and in rare cases, ignorant condescension. There has also undeniably been a national shift in the way we view and address those who were directly affected by the storm. Grand Bahamians and Abaconians are no longer addressed as such, but are now referred to as "victims" and "survivors." This storm has firmly planted us in the position as "other," and those that were in its direct path grow roots even deeper in this rocky soil.

Specimen examines how catastrophic events and personal traumas redefine an identity. An individual is altered within themselves (psychologically and physiologically) as well as externally through a newly established and single-minded perception. In the work, I grotesquely modify old family photographs, substituting select elements with imagery of decay and environmental unrest, as a way to illustrate the lasting transformative effects this trauma has on personal stories and histories. 🏠





Specimen, 2019 (New Providence)

Cydne Coleby

Installation with digital collage, gold leaf and white ink.

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

ASHLEY COMARCHO



Born in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, Ashley Comarcho currently lives and works in Freeport, Grand Bahama where she has resided for the past 15 years. She is a self taught artist, having no formal training, and her work incorporates fluid, abstract elements using various media.

Ashley draws inspiration from the local landscape and from music in particular. She sees sound waves transitioning from the auditory to the visual in emotive waves of colour.

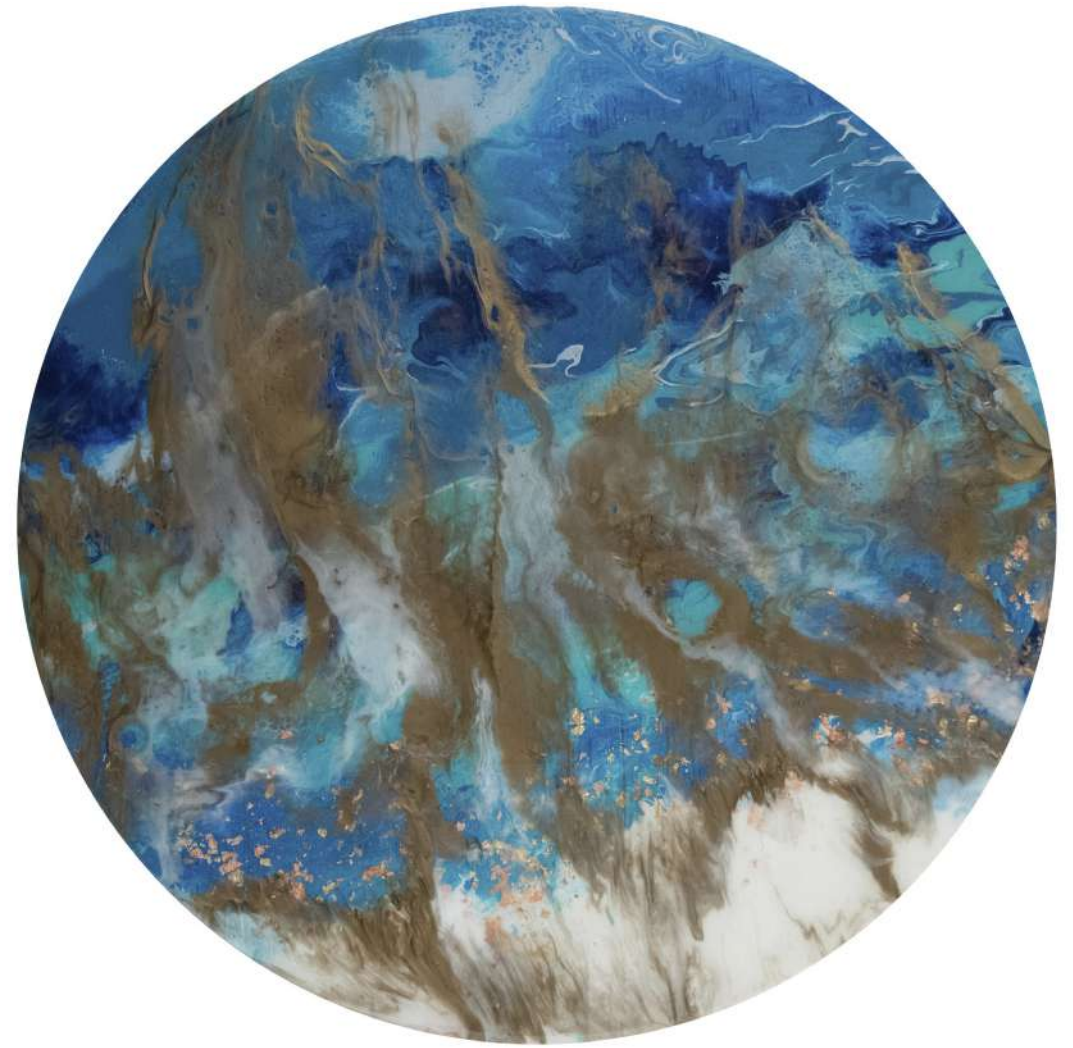
Her art has been displayed at exhibitions in Nassau and Freeport, The Bahamas including Festival Noel (Rand Nature Center) Freeport, Issa Wybe Central Bank of The Bahamas Nassau, Sensory Delight (GB Sailing Club) Freeport, and is currently on display at The Current at Bahamar.

Artist Statement

It is very hard for me to articulate the thoughts and ideas that went into the creation of *Breaking Point* and *Breathe Through the Sea*. After weathering Hurricane Dorian in Freeport and losing my livelihood and friends, then losing my father three weeks later, my artwork represents hope and healing. Without it I would not have been able to cope. 🙏



Breaking Point, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Ashley Comarcho
Pine wood, cement, spray paint, resin
20" x 20"
Collection of the artist



Breathe Through the Sea, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Ashley Comarcho
Pine wood, acrylic, resin, gold leaf
30" x 30"
Collection of the artist

CLAUDETTE DEAN



Bahamian artist Claudette Dean (1954) was born in Blind River, Ontario, Canada. She obtained a BA in French Literature from the University of Windsor, Canada, and continued her studies at the University of Nice, France, where her innate passion for fine art was first awakened. In The Bahamas, she studied with renowned artist and sculptor, Antonius Roberts, and in the U.S. at the Fine Art Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts, with Selina Trieff, one of the original New York-based figurative expressionist painters of the early 1950s.

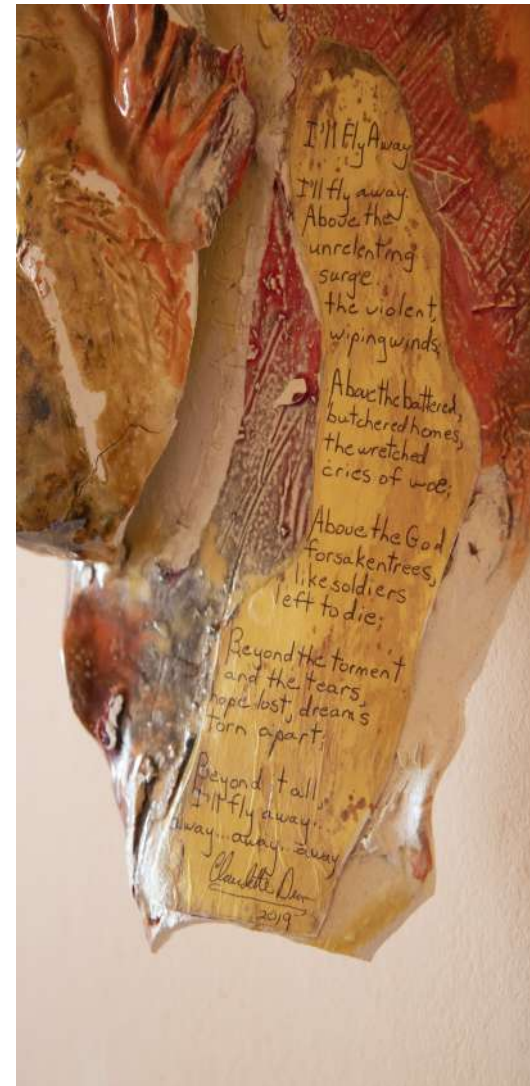
Dean's spiritually based work expresses universal themes such as love, light and connection, and is often inspired by nature. Issues of womanhood and identity are also often at the forefront of her work. Primarily a painter and mixed media artist, Dean also includes the written and spoken word in her creative arsenal. Her publications include "Inner Sanctum," which includes art and poetry first displayed in an eponymous solo show held at PopopStudios in 2010, and a

novel *Smelling Roses: A Tale of Connection and Transformation* published in 2018. In 2012, she wrote and performed *Resurrection*, a performance art video featured in "NE6: Kingdom Come," at the NAGB. Dean has exhibited extensively at home including three solo shows, multiple juried exhibitions at the NAGB, and several group exhibitions at the D'Aguiar Art Foundation. Abroad shows include: a solo at the museum in Blind River, Ontario, Canada; group shows in South Florida; in Harlem, NY, at the Adam Clayton Powell Gallery; and in Paris, France. Dean's work is in major private and corporate collections including, The Dawn Davies Collection, the D'Aguiar Art Foundation collection, the National Collection of The Bahamas and the Miami's Children Hospital. In 2006, Dean received an award from the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, through the Women's Bureau on Grand Bahama Island, for excellence in the realm of Fine Art.

Artist Statement

After experiencing a life threatening event, for the first time, during Hurricane Dorian, I gained a kernel of wisdom. During the storm, the initial perception of "I am in control", morphed into the reality of "I have absolutely no control", and finally became "When I relinquish control, I am at peace."

After the passage of Dorian, during which my husband and I found refuge in my upstairs studio, we came down to the complete destruction of our home. Our entire art collection was ruined. Walking through the detritus, the collapsed walls, broken shards and random bits of furniture, I came upon this broken piece of artwork, a ceramic by a well-known Bahamian artist, Imogene Walkine. Despite the damage there was still beauty there and I called Imogene to ask her permission to use it to create another piece. She kindly consented and I affixed a poem to the salvaged piece entitled, "I'll Fly Away," (which was the name of the original artwork by Imogene), in remembrance of all those who perished in the storm. So, the work is—in a sense—a collaboration, speaking to resilience and survival. 🙏



I'll Fly Away, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Claudette Dean
Ceramic sculpture with original poem
15" x 15"
Collection of the artist



EVA DEHMEL



I grew up in Germany before and during World War II. After our house in Berlin was bombed and destroyed in 1944, I had to flee, together with my mother and siblings, to the south of Germany. My father was at the front. This was the first time I lost a home and became a refugee; I was 10 at the time. We were among the few lucky families to see our father return, after 10 years as a prisoner of war in Russia. At that time, I was already a medical student in Munich.

My involvement with Grand Bahama dates back to 1983, when we got our first home there. In 2000, we moved to Freetown, East Grand Bahama.

I have been involved with art ever since I can remember. Throughout all my life I have found refuge, joy and healing in art. I paint, sculpt and make things. For me, art has always been the time when I have felt free and unrestricted, like a child. Once, when I was a teenager many years ago, after an argument with my mother, I locked myself in my room and painted all the walls with trees, birds and flowers. I still do things like that ... ask my children and grandchildren!

Artist Statement

I draw my inspiration - and often my media - from my direct surroundings. Many of my sculptures come from the Golden Grove Beach near Freetown, East Grand Bahama, where I lived until Dorian struck. I would see a face or a figure "living" in a piece of rock, or coral, or drift wood, calling for me to release it. So I would take it to my studio and, with the help of clay, paper mache or anything at hand—make it visible for the rest of the world. It was before Christmas, I don't remember the year now, I had found a piece of coral which to me looked like two ephemeral wings—that is how the Angel of Golden Grove appeared, its wings brought it to me. It has been standing by the entrance of our house ever since: our Guardian Angel.

Our home on Golden Grove Beach was cut off the land and damaged beyond repair. My studio was reduced to a pile of debris. It was a while before we could even enter what remained of our home, but when we did, in the middle of all the destruction, there it was—one wing slightly damaged, but still standing, still standing! The Guardian Angel of Golden Grove Beach never abandoned us. 🏠



Golden Grove Guardian Angel, 2019 (Grand Bahama)

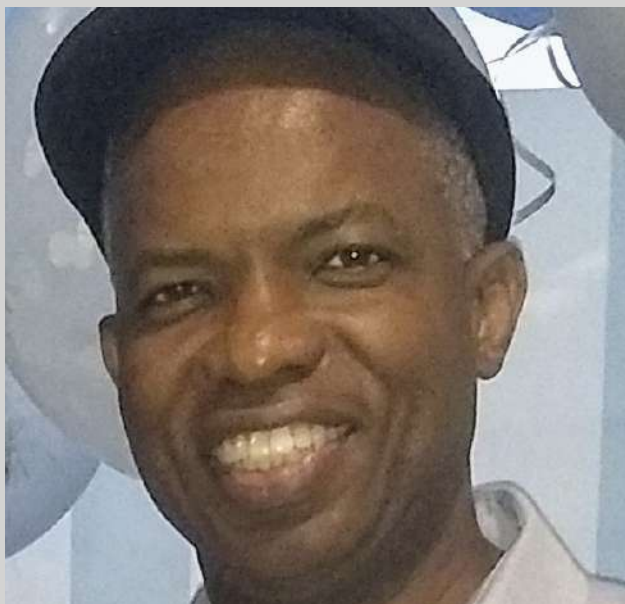
Eva Dehmel

Papier mache, wood, coral and acrylic paint

23 x 10 x 6 approx

Collection of the artist

RITCHIE EYMA



Born in Nassau (Bahamas) in 1967, Ritchie Eyma grew up in Haiti in a household where one uncle was a ceramicist and another was enrolled at L'Academie des Beaux-Arts. The various artistic activities around him soon began to influence him so much so that his favourite places to hang out became the National Art Gallery and the Galerie d'Art Nader in Port-au-Prince.

His first attempts at creating art were stenciling comic book characters using coloured pencils. Then there were watercolours that bore the mark of a fruitful imagination and the influence of local artists. When he moved back to Nassau in 1982, his art teacher Sue Bennet-Williams at C.C. Sweeting Senior High School introduced him to oil and acrylic paints. After passing his G.C.E. 'A Level' art exam, oil became his medium of choice. During the late 1980's and early 1990's, Eyma showed his work at the Central Bank of the Bahamas Annual Art Exhibition and Competition. He also took part in several Longbranch Artists and Artisans shows. After about a decade of serving

fulltime as a volunteer worker of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bible education, he resumed painting in earnest. In 2003, his painting *Fort Hill Houses* was selected for inclusion in the inaugural exhibition of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas. Since 2005 Eyma has been exhibiting with Nicole and Eddie Minnis (Minnis Family and his wife Roshanne.). In 2014 he participated in the "Minnis Family Retrospective" exhibition where a wide cross-section of his work was displayed. He and his wife now reside in Marsh Harbour, Abaco (Bahamas) where they share a studio and are actively involved as volunteer Bible teachers in the Haitian community.

A blend of impressionism and realism, Eyma's work often reflects the influences that shaped his childhood. While the subject matter is generally taken from Bahamian life, there is often a special touch which reminds the viewer of his Haitian roots. His original paintings can be found in galleries and private collections locally and abroad.

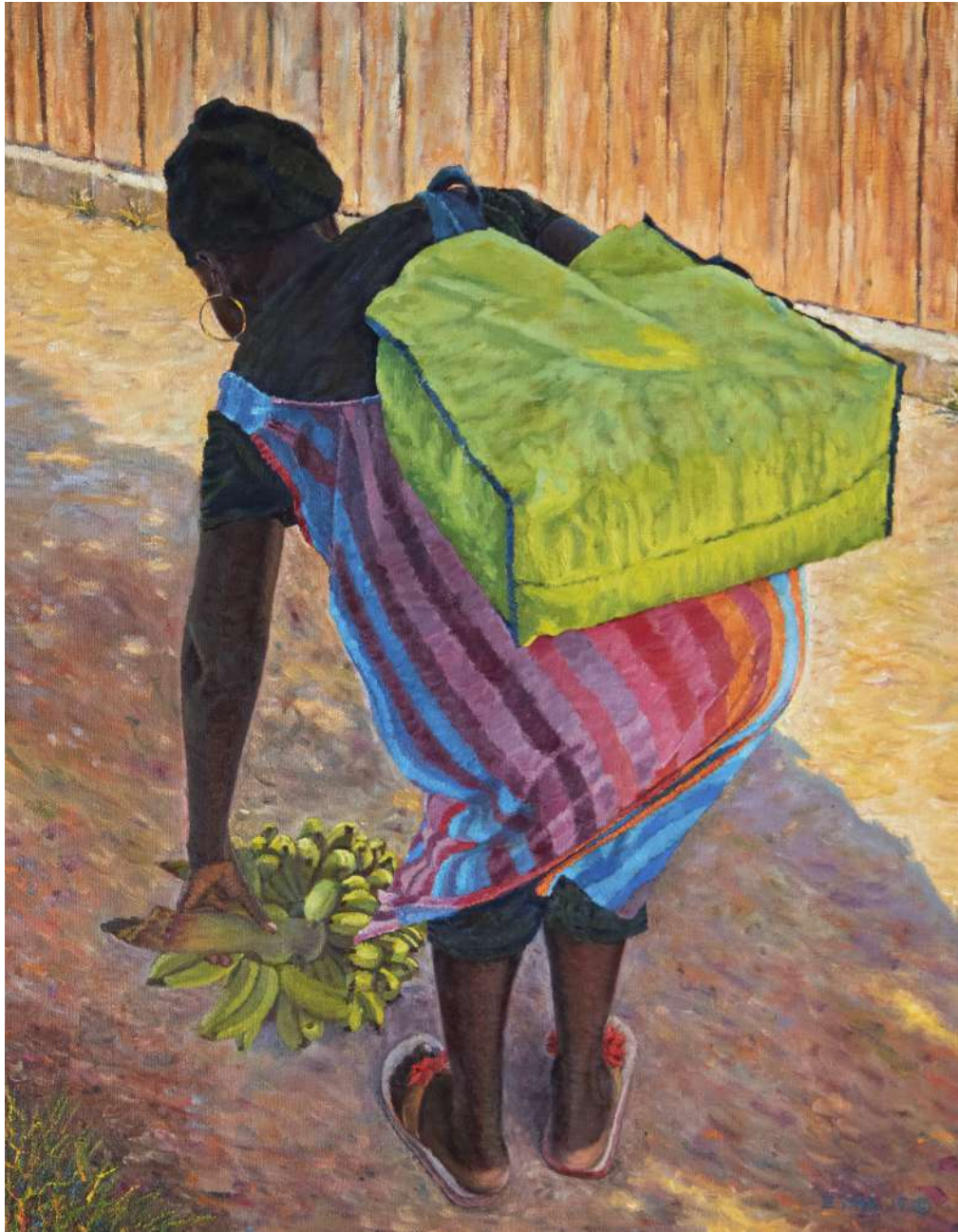
Artist Statement

Both of the paintings in this exhibition miraculously survived Hurricane Dorian. They were packed and stored in a small corner of our art gallery, which was completely destroyed. When we visited it the day after we thought we had lost everything, but the landlord returned a few days later and, like a miracle, only that small corner where we stored our works survived intact. Everything was fine—almost no water damage. The painting *Cracking Conch* depicts an older fisherman passing on his experience and skills to the new generation. With climate change, rising sea levels and the depletion of the conch population, his whole future is in doubt. A way of life is under threat.

The next painting is of Flo, a single mother going about her weekly business of buying and selling produce in The Peas, Abaco, on a Saturday morning. She is working hard for her children to have an education. Widowed a few years ago, she did not allow her grief to overwhelm her. She is hopeful, confident that there will be better days ahead. Last September, she and her family survived Dorian. This painting also survived the onslaught of the storm. They are survivors. 🙏



Cracking Conch, 2018 (Abaco)
Ritchie Eyma
Oil on linen canvas
24" x 32"
Collection of the artist



Woman at Her Chores, 2018 (Abaco)
Ritchie Eyma
Oil on linen canvas
30" x 24"
Collection of the artist

TAMIKA GALANIS



Tamika Galanis is a documentarian and multimedia visual artist. A Bahamian native, Tamika's work examines the complexities of living in a place shrouded in tourism's ideal during the age of climate concerns. Emphasising the importance of Bahamian cultural identity for cultural preservation, Tamika documents aspects of Bahamian life not curated for tourist consumption to intervene in the historical archive. This work counters the widely held paradisiacal view of the Caribbean, the origins of which arose post-emancipation through a controlled, systematic visual framing and commodification of the tropics. Tamika's photography-based-practice includes traditional documentary work and new media abstractions of written, oral and archival histories. Tamika earned a Master of Fine Arts in Experimental and Documentary Arts from Duke University.

Artist Statement

The hurricane season of 2017 shifted storm expectations and response for those of us in the Atlantic Ocean: what was happening to Small Island Developing States in the Pacific Ocean made its way across the globe. While we experienced an uptick in storm severity since Joaquin in 2015, hurricane conditions proved to be increasingly inhospitable. The 2017 hurricane season revealed just how ephemeral this human experience is, especially for those of us in the Caribbean. Displaced Ragged Islanders, Barbudans and Dominicans articulated what climate migration would mean for those of us in the region; while it was horrifying, nothing would prepare us for the hurricane season of 2019.

Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit of Dominica addressed the United Nations in 2017, in a poignant call to action, while his countrymen were dealing with the catastrophic conditions left in the storms' wake. While the region was waking up to a new reality, so was my family: my grandmother's health declined rapidly during the hurricane season of 2017. Her descent into immobility and an inability to communicate seemed to happen just as quickly as a storm's passing. Just as tangible family archives are lost in a storm, it begs questioning what happened to my grandmother's memories? Like our own home movies—here, weathered by time—do they glitch? Or have they, like all else, been swept into the ether by the water and the wind? 🏠



A Thousand Points of Light, 2018 (Cat Island)

Tamika Galanis
Digital video and sound
20:06 minutes
Collection of the artist



A Thousand Points of Light, 2018 (Cat Island)

Tamika Galanis

Digital video and sound

20:06 minutes

Collection of the artist

YUTAVIA GEORGE



Yutavia George is from the Bahamas. She earned a Bachelors of Art in Art Education from the College of The Bahamas (now University of the Bahamas) in 2014. She has worked as an educator for five years in the Bahamas (2014-2019). She is currently furthering her tertiary education in Paris, France.

Artist Statement

My current works explore identity and one's ever-changing environment. I am probing the individual and their surroundings and manipulating media to convey emotional transitions. I am currently using the discipline of drawing to highlight void, construction, development and deconstruction. Each of the spaces in my works are impacted by one mark in each space.

My work for "Refuge" showcases my opinion of Hurricane Dorian's effect on The Bahamas. I used an ink droplet on paper, shifted by the kinetic energy of my hands and water, to develop a permanent gesture. I relate this work to the unforgiving yet healing scar left across the Bahamaland and in the lives of many if not all Bahamians.



Environment V, 2019 (Diaspora)
Yutavia George
Ink on paper
18" x 24"
Collection of the artist

Environment VI, 2019 (Diaspora)
Yutavia George
Ink on paper
18" x 24"
Collection of the artist

Environment VII, 2019 (Diaspora)
Yutavia George
Ink on paper
18" x 24"
Collection of the artist

THOMAS HAIRSTON

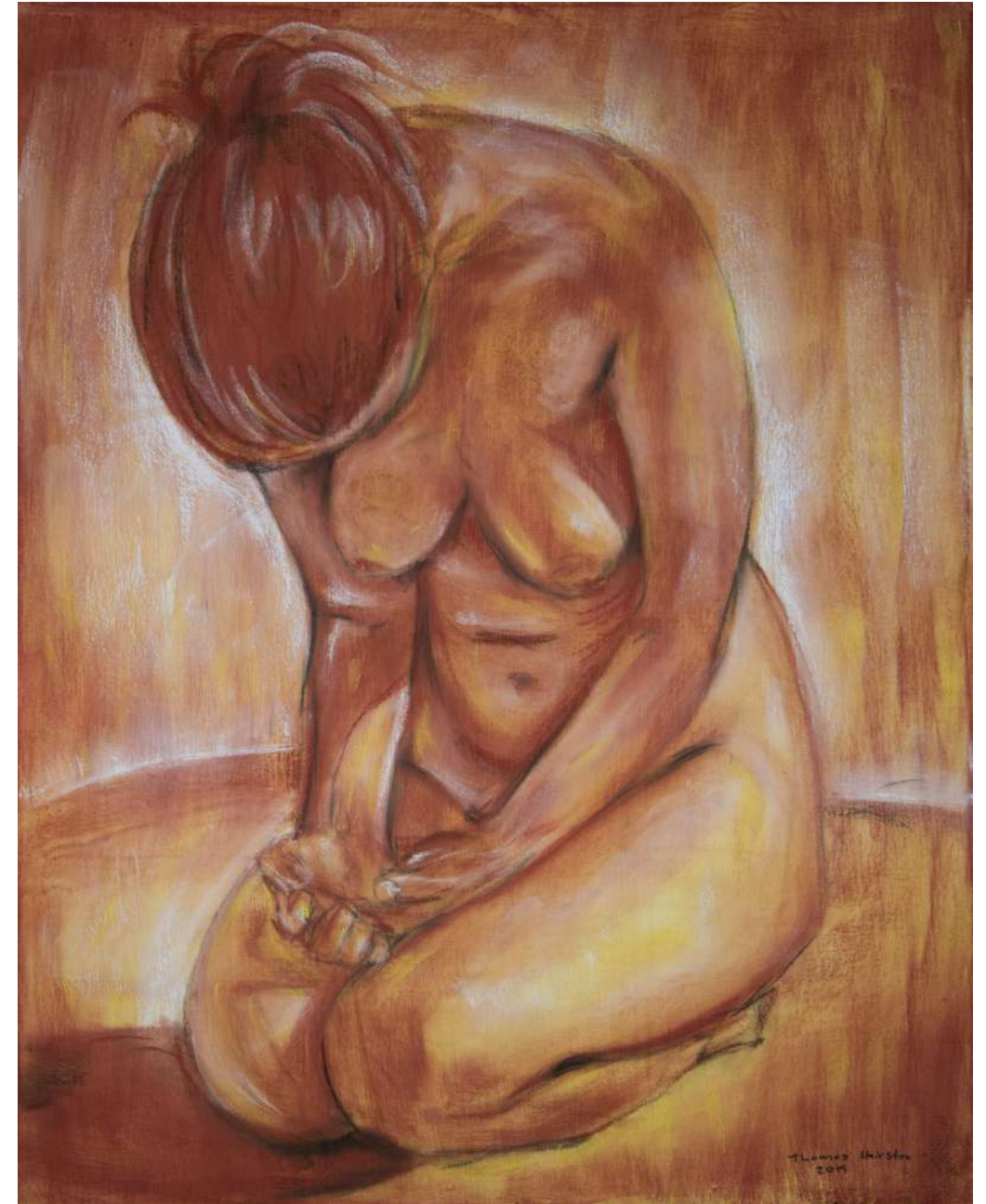


Thomas M. Hairston was born on October 10, 1989, in Nassau, The Bahamas. He has a passion for creating art that began in his early childhood. He attended and graduated from St. Augustine's College High School in 2007 and matriculated into the College of the Bahamas, where he successfully attained an Associate's of Science in Architecture in 2010.

Artist Statement

Hope, explores that feeling of vulnerability, devastation, loss and sorrow can be based on the fundamental belief that life circumstances can be better. 📖

Hope, 2019 (New Providence)
Thomas Hairston
Charcoal and soft pastels on canvas
24" x 30"
Collection of the artist



KEN HESLOP



Ken Heslop trained as a sculptor at art college but has also produced many two-dimensional works in a variety of media. His three-dimensional work usually addresses ecological concerns such as pollution, climate change and water conservation as these global concerns inevitably affect the Bahamas. Heslop's work can be found in private collections in Europe, North America and the Bahamas and his murals and paintings can be seen in hotels and institutions in Grand Bahama. Heslop has been a Bahamian citizen since 2010.

Artist Statement

The Doves of Peace Are Home Tonight is a simple drawing. It depicts the moment the birds returns to the ravaged pine trees, reminiscent of the moment when the dove returned to the Ark. The human loss of life as a result of natural or manmade disasters is always tragic, but consideration is rarely given to the loss of other forms of natural life. They too need to seek refuge.



The Doves of Peace are Home Tonight, 2019 (Grand Bahama)

Ken Heslop

Ink on cotton rag paper

Collection of Mrs Isabelle Heslop (artist's wife)

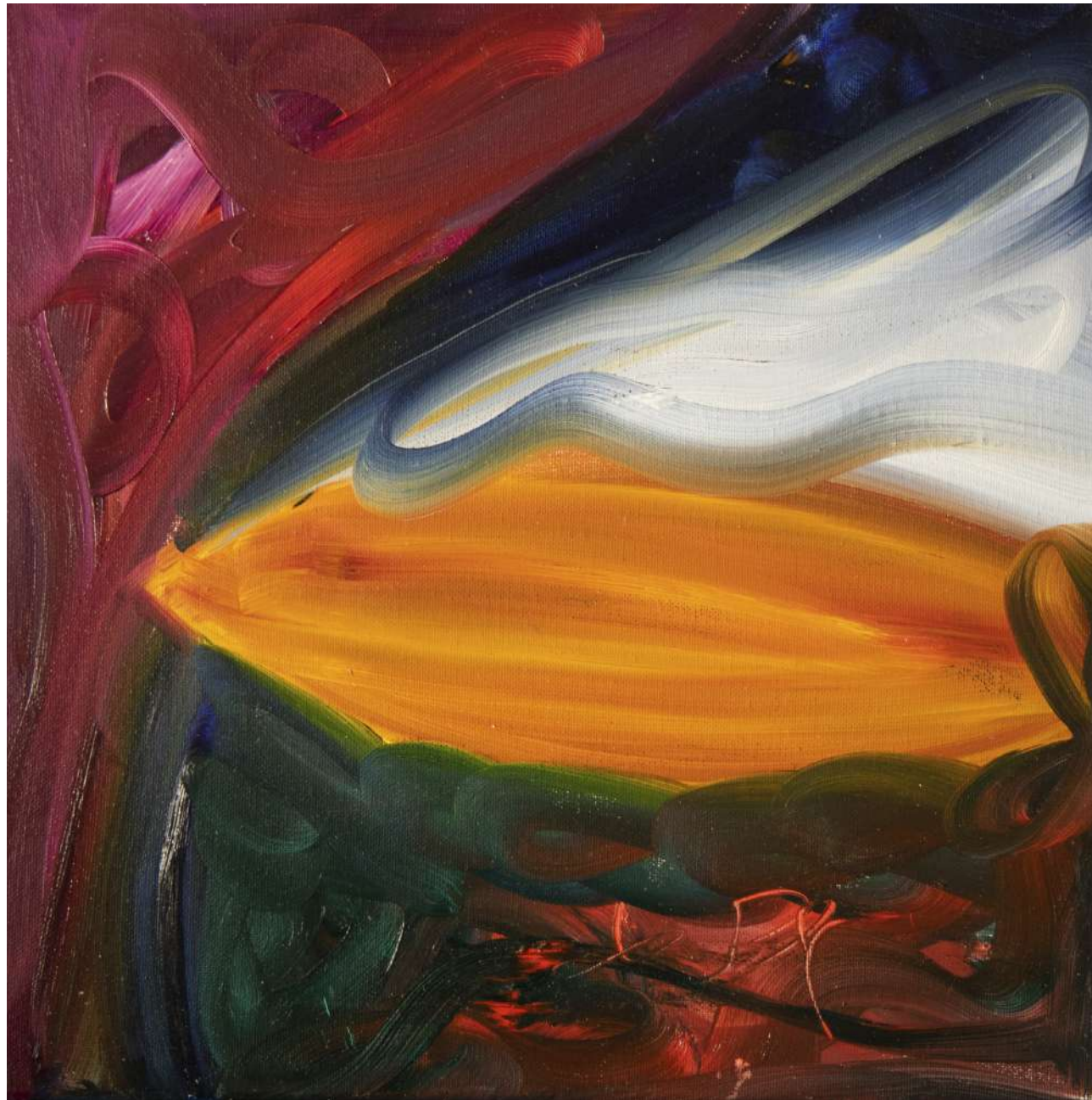
LUCAS KAIGHIN



Lucas Kaighin is a young artist from Abaco who is fascinated with the process of creating artwork, using paint as his medium. The act of applying paint to canvas, the movement of the brush and the ambiguity intrinsic to work that is allowed to “become”, are of particular interest to Kaighin. He is driven to paint and uses his artwork as an outlet to speak to the “Joy of Life” and the harsh “Truth of Despair.”

Artist Statement

I endured six days on Abaco surviving Hurricane Dorian and was not able paint until almost two weeks after being airlifted to safety. My family and I were forced to leave Abaco due to unsafe conditions—looters trying to intrude into our home. I was supposed to start my senior year of high school on September 1st, but that got blown away with Dorian. My school is no more, my classmates scattered all over. The paintings in “Refuge” were done in the weeks since Dorian. The *Eye of Dorian* represents the fury of the hurricane bearing down on my home. *Tsunami* represents the ferocity of the 22 foot tidal wave that swept my dear aunt away. *Guardian Angel* represents the protection of all the prayers which were offered up on Abaco’s behalf, prayers which kept us alive. 🙏



Guardian Angel, 2019 (Abaco)

Lucas Kaighin

Oil on canvas

18" x 24"

Collection of the artist

Eye of Dorian, 2019 (Abaco)

Lucas Kaighin

Oil on canvas

14" x 14"

Collection of the artist

LAVARRICK KING



Bahamian artist Lavarrick King was born in 1978 in Nassau, The Bahamas. He's been drawing for as far back as he can remember. Being encouraged at school by teachers and peers to pursue art as a career did little to help him take it seriously, as he did not hear those same encouraging words at home. In his early thirties, finding himself unemployed, he began to paint island scenes on small canvas boards, selling them at tourist hot spots. Unfortunately, his lack of painting skills prevented him from producing a quantity of work that could sustain him, compelling him to return to the work force.

At thirty-three years old, he relocated to the island of Eleuthera, where he honed his gift and taught himself how to paint in both acrylic and watercolor mediums. It was Eleuthera that gave him the inspiration to paint the beauty of the island in its unique and raw form.

Artist Statement

The destruction that Hurricane Dorian left behind in the northern islands of the Bahamas is evident. What is not seen, however, is the mental trauma that has taken a toll on those affected. For many, every day that passes is another day to relive those crucial moments of escaping disastrous situations; of being drowned by floodwaters seeping into their homes; seeing buildings collapse on neighbors, friends and family; seeing people being dragged out to the sea; and many other horrendous moments that would replay in their minds for the rest of their lives.

Fear of being swept away depicts human lives in retreat as another tidal wave approaches. Though not a huge wave, having seen several and the damage that they have caused has left these individuals traumatised and afraid, the clothing colours represent political affiliation and the headscarf represents nationality proving that no matter where we are from, what political party we support or the color of our skin, we are all affected by this storm. When we are focused on survival and seeking refuge, none of these things matter. 🏠



Fear of Being Swept Away, 2019 (Abaco)
Lavarrick King
Acrylic on canvas
18" x 24"
Collection of the artist

BORYANA KORCHEVA



Boryana Korcheva grew up in Bulgaria under a communist regime, which was overthrown in 1989. She studied art in the atelier with Kiril Stanchev, a prominent Bulgarian artist and pedagogue. Her my family was opposed to the idea of a professional artistic career and Korcheva had to enroll in the Sophia State University where she obtained a degree in Arabic Studies. Korcheva returned to art much later in life, when in 2008 she had an opportunity to end a professional career as a PR consultant and resume art studies in Dubai. Since then she has dedicated herself to visual art, blogging and travel. The most productive part of Korcheva's art career began in 2012 when she relocated to Freeport, Grand Bahama. She has exhibited locally and internationally, curated exhibitions and founded Boryana's Art Salon, an informal private platform for intellectual exchange and networking for artists and art aficionados in Grand Bahama.

Artist Statement

My primary interest is in the human condition expressed through the human form. I divide my practice between working from nature, a very deliberate process of building an internal visual library, and intuitive drawing/painting. Because I approach drawing without a pronounced idea or narrative in mind, emotion reigns. What comes from my hand when I draw is always unexpected and often unsettling, if not disturbing to me. The serendipity of the outcome is the main reason why I make art. *The Forsaken* emerged from the drawings of the last month or so. It was painted on raw, un-primed, unstretched linen, first on the floor of my studio, then nailed directly on the wall. In it I see horror, incomprehension, desperation and something that only those who lived through Dorian would be able to recognise and name—if there are words for it at all. 🏰



The Forsaken, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Boryana Korcheva
Acrylic, oil, pastel and nails on raw canvas
46" x 62"
Collection of the artist

ALTON LOWE



Alton Lowe (born Abaco, The Bahamas, 1945) is an important figure in Bahamian art whose realist oil paintings celebrate the beauty of the Bahamian landscape and island life. A seventh-generation Abaconian who can trace his family heritage to the first Eleutheran Adventurers settlers from the mid-1600s, Lowe's exquisite pieces, drawn from his birthplace, help Bahamians appreciate the bounty of their surroundings and heritage.

Lowe's appreciation for art developed at a young age, when he would observe his father drawing seascapes with ships at the dining table of their home in Green Turtle Cay. At nine years old, Lowe developed this passion through art classes with a local American woman who lived in the Green Turtle Cay settlement. At age 14, Lowe met an American couple who ran a successful art gallery in Miami Beach. The couple, long active in the international art community, invited Alton to live and study with them after he graduated school. After a two-year study period in Florida,

he headed to the prestigious Frank Reilly School of Art in New York City with their generous assistance. In New York, Lowe studied classical drawing and painting, completing the four-year program in only three years. Following graduation, Lowe travelled in England and Canada, sketching and painting, before returning home to The Bahamas and holding his first exhibition in 1966. The exhibition served as a fortuitous beginning for his prolific career. Following his earliest success, Lowe became known for his spectacular and social annual exhibitions—which took place for decades at the Nassau Beach Hotel.

With a great interest in the environment, Lowe is deeply committed to protecting and preserving the Bahamian landscape he so beautifully depicts in his work. In 1976, he founded the Albert Lowe Museum in New Plymouth, Green Turtle Cay, in memory of his father (who is depicted in one of the oil paintings on display), which was housed in a beautifully restored wooden Loyalist home that illustrates the history and culture of Abaco. This building was severely damaged in the hurricane and the paintings on display were salvaged from the wreckage. Also in the late '70s, he created the Loyalist Memorial Sculpture Garden which pays tribute to founders of the community—many of these bronze sculptures were tossed off their pedestals like rag dolls during Hurricane Dorian. In the late 1990s, Lowe opened his own gallery space, Alton Art Gallery, in his home. This was utterly destroyed in Dorian with over 40 paintings submerged in raging sea waters for more than a day. These are currently being salvaged and treated.

Lowe's paintings can be found in collections around the world, as well as in the private collections of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, HRH Prince Charles, the late Princess Diana and Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Sands. 🏰





Parliament Street, 1982 (Abaco)
Alton Lowe
Oil on canvas
21½" x 32½"
Collection of the artist



Hole In The Wall Lighthouse, 2002 (Abaco)
Alton Lowe
Oil on canvas
24" x 36"
Collection of the artist



Blue Moonlight, 2010 (Abaco)

Alton Lowe

Oil on canvas

18" x 24"

Collection of the artist

Beyond The Horizon, 1974 (Abaco)

Alton Lowe

Oil on canvas

19" x 23"

Collection of the artist

ANINA MAJOR



Anina Major is a visual artist from The Bahamas whose work investigates the relationships between self and place in an effort to cultivate moments of reflection and a sense of belonging. Major studied at the College of The Bahamas before earning her BS in Graphic Design from Drexel University and her MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She is the recipient of numerous awards and residencies, including the St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artists Award for sculpture, MassMoCA Studio Artist Programme and Provincetown Fine Arts WorkCenter Fellowship. Her work has been exhibited in The Bahamas, across the United States and Europe.

Artist Statement

I once heard a love song comparing love to a resting place, shelter from a storm. A place that provides comfort in troubled times. And it is the memory of love that brings you home. *Shelter* was made in consideration of one's love for home and the protective aspects of the relationship with that place. Here, a handmade straw-doll souvenir cast in porcelain rests under a sky-blue roof on a bed of raw cotton in its fragile state. 🏠



Shelter, 2018 (Diaspora)

Anina Major
Porcelain, wood, raw cotton, gold lustre
8.5 W x 14 H x 4 D
Collection of the artist

DYLAN
MILES



Born and raised in Nassau, Bahamas, Dylan Miles is a creative and resourceful illustrative artist. Having won several awards as a youth, Dylan began displaying his work in earnest in 2018, specialising in the use of pen and ink to create highly stylised black and white illustrations (with the occasional use of red). While the medium and presentation is simple, it serves to compliment the work itself, which consists of intricate abstract designs as well as detailed surrealist imagery. Dylan graduated from Queen's College and has an Associates Degree in Architecture from The University of The Bahamas, which influences the technical aspects of his work.

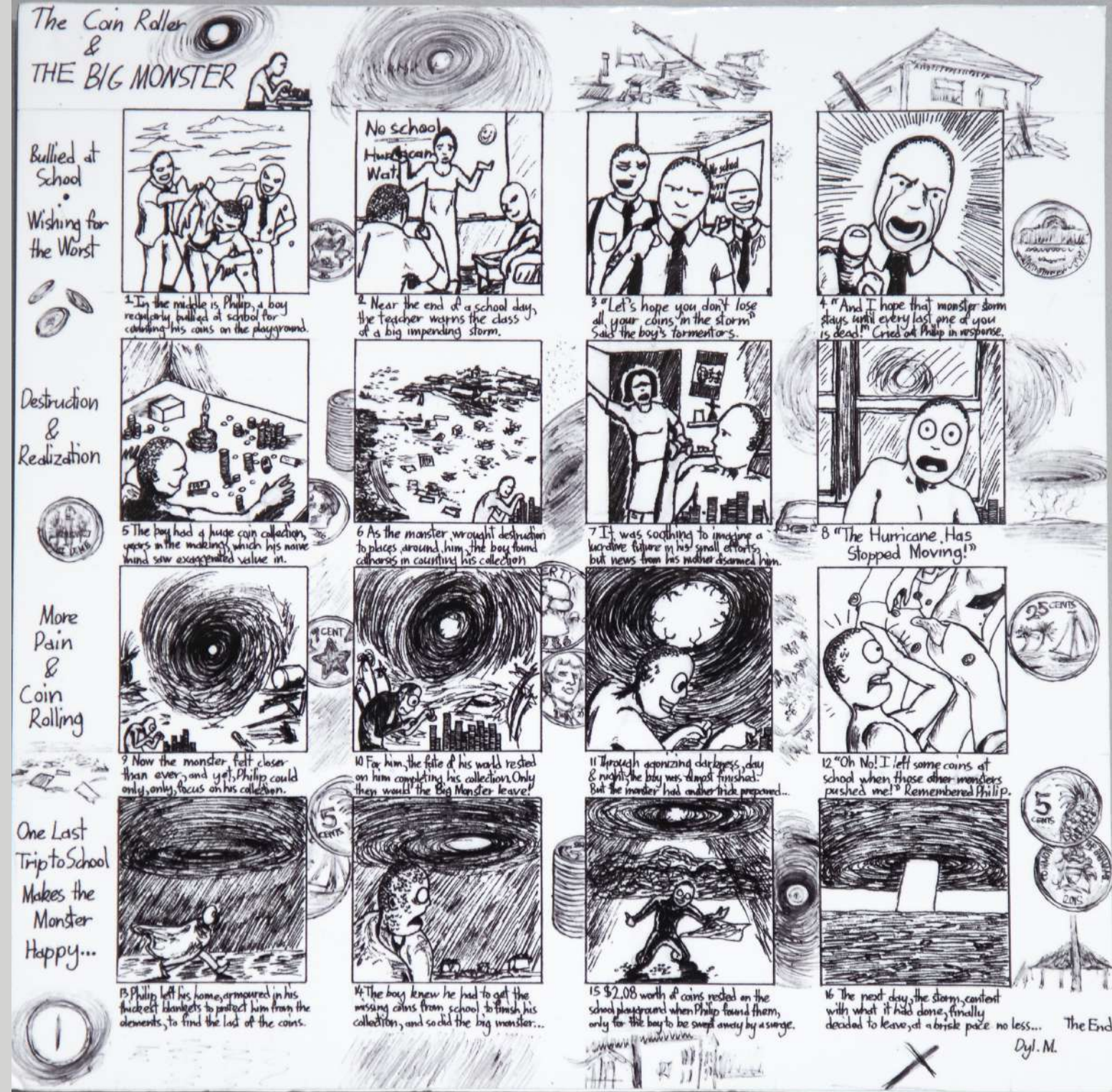
Coin Roller and Big Monster, 2019 (New Providence)

Dylan Miles

Print from pen and ink drawing

15" x 15"

Courtesy of the Antoinette Seymour Collection



NICOLE MINNIS-FERGUSON



Bahamian artist Nicole Minnis, is the eldest of three children and was born to Bahamian artist and songwriter, Eddie Minnis, and his wife Sherry in 1970. She graduated from Queen's College Senior High School in 1986 with seven G.C.E.'s, including a distinction in Art. Her recognition as a young Bahamian painter started soon after she left school when she won numerous Central Bank and Esso Art competitions. She also received an award in the senior division of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition for meritorious works of Art. In May of 1988, she held her first individual art exhibition and participated in a joint Caribbean art exhibition held in Toronto, Canada. She has participated in numerous joint family art shows along with her father and sister, Roshanne, including a retrospective exhibition at the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas in 2014. Nicole works mainly in oils. In her paintings, she tries to capture the beauty of the Bahamian people enjoying everyday activities. Her paintings are in private art collections throughout The Bahamas, Barbados, Canada and the United States. Nicole is grateful to have the freedom and flexibility to volunteer her time in the Bible educational work as a minister of Jehovah's Christian Witnesses.

Artist Statement

In August 1992, Hurricane Andrew hit the Island of Eleuthera where we lived... anyone who has ever been through a major hurricane like Andrew or Dorian, knows that this experience changes your life forever! I was moved to capture this experience in oil. Using three children of different ages I placed them in and around their home, which had been totally demolished. Each expression is different but captures their personal struggle and unique response to the same event. It took me almost a year to create and paint this canvas. The final piece is entitled, *After the Storm*.

Hurricane Dorian ravaged the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco. So many precious lives, businesses, homes and possessions were lost. Our family had an art gallery in Marsh Harbour, Abaco and this too was also totally destroyed and under water. I had hoped that maybe one piece of artwork could be spared but feared that all had been destroyed and was gone forever. How could we recreate works of art that had taken us months and years to create? Miraculously, our body of work including my painting, *Lil Hairbraider II* survived. Volunteers from the Smithsonian Institute helped with the restoration. Dorian tried to destroy everything in its path but it was unsuccessful. I want this painting to be a reminder and encouragement to Bahamians that we always have hope, miracles can and do happen and that restoration is possible. 🏰



After The Storm, 1994 (Eleuthera)

Nicole Minnis-Ferguson

Oil on canvas

48" x 36"

Collection of the artist



Lil' Hairbraider II, 2018 (Eleuthera)
Nicole Minnis-Ferguson
Oil on canvas
30" x 24"
Collection of the artist

ROSHANNE MINNIS



Bahamian artist Roshanne Eyma, daughter of Sherry Grace Minnis and artist and singer/songwriter Eddie Minnis, was born on May 4, 1972. Her interest in art began early in life, growing up surrounded by a family of artists. She started painting seriously in 1986 for art competitions when she was 14 years old. In 1988, she graduated from Queen's College with eight distinctions at the General Certificate of Education examinations Ordinary Level, including in art.

She received awards in several art competitions, including the Esso and Central Bank art contests. She has also participated in a number of joint exhibitions with her father, Eddie Minnis, and sister, Nicole Minnis-Ferguson, in Freeport (1988) and in their family shows in Nassau at the Crystal Palace (1990), the Kennedy Art Gallery (1995), The Central Bank (2005) and UBS Bahamas Ltd. (2010). In 1998, she married a fellow artist, Ritchie Eyma. After living in Nassau for more than a decade, they decided to move to Marsh Harbour, Abaco in 2012. They both serve as pioneer ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Haitian community there, helping people improve their lives through Bible education. The couple have participated in numerous art exhibits in the Abacos, and held a family art exhibition at the Ocean Club, Paradise Island, in March, 2018. A special highlight of their artistic career was the Minnis Family Retrospective Exhibition held at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas in Nassau from July to November of

2014. Roshanne paints in oils and soft pastel. She completed what she considers to be her first real piece of artwork in soft pastel when she was in grade four, and this remains her medium of choice. Even in her oil paintings the blending techniques she uses in pastel comes through.

Her work has been described as a sort of "romantic realism." She attempts to capture a mood that leaves the viewer with a serene feeling. Her chief interest has been figure studies of local people in their natural settings. She also enjoys nature studies and is fascinated by the beautiful Bahamian waters. Her paintings are presently in private collections in The Bahamas.

Artist Statement

I was very pleased to receive the open call from the NAGB for "Refuge", and I feel privileged to have my work displayed in the exhibition. The theme is very personal to me. My family and I had experienced Hurricane Andrew in Eleuthera but never in our wildest imagination did we envision anything like Hurricane Dorian. The devastation was worse than anything The Bahamas has ever seen. Through it all, we are very thankful. Thankful for life. Thankful for health. Thankful for our family. Thankful for our friends. Thankful for our faith. What we lost were things, things that can be replaced. So many more lost loved ones, and for them life can never be the same again. Our hearts go out to them. A month after the storm we received a gift that we never expected. The landlord of our art gallery told us that he had found and secured our paintings! We could hardly believe it when we opened the cardboard boxes that my husband had carefully packed with bubble wrap before the storm to find all of our paintings intact, like they had just come from the frame shop. I was especially surprised to find my pastel, *Holiday Splash* in pristine condition.

Of course, this work was completed long before Hurricane Dorian. It depicts two boys in Cooper's Town Abaco, innocently enjoying the beautiful clear waters by their home on an Independence Day holiday. This signifies to me our innocence as a people and the calm before the storm. Who could ever imagine the sea that we splashed and played in could cause so much destruction? Are we coming to terms with the potential crisis we will face as rising sea levels endanger our "islands of the shallow sea"? Can we ever return to this innocence again after so many ugly issues have raised their head?

My second painting selected to be displayed in "Refuge" is entitled *Transformation*. Brilliant pink flamingos have long been a part of our national heritage. I have roots in Inagua where the

majority of them make their home. I was intrigued to find that the graceful, colourful adults have humble beginnings as fuzzy, grey chicks. I would not call them ugly ducklings. They are awkward, but cute and appealing in their own way. *Transformation* shows the metamorphosis of these fumbling young ones into confident mature adults. And it also depicts the constant nurturing and care that is needed for such a transformation.

This painting also miraculously survived Hurricane Dorian in Abaco. I never thought I would see this original again. It brings to mind our current struggle. We are struggling and floundering in the face of this disaster of epic proportions. Will a transformation occur? Will we attain dignity and grace?

I would like to thank the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas for helping to raise awareness through the arts about this national tragedy called Hurricane Dorian. We really appreciate their support for the arts and for the artists who have lived through this nightmare. What a wonderful thing for us to come together to express ourselves through our various media, record history as it happens, and help each other to heal. Thank you for appreciating what we do, and for helping others see that art really does matter. 🇧🇸



Holiday Splash, 2016 (Abaco)

Roshanne Minnis

Soft pastels

18" x 24"

Collection of the artist

Roshanne Minnis

FRECINDA MULLINGS



Frecinda "Cindy" Syntyche Mullings was born October 7, 1990 in Nassau, The Bahamas. She is an expressionist painter who began nurturing her artistic talents after taking a course in painting in 2009 at the College of the Bahamas, in which two of her pieces were displayed in an exhibition called "Colour of Harmony."

Mullings has participated in multiple exhibitions in Nassau including at The Central Bank of the Bahamas and the Pro Gallery. She has participated in the "Lifestyle Wellness" exhibition in October 2014, with the Salus Project artists. Her solo exhibition called "The New Knowledge" in July 2015 was a series of artwork focusing on spirituality, the female form and multiple perspectives of religion and the subconscious mind. Her most recent work was displayed at The Creative Center's exhibition entitled "Black out" in October 2019.

She currently resides in her hometown of Nassau, but intends to do some travelling in the near future, as well as further her tertiary education in the arts and child psychology.

Artist Statement

In September 2019, Hurricane Dorian devastated Abaco and Grand Bahama, drawing global attention, which resulted in the giving of various forms of aid. Predictably, as the weeks passed, it faded from international headlines while its effects continued reverberate throughout The Bahamas as residents struggled to define and embody resilience, recovery and rebuilding. These are, most often, associated with emotional stability, physical strength and financial resources. Absent from many conversations about disaster recovery is the spiritual connection we, as African descendants, have with our ancestors who continue to send their blessings, hold space for us and guide us.

Mlinzi, Swahili for "protectors," depicts eight protectors who generate and control a constant flow of energy and power for continued healing and restoration of first, body, mind, and spirit and second, material possessions. The number eight is significant in its representation of infinity and association with success and material wealth, bringing balance to the emotional and mental work the protectors undertake on our behalf. Our ancestors, unmatched in their wisdom and intuition, are ever-present and will help us to rebuild.

Mlinzi combines the artist's surrealistic style with African spirituality and culture. 🏠



Mlinzi, 2019 (New Providence)
Frecinda Mullings
Acrylic on canvas
24" x 36"
Collection of the artist

DYAH NEILSON



Dyah Neilson (b. 1996 Nassau, The Bahamas) graduated from Queen's College High School in 2013, then from York University, Toronto, Canada with a BFA in Visual Arts in 2018, after which she returned to The Bahamas. Preferring fast-drying mediums, she works in acrylic paint and coloured pencil, and her use of a dry brush technique allows her to build up layers of colour while keeping a relatively flat surface. Neilson is deeply inspired by nature, natural and social histories, and the symbolism and metaphors that are ingrained in these histories. She uses symbolism in her portraits to explore the complexities of spirituality, relationships and femininity. While in high school, she received the top score for the Art BJC (2008) and BGCSE (2012) examinations in the country, and received the Governor General's Choice Award in the Annual Central Bank Competition in 2009. She participated in her first craft show "ETSY: Made in Canada" (2017) in Toronto and since returning to The Bahamas in 2019, she has taken part in group exhibitions at Doongalik Studios and the Current and with the Chan Pratt Foundation. Neilson held her first solo exhibition "Love & Fear" (2019) at Doongalik Studios in Nassau, The Bahamas.

Artist Statement

In the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, we are grappling with questions of how much, or how little, the government cares about its people; if people will leave their island or country for good; how our economy will be affected; how we address climate change; and how we are meant to come to terms spiritually and emotionally with the amount of grief we feel. We wonder what the solutions will be to all of our concerns and if those in power will respond appropriately to allow us to progress after so much destruction. Will our guides take us away from here to avoid another natural disaster happening again in our lifetime? Does it mean we abandon our country due to trauma, fear and self-preservation? Do we allow this disaster to affect how we perceive God or cause us to question His goodness?

In the church, speakers have attempted to address the pain and the worship team preludes the message with songs of oceans rising, being called to walk on the water, and sinking beneath it. These songs that are meant to create imagery of the healing and power of God, now evoke thoughts of those who lost their lives to rising oceans during the hurricane. Words used for worship now act as triggers, calling up memories of bodies now left behind. As an island nation, our history and relationship to water is a rich and complex one. Many have lost their lives to unforgiving waves to get to our shores, and yet it is a place of provision and healing as well. How do we reconcile the destructive nature of water with our spiritual connection to it?



Guides to Calming Waters, 2019 (New Providence)

Dyah Neilson

Acrylic on canvas

14" x 18"

Collection of the artist

MATTHEW RAHMING



Matthew Rahming was born in Nassau, The Bahamas, and is an emerging interdisciplinary artist. Rahming graduated from St. Augustine's College in 2014. From 2016–2019 he attended the University of the Bahamas (UB) studying fine art and he is currently pursuing a BFA at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts. In 2017, he exhibited his first solo exhibition "TUFF" at UB's Pro Gallery. From December 2017–October 2019 Rahming served as the Curatorial and Collections Assistant at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (NAGB) and in November 21, 2019, Rahming opened his first show as a curator, on a project entitled "to throw rocks," an exhibition exploring black masculinity in The Bahamas, at the Franklyn Wilson Centre at UB, drawing on works from private collections and from the National Collection, loaned by the NAGB.

Artist Statement

Over the last year, I've made sculptural works—predominantly ceramic and fibre-based – that investigate the relationship between objects and the cultural ritual/everyday habits of which they are a part. The fibre works begin with reclaimed ropes and nets from beaches and bodies of water, while through the ceramics, I have mostly been thinking about religious rites and food consumption/storage.

Being of African descent, living in the Caribbean and being a poorly-practicing Catholic, I feel deeply connected to life's rituals and the apparatus and refuse of ritual. I use my art practice to navigate these two deeply nuanced and often overlapping and opposite aspects of who I am. These histories can make me feel out of place in today's society of disposable objects and ideals. I try to make objects that blur the line between what people perceive to be of Christian rite and traditional African spiritual practice, as a way of critiquing the common assertion that the two are separate and conflicting, although equally influenced by folklore and religious mythos.

My piece is called *The Thing About Water Is* which for a long time was *the parable of water*. It consists of three earthenware containers filled to the brim with seawater sitting on top of a block of quarried limestone on the floor. Water has always represented life and death for us. As we crossed the Atlantic it was death; as we build industry in the new world around the sea it means life. When we are enjoying the sea and its calm it is life. At the shoreline, I think about what the water has given but I am also presented with the threat, maybe even the promise of death. As a people, I think we "forget" much about our traumas and their connection to the sea, which existed before September 1st, 2019.

I want my piece to exist as a reminder. When you stand near it you will be looking at the sea, tame, as well as contained and separated from the pull and push of moon and currents that you experience at the shoreline.

And we are now all freshly aware that the shoreline isn't as constant as we once thought.. 🏰



The Thing About Water Is, 2019 (New Providence)
Matthew Rahming
Earthenware, sea water, quarried limestone
15.5 L x 13.5 W x 18 H
Collection of the artist

ALISA STREATHER ROBINSON



Robinson was born and raised in The Bahamas and has always been fascinated with the ever-changing waters which inspired her love for the arts. Seven years ago, she founded and currently chairs a youth group, “Young Artists of Grand Bahama” and she is also an art instructor and examiner with the Ministry of Education, teaching at a local high school. Her work can be seen in both local and international businesses and homes. As a member and former president of the Grand Bahama Artist’s Association, she exhibits twice a year with this group, as well as showing in many other local festivals and events. Her artwork was used in the Old Bahama Bay blue flag certification, and she illustrated recording artist Kirkland “KB” Bodie’s children’s book, *Bahamian Lyrical Tales*. She is married to musician and educator Reynold Robinson and they have three beautiful and talented children, two boys and one girl.

Artist Statement

This is a triptych, which is a set of three panels in a single work; it is the depiction of three distinctly different views from my kitchen window. The first painting represents the pre-Hurricane Dorian peaceful vista, which I have had the pleasure of seeing for the past eight years. I enjoyed watching the breeze blowing through the leaves of the trees, the play of light and wind

on the surface of the water in the canal, and our dog running after a passing boat along the pathway at the water’s edge, but mostly, just the quite calm of the day.

The centre image depicts the same scene as above, during Hurricane Dorian. Only the tops of the coconut trees can be seen, as the powerful, rising surge moved inland, creating an ocean in and around our home. My last communication with my husband, before my phone lost signal on Monday morning of the storm was, “There is seven feet of water in the house and eight feet of water outside!” Our home is built four feet off the ground and our ceilings are ten feet high and this knowledge helped to keep me level-headed enough to try to reassure my three grown children, who were not on the island at the time of the storm, that their dad would be okay. I asked them to pray for their father, and posted coordinates to our home for rescue purposes, as we live in a very remote area. The hand prints on the glass represent the haunting touch of the lost souls who drowned in the relentless battering of wind and water that no one had ever encountered before on Grand Bahama. Unfortunately, we lost our beloved German Shepherd of 13 years, and two turtles of 25 and 21 years each.

The final panel—a collage—depicts the view afterwards: post-Hurricane Dorian, out of the same window. On Wednesday morning, I stood at the northern foot of the bridge in the wind and rain, trying to direct persons to our home to rescue my husband. The rescue vehicles returned with many persons aboard, but I was told my husband was nowhere to be seen or heard, as they walked through our home. While I cried and prepared to leave the rescue site, a gentleman ran to me, and informed me that my husband had been rescued, but he had been taken by boat to the southern side of the bridge. Eventually we were reunited, and our family members are all well. Days later we returned to an empty shell of our home, with no kitchen, no doors, no interior walls, and only broken furniture, torn paintings, books, clothing and mere shards of glass in the window frames. The view now looks out on piles of debris, and burnt and parched trees, grass and land left in the wake of the storm. The items glued to the painting, are the broken pieces from our window, a twisted and rusted hanger, resulting in stained clothing, and a painting from my collection entitled, *Bahamian Women First*, found three canals away, twisted, torn and wrapped around a tree! We are living one day at a time. 🏠



A View From My Window' Triptych: Pre- Hurricane Dorian, 2019 (Grand Bahama)

Alisa Streather Robinson
Acrylic on stretched canvas
36" x 18"
Collection of the artist

A View From My Window' Triptych: During Hurricane Dorian, 2019 (Grand Bahama)

Alisa Streather Robinson
Mixed Media on stretched canvas
36" x 18"
Collection of the artist

A View From My Window' Triptych: Post Hurricane Dorian, 2019 (Grand Bahama)

Alisa Streather Robinson
Mixed Media on canvas panel
36" x 18"
Collection of the artist

JORDAN RUSSELL



Jordan Tristan Russell, born on August 6th, 2001, in West Palm Beach, Florida, has lived in Abaco, The Bahamas, with his family for his entire life. He attended St. Francis De Sales School from Pre-K to Grade 12, graduating in June of 2018 at the age of 16 with an accumulative GPA of 3.7. Upon leaving high school, he went straight to work with an exterminating company by the name of The Exterminators. The artist states, "Although it was never what I truly wanted to do, I knew I had to get to work to make money in order to follow my real dreams. I grew up with an absolute love and obsession for boats and the ocean generally, leading me to want to pursue a career in the marine industry as a captain. Additionally, growing up I always had an active imagination and desire to create and this led me to pursue photography. I fell in love with photography in the summer of 2018 and in November I bought my first ever camera and began developing my skills. In December of the same year, I left my job to try to make it as a full-time photographer, but I was faced with many challenges and as a result did not have much success. So I took a job with a dock building company in my home town of Abaco, whilst also continuing to work on my skills and acquire my Captain's License. I began working for Abaco Tug in April of 2019 and I worked there up until the day my life changed forever. On September 1st, my home, the island I love, and the only place I have ever called home was ravaged by Hurricane Dorian, destroying everything my family and I have ever worked for and tearing a piece of our hearts right out of our chests. Additionally, it also led to the loss of my best friend, the only best friend I have ever had since the day I was born. My life has been turned "upside down."

Artist Statement

I want to use my work as an avenue to share my love of the beautiful world that God has created with my audience. After a long day of shooting images, editing and posting online, I am constantly awestruck by the incredible moments I am able to capture with my camera. While I have only been actively pursuing an art career for one year, I believe that I am capable of touching the world with my art and making a name for myself in the industry. 🙏



Endless Dawn, 2019 (Abaco)
Jordan Russell
Photography
20" x 13"
Collection of the artist



Lost in Reflection, 2019 (Abaco)
Jordan Russell
Photography
20" x 13"
Collection of the artist

LEANNE RUSSELL



Leanne Russell (b. 1982 Green Turtle Cay, Abaco, The Bahamas) was initially interested in the visual arts, but chose to pursue commercial studies and obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree from St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2002. When she returned to Abaco, she was reunited with her first love—painting. She completed a series of murals for the Green Turtle Club, where she was employed, and received a number of commissions for corporate and private collections in the United States and Australia. She has exhibited in the United States, St. Kitts and Jamaica, and her work is a part of the Imago Mundi Collection. In 2015, Leanne was a Bahamian Icon finalist in the fine art category for her work in creating platforms for young Abaconian artists to showcase their talents. Most recently she has participated in shows at The Public Treasury; Transforming Spaces at Doongalik Studios in "In Situ"; and The Current at Baha Mar in "Instinct II: From Darkness to Light" (2018); and the 7th and 8th National Exhibitions (2014 and 2016) at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas.

Artist Statement

"Dazed residents of Great Abaco, suffering from lack of food, water and sorely needing medical attention, today strove to bring order out of the chaos created by category 5 strength hurricane force winds which, for 36 hours, ravaged the small group of islands"

-Francis P. Malone; September 13th 1932, Daily News

This excerpt, included in Amanda Diedrick's book, *Those Who Stayed*, became the basis of this collection of collages. The bizarre similarities between the 1932 hurricane that devastated Green Turtle Cay, and Hurricane Dorian, became even more apparent when Amanda shared with me a collection of photos taken just a week after the storm on a relief trip in September 1932, by Jack Mertland Malone (master artist Brent Malone's father). Combining photographs taken by myself and photographer Ashrica Gardiner with the Malone photos, this four-piece collection reflects on the aftermath, what was experienced politically and sociologically, and how many of those experiences are interchangeable. The name of each piece is the handwritten caption left by Mr. Malone on each of the 1932 photos. 🏠



1932 or 2019; All Together, 2019 (Abaco)
Leanne Russell
Collaboration with Jack Mertland Malone
(Brent Malone's grandfather) and Ashrica Gardiner
Photo collage on canvas
18" x 26"
Collection of the artist



1932 or 2019; They Search The Wreckage, 2019 (Abaco)
Leanne Russell
Collaboration with Jack Mertland Malone
(Brent Malone's grandfather) and Ashrica Gardiner
Photo collage on canvas
18" x 26"
Collection of the artist



1932 or 2019; My Address from the School Floor, 2019 (Abaco)

Leanne Russell

Collaboration with Jack Mertland Malone

(Brent Malone's grandfather) and Ashrica Gardiner

Photo collage on canvas

18" x 26"

Collection of the artist



1932 or 2019; Their Father is Buried Under the Wreckage, 2019 (Abaco)

Leanne Russell

Collaboration with Jack Mertland Malone

(Brent Malone's grandfather) and Ashrica Gardiner

Photo collage on canvas

18" x 26"

Collection of the artist

HEINO SCHMID



Heino Schmid is a versatile artist who uses a variety of media to investigate simple encounters between people and environments. His works in painting, drawing, collage, video installation and photography all aim to illuminate the collective experience within society through visual deconstruction. Schmid received his Associates of Art degree in art from the then College of The Bahamas (now University of The Bahamas), and a BFA in Photography from the Savannah College of Art and Design, USA. He was the first recipient of the Harry C. Moore Memorial Scholarship of the Arts, earning the honour to help pursue an MA in Fine Art at the Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art Studies and Design, the Netherlands.

Schmid's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including in Germany, the USA, and Trinidad and Tobago. In his exhibition "Wait, I Saw Something", held at the D'Aguiar Art Foundation, Schmid exhibited abstract works that encapsulate the subtlety of human interaction, magnifying the private exchanges between the subjects. His inspiration often comes from his own personal experiences, and as a result, his pieces are honest, vulnerable and filled with intimate visual stories. He is quoted as saying "I approach each body of work in a very personal way. Using self-referential experiences as an avenue to illuminating collective experiences, I hope to reveal the subtle social dramas that inform social dynamics and ultimately bring those realities to the forefront for discussion."

Artist's Statement

The work *Home* is a reconsideration of earlier, much smaller work. Having seen the destruction throughout the islands hit by Dorian, I felt compelled to reconsider this work and think about the idea of home. The house is both fragile but sturdy and functions as a sort of icon, or votive painting, in which I both petition for a miracle of safety and security and give thanks for survival. The browned palm fronds reminds many of us of how we had to literally excavate our homes from under piles of blown leaves or mud and are also reminiscent of how the vegetation and landscape looks after the passage of a hurricane: the salted sea water "burns" all plant material and leaves what was green and lush, brown and faded. 🏠



Home, 2019 (New Providence)

Heino Schmid

Acrylic, graphite and oil stick on wood with found palm leaves

70" x 96"

Collection of the artist



LAURIE TUCHEL



Laurie Tuchel is an American artist who divides her time between adopted homes on Grand Bahama Island and Edinburgh, Scotland. Interested in landscapes and the human figure, her subject matter observes the interplay between people, place and culture, in both remote and urban settings. She is always looking for the common denominator that makes us human. Her work begins with sketchbooks filled with recordings of emotional and visual responses by working in Plein Air. These interpretations become the intuitive foundation for future paintings created in the studio. She is a founding member of the Grand Bahama Plein Air Painters Society and is an active participant in that island's artistic community. Laurie is equally interested in creating works of art that tell the stories of her island, Grand Bahama, a community with limited exposure to the power of visual art and its storytelling abilities. She is the inspiration behind a collaborative ongoing series highlighting the island's unique history. Together with other island artists, Grand Bahama's heritage is being showcased in new ways.

Since 2014, Laurie has exhibited paintings in The Bahamas, the United States and Scotland. She is a 1980 graduate of Sweet Briar College, Amherst, Virginia and 2018 graduate of the Leith School of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland. Laurie and her husband Charles are permanent Bahamian residents and have lived on Grand Bahama since 2002. Their sons, Andrew and James, live and work in Los Angeles.

Artist Statement

Grand Bahama has been my home for 19 years. I have lived through major storms since my arrival in 2002. I have watched the island fight its way back from Jeanne and Francis and Wilma and Mathew and now... Dorian. Dorian, a league unto its own. I watched from Scotland. I watched Grand Bahama and the Abacos, fight for survival. I watched the storm unfold as ZNS tirelessly kept the people informed as best they could. I listened to the stories of bravery, and watched the footage of humanity emerge as the storm grew tired of beating the life out of our islands and finally moved off shore. I have been laid speechless by the scenes of destruction, of incredible bravery and of deep, deep sadness. I simply don't have the vocabulary to express the devastating loss of life, of homes, of culture. Or the indescribable relief of survival, listening to the stories of those who faced days of torment sheltering inside roofs, or hanging onto tree branches, or refrigerators, or a loved ones' arm, for unspeakable hours. And so I paint. I paint thinking about the courage, the dignity, the survival and the loss that I feel for my Bahamian island family. I think about our collective vulnerability as human beings facing such a cataclysmic natural disaster. I think about the future, the past, the present. I think about our will to rebuild, to not give up. And so I paint with collage, pieces of paper representing our tattered present state but made whole when pieced and painted together into a unified image. Torn but not broken. This developing body of work is dedicated to the Bahamian people, to the Grand Bahamians and Abaconians' indomitable spirit. May they remain forever strong and never give up. 🇱🇻



Wading Into The Melee, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Laurie Tuchel
Oil and acrylic on archival paper, mounted on board
24" H x 24¼" W
Collection of the artist



The Evacuation of Sweetings Cay, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Laurie Tuchel
Oil and acrylic on archival paper, mounted on board
15" H x 22¾" W
Collection of the artist



Rest In Peace Dear Child, 2019 (Grand Bahama)
Laurie Tuchel
Oil and Acrylic on archival paper, mounted on board
30³/₄" H x 24" W
Courtesy of The Dawn Davies Collection

CHRISTINA WONG



Christina Marie Wong, born September 13th, 1995 in Nassau, Bahamas, is a Bahamian artist who focuses on artistic expressions using various media, highlighting social development. Much of Wong's work to date has been created using watercolour and acrylic paints with the intent of heightening the awareness of equality for women. She received the E. Clement Bethel Art Award in 2013, which encouraged her to pursue her passion. Wong graduated in 2016 from the College Of The Bahamas with an Associates of Arts degree in Art, and from Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 2018 with a Bachelors degree, also in Art. Wong received an honourable mention for The Central Bank Competition in 2019 for her piece inspired by Hurricane Dorian, *Everybody and Dey Grammy #hurricanedorian*. She is passionate about continuous personal improvement and development as an artist and enhancing her creativity to make a dynamic impact on the local art scene, and ultimately on the international stage.

Artist Statement

In Bahamian colloquial speech, "everybody and dey grammy" is a phrase used to exaggerate the amount of people being referred to. For example, "everybody and dey grammy going to Junkanoo" or "everybody and dey grammy gat a Nissan Cube." In relation to the art piece, "everybody and dey grammy was being updated on dey phone during hurricane Dorian." This time, though, it did not seem like an exaggeration. This painting is a reflection of a Bahamian grandmother's anxiety while she is being updated through her devices. Though miles away in the capital and not affected directly, she empathises and mourns for her country. Even after the storm, social media was buzzing with 'missing persons' notices, death tolls, imagery of the aftermath, donation requests, truth and fallacies. It was creating hope for some and more trauma for others.

We have experienced these before, so it was nothing new. Our building codes enabled us to withstand a category 5 hurricane, at least that's what we thought. It came in like a wrecking ball, sustained winds peaking 185 mph, hovering like a mad woman waiting for you to notice. Flooding its anger on thousands, drowning innocent souls. Merging man and beast into one boiling pot. The deceased increased and the hope decreased. No, not everyone one was physically affected. Grand Bahama and Abaco will never be the same, but we will lift up our heads to the rising sun, and march on, forward, upward, onward, together as a united people.

There is a dual meaning behind the series of works. The unaffected Islands felt helpless in the midst of the storm and were only updated through the news and social media. They desperately wanted to send aid, but the storm did not allow them to for hours. The second meaning to this theme was literal. Many persons lost children, parents, spouses, other family members and neighbours, and were unable to do anything, their only option to try to survive and find refuge. This work shows glimpses inspired by stories heard, with the intent to have people empathise with and visualise what many have experienced and will never be able to forget. 🏠



Everybody and Dey Grammy #hurricanedorian, 2019 (New Providence)

Christina Wong

Acrylic on canvas

30" x 40"

Courtesy of The Dawn Davies Collection



So Close Yet So Far, 2019 (New Providence)

Christina Wong

Acrylic on canvas

30" x 40"

Collection of the artist

LEMERO WRIGHT



Lemero Wright started drawing at an early age and was taught by the late Sandra Illingworth, who played a pivotal role in his career as an artist. He has participated in numerous art shows including the Oxford International Art Fair in London. Wright's style is interchangeable and incorporates elements of surrealism and urban graffiti art. He continues to work to develop his artistic practise and seeks to paint the ordinary in unusual ways.

Artist Statement

In an attempt to cope with the devastation left by Hurricane Dorian, I have been investigating the idea of mystery through my work. The mystery of a young man bruised and battered, taking refuge in the mangroves. This piece speaks to the loss and grief he is experiencing, having lost everything. The mangroves show that we are still rooted in the ground as a nation and that we will rebuild stronger. 🇧🇸



Mystery in da Mangroves, 2019 (New Providence)

Lemero Wright

Acrylic on canvas

48" x 60"

Collection of the artist

XAN-XI



Xan-Xi is a Bahamian multi-media artist, writer and educator. She started exploring art and writing as a young child, with the encouragement and mentorship of her father. Her first medium of choice was acrylic paint, and she spent the greater part of her adolescent years in intense self-directed study using this medium. In addition, her love for reading, birthed a love for writing and performing. She was an active member of both her primary and high schools' drama clubs, winning first place at the E. Clement Bethel National Arts Competition more than seven times. In her high school graduating year, Xan-Xi organised almost twenty of her talented schoolmates to create a group called the P.I.C. (Partners in Creativity). They then went on to host a successful mixed media show at the Radisson Hotel.

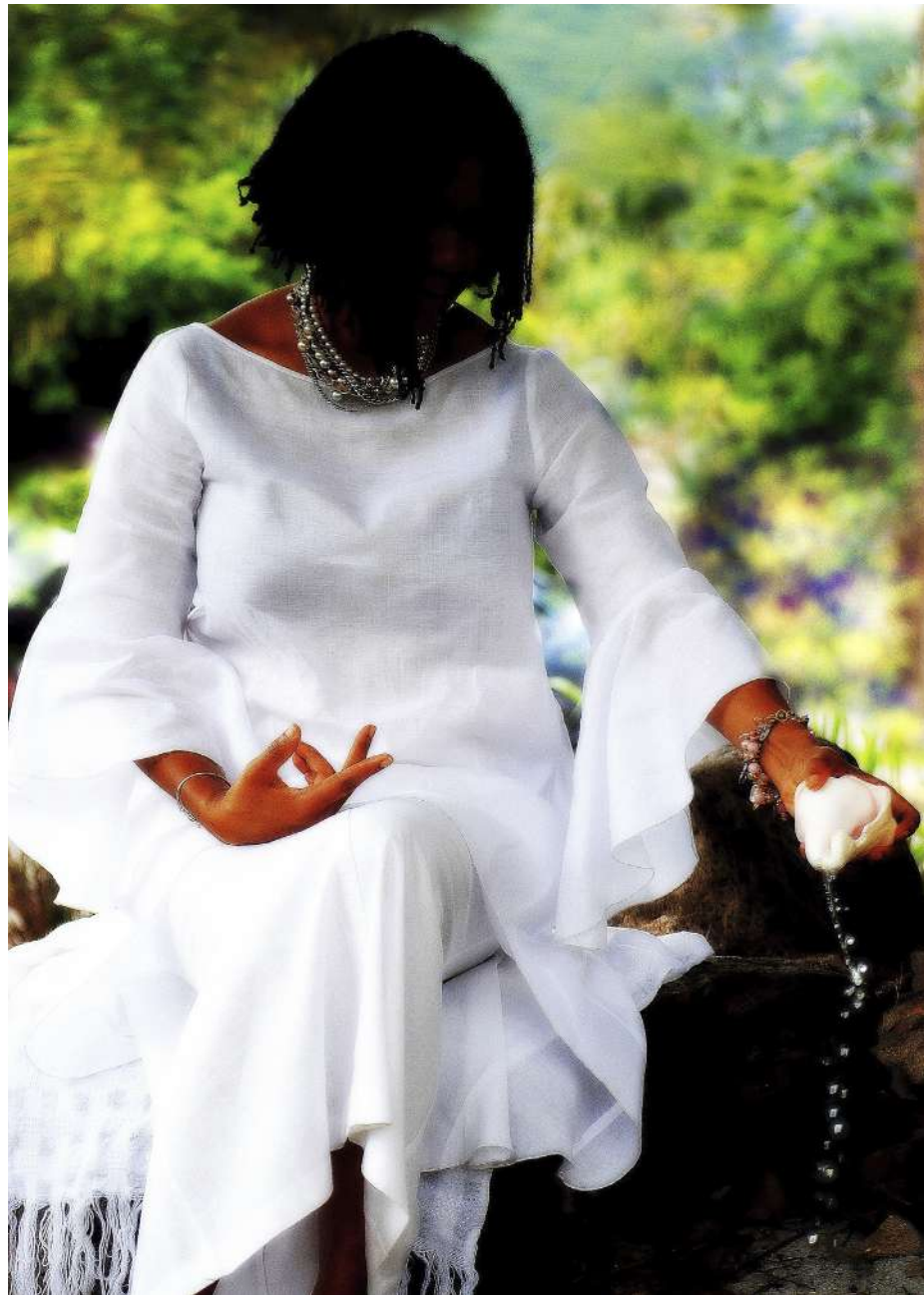
As a young adult, she began writing and performing regularly, developing and honing her craft. During this time, she was introduced to jewelry design whilst studying fine art in Barbados. Out of this, her jewellery company, Amani Nefertari Designs was born. She experiments with metals like copper and silver, and uses gemstones and pearls in her "wearable art." Many of the designs are influenced by her fascination with how the African aesthetic has been retained, reshaped and re-imagined across the diaspora.

In 2015, after the birth of her second son, who was unable to see, her art and purpose took another defining turn. Xan-Xi made the decision to stand, speak and advocate for sensitivity and inclusiveness in art spaces. "Hands (are) For Seeing" was born. In 2015, she curated the first sensory art exhibit in The Bahamas. This work continues. In addition, her most recent endeavor in 2019 has been the founding of WE Artists' Collective, a Caribbean-based arts collective dedicated to creating spaces for Caribbean artists to engage as part of the collective context.

She describes herself as a radical optimist.

Artist Statement

We pour libation, for those who have disappeared. For those we cannot and, for those whose light was extinguished. This is how we honour them. We pour libation, and ask that the earth receive them, we ask that their souls be lifted from tragedy, into bliss. This is how we give thanks, this is how we acknowledge the divinity in all life. And through this, indeed, we also ask that we remember our commonality as human beings, needing light, love and refuge. 🙏



Ìbà'ẹ̀, ìbà'ẹ̀, ẹ̀ni tó nù. for those who have disappeared., 2019 (Diaspora)

Xan-Xi

Photographic print on canvas

48" x 32"

Collection of the artist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Refuge” was conceived, organised, installed and produced thanks to the passion and commitment of the permanent staff and temporary workers at the NAGB, all of whom all threw themselves into the creation of this show after the passage of the world’s most devastating hurricane to-date. Despite infrastructural challenges works came by boat and air and were carried to NAGB with love and care.

A special thanks goes out to all the artists and writers, who opened their hearts and minds to this call at such a raw moment in our country’s history. We would like to thank them all, as well as the continued support of the NAGB Board of Directors.

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With special installation assistance from Jodi Minnis.

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Pages 220-221: Guides to Calming Waters, 2019 (New Providence)

Dyah Neilson

Acrylic on canvas

14" x 18"

Collection of the artist

REFUGEE