



PRESS FILE

IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Allora & Calzadilla, Candida Alvarez, Alvaro Barrington, Minia Biabiany, Ramiro Chaves & MAOF, Jean-Luc Delagarigue, Daniel Lind-Ramos, Manuel Mathieu, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, Ada M. Patterson, The Living and the Dead Ensemble

From September 26th, Z33 presents the group exhibition *In the Eye of the Storm*. Based on the work of more than 10 artists from the Caribbean, this exhibition examines the impact of climate change and how the Caribbean population in general and the artists in particular deal with this.

Climate change is everywhere, yet it is largely invisible in our daily lives. It is as if we have been thrust into the eye of the storm, a threatening silence surrounded by crushing winds. This image holds true especially for the Caribbean, where hurricanes have caused great damage and revealed deep inequalities. What once seemed like a distant future for Europe is already a reality there, and recent natural disasters suggest that the future is now. How do Caribbean artists respond to these experiences? How do they take action? What is their relationship to their environment? These questions are at the core of the exhibition *In the Eye of the Storm*.

In this exhibition, leading artists from Puerto Rico, Haiti, Barbados, Grenada, Guadeloupe and Martinique present films, photographs, paintings, sculptures, and installations. They address the impact of literal and figurative storms. Through their work, we can sense what binds them to a given place: the communities formed there, the memories attached to it, or the living knowledge of its natural features. These works propose a distinct visual language to address climate change, as the artists confront the issue with poetic and creative responses rather than simply depict the storms themselves.



About the artworks

How can we cope with storms?

Climate change is everywhere, yet it is largely invisible in our daily lives. It is as if we have been thrust into the eye of the storm, a threatening silence surrounded by crushing winds. This image holds true especially for the Caribbean, where hurricanes have caused great damage and revealed deep inequalities. These storms are often exacerbated by political and economic storms, as the colonial past has created an uncertain future.

In the Eye of the Storm explores how Caribbean artists respond to climate change and destruction in their environment. Through their work, we can sense what binds them to a given place: the communities formed there, the memories attached to it, or the living knowledge of its natural features. These works bear witness to emotionally and historically charged landscapes in danger of disappearing.

1 Allora & Calzadilla

Graft, 2019

Thousands of yellow blossoms from roble amarillo trees, an oak species native to the Caribbean, appear as though the wind has swept them across this space. Created through a fabrication process originally developed for scientific purposes, the blossoms' hand-painted petals are reproduced in seven degrees of decomposition, from freshly fallen to wilted and brown. *Graft* alludes to environmental changes that have been set in motion through the interlocking effects of colonial exploitation and climate change. Systemic depletion of Caribbean flora and fauna is one of the primary legacies of colonial rule. Nonetheless, the region remains a biodiversity hotspot. In their plastic and unnatural stillness, these flowers reflect this fragile ecological predicament.

2 Daniel Lind-Ramos

María de los Sustentos, 2021

Figura Emisaria, 2020

Daniel Lind-Ramos created these imposing figures from everyday materials found in his immediate environment. They evoke the history of Loíza, the Afro-Caribbean community where he has lived for his whole life. *María de los Sustentos* (Mary of Sustenance)—made of various materials, including fishing nets, cooking pots and pans, tarp, and debris—refers both to the Blessed Virgin and to the eponymous hurricane of 2017. This work is an allegory of how ancestral knowledge and customs help communities during catastrophic times. *Figura Emisaria* (Emissary Figure) alludes to ancient knowledge passed down from generation to generation that not only sustains people economically, but also helps them to survive during food crises.



3 Alvaro Barrington

Grenada 2, 2021

Jamaica, green background, 2021

Barrington's paintings of hibiscus flowers refer to the landscape of his childhood in Grenada before he moved to New York. These compositions include the national colors of Grenada and Jamaica, and symbolize the solidarity between the Caribbean islands and the diaspora. They are part of a series inspired by the parallel migration of the Jamaican author and pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey. The artist's frames are made from typical Caribbean building materials.

4 Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

Gosila, 2018

This film records the days after the monstrous Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico in September 2017. It shows a world being taken apart and then slowly put back together as people re-establish some kind of order in their lives. Although we see the devastated landscape, the storm itself does not appear. How can you film an event that is characterized by crushing winds and complete darkness? In this film, the artist conveys the sense of disorientation by filming certain scenes upside down or askew.

5 Ramiro Chaves & MAOF

Risograph prints from the publication MAOF, 2018

The collective Materiales y Oficios (materials and crafts, abbreviated MAOF) develops sustainable applications for local and waste materials in Puerto Rico. For example, its members collect and recycle wood from different sources and process it with traditional techniques. Following the devastation of hurricanes Irma and Maria, MAOF used fallen trees for diverse reconstruction projects in the country. Ramiro Chaves has followed MAOF since its foundation in 2014, and published a book about its work in 2018.

6 Candida Alvarez

Jellow, 2018

Here to There, 2018

Lomas, 2018

From the series Air Paintings, 2017-2019

Candida Alvarez created her *Air Paintings* series in response to Hurricane Maria, while she waited in her studio in Chicago for a sign of life from her family members in Puerto Rico. For her, the creative process was also a mourning process after the destruction of the island and her father's recent passing. These paintings can be interpreted as mental maps in which places and



memories are blended together. The compositions are double-sided, made by pressing paint through a canvas of PVC mesh, to form an interplay of light with blocks of colour that appear to float.

7 Minia Biabiany

Breathings of the Wind, 2021

Minia Biabiany creates a web of associations between places and objects. Her weaving practice is a metaphor for the connections between thoughts and gestures, while the rhythmic interplay of lines is by turns dynamic and tranquil. In this instance, the eye of the storm is depicted as a pause for breath between a hurricane's arrival and its departure. The perishable materials, such as banana leaves, evoke the natural environment of Guadeloupe. In this case, however, they refer to the poisoning of banana plantations under the negligent French government. Yet banana plants also have healing qualities. Through her poetic gestures, the artist proposes a path to recovery for the island and its residents.

8 Ada M. Patterson

The Whole World is Turning, 2019

Kanga for the Present, 2019 (ongoing)

A group of lovers is visited by a familiar guest: a hurricane. The lovers realize how much they, their guest, and their world are changing. How will they receive this turn of events?

Every year, people in the Caribbean prepare for the hurricane season, but rising and warming sea levels are leading to more violent storms. Made in the emotional aftermath of Hurricane Dorian in 2019, this video is a queer retelling of how climate crisis destabilizes both a community's relationship to its environment and alters its capacity to live and love meaningfully.

The lovers wear kanga around their waists, a printed textile popular in East Africa. Each kanga has a name that can hope, bless, laugh, mock, warn, protect, or curse. Patterson started making kanga during Hurricane Dorian, in search of words to express the turbulence being faced by the Caribbean. These kanga are gifts that struggle to speak to what is happening in worlds queered by climate crisis.

9 Jean-Luc de Laguarigue

Images from the series Nord-Plage, 2001-2014

Photographer Jean-Luc de Laguarigue focuses on the life of the Creole community of Martinique. His series *Nord-Plage* documents the slow decline of a fishing village that was in danger of collapsing into the sea at the beginning of this century, then ultimately had to be evacuated. When heavy sea winds and high salt waves eroded the cliffs under the houses, the village was completely



at the mercy of the elements. De Laguarigue sees Nord-Plage as a symbol for the whole of Martinique, where traditional ways of living are disappearing due to rapid modernization.

10 Manuel Mathieu

Windchime (2015), Dancing with a Line (2018), Micro Study 2 (2018) Caught in the Moment (2020), Virilio (2018), The Ritual (2018), Paradigm (2021), Study on a Head (2021)

Manuel Mathieu's work reflects a world in motion. Figures and landscapes merge seamlessly. Internal and external storms are inextricably bound together. Mathieu was inspired by the country of his birth, Haiti, which is marked by political and economic instability, frequent natural disasters, and vigorous cultural dynamism. In this installation he evokes that changeable environment. His burned canvases render the transience tangible. At the same time, his paintings exude a dynamic spirit in which figures appear and disappear in a swirling mass of colors and forms.

11 The Living and the Dead Ensemble

The Wake, 2021

Night has fallen on a world on fire. Demonstrations, earthquakes, forest fires: fire is everywhere. The fires of struggle and pain, of chaos and rebirth. The Wake is a place for dreaming and mourning, a journey across time and space, an attempt to reconstruct an exploded geography, like the broken mirror of a chaotic world that will be consumed by raging rains. A cacophony of voices—an assembly of people trying to understand one another. Is there a future, beyond the recurring disasters? The Wake transforms a polyphonic cry of the Caribbean into a call to heal the world.

About the artists

Jennifer Allora & Guillermo Calzadilla

Jennifer Allora (1974, US) and Guillermo Calzadilla (1971, CU) live and work in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Since 1995, they have built a research-based practice that responds critically to the intersections between culture, history, and geopolitics. The duo produces interdisciplinary works combining performance, sculpture, sound, video, and photography. Solo exhibitions have taken place at Serpentine Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Haus der Kunst, Munich; MoMA - Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Castello de Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; MAXXI, Rome; Fundacio Antoni Tapies, Barcelona; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Renaissance Society, Chicago; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain; and many others. Allora & Calzadilla represented the United States at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011. In 2015, they made the site-



specific installation Puerto Rican Light (Cueva Vientos), a Dia Art Foundation commission on the southern coast of Puerto Rico. Recently, their 2007 work of “living sculpture,” Balance of Power, was performed at Tate Modern in London in 2019, and their solo show at the Menil Collection in Houston, Specters of Noon, opened in September 2020.

Candida Alvarez

Candida Alvarez (1955, US) received her MFA from the Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT (1997) and has been teaching painting at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago over the past 20 years. In 2017, Alvarez was commissioned by the City of Chicago to create a 200 foot-long, digital painting installed outdoors on the Riverwalk as part of the inaugural Year of Public Art; collaborated with international designer Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons 2017 Men’s Couture collection; had a 40-year retrospective at the Chicago Cultural Center curated by Terry R. Myers; and published her first monographic book Here: A Visual Reader. Currently, her work is included in the inaugural La Triennial at El Museo del Barrio in New York (whose title Estamos Bien was inspired by an Alvarez painting), Latinx Abstraction at BRIC Arts in Brooklyn, The Long Dream at the MCA Chicago, and LatinX American at the DePaul Museum of Art Chicago.

Solo exhibitions include Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago, (2020), Gavlak Gallery, Palm Beach, (2019), Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago (2012-13); Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco (2003); New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT (1996); The Bronx Museum of the Arts, NY (1992); The Queens Museum, Flushing, NY (1991); and Galerie Schneiderei, Cologne, Germany (1990).

Alvarez is a recipient of the 2019 Joan Mitchell Foundation, Painters & Sculptors Grant, and in 2021 was the second ever recipient of the Helen Frankenthaler Award in painting. She currently lives and works in Chicago, where she holds the F.H. Sellers Professorship in Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is represented by Monique Meloche Gallery Chicago and Gavlak Gallery Palm Beach/Los Angeles.

Alvaro Barrington

Alvaro Barrington (VE, 1983) was born in Venezuela to Grenadian and Haitian migrant workers, Alvaro Barrington was raised between the Caribbean and Brooklyn, New York, by a network of relatives. An unwavering commitment to community informs his wide-ranging practice. While Barrington considers himself primarily a painter, his artistic collaborations encompass exhibitions, performances, concerts, fashion, philanthropy and contributions to the Notting Hill Carnival in London. His approach to painting is similarly inclusive – embracing non-traditional materials and techniques such as burlap and sewing – and infused with references to his personal and cultural history.



Drawing on formative experiences with his grandmother in Grenada, Barrington creates richly textural mixed-media paintings on the burlap fabric used in Caribbean cacao production. The artist's use of stitched yarn in paintings and postcards draws upon the traditionally gendered craft traditions passed down by the women in his family. His intimate compositions, rendered in a distinctive palette of reds, browns, yellows and greens, often focus on single subjects in close-up: tropical vegetation, abstracted portraits and body parts. Recurring motifs such as the hibiscus, the national flower of Jamaica, conjure a romanticised view of the Caribbean that no longer exists except in memory.

Barrington, who has been involved in community activism, studied at Hunter College, New York, and The Slade School of Fine Art in London, where he started lecturing in 2019. His first solo exhibition, which opened the same year he graduated, was curated by Klaus Biesenbach at MoMA PS1, Queens, in 2017. His work has since been shown in numerous solo and group shows, including A Taste of Chocolate at Thaddaeus Ropac, London (2018) and his ongoing Tt x AB collaboration with the painter Teresa Farrell. Barrington co-curated the exhibition Artists I Steal From with Julia Peyton-Jones at Thaddaeus Ropac, London in 2019.

Minia Biabiany

The work of Minia Biabiany (1988, GP) observes how the perception of the body is entangled with the perception of space, land and History. She invokes the paradigm and the gestures of weaving within poetical language by creating layered narratives linked with self-understanding and healing to explore the possibility of an enunciation out of the dominant colonial storytelling in installations, videos and drawings. Minia Biabiany initiated the artistic and pedagogical collective project Semillero Caribe in 2016 in Mexico City and continues to explore the deconstruction of narratives with the body and concepts from Caribbean authors with the experimental platform Doukou. She works and lives in Guadeloupe, a French Caribbean island which is still not independent today. Her work has been shown in the Xth Biennale de Berlin, TEOR/ética in Costa Rica, Witte de With (now Melly) in Rotterdam, Cràter Invertido in Mexico, Prix Sc Po 2019 in Paris, SIGNAL in Malmö, amongst others.

Ramiro Chaves & MAOF (Materiales y Oficios)

MAOF has been in operation since mid-2014, housing a collection center for timber logs, sawmill, wood workshop, hen-composter, nursery garden, artists' workshop, exhibition space, and living space for resident artists. MAOF was involved in several re-construction projects and other initiatives through the critical use of materials (wood, timber, tools, etc.) coming from different contexts. MAOF was founded by Diego de la Cruz Gaitán, who co-directed it along with Gabriel Maldonado Andreu and Mario Gracia Otero, and they've worked with a wide range of collaborators. Artist Ramiro Chaves developed a long term experimental documentary process that concluded in the edition and publication of the collaborative book MAOF in 2018.



Jean-Luc de Laguarigue

Jean-Luc de Laguarigue (1956, MQ), a martinican photographer, reveals in his work the endless ways for Creoles to reach the world, running below the national borders left by colonization from The French Antilles to Cuba, and from Cayenne to Saint-Lucia. In many aspects, starting from Walker Evans's images taken from the southern states of the United States, he shows their continuity going from the Caribbean to the South American continent. We can't dissociate his photos from some geometry of light that structures space following a variety of profound meanings that do not appear in daily life. His art also focuses on practicing on blind parts and locating the essential thing, on which our ordinary scrutiny will not dwell. Black and white will logically be the central elements of his photographic treatment of colour, that won't tolerate the opposition between beauty on film and digital magic.

Daniel Lind-Ramos

Daniel Lind-Ramos (1953, PR) lives and works in Loíza, Puerto Rico. His work has recently been included in the 2019 edition of the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and in group exhibitions at Haus der Kunst, Munich (2021), Rollins Cornell Fine Arts Museum (2021), The Drawing Center, New York (2021), and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2018). His recent solo exhibitions include The Ranch, Montauk (2021), Storage of Memory at Marlborough Gallery, New York (2020), and De Pie: Ensemble y Dibujos at Museo de las Americas, San Juan (2013). Lind-Ramos' works are in numerous public collections such as the Whitney Museum, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Pérez Art Museum (PAMM), Miami; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico (MACPR), amongst others.

Manuel Mathieu

Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist, Manuel Mathieu (1986, HT) is known for his paintings, which investigate themes of historical violence, erasure, as well as Haitian visual cultures of physicality, nature, and religious symbolism.

Marrying abstract and figurative techniques, his compositions carve out space for us to reflect on Haiti's transformative history while inviting us to consider the different futures the act of remembering creates.

Drawing from a wide-range of subjects, Manuel's practice combines his Haitian heritage and his formal arts education, which culminated in an MFA Degree from Goldsmiths, University of London.

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz (1972, PR) is an artist whose expanded moving image work is entangled with Boalian theater, experimental ethnography and expanded cinema. She tends to work with non-actors, and incorporate improvisation into her process. Her recent work is on the sensorial unconscious of anti-colonial movements, feminist experiments with language and narrative



as well as irrational projection lenses. Recent solo exhibitions include: Binaural in Espacio Odeón, Bogotá; Gosila, Der Tank, Basel; Nuevos Materiales, Museo Amparo. Her work is part of public and private collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, Kadist and Guggenheim, among others.

Ada M. Patterson

Ada M. Patterson (1994, BB) is a visual artist and writer working with masquerade, textiles, performance, video and poetry, telling stories and imagining elegies for ungrievable bodies and moments. Patterson is the 2020 NLS Kingston Curatorial & Art Writing Fellow. Upcoming exhibitions include "A Brighter Sun: Art from Britain and the Caribbean" at Tate Britain, London.

The Living and the Dead Ensemble

The Living and the Dead Ensemble are a group of artists, performers and poets from Haiti, France and the United Kingdom. They initially came together in Haiti 2017, to produce the Haitian Creole translation and performance of the play Monsieur Toussaint by Édouard Glissant. Initiated from an original idea by Louis Henderson and Olivier Marboeuf, who have been collaborating as a director/producer partnership since 2014, the Ensemble's first film OUVERTURES premiered at the Berlinale, 2020. Their work explores different possible methods of telling history in the present from a caribbean perspective and a transnational imaginary. The Ensemble produces texts, performances, films and installations. The Ensemble are: Rossi Jacques Casimir, Dieuvella Cherestal, Sophonie Maignan, Cynthia Maignan, James Desiris, James Peter Etienne, Mackenson Bijou, Leonard Jean Baptiste, Olivier Marboeuf, Louis Henderson.

Bio curator

Tim Roerig

Tim Roerig is a curator at Z33. He studied Philosophy and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam and worked previously as a curatorial assistant to the late curator Okwui Enwezor. Selected projects include the exhibitions and catalogues: Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945-1965, Haus der Kunst, Munich (2016) and All the World's Futures, 56th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2015).

Practical Information

- Curator: Tim Roerig
- The exhibition runs from 26.09.21 to 23.01.22.



- Opening day for guests: 25.09.2021
- Installation views are available from Thursday 23.09.21 via www.z33.prezly.com

- **Contact**

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