

Information Marcel Pinas

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1. Artist Resumé – Marcel Pinas

Personal information:

Date of Birth: 22 march 1971

Birth place: Pelgrimkondre

Marowijne

Suriname

South America

Nationality: Surinamese

Email: boipili@yahoo.com

Phone: +597 8510804

Website: www.marcelpinas.net

Education & Residencies:

2012 Residency at VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Brussels, Belgium

2007-2009 Residency at the Rijksacademie, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2005 Residency at the Vermont Studio Center, USA

In between Several workshops by international artists, Suriname

1997-1999 Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts, Jamaica
(selected Top Student for 1999 graduating class)

1994-1995 Art teacher training, I.O.L., Suriname

1993-1994 Transitional year Anton de Kom University, Suriname

1987-1990 Nola Hatterman Art Institute, Suriname

Work experience:

2018 Organized Moengo Festival of Visual Arts, Tembe Fu Libi II, Moengo, Suriname

2015 Organized Moengo Festival of Visual Arts, Tembe Fu Libi I, Moengo, Suriname

2012 Launch of 'Boipili', Marcel Pinas' own line of silver jewelry inspired by maroon culture

2011 Founder of CAMM - Contemporary Art Museum Moengo, Suriname

- Since 2010 Nominated and elected as Young Global Leader to the YGL community, part of the World Economic Forum. Since then participated in numerous YGL meetings and conferences in several countries worldwide.
- 2010 Founder Kibii Wi Foundation and TAS - Tembe Art Studio in Moengo, Suriname, where people from local communities are trained in several art forms
- Since 1992 Artistic employee at the Ministry of education, development and culture

Awards:

- 2005 First price for art structure, Bewegter Wind, Germany
- 2003 Business Finance Art Award, Utrecht, the Netherlands
- 1999 Edna Manley College for Visual and Performing Arts, Jamaica, Top Student 1999 graduating class

Solo exhibitions

- 2018 Afaka Tembe ,Hotel Maria Kappel ,Hoorn ,The Netherlands
- 2016 Kibri a Kulturu,Galerie Ptries van Dorst ,Wassenaar,The Netherlands
- 2016 Eside Tide Tamaa,Gallery Readytex,Paramaribo ,Suriname
- 2015 Kibri a kulturu,Smith Daidson Gallery,Amsterdam ,The Netherlands
- 2014 Kibri a kulturu,Beddington Fine Art Gallery,Bargemon ,France
- 2013 Kibri a kulturu ,Galerie Sanaa ,Utrecht the Netherlands
- 2013 Kibri a kulturu Beddington Fine Art Gallery,Bargemon,France
- 2012 Maroon culture relocated, Galerie SANAA, Utrecht, the Netherlands
- 2012 Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
- 2012 La Liberté PRK No???, Kulturkaffee, Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB), Belgium
- 2011 Kibii Wi Koni, Beddington Fine Art Gallery, Bargemon, France
- 2011 Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event, Camp de la transportation, St.Laurent du Maroni, French Guiana
- 2011 Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event, De Hal, Paramaribo, Suriname

2011 Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event, comprehensive exhibition of installation art, KKF, Paramaribo, Suriname

2011 Kibri a Kulturu, Bergen NH, the Netherlands

2011 Kibii Wi Koni, La camp de la transportation, St. Laurent du Maroni, French Guiana

2009 Kibii Wi, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, the Netherlands

2009 Kibri a Kulturu, Gemak, The Hague, the Netherlands

2008 Beddington Fine Art Gallery, Bargemon, France

2007 Kibri a Kulturu, Cayenne, French Guiana

2007 Marcel Pinas, Artlease/Contemporary Art, the Netherlands

2007 Herman Krikhaar, Sallernes, France

2007 Ibiza, Spain

2006 Kibii Wi, Camp de la Transportation, French Guiana

2006 Kibri a Kulturu, Exhibition and Catalogue presentation, Readytex Art Gallery, Suriname

2003 Tembe, Readytex Art Gallery, Suriname

2003 Kibri a Kulturu, French Guiana

2002 Kibri a Kulturu, Suriname

2002 Afaka, Brazil

Group exhibitions

2019 Group exhibition ,The visual life of social affliction,,National Gallery,Bahamas

2019 Group exhibition,De grote Surinaamse tentoonstelling ,Amsterdam ,The Netherlands

2018 Group exhibition, De Nest ,Den haag ,The Netherlands

2017 Group exhibition, II Bienal del Sur ,Pueblo en Resistencia ,Venezuela

2017 Group exhibition Jamaica Biennial ,Jamaica

2016 Group exhibition Bienale de Cuenca,Equador

2016 group exhibition, Ondes "imprevues""turning tide",Memorial ACTe Parbousier ,Guadeloupe.

2016 Group exhibition ,Glass museum, Leerdam ,The Netherlands

2015 Opening exhibition of new location Readytex Art Gallery, Paramaribo, Suriname

2014 SITElines.2014 – Unsettled Landscapes, Santa Fe, USA (upcoming in July)

2013 Exhibition with goldsmith Ivan Chevillotte, Munich, Germany

2013 Atelier Michel Fedoroff in Bargemon, France

2013 Pigments>Guyanne, Martinique

2012 Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba

2012 Caribbean: Crossroads of the World, El Museo del Barrio/ The Studio Museum/ Queens Museum, New York, USA

2012 Who More Sci-Fi Than Us, Kunsthal Kade, Amersfoort, the Netherlands

2012 Back to the roots, La Magnanerie de Seillans, Seillans, France

2011 About Change, World Bank, Washington DC, USA

2011 Wrestling with the image: Caribbean interventions, OAS, Washington DC, USA

2010 Kunst is Kracht, Readytex Art Gallery in De Hal, Suriname

2010 National Art Fair (NK'10), Paramaribo, Suriname

2010 Lilly's Galerie, The Hague, the Netherlands

2010 Sribi Switi ,...Sa e Psa, Pulchri Studio, The Hague, the Netherlands

2010 Paramaribo SPAN, DSB Bank, Paramaribo, Suriname

2010 Biennale du Marronage, Matoury, French Guiana

2010 Sure Suriname, Arti 10, The Hague, the Netherlands

2009 8 December public art installation, Fort Zeelandia, Suriname

2009 National Art Fair (NK '09), Paramaribo, Suriname

2009 Licht aan Zee, Den Helder, the Netherlands

2009 Kréyol Factory, Paris, France

2009 Havana Biënnale, Cuba

2009 Wakaman exhibition, Fort Zeelandia, Paramaribo, Suriname

2008 Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2008 Open Atelier Rijksacademie Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2008 MK Galerie, Berlin, Germany,

2008 Art Fair, Utrecht, the Netherlands

2007 Latitudes 2007, Paris, France

2007 National Art Fair, Paramaribo, Suriname

2007 Open Atelier, Rijksacademie, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2007 Art Move, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

2007 Infinite Island-Contemporary Caribbean Art, Brooklyn Museum, USA

2006 Latitude 2006, Paris, France

2006 Holland Art Fair, the Hague, the Netherlands

2006 Kunst uit gepakt, Fundatie Museum, Zwolle, the Netherlands

2005 Moved Wind Art (Bewegter Wind), Germany

2005 Open House Exhibition Readytex Art Gallery, Suriname

2004 Paris Cayenne, French Guiana

2004 Open House Exhibition Readytex Art Gallery, Suriname

- 2003 Art Gallery Otrabanda Vieja, Curaçao
- 2003 Gallery Pauw, Oosterhout, the Netherlands
- 2003 De erfenis van slavernij, Wereldmuseum, the Netherlands
- 2003 Ancestral Whispers, Bolivar Gallery, Jamaica
- 2003 Exotic Caribbean, the Netherlands

Public Art Installations

- 2008 Moiwana Monument, district Marowijne, Suriname
- 2008 Faaka Tiki art installation, Moengo, Suriname
- 2007 Afaka art installation, Abadoekondre, Suriname
- 2006 Reconnecting Africa permanent art installation, Tropenmuseum, the Netherlands
- 2006 Totempole art installation, Fort Zeelandia, Suriname
- 2005 Kokolampu installation for the occasion of 30 years independence, Suriname
- 2005 Spoons installation, Saschenberg, Germany
- 2004 Fu Memre Moiwana, art installation, district Marowijne, Suriname

Publications

- 2019 The visual life of social affliction, small axe project 2019
- 2015 Tembe Fu Libi, catalogue of exhibition Tembe Fu Libi, part of the Moengo Festival of Visual Arts
- 2012 Sranan Art Xposed (SAX6) edition 6, July 2012
- 2011 About Change-In Latin America and the Caribbean, Catalogue about the About Change Art Program of the World Bank in Washington DC, 2010/2011

- 2011 ARC magazine, issue # 3, 2011
- 2011 Sabaku, Suriname airways inflight magazine, August-October 2011 edition
- 2011 Sranan Art Xposed (SAX5) edition 5, September 2011
- 2011 Marcel Pinas. Artist, more than an artist, second catalogue about Marcel Pinas
- 2010 Wrestling with the image-Caribbean interventions, digital catalogue of the exhibition at the OAS (as part of the About Change program of the Worldbank)
- 2010 Paramaribo SPAN, catalogue of the exhibition
- 2008 Wakaman. Drawing lines-connecting dots, catalogue of the exhibition
- 2006 Kibri A Kulturu, first catalogue about Marcel Pinas

2. MARCEL PINAS BIOGRAFIE

Pinas was born in 1971, in the district of Marowijne in East-Suriname, in the village Pelgrimkondre. As a teenager he moves to the capital city Paramaribo. His art teacher in school recognizes his talent and convinces him to enroll at the Nola Hatterman Art Institute, from which he graduates in 1990. He studies at the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica, is artist in residence at the Vermont Studio Center in the USA, the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam, travels all around the world, but remains forever true to his roots. The theme *Kibri A Kulturu* (preserve the culture) is his main driving force and source of inspiration.

With his art Marcel Pinas aims to create a lasting record of the lifestyle and traditions of the Maroons and hopes to create a worldwide awareness and appreciation for the unique traditional communities in Suriname and the serious threats they are facing today. He is the founder of the Kibii foundation which includes an art park and cultural center where the youth from his hometown is trained and motivated to build a future based upon the strength of their own culture.

Marcel explain the local context of Suriname. After the domestic war he noted that Suriname is still facing several issues as: increased criminality rates, unemployment, identity crisis, discrimination and stigmatization. That especially having in mind that the Maroons are indigenous people, deprived of voice on a social level, which makes things even more difficult. The Kibii Foundation has been very active and they are the only cultural centre in that region of the country. In the last 5 years they developed several projects: Art Park, small museum, guesthouse, art school, and the Moengo Festival. Concerning the activities of Kibii they are facing many challenges locally in the sense that 80% of the local population does not believe in the projects they are developing, 10% has doubts, and 5% does not want to know anything. There are many political and religious influences that affect the local population. In an attempt to find a solution for these challenges in reaching out to the community, they came up with the idea of creating the Moengo Festival in 2013 (on the theme of music). The Festival involved training of 15 music groups, 80 workshops, 10 food stands, 25 performances, 6000 visitors. The important gain was that they managed to communicate with the community and asked for solutions to the problems and challenges. That is how the second Festival on the theme of Theater and Dance was born. As part of the network partnership programme they are developing the Contemporary Art Museum Moengo - CAMM project, the Research center project, and the Artist in residency program in connection to the Moengo Festival. The CAMM project involves training employees - capacity building, museum programming, creation of a permanent collection and collection management. What is interesting is that the entry for the people from the community is free, but everybody else has to pay a regular fee. Marcel also expressed an interest for a possible collaboration with Museo de Antioquia. The Research center works with documenting the many achievements made by the community. Furthermore, the materials gathered will be shared back with the community. Finally the residency program is connected to the annual Moengo Festival. In 2015, 2 visual artists will come to Moengo to do a residency and work with the community.

Few questions were posed by the network partners, on the political and pressure from the community, on the experience with the network partnership, and on the connection between Suriname and Latin America. Marcel explained that the Dutch and French Ambassadors in Suriname are regularly visiting the cultural centre which is very important for them because it sends a message to the government also. He added that with the Mayor

it took 3 years until he accepted what they are doing. In connection to the benefits from the network partnership he explained that in his opinion it would be very helpful if once a month available network partners could skype together. The intention would be to speak on current problems, and question the own ways of work. Finally on the question of the relation between Suriname and Latin America, Marcel pointed out that the initial problem is the language. He also added that the countries do not have many connections although they are geographically close. He concluded saying that at least one of the artists he met at Museo de Antioquia showed interest and he sees possibility of working together.

3.Marcel Pinas artist statement

For years now Marcel Pinas is known as an artist strongly dedicated to his culturally inspired theme; a theme with which he has managed to put the unique maroon culture in Suriname and also the country itself, on the map in many places around the world. With his theme Kibri A Kultur (preserve the culture) he aims to give the unique Maroon culture and the threats facing Maroon and Indigenous communities in Suriname's interior today, the attention they deserve.

His paintings are colorful compositions in which the combined use of pangi textiles and traditional signs and symbols in bright contrasting tones of acrylic paint, reinforce the theme and heighten the visual impact of the work. Because of their cultural significance pangi textiles, just like the ancestral Afaka script symbols and the traditional woodcarving patterns, play an important role in Pinas' art which is recognized for its traditional yet contemporary flair.

With his art and especially with his multimedia installations exhibited worldwide, he presents a highly critical point of view on social issues surrounding maroon communities and through his own career as an artist he works towards building a community with new opportunities and new positive perspectives for the future.

4. Articles Marcel Pinas

1. Marcel Pinas :The art of presence by Christopher Cozier

<https://www.caribbean-beat.com/issue-122/marcel-pinas-art-presence#axzz6D2vqHLYW>

2. Marcel Pinas :My works is the voice of the community where I come from

<https://africanah.org/marcel-pinas/>

3. werk van Marcel Pinas nazaat van de marrons nu prominent te zien in de grote tentoonstelling over Suriname by Stephan Kuiper

<https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/werk-van-marcel-pinas-nazaat-van-de-marrons-nu-prominent-te-zien-in-grote-tentoonstelling-over-suriname~be01c450/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

4. Marcel Pinas k wil de marrons hun culturele trots terug geven

<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/10/02/ik-wil-de-marrons-hun-culturele-trots-teruggeven-a3975370>

5. Surinaamse kunst festival wijkt uit naar buurland

<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/09/16/surinaams-kunsthestival-wijkt-uit-naar-buurland-a3973512>

6. Kibii wi koni Marcel Pinas the event

<https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/marcel-pinas~bb562c99/>

7. Surinaamse kunstenaars nemen het heft in eigen handen by Edo Dijksterhuis

<https://www.parool.nl/kunst-media/surinaamse-kunstenaars-nemen-het-heft-in-eigen-handen~b4d22905/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

8. Marcel Pinas Site Santa Fe

<https://sitesantafe.org/artists/marcel-pinas/>

5. Video projects marcel Pinas

1. Onthaal kunstenaar Marcel Pinas uit Suriname

<https://youtu.be/OLCnzg0GP9Q>

2. Marcel Pinas over Kibii wi koni Tentoonstelling

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxnBMhK7_dQ

3. Marcel Pinas: Project multi cultureel centrum Moengo

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xbsxaj>

4. Kunstwerk van flessen laat zien dat iedereen bijzonder en uniek is

<https://www.oogtv.nl/2016/03/kunstwerk-van-flessen-laat-zien-dat-iedereen-bijzonder-en-uniek-is/>

5. Marcel Pinas

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5a9wm>

6. Marcel Pinas /Kibii Foundation

<https://vimeo.com/136725338>

7. Marcel Pinas in Mali

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xbswik>

8. Marcel Pinas de lepels

http://www.stammeshaus.com/ab/2009/08/lepels_-_een_videomix.php

9. Marcel Pinas

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xcmjbjh>

10. Moengo project

<https://chronique-du-maroni.fr/760/>

11. In elk kind schuilt een Pinas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5BHVjaExYw>

6. Article by Nicole Smith Johnson

Marcel Pinas' Suriname

or, of the Circle and the Spiral.

And despite our consenting to all the indisputable technologies; despite seeing the political leap that must be managed, the horror of hunger and ignorance, torture and massacre to be conquered, the full load of knowledge to be tamed, the weight of every piece of machinery that we shall finally control, and the exhausting flashes as we pass from one era to another—from forest to city, from story to computer— at the bow there is still something we now share: this murmur, cloud or rain or peaceful smoke. We know ourselves as part and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify. We cry our cry of poetry. Our boats are open, and we sail them for everyone.

- Édouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*.¹

A Tale of (at least) Two Surinames

It is impossible to talk about Marcel Pinas' work without talking about his community organizing, and it is impossible to talk about his community organizing without talking about his community, and it is impossible to talk about his community without talking about Suriname. Fortunately, the trouble doesn't end there, because it's impossible to tell you about Suriname, in reference to Marcel, without telling you about one particular Suriname, Marcel's Suriname. Marcel's Suriname will of course bring us back to Marcel, so this will be circular in the best ways. That said, let's start at the end.

Marcel Pinas' Suriname has no boundaries, it reaches across the Maroni River into French Guiana, and across the sea into the Caribbean, and sometimes even spans continents, taking in the Netherlands and France. It is a place of hope and possibility. There, hospitals heal more than bodies, they heal communities, they heal spirits, they invoke ancestral salves. It is a place where challenges are great, but not a deterrent, just an opening for magic. In that Suriname, the most extraordinary alchemy is possible. The lead of exploitation and massacre can be transmuted into the gold of kinship and abundance. In that place, people who have had everything taken away can find that that they were left with the most important thing, themselves. When you have a chance to hear Marcel Pinas talk about this Suriname, the future folds into the past, and what should be collapses into what is. Tradition and innovation

¹ Édouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*. Trans. by Betsy Wing, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. p. 9

are natural bedfellows, and difference is not a thorn in the side of harmony. Every person, and every people, can embrace their specificity, while remaining part of a community. Marcel's Suriname is ancient, but not yet born.

Like most places though, Suriname is not one thing to everyone. Marcel's Suriname is manifest in some spaces, at some times, but not in all spaces at all times. Marcel's Suriname is not a place of "social affliction," but there is undeniably a Suriname that is tragically afflicted. Marcel prefers to focus on his Suriname, and ignore that other, but he is also a practical man. He knows that his Suriname does not exist without the other one. In fact, one was born of the other. So, we, he and I, have agreed to tell you about the other Suriname, only because it will help you understand.

This other Suriname has a troubled history, an endangered present, and a future that one might be tempted to describe as doomed. Let us call this one the Suriname that modernity made. Let us call it modern Suriname.

Modern Suriname was born in the sixteenth century. Its first father was English. That father fell out with the Dutch, and settled the argument by turning over Suriname in exchange for what was then New Amsterdam, but is now New York. Suriname and New York are siblings in this way. They don't know each other well, because Suriname is the outside child, in that Faulknerian New World way. Suriname knows New York well, she polishes the gilded frames of New York's graduation photos, but to New York, Suriname is only the help. Maybe they played as children, New York does not remember.

Anyway, Modern Suriname was born and there was some fighting and eventually she was sent to live with the Dutch. Like most places her age, she was a servant, she was paid in modernisation. Sugar and bauxite was extracted, dams were built. Suriname served dutifully. She acquired layers, became fleshy- the Javanese upon the East Indians, the Chinese upon the Madeirans, all those upon the enslaved Africans, who haemorrhaged the Maroons (Okani/Ndyuka, Saamaka, Paamaka, Matawai, Kwinti and Aluku²) under the Dutch, with Levantines, Maronites and descendants of Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews throughout.

Meanwhile, inside, under cover of bush, some part refused to be the help. Her folds would not submit to the stiff corset of modernity. That part remained stubbornly fugitive.

² According to Alex van Stripiaan, Professor of Caribbean History at the Erasmus University Rotterdam: "These are the names the Maroons use themselves. In Surinamese Dutch the first four are usually denoted as: Dyuka or Aukaners, Saramaka/Saramakaners, Paramaka/Paramakeners, Aluku or Boni-Maroons, though for the most part these live in neighbouring French Guyana."

The Circle- Modern Suriname

At this point we abandon the aerial view to touch down with grasping hands. There will be some violence, but that's unavoidable, if I am to deliver something tangible.

In 1982, modern Suriname had been independent for seven years. The honeymoon ended with a massacre. After five years of corrupt civilian government, led by Prime Minister Henck Aron, a military coup put Sergeant Desiré Delano "Dési" Bouterse in charge. Bouterse was in many ways an embodiment of modern Suriname. Born in 1945, in the northeast Wanica district, to a family of Amerindian, Afro-Surinamese, Dutch, French, and Chinese ancestry, he moved to the Netherlands in 1968 with no more than a high school education. There, he joined the armed forces of the Netherlands. He returned to Suriname in 1975 and shortly after became chairman of the new Surinamese military union.

The military government suppressed four counter-coups between 1980 and 1982. The last of these, in March 1982, was followed by widespread repression. An evening curfew was imposed, and freedom of the press was curtailed with only one newspaper, *de Ware Tijd*, allowed to continue publishing. On the seventh, eighth and ninth of December 1982, fifteen of modern Suriname's prominent men—intelligentsia and businessmen opposed to the regime—were rounded up, tortured and murdered at Fort Zeelandia, then the army's headquarters. Before the murders, known in Suriname as "the December murders", the fort was a museum. Before that, it was a prison, and before that slaves were punished there. It is also the cite of Paramaribo and modern Suriname's founding in the seventeenth century. Today, the huddle of strange, pink-stoned buildings are a museum again. The bullet holes from the murders are part of the exhibit. Circles.

Not long after that, around 1986, Bouterse fell out with his long-time body guard, Ronnie Brunswijk. A Ndyuka Maroon from Moiwana in the Marowijne District of eastern Suriname, Brunswijk formed a guerrilla army drawn from his minority ethnic background, and based largely in the heavily forested interior of the country. Thus began the Surinamese Civil War, also known as the Interior War. Though it started small, with Brunswijk leading a small band of armed men in robbing banks and hijacking trucks in eastern Suriname, it would have a devastating impact on the country.

The interior was the land of the Maroons and the Amerindians, but it was also the land of bauxite, a notoriously noxious industry that had been in Suriname since 1916 when American corporation Alcoa began operations there.³ As part of their military strategy, the guerilla army twice cut electricity from the Afobaka Dam hydroelectric project, 60 miles south of

³ See Len Boselovic, "Alcoa Leaves Town: The bauxite brought the Pittsburgh company, but the market moved on", [The Land Alcoa Dammed](#), 23 April 2017, Pittsburgh PA: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Online.

Paramaribo. The foreign-owned dam provided most of the power used by the aluminium industry, and provided a quarter of the nation's electricity. Since bauxite and aluminium exports provided seventy percent of Suriname's foreign exchange, there were widespread shortages of food and consumer goods. An already difficult economic situation, initiated by the withdrawal of Dutch aid as sanction for the December murders, worsened.

If the war had a devastating impact on Suriname, it was almost the end of the Maroons. Not only did the economic damage disproportionately affected them— since the largely Maroon Marowijne district and its major towns, Albina and Moengo, were almost entirely dependent on bauxite jobs— but there were a series of vicious military raids on Maroon villages. The most famous of these is now known as the Moiwana Massacre. On the 29th of November 1986 the army attacked the village of Moiwana, where Ronnie Brunswijk's is from and just thirty minutes by boat from Marcel Pinas' hometown of Pelgrim Konde. At least 35 people, mostly women and children were killed, and the settlement was razed to the ground. In the aftermath of the raids ten thousand people, most of whom were Maroons, fled across the border into neighbouring French Guiana.⁴

Though the Surinamese government issued an official apology and compensation for the Moiwana Massacre in 2006, no one has ever been prosecuted.

Today, Alcoa has de facto left Suriname, though it maintains contested ownership of the Afobaka dam, collecting millions per year for the provision of electricity. Gold mining is wreaking new havoc on the health of the people and the environment,⁵ and Desi Bouterse is in his second term as elected president of Suriname. Ronnie Brunswijk is a politician, director of a lucrative gold-mining company, and owner of a local football team. Though a Dutch court has convicted both Brunswijk and Bouterse of drug trafficking, neither have ever served time.⁶ There was also the bizarre 2013 case of Bouterse's son, Dino, who was not only accused of colluding with Mexican drug smugglers to ship cocaine via Suriname, but also of planning to build a Hezbollah base in Suriname, all while serving in Suriname's counter-terrorism force.⁷ Strangely enough, Bouterse's first term was possible only because of a coalition between his National Democratic Party and Brunswijk's General Liberation and Development Party.

⁴ Clémence Léobal. "From ' primitives ' to ' refugees ': French Guianese categorizations of Maroons in the aftermath of Surinamese civil war", *Legacy of Slavery and Indentured Labour: Historical and Contemporary Issues in Suriname and the Caribbean*. Ed. Maurits S Hassankhan, Lomarsh Roopnarine, Cheryl White, Radica Mahase.. New Dehli: Manohar Books, 2016. Print. pp.213-230.

⁵ See Vice Netherlands. "Mining the Golden Mountains of Suriname With An Ex-Rebel Leader." *YouTube*, Directed by Joey Boink and hosted by Gwen Pol, 12 Jan. 2016, Online.

⁶ Simon Romero, "Returned to Power, a Leader Celebrates a Checkered Past", *The New York Times*, 2 May 2011, Online.

⁷ Reuters in New York. "Suriname President's Son Sentenced in New York over Hezbollah Proposal." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 10 Mar. 2015, Online.

Some circles are ugly.

The Spiral- *Kibii Wi Koni*⁸

The title of Marcel Pinas' most recent work, *A Kibii Koni* is a Ndyuka term that translates to something like "the hidden knowledge". The installation is comprised of XXXX suitcase-like containers, traditionally called *toombo*. *Toombo* means something like "your wealth". It is a collection of an individual's treasures, those things they will leave to their community when they die; ceremonial objects, the cloth they want to be buried in, their hammock, and so on.

In his *toombos*, three of which are exhibited open, Pinas has included objects used in cultural ceremonies: *pimba*, a white clay used to paint the skin and mark ceremonial space, it is also believed to have medicinal purposes and is traditionally eaten by pregnant women; bird's feathers, often used to decorate sacred objects; Florida water, a perfume-like liquid used to in ceremonial baths of bodies and space; and *pangi*, a plaid cloth customarily weaved by Maroon women. These are positioned in front of a text in Afaka script, named for Afaka Atumisi, who in 1910 invented the writing system of fifty-six characters to render the Ndjuka language. The syllabary has never been widely used, but Pinas has been very deliberately putting them back into circulation since his early mixed media paintings.

The text is divided into three sections, which can be translated as follows:

1. *Medicine Toombo*

The knowledge our ancestors used to organize themselves.

The knowledge has to be preserved for the next generation.

Our ancestors knew how to live with the surroundings.

The forest is their everything- supermarket, pharmacy, hardware store.

The way our ancestors used to live is the way to preserve the world.

2. *Pangie / Gudu Toombo*

Everyone who has a husband or wife has their own *Toombo*.

When someone dies the relatives take the *toombo* to bury their loved one.

If you do not have a *toombo* you are a loser in the community.

What is inside the *toombo* can be used for different cultural activities.

The *toombo* indicates your standing in the community

3. *A Kibii Toombo*

When we are not here anymore.

⁸ translation

What do I own?
Ready, ready.
Payment,
wedding,
standing in the community.
Greetings.
Well done.
When I am gone.
Well developed.
Unexpected.

For this commission, Pinas has provided a kind of synecdoche of his artistic practice, which is itself an indexical segment of a broader practice of community organising and cultural preservation. By “cultural preservation” I do not mean the capture and reification of a fixed culture most often associated with that term. Pinas is engaged in something more ongoing, the excavation of a culture after centuries of repression, and simultaneously a reinvention via the lexicon of contemporary art. Thus, the work is the revelation of Pinas’ *Toombo*, intended not for his funeral, but for a gallery.

There are a couple things going on here. For one, if the *toombo* is generally shared post-humously, and Marcel is very much alive and well, the installation seems to beg the question: what death happens in the gallery? Or, to put it another way, what living thing is made inanimate here?

I have seen Marcel speak about his work many times, and it has always struck me that he makes no distinction between his work as an artist, and his work as a community activist. His PowerPoint presentations always include a few slides of his installations at the National Gallery of Jamaica (2017), the Havana Biennale (2012), the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam (2008), but he will not linger there too long. The majority of his slides and the focus of the discussion is always Moengo. Everything goes back to Moengo and the Kibii Foundation he founded there.

The installations themselves function similarly. What is to be made of these strange objects? How do we read these symbols that *Google Translate* does not recognise? One might be tempted to view them as ethnographic, artefacts of some kind, but without the usual explanatory labels and text panels. Their location in a contemporary art space seems to undermine that reading. These are artefacts of Maroon culture in a way, but only in the way that Jeff Koons’ balloon animals are artefacts of a certain strain of contemporary American culture. *A Kibii Koni*, like all of Pinas’ installations are a kind of seduction, an invitation to Moengo. They offer symbols that can only be fully engaged if their viewer takes the time to inquire further.

It will not be an easy inquiry either, once one has waded through the complex political history of this country most people have never heard of, the why of things, there is the forest to contend with, the how. Suriname has one of the smallest population densities in the world, with few markers of modernity beyond the coastal settlements. What's more, maroon culture is by definition shrouded in bush. On the one hand, Marcel is advocating for visibility, opening his *toombo* to a global audience, but on the other hand, he is not as interested in bringing the forest to the world, as he is in directing the world to the forest.

The aim of the Kibii Foundation is the uplift of the Maroon people, with Moengo as a kind of pilot. "Uplift" may seem old-fashioned, but it's difficult to find another word that speaks to the two sides of Kibii's work: facilitation of the economic restoration of a community ravaged by modern politics and industry, *and* an assertion of overwritten cultural value that does not need cultivation, so much as recognition. In the statement, "The way our ancestors used to live is the way to preserve the world" is a message for not just contemporary Maroons, but also for that other, modern Suriname (concentrated in Paramaribo), and a broader global community that sees even Paramaribo as a forgotten hinterland.

The foundation started with the Tembe Art Studio, a community art centre, housed in a building that was once a hospital for Alcoa employees. Tembe houses a recording studio, research centre, and half of the two part Contemporary Art Museum of Moengo (CAMM), Suriname's first museum dedicated to contemporary art. Tembe also hosts an artist residency, which has brought artists from across the region, such as Barbados' Sheena Rose, but also Surinamese diaspora based in Holland, like Remy Jungerman, and Dutch artists like Feiko Beckers. Each visiting artist, and several local artists, produce a work for the Moengo sculpture garden, which dots sculpture throughout the red-mud-stained town. In every presentation, Marcel matter-of-factly states that Moengo will become Suriname's art centre, and having had a chance to visit, I see no reason to question his vision.

What does it mean to have the nation's first contemporary art museum, the sort of institution generally associated with bustling Euro-American metropolises, two hours' drive into the forest, in a town treated with neglect at best and disdain at worst by its capital city? What delicious audacity.

Is CAMM the temperature-controlled, starchitect-designed, custom-built structure we've come to associate with contemporary art museums? No. It's in a building designed to be a hospital, each work or group of works occupies it's only little room. The ceilings are not especially high, but there's enough room to fit Wadell and Dona Akobe's seven foot Tembe⁹ piece. One gallery does open on to a ramp once used for ambulances, but there are works by artists from across Suriname and its diaspora, and across the Caribbean honourably installed there nonetheless. What's more, in the Caribbean and much of the global south, the idea that

⁹ The name given to traditional Maroon carving.

contemporary art can exist without temperature control and Herzog and de Meuron-secured elegance is a sorely needed affirmation.

With this in mind, I am not the least surprised or doubtful when Marcel informs me that the research centre—now a small room housing a few computers, a small library and projection facilities, where community members learn research techniques from visiting scholars— will become a university of maroon knowledge. After all, since its founding in 2010, a guest house, restaurant, craft shop, jewellery line, home furnishings line, and an annual festival that brought twenty thousand people to Moengo in its last staging have mushroomed around Tembe. These all fall under the umbrella of the Kibii Foundation. If you ask Marcel about his work, that is what he will tell you about.

His artistic production functions as a crystallisation of the broader project, materially and discursively. The installations often include elements made or contributed by members of the Maroon community. In *A Kibii Koni*, for example, the *toombos* come from Saamaka villages on the banks of the Gran Rio River.¹⁰ The *pangi* was made by the Maroon women who traditionally make it, and paid for with commission funds. Similarly, in earlier installations like *Pe Wi Ego*, exhibited at the Hague in 2009, school children in Moengo were asked to trade in their old shoes for new ones purchased using private donations. The old shoes were then included in the installation, along with a video work, depicting the process. This combination of new media and time-worn found materials is a recurring theme in Marcel's work, and seems to perform the *Kibii* project via form. The 2008 Moiwana memorial operates according to similar logic, the monumental Afaka symbols that Pinas installed near the site of the massacre do not only memorialise what was lost in those bloody days. They also index what is becoming within, and out of, that traumatic space.

Though the artistic production and community activism parallel each other in intention, there is certainly a difference in their methodologies. When I pressed Marcel to articulate a distinction between these two ways of working, he again evaded my grappling: “The studio is where I go to think about the community work. I go out into the community, then I go into the studio to think about what I'm doing in the community, then I go back out into the community.” The artworks then, are the by-products of working through, a kind of schema.

This ongoing relation between artistic production and a rigorously site specific community activism distinguishes Pinas from some of the better known names in the increasingly canonised sphere of socially engaged art. The names that will come up if you do an internet search for “socially engaged art”— Rick Lowe, Theaster Gates, Tanya Bruguera— all produce work across a variety of spaces and social issues for varying periods of time, with changing levels of personal involvement. Often, individual works can function independent of the rest of these artists' oeuvres. Marcel's project is different. Each artwork emerging from

¹⁰ Also known as the Suriname River.

Marcel's practice— from the early painting to the Moiwana memorial through to *A Kibii Koni*— returns to the same place, the same ideas, the same densely layered time(s).

Pinas' *Toombo* is not only a freeze frame of an ongoing process, but also a declaration of lifetime commitment. The revelation and sharing of Maroon knowledge is a life's work. Work that requires the re-inscription of tradition (ancestral knowledge) as futurity (contemporary art centre). Here, a vanquished history is brought into the future, but it doesn't quite form a circle, more a spiral. It does not go back three sixty degrees exactly, it adds a dimension that is neither forward nor backward, more beyond.

Old things and here, but new things too, the *toombo* is not being shared just with maroons, it's a broader community that's being invited to a table set with ancient knowledge, in hopes of a brilliantly intrepid future. Would it not be a fine way for things to come around?

7. Visuele documentatie Marcel Pinas



Titel: Afaka sikii

Jaartal 2005

Materiaal: metaal

Afmetingen: 5 m x 5 m x 1 m



Titel: Moiwana monument

Jaartal :2007

Materiaal: metaal, aluminium, beton

Afmetingen: 40 m x 40 m x 15m



Titel:Moiwana monument



Titel: Kibii wi Koni

Jaartal : 2005

Materiaal:metalen tonnen ,aluminium,

Afmetingen:5 m x 10 m x 5 m.



Titel:OS Pelgrim kondre

Jaartal:2005

Materiaal:oude school banken ,boeken potloden lepelolie lampen

Afmetingen:10 m x 10 m x 1m,

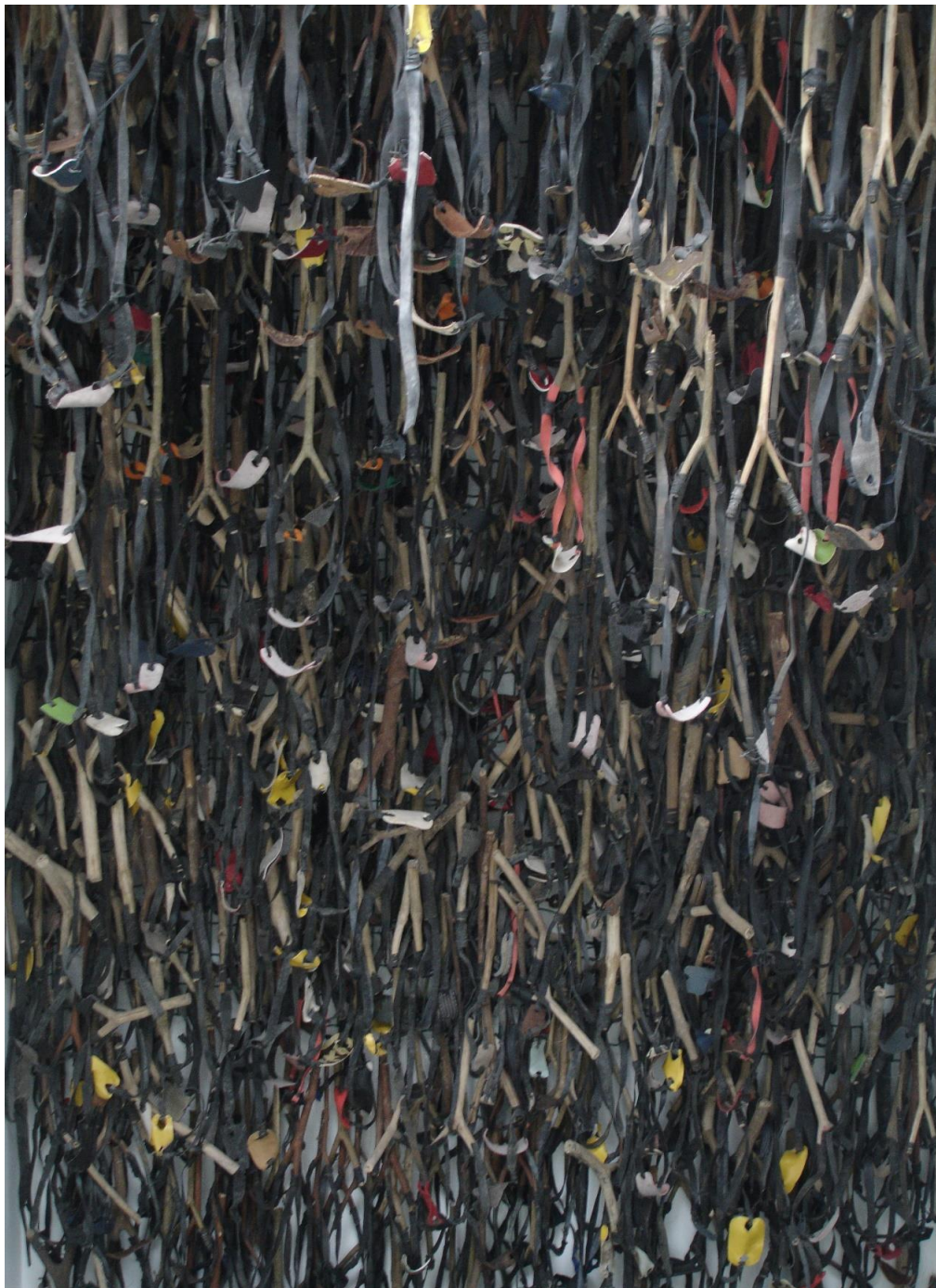


Titel: San fika

Jaartal:2009

Materiaal;Lepels

Afmetingen 5 x 10 m



Titel: Feti

Jaartal:20011

Materiaal: Katapulten

Afmetingen2,5 m x 2,5 m x 2,5 m



Titel:Pe we go

Jaartal :2005

Materiaal:oude schoenen

Afmetingen:2m x 2m x 0,5 m



Titel:Leti

Jaartal:2005

Materiaal:poppen,pangie

Afmetingen2m x 2m x 0,5 m



Titel: Doo

Daartal;2007

Materiaal: mixed media op doek

Afmetingen:2m x 1.50,



Titel:Koli libi

Jaartal:2005

Materiaal:oil lamp ,metal

Afmetingen:90 cm x 90 cm x 10 cm



Titel expositie :Kibri a kulturu

Jaartal:2008

Materiaalmixed media

Afmetingen:20 m x 20 m x2,5 m, context



Titel:Faaka tiki

Jaartal:2011

Materiaal:mixed media on wood

Afmetingen:10 m x 10 m x 2,5 m



Titel: Faaka tiki



Titel:Faaka tiki kondee

Jaartal:2010

Materiaal:mixed media

Afmetingen:2m x 3m x 1 m

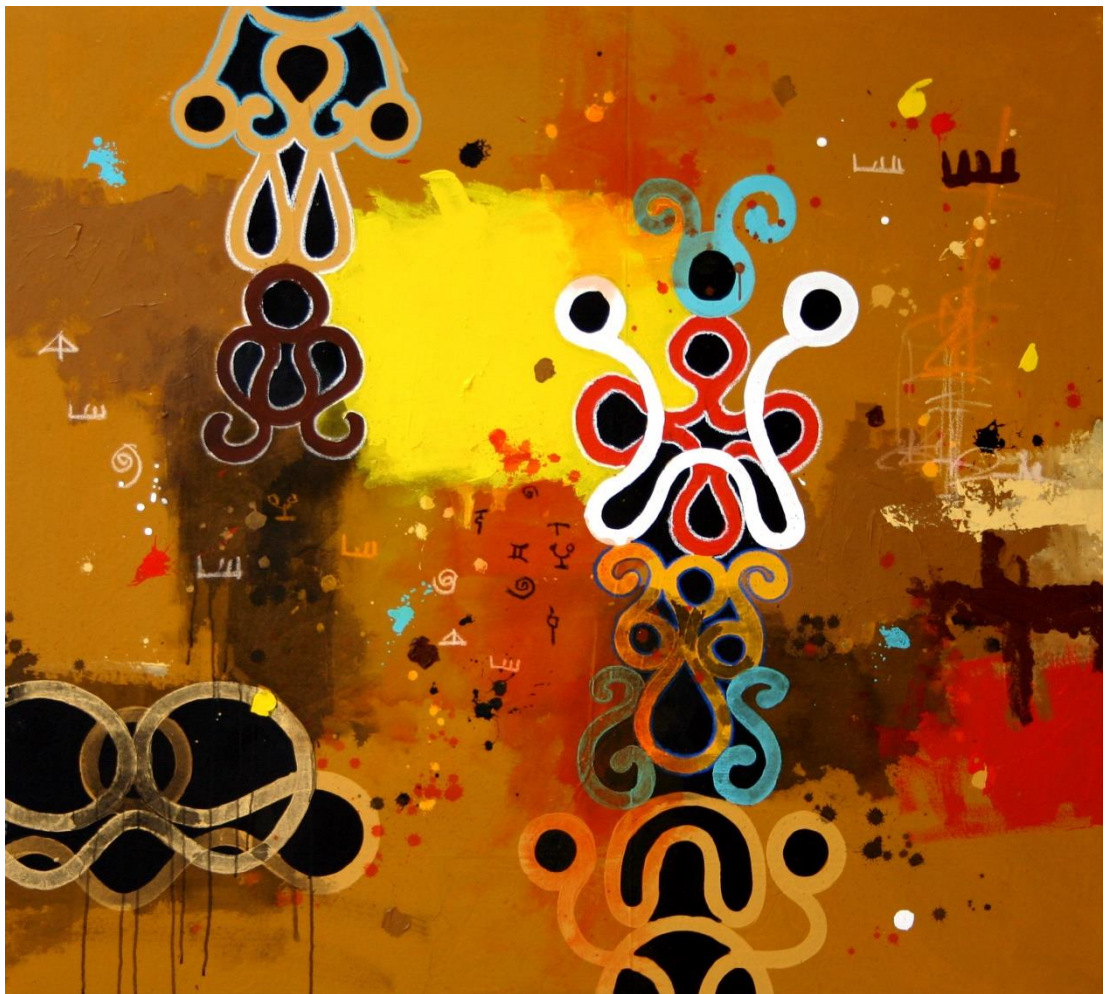


Titel:Afaka

Jaartal2016

Materiaal:glas

Afmetingen1,5 m x 1,5 m x 1,5 m,



Titel:Tembe

Jaartal:2006

Materiaal:mixed media on canvas

Afmetingen:1,5 m x 1,5 m



Titel:eside tide tamaa

Jaartal:2012

Materiaal:skelet ,body bags

Afmetingen:10m x 5m



Titel:What is left

Jaartal:2010

Materiaal:vat,keramiek,

Afmetingen:2m x 2m x 1,5 m



Titel:Alibi

Jaartal:2008

Materiaal;schedel,klok ,houtsnijwerk paneel

Afmetingen:10 m x 3 m x 2m



Titel: Gi nyan nyan

Jaartal: 2016

Materiaal:doeken,teilen

Afmeting 5m x 4 m x 0,50 m



Titel: Tembe

Jaartal:2016

Materiaal:glas

Afmetingen:0.50 m x 2.50 m x 0.50 m



Expositie bij Artlease galerie in Utrecht



Titel: Afaka totem

Jaartal: 2015

Materiaal: olie vaten

Afmeting : 10 m x 10 m x 5 m



Titel:Kibii Wi Koni

Jaartal:2007

Materiaal:Flessen,doeken

Afmetingen:10m x 5 m x 0.25 m



Titel:Kukuu

Jaartal: 2014

Materiaal:keukenkast en keuken gerei

Afmetingen:1.50 m x 20 m x 0.50 m



Titel: A kibii koni

Jaartal 2019

Materiaal:trommels,doeken ,flessen,veren,klei

Afmetingen: 2 m x 5 m x 1.5 m



Titel:Kunu I & Kunu II

Jaartal:2016

Materiaal:mixed media

Afmeting :80 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm



Titel: Uman Deesi.

Jaartal:2016

Materiaal:electrische kookplaat en ketel

Afmetingen: 40 cm x 40 cm x 40 cm



Kukuu installation at the Cuenca Bienale in Ecuador



Titel: Moiwana tafaa

Jaartal: 2019

Materiaal: mixed media

Afmeting : 15 m x 2 m x 1.20 m

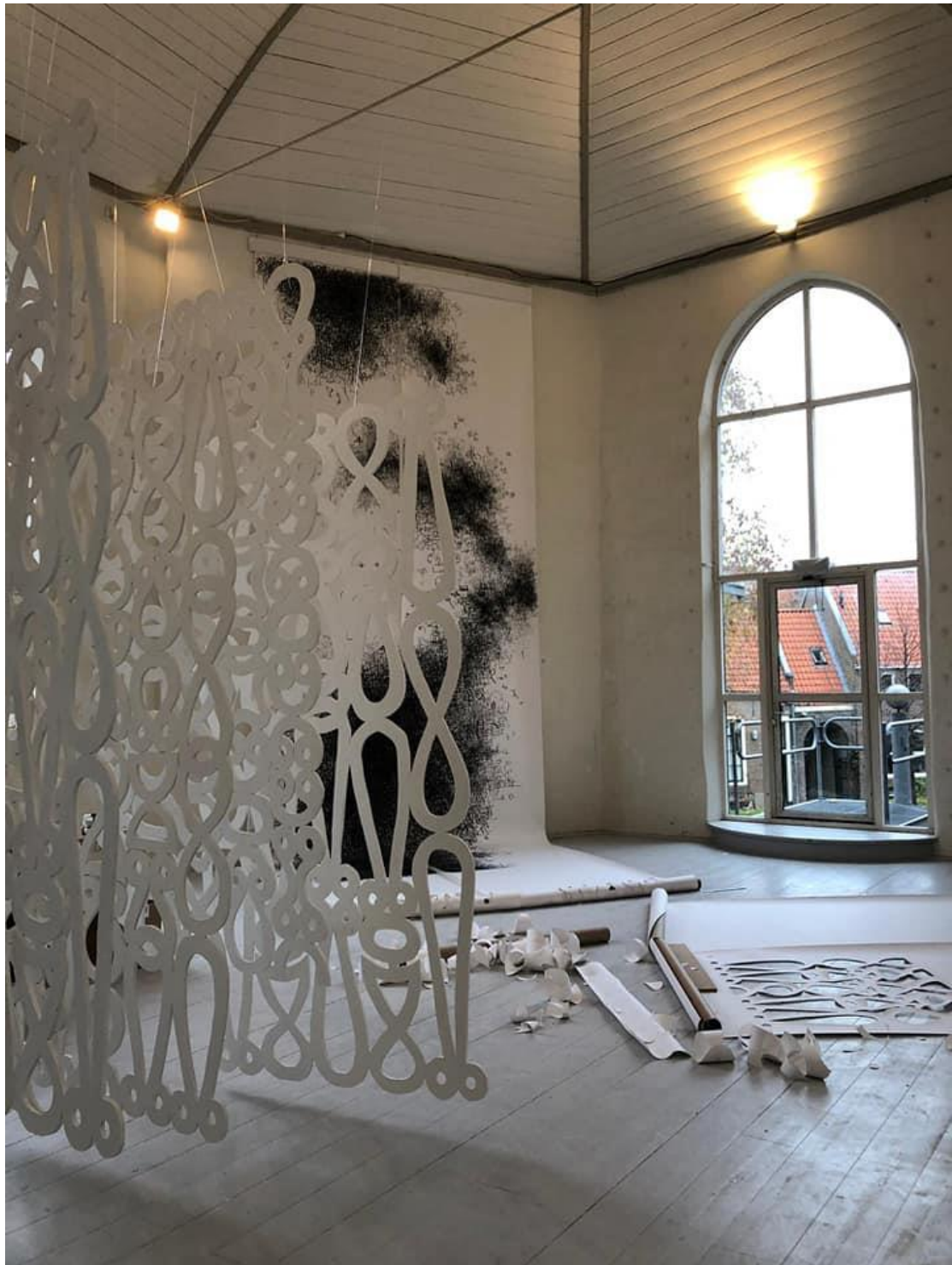


Titel:Tjai a ede

Jaartal: 2008

Materiaal:Mixed media

Afmeting :10m x 2 m x 1 m



Titel:Werk in progressie Hotel Maria Kapel ,Hoorn ,Nederland



Titel: Sanfika en what is left

Jaartal: 2011



Titel:Overzicht tentoonstelling Kibii wi koni

Jaartal:2011

