Dear Baffu,

On a dark, coffee-ridden, 12th of June night, eyes thinking about the words written in the flash forward style of an Argentinean novelist, Cesar Aira, while browsing between facebook, and reading an interview on Bomb magazine, the soft key sounded at 12:01 am. The link to the first edition of Baffu arrived, quick to download, and open in adobe reader - ready for viewing.

Upon scrolling its pages, what immediately came to mind was the groundbreaking nature of this first publication. I thought about the concept of creating art in a post colonial space, which has historically institutionalized and attempts to suppress and condition the creative imagination with fear. What I see within the pages of Baffu is a live wire, filled with spirit - a space where imagination can soar - a counter narrative landscape, where young Belizean artists can positively engage in the process of writing and expressing their own creative identities.

My field is literature, so I will not attempt to offer any critique of these stunning visual pieces. All I can say is that they are thought provoking and offer tremendous inspiration, insight and curiosity. However, the feeling I get when viewing the art and reading the poetry, is like being submerged into a dynamic mental terrain, where raw emotions - angst, despair, honesty, anger, hope, pleasures, dreams, nightmares, desires - are shot and mixed, forming a tapestry, which is developing an often ignored and forgotten outlook or scene of the youthful Belizeans’ state of mind.

I may be wrong, but some may sense that there is a lack of structure or order, because of the absent table of contents, the mixing of different types of art, some that seem like sketches or rough work, with poetry, contrasting text sizes and so on. However, in my mind I think the order and structure and the inclusion of literary and visual arts, make a statement in itself; it is intended to disorient or disturb, especially those programmed into submission to the typical order of the day.

There is an energy breathing beneath this tapestry, and each breath is expansive as Baffu’s pages reflect a radiant beam which is evolving a breathing ground that is becoming more and more vital in our post colonial society. Okay, that’s some thoughts I have on Baffu. Feel free if you’d like me to expand on any of these random reactions I have offered. I anticipate the second edition. Question: Are you a set group, or do you intend to post a call for submissions to a wider audience? Of course a call would be great, but it also has its own implications.

Respectfully,
Ubaldimir Guerra
This Mound is Noh Mul
by Katie Usher

Even as I sit here, in front of this computer I am picking bits of limestone out of my wet hair. I close my eyes and try to let the moments of earlier today become vivid and alive again.

At 5:55, the blue van picked me up on the Philip Goldson Highway, just miles away from the Philip Goldson International Airport. Inside some members of the BAFFU team and I were on our own ‘road to El Dorado’. We, unlike the fifteenth century Spaniards in the New World, were en route to a Maya ruin, the former Maya site Noh Mul.

We stopped in Orange Walk Town to feast on the famed ‘Orange Walk tacos’, except for Dwayne Murillo who in observance of Ramadan must fast. We drove further on, to fix a valve on one of the tires. Some members went to the nearby park. I stayed on, I like the machines at the tire shop. The mechanical noises, the grease, the part of me, which always seeks to acquire ‘male’ knowledge and strength stayed on to be satiated.

Yasser Musa and Gilvano Swasey got directions from the man at the tire shop, he knew exactly where it was because he “used to farm deh. Before wen da mi loan bush.”

We all got back into the van and very soon, were turning off the Northern Highway unto the road which led to New San Juan. This is where the remains of Noh Mul sat, nestled in the loose vegetation, surrounded by a sea of cane fields.

We tackled a rough road to get there, which was fine by me, well accustomed to unpaved, pothole-speckled, rain-beaten roads of Vista del Mar. My comrades did not seem to mind either.

We could see it become real. The picture of a bulldozer-scraped Maya site, is just that, walking to the ruin, faced with its immensity, its vulnerability, its loss. The wreckage became 3D.

Gilvano climbed all the way to the top and smiling from the ledge said we could access it from the side. The braver ones went first, Micah Vernon, Briheda Haylock, Alyssa Craig, Kyraan Gabourel,
Welcome to Las VEGAs by Micah Vernon, Nohmul, Orange Walk, 2014

Kristian Carter and Shantel Carter, me and Dwayne lagged for a bit a the base. The climb was not an easy one. He decided to stay and I swallowed my fears and began to crawl on up getting assistance with my folder of documents the flip and my phone.

I met them at the top, as they posed for a picture on a ledge.

I knew I needed to bury my credentials, I just didn’t know where. Gilvano suggested the top of Noh Mul. Conveniently, there was an orifice there already. The earth around it was soft, so I decided it was perfect. I buried my academic history there, SJCJC and ESAY transcripts, an SCA graduation program circa 2003, and an acceptance letter and other forms from John Carroll University. After burial, I covered it with a stone and we all descended.

Micah, who had, descended first did his own intervention, at the base of Noh Mul, he disrobed and held a silver poster which read “Welcome to Las VEGAs!” A commentary on the fact that the demise of Noh Mul is the masterwork of the Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Gaspar Vega and his relative, aspirant standard bearer, Denny Grijalva.

Gathered at the base, along with Alton Humes, functioning as writer and press, we listened as Yasser explained his intervention, which was to bury a Landings book, a 464 page brick which documents 10 years of culture and thought. He would bury it here, but not before we all signed it, and some, tried to throw it up into the small oval crevice, made famous world wide when news broke of its near complete demolition in May of 2013.

The book was buried under soft cal, and patted down by Dwayne’s prayers and hands. Kyraan sealed the ritual with a beautiful burst of spoken word, followed by
Dwayne reading a poem he had written for the occasion.

As we were leaving, marveling at the pottery shards and flint chips, just lying there in the open, legacies of Noh Mul having been ravaged by those immense metallic claws. Everything flung in any direction, not prepared for the sudden assault.

We were met by a “what are you doing here? This is my property. This is not Noh Mul, this (is) just a mound. Noh Mul is back there. Covered in bush. Di English mi already come there and excavate that.”

He refused to give his name, but made it clear that we were trespassing.

We left that mound and drove toward another which was completely gone, except for the corner of it, held up by the roots of a tree. Here the CTV3 met and interviewed us.

After a supercharged day, it was nice to unwind in Boston village at Gilvano’s home amid craboo, annatto seeds, and discussing pairings for fever grass tea, spice seeds maybe.
Meet Me in Nohmul

Kyo D’Assassin

Limestone in ruins
a hole in history
what happens in VegaS
stays in VegaS
shows be the mystery
Meet me in Nohmul
pack your bags
grab a camera
Behold the Behemoth
a mound to a landowner
We climb in spirals
hand in hand
rare for Belizeans
leaving artworks & credentials
mapping where we come from
The tears of the Indians
to a blemish on the land
prayers go unanswered
rivers dried in the sand
We bless the dead
with blood works of our hands
the prop on the stage
10ft from the mic stand
shards decorated the path
to the infamous bloodbath
the story irrelevant
like the spirits' wrath
Nohmul is the face
of every native in place
as the excavator is the mace
the loogie of disgrace
But it's just something
that made the news
flipping between channels
without a clue
We wait on the internationals
to tell us what to do
cuz only then will it be
worth more than the square of two
but with our Grinchy hearts
dogs eat the whore
Let's see what happens
when it's at your front door
The Fear
(To A Motivation of Self)” (#8)

Alton Humes

I am Just one,
Just a man.
But I am staring,
bleary-eyed into
the Heart of Darkness.

I stare into the grotesque
face of FEAR.

You see, FEAR is not
Just the intangible known;
It is the heart of the center,
the dark, gaping maw
Of raw, naked reality.

It is the knowledge that no matter what
you do, you are nearly alone,
the stage before you, only that
YOU
cannot stand upon it.

The stage is there, but you
Cannot rise to its grandness,
Because SOMETHING will
Slink forth, to SURROUND
you, to STOP YOU.

That, my Friends, is FEAR.

FEAR is truly a dangerous thing.
It leaps, seeps and creeps,
crushing its Dark Hands
around your throat,
stifling your body,
rendering your soul to pieces.

No one, man or woman,
Boy or girl
is immune.

But, oh, oh how many laugh,
Mocking your realization, the
acute awareness that FEAR
surrounds YOU.

You dare to tell me not to be afraid?
Who are YOU to Tell ME not to FEAR?
Who told you to stand on a stage,
to mock me as I fail to ascend
with you?
Who told YOU that I must join
you
As you stand there to plot
against
me, my slow rising too complex
for your jealous mind?

You see, you fail to measure me,
Knowing even as I rise,
I cannot rise higher than you.

Even I dare attempt to conquer,
I know that FEAR still surrounds
me.

But therein,
you see,
is my motivation.

My rise is only preceded by
the KNOWLEDGE that I
am only better than my most
average self.

So, judge me not for my nervousness,
judge me not for my hesitant
step,
for my journey is only at the
beginning.
And where FEAR surrounds me,
it does not choke me,
it does not CONQUER ME!!!

Fear, the lethal, noxious,
choke,
may gather around me,
may surround me,
may yet gather to
incapacitate me,
rob me blind of sight,
of sound, speech
and of mind.

But it will not kill me,
Not when it can motivate
me.

Not when it can move me,
From plane to plane,
Strength to strength.
So while today I cannot ascend
the stage to join you,
tomorrow is your day to stand
back.

Tomorrow, I will not merely
ascend a stage,
the stage will seem as if I were
standing on nothing at all.
It will fade from my eyes
until it will be only air,
rising to carry me
beyond.

Carry me beyond ---
beyond all doubt,
beyond all sorrow,
beyond my own flawed mind.
To a place where FEAR
no longer rules,
no longer dominates me.
When I ascend the stage,
all I will be is me.
FEAR will not dominate me,
I stare FEAR in the face
and shrink it until it’s almost
NOTHING!!!
FEAR is conquerable,
Because it is a stepping stone,
a building block,
To motivate ME to my
HIGHER SELF!!!

(w.)13-03-2014
[transcribed (typed) on June
17th, 2014]
BAFFU

Over 30 Artists + Poets.

June 13th _ Image Factory_ 7pm

Chris Vasquez
5 minute press conference 12 June 2014
BAFFU event – Thursday 12 June 2014
- 5 minute press presentation – 10:00am

BAFFU event(s) – Friday 13 June, 2014
- Bafu – PDF e magazine – 12:01am (Bafu Facebook + imagefactorybelize.org)
- art exhibition Part 1 – 20+ artists and poets – starts = 7:00pm
- poetry performance – 8:00pm
- art exhibition Part 2 – 8:45pm

Bafu e magazine + exhibition + performance –
organized by brijeda haylock and kyraan gaboure1

What is art to you?
Art is the only thing that’s never been a waste of my time. It’s helped me grow emotionally. Like time spent on a toilet seat.

What drives you to create? Boredom
- Marvin Vernon, Bafu artist

In this race the challenge is to lose the most mental weight.

Baffu is to be a challenge from which we all emerge transformed. Evolved.

You must be able to sift through the mountains of bullshit around you, and find usable, workable material, like Wall E, and find in the wasteland, signs of intelligence.

This is why community is key. Baffu provides that platform. The Baffu artists should all read, youtube, tweet, skype, chat, watch tons of TED talks on everything from Politics to fashion, to skateboarding, to homeschooling to micro economic lending systems around the world and study current events and World History.

Because the world requires more of you than what you draw, dance, shout, film, write, perform, and or sing. It requires that your brain is highly functional and alert. And, more importantly, like gases, which are composed of highly unstable molecules, able to navigate all types of conversations, which will span cultures, age, interests, politics and perspectives.

- Kate Usher, Baffu thinker
Scenes
from the Baffu art + performance show
21 June 2014
Kyraan Gabourel
A treatise on the aesthetics of a dreaming imaginary vortex was what he wrote as a working title to save and add to his notes where a tremor of ink begun to emerge along the spine of the note map.

- Ubaldimir Guerra
The Web of Lies

Ilona Smiling

“Oh, what a tangled web we weave. When first we practice to deceive” goes the old saying. Everyone lies; we lie on a daily basis. Whether it’s a white lie or a big lie, we just lie. But we fail to realize that no matter how small our lies are, they call keep adding up. These little lies, soon become big lies that spin out of our control, and no matter how big it gets, we can’t just say… I lied.

The Web of Lies installation enables everyone to admit publicly, but discreetly, that they have lied, while at the same time physically showing how intricate and deceiving a lie can be. For this installation, I will be creating giant spiders using elastic stings and push pins. The installation will be constructed on the walls, on the floor and ceiling, leaving minimal walking space for the audience. The minimal walking space for the audience is crucial in this installation as I want the audience to feel trapped or stuck in the web in order to physically and mentally experience what it is like to stand in a web of lies. The twist and turns you have to make to maneuver through the strings makes it difficult to find a spot to properly stand; and just when you think you are in a safe spot, you are tripping over another string. I purposely want to make the web this way to symbolically represent our actions when we lie. Just when we think we have covered all our bases with our lies, suddenly we forget. After the creation of the webs, visitors will be asked to write and pin on the web, lies that they have told someone or lies that they have been told. At the end of the series, we have not just a web structures, but a web literally filled with lies. The installation is meant to be interactive and therapeutic for the audience, especially those who are holding on to guilt but are ashamed to let it go.

Installation process:

Step 1: To create the spider webs, I will be attaching the stings to the push-pins which will be inserted into the wall.

Step 2: The strings will be stretched out, separately, and attached to the ground (via push pins or tape depending on your floor). In the photo below, I used tape to attach the string to the ground as the floor was cement. I will do this procedure repeatedly until I have completed a base or skeleton for the web.

Step 3: After the skeleton/base is created, then I will proceed in creating small patterns and design, as would a spider. I call this my spinning phase. On each string of the base/skeleton, I will attach a new string and spin it in and out of the skeleton which will create the spider web effect.

The Web:
When the web is completed, visitors will then be asked to write down on pieces of paper a lie that they have been told or a lie they have told someone, and to enter the web and attached the lie on one of the strings inside the web. Below are some examples of lies that people wrote during a previous display of the installation.
Torn between a raven and a white dove
Senility confronts intelligence
Wings of obscurity glide swiftly through curiosity
Scattered and confused feathers shed a hopeful tear
The tear that leaves the dark raven
Purifying the channels of the white dove
Innocence that prevents innocent deeds
Innocence that serves the tabla rasa for guilt

A raven persistently pursues a white dove
A white dove innocently accepts a raven’s intrusion
Survival allows both to co-exist
Death permits both to cease existence
The sky wanders their conflicting minds
The sky does not judge their conflict
Their conflict becomes more existent than themselves
They have travelled the heavens above and earth below

In the paradigm of time there is no clock
Yet their time is extinguished by their conflict
Preoccupied with guilt and innocence they remain
In nothingness
Particles intercepted as they repel and attract
Dictatorship reflects their own philosophy

Their minds are altered by another’s anatomy
Heaven bound they pray when they know not thyself
Birds of a different feather
Untangle the web of insecurity
Release the chains of limitation and judgment
Seek the mirror that lies deep in the chambers
Cleanse the dust and decay of materialism

Intrinsically impregnate the coming of a new seed
Mentally consume and energize the manifestation of
The true ‘am’

Ubaldimir Guerra
Light
Feast

Sean Taegar

For the Spirit
For my Mother and my Father
Andrea and Leroy
For my family

‘Oh friendly light
Oh fresh source of light’
Aimé Césaire

The light floats
The light feast
The feather of focus drinking the air
This book burns, drinks fire, the flames foaming sky
A bird of light illuminates the sky with salt
lightning of larynx
with the milk of fire.
Air transparent as remembering
Invisible as the sound of chalky feathers echoing to silence.
A claw of eagle sky.
A cloud of milking moon
Dust. Ash. Sing.

Sleep, sleep in this humble space
So you can see the stars, the sea, the moon dancing.
Light launched from the lungs.
The air drinking stars.

Moon of milk you fell into the sea
Lighting up the sky with glowing salt.
Cloud and milk drinks the moon sky

Suns sweating in the skull
Illuminating the dream’s pearls.
Inside light,
Feathers floating to sky

The sun blazes nightmares to ash scattered by the wind
Feathers of light foaming the face
The light singing in stars

The night sleeps
  Sings in sky.
  The words searching for air
  Drinking light for nourishment
  The words dancing in sky
  Inside the moon’s floating chalk

Sleep in me star
  Let us sleep
  Launch eternity in the egg
  Sleep
  Sleep
  Sleep
  Lines of light tracing infinity.
  Wings of light singing air.

Stars, dancing crystals of diamond floating cloud
  Sing the movement of air
  The cosmos singing milk
  The light that we become sings and floats to sky

The words spinning like dead stars.
  Light dancing ink.
  The words sleeping in the milk
  Of the computer screen flashing ivory, leaving the cursor blinking
  Drinking ink and coffee and other sections of night

A book of light swimming in fire milk swimming inside the moon’s chalky smoke of dancing stars
  A butterfly of light flaming

The sky of light drinking the sun.
  Stars of light drinking sun
  Stars of light drinking my fingers of chalk and foam
  Drink stars for their refreshing shining

Fly, fly wings of light across the electronic screen
  Fly, fly wings of light across infinite pearls

Light the way for hands floating on feathers

Let the arrow fly
  The arrow of feathers that does no harm to skin
  that flies from the sun
  that lights the way for the young in circles
  Bathes the young in light so
  They see tomorrow’s circular energy
  As I write my hands vibrate with fire
I am a terrible waitress

Not for the fear
of sweating
of being anchored
of being small
being treated small
any insult they could dream up
to dish out
I can devour with ease
these pale in comparison to my
own
self-doubt
self-criticism
self-judgement

I am a terrible student

I question
I think
I do
I do
I think
I question
I question
I think
I do
I do
I think
I question
Notice school; absent
School was were I compensat-
ed for
not being pretty
not being thin
not being popular
not having friends
not being cool
not being attractive
not having my father’s attention
not being an athlete
not being a cheerleader
not being a beauty queen
None of that shit matters when
you have a solid GPA
Especially when
You are the only
black person
black woman
non-native Spanish speaker
Belizean
You compensate
Your GPA
becomes your companion
the only one you can talk to
who doesn’t correct your
Spanish
Laugh and shake their heads
when you confuse words
Laugh when you don’t under-
stand words
jokes
paragraphs
chapters
books
things

Now,
in this GPA-free place
what can quantify me?
How can I be judged among
women
who
have it together
who stayed in school
who were able to become
wives
able to build families
homes
careers

I am a terrible judge
of
what success is
of
what true love is
of
what sacrifice is
of
what failure is
of
what hatred is
of
what giving up is

I am unsuccessful because
I do not have
to quote Gil Scott Heron
“a good home and a wife
(husband) and a child and food
to feed them every night”

I am not loved because
I relied on
the fantasy of your mania
your delusion
and allowed that whimsy
to fool me
Nietzsche says “love is mad-
ness”
So of course
I thought that I was loved
Until you were medicated
treated
institutionalized
and the whimsy ended

“no Katie, you need to stop
calling, and live your life, and
leave me alone, and don’t
come see me, and forget about
me, and move on, and do your
own thing, and I am messed
up, and I don’t want you to see
me like this, and I am sorry.
Sorry Katie”

no
just hang up
leave me here cold
reeling in the tempest of what
was
simultaneously the most
beautiful and most ugly thing to
have transpired in my life
the most happy and the most
sad
the most serious and the most
frivolous
leave me here, alone with this
and then silence

no I am not loved
I was not before you
I wonder if you will ever aban-
don my dreams
so I can sleep restfully

I do not sacrifice myself
The minute things complicate
themselves
I run

I run at nights,
because I am a late riser
because I am a late sleeper

I am testing my lungs
building them
that is the only sacrifice I know
when my body screams stop,
and I seh
no fat gyal, run, run sohn moh
noh stap

I don’t know failure
I fail everyday
I have perfected the art of
losing
just so that when I fail again
I don’t slump over in defeat
but find silver linings
a way around that
option B, or beyond
a reason to
run, run sohn moh
noh stap

I don’t know what hatred is
If I name it, it exists
If it exists
I am ashamed to admit how
much of it
I consume and churn out

I don’t know what giving up is
because even if you do, life
goes on
so all I could do
is
run, run sohn moh
noh stap

Kate Usher
little bright eyes becoming numb?

www.postlandings.com
"Depression and despair, sorrow and hate - such emotions are never deemed colorful or beautiful. It takes a certain kind of individual to be able to dive head first into such negativity, keep his eyes open, and emerge from the depths with a deep appreciation and a transcendental understanding of what so many of us fear - Pain. I am the voice crying from behind the mirror... the eyes that stare back at you. I see the rainbow in the black of night... the ecstasy in an open wound. I expose the life society swept under the rug hoping to ignore. I am the unknown that forces reality’s resurrection. I awaken the memories that were laid to rest and buried. I give you truth... both inconvenient and unpleasant, but necessary."

- Antonio Beardall

(note: Kyraan Gabourel, Baffu editor)

New artist/poet for Baffu second edition. His Biography drew me into wanting to read his material. Attached are his works and photo with his bio information at the bottom.

His style is shows patterns of the ABC format seen in classical poems with a little twist on free verse. Some poems follow AA BB... pattern while others are ABAB CDCD having both same and near rhyme. His writings struck me as apocalyptic, something like John, who wrote Revelations.
Failed DNR

Are you lonely in your mind?
You stare, see...
Another world that's all your own,
Just you...

Or are there many demons
who come to dance, with you?
And is it me, who is lonely,
In this world, out here?

Why are you clinging on to life?
Plugged in, drift...
Cold and motionless you lie,
You dream...

Eyes so blank, never blinking
Can you see us cry?
Tired lungs, electric breathing
Do you long to die?

Antonio Beardall
Passion Forgot

Just like the sun rises
Over the east
And the ticking clock,
So shall bodies wither
And souls burn out
To form new stars.

With youth in passion,
And youth who forgot,
The colors vibrant
And shadows dark,
Become dust in time
And spirits’ whispers.

For great minds long gone
But etched on the world
And faces that look
Through pools of water,
The candle’s burned out
But smoke rises forever.

Antonio Beardall
The Introduction to Mr. Light

Shantel Carter

At the moment of our first breathe
Freedom from the deep depths throughout the tunnel of life
From the darkness, the light introduces itself
During our nativity
Our first friend gives us the gift of purity
“Hi, I am Mr. Light”, he says
While cradling us, he is enabling our little eyes to see
Mr. Light then continues to speak
“I will guide you as long as you allow me”
From then on, we have been inducted into a new society
Of which became to be our own families
Because they are the first to influence our innocence
Whether they defuse the light
Or keep it burning light incense
It is their choice of which to choose
Tie the bunny ears on our shoes
Fix the smile ready for church
Baptized my thoughts
To not judge with eyes of negativity
To keep my own purity
To plan a family
But not to use contraceptives because it is unnatural
Abortion is premeditated murder even when sometimes penetration is from a stranger?
The homosexuals are sinners, yet I am to respect my neighbors?
My youthful eyes are confused with this duality
I never went to a catholic church but went to catholic schools
Learned all the rules because that’s what I am supposed to do
But tell me this
When have algebra ever helped you to get mango from tree?
Not never
I’ve noticed like forever we’ve been praising Christopher Columbus then
Much to later down the road I discover he’s a scumbag
What a drag
I begin to question society’s syllabus
Is really looking out for us?
Topics like physics, calculus even sets
Gets me so upset when I realize how useless these were
Not even geography or Columbus’ Santa Maria could help me discover how to
Do my taxes, how to get a job, or even C.P.R.
None of these are on our school system’s radar
That’s why society hasn’t gotten far because they are
Leaving our fresh sponges dry
This is no Bikini Bottom
We need to aim high
But no-my mind is trapped in an endless loop
Of hopeless education-Confucius philosophies and religion, and don’t forget the mind corrupting television
Popping my mind like popcorn until it fries
But no-I still watch my cartoons
My Disney princesses
Teaching me fantasies that a rich man shall save me
I kissed frogs but never became a princess
No magical broom ever came to life to clean up after my mess
Hogwarts’s letter. ..Never came
And no matter how much I yelled I never became a super saiyan
The carpet in my room… It never flew
No animals can talk
Not even Scooby Doo
No jinkies for me because I never had a clue
M. Light my first friend begins to fade
Nowadays I reminisce on our last conversation
The day he finally walked away
Attempt number one: “Let us go outside and enjoy the day”
No I say, I rather stay inside and play video games
Attempt number two “Let us read books and explore the mind
No I reply I rather combine theses drugs and alcohol
Attempt number three
Let us pray and rejoice to the lord
No I say I rather stay at this club and explore his and her bodies
My 3rd round at the end of the night
Hits me harder that Jacky Robison’s strike
I am not even sure if I’m high

Because Mr. Society concluded
That he Mr. Light is the bad guy
Mr. Light now fades away
A flame in a midnight hue
Drenched by the madness of society
The darkness now cradles my head to toes
My Geppetto to Pinocchio
Telling me whatever to do
My Darth Vader trying to turn Luke to the dark side
Nowadays Mr. Light just hides
And I no longer bother to seek
Mr. Light no longer tries to find me
And the pain-the hurt it hits me harder that a whiplash
But when will I ever realize I’ve been brainwashed.
By: Alton F. Humes  
(Freelance Reporter)  
ORANGE WALK TOWN,  
Monday, July 14th, 2014

Youth Artists make Pilgrimage to Noh Mul

The destruction of the Noh Mul Archeological Site will undoubtedly rank as one of the greatest injustices ever committed against the Belizean people. But when said Belizean people are influenced along political lines, and fail to recognize the magnitude of what was lost and what could have been lost forever (thanks to the machinations of Orange Walk businessman and political aspirant Denny Grijalva, and supported by Hon. Gaspar Vega), it fell on an unlikely, but key group of the society to point to the epicenter of the madness, and like the Prime Minister, yell at the top of their lungs: “For God’s sake, STOP IT!!!”

And so it would be on Saturday, July 12th, 2014. Mr. Yasser Musa, the master brain behind the Image Factory Art Foundation, along with artist-curator Gilvano Swasey and 10 young artists, including this reporter, made the journey to the site that started up quite a hubbub, but like so much in a 10-second society, faded like the sunset into a harsh night. With a rented van in tow, youthful energies set on overdrive, and a mission to bring attention to an unthinkable act (for which no one has faced formal justice), we were on our way.

And while there were plenty of jokes to throw around, Orange Walk tacos to eat and bumpy roads to conquer, it was the site of the once-majestic Noh Mul, located just outside Orange Walk Town, rising from the green and brown sugarcane fields that stirred both sadness and simmering rage. During the tour, Musa, a history teacher at St. John’s College, told the gathered that the ruin, even in its present chewed-out state, is over 2,000 years old, dating back to its construction about 400 BC.

But while it was enough for this reporter/poet to channel that into decent poetry, others took more drastic actions. Ms. Katie Usher, an employee of the Factory and an “artivist” in her own right, climbed along with Swasey and several other artists, to the lush, green summit of the ruin and in defiance of the hypocritical society we live in, buried her “credentials” – the educational achievements and transcripts that now marked the oppressive and tightening noose “hanging” as a sign of inferiority in a society that supposedly values educated, but not thinking, beings. Usher admitted in a brief interview that she wanted to ‘bury herself’, but opted to bury the transcripts in protest.

One of the highlights of the event was the destruction and burial of a signed copy of “Landings”, an art book published by the Foundation. Upon burial, some of the artists recited poetry over the wrecked book. But just as the act was complete, a farmer who worked in the area (name not divulged) came by in a pick-up and told us that the ruin we were visiting wasn’t Noh Mul at all, but rather “just a mound” and ‘advised’ us to visit a smaller ‘mound’ not too far away.

Advice heeded, the group did so, and it yielded some surprising treasures, one in particular that likely would have landed this reporter and his fellow pilgrims in jail (which would definitely have put a damper on the event). While there, Love FM interviewed Musa and the group.
Everything aside, it was a once-in-a lifetime experience that not only highlights the necessity of protecting our valuable Maya ruins from human destruction, but also serves as a true “giving back”, creating harmony out of what still feels like chaos. So, the journey to Noh Mul may not have been the expected, but it was well worth seeing political destruction restored to an orderly, if not incomplete, beauty.

Alton F. Humes
Alton F. Humes was born December 12th, 1988 in Belize City. The “average” 2nd child of 5 born to working-class parents (1 of whom was born 17 years after the last), he didn’t always excel academically, but grew up with a love for words and reading. It was such a direction that led him to poetry and sometimes songwriting, starting to write in primary school and through high school, restarting later in his life. However, a win in a Drug Week Poetry Competition in high school took him tangentially to other writing endeavors, including journalism, having been a full time journalist with the Belize Times (and later freelance journalist).

He hopes to become a screenwriter and filmmaker, as well as write novels that will earn him both mutual respect and financial comfort.
Filled with No one

She comes home and there is no one.
She walks around and there is no one.
She climbs the stairs to society’s den,
But it is filled with no one.
In her world there are only herselves.
It takes time to be complete,
And it takes time to lose faith.
The connection to earth is through no one
Not even through a greater being
No one can actually see.
The world is filled with no one,
Because it sees no one.
There is a void where no one lives.
But she lives alone
In the dark night.
She will not go swearing
At the curtain of this disguise.
She has given up,
Inhibited by the passion she so carefully hides.

V>P

(Valerie Penner)
Her Conviction

And to love she did,
She fell back, opened her arms
In an array of promise
Into a bed of roses
That was his arms,
Open and waiting
Forever waiting.

Come forward my love
From the branch behind
Where you’re hiding.
Come forward my love,
You are the my soul
My heart and everything in between.
My words are with you.
I hope you treasure it all
Until you are dead.
Only then may I wish
That I lay beside your earthly bed
As you softly and quietly
Slip down into a bed of heather
And soft orange blossoms.
Come hither “Mi Amor”
Take my words
Make them yours!
I need your soul
To make love to mines..
There be joined,
Joined in the sacrament of trust.
Not a tragedy waiting to happen.
You are my last resort
And my most beautiful one.
Please understand as I long
To bury darkness but cannot.
Please understand as I reconcile my soul
To match your lovely one.
I want your absurdity to match my own.
Come into me in a sensual embrace,
Cover me in an eternal caress and know
That I am thine and yours.
Said in two ways to absolve the dying light
That once was our plight.
Come closer as we both,
Fade into the dying of the night.

V>P
(Valerie Penner)
"What Lived Here" (#16 – Book 1)

Alton Humes

A bumpy van
Ride, like
   Sexual death,
Laughing like mad
at foolish imagery.

And then –
   Then, the AWE!!!!

In the midst of Destruction,
   is THIS – this white-walled grace.
The desolation of Beauty,
   Destroyed yet remaining
Magnificent.

Your eyes behold it on a
   Tell-lie-vision screen,
But there remains nothing,
   NOTHING, like
Beholding it with your
Own Eyes.

What Lived Here
   Is history,
    Her-story,
     Their-story,
      OUR story.

What Lived Here
is unfit for poetry,
remaining a Transgression
marred in Travesty,
only Time will re-write.

One man, ONE MAN,

Took from this Place,
but, in taking, he Slaughtered
anew the anciently modern Life
of a Great People.

I Shudder in the Humility
of being in this Great Place,
but TREMBLE for Fear that our Ancestors will not
SLAUGHTER
US in turn for ruining
   their Sacred Home.

It well may be what we DESERVE!!!

What Lived HERE,
   is not written,
    not sung,
     not spoken,
      not TELEVISIONED...

WHAT LIVES HERE....
   is LIVE!!!!

“Word Sonnet (from Noh Mul)"
(#7-A – Book 2)

Maya ruined.

Destruction present.

Youth outraged.

We took, we put (gave) back.

Restoration, order complete.
“The Bulldozer’s Tale” (#7-B - Book 2)

Alton Humes

I am a bulldozer,
a Machine,
without thoughts, emotions,
human handicaps.

I do my job, and I
do it well.
My human driver and
I are a Team,
one in Purpose,
one in Action.

My Job is Destruction;
no time to think, ask,
fight, breathe.

But that ALL Changed
on that Faithful Journey
to Noh Mul.

I told you I do my
job well,
and my driver and I
were in sync.
We crushed, we wrecked,
we Desecrated.

But the FEAR was yet to be
born without me.

Even though I’m a Machine,
I couldn’t shake the
frightful hum of fear
that travelled down my
mechanized back.

I wasn’t burdened by
human emotions,
so why –
why
was the FEAR travelling
in my engines, my gears and
machinations?

My human driver went on
to other jobs before alcohol,
hard drugs, and terrible luck
did him in.
But I –
I
NEVER worked again.

I was no longer able
to do what I loved.
The joy I had in wrecking
this inconsequential
piece of history
was transformed, mutated,
to horror and pain.

WHY HAD I DONE IT?!

Why did I go to THAT PLACE,
go as an agent of ruination
and desecration?

But alas, my answers are
choked, in rust, in grease,
in the sooty ashes of a sin
greater than any other
destruction I’ve ever
committed.

I lie HERE, far
away from my triumphs,
my past glories,
rusting
in pieces,
paying for My Sins,
all because of
to Noh Mul.

All Poems:
(w.) 12-07-2014; (Transcribed) 14-07-2014
[Typed with minor and later editing as well as various
additional corrections on July 22nd, 2014]
Even as I was recollecting the moments and peace of Poustinia, writing about and savouring it, drama brewed up the street. The garbage collectors rendered completely powerless by the City Council, decided to revolt. From where I stood, it seemed poetic even. The citizens responsible for keeping the city clean opening bags of trash in front of the seat of city governance.

It was a small act, but its ambitions and reach were big.
Violence erupted across the street from the Factory an hour ago. After meeting with the Image Factory team we decided to cancel the opening tonight at 7pm. We are asking the artists and those who can make it to come to the Factory between 3 and 5 pm today. — with Marvin Vernon and 18 others.

Kyo D’Assassin, Katie Numi Usher, Wilford Felix and 17 others like this.

Sasha Walker I’m so over this. Shit like that happen all d time. Fuck this. No one wa show up de time cuz de da work or cxc or school. This is bullshit. I’m sorry. I can't deal with this. Not even I Gwen da my own art show cuz some simple asshole. Fuck this.
June 13 at 11:02am · Like · 4

Amir Smith Like why mien
See Translation
June 13 at 11:04am · Like

Beverly Gongora Monsanto O shux...
June 13 at 11:06am · Like

Ivar Juarez yup dat happen rite in front of city hall! damn people stupid
June 13 at 11:09am · Like

Kalmy Welch oh gosh...............i have to cancel and i was looking forward to attend!! 😞
June 13 at 11:16am · Like · 1

EL Arellie SORRY but #baffu u messed up, cud have given a little more thought
Photobombs from today's meeting, was the most festive baux meeting of its time.
Sasha Walker
June 21 · Edited

So I decided to leave BAFFU last week. Today was affirmation to my decision. I put so much effort into it and tried so hard. The organization was so off the magazine was a big fuck you to me and the pr skills was unprofessional. I guess I got over excited and thought this would be something I could be proud of. But as usual a huge let down due to people trying to make a name for themselves instead of putting art before fame.

Like · Comment · Share 29 · 11

Ruhiel Bey
June 21

After today, I'm out. Kindly remove me from the group.

Like · Comment

Sasha Walker likes this.

Sasha Walker I'm with Ruhiel. Today was a big disrespect and let down. Today really made the decision easy. I stand with what i pasted within the week. Please no one message about staying in BAFFU again.
June 21 at 5:41pm · Like

Kyo D'Assassin bit lost what happened??
June 22 at 7:30am · Like

Write a comment...

Wilford Felix
June 22

Hey guys, I hv a lot to say bout saturday and the week prior. However I will not hide behind fb and voice my opinion. I intend to lay it out at our upcoming meeting. Piz don't ask me to just go ahead and say it on the page. Come on... I am interested in saying it to your faces.

Like · Comment

Kyo D'Assassin, Valerie Penner, RH Palacio and 7 others like this.

Stephen Gabb I totally agree bro
June 23 at 1:23pm · Like · 1

Write a comment...
**Shernell Whittaker**

June 22

Ok so I would really appreciate it if someone would tell me what's going on and why people are so let down about yesterday. I really enjoyed it and people I know that went to support agree with me so....????? Dafuq is up?

Unlike · Comment

👍 You, Marvin Vernon, Kyo D'Assassin, Valerie Penner and 2 others like this.

**Marvin Vernon** I thought it went well too. I got all positive feedback from people

June 22 at 5:27pm · Unlike · 4

**Briheda Haylock** we are all wondering the same thing but the ppl who are saying otherwise have left the page.

June 22 at 5:29pm · Like · 1

**Amir Smith** I really neva see nothing wrong

June 22 at 5:30pm · Like · 2

**Shernell Whittaker** yo feel mi? but like what i read in previous posts, something went wrong apparently and we need not just those people but every one to share with us and say wassup

June 22 at 5:30pm · Like · 1

**Shernell Whittaker** I understand certain shit neva all that organized with the magazine but faqq BAFFU di ya, theres no turning back now

June 22 at 5:35pm · Like · 1

**Valerie Penner** the show must go on! moving forwards...no matter what

June 23 at 4:35pm · Like · 1

Write a comment...

👍 Gia V. Martinez, Emz Ortiz, Rachelle Estephan and 4 others like this.

**Melanie Price** go go go! SUCCESS to all the artists and performers! Power to the Positive People!!!! I am there in spirit! Nyahbinghi means Liberation

June 21 at 4:33pm · Like

Write a comment...
why do belizeans feel the need to shout from the mountaintops when they create things. “I am an artist” #artistartist hashtag artist, when they can barely hold a paintbrush. let your work speak for itself. if I see more posts of you talking about how you are an artist than I see your actual work, I’m going to assume you’re playing pretend.

18 likes 17 comments

In a relationship with Ryan Jex for 2 Years

facebook had a cute little happy anniversary message for us

48 likes 3 comments
Baffu june 13, image factory

Like · Comment · Stop Notifications · Share

Stacy Ann, Jenna Anne Perez, Leticia Westby and 9 others like this.

Valerie Penner i like this one lol
June 7 at 6:11pm · Unlike · 1

Briheda Haylock thanks
June 7 at 6:11pm · Like

Write a comment...
Kyraan Gabourel + Dwayne Murillo

poetry performance at Nohmul

see it at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqZE9QOIJgM
To A Dying Mother

Silent, unmoving,
On a bed as worn
As the rag you are dressed in,
Tears forming in your eyes,
Knowing what's coming,
An end to it all

But mine still lies ahead,
The wind howling outside
Reminds me that the world
Can be like your heart,
Cold and scathing
For I needed to bleed
To prove my worth

Yet my love I give you,
Undeserving,
But there's nothing more
That you can do
But wait out the days
Till your eyes are closed
And dream forever, a silent memory

So carry your tears now,
For none shall be shed
After you're gone,
To water the chances
That somewhere in that world
Forgiveness can grow
And as your blood turns
To ash inside your veins,
The light weeps not for your soul
But darkness forever more
Shall sprout from those seeds
You planted in me.

So carry on, dream

Antonio Beardall
Faithlessness knows no Hope in this city of Ghosts

Ilona Smiling

Disclaimer: Ghost - an apparition of a dead person that is believed to appear or become manifest to the living, typically as a nebulous image.

Most days I don’t know whether or not to run away, or roll myself up into a dark abyss of depression and wait for my death. It’s been a little over a year now since I’ve been back, and once again I’ve been questioning...why? Why did I come back, why did I believe this time would be different, why did I think we were getting better. The truth is we’re not. I’m not sure if we have gotten worse or we have just been floating in the same position as we were 10 years ago!

For two years I was living and studying in Taiwan, and for two years I was surrounded by some of the best artists, curators, and art managers from around the world (some of which are friends and teachers). Every day was a learning experience in which my brain and heart were exploding with awesomeness overload. My mind opened up to a world of new possibilities when it came to art and how to curate/display it. For 7 months I was working at the Digital Art Center Taipei in which I gained insight into how art and technology can make for one amazing show. My friends and I even curated an international exhibition, which wasn’t easy by the way, but our hearts were beating with so much determination that we never once gave up. Every time someone said no, we politely said, “thank you for your time” and moved on to the next task.

There was no time for whining and crying over who doesn’t want to help us, and creating all the reasons why they should help us. NO! There was no time for self-pity at any point; if we wanted to see something happen, we had to make it happen, and we did. Another thing we had was unity; no one was putting the other one down. If your technique needed to improve, one could say so without the other getting offended. We simply understood the power of constructive criticism. None of us felt threatened or felt that someone was trying to take something away from the other. We all knew that we were together to grow as individuals but most importantly grow as a team.
Now cut to present day Belize, where everyone feels like “dah one deh” is in a secret society that is out to get them *eye fucking roll*. I had hoped, with all my might that all the great things I learned those two years would carry over to my life in Belize. The main reason I came back was to help, in any way that I can, build the art system. Little did I fucking know, nobody cares about your thoughts or ideas here. It’s just the same old shit. From the bizarre notion, and I’m quoting what other people have said, “UDP, dah deh dih bring we down” to the “I can’t wait till PUP come back in and bun fiah pan Dean Barrow and fih he bally deh”. I won’t lie, after a while, I started to get pulled into this crap and started yelling like everyone else, whining and creating all reasons possible as to why the government is to blame for all the problems. Slowly the life within me was pouring out of my soul and being replaced with thoughts of hate and anger. My soul was becoming black like so many already are. You can almost see it in their faces. Greetings are said with such disdain that you wonder to yourself, “well dah weh I do she/he so”. But it was never you, or anyone else. Their hearts were just filled with lost hope which disintegrated their faith in life in this country. Deep down, they’re screaming so hard within themselves that the only evidence is the hardened face that you see and the livid voice you hear. It’s as if though they have become a shell of who they were. Almost like ghosts.

Slowly but surely, I could feel this happening to me. My face had changed; my outlook on life had changed. This wasn’t the person I grew into two years ago. That level headed person was slipping away from me. I began to realize this change when I started to get more and more involved with the arts and entertainment industry in Belize. After meeting all these amazing and talented people (singers, song writers, actors and artists) I thought to myself.” YAYS OMG WE’RE GONNA CHANGE THE WORLD IT’S GONNA BE SO FRICKING AMAZING”. -_- This honestly, won’t happen. Not because we are not a talented bunch, but because we can’t work together as a team. You tell someone “hey I like your work but your technique (whether it be in singing, acting, painting, etc.) needs a little work you get a “fuck you mahbwai how you gwen tell me how dih fuck I fih do my work”. It was literally walking into a field not knowing that underneath lies grenades at the least unexpected spot. Then opinions are not to be given; o0o0o0o flipping noo00o0o nuh uh. As I’ve said previously, I’ve studied this for two years (I gots mih a perrdi MFA degree), and worked a bit along with various artists and curators, so I think, I know I thing or two; I most definitely have a lot more to learn, but I know my shizzle. Now imagine my surprise when my thoughts were shot down because, and I’m quoting this person “I’ve had two years experience of this already” (please note….this was just two years of couple a (3) art shows the artist did) along with a “well I’ve had multiple conversations with professional artists who said...” blah blah fucking blah. In my head I’m like, “so what did you think I was doing for two years, painting trees with bears in the fricking woods while frolicking in the wind?” Yes, I know that I might not have much experience here in Belize and I am in no way saying experience doesn’t amount to anything, but does my two years of hard work not count for anything here. DOES IT NOT???

The BS doesn’t stop there. Constantly I’ve heard this, especially around musicians, “deh dah no real artist because deh fake, because deh dah sell out and deh only care bout money and fame, people only want get deh name out deh” blah blah. In my opinion, why should you care who is doing what? Take care of you. If you know you’re in it because you love it then do it, but don’t judge others on a life that you know nothing of. So what if people are in it for the money...
People need fih eat and guess what, you need money fih eat. What are you going to eat when you’re hungry…mud? Now stop me if you’ve already heard these echoing words of despair “dah dih govament no dih gih we nothing. Dah deh fih help we out.”

After hearing this over and over and over again, I realized something. If all of these things are getting to me, it must mean that I have some kind of fight left in me. I don’t want to just sit down and start throwing insults at people or complaining as to why the government is not helping, I want to get up and do my work; work that will inspire or change the way we see art. If we want to make a change in Belize, we have to start working together as a team. We have to stop insulting other artists and their choice of medium, we have stop thinking the other artist is the enemy, we have to be able to take and give constructive criticism. We have to start doing things for ourselves by ourselves. If the government doesn’t want to help, that’s their prerogative. Let’s move on and find another group to support us. Not everything has to be a constant fight. Those of us who are fighting I know your anger is because you are still alive and you want more; but how will we achieve more if we can’t work together. ANYTHING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH A TEAM. No one man stands alone to change the world; we all need a support team.

The more we begin to fight without cause, the more we will start to lose our faith in our future. Without faith we have no hope, and the minute you have no hope your soul leaves your body, leaving only a shell to represent you, a shell that stands where you once stood. And I don’t want to be no goddamn shell so grow up and let’s make some bloody mind boggling art stuff!! Shit! My point is people, sitting down and complaining about everything won’t ever help us change. Sitting down and whining when someone doesn’t want to support us, won’t ever help us to change.

There are a billion other people on this earth we can find to help and support us and once we start pulling our resources together and start working as a team, we will begin to see the change and movement we have been waiting for. I told you before about my experience in Taiwan not to brag about the things that I’ve done, but to show you that with understanding and teamwork, people from different backgrounds and walks of life and come together and put aside their differences to create something amazing. Don’t lose your faith…or you’ll become a ghost.
What the Solar System is made of

If you think about it, the earth is just a great big ball of dirt,
And we’re just creatures made of meat that live on the ball of dirt.
We eat green things that grow from the surface of dirt,
And we kill and eat other creatures.

The sun is just a great big ball of fire.
And to us creatures, it’s just a yellow circle on a blue canvas up high
That we can’t look at directly for too long
Or else the little white balls embedded in our skulls would start to burn.

The moon is just a great big ball of rock.
But this ball is special since it can hide some parts of itself.
On good nights it is a whole ball; on sad nights it is just a sliver of silver.
Sometimes it hides its face completely since we’re too repulsive to look at.

a.c.
"Scream your name hoping you can hear me"

Mariceli Mahitani
"There is no humane or legal justification for the way the Israeli Defense Forces are conducting this war. Israeli bombs, missiles, and artillery have pulverized large parts of Gaza, including thousands of homes, schools, and hospitals. More than 250,000 people have been displaced from their homes in Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinian noncombatants have been killed. Much of Gaza has lost access to water and electricity completely. This is a humanitarian catastrophe,"

Jimmy Carter

former President of the United States of America

In op-ed written for Foreign Policy, former US president accuses Israel of 'deliberate attacks on civilians' saying there was 'no humane or legal justification for the way the IDF are conducting this war.'

Published: 08.06.14, 08:52
My first week at home was wonderful, and I spent most of my time with my family in the village. I also decided to stop in at what would be my new office the following week to introduce myself to the small team. I walked in with my usual smiley self (I don't smile as much anymore), still infected with that warm Southern hospitality, and presented a pleasant greeting to the room. The young lady in the office gave me a very cold look from head to toe and made it very clear with lone body language that I would not be welcomed as her new director. Did my smile seem fake? It was sincere. Was it my clothes? They were modest, perhaps a bit too formal for the beach village? I learned very quickly that no matter what, I didn't stand a chance.

It was the first wart I would discover on the penis.

And then more warts began to appear.

No matter how much support and encouragement I received from my board members, most of whom were strong, assertive business people who had mastered the art of survival in this stinging environment, I felt it impossible to win in the wider community. I had entered a war zone. Since I had left for college in 2005 at the age of 18, the social fabric in this place had been ripped to shreds by a booming tourism and real estate industry, which had created fierce competition for economic opportunities and left the Peninsula vulnerable for more exploitation. The government under both administrations provided little regulation and corrupt ministers only looked out for their pockets and party supporters. There was little trust here, and I was blindsided, completely unprepared — no matter how many news stories I had read online. No journalist was covering these issues.

Placencia was no Spring Hill campus or Sweet Home Alabama, girlfriend! And no instructor at St. John's had warned me about what a Belizean could encounter at home following a stint at a college outside the country or how difficult it would be to be a part of the solution to the "brain drain crisis." The Placencia Peninsula quickly began to eat away at my spirit like rust on iron. Completely drained with the battle in my office to connect with my co-workers, I could find little energy to fight the bigger fight or extend my support anywhere else. Sorry kids, I forgot to give you awards again. Sorry cancer lady, I forgot to champion your cause this summer. I had switched on to survival mode. I became depressed, distraught, defeated. A visiting dermatologist told me that my face had broken out more than it ever did when I was a teenager because I was drowning in too much stress.

"You shouldn't be like this in Placencia," said my grandfather to me one night when I confided to him on the porch at his restaurant. "You shouldn't work so hard. You shouldn't have to try so hard." Well, he was a real take-it-easy kinda guy and lucky for him, my hard working grandmother had set him up rather well! It also helped that he was a bad-ass guitar player. He was a black Creole. He was Belizean. He killed the guitar. He was golden on all sides. Everyone loved Cleveland Berry. It was my board chairman who kept me hanging on. He saw great potential in me and pushed me not to give up. More than any other person, I didn't want to disappoint myself, and I trudged onward. There were several other incredible people who tried to encourage me too. They were mostly in their 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s. But sometimes it just didn't feel like enough when I was trying reach out to my age cohort.

"How could I let cruel hearts in this little place be so powerful? How could I let this bother me so much? It's just a sliver of land in a big, big world. There are lots of beautiful people in the world. What is wrong with me?! This should be easy!" I told myself this on many, many, many occasions.

The collision between the developing world and the developed world on this skinny penis had also created extremely uncomfortable racial tensions that I hardly ever experienced before – even in Alabama.

In November 2011, I had my first public date in the village with an Australian writer of European descent. He was a literature fanatic I had met on a night at one of the bars, and eventually taught me a few lifesaving tricks in the publishing program I used to put out the local paper. I was always a sucker for the creative types, and I was thrilled to meet someone I could finally connect with. We held hands as we walked down the Placencia main street and a tour guide yelled from a bar on
the side of the road: “Why don’t you try dating a black guy for a change?!” Everyone around burst out laughing at the bar. It was like a dark scene out of the mean kids table in Hollywood movies. The only other person I had dated in Placencia was my Belizean boyfriend before I left for college. He was mixed, but appeared white/fair-skinned, what have you, and I guess that was points off for me. The men of different races and ethnicities I saw while living in the States held no ground here. I felt as though maybe walking around with a chart of my dating history might be of some help.

I was embarrassed, and it was my very first experience encountering any kind of direct racial attack. Unlike me, thankfully, this gentleman, a seasoned world traveler found the incident rather unflinching. We spent the rest of our date discussing my reintegration difficulties at home and before he left Placencia to ultimately work in the Peace Corp in Malawi, Africa, he reminded me that I should never let myself get in too deep with the community. Stay on the sidelines, he said, to protect yourself. I cried when he left even though our little dalliance was only for a week.

I was fat, unhappy and tired, but I still stayed on the penis, even with all its nasty warts.

There was a heart wrenching and obvious segregation in the village, and I often found myself in strange situations where I felt like had to choose between groups of locals and expatriates. I hated it so much. I could feel it everywhere. In the grocery store. At the print shop. On the street. I was torn. I was paranoid. Going out was like walking on egg shells, and I had to drink myself silly to just let things go with the flow. Like I would anywhere, I gravitated towards like-minded individuals – people who enjoyed music like I did for starters. Those usually ended up being North American immigrants, unfortunately, not helping my case at all.

I remember enjoying some top-notch blues at one of the bars played by some expat and visiting musicians and completely letting myself go. The carefree girl I once was had been reborn and for a few minutes, all my inhibitions were gone until I caught the disapproving glares from a few Placencia-born locals standing by the rails. I couldn’t really enjoy myself for the rest of the night. My anxiety levels soared, and it made my stomach turn. Had I done something wrong? Was this out of line? Should I obey a certain behavior code? Am I being a dishonorable Belizean? I haven’t danced at the bar since.

Many times when I found myself hanging out with my fellow Belizeans, conversations ended up being about race and how much white people sucked. I grew sick of it, but I couldn’t ignore it. It was real, and I was always aware that it was not going to go away as long as no one tried to address the pressing issues creating these divisions. As long as there was no leader to bring people together in this village, on this peninsula, the venereal disease on this penis would fester. Instead, political leaders and their cronies on the Peninsula continued to worsen the divisions, bringing no real solutions to anything.

My social life and my work life became two endless battles of seeking acceptance and reaching common ground and being in my apartment or on the beach alone or drinking myself drunk at a bar or stuffing my face at a restaurant was my only real escape from it all.

I was deeply conflicted.

http://penisofbelize.wordpress.com/2014/07/14/warts-zone/
Junkie Artistes

Kyo D’Assassin

Lotta artists flying
more like jiving
their pens off the paper
sticking each other
lyrics, bullets
knives & gimmicks
chasing the stone
rolling from Everest
the soul of the crabs
emerging from hurt and hatred
reason why a lotta artists
in Belize have crabs
not below, but above
so every action, natural
the buzz, an actual
needles screwing veins
without Vaseline
running, running, running
running for another post,
a comment of validation
wrongs on a high
Y’all the best in ties
till they share plates
dipping into each other’s cookie jars
the sweet bitter to those
living in the aftermath
couple of shows elevate
to the point, where you feel like levitate
diseases gravitate
defining your murder rate
you take aim & shoot
destroying mirrors by shards
a part of you gone
every time you "go hard"
then again, many many
are Ray Charles
blind... a star & a cripple
greatness forgets you
like those who made you
History is and will always be
the pattern you overlooked
for you never read or wrote the book
Kyo D'Assassin is a P.O.M.E. (Product of My Environment). Influenced by the culture of everyday life he writes to provoke and spark conversations that are necessary for the survival of the Belizean minds. Inspiration comes from experiences both home and borrowed, mixed with innovation; his birth born from this flirtation. Art is the medium of the soul; the hieroglyphics of the tree mixing with the sands of time and flesh.
Land of the Free

Kyo D’Assassin

[Verse 1]
Oh land of the slaves
by the Carib Sea
Our manhood taken
our rights no liberty
Yes, pirates here linger
injustice run free
We complain
for this false sense of democracy
The blood that we shed
many souls go unaccounted
We go with the flow
or feel the jumper’s rod
By the lies of truth
all the rest got lost
We burn and burn
as hewers of wood

[Chorus]
All die, Belizeans
due to half mek plans
We fight each other
while foriegners tek di land
Drive back, the patriots
let tyrants run free
Land of the slaves
by the Carib Sea

[Verse 2]
Nature was raped
for its riches and gold
Destroying "Mounds" & Reefs
that's just how life goes
The fatherless children
bicker and more
behind closed doors, they plot
our heritage sold
From old Rio Hondo
to Temash Sarstoon
Our country brainwashed
by the propaganda rule
Keep watch on di borders
contraband run loose
This silent revolution
not far from bloom
When they claim the first thing they see is your face, this is what they mean.
Baffu

Do not sing “Amazing grace how sweet the sound” at my funeral
For the sound of slave songs, bleeding lashes and black burning ashes were never sweet
Do not say “In loving memory of,” for you shall remember me only as this.
Remember me for my rage and discomfort, and being disturbed and different in the society of
which I was amidst.

Speak of me for who I am
The 21st of September
The British clan
This heart was never stainless steel
And life revealed itself to me in epiphanies upon epiphanies upon epiphanies
And so I………I want to be remembered
As the drawer of overdue bills, Friday night clubs and overdosed pills
Speak of me as I am!
Gang scars, bullet shells
Little girl seeking refuge under beds
Six men lusting for head when I couldn’t live peacefully in my own………head

Tell my children
That I was virgin stains in the back seats
Liquor games and nappy mane
I was a black freak!
Tell them, I knew not how to love
But the oceans loved them
Tell them forgive me.…
For I know they watch from above.
Speak of me
As trickling blood, slain in white castles
Reincarnate to become higher
Breathing out blood red fire!
And I became this!
What you thought dragons didn’t exist?

Think of Kings and Queens and Harriet Tubman…. 
Perfectly written eulogies
I dream not of such a fucking thing.
Speak of me for who I am!
Part human and part something you can never understand….
I beg of you…..
Speak of me as Baffu.

---- Iyesha Ortiz
connect to our collaborators

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Image Factory Presents

THIRD EYE

Alyssa Craig  Briheda Haylock  Elise Arelie

Coming in November
Baffu2
an e magazine about art + writing + performance + culture from BELIZE

uploaded: 12:01am
1 september 2014

published by the Image Factory Art Foundation
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