

**Vous êtes ici (1) / You are here / Usted está aquí / Cé ici-là minm ou yé**

*The Creole language says ici-là (“here-there”) doubtless to extend the forces of “here” towards the infinite. It often insists on ici-là minm, (“right here there”), nowhere else but here which is nevertheless over there or up there (whence the Creole language gets là minm, “right there” meaning “right now, immediately”) as if to make a clean break between “here” and its near or far surroundings.* (2)

How do the artists of the Caribbean perceive this “nowhere else” which is theirs, but which remains an exotic and faraway “over there” whose location is vague to all but the natives? *During my successive visits to the United Kingdom, my friends ran through lists of innumerable exotic islands in an effort to remember where I lived, but all they could recall was that it was a tropical island somewhere, which they wouldn't be able to find on a map.* (3)

For those who come from these tropical islands, who live in these *islands in the sun* (4), Paradise has a different face: *The burden of the context, the burden of history, burden of the place of origin. It's tiresome to repeat it, all the more so because it's true, but it is the burden of being born in a small outlying region where one's personal sensitivity is hemmed in on all sides by ideologies, national myths, stereotypes, by all the complex expectations generated by what it means to be an artist from the Caribbean living in the Caribbean.* (5)

Christopher Cozier's drawings in the series *Tropical Nights*, variations on the theme of *being from and in the Caribbean*, communicate his perception in the manner of a personal diary with images, daily notes, stream of consciousness. What world do these images suggest? A disconcerting island? A sinister island? A funny island?

The works gathered for this exhibition entitled *Vous êtes ici [you are here]* are all the expression of a critical view. In the words of Christian Boltanski, *Art consists solely in asking questions, arousing emotions without giving any answers.* (6)

The artist's posture, his take on the world is today much more important than the quest for beauty. And this view that the artist has on the world is not neutral: it is the view of a thinking being who plays a part in this world.

As a result of the process of dematerialisation and intellectualisation of the work, the concept of the work becomes the work itself. The work is worked out mainly in the mental phase of its conception and today art is in perpetual evolution, permanently redefining itself, it practises heterogeneity, takes on a multitude of forms, uses a variety of new and incongruous materials, sometimes even becoming immaterial, as can be seen in the works gathered for this exhibition.

The growth of virtual communication and travel, the delocalisation of the works of the big museums are helping spread creolisation and encouraging dialogue. *Now we are at the stage of hybridising and globalising, everyone has several identities.* (7)

And when we talk about “us” and “here” we are also talking about “you” and “everywhere else”.

*Think globally and act locally. Act here at the same time as thinking about there, that is to say, make your action also a counter action, so that it enriches itself with its own doubting and permeates its surroundings.* (8)

**Dominique Brebion**  
**Aïca South Caribbean**

1 *Vous êtes ici* is the title of a work by **Marcos Lora Read** (Dominique Republicaine) - installation 200 x 200 - 2008

2 Glissant Edouard – *La saison unique* in *La Cohée du Lamentin*- Poétique V- NRF published by Gallimard- 2005 p.31

3 **Dixon Rex** – *Where to find me* in *Small Axe, a Caribbean journal of criticism* n°29 – July 2009 - Duke University Press  
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4 *Island in the sun* is the title of an installation by **Alex Burke** (Martinique) – installation : photocopies, sticky letter, packing cartons and various objects – 1997  
'Island in the Sun' was first an English novel by Alec Waugh and then made famous in the american film of the same title starring Harry Belafonte in the 1950s.

5. **Cozier Christopher** in *Working Notes: on Christopher Cozier* – interview by **Nicholas Loughlin** in the exhibition catalog for Little gestures from the Tropical Nights series – 2007

6 **Christian Boltanski** *Monumenta 2010* Grand Palais – Paris – from 13/01 to 21/02 2010

7 **Buci – Glucksmann Christine** *Autre chose* exhibition catalog, Contemporary Creation Centre, Flers, France  
(9 January / 7 March 2010)

8 **Glissant Edouard** – *La saison unique* in *La Cohée du Lamentin-* Poétique V- NRF published by Gallimard- 2005 p.31