

contributors

*Dialogues in Caribbean
Modernisms*

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University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras

The image features a large, stylized graphic composed of the letters 'S' and '2'. The 'S' is rendered in a thin red outline, while the '2' is a solid, thick red shape. The word 'Contributors' is centered within the 'S' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Contributors

JASON ALLEN-PAISANT is a Jamaican scholar and multi-award-winning poet. He is the author of two critically acclaimed books of poetry. *Thinking with Trees* won the 2022 OCM Bocas Prize for Poetry and was shortlisted for the Michael Murphy Memorial Prize. His second book of poems, *Self-Portrait as Othello*, a Poetry Book Society Choice, won the UK's two most prestigious poetry awards for 2023—the Forward Prize and T.S. Eliot Prize. It is one of the rare books to have accomplished this feat. Professor of Critical Theory and Creative Writing at the University of Manchester and Associate Editor of *Callaloo*, he has recently edited the Penguin Modern Classics edition of Aimé Césaire's *Return to My Native Land* and written the introduction to the work. His other books include the philosophical treatise *Engagements with Aimé Césaire: Thinking with Spirits* (Oxford University Press, 2024). His collaborative projects include *Natural World*, with visual artists John Edmonds and David Hartt, and curator Nathaniel M. Stein; *Dandy Style*, a performance commission from the Manchester Art Gallery; and *Pantemporal Intimacies*, commissioned by Lux Moving Image (London). His nonfiction book, *The Possibility of Tenderness*, will be published by Hutchinson Heinemann in 2025. Jason lives in Leeds with his partner and two children.

DIÓGENES BALLESTER was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, in 1956. He is a visual artist, self-described an *Arteologist*, writer and educator who, after living in New York (El Barrio of Harlem) for over 40 years, returned to Puerto Rico. In his work, Ballester uncovers ancestral knowledge and cosmology through the act of researching cultural objects and symbols. He appropriates and repurposes those symbols and objects

into his multimedia work, which comprises sketches, paintings, assemblages, drawings, prints and electronic media, reflecting on what these have to offer our current and future world. He integrates the different elements into installations, designed to reconfigure and re-contextualize meaning and provide altar or chapel-like spaces for reflection on the layers of history and culture embedded in the work. The installations become a method of accessing the past and re-interpreting the present in a Puerto Rican, trans-Caribbean, and transnational dialogue. Ballester's work has been exhibited in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the United States, France, China and other countries in hundreds of galleries and museums, some of which, like the National Museum of African American History and Culture and The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., have included his work in their permanent collections. He has received numerous honors for his artistic work. Recently, he received the Center for Creative Economy Grant to continue building his legacy project *Casa de Arte y Cultura de La Playa de Ponce* in 2022; and *Para La Naturaleza* Grant for conducting a research project which resulted in a multimedia installation entitled *Arteology: Chapel for Reflection* in 2023.

DANTAÉ GAREE ELLIOTT is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at New York University. Her dissertation, "Barrel Poetics," examines barrel culture within the Caribbean diaspora and the barrel's representation in contemporary Caribbean art. She was Co-Director of the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute Summer Seminar for their Curatorial Fellowship class 2022. She is an editorial assistant for *Small Axe*. She is also a featured artist in volume 04 of *Forgotten Lands, Currents of Africa*, and copy editor for volume 05, *The Haunted Tropics*. She was the spring 2023 Mellon Fellow at Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at NYU and co-curator of the first solo exhibition of Vincentian photographer Nadia Huggins, *Coral & Ash*, at the KJCC, New York University. She is currently a 2024-2025 doctoral fellow at the Center for the Humanities and a Dean's Dissertation fellow at NYU.

WIGBERTSON JULIAN ISENIA is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam, focusing on gender, sexuality, and postcolonial contexts, particularly in the Dutch Caribbean. He has published in journals such as *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies* (Dutch Journal for Gender Studies), *Feminist Review*, and *Small Axe*, and contributed to the *Routledge Companion to Sexuality and Colonialism*. His monograph, *The Question of Dutch Politics as a Matter of Theater*, was published in 2017. His article “Looking for Kambrada: Sexuality and Social Anxieties in the Dutch Colonial Archive, 1882–1923” received an honorable mention for the Gregory Sprague Prize from the Committee on LGBT History. His dissertation, “Queer Sovereignities: Cultural Practices of Sexual Citizenship in the Dutch Caribbean,” also received an honorable mention from the Caribbean Studies Association. Beyond academia, he co-curated the exhibitions “Nos tei” about queer of color organizing and “House of HIV: The Stories Behind 40 Years of Community Initiatives.”

ERICA MOIAH JAMES is an art historian, curator, and assistant professor at the University of Miami. Her scholarship centers on indigenous, modern, and contemporary art of the Caribbean Americas and African Diaspora. In 2022 she curated *Didier William: nou kite tout sa dèyè* for the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, and *Nari Ward: Home of the Brave*, Vilcek Foundation, New York City. She is the recipient of grants from The Warhol Foundation, The Mellon Foundation, and The Terra Foundation, and is a research associate at the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Center, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She is the author of “Decolonizing Time: Nineteenth Century Haitian Portraiture and the Critique of Anachronism in Caribbean Art” (*NKA*, 2019), “The Black Sublime: René Peña’s Archangel” in *The Visual Life of Social Affliction* (2019 catalogue), and the book *After Caliban: Caribbean Art in the Global Imaginary* (forthcoming 2025).

RÉGINE MICHELLE JEAN-CHARLES is the Dean's Professor of Culture and Social Justice as well as Director of Africana Studies at Northeastern University and a professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. A Black feminist literary scholar who works at the intersections of race, gender and justice from a global perspective, her scholarship and teaching include work on Black France, African diasporic literatures, Caribbean Studies, Haiti, and the Haitian diaspora. She is the author of three books and numerous publications that have appeared in books, edited volumes, and peer-reviewed journals. Her most recent book, *Looking for Other Worlds: Black Feminism and Haitian Fiction* (University of Virginia Press, 2022) received an Honorable Mention for the Modern Language Association's the James Russell Lowell Prize. Jean-Charles is currently at work on two book projects—*The Rape Culture Syllabus* is under contract with Columbia University Press, and *Tifi at the Center: Holding Haitian Girlhood*.

REMY JUNGERMAN was born in 1959. He lives and works in New York and Amsterdam. He attended the Academy for Higher Arts and Cultural Studies in Paramaribo, Suriname, before moving to Amsterdam where he studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. In his work Jungerman explores the intersection of pattern and symbol in Surinamese Maroon culture, the larger African diaspora, and 20th century Modernism. Placing fragments of Maroon textiles and other materials found in the African diaspora—the kaolin clay used in several religious traditions or the nails featured in Nkisi Nkondi power sculpture—in direct contact with materials and imagery drawn from European art traditions, Jungerman presents a peripheral vision that enriches our perspective on art history. Jungerman represented the Netherlands at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. In 2021-2022 he had a solo show at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and in 2022 he received the Heineken Prize for art.

LORETTA COLLINS KLOBAH is a full professor of Caribbean and Asian literature and film, creative writing, and medical humanities at University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. *The Twelve Foot Neon Woman* received the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean poetry, and *Ricantations* was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. She co-translated and co-edited the anthology of Caribbean women poets *The Sea Needs No Ornament/ El mar no necesita ornamento*, which received a PEN Translation Award in Britain and a Caribbean Reader's Choice Award. It was also named the Summer Translation Choice by the Poetry Book Society. Her scholarly essays have been published in journals and anthologies.

MAFALDA NICOLAS MONDESTIN is a Haitian visual artist born in the United States in 1982, and raised there and in Haiti and Canada. She studied graphic design at Valencia Community College in Florida. In 2012 she moved to Haiti where she shifted her focus to the fine arts by pursuing her practice full time, all the while working with non-profit art organizations such as AfricAmérica and Le Centre d'Art. Through mixed media paintings, collages and prints, her current body of work explores the themes of migration, belonging and memory. Nicolas Mondestin has exhibited in Haiti, the United States, Martinique and France. She has participated in art residencies in France at the Cité Internationale de Paris and at the *Taller Experimental de Gráfica de la Habana in Cuba*. She currently lives in the Dominican Republic.

JEAN "BACO" ORTIZ was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, in 1987. Popularly known as Baco Ortiz, he is a visual artist and educator. He obtained a B.A. in Painting from the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (PUCPR), Ponce Campus. In 2017, he held his first solo exhibition titled "(G)entes" at the Trinitaria Gallery in Ponce. Ortiz's oil paintings incorporate glazes, a technique that reveals other traditions not historically associated with fine art. By doing so, he blurs the boundaries between fine arts and popular arts, asserting that a people's true history lies beneath the official narratives of the privileged classes. Beyond his artistic endeavors, Ortiz has been an active

community leader in the Bélgica neighborhood of Ponce. He has created murals for various events, including “Ponce Renace,” “Pa’ el Barrio,” “Ponce es Ley,” “Yaucromatic,” “Píntate pal Oeste,” and “Guánica Color y Vida.” His mural work extends to foundations and private entities such as Centro D.I.V.A., Amnesty International, and the Culebra Foundation.

VANESSA PÉREZ-ROSARIO is a translator and professor at Queens College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Her teaching and research interests include U.S. Latinx and Caribbean literatures and cultures, transnational feminisms, poetics, critical archive studies and friendship. She is the author of *Becoming Julia de Burgos: The Making of a Puerto Rican Icon* (2014) also available in Spanish, *Julia de Burgos: La creación de un ícono puertorriqueño* (2022). This book is the winner of the Silver Award, Best Latina Themed Book, and Honorable Mention, Dolores Huerta Best Cultural and Community Themed Book, 25th International Latino Book Awards, 2023. Her translations have appeared in *The Nation*, *sx salon*, and *Kweli Journal*. She is the translator of *Boat People* (Cardboard House Press 2021) by Mayra Santos-Febres, which received Honorable Mention for the Best Bilingual Poetry Book, in the 25th International Latino Book Awards, 2023. She is the editor of a forthcoming critical edition titled *I Am My Own Path: Selected Works of Julia de Burgos* (University of Texas Press 2025). She has received awards from the Woodrow Wilson and Mellon foundations, the American Association of University Women, and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. She is managing editor of *Small Axe*.

JERRY PHILOGENE is Associate Professor and Director of the Black Studies Program at Middlebury College where she specializes in interdisciplinary American cultural history, art history, and visual arts of the Caribbean and the African diaspora with an emphasis on the Francophone Caribbean. Her publications

have appeared in peer-reviewed journals and exhibition catalogues. Dr. Philogene is also an independent curator. In 2023, she co-organized with Dr. Katherine Smith the *Myrlande Constant: The Work of Radiance*, an exhibition and accompanying catalogue on the contemporary textile works of Haitian artist Myrlande Constant at the Fowler Museum, UCLA, 2023. She is the recipient of a 2020 Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant for her current book manuscript “The Socially Dead and Improbable Citizen: Visualizing Haitian Humanity and Visual Aesthetics.” She is also writing a monograph on Haitian modernist painter, Luce Turnier.

CARMEN HAYDÉE RIVERA is a professor in the Department of English, College of Humanities, at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus. She holds a Ph.D. in American Literature, with an emphasis on Multiethnic Literatures of the United States, from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Her teaching and research interest include Diasporic Puerto Rican Writers in the US, Contemporary US Latinx Literature, Literature of Caribbean Migration, and Women’s Studies. She has served as Interim Chair, and Graduate Program Coordinator. Her publications include two co-edited collections of essays, *Cuba and Puerto Rico: Transdisciplinary Approaches to History, Literature, and Culture* (2023) and *Writing Off the Hyphen: New Perspectives on the Literature of the Puerto Rican Diaspora* (2008). She is also the author of a critical biography, *Border Crossings and Beyond: The Life and Works of Sandra Cisneros* (2009), as well as a collection of interviews, *Diasporic Journeys: Interviews with Puerto Rican Writers in the United States* (2023). Additional critical articles under her authorship appear in collections and journals such as *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Fiction*, *The Ethnic Studies Review*, *CENTRO Journal*, *Camino Real*, *Revista Op-Cit*, *Revista Umbral*, *Pasaporte Latino*, *New West Indian Guide*, *Latino/aResearch Review*, *Caribbean Studies*, *Diálogo*, and *Sargasso*.

ZAIRA O. RIVERA CASELLAS is a critical essayist and university professor in the Department of Hispanic Studies of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus. She currently serves as interim director of the Graduate Program in Translation in the Faculty of Humanities. She has published articles on literature and racial identities in journals such as the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, *Cincinnati Romance Review*, *Revista Ártemis*, *Sociocriticism*, and *Revista Iberoamericana*. She has collaborated on the anthologies *Escrituras en contrapunto: estudios y debates para una historia crítica de la literatura puertorriqueña* (2015) and *Contrapunto de género y raza* (2005). Her book *Bajo la sombra del texto, la crítica y el silencio: discurso racial en Puerto Rico* (2015) brings together critical essays on race and literature in Puerto Rico. She is now researching and working on a manuscript on racial representations, national imaginaries, and gender from an Afro-diasporic perspective.

ROQUE RAQUEL SALAS RIVERA is a Puerto Rican poet, educator, and translator of trans experience. His honors include being named Poet Laureate of Philadelphia, the Premio Nuevas Voces, and the inaugural Ambroggio Prize. Among his six poetry books are *lo terciario/ the tertiary* (Noemi, 2019), longlisted for the National Book Award and winner of the Lambda Literary Award, and *while they sleep (under the bed is another country)* (Birds LLC, 2019), which inspired the title for *no existe un mundo poshuracán* at the Whitney Museum. He coedited the anthologies *Puerto Rico en mi corazón* (Anomalous, 2019) and *La piel del arrecife: Antología de poesía trans puertorriqueña* (La Impresora, 2023). His translations include *The Rust of History* (Circumference, 2022), longlisted for ALTA's National Translation Award, and *The Book of Conjurations* by Irizelma Robles, winner of the Sundial Literary Translation Award. In 2025, Graywolf Press will publish his speculative epic *Algarabía*. Roque currently teaches in the College of General Studies and serves the needs of a fierce cat named Pietri.

MAYRA SANTOS-FEBRES was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico 1966. She studied literature at the University of Puerto Rico and a Ph. D. at Cornell University. She has been a visiting scholar at Rutgers (1992), Cornell (1994) and Harvard University (2004) as well as Complutense University in Spain (2013), Autonomous University of México, at Yucatán campus (2008) and Leipzig University in Holland (2005). She co-created the Creative Writing Program for the University of Puerto Rico, and founded and directed The Word/ Festival de la Palabra, the most internationally recognized Literary Festival in Puerto Rico (2010-2009). Content Coordinator of Interdisciplinary and Multicultural Institute at the UPR, Mayra Santos-Febres is currently the Principal Investigator for the development of University of Puerto Rico's Afro-Diasporic and Race Studies Program, which has been recently awarded with a Mellon Foundation grant for academic diversification. As a writer, Mayra Santos-Febres has won many international prizes and recognition, such as the Letras de Oro Award (Spain, 1994) the Radio France Juan Rufo Award (1998), the Premio Primavera Award, Spain (2011) for her novel *Nuestra Señora de la Noche* and the John S. Simmon Guggenheim Fellowship (2015) as well as the Rockefeller Bellagio Center Residency (2018). Her literary work has been translated into French, English, Italian, Rumanian, Korean, Portuguese and Icelandic. She has published the poetry collections *Anamú y manigua* (1990), *El orden escapado* (1991), *Boat People* (1994), *Tercer Mundo* (2004), *Lecciones de renuncia* (2021), *Huracanada* (2018). Her publications in short fiction include *Pez de vidrio y otros cuentos*, *El cuerpo correcto*, *Un pasado posible y Mujeres violentas*. She has also published the novels *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2001), *Cualquier miércoles soy tuya* (2002), *Fe en disfraz* (2009), *Nuestra Señora de la noche* (2006) and *La amante de Gardel* (2015), and the essay *Tratado de Medicina Natural para Hombres Melancólicos* (2011) and *Sobre piel y papel*. In 2019 she won the Prix Nationale de Litterature de l'Academie de Pharmacie in Paris, France for *La amante de Gardel*.

DAVID SCOTT teaches at Columbia University, New York, where he is the Ruth and William Lubic Professor in the Department of Anthropology. He is the author of seven books, *Formations of Ritual: Colonial and Anthropological Discourses on the Sinhala Yaktovil* (Minnesota, 1994), *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton, 1999), *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Duke, 2004), *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* (Duke, 2014), and *Stuart Hall's Voice: Intimations of an Ethics of Receptive Generosity* (Duke, 2017), *Irreparable Evil: An Essay in Moral and Reparatory History* (Columbia, 2024), and (with Orlando Patterson), *The Paradox of Freedom: A Biographical Dialogue* (Polity, 2023), and co-editor of *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and his Interlocutors* (Stanford, 2007). He is currently at work on two book projects—the first is a biography of Stuart Hall; and the second is a reconsideration of question of reparation and revolution through the work of Walter Rodney. Scott is the founder and editor of the journal *Small Axe* (www.smallaxe.net), and director of the Small Axe Project. Over the past decade, he has directed a number of visual arts exhibition projects: *Caribbean Queer Visualities* (Outburst Queer Arts Festival, Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast [11 November 2016—7 January 2017]; and Transmission Gallery, Glasgow [18 February 2017—25 March 2017]); *The Visual Life of Social Affliction* (National Art Gallery, Nassau, The Bahamas [22 August 2019—10 November 2019]; Little Haiti Cultural Center Art Gallery [6 December 2019—28 February 2020]; and TENT, Rotterdam [10 July 2020—27 September 2020]), and *Pressure*, the Kingston Biennial 2022 (26 June—31 December 2022). The Small Axe Project is currently engaged in a series of interventions around the theme of Caribbean Modernism (see: www.smallaxe.net/projects).

ROBERTA STODDART was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1963. In Australia, she obtained her undergraduate Diploma in Visual Arts at the Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, and post-graduate Diploma in Visual Arts at the Sydney College of Art in Sydney. She currently lives and works in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Her paintings have been described as brave, dense, bold, thoroughly executed, and deeply felt. Intense and disturbing, they stimulate questions about our collective prejudices, our psychological spaces, and our notions of belonging. She has published two books, *Seamless Spaces* (2000) and *The Storyteller* (2007), and produced seven solo exhibitions, among them *Domestic Harmony* (Grosvenor Galleries, Kingston, 1995); *Seamless Spaces* (Caribbean Contemporary Arts, 2000); *In the Flesh* (National Museum and Art Gallery, Port of Spain, 2007); *Indigo* and *The Tear Catcher* (both at Y Gallery, Port of Spain, 2014 and 2018, respectively). She has participated in important local, regional, and international group shows, including *The Third Biennial of Painting of the Caribbean and Central America* (Dominican Republic, 1996); *Lips, Sticks and Marks* (Barbados and Trinidad, 1998), a groundbreaking Caribbean travelling exhibition of work by seven women; *Políticas de la Diferencia: Arte iberoamericano* (Recife, Brazil; Buenos Aires, Argentina, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City; Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico; Chicago Cultural Center; and Valencia, Spain, 2001/2002, curated by Kevin Power); *A Suitable Distance, Impressions of Trinidad by Five Artists* (Soft Box Studios, Port of Spain, 2006); *Three Painters* (128 Gallerie, Kingston, 2008, curated by Susanne Fredricks); and *Self-Consciousness* (Werner Gallery, Berlin, 2010, curated by Hilton Als and Peter Doig). In 2021 she participated in Artsy's Atlantic World Art Fair on the Suzie Wong Presents platform, and in 2022, *Pressure*, the Kingston Biennial (National Gallery of Jamaica, curated by David Scott). She has received the Life of Jamaica Art Scholarship (1991), as well as a Peoples' Choice prize (1999) at the Thirtieth Festival International de la Peinture, in Cagnes-sur Mer, France.

MARÍA ELBA TORRES is a critic, curator, historian, and professor. She has a doctorate in History from the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, as well as a master's degree in Ibero-American Letters from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. She has taught at universities in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the United States, principally on Afro-Puerto Rican culture. She is the co-director of the project *Tiznando el país: visualidades y representaciones*, a visual art, transdisciplinary and anti-racist education project funded by the Mellon Foundation.

ÉVELYNE TROUILLOT lives in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and is a retired teacher of the French department at the Université d'État d'Haïti. She works now as a translator and editor. Trouillot has published four books of short stories. In 2004 she received the Prix de la romancière francophone du Club Soroptimist de Grenoble for her first novel, *Rosalie l'infâme*. In 2005 Trouillot's first piece for the theater, *Le bleu de l'île*, received the Beaumarchais award from ETC Caraïbe. Trouillot has also published four books of poetry in French and in Creole. Her latest book of poetry *Il faut parfois chanter* was published in 2022 (Editions Bruno Doucey, France). Her novel *La mémoire aux abois* (Éditions Hoëbeke 2010) presents a compelling view of the dictatorship in Haiti and received the prestigious award Le prix Carbet de la Caraïbe et du Tout-Monde in December 2010. Her novel *Désirée Congo* (Cidihca 2020) presents a diversity of characters in the final years of the Haitian Revolution. Her latest novel *Les jumelles de la rue Nicolas* (Editions Project-iles, France 2022) unfolds around two young women willing to find some happiness in a context of social prejudice, precarity and turmoil. Trouillot has been an invited participant at many academic conferences and has contributed to numerous journals and periodicals in Haiti, France, South and North America. Trouillot's work has been translated into English, German, Italian, Catalan, Portuguese and Spanish. After the 2010 earthquake Trouillot and her siblings funded the Anne-Marie Morisset Cultural Center to help promote literature and culture to disadvantaged youth.