

# Cover Art

## “They Say We Can’t Breathe Underwater”

Natalie Wood

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They say we can’t breathe underwater is a photoshopped image of a 2022 Toronto Carnival Individual Category Costume I co-designed and performed depicting Yemayá, the Orisha who birthed the seas. The photo, taken at Toronto's Lakeshore is digitally immersed in the Atlantic Ocean 's Middle Passage, and superimposed is a swimmer honoring the journey, reminding us that we, descendants of the the Atlantic slave trade continue to breathe in unbreathable circumstances.

In *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*, Jacqui Alexander writes,

Yemayá holds the crown, having enabled the Crossing...She has assumed the task of transforming what we most need to learn from the Crossing into what we most need to learn about ourselves. *Pedagogies of the Sacred are pedagogies of Crossing.* (Alexander, 2005, p.329).

**Natalie Wood** is an award-winning Trinidadian-born, Tkaronto-based visual and media artist. Her multimedia artwork cohabits the areas of popular culture, education and historical research and explores her fascination with counter-narratives, Caribbean folk tales, healing cultures and icons that liberate Black and Queer communities. Her practice includes painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, video, and performance, and extends into her work as a curator, educator, and community-based queer activist. She is presently completing a research creation project for her PhD focused on Black Queer Resistance in the performance of Blue Devil mas.

Wood is a founder of the Blue Devil Posse, Co-conspirator in the Blue Sea Devil Moko Jumbie Mas Camp, co-founder of the Environmental and Urban Change Black Caucus at York University, a fellow at Black Lives Matter's Wildseed Centre for Art and Activism, and as a George Brown College (GBC) Professor, she has been a Black Futures consultant and co-founder of the GBC Social Innovation Hub. She is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art.

Selected awards include a SSHRC grant (2021), Canada Council Creation Grant 2020, several York University, Ontario Graduate Scholarships and Fellowships, a Black Leadership Award from the Black Student Success Network at GBC 2017, Community Based Research Award of Merit from the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives & the Wellesley Institute 2007, the New Pioneers Award for contribution to Arts and Culture 2006, and the City of York Civic Recognition Award 1997 for using the Arts to support marginalized communities, a NourbeSe Philip Arts recognition grant along with numerous grants and awards from Toronto, Ontario and Canada Arts Council.

# Contributors

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## Keisha Bell-Kovacs

Keisha Bell-Kovacs is a musician and third year PhD student in ethnomusicology in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design.

## Vindra (Vanessa) Moonilal

Vindra (Vanessa) Moonilal is a PhD student in the Department of Humanities at York University. Her research interest is in first-generation Indo-Canadian Caribbean biographical narratives.

## Whitney-Ann Patrick

Whitney-Ann Patrick is a second-year Master's student in the graduate program in Communication and Culture at York University. She holds a bachelor's degree in Communication, Culture, and Film Studies from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine. Her current research focuses on the digitisation of Carnival Culture and the implications for Trinbagonians and members of the Trinidadian diaspora. Her research reflects a commitment to elucidating the evolving dynamics of cultural identity and communication in the digital age.

## Tka Pinnock

Tka C. Pinnock is a PhD candidate in the Department of Politics, and a Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean at York University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of feminist political economy, political ecology, globalization, and critical development studies where she explores the everyday politics of "life- work." Her dissertation project explores the ways in which the life-work of marginalized workers is re/shaped by and in response to contemporary economic development processes, using the tourism sector in Jamaica as a case study. Pinnock's community work also gives rise to an interest in diaspora studies and community-based research.

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## Nastassia S. Pratt

Nastassia Pratt is a recent graduate of the MES-Planning in the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change Studies, with scholarly interests in public space planning, open and recreational space planning, and spatial justice. Nastassia is also an accomplished artist and curator.

## Odeimin Runners (Adrian Kahgee and Debbie Ebanks Schlums)

The Odeimin Runners is a collective of Ogimaakwe—women warriors, Indigenous and Caribbean—inspired by the traditional teachings of the strawberry or “heartberry.” Together, members Adrian Kahgee (Saugeen First Nation) and Debbie Ebanks Schlums (Turtle Island/Jamaica) with Rebeka Tabobondung (Wasauksing First Nation) exhibited works at the Durham Art Gallery, Agnes Etherington Gallery and Nuit Blanche.

## Arshad Suliman

Arshad Suliman is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Toronto. He is a 2023 Pierre Elliot Trudeau Scholar and holds the prestigious Canadian Graduate Scholarship to Honour Nelson Mandela. He completed his BA and MA in History, and obtained a Certificate in Black Canadian Studies at York University. His doctoral project uses oral history methodology to explore the role of Black Canadians in transnational liberation movements in Southern Africa.

