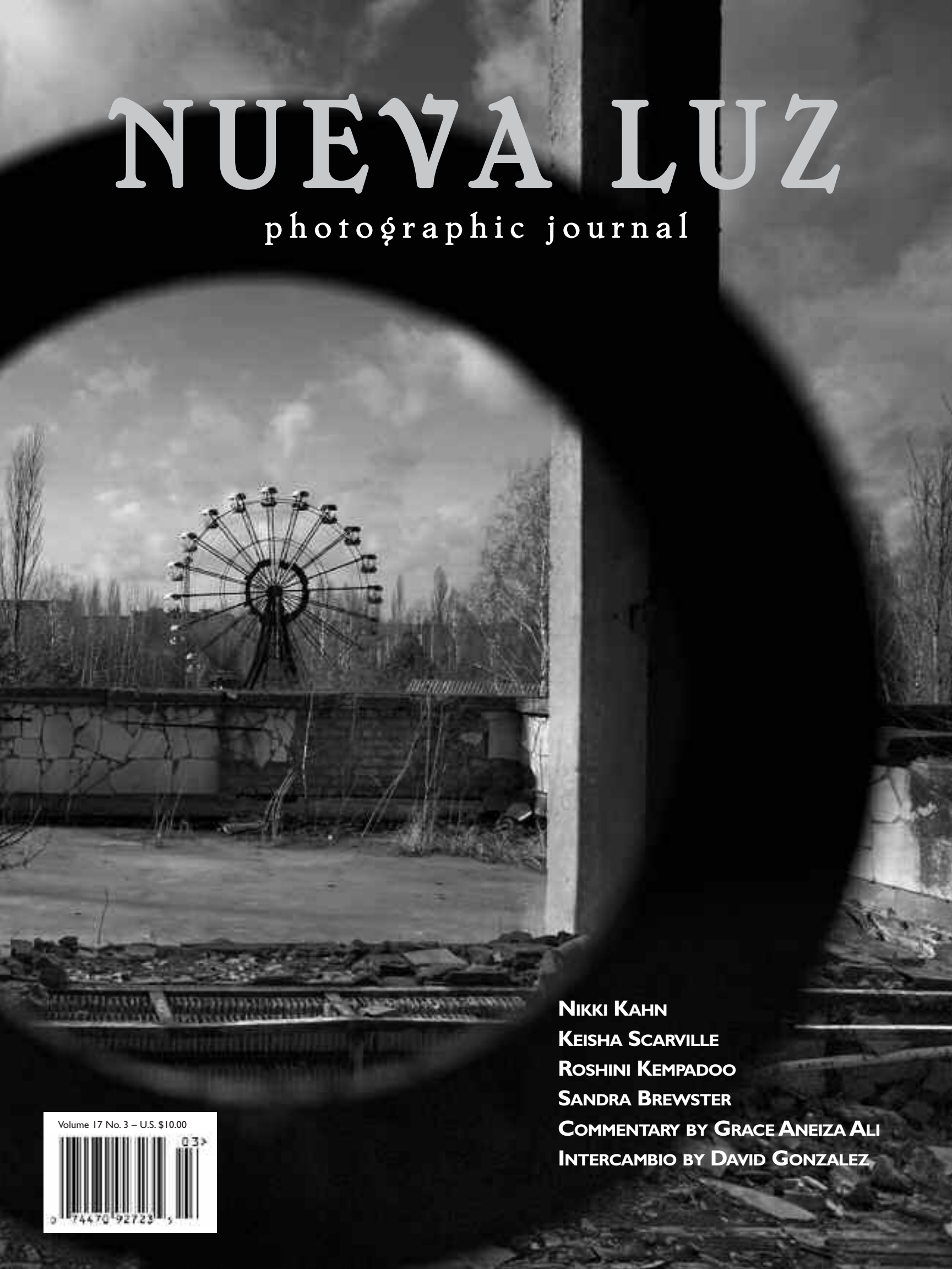


NUEVA LUZ

photographic journal



NIKKI KAHN

KEISHA SCARVILLE

ROSHINI KEMPADOO

SANDRA BREWSTER

COMMENTARY BY GRACE ANEIZA ALI

INTERCAMBIO BY DAVID GONZALEZ

Volume 17 No. 3 - U.S. \$10.00



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Terry Boddie, *School Days, Residue of Memory, series, 2000/2007.*

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NUEVA LUZ

photojournal volume 17:3

Table of Contents

Editorial page 1
 Commentary by Grace Aneiza Ali . page 2–5
 Niki Kahn page 6–15
 Keisha Scarville page 16–25
 Roshini Kempadoo page 26–31
 Sandra Brewster page 32–35
 Intercambio page 36–40

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Cover: **Nikki Kahn**, *Untitled, Chernobyl: A Bleak Landscape* series, 2011. Archival pigment print, 9 x 14". Courtesy *The Washington Post*



© Self-portrait

Ever pick up a magazine you haven't seen in a while and think, "wow, I've really missed this"?

I seem to have that experience often these days, even with some of my favorites. I don't subscribe to as many anymore because I am usually too busy to read them (which makes me feel guilty), while also trying to be environmentally conscious. And then another part of me assumes I can catch up with the *New Yorker* or *Utne Magazine* at the dentist's office or at a friend's. But that's the problem with complacency: you expect things to be around forever.

Being an editor and publisher, that complacency and guilt is very hard to admit – but it also allows me to deeply appreciate the courage of those publications brave enough to transform themselves in order to remain relevant and accessible. I also feel the pain of those that have had to close their doors.

Nueva Luz will soon be among the transformed, so expect some big changes. We're working on our web redesign now, and the magazine is next. But better yet, I hope you will participate in the changes as we explore where the magazine fits in your life and the artworld. Without your eyes on these pages, the work of these artists might as well be rendered powerless.

As far as we know, *Nueva Luz* is still one of the few magazines that pays its featured artists, and is the only journal dedicated to photo-based artists of color in the U.S. One would think this is a specialized enough niche to recruit unending sponsorship, grants and subscriptions (especially with the country's changing demographics)... but the truth is, many of you might be in the same boat I admitted to above.

I hope you'll take action: renew and take a moment to tell us what *Nueva Luz* means to you, and share your suggestions. Letters sent to info@enfoco.org will be shared with our board, funders and featured via our social media platforms; and if you renew for two years (or make a \$50 or more donation), you'll also be entered for a chance to win a print from our Print Collectors Program.

The artists need you... and here you have a chance to make a real difference in ensuring a more equitable photographic history.

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Miriam Romais,
 Editor & Publisher

A GUYANA WORLD VIEW:

PHOTOGRAPHERS KEISHA SCARVILLE, NIKKI KAHN, ROSHINI KEMPADOO, AND SANDRA BREWSTER

by Grace Aneiza Ali

Although geographically located in the Amazon region on the northern coast of South America, the country of Guyana is more culturally aligned with the Anglophone Caribbean Islands because of a shared history of over 200 years of British colonization. Today many contemporary depictions of Guyana, whether via the image or the written word, continue to center on the exotic, the colonial, and the touristic. Assembled here are four Guyanese women photographers, **Keisha Scarville**, **Nikki Kahn**, **Roshini Kempadoo**, and **Sandra Brewster**, whose artistic visions and portfolios work to counter this historic malpractice. These women engage ongoing conversations with Guyana and its vast diaspora: the country has a population of over 750,000 and an estimated 1,000,000 citizens living outside its borders. Their Guyanese roots, some of them were born in the country and some were born outside of Guyana to parents with Guyanese heritage, have led them to current home-bases in New York City, Washington, D.C., London, and Toronto, respectively—a reflection of the far reaches of the diaspora and the notion that there are currently more Guyanese living overseas than in the nation itself.

Although widely accomplished and awarded—within this inter-generational quartet, for example, is a Pulitzer-prize winner—the work of most Guyanese women photographers remains largely unknown on the world stage. It is this obscurity that fueled a curation of their work for this issue of *Nueva Luz*. Despite their crisscrossing of borders—geographic, ethnic, and psychic ones—these photographers return to Guyana’s soil often. They each remain personally and professionally invested in their homeland and share a sense of responsibility toward it.

At first glance, **Keisha Scarville’s** *Passport* series is charged with socio-political meaning—a commentary on black male identity, a precursor to the criminal mug shot, and a visual editorial about immigration policies. However, at the heart of Keisha’s intention is simply and poignantly a daughter’s attempt to understand her father.

Keisha Scarville is first-generation American. Born to a Guyanese father and mother, she spent her childhood raised in a Brooklyn community, but within the walls of her home, her experience was a Guyanese-centered one. Her parents maintained their connection to Guyana, returning often and taking their children with them. For Keisha, *Guyanese-ness* is both a lived experience and an observed one.

The *Passport* series pays homage to her father Keith Scarville—not as he is, but as he was. Indeed, the past is heavily present in the image. What Keisha sees in this singular passport photo—it’s signs of age and decay visible via its yellowing tones, frayed edges, and a faint timestamp on its right corner—is a “young man frozen in the distant past.” The moment of time captured in this image is 1955: pre-independence Guyana, a time when the British colony was rife with political turmoil and ethnic conflicts, yet primed for transition. Keith is sixteen years old living in British Guiana as the country was known during its colonial rule. Even at a young sixteen, he was committed to witnessing a world beyond British Guiana’s borders. He would get that chance via a job on a cargo ship. By 1968, two years after Guyana gained its independence, Keith would find his way to Brooklyn, New York where he eventually took on the blessing and the burden of new roles: an immigrant in the United States, a young black man witnessing America’s civil rights era, a new husband and father.

These are the roles that Keisha knows well; the person she doesn’t know is the one posing in the passport portrait. There is a mysterious allure that envelopes the image, one that is both heightened and downplayed in Keisha’s various treatments, which include layering, collaging, distorting, scratching, damaging, and superimposing the portrait. For Keisha, each reinterpretation of the photo speaks to a particular nuance in their father-daughter relationship. She confronts notions of femininity and masculinity by rendering her father’s lips a blood red in one interpretation. She engages ideas of invisibility, erasure, and censorship—both his and hers—by using white-out to paint over Keith’s eyes and mouth, essentially blinding and muting the subject. She replaces his face and neck with sandpaper in one treatment, and in another, completely scratches out the contents of the image with a knife using cross-hatch patterns—aggressive acts that result in a ghostly outline of Keith’s presence.

“The portrait,” says Okwui Enwezor, “is always an event of momentary duration.”¹ Keisha’s artistic manipulations of her father’s portrait are indeed gestures to reclaim a moment in time, to understand a man she doesn’t recognize by dialoguing with the man he was before he became a father. Her artistic gestures circle back to her desire to know who this man once was and a yearning to understand the man lost. They also allow the viewer to focus on the most compelling aspect of the portrait—the subject’s gaze. Keith is steadfast in his gaze. It is one of both innocence and determination; one that is not, ironically, “frozen in the . . . past” but instead pregnant with possibility and fixed on the future. The world is open to this sixteen year old. It’s this very gaze that compels us to join Keisha in her questions: Who is this young man? Who will he become? What does the world have in store for him? And he for the world?

¹ Lyle Ashton Harris: *Excessive Exposure: The Complete Chocolate Portraits*, by Lyle Ashton Harris. Text by Okwui Enwezor. Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2010.

Keisha’s choice of objects to layer, cover, and outline Keith’s face and neck are also deeply charged with cultural, political and historical meaning. They allow us to read a certain kind of *Guyanese-ness* in the portrait. Black-eyed peas, a staple in Guyanese cuisine that was originally brought to the Americas by Africans via the Atlantic Slave Trade, almost entirely consume one image—a reminder of the nation’s unshakeable slavery past. Grains of Indian-grown basmati rice inundate another image—a reference to the influx of Indian indentured laborers in the nation and the ongoing ethnic conflicts between the African and Indian Guyanese populations. In another treatment, vertical strips of sugar cane stalks function more like prison bars, conjuring up a colonial culture of exploited labor of enslaved Africans, indentured Indians and Chinese laborers during the nation’s booming sugar plantation era. Gold-hued dots outline the perimeter of Keith’s face in another treatment, a reference to the maniacal European quest during the 16th century for the legendary lost city of gold, El Dorado, believed to be located along the remote regions of the Orinoco River in Guyana.

These emblems of colonialism—black-eyed peas, basmati rice, sugar cane stalks, gold dots—threaten to drown and devour Keith. As symbols utilized in Keisha’s artistic practice, they represent the collective histories—slavery past, ethnic strife, exploited labor, colonizers’ greed—this young man carries, confronts, and aims to break free from.

Nikki Kahn’s body of work as a photojournalist with *The Washington Post* has led her to document the places engulfed in the headlines as well as those not so known. Kahn has been able to actualize what Keith Scarville envisioned for his life: to bear witness to a world beyond Guyana’s borders. Her visual reporting spans the globe—Afghanistan, Haiti, Tunisia, India, Egypt, and her native Guyana, where in 2004, her series “AIDS in Guyana,” shed light on the growing yet under-told crisis.

Like Keisha Scarville, Kahn too is occupied with the past. No stranger to war-torn lands and ravaged communities, she manages to avoid the dangers of telling a single story or retelling a predictable narrative. This gaze of avoidance is evidenced in her social documentary series on the abandoned town of Chernobyl in east Ukraine. It was 2011, twenty-five years after what became known as the worst nuclear plant explosion in history, rocked the small town, killing 30 workers, forcing an additional 130,000 resident-workers to evacuate, exposing thousands to radiation, and unleashing cancers and deformities on those exposed. Kahn was on assignment for *The Washington Post* but shot the images by posing as part of a public tour group who were allowed limited access to the town by the government.

Often when we think of large scale disasters like these, we immediately turn to the numbers—the raw data—like the ones mentioned above, to gain a sense of the impact of a tragedy, to place it in a hierarchy on the totem pole of tragedies. However, what marks Kahn’s *Chernobyl* series is precisely her avoidance of the big picture—i.e., an overwhelming and predictable narrative

of death, decay, and abandonment. Kahn is not interested in Chernobyl as a site of mourning. She is instead invested in the following two ideas: the objects of innocence and remnants of life that remain; and how that sense of life and innocence are both juxtaposed against the foreboding landscape of Chernobyl—a place written off as a ghost town by many. The town has since become the subject documentaries, Hollywood horror films, and is part of a growing “terror tourism” trend.

At first glance, some of Kahn’s images are haunting. They actually do look like a still shots from a horror film. In one particular image, Kahn discovers a the girl’s doll resting peacefully in one of the floors of a former kindergarten. She lays listless on a wooden plank that serves as a bed. At least one of her eyes seems to be missing, so does her left arm. Her once blonde hair is now a dusty white. Her face is layered with dust, so are her pink shirt and pants. A shoe is missing from her right foot. But the white sock remains. Shards of glass and debris outline the small space she takes up on the upper corner of the wooden plank-cum-bed. Some of the glass from the window behind the bed is still intact; the rest of it, broken off in sharp edges, languishes dangerously on a deteriorating window-sill. Outside the two-paned window, framed by decaying wood and peeling paint, is a cold, gray sky.

Although the image of the girl’s doll is shrouded in abandon, it simultaneously reminds us of a joyous and innocent life that once existed in this place. That sense of life can also be read in other images—the toy fish that sits on a window sill; the dancing silhouette figures still intact on an abandoned building; the peeling yet vibrant mural on a building’s façade; and the suspended seats of an amusement park ride.

Collectively, Kahn’s lens on this town implore us to focus not on the looming and unavoidable cloud of nuclear disaster but on the people that lived in Chernobyl and the details of *how they lived* their lives.

While Nikki Kahn’s gaze on Chernobyl asks us to imagine a community’s existence through objects left behind or those that survived, **Roshini Kempadoo’s** *Ghosting* requires us to think critically about what does not exist. In a 2010 interview with Nalini Mohabir, Kempadoo reveals that at its core, her work is a deliberate and complicated attempt to engage absence, “to think about the narratives that are missing from the record.”²

Kempadoo is personally invested in such historical absences. Born to Guyanese parents, Kempadoo spent much of her youth shuffling between England (she is currently London-based) and throughout the Caribbean, including Guyana where she was a student in the 1970s. She tells Mohabir:

“The history that was taught to me in Guyana was a history relevant to building the new nation, anything prior to independence was not deemed significant unless it related to that agenda.”³

In her multi-media *Ghosting* series, she transplants archival images sourced from Trinidad and Tobago’s National Archives onto other historical and contemporary documents, photographs, landscapes, maps, and illustrations. Her goal is to excavate and re-imagine stories rooted in the islands’ colonial periods of African slavery and Indian indentureship (which lasted through 1917) and in its thriving sugarcane plantation economy.

Kempadoo’s digital fusions serve as tools to confront and expose the “record” as tenuous. The naming of the series, *Ghosting*, in which the narrative is being haunted, implies that the body of work functions as a gesture of resistance, a statement of defiance, a declaration that we will not disappear into history.

This refusal to disappear is perhaps most powerfully represented in the image titled *de Boissiere* image. Kempadoo super-imposes a black and white portrait of a handsomely dressed black couple onto a 1797 map of the island. The map itself conjures up the traumatic transatlantic journey for enslaved Africans and indentured Indians from the western coast of Africa or from Calcutta, India to the West Indies for enslaved Africans and indentured Indians. Directly to the left of the couple is a six-column table distilling “The Population of the L (island) of Trinidad 1797” into racial classifications of “Whites, Color, Slaves, Indians.” The table’s raw numbers visually reference similar colonial identification documents used during *The Middle Passage*. They evoke memories of an era where African and Indian bodies were reduced to numbers, as in “Slave # xxxx” or “Emigrant # xxxx” and where the African and Indian life was rendered anonymous and inhuman. It also bears noting that “Slave Women” are listed as the most populous group on the island. Yet, we know that the story of the enslaved African woman remains one of the most repressed and misrepresented of the time. That irony is not lost on Kempadoo. In response to that historical erasure, African and Indian women function prominently throughout *Ghosting*.

Kempadoo’s *de Boissiere*, as does much of the *Ghosting* series, urges us to think about the gaps in the narratives and reminds us how “the record” fails us and fails us often. Employed within her arsenal of digital techniques is a brilliant stroke of manipulation. The portrait of this couple, whose stance is at once confident, poised, and dignified, stands in direct contrast to the anonymity and inhumanity represented by the table’s census data. This juxtaposition exposes how these cold and unfeeling numbers, aimed at categorizing *what* they are, clearly fail to encapsulate *who* they are.

If Kempadoo asks that we consider absence, Toronto-based photographer and mixed-media artist **Sandra Brewster** requires that we interrogate the ubiquitous. In *Untitled Smiths*, Brewster juxtaposes portraits, mostly of young people, against a grid of

smaller-sized afro-headed figures whose faces have been replaced with phonebook pages featuring the telephone numbers and addresses of those with the last name “Smith.”

Brewster’s choice to use Smith as a naming symbol comes heavily charged, bringing with it a host of historical baggage. The surname Smith, which originates from England, is the most prevalent surname in the United Kingdom and the United States, and the second most common in Canada. In addition, the name is particularly popular among African-Americans—a reminder that enslaved Africans were stripped of their own birth names during the era of slavery. To mark their identity as someone else’s property, they were recast with the names of their masters. Others voluntarily took on the name “Smith” as they began their lives as freed men and women.

With this legacy in tow, Brewster embarks on the business of troubling contemporary waters. Like New York and London, Toronto too occupies a prominent node in the Caribbean diaspora—it has one of the largest and oldest Guyanese populations outside of Guyana. Keeping in mind Brewster’s specific geographic location and cultural context within Canada, *Untitled Smiths* conjures up the following questions: Where is the common ground between the African Canadian and the Afro Guyanese? Where do the two meet?

Brewster is not particularly sold on the notion that one’s place of birth is essential to one’s self-identification. Like Kempadoo, who is invested in exposing the fragility of historical records, so too does Brewster see the relationship between geographic origin and identity as tenuous. Brewster, who is first-generation Canadian with parents who left Guyana in the 1960s for Canada, shares how her own family story interrogates the relationship between geographic place and self-identification:

“My sister and I were seen as two little Canadian girls. However, I’d insist that I was Guyanese simply because of where my parents were born. *It didn’t matter where I was born.*”

One might also imagine Brooklyn-born and first generation American Keisha Scarville, whose parents immigrated to the United States also in the 1960s, echoing similar sentiments.

Untitled Smiths is pregnant with readings rooted in symbols, and written and unwritten texts, but strikingly obvious is Brewster’s visual positioning of the Black body in this series. In *Untitled (Plain Black 2)* and *Untitled (Plain Black 3)*, the female body takes center stage. In these images, that body is at times faceless or the face is partially visible or seen in a side profile. While Keisha Scarville’s passport portrait of her father addresses the nuances of black masculinity, Brewster tackles a particular brand of femininity. And, like Kempadoo who writes in women and girls into the historical record, so too does Brewster make the female body prominent in her work. If Brewster is asking us to explore ideas of identity—of what it means to be Black, Guyanese, Caribbean, and Canadian, all at once—she is also inviting us to apply a gendered and generational lens as well. How does being a 21st century young woman complicate or compound these questions of national and cultural identity? It’s a question that perhaps harkens back to Brewster’s own biography as a young daughter of immigrant parents living in Canada.

In her artist statement, Brewster writes that she chose Smith as a naming symbol to challenge “ideas of sameness and commonality and invisibility.” We can apply Brewster’s sobering words as an affront to similar assumptions made about the community of Guyanese women photographers. As distinct as their portfolios are, what connects these four women, as they move about the world and as their lens land on Guyana, Ukraine, Trinidad, and Canada, as seen here, is that Guyana continues to deeply inform and influence their worldview. Their roots do not stop in Guyana. We should look to these artists the way we continue to look to the work and wisdom of prominent Guyanese historian, political activist and scholar Walter Rodney, who during the course of his life’s work to champion the working class, challenged us to always keep searching for new answers to old questions.



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GRACE ANEIZA ALI

Grace Aneiza Ali, is the founder and editorial director of *OF NOTE*, one of the first online magazines focused on global artists using the arts as catalysts for activism and social change. She’s an Adjunct Professor of Literature for the City University of New York, a World Economic Forum Global Shaper, and a Fulbright Scholar. She currently hosts the *Visually Speaking* series at the Schomburg Center, which examines the state of photojournalism through the lens contemporary photographers and image-makers. Grace was born in Guyana and immigrated to the United States when she was fourteen years old. Guyana continues to inform and influence her worldview.

www.ofnotemagazine.org

² “An Interview with Roshini Kempadoo,” by Nalini Mohabir. *explusultra: The Postgraduate WUIN International Networks in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies* Volume 2, December 2010. <http://explusultra.wun.ac.uk/>

³ *Ibid*



Nikki Kahn, *Untitled, Chernobyl: A Bleak Landscape series*, 2011. Archival pigment print, 9 x 14"
Courtesy *The Washington Post*

Artist Statement

The impetus for my visit to Chernobyl twenty-five years after the disastrous 1986 nuclear explosion, came after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear tragedy in Japan in 2011. The collection of images give a glimpse of the life that ceased to exist in the towns of Chernobyl and its neighboring city, Pripyat. Beneath the grey winter skies, a 19-mile radius of leafless trees overtake the barren landscape known as the exclusion zone. The staccato beep of the Geiger counter warns of the ever-present excessive radiation levels. A quiet still air lingers over the town as workers try to contain the leaks from the sarcophagus surrounding the damaged reactor, reminding viewers of the continued impact of the disaster which affects the population of Ukraine. Health problems persist and once fertile land remains contaminated and abandoned.

Nikki Kahn



Untitled, Chernobyl: A Bleak Landscape series, 2011. Archival pigment print, 9 x 14"
Courtesy *The Washington Post*



Nikki Kahn

Untitled, Chernobyl: A Bleak Landscape series, 2011. Archival pigment print, 9 x 14". Courtesy The Washington Post



Nikki Kahn

Untitled, Chernobyl: A Bleak Landscape series, 2011. Archival pigment print, 9 x 14". Courtesy The Washington Post



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Untitled, Chernobyl: A Bleak Landscape series, 2011. Archival pigment print, 9 x 14". Courtesy The Washington Post



© Marvin Joseph

NIKKI KAHN

Nikki Kahn (b. 1967, Georgetown, Guyana) received her B.A. from the American University in Washington in 1996 and her M.F.A. from Syracuse University in 2004. In 2011, Kahn shared the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography with her Post colleagues Carol Guzy and Ricky Carioti for their series *Haiti's Profound Sorrow*. In 2012 she was a winner in the White House News Photographers Association's *Eyes of History* competition; her her work focusing on portraits of civil-rights leaders was given a special exhibition at the Newseum in Washington, DC. Kahn previously served as a photographer and editor at Knight-Ridder Tribune Photo Service in Washington, DC, and has also worked as a staff photographer at *The Indianapolis Star* and as intern at *The Washington Times*, and the *Anchorage Daily News*. Kahn has also won awards from the National Press Photographers Association and Pictures of the Year International. She currently works on staff at *The Washington Post*.

www.nikkikahn.com



Keisha Scarville, *Untitled, Passports series*, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"

Artist Statement

A passport allows one to traverse geographic borders while identifying who we are within a given space. When I was a child, my parents kept all the family passports together in a drawer. I would look through them to learn about what far off places the members of my family had visited.

My father's earliest passport photo was of particular interest to me. The image was taken when he was barely out of his teens—a time before I was his daughter and he, my father. I would stare at it for long periods of time and look for clues about this young man frozen in the distant past.

Passports is an ongoing project where I repeatedly reinterpret my father's first passport photo. In the series, I interrogate the significance of the photo as an identifier and attempt to forge a dialogue with the image. I use collage and other materials to transform and dislodge the unmoving stoicism of the printed image and create an alternate spatial narrative. In each piece, I respond to the effects of immigration, identity and my own personal history.

Keisha Scarville



Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



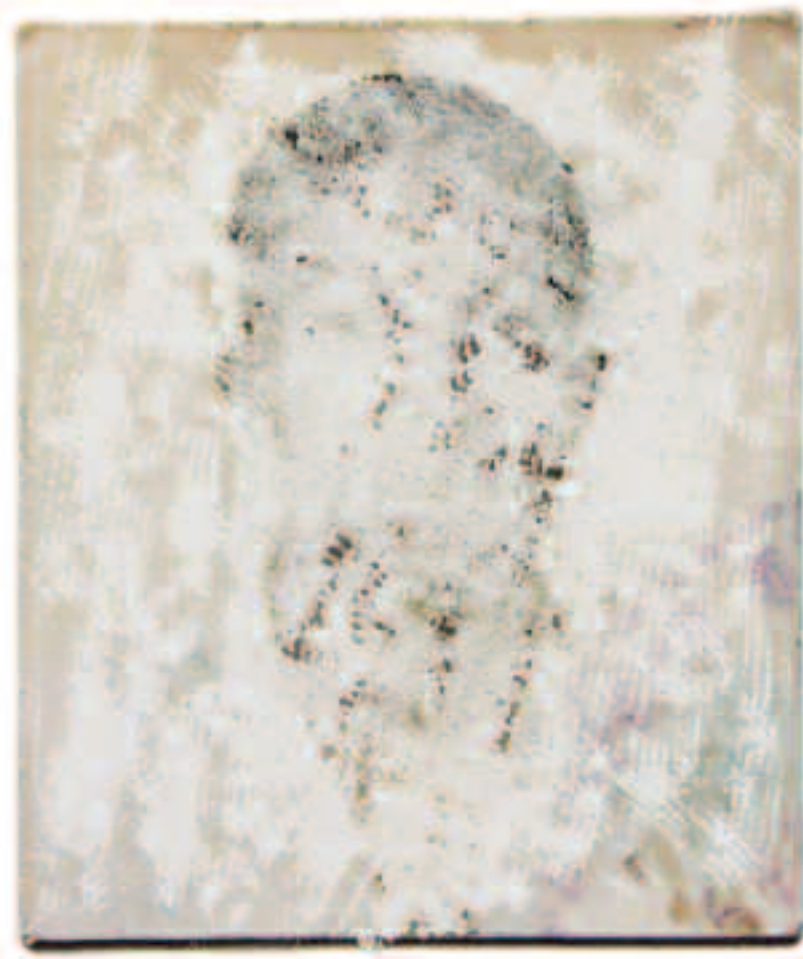
Keisha Scarville

Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Keisha Scarville

Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Keisha Scarville

Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Keisha Scarville

Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Keisha Scarville

Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Keisha Scarville

Untitled, Passports series, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Untitled, *Passports series*, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



Keisha Scarville

All images are untitled, *Passports series*, 2013. Mixed media, 7 x 5"



KEISHA SCARVILLE

Keisha Scarville (b. 1975, Brooklyn, NY) received her B.S. from Rochester Institute of Technology in 1998. Weaving together themes dealing with memory and transformation, often photographing her family and common everyday objects, Scarville's work has been exhibited and published nationally. Her work has been included in exhibitions at The Studio Museum of Harlem, Rush Arts Gallery, and Kenkeleba Gallery, in NYC; Cornell Museum, West Palm Beach, FL; Museum of African Diasporan Arts and The Brooklyn Museum of Art, in Brooklyn, NY. In addition, her work has appeared in *ARC Magazine*, *Camera Arts Magazine*, *Time*, *PDN Edu*, *Vibe*, *Nylon*, and *The New York Times*. Scarville's work is included in various public and private collections including the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Center for Photography at Woodstock, where she was an artist-in-residence in 2003. In 2006, Keisha was awarded a grant through the Brooklyn Arts Council's Community Arts Program. Currently, she is a faculty member at the International Center of Photography and adjunct professor at Bard Early College. www.keishascarville.com



Roshini Kempadoo, *Ram & Elsie (15)*, *Ghosting* series, 2004. Giclée print, 10.2 x 19.7"

Artist Statement

Ghosting is an invitation to re-consider the imaginary plantation and to reflect on the interconnections between Trinidad, the Caribbean diaspora, and Britain through a multimedia artwork of spoken word and photographic landscapes in movement.

Memory is often prompted and guided by photographs, documents, maps, and illustrations created and archived as colonial historical records. In the case of Trinidad, many of these documents are written in the 'Queen's' English, presented as 'authentic' documents and images that testify to the past economic project of Trinidad as a British colony. Much of what is absent and escapes the historical record is evoked here – particularly that of women's stories, their presence, visibility and voice.

In *Ghosting*, stories are staged to meet that absence, to write an imagined history of people that constituted the plantation – brought up in, worked on, and lived the plantation. The characters evoked through sound and photographic montages are based on a fictional archive of absent images, unwritten diary accounts, and buildings long demolished in the generative landscape we may describe as the Caribbean plantation machine.

Ghosting provokes something between a partial presence and absence, a creolised evocation, or a half-truth presumed to have occurred from what we know existed. Each fragment or snippet is triggered by our willingness to move the smooth river stones from one 'home' or pit to another in the wooden board – to metaphorically and physically empty out and place the 'stone' /story elsewhere.

Roshini Kempadoo



Aunt Ruth (7), *Ghosting* series, 2004. Giclée print, 10.2 x 19.7"



© Self-portrait

ROSHINI KEMPADOO

Roshini Kempadoo (b. 1959, Crawley, Sussex) is a photographer, media artist, and lecturer. Her research, multimedia, and photographic projects combine factual and fictional re-imaginings of contemporary experiences with history and memory. Having worked as a social documentary photographer for the Format Women's Picture Agency, her recent work as a digital image artist includes photographs and screen-based interactive art installations that fictionalize Caribbean archive material, objects, and spaces. They combine sound, animations, and interactive use of objects, to introduce characters that once may have existed, evoking hidden and untold narratives. Kempadoo's work has been exhibited internationally at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Ontario, Canada; Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC; The National Portrait Gallery, United Kingdom; and Watermans Art Centre, United Kingdom. She is represented by Autograph ABP, London.

www.roshinikempadoo.co.uk



I is not, nor eva meant to be slave

Roshini Kempadoo

Ram, Jean & Jonas (4), Ghosting series, 2004. Giclée print, 10.2 x 19.7"

Arima and Guapo.
 Toco Saliya and Cocos
 Mayaro.
 Guayaguayare
 Herine.
 Teague and Gallos
 La Bray
 Sipara.
 Naparima
 Monferrat N Savana
 Grande Pointe a Pierre / Stony Pt.
 Savanette Cuba & Casca
 bal
 Port D'Espagne: Port of
 Spain

The Population of the Is. of Trinidad 1797.

	Whites	Colour.	Slaves.	Indians	TOTAL.
Men	294	1196	1164	365	2719
Women..	590	1624	3595	191	6100
Boys...	301	898	1232	190	2621
Girls....	206	756	1106	186	2310.



Note:
 These are not natural to the Island,
 the laden with the fruit was wrecked
 since from whence the present
 are exceedingly well.

Roshini Kempadoo

De Boissiere (11), Ghosting series, 2004. Giclée print, 10.2 x 19.7"

Sandra Brewster



Sandra Brewster, *Untitled (Plain Black 1)*, *Untitled Smiths* series, 2011-2012. Mixed media on wood panel, 48 x 60"

Artist Statement

Among the series I've worked on, the *Smiths* have been a recurring theme. The name *Smith*, from a large section of the North American telephone directory, conjures up ideas of sameness, commonality and invisibility, as there are so many. Offering an element of humour, I use the name to mock the notion of a monolithic Black community—of course not all Smiths are related, or look or act the same.

The Smiths are afro-headed characters that I present as paintings on slabs of wood, their bodies clothed in solid colour and their faces replaced with the *Smith* section of the phone directory transferred to the surface. I continue to use them in various visual narratives and pieces that offer a questioning around concerns of identity and representation.

In the *Untitled Smiths (Plain Black)* panels I've transferred images of people among the grids of *Smiths*. These people individually challenge mainstream perceptions of how they should represent.

Sandra Brewster



Untitled (Plain Black 3), *Untitled Smiths* series, 2012. Mixed media on wood panel, 48 x 48"



© Wayne Salmon

SANDRA BREWSTER

Sandra Brewster (b. 1973, Toronto, Canada) is a multi-media artist creating work that engage issues of race, identity, representation and memory. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from York University and is a recipient of numerous grants. Her work has been published in *Of Note Magazine*, *The Walrus*, *Small Axe*, *Chimurenga Magazine*, *Mix Magazine* and *NKA Journal of Contemporary African Art*, among others. Recent exhibitions include Georgia Scherman Projects, and A Space Gallery, Toronto, Canada; SPACE, in London, The Print Studio in Hamilton; Robert Langen Gallery, Wilfrid Laurier University, in Waterloo, England; Five Myles Gallery, New York, NY. Brewster's practice also includes work as an arts educator/community arts facilitator, and she has coordinated numerous exhibitions involving local artists. Sandra Brewster recently completed an artist residency at Alice Yard in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

www.sandrabrewster.com

Sandra Brewster

Untitled (Plain Black 2), Untitled Smiths series, 2013. Mixed media on wood panel, 18 x 48"

WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO PEOPLE: RAFAEL RAMIREZ'S STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

by David Gonzalez

It's not easy being a street photographer when the sidewalks are empty.

In the early 1980s, Rafael Ramirez faced that dilemma when he moved from New York to Puerto Rico. Rather than make complicated compositions of off-kilter pedestrians with blocked limbs and cut-off heads, he started shooting quiet scenes of houses, lights and power lines. When he moved to Virginia in 1999, he stopped shooting altogether.

But true to his calling, a few years ago he started going to Washington, D.C., where he resumed taking pictures of harried commuters at bus and train stations. Back in rhythm, he returned to Virginia intent on finding a new avenue for his photography.

"My wife likes to go to malls, but she doesn't like to drive, so I take her," he said. "I started photographing the mall at Tyson's. It has a glass ceiling on the second floor. I go to town and shoot."

I knew he could not have stayed away from street shooting forever. Back in the late 1970s, Rafa was one of the most talented street photographers I knew. He was always thinking about images – his own and others – and always willing to teach and learn. He and Louis Servedio Morales gave me insights into photography in ways my teacher at Yale did not.

Rafa was raised in the South Bronx and started taking pictures as a teenager, taking his mother's Japanese rangefinder to Central Park. His pictures of water and reflections looked to him like postcards. He was hooked.

In Queens College, he studied with Herb Goro, who brought the era's leading photographers to class. One of them was Garry Winogrand. Inspired, he took to the streets and never looked back.

"I just put things together, mostly people and backgrounds," he said. "I didn't get nasty responses. I didn't get scared looks. People just relaxed and looked in the camera."

He would spend hours outside, then rush home to his Bronx apartment to process his film, looking for a specific shot that had jazzed him up earlier in the day.

"I was looking at this thing in my mind," he said. "I was in love with an image I hadn't processed yet. You think you got it, you process it and look for it. Sometimes you got it. Sometimes not. There is a lot of element of surprise. Most of the time the surprise was negative."

David Gonzalez is the co-editor of the Lens Blog at the New York Times and a founding member of *Los Seis del Sur*.



While working as a studio assistant on 57th Street, he met Charles Biasiny-Rivera and got involved with En Foco. His early work was aggressive. Making extra money after hours driving a cab, he also took pictures behind the wheel, producing his well-received *Taxi* series, which was featured in a show at the Puerto Rico gallery Casa Aboy. His street work won him a CAPS grant, which he used to buy a one-way ticket to Puerto Rico.

When he returned to the mainland in 1999 – after being a partner in the Old San Juan gallery and photo store Zoom and working as a freelancer – he spent several years as a custom digital printer. He did not, however take his own pictures. Part was he did not find a camera he liked. And the area around Fairfax was not conducive to walking and shooting.

“It bored me,” he said. “Street photography is very difficult here.”

But he cited the work of Mark Cohen, who took amazing images in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

“He had the same problem I had,” he said. “This is not Fifth Avenue. I can’t walk around anonymously and photograph without getting hassled. He had to do what the other guys were doing on Fifth Avenue: he just had to shoot in a different way.”

His new work shows he has found his own, new way. He no longer cuts off heads or reduces people to partial components of a composition. His mall pictures are even quiet.

“It’s not that my work has changed,” he said. “I’ve changed. Before I was poor, hungry and had no girlfriend. I was isolated and alone. Now, 30 years later, being married and having a kid, I have a different perspective on the world. I’m no longer angry. I look at people and understand. So, I changed the way I approach people in photography. I’m softer with them. I’m not as harsh. I don’t chop off heads anymore.”

p.37: *Union Station* 6/26/12, 2012. Archival pigment print, 15 x 9”

p.39: *Mall* 12/15/12, 2012. Archival pigment print, 15 x 9”

p.40 Top: *PR Day* 6/13/79, 1979. Archival pigment print, 9 x 12”

p.40 Bottom: *Mall* 12/15/12, 2012. Archival pigment print, 15 x 9”



Ramirez at the En Foco Street Gallery in Mott Haven, August, 1979. Photo by David Gonzalez.





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