IMAGINATIONS
JOURNAL OF CROSS_CULTURAL IMAGE STUDIES | REVUE D’ÉTUDES INTERCULTURELLES DE L’IMAGE

Publication details, including open access policy and instructions for contributors:
http://imaginations.csj.ualberta.ca

“Guest Artist - Storm Saulter - Portfolio”
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December 7, 2015

To Cite this Article:
Saulter, Storm and Emiel Martens. “Guest Artist - Storm Saulter - Portfolio” Imaginations 6:2 (2015): Web (date accessed) 10-17. DOI: 10.17742/IMAGE.CCN.6-2.2

To Link to this article:
http://dx.doi.org/10.17742/IMAGE.CCN.6-2.2

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In January 2015 Storm Saulter was appointed as Filmmaker in Residence at the Department of Literatures in English, University of the West Indies (UWI). During his tenure, which lasted until May of that year, the Jamaican filmmaker contributed to the Department’s Film Studies programme by teaching the course, Creative Writing: Screen/Stage, and offering guidance to students interested in the world of filmmaking.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect teaching this class but very early I realised that there was a room full of great storytellers with really strong and deep ideas and who were passionate about film. We ran it like a script development workshop and each student had their own idea to develop into a feature film. Young Jamaicans are way more exposed to all kinds of media and are influenced as much by Japanese anime as they are by Hollywood studio films. Thankfully they are trying to break-out of the Hollywood storytelling archetypes and develop a new aesthetic. That is what I encouraged and that is what the students set out to achieve, and the results were really surprising and powerful. I definitely want to see some of those stories on the screen. I never went to a classic university myself so working with students that age was a new and energizing experience for me as well.”

Besides teaching, Storm also participated in the annual ‘March is Movie Month at Mona’ series hosted by the Department. He named his talk, which was supported by different excerpts of his work, ‘Towards a New Caribbean Cinema’, after the title of this interview.

“In my talk I really tried to hammer home the importance of developing our own aesthetic. In looking at the things that make the Caribbean unique, our landscape, the physicality of our people, the mixed up languages and sounds, the richness of colours in our world. Not to shy away from those things but to intentionally weave them into the fabric and texture of our filmmaking. To create a filmmaking language that transcends any one film. This was also the aim of a short film workshop I ran in the summer months. This workshop consisted of four intensive weeks where participants came with ideas and left with a fully developed script that was ready to be produced.”

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a - Commissioned film poster of *Better Mus’ Come* made by Jamaican artist and graphic designer Leasho Johnson. ‘It became clear that, for me, the ultimate story of the Cold War era was about the poor people who were the sufferers, so the story had to represent them.’

b - Still from Storm’s early work Waterboot, a 2003 video art piece that was part of the exhibition *Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art* at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. ‘I regularly returned home and just documented everything with my digital camera, little random Jamaican things, which I then edited in a certain way.’

c - Poster of the third and last edition of the *Flashpoint Film Festival* in 2008 in Port Royal. ‘I believe Flashpoint kicked a lot of people on the island in the butt in terms of realizing that this is what we need to do to get the film industry going.’

d - Official film poster of Storm’s first feature film *Better Mus’ Come* (2011) featuring Sheldon Shepherd and Sky Nicole Grey. ‘I really wanted to make a film about the seventies. I had always been fascinated with the Cold War and the international geopolitics at the time.’
Following the residency, Storm was selected to take part in the inaugural Caribbean Film Mart at the tenth edition of the Trinidad + Tobago Film Festival. Co-financed by the ACP Cultures+ Programme, funded by the European Union (European Development Fund) and implemented by the APC Group of States, “the primary goal of the Caribbean Film Mart is to foster direct relationships between the Caribbean and the international film industry, by stimulating and creating viable cinematic co-productions” (ttfilmfestival.com). In total fifteen filmmakers were selected to pitch their projects (in development or pre-production) to international film producers, commissioners, sales agents and funds—and one of them was Storm with his fiction film project, Spinter.
‘Although we did everything in a really low-budget way, we were very meticulous with getting the look and feel right.’
b - Announcement of the screening of *Ring di Alarm* at the 2013 Pan-African Film Festival in Los Angeles. "I definitely think New Caribbean Cinema is a driver for Caribbean cinema in general. I just see it."

"We all made one short film and worked together on each other’s films."

c - Film still from *Watching Him Kissing Her*, the *Ring di Alarm* film directed by Storm. "Although the *Ring di Alarm* films are very different from each other, I do think they have something in common and that is a slight interest in the dark side of life."
“This was one of the most helpful development programs I’ve participated in because of its focus on Caribbean films specifically and because of the quality of industry professionals brought in to meet with us about our projects. The collection of filmmakers there was a great representation of the new wave of Caribbean cinema and all projects involved in the mart moved forward in some way. This was the unanimous feeling of the filmmakers. I developed new partnerships for Sprinter and I know the seeds planted there will bear fruit.”

d - Film still from Coast, the Ring di Alarm film directed by Nile Saulter on which Storm worked as a cinematographer and co-producer. “The Caribbean film aesthetic is still very much open, but it is definitely magical, colorful, kaleidoscopic, language-rich and musical.”

e - Image from Storm’s photo shoot of the band Arcade Fire at the Trident Castle in Port Antonio, Jamaica, published in the Rolling Stone magazine (2013). “Throughout the week I am often in touch with a couple of production companies.”
a - Photograph by Storm of Trinidadian fashion designer Ayana Riviere, also published in the Rolling Stone magazine (2013). “I oversee treatments, I deliver edits, I go to meetings, I scout locations, I am in pre-production or I am actually shooting.”

b - Production still of Storm shooting the music video “Who Knows” by the Jamaican artists Protoje and Chronixx. “I usually have a few of these projects going on at the same time, in different stages of development.”

c - Still from the music video “Who Knows” featuring Protoje and Chronixx. “When I have a deadline, I just have to stay up for a few nights and get it done.”
d - Photograph by Storm of Chronixx as part of a campaign for Lifted Research Group (LRG), a creative lifestyle clothing company (2014). “I do quite a bit of commercial work; that is actually what I do most of the time.”

e - Film still from a video piece Storm did for the Canopy Guild, a community photography, fashion, and object-design project-cum-exhibition initiated by Trinidadian artist Rodell Warner. “I feel any moment now we can make the big hit films, I definitely feel that.”

f - Screen shot of Storm’s homepage http://stormsaulter.com featuring a photograph by Storm of Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt for media technology company Soul Electronics. “I want to make the films that epitomize Caribbean cinema.”

Links

Better Mus’ Come Official Trailer

Interview with Storm and Better Mus’ Come lead actor Sheldon Shepherd

Feature on the Better Mus’ Come premiere in Philadelphia on the Lavonne Nichols Show

New Caribbean Cinema Featurette

Feature on New Caribbean Cinema on Dutch television (VPRO Cinema)

Ring di Alarm Official Trailer

‘Who Knows’ Music Video

Storm’s Official Homepage