

# The Alwyn St. Omer PORTFOLIO

Born at Castries, Saint Lucia in 1958, Alwyn St. Omer was inspired by the work of his father, the late Sir Dunstan St. Omer a widely acclaimed international artist of Saint Lucian origins and by his mother Cynthia, a secretary in the Prime Minister's office. she encouraged him by providing a regular supply of art materials.

Alwyn was also inspired by the plentiful supply of picture books around the house and at about age six, was introduced to Comics, including the Illustrated Classics, which fueled his appetite, not only for graphic design, but also for folktales and storytelling in a pictorial format. Growing up in an artistic environment with nostrils tuned to oil paints, provided further stimulus.

As a young aspiring artist Alwyn was also privileged to witness plays performed by a famous local theatrical company, the Saint Lucia Arts Guild, adding a dimension of realism to what he saw and read in the comics. He was enamoured by plays steeped in the island's rich folk and musical traditions that included some of the early works of the island's Nobel Laureate, poet Derek Walcott and his playwright, twin brother Roderick. It is from this launching pad that young Alwyn, budding artist and storyteller was thrust into orbit, a creative artist with very deep passion and lifelong desire to document his

island's cultural heritage through his drawings and paintings. For him rediscovery and preservation of all the treasures forming the formidable expanse loosely termed Saint Lucian folklore would be his life's achievement. Its art, myths, writings and traditions, its National Theatre, all housed in one monumental edifice.

By extension the St. Omer family is well known in art circles and widely considered the leading family of painters in Saint Lucia. They may well be a unique artistic family anywhere in the Caribbean and the world.

Alwyn studied Art at the Edna Manley School for Visual Arts in Jamaica and Video production and Audio Visuals at Portsmouth College in England. His work includes the design of Saint Lucia's National Independence Monument and the "Moon Dancer" Masquerade series of paintings. An attempt in painting, to revive interest in and to Save the lost Masquerade tradition, as a medium to acknowledge the islands rich biodiversity and to promote the concept for the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.

He is a Director of St. Omer Art Institute, with a list of publications under his belt, including Sands Tourism Magazine, the CIMPEX Home Companion Magazine and the Wakonté series of children's colouring books and comics. A former Television Producer and Carnival Band Leader and Designer. As a painter, Alwyn also specializes in Abstract Art, landscape Paintings and Murals.



Painting: "Adan sé moun-an ka dansé, mé adan yo ka pléwé." (Translation from St Lucian Kwéyòl, "Some of the people are dancing but some of them are weeping".) Moon Dancers, an abstract painting done in acrylic on canvas, by Alwyn St Omer, size 3ft x 5ft.



## **ART EXHIBITIONS:**

### **Solo:**

The Embassy of Mexico (St Lucia 2009)  
Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2010)  
Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2010)  
The Embassy of Mexico and the Embassy of Spain (St Lucia 2019)

### **Group/Family:**

Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 1989)  
St Lucia National Trust (St Lucia 1992)  
Pointe Seraphine (St Lucia 1996)  
Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 2002)  
Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 2004)  
Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2009)  
Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2010)  
Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2011)  
Martinique Gallery (Martinique 2013)  
Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2015)  
Folk Research Centre (St Lucia 2016)  
The National Archives (St Lucia 2017)  
St Lucia Consulate (New York 2019)  
Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 2019)



## ABSTRACT ART:



### **THE MOON DANCER MASQUERADE SERIES (Principal series)**

#### **Kité Flit-la Menen Lèspwi-Ou... (Let the Flute Lead Your Spirit). Masquerade Paintings by Alwyn St Omer.**

The Moon dancer series is an abstraction of the Masquerade, my attempt in painting, to revive interest in and to Save the Traditional Masquerade. The “Masquerade” was an old time Street theatre, including the Toes and the Pie Banan. They roamed the streets of Castries at Christmas time, stopping at innumerable locations, they performed for rich and poor alike, up to the mid 1970’s, the time of Everton Lawrence, the last of the Toes, or Pa Pa Jab.

They were ritualistic gifts from our African past emanating from secret acts of rebellion. In those days, slaves whenever the plantation owners permitted any form of celebration, would transform themselves into various forms of mask tradition. A quiet revolution and secret link to the motherland from where they were so savagely torn. It was a silent conquest over those who sought to be their masters. These ritualistic gifts provided quiet comfort to our ancestors, the traditions continuing through the ages, becoming an Integral part of our cultural and Christmas celebrations, until strangely disappearing over the last forty-five years in St Lucia, with no credible explanation, or why, of the great departure.

As I become more curious about the Masquerade, I started to look for old photographs to draw and paint from, but soon realized that there was hardly any documentation of their existence.

In fact, Research led me to discover that the disappearance was part of a wider circumstance and related to a problem of environmental and social degradation, leading to cultural degradation. It was my awakening to the fact that many of the cultural/folk traditions that, at one time, sustained viable environmental practices were fast disappearing.

As I freely borrow from my friend Peter Murray's research, in 1999, at an international conference in Italy by the World Bank and UNESCO to strengthen links between cultural and financial development, it was discovered that there was a corresponding decline in the folk traditions of St Lucia and its once pristine environment.

It was out of this profound reality that my "Moon Dancer" Masquerade series was born. An attempt in painting, to revive interest in and to Save the local Masquerade, as a medium to acknowledge our rich biodiversity and to promote the concept for the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.



A La Mòd Lézyayèl.... translation: in the way of the ancestors #2 Masquerade Series, 3ft x 5ft painting available for sale, done in Acrylic on Canvas by Alwyn St Omer. Poetic interpretation, George Goddard





"Moon Dancers in shades of Blue, Black and Red.



Kité Flit-la Menen Lèspwi-Ou... ( Let the Flute Lead Your Spirit). Masquerade Paintings by Alwyn St Omer. Poetic interpretation, George Goddard



LANDSCAPES:



Petit Piton



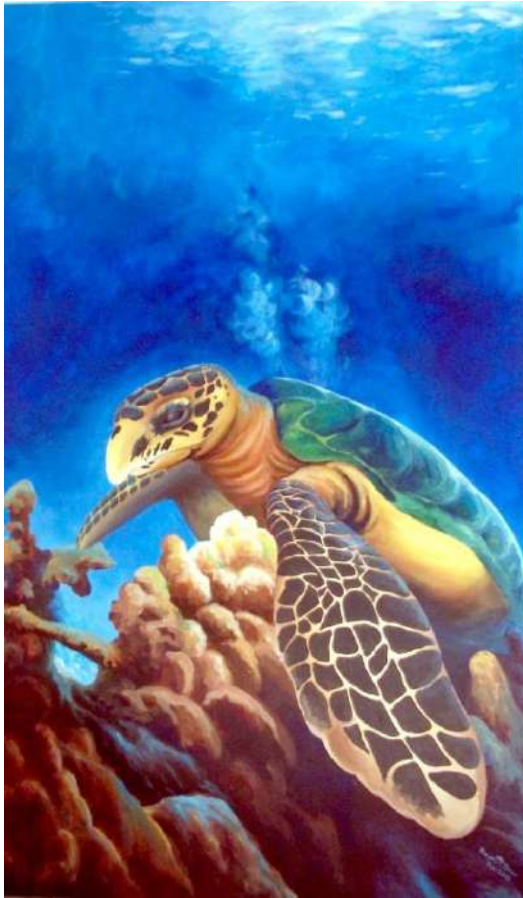
the Night & the Piton



Esperance, Monchy



## MERINE CREATURES & THE SEA:





ABSTRACT ART:



"Dreams" a painting series, based on the landscape in the mind of a man, paralyzed by indecision and fear...Palette Knife painting done with acrylic on canvas



The Holy Family



La Mare Haut...

ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE:  
Design of the National Independence Monument of St Lucia





MURAL ART:



GIZ Ridge to Reef Environmental Mural



Working on the Dome Mural in the River Doree Anglican Church in Choiseul



# St Omer paints Wall of History

Several weeks ago drawings began to appear on the walls next to the St Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA). Curious passersby were anxious to find out who was the mastermind behind this magnificent piece of artwork.

The son of acclaimed St Lucian artist Dunstan St Omer, Alwyn can take all the credit.

The *STAR* met up with Alwyn St Omer as he put the finishing touches on his work of art.

St Omer said he has been painting for as long as he remembers. He developed a love for painting at a very tender age.

"As children we used to stay up to watch my father paint," he said. "He never wanted us to paint. We used to steal his brushes to paint. He cursed us all the time when he could not find his brushes. We were very privileged to have pioneers like Derek Walcott and Garth



Alwyn St Omer as he works on his masterpiece

St Omer coming home to listen to music and daddy had all his African and

European books."

St Omer said he also has a passion for drawing

comics and publishing.

"My father gave me those classic illustrated comics. He used to give me a

Omer. "I was curious about what the guys were saying and that is how I began to read."

no emphasis is being placed on developing the arts. He would like to see arts become an industry.

"Something has to be done to help artists. Everyday I am surprised when I see the amount of talent we have in St Lucia," said St Omer. "The kids have incredible talent but they are frustrated. Some of them are very gifted and you will never know because they have no avenue to express themselves."

St Omer was contracted to paint the murals by the Castries City Council. He said he got the idea of what he would paint on the wall when he heard someone on a talk-show stating that they did not see the relevance of Independence.

"I thought why not do something patriotic. I used the St Lucia flag as a motif for the paintings," said St Omer. "The paintings will give you a glimpse into St Lucia's culture, people and where we came from."

The public response to the murals, said St Omer, has

Newspaper clipping on SLASPA/CCC Mural



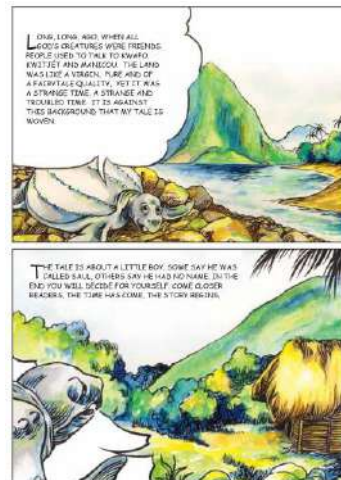
Faux a Chaud, Castries City Mural



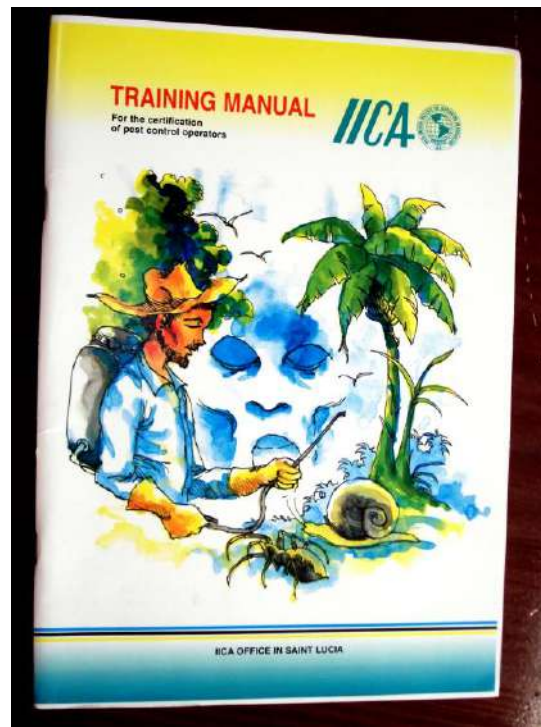
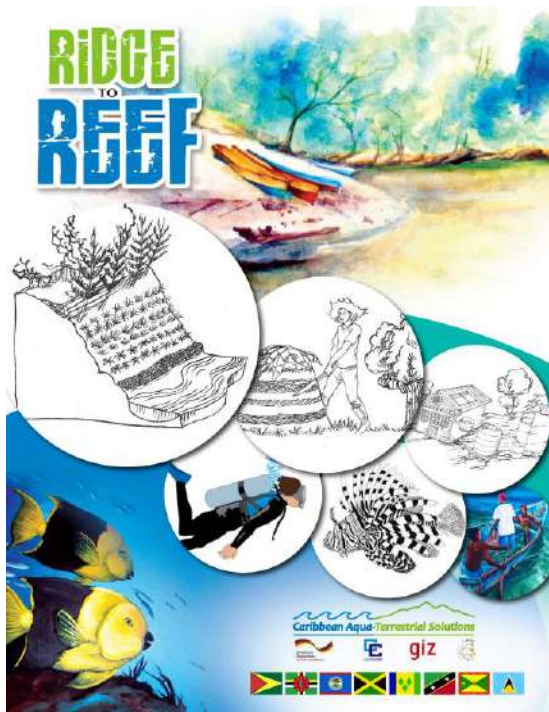
## Graphic Novel

Of Alwyn's Graphic Novel Soucoyan, noted St Lucian writer, poet and playwright, McDonald Dixon writes. Alwyn, through his skills as an artist, has created on paper those amorphous beings, imbuing the hideous images that resided only in our subconscious with an existence only equal to our own inveterate perceptions. Alwyn is currently following the same path a young Derek Walcott followed to discover 'Ti Jean and his Brothers' A path also followed by his twin brother, Roderick and by Charles Cadet through music. They pursued the echoes of our oral traditions to the inevitable source and uplifted the images they found beyond mediocrity. This is as it should be, to preserve custom and art; we of the current generation must lift the mirror beyond the age and raise life from the status of mere mimicry to a new and glorious existence, fit for the stage. There is never enough of the oral tradition the Greeks have shown us. After two thousand years, the Aristophanes, Euripides and Sophocles, still enthrall us with their mythical beauty. These were the first explorers in conventional western civilization who took the raw images of their oral tradition, shepherd's tales, warrior tales and enriched them with another dimension that gave them legs to survive the ages, until we in turn were able to discover and enjoy them.

Only time can measure the classical propensity of this work, but one thing is certain, Alwyn has drawn legs to this St. Lucian Folk Tale. The inspiration to walk or gallop is the mind of the reader. For my generation and others who still remember vividly the stories about Bolom, Mama Dlo, Papa Bois and Soucoyan, this work is a treat. It recreates long forgotten incidents from childhood, filled nostalgia and mixed with all those other simple ingredients that made the world a better place to live, as we for one fine moment relive the dreams of youth.



SCIENTIFIC & AGRICULTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS:





CARNIVAL ART:





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