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IMPULSE ART PROJECT
CREATIVE PLATFORM IN EAST KINGSTON
JAMAICA

A Rubis Mécénat cultural fund and a Rubis Energy Jamaica
long-term initiative at Dunoon Technical High School



The practice of visual arts as a positive means of ex- pression

IMPULSE ART PROJECT KINGSTON JAMAICA

An artistic and a social initiative to support Jamaican youth through the practice of visual arts.

InPulse is an ongoing project undertaken in 2015 by Rubis Mécénat cultural fund in partnership with Rubis Energy Jamaica at the heart of the Dunoon Park community in East Kingston, Jamaica. It strives to support Jamaican youth and improve the conditions of young adults from local communities through the practice of visual arts as a positive means of expression.

A creative platform and a life skills development programme, *InPulse* offers visual art courses led by local and international artists as well as general-purpose educational training. Furthermore, the programme introduces its participants to the art market and to its professionals by organising specific visits and inviting leading figures of the Caribbean artistic scene.

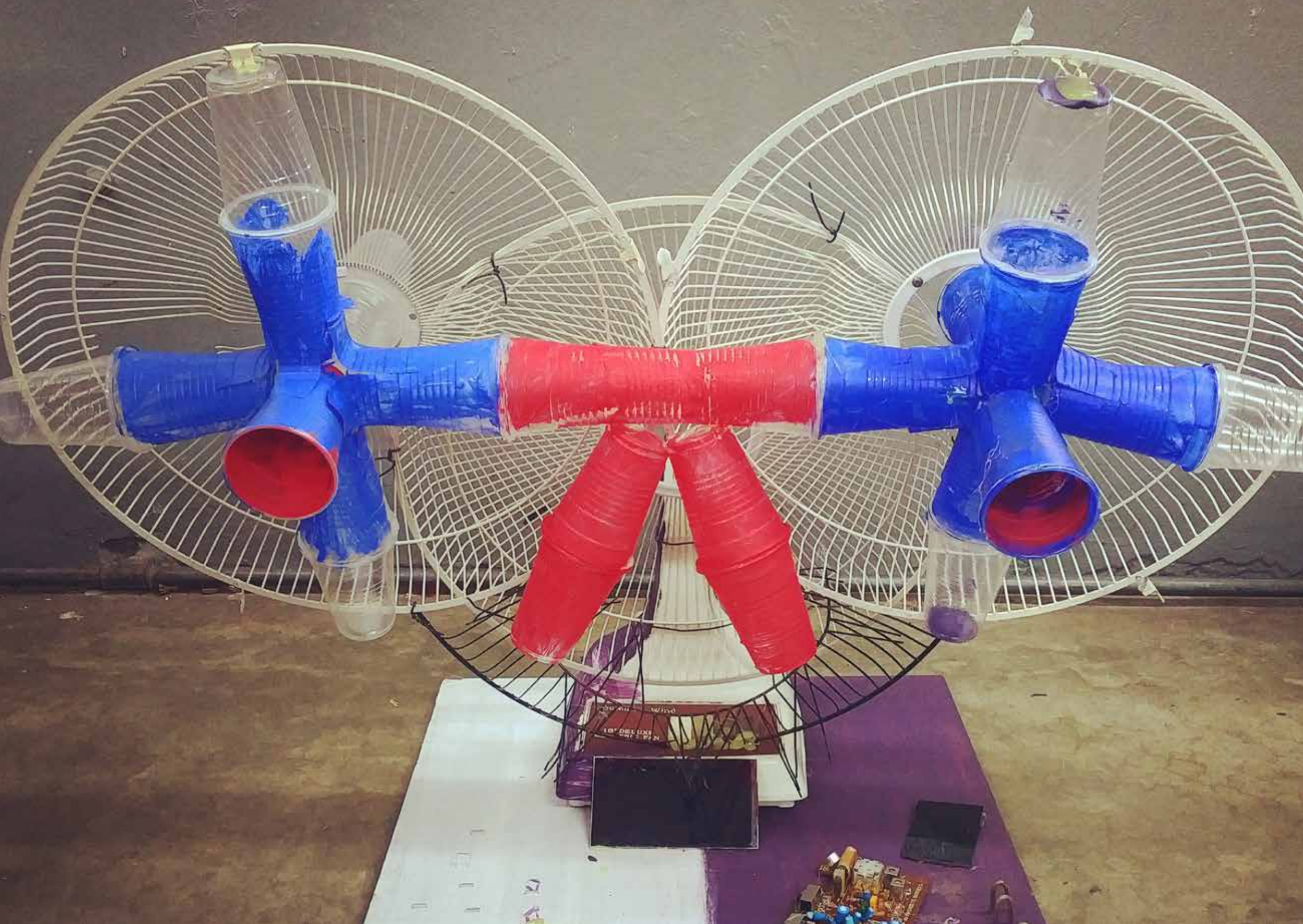
Each year the project awards scholarships to the most promising students to pursue a tertiary education at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts in Kingston.

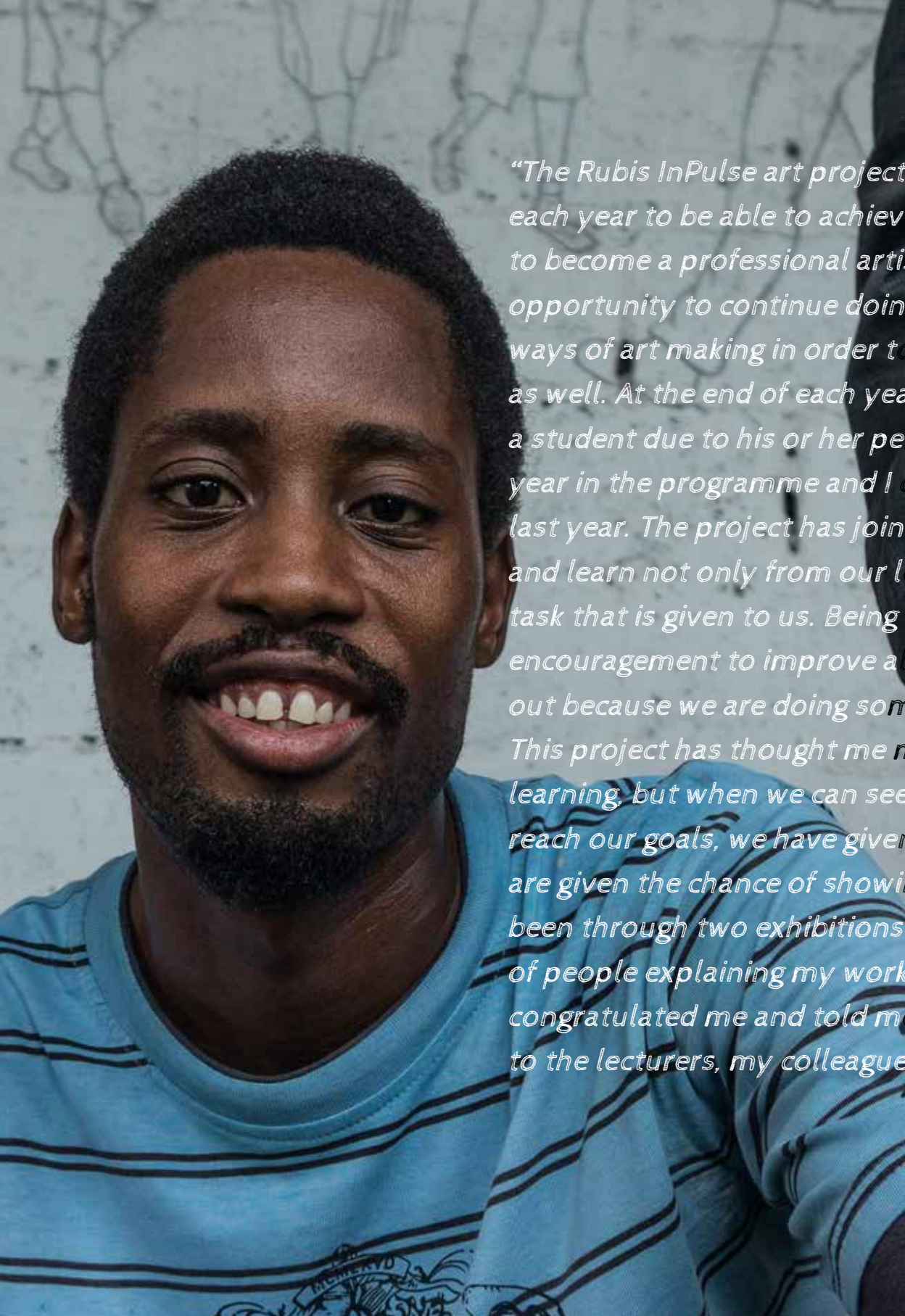




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"The Rubis InPulse art project, is a programme that is helping young artist like myself each year to be able to achieve a career through art as a step by step process in order to become a professional artist. Being enrolled in the programme has given me the opportunity to continue doing something that I love; meeting new people; learning new ways of art making in order to strengthen my skills; and learning how to earn from it as well. At the end of each year the programme would offer a full-time scholarship to a student due to his or her performance throughout the programme. This is my second year in the programme and I can see the growth that each one of us made compared to last year. The project has joined us together in an environment where we can see, excel and learn not only from our lecturers but also from each other's way of approaching each task that is given to us. Being around artists such as ourselves, gives us the strength and encouragement to improve along the way. This way we can learn and not get stressed out because we are doing something that we all love and having fun at the same time. This project has thought me many things including that we all have our differences in learning, but when we can see these differences and take out the information needed to reach our goals, we have given ourselves the power to grow as individuals. Each term we are given the chance of showing and talking about our works within each exhibition. I have been through two exhibitions in the programme and my experiences being around a body of people explaining my works and about the project was so wonderful that everyone congratulated me and told me that I should continue the great works. In advance thanks to the lecturers, my colleagues, and the body of persons that put this project together."

Sheldon Green
Inpulse Art Student



Workshop with the Atis Rezistans art collective - Introduction to Haitian art



*A durable al-
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velopment of
the local King-
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offering them
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*Jamaica has a
dynamic cul-
tural and ar-
tistic scene*





Workshop with Phillip Thomas - Painting



Workshop with the Atis Rezistans art collective - Introduction to Haitian art



A
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"InPulse art project has helped me in my development as an art student while helping me with techniques. Each week I have attended the classes. There is assurance that there is something new being brought to the team. It also helped me with proper time management. The programme has benefitted me both financially and as an artist."

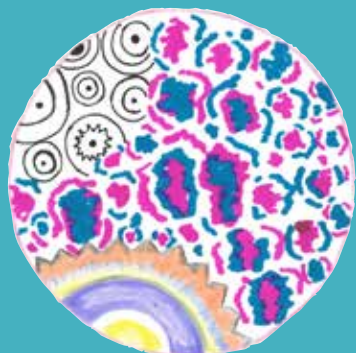
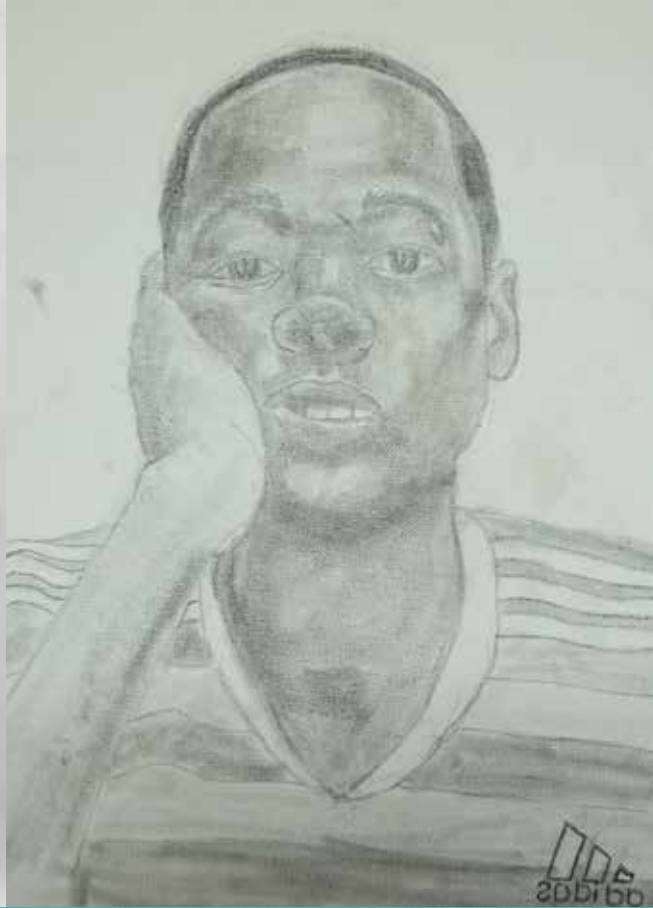
Jordan Harisson,
InPulse scholar, Bachelor of Fine Arts
at Edna Manley College, Kingston, Jamaica





Kingston's inner com- munities





IMPULSE ART PROJECT
Film by Nile Sauter



IN- PULSE

IN TIME WITH JAMAICAN ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

By Monique Barnett-Davidson

In February 2017, a group of young *InPulse* programme participants attended their first Jamaica Biennial at the National Gallery of Jamaica (NGJ), Kingston. The event is the largest contemporary art exhibition in the country and this year was very ambitious. It featured over one-hundred and sixty major and emerging artists from Jamaica, the Jamaican Diaspora and a few from the Caribbean region; spread out over three locations in Kingston and Montego Bay.

So much was there, almost every technical and material approach was represented. It even featured what is touted to be the largest two-headed drum in the Caribbean, measuring exactly 914.4 cm in length; hewn out of the single trunk of a felled silk cotton tree. Artists used animated GIFs, human hair, animal remains and super-sized dresses made out of dish rags. There were even a pair of gold fish (rest in peace, Fred).¹ Whether the students were aware of it or not, the achievements of these artists were windows into their own potential. Their excited and animated explorations of the various galleries on their visit hinted at piqued curiosities and renewed vision.

The ambition of the NGJ's Jamaica Biennial 2017 is

perhaps the greatest indicator of where Jamaican art is at the moment. Just over two decades before, the art community had suffered a crucial setback. In the early 1990s, what was a steadily growing commercial economy surrounding and supporting visual art practice and business, grinded to a halt when Jamaica's financial sector had crumbled. A large number of local financial and corporate institutions - the biggest buyers and supporters of the visual arts - filed for bankruptcy or were being liquidated. In their absence, the support of smaller-scale private buyers was insufficient to keep things afloat. The Jamaican art scene seemed to enter a period of relative quiet. Many art-driven businesses closed their doors and funding opportunities for artists dwindled. Today, the commercial art market continues a struggle of recovery. The rally now taking place has been a result of the tenacity of creators and innovators as they continue to diversify output and seek new platforms for expression and promotion. An increasing number of Jamaican artists, in particular the young and emerging, have been seeking to participate in more overseas fellowships and residencies. These programmes have afforded them opportunities to participate in overseas exhibitions. These have included *EN MAS': Caribbean and Performance Art of the Caribbean* (New Orleans, 2015), *Jamaican Pulse: Art and Politics from Jamaica and the Diaspora* (Bristol, 2016) *Jamaican Routes* (Oslo, 2016), *Jamaica Jamaica!* (Paris, 2016/2017). As I write, the Perez Art Museum Miami is currently hosting a retrospective exhibition for one of Jamaica's historic pioneer Intuitive painters, John Dunkley (1891-1947), entitled *John Dunkley: Neither Day nor Night*, which was opened in May 2017 and scheduled to close in January 2018. Jamaican artists, like so many others around the world, have also incorporated the Internet as an extended space for showcase and self-promotion. Many of them can be found and are active on a myriad of social media handles like Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr, garnering unique success as a result.

KINGSTON, ART METROPOLIS

The pulse of this transition is felt the strongest in capital city Kingston – the nerve centre of visual arts infrastructure and activity.

The city boasts the oldest and the largest public art museum and arts college in the Anglophone Caribbean: respectively, the NGJ (a division of the Institute of Jamaica - IOJ, established in 1974) and the Edna Manley School of Visual Arts (formerly the School of Art and Craft, established in 1950). These are supported by other state-run, arts-focused agencies, such as Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) – which annually holds a national art competition for local professional and amateur artists since 1963. There is also the Junior Centre – another division of the IOJ, dedicated to the social and cultural development of children. They coordinate the Junior Exhibition for Art and Craft in Schools, one of the longest running exhibition programmes for child art in Jamaica since 1962. Some of the largest private and corporate collections are also based in the city, rivalling even the NGJ's permanent collection, such as that of the Bank of Jamaica, the island's largest central banking institution.

Among the many artists based here, Kingston is also home to a large number of street artists, whose works can be seen on the walls of homes and business places, vehicles, juice-and-snack carts, and even coffins! These artists work outside of the traditional art channels, supported mainly by persons from within their communities. Initially emerging out of sign painting conventions, most street artists produce mural portraits of famous local and international public figures as well as other commemorative murals of deceased loved ones or community icons. In some communities, it is not uncommon to see numerous murals of slain gang members and leaders. Such murals have been frowned upon by the police forces, who will occasionally overpaint these death portraits.

Since the early 2000s, there have been the emergence of non-profit, artist-run spaces such as Studio 174 and NLS (New Local Space), which experiment with residency programmes for local and international artists, as well as with exhibition programme formats. Aside from the Jamaica Biennial, two other Kingston-based visual arts extravaganzas are the *Liguanea Art Festival*, inaugurated in 2005 and the *Kingston on The Edge* (KOTE) summer urban arts festival, which began in 2007. Both these events are initiated by the Kingston business community and have succeeded in attracting massive corporate support. In recent times, their occurrence have become greatly anticipated by established as well as emerging artists and collectors alike.²

Events like KOTE have inspired a greater appreciation for the use of alternate spaces as art exhibition venues in Kingston, which include a variety of business places such as restaurants and even law firms. In 2014, local firm *Myers, Fletcher and Gordon* organized an exhibition entitled *Trajectories: 70 Years of Art*, which featured a substantial display of selections from its corporate collection of Jamaican art, in dialogue with contemporary works of art by emerging artists; transforming its office rooms and cubicles into a series of intimate showcases of paintings, sculptures, works in mixed media and even digital projections and film. Emerging private ventures like *Red Easel* and *Moda Market* have begun to experiment with the idea of pop-up galleries or exhibitions.

IMPULSE JAMAICA – ENRICHING COMMUNITIES AND LIVES THROUGH CREATIVITY

While facilitating the development of career artists is key to continuity, this continuity is unsustainable without social engagement. Many Jamaican artists are involved in creating opportunities for social change and improvement for communities, through collaborations with community-based interest groups. Grant funding for such programme

initiatives have been made available through some local corporations like the Wisynco Group Limited, who are committed to supporting social development.

Inclusion, exposure, education and appreciation are among key elements of coordination in this regard.

Participants can view themselves, their abilities and opinions, as well as those of others, reflected in technique and artistic output. Exhibitions and showcases can act as positive re-enforcement for personal as well as artistic growth. Learning technical skill in art forms like ceramics, graphic illustration and even digital art exists in tandem with learning important life skills, potentially steering career direction and even inspiring entrepreneurship. High levels of craftsmanship are achieved through discipline and the commitment to that can encourage participants to realize the wider value of creative work in social contexts.

When the *InPulse* programme initiated in September 2015, it increased value to an active pre-existing network of local artists, art educators, institutions and other similar programmes, committed to what I have just described.

InPulse is based in the Dunoon Park community in East Kingston. The programme aims to broaden the perspectives of its teen participants through exposure to the visual arts in structured workshops. Additionally, the programme also facilitates remedial literacy and numeracy classes for those who need it, balancing art education with basic academic development. These workshops are held in a dedicated classroom at the Dunoon Technical High School, and take place after school during the week and on Saturdays. It is currently subscribed by about twenty teenagers from the school and surrounding community.

The programme is run by a group of well-respected local multi-disciplinary artists who also work professionally as art instructors. Currently there are three who form the core team: lead coordinator Camille Chedda, Oneika Russel and Stanford Watson. This team is occasionally expanded to include other artists who are invited to

conduct specialized short-term workshops, designed to focus on contemporary approaches to art making. In 2017, for instance, there has been a film workshop conducted by Jamaican film-maker Nile Saulter and a sculpture workshop conducted by members of the Haiti-based Atis Rezistans, represented by UK-born artist and curator Leah Gordon, alongside Haitian artists Andre Eugene and Jean-Claude Saintilus. The programme also encourages its young participants to embark on community-based art projects which have included mural projects at Dunoon Technical, and at the Adastra Gardens Basic School located just about 5 minutes away. The programme also has scholarship offerings for its participants; at the time of this writing, two former participants and scholarship awardees are final year students at the Edna Manley School of the Visual Arts.

Support from Rubis, the cultural fund Rubis Mécénat and Rubis Energy Jamaica, as well as community endorsement, local collaborations with artists, plus a fair amount of media coverage, have made the *InPulse* programme one of the most dynamic initiatives thus far. One anticipates the future achievements of this small group of talented youngsters and their dedicated instructors. With that in mind, we remember those excited students who visited the Jamaica Biennial of 2017. After their experience, I would like to hazard a guess and say that their best is yet to come.

¹ Fred the Gold Fish passed away after an encounter with an adorable young visitor who loved him a little too much.

² These events are rivalled only by the Mandeville Arts Festival, currently the oldest arts festival in the country at twenty-six years, held in the town of Mandeville over 90 km west of Kingston.

HALLELUJAH WAVE
Film by The Inpulse
Art Students and
Nile Sauter



“The InPulse art project at Dunoon Park Technical High School has had one of the greatest impacts on the lives on many individuals including myself. It is an opportunity unlike anything I have ever experienced. We, the participants of this programme, get full hand knowledge in teaching from highly qualified teachers in the areas of Mathematics, English Language and Visual Art. The feeling is great because we interact with each other, share ideas, differences and most of all we work as a team. And even though we have different personalities we get along very well because we have the same goals and objectives.”

Kirk Cockburn
Inpulse Art Student





*Positive
impact*



ANIMATION DRAWINGS by the InPulse Art Students and Oneika Russell







“At Rubis Energy, we actively seek to partner with companies who share our commitment to sustainable development, and to steering Jamaica in the growth and peace path by building both the capacity and sustainable prosperity of the communities in which we operate.”

Alain Carreau CEO,
Rubis Energy Jamaica

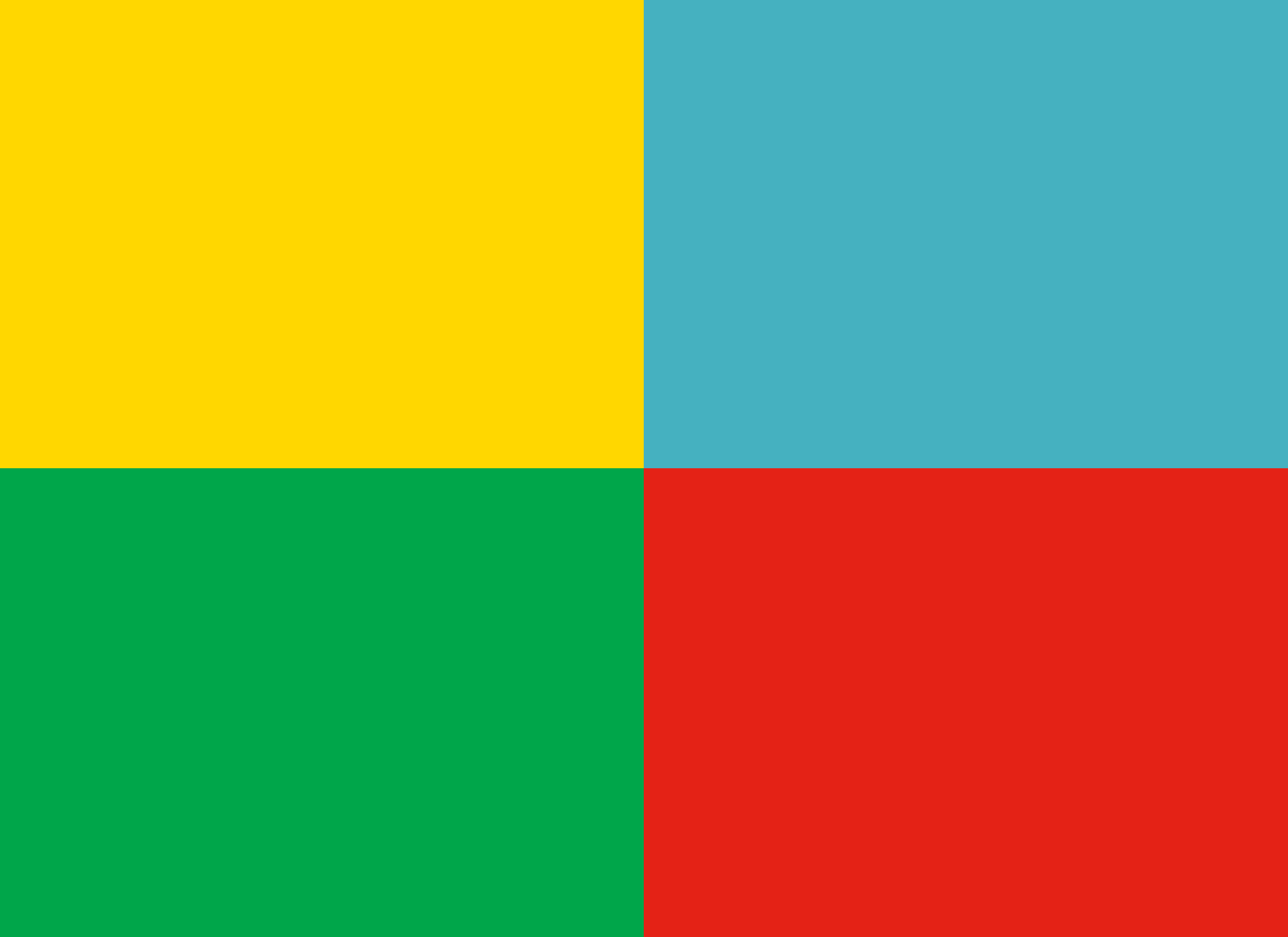


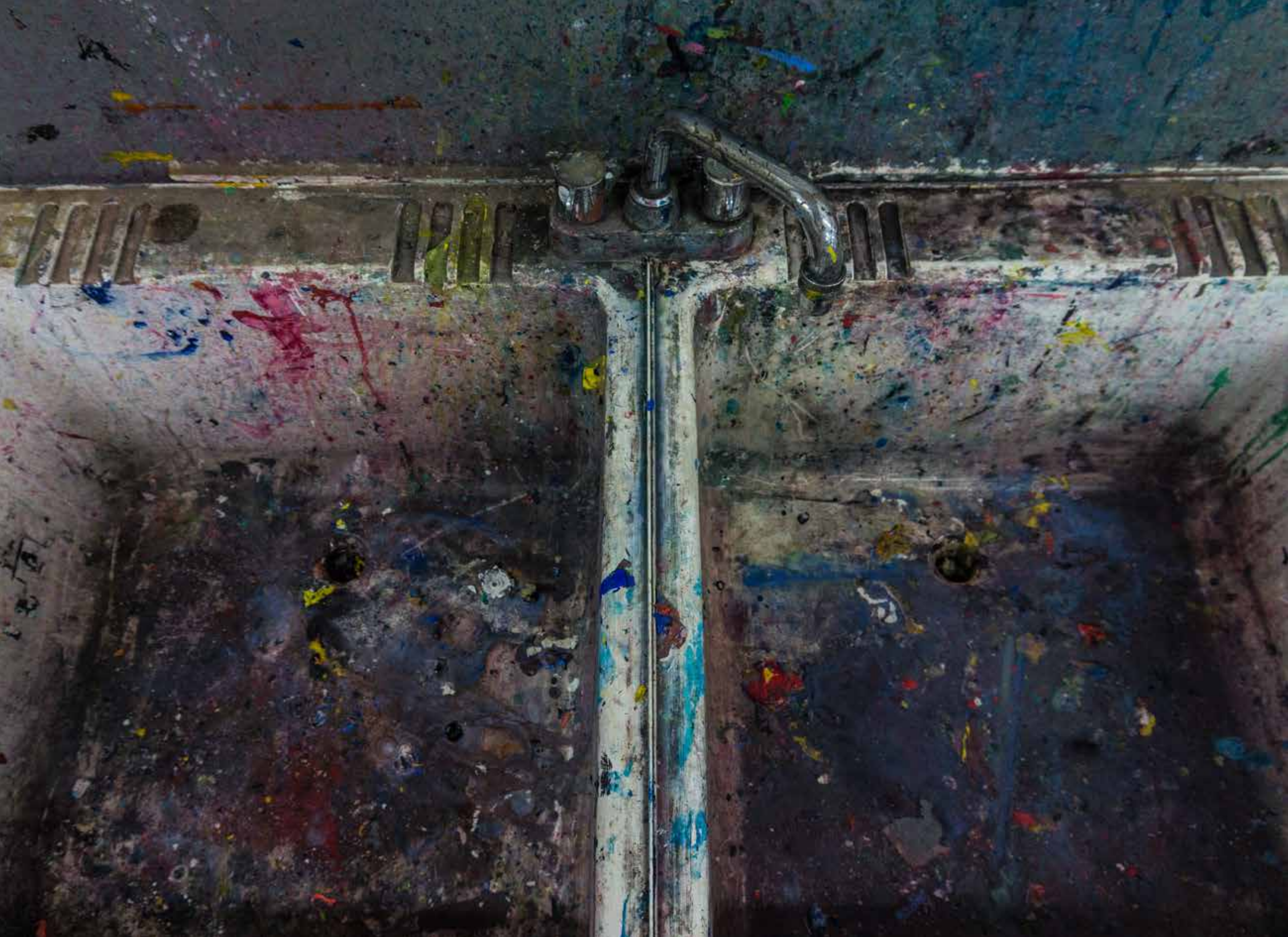
MENTORS



The goal of empowering Jamaican youth through the practice of visual arts as well as to improve the environment and the lives of these youths



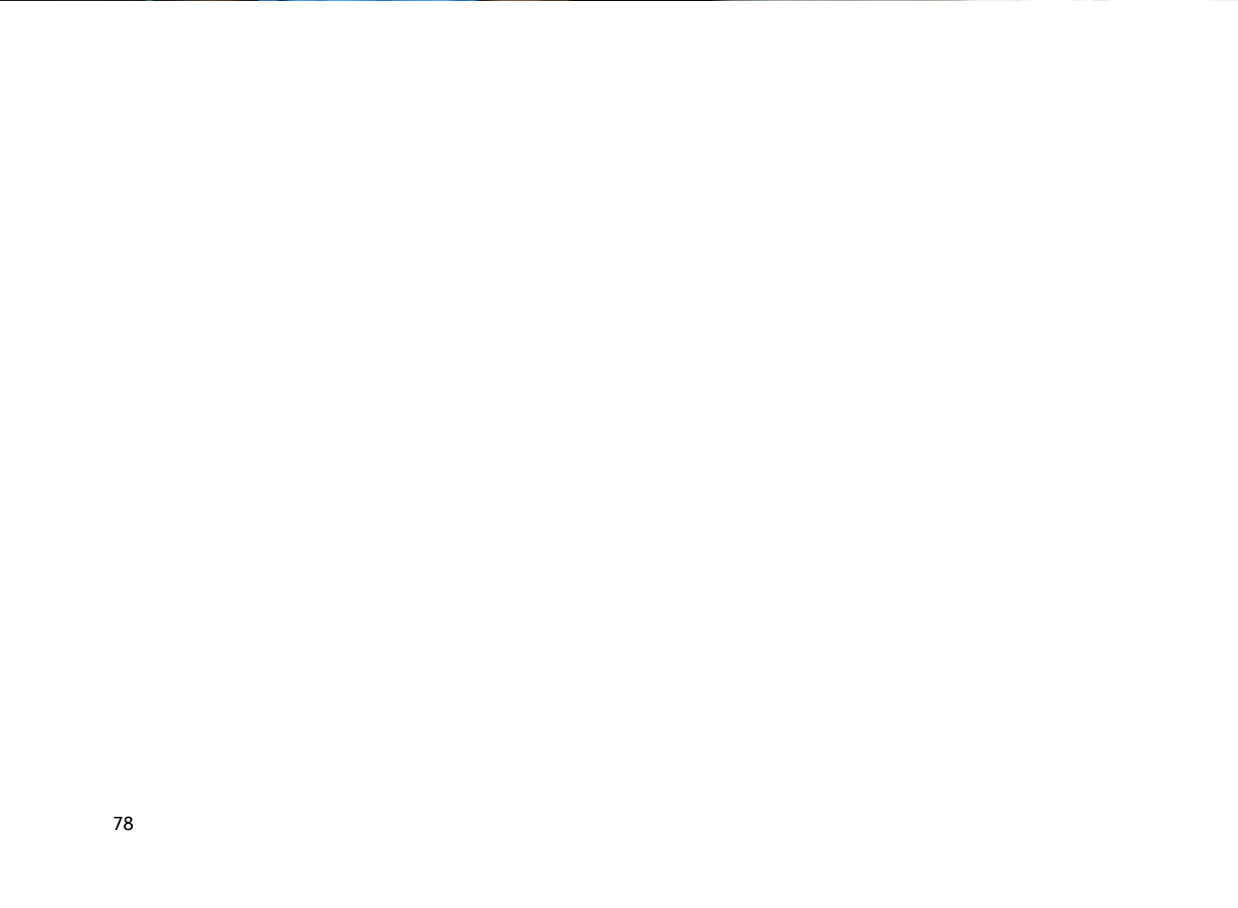
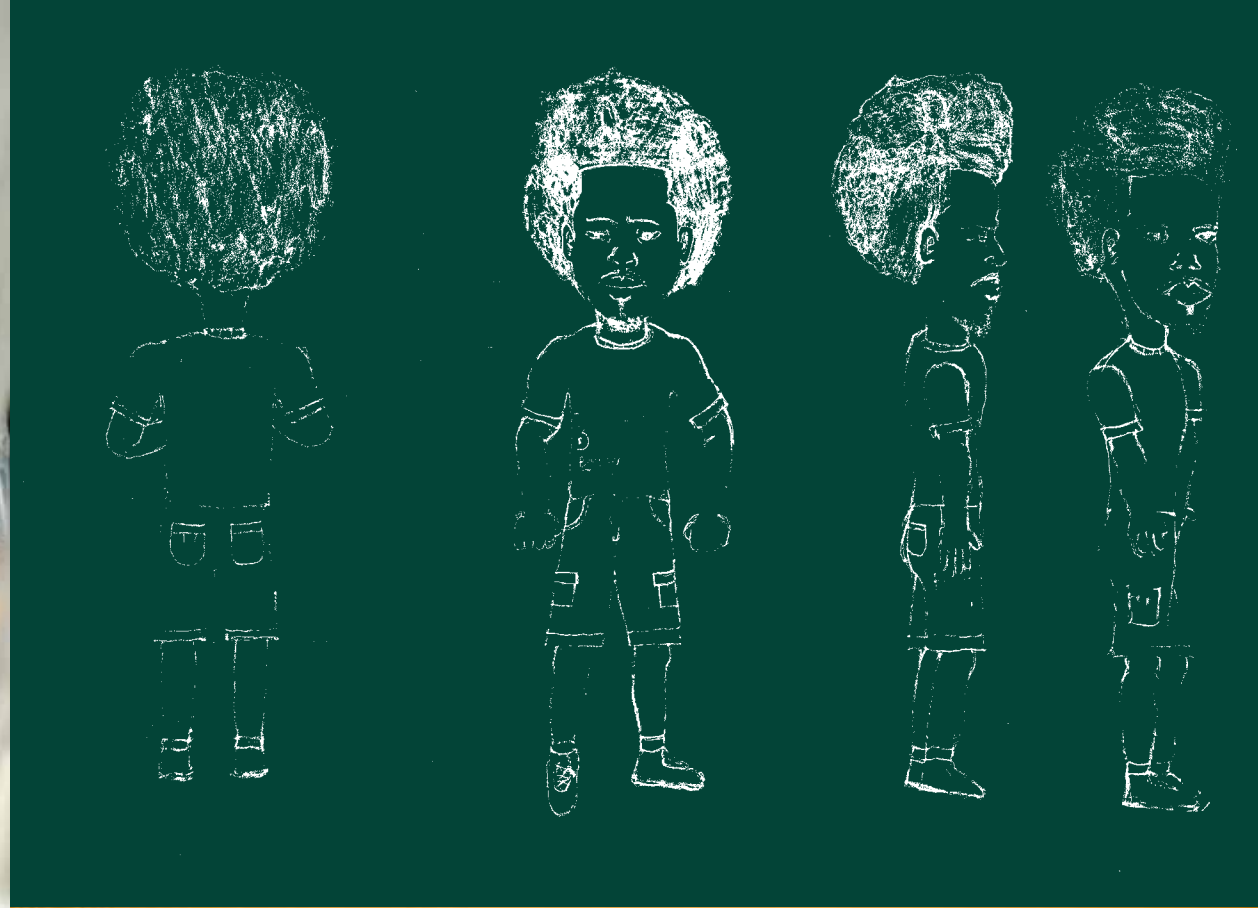




*The im-
portance
of cul-
ture and
of the
value of
art*







*Support to
contemporary art, Rubis
Mécénat aims
to develop
lasting social
art initiatives*





Oneika Russell *A little bit of what you fancy*, video still, 2017



East-
Kingston





Neighbouring communities who wish to develop their creativity and deepen their knowledge in the field of art



A photograph of a classroom scene. In the foreground, a young man in a blue polo shirt stands with his back to the camera, looking towards a large, vibrant mural on the wall. To his left, a young woman in a red shirt is looking down at a smartphone. Another student is partially visible on the far left, also looking at a device. The mural is a complex, colorful composition featuring large, stylized letters (like 'B', '2', 'C') and abstract shapes in shades of orange, yellow, blue, and pink. The text 'Through the learning of visual arts' is overlaid in a white, hand-drawn font across the center of the image.

*Through
the learn-
ing of
visual arts*



Long-term
initiative
within the
Dunoon
Park com-
munity in
East King-
ston



Camille Chedda *Rebuild*, cement, plastic bags, sequins, plastic toys and objects, rice, printed text, concrete blocks, 2015. Photo: Lazaros





The book was published on the occasion of the exhibition
INPULSE ART COLLECTIVE

By Jamaican artists from the InPulse art project

At Studio 174

174 Harbour Street, Kingston, Jamaica

21 January to 25 February 2018

An exhibition within the frame of the InPulse art project

A social-art initiative by Rubis Mécénat cultural fund in
collaboration with Rubis Energy Jamaica to support Jamaican
youth through the practice of visual arts at the Dunoon
Technical High School, Kingston, Jamaica.
Since 2015.

Essay by Monique Barnett-Davidson, Visual Arts and Museum
Professional living in Kingston

Artists from the InPulse art project

Andre Bowen | Demar Brackenridge | Ashaunie Bundy |
Kirk Cockburn | Davaska McDonald | Alisha Ferguson |
Rashid Gordon | Sheldon Green | Jordan Harrison |
Tyrece Henry | Sasha-Kay Hinds | Adriel Irwin | Damali Johnson |
Odwayne Johnson | Shevar Levy | Jevaughn Moven |
Rameesh Ramsay | Kyle Stone | Kyle-Lee Waugh

Thanks to the tremendous commitment of the mentors,
the visual artists Camille Chedda, Oneika Russell, Nile Saulter,
Phillip Thomas, Stanford Watson, Haiti-based Atis Rezistans
represented by Andre Eugene and Jean-Claude Saintilus, and
Leah Gordon.

Thanks to Monique Barnett-Davidson.

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Nesmart Nelson, Cadie Ashley, IxesRoy and Andrea Gooding
from Rubis Eastern Caribbean, to the Dunoon Technical High
School team, Shawn Aaron, Steffan Harriott, Dania Roberts,
Duhane Telphia and to the project assistant Kimberly Reid.

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