

Thomas-
Girvan
jasmine
fire
Sacred
in
Bathed





I know why a caged bird sings - Can we find a different Melody?, 2017.

The artist Jasmine Thomas-Girvan lives in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which consists of the main two islands, and numerous smaller islands around it in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is a big island archipelago: an area of sea with a lot of small islands in it. The artist lives in a home surrounded by nature. Nature is important for the artist and a lot of the materials she uses in her artworks come from it. For example, she uses coconuts, bird feathers, palm leaves, rocks and different kind of seeds. These materials show us the richness of nature in the Caribbean.

Begin where you are

"Begin where you are."
George Lamming

This is a quote from writer George Lamming. The text and the writer are a big inspiration for the artist.

"Begin where you are" for the artist Jasmine Thomas-Girvan means that she likes to make artworks that tell us something about the history of the Caribbean. This is where she grew up and still lives. In her art pieces she uses not only the materials she finds in nature around her house, but also washed-up objects she finds on the beach. She combines all these materials with objects in glass or iron that she makes herself.

Together they form art pieces that tell us something about the history of the Caribbean. The history of the Caribbean is sometimes difficult, but the artist also likes to show the beauty of this history and invites us to think about it. The work shows how incredibly strong people are.



Terra Preta, 2016.

1a.
Have a close look at the art piece. Circle the materials that you think are part of the art piece.

1b.
Which story do you think this art piece wants to tell us?

calabash

coconuts

seeds

feathers

bones

silk

earth

palm frond

paint

wood

grass

leaves

brush

cow horn

waste

The princess and the pea

Do you know the story of the princess and the pea? This story is a fairy tale about a queen and a king who have a son that wants to marry a real princess.

To find out if the girls that present themselves are real princesses, they come up with a way to check. They believe that a real princess has to be so sensitive that when she sleeps on a pile of twenty mattresses, she will still feel a tiny pea hidden under all of those mattresses.

A lot of time passes and no girl feels the pea. But one day, a girl comes along. She wakes up after having slept on all the mattresses, and when asked how was her night, confesses that she did not sleep at all because it felt like there was a rock under her mattress. This is the real princess, which the prince was looking for, so they get married.



The artist Jasmine Thomas-Girvan used this story in the artwork *Real Princess*. This art piece shows a big image of a princess. This princess is wearing on her head a crown and a bird. Underneath this image you see a closet with eight different drawers. The closet looks like the pile of mattresses from the fairy tale. Each drawer represents an event from the history of the Caribbean. The princess feels just like the one from the fairy tale: she senses each event from each drawer. She feels the deep grief that is part of each event. The drawers represent the slave trade, looting and other cruelties. Do you see the bird on the head of the princess? This bird looks backwards and reminds us of the fact that we have to look backwards to move forward.

Have a close look at the art piece.

2a.
The art piece shows us eight different drawers and each one of them represents an event from the history of the Caribbean. Choose a drawer that draws your attention. Write down what you think the drawers tell us. You can use the internet to look for more information.

2b.
Color this rectangle in a color that, according to you, represents the event in the best way.

Real Princess, 2016.

Assemblage

The type of art pieces Jasmine Thomas-Girvan makes are called *assemblages*. This means she uses a lot of different materials and objects and combines these together. In With assemblage you can use anything you find: things like fabrics, objects from nature, iron, trash or images from magazines. By combining and connecting the objects in an artistic way, a complete artwork is made. The objects composed together tell a story.

3a.
Take a piece of clay that fits in the palm of your hand.

3b.
Find a place where you can stand or sit down without being disturbed. Hold the piece of clay in your hand and close your eyes. Imagine you are a tree with long branches. Imagine how your branches look. Are there leaves on them? Yes? What color are the leaves? How high do your branches reach?

3c.
Imagine your tree has roots. These roots grow deep into the ground - they are as long as the branches. There is a wind blowing and it sways you from side to side.

3d.
Think of the place you would like to grow as a tree. Maybe in front of your house? Or in the park? Maybe on a tropical island. Write this down on a white piece of paper or on the next page in this activity.

3e.
Now make the tree from the clay you held in your hands. Don't forget to make the roots.

3f.
Take the piece of paper that you have written on and place your tree on it.

3g.
Look for objects that tell us something about the place you have written about. Think of materials like sand, earth and leaves from the park. You can also use images from magazines that show us something about the place where your tree stands.

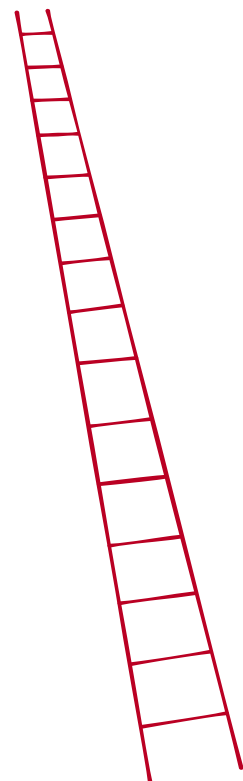
3h.
Form all these elements into a real art piece by connecting them together. You can also use fabric to do so.

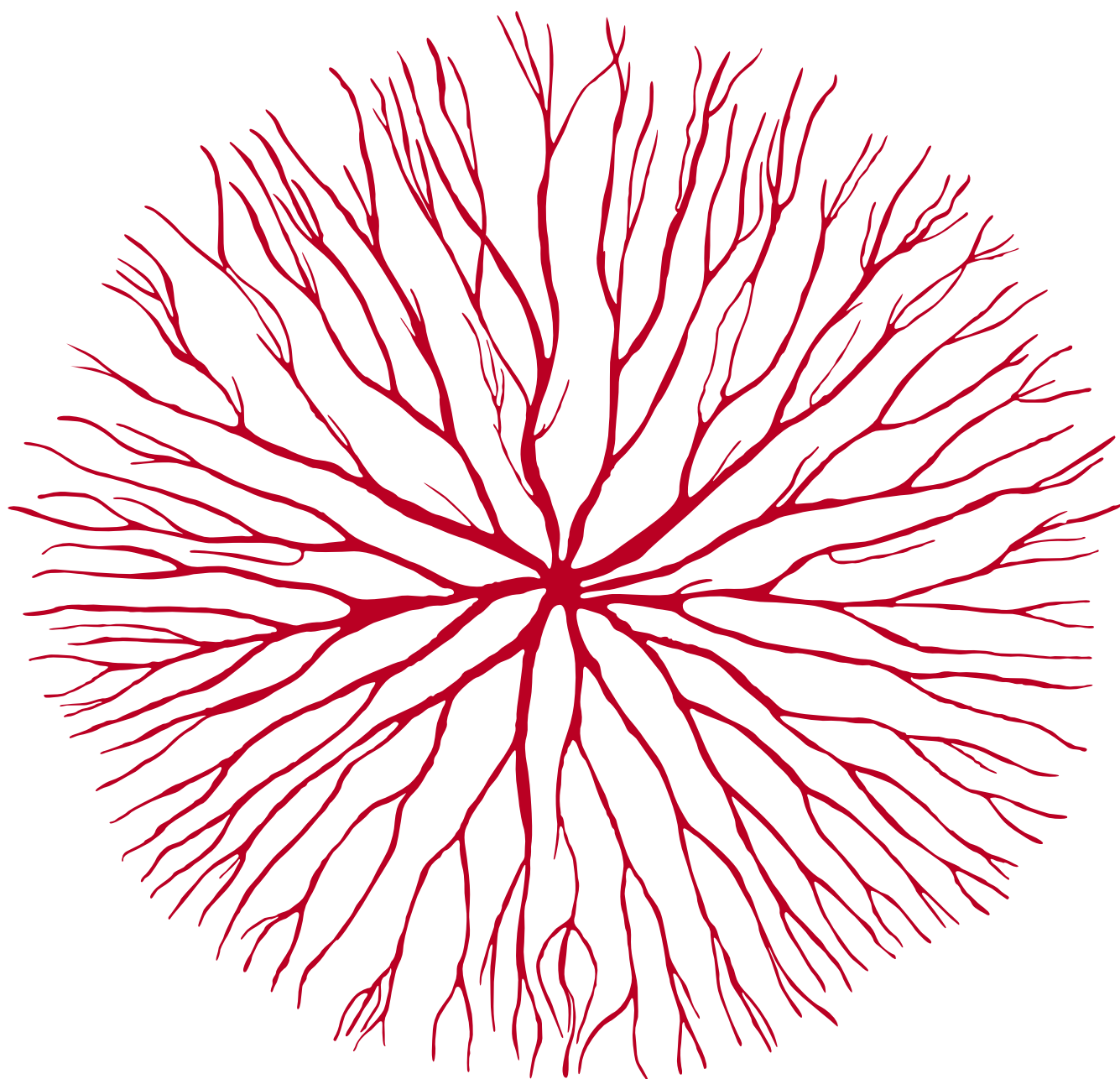
3i.
Make a picture of your assemblage artwork and email your picture to activiteiten@kunstinstituutmelly.nl. We will place the picture of your art piece on the [website](#).

Tip! Need some inspiration? Click [here](#) and see what other participants have already made.



Zangukunu-An instrument for levitation, 2021.





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© 2021 Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam.
Kunstinstituut Melly is supported by
Gemeente Rotterdam and Ministerie
van OCW. This project is made possible
by Stichting Ammodo and Henry Moore
Foundation.

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