



Sigi Torinus: Into the Light



## Sigi Torinus: Into the Light

Curated by Srimoyee Mitra  
**Art Gallery of Windsor**





### Director's Foreword

*Sigi Torinus: Into the Light* is the artist's first major exhibition with the Art Gallery of Windsor. We are pleased to present it in the context of the Gallery's commitment to developing solo projects with prominent artists working in the region and our international border community. This exhibition shows the artist's commitment to multi-media and site-specific installations using moving image technologies and exploring notions of home, belonging, nomadism, migration and mobility.

Sigi Torinus is Professor for Integrated Media at the University of Windsor, where she has been teaching since 2002. She was born in the United States Virgin Islands and spent her youth there. Her formal education was obtained through study in Germany and California, and since 1991 she has developed an impressive international exhibition record showing her work in Australia, the United States, Germany, Russia, Cuba, Norway, Italy, Ireland and Canada, among other countries. Prior to coming to Windsor, she taught at the University of California, Berkeley, the San Francisco Art Institute, Braunschweig Art Institute in Germany, and at the Academy of Art, San Francisco.

Torinus' work has been consistently engaged in crossing social, technical and cultural borders. While establishing her art practice in Windsor, she has also become a founding member of the Noiseborder Ensemble with Dr. Brent Lee and Dr. Nicholas Papador at the University of Windsor. The collective is devoted to the development of tools and methods for integrating acoustic, electroacoustic and video performance. This exhibition and supporting e-publication bring together exhibition documentation of the artist's work alongside contributions from the AGW's Curator of Contemporary Art, Srimoyee Mitra, and guest writer Honor Ford-Smith. The feature essay by Ford-Smith elaborates on Torinus' experience as a white subject growing up in the Caribbean and situates these experiences amidst post-colonial discourses. Mitra's statement takes occasion to remind viewers of the immersive nature of the exhibition experience and the key visual themes within the work. I thank all who have worked together to develop both the exhibition and e-publication contents, including the Gallery's supporting key staff members Otto Buj, Nicole McCabe and Stephan Nilsson, who all worked to ensure the exhibition and publication were realized to support the artist's vision.

The AGW is indebted to the ongoing support from The Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council in bringing this project to fruition. The City of Windsor continues to support the AGW on a new operating model, taking on full responsibilities for the maintenance and long-term care of our purpose-built home where we are now a 49-year gratis lease tenant on the mezzanine and upper levels in our premium exhibition galleries, and where Torinus' exhibition was presented. The stable funding and support from these organizations has ensured that we are able to deliver a strong program of contemporary art exhibitions and corresponding publications for our audiences to enjoy.

Catharine Mastin, PhD, Director

*Into the Light*, 2014 (video still)





### Curator's Foreword

*Into the Light* brings together a series of immersive artworks that are familiar and disorienting at the same time. Using photography, video and objects, artist Sigi Torinus develops multi-sensory installations that ask viewers to consider how individuals navigate space and one's assumptions of places that are foreign or unknown to them. Of German heritage, Torinus grew up in the Caribbean island of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, well before it was touted as a prime vacation destination as it is today packed with all-inclusive resorts and hotels catering to holiday-makers as the tourism industry, is one of the prime drivers of its economy. Since then she has lived and worked in Germany, California, and for the past decade Torinus has made Canada her home. The experience of migration and movement echoes in her art practice as she experiments with light and sound in poetic and playful ways to create images and environments that are constantly in flux, visible and intangible at the same time. For this exhibition Torinus returns to the Caribbean to develop a body of work that explores the trope of an island beyond its geographical and topographical meaning but rather as dialectic between location and dislocation, isolation and connection, absence and presence.

This exhibition is named after a large-scale video installation, *Into the Light*, which captures the everyday life, urban spaces and daily rituals on the streets of cities across Cuba, where she has family. The central recurring image is the word REVOLUCIÓN written on various walls. It remains visible only for a few seconds at a time, and becomes obliterated by pedestrians passing by, traffic and various other 'distractions'. It serves as a metaphor for the grand ideas and concepts we have in our lives that give us orientation, at times turning into dogma, or serving as something that calls to be challenged. In her artist statement, Torinus writes, "Interruptions and interventions are necessary as "breathing space" for developing both concrete solutions to the 'grand' idea as well as possible alternatives." The perception of the text itself changes based on the different colors, fonts and spaces in which they are rendered. In this way, the artist reminds viewers that ideas and meanings change over time and never remain static. *Into the Light*, the installation, offers viewers glimpses into the everyday life in a variety of cities in Cuba where she made the work. Contrary to the simplistic, idealized images of the beaches and sand that the island represents for North American vacationers, this installation conveys the nuances and intricacies of daily life it's diverse culture and people that remain hidden from the mass media. Torinus takes her research further by exploring the myths and rituals that are passed down generationally through oral traditions and practice while mining personal and collective memories of island culture in the Virgin Islands and beyond. The phrase, "into the light", can also be understood as, "making something known"; "disclosing a secret" or "the act of narrating." Similarly in this exhibition, Torinus playfully activates multiple of ways of seeing, listening and understanding an idea, a belief, a place in ways that transcend stereotypical assumptions with a world view that is vibrant, eclectic and changing.

Srimoyee Mitra, Curator of Contemporary Art

*Into the Light*, 2014 (video still)





*Bleached by Nostalgia, 2014 (postcard detail)*

## **Soaring at the Crossroads: Mobility, Stillness and Space in the Art of Sigi Torinus**

Honor Ford-Smith



*I'm flying. High and cool as a kite, I float over the all-inclusive hotels and their swimming pools, the markets of fruit, plastic and strips of false hair, the jerk chicken stands, the hot road and the turquoise bay. Sometimes it is the island as it is now. Or it is the island of my childhood when boats were beached along shaded green and white shores and the fishermen with the big circular net closed in rhythmically on the doomed fish. Then I hover over mountains damp with the mist that circles me. The silver powder of ferns dusts my ankles as I land and walk through the damp earth. Then I take off again as the sea rolls in and out and the black sand near the shore is speckled with tiny pale pink shells.*

*And then it changes and the landscape is new. Reassembled from the ancient original, it has shapes I have never noticed. Old remembered topographies have been pieced together into something I have never seen before. I look down from a familiar slope unto a new cove right where I have been swimming for so many years without knowing it was there. A town appears in the distance. It is an old town so it must have been there all along. Roads wind through old neighbourhoods that I have never seen. I have been here so many times, how did I miss that? When did I miss it? Now, then or in the future?*

Sigi Torinus' *Into the Light* (2014) is like this dream. Taking flight and landing, it evokes the lyrical tension between soaring and stillness in a layered meditation on the meaning of migration and home. At this crossroads of possibility, you enter a world where boundaries between the human and the more than human collapse and the spirit challenges borders of all kinds, moving with fluidity from one physical form to another: human to animal, earth to water, sky to sand to mangrove, and symbol to materiality. I propose that this vision of mobility and groundedness is subtly informed by Caribbean principles of shape-shifting. In a variety of ways, Torinus' work juggles different and sometimes opposing signs and symbols provoking us to a transcendent reimagining of infinite ways of being.

#### **Flight and interconnectedness: The cazuela of space**

An empty chair hovers suspended at the gallery's entrance. Nearby small, framed snapshots hang on the wall beside it. *Bleached by Nostalgia*, as this collection of images is called, shows Torinus growing up in St. Thomas in the American Virgin Islands (USVI) where she was born. Here she hugs a donkey or dances with her dog. There she takes notes at a school outing or helps nurture a tiny coconut tree. Scattered antique postcards of the tourist's Caribbean offset these. Opposite two empty wooden schoolroom chairs flank a horizontal split projection of sea, sky and landscape. Looped video images of water, sky and earth are hidden in small windows in the seats of the chairs. They call into being the desire for release, or for *travelling*, the word many Caribbean people use for the movement of spirit out of body. Taken together these small images create a moving sensory ecology, mixing North and South, time and place, human and more than human, body and spirit.

Torinus works across spatial and cultural borders as any artist formed in the Caribbean must if they are to negotiate the difficult regional history of colonization. What Torinus shows in her work to viewers in Europe or North America is always already constrained by the long history of racial representation and Othering through which the region is inevitably read. Art is after all brought into being by all the institutions and languages that authorize it. These institutions produce what we are able to see and not see and they structure how we make sense of cultural and social spaces. For example it might be easy at first glance to read the video installation *Mirame Pero No Me Toques* (2011) as yet another example of depictions of otherness, in the tradition of films depicting a white anthropologist at work. Upon looking again, Torinus' work disrupts this by rupturing the viewer's gaze and turning it back on itself.

At a Santeria ceremony for her Cuban father-in-law, Torinus appears in a circle of family members holding a goat. The action fades in and out, making it difficult to follow the narrative or fix the meaning. At the centre of the ritual, she turns to face the camera, a small, pale, blond figure looking out at us from the centre of an Afro-Cuban rite under the direction of the Santero or priest. Beside the images of the ceremony, on the other side of the split screen, young brown men stare straight out at the viewer confronting us with their hip-hop sign language. They seem to challenge us: making us conscious of domination and interconnectedness and the ways in which the act of looking is itself haunted by the discursive history of colonization and racial struggle. This treatment of the subject emerges from her experience in the Caribbean, Europe and North America — one in which disparate places simultaneously overlap, struggle and exist together in spite of each telling very different stories about belonging and identity.

Unlike Canada, where national narratives celebrate the heroism of European migrants who subdued and settled the “the true north strong and free,” the Caribbean white minority from which Torinus comes, inhabits a precarious and ambivalent cultural space. Despite considerable privilege, their presence in Black spaces during colonialism made these figures suspect, “impure” or “contaminated” in the eyes of Europeans. The ideal image of the enlightened, restrained and cultivated European subject contrasted with the ugly brutality of slavery and made all too clear the vulgar violence on which Europe's humanism depended. The discomfort that resulted from this gave rise to a stereotypical racial figure, that of the degenerate Creole, in colonial discourse by the 19th century. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) portrays a crazy white Creole woman incarcerated in her English husband's attic, hidden away until her husband tries to marry the earnest, hardworking, English Jane Eyre. The wedding ceremony is dramatically interrupted, her existence revealed and union prevented. Dominican writer Jean Rhys' famously reclaims this woman's agency in her *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which is literary rejoinder to Bronte's novel. Rhys (1966) substitutes the idea of liberating flight for the death that Bronte describes. The Creole heroine liberates herself from her colonial and matrimonial prison, taking flight like a bird, soaring through the air as she leaps from the flaming battlements of the colonial mansion into the arms of Tia, her black childhood friend.



This ambivalent racial reconciliation and liberation from confinement comes about through two contradictory impulses: flight and cross-racial friendship. At a philosophical level, the impulse toward flight echoes the principles behind marronage that structured regional culture during the long plantation period. At that time, maroon (or in Spanish cimarrones) was the name given to rebels seeking freedom. They created communities of maroons across the region and they launched struggles against the slavery and confinement on plantations often winning important concessions from colonizers in the form of land grants.

The idea of cross racial friendship is far more cautiously approached by Black writers. Scholars and writers like the Cubans Fernando Ortiz and José Martí, African-Caribbean poets like Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott as well as visual artists like Wilferdo Lam and Aubrey Williams can all be read as proposing that the main contribution of Caribbean thought arises from the region's everyday interruption of pure categories of Western exclusionary classifications. They argue, in different ways, that region's future depends on Caribbean people's willingness to transform reality in their own interests through appropriating and mixing cultural signs and symbols that appear irreconcilable. This transformation can be brought about through unequal and sometimes violent struggle as proposed by Frantz Fanon, but it can also be brought about through friendship and love. Here the Cuban feminist Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda insisting on the cross racial erotic as an impetus for freedom in her novel *Sab*, which advocated for the abolition of slavery and women's rights. Edna Manley, nationalist Jamaican artist combined symbols and images from African art and European traditions in modernist iconographies of the sacred, the national secular and the natural in her depiction of a hybrid imaginary.

This ability to think across boundaries is the basic principle of hybridity. It is the cazuela or cooking pot made up of many ingredients. It is also the crossroads, the space of Papa Legba, the trickster God of the Yoruba who made the middle passage to the Caribbean with the forced migration of his people. Legba reconciles contradictions and opens the way for communication between the living and the dead, between here and there, past and present and between the human and the more than human world. Legba is guardian of the point where different energies meet. He enables the crossing of borders, and controls communication between the living and the dead. Through him there can be a mingling of energies because he is able to juggle productively with oppositions without attempting to obliterate their differences. Torinus' work inhabits this metaphysical crossroads using a visual method that juggles the African sacred with Caribbean Indigenous, the Western philosophical and elements of Asian spiritual traditions. She works between overlapping traditions of sacred and secular, nature and culture in ways that are filtered through the imagery of her personal formation.

Childhood photograph (Sigi and mother Trudy)







### **Moving and being moved: Space and possibility**

In *Bleached by Nostalgia* (2014) Torinus takes the risk of revealing the taboo autobiographical experience of moving between boundaries. Her story is one of separation and movement. Her parents were migrated from Europe to St. Thomas in the 1950s. Her father grew up in the Ukraine, Poland and Chile and was sent to the Virgin Islands as a skilled worker employed to service Volkswagen cars. (This is likely one source of Torinus' interest in mobility, mapping and transportation.) Her mother was from rural Germany and grew up on a farm surviving the Blitz of the Second World War. German immigrants in the Caribbean came mainly as indentured workers in the 19th century and their descendants can still be found in villages of Jamaica. This family came outside of this history propelled, by flight from the European post war turbulence. Sigi was born and raised in St. Thomas. Unlike most whites in St. Thomas who went to private schools, she attended the local public school. In childhood she confronted the disorienting fact of her own difference, becoming aware of the peculiar eccentricities of the white minority while also fielding questions from childhood friends who found her an aberration and wanted to know if she shared the same color blood. She learned to be a loner who made small constructions in the yard or helped her father with his photography.

In her mid-teens the family moved back to Germany where she learned that the Caribbean is understood only through its racialization and primitive inferiority. She quickly found that in spite of how she looked, whites racialized her. To her surprise the language she spoke was not considered English and no one could understand it. She was uncomfortable in a society where people classified her as belonging to a general category of "elsewhere" and where the Virgin Islands were interchangeable with Hawaii. In a bizarre but oddly familiar story of racism she describes being put into a bathtub and scrubbed repeatedly by an adult who felt that her skin was dirty. In art school the bright colours she chose for her work were considered vulgar and she was predictably told "You can go right back to the Caribbean with those colours." She was, as Mary Douglas (1966) might put it, matter out of place, falling outside the historically constructed spaces that regulate where bodies are supposed to be and how they are supposed to perform if they are not to be considered dangerous and threatening to social order. Confused, for a time she stopped speaking altogether.

How do people make sense of experiences that fall outside of the habitual meaning making discourses of society? The obvious answer to this is that they have to find ways to create counter- narratives of community. For many Caribbean people in the 20th century the stories of resistance that supported decolonization provided this. In the Virgin Islands this possibility was prevented by the fact the Danes sold the islands to the Americans. Unlike islands marked by nationalist struggles against the colonizer, the USVI are a dependency of that enduring imperial presence in the region, the USA.

Childhood photograph (Sigi with 6th-grade classmates)



The islands are therefore part, but not part of the US, and are referred to, not as a colony, but as a “non self-governing” entity that exists as a dependency within anomalous terms and conditions established by its powerful ruler. Like most of the Northern Caribbean, its population is mainly African. It is English and Creole speaking but is not part of the regional political and cultural community because of its relationship with the US, so it doesn’t conform to the category of the small island nation state. This jumble of competing signs and systems produces a tangled location from which it is difficult to find a place to speak. For Torinus, this was exacerbated by her family’s migration to Germany where there is little or no Caribbean diaspora and where her childhood experience faded into silence.

This silent past was left undisturbed by the Eurocentric art education she received where her exposure was almost entirely to Western theorists: Kant, Hegel, Adorno, Schiller, Gramsci, Bloch and Brecht and so on. Her MFA studies in California were dominated by Western post-structuralist thought. None of these theories dealt with the either Caribbean cosmologies nor did it make sense of the lived reality of complicated cross-cultural identifications. All this may be the reason why Torinus’ early work did not engage directly with either the landscape or the everyday life of the Caribbean. She preferred, she says, to refer to it indirectly through the use of colour and theme since her European audiences were either not interested and/or had no tools to understand her world.

Her approach altered when she began to look for explanations for experiences that formal Western art education either left out or seemed unable to address. In California she practiced meditation and explored healing and energy work while continuing to work across the Caribbean and in Europe. Then in 2002, she moved with her husband, Cuban artist José Seoane, to Toronto, Canada, where Caribbean culture mixes and mingles in ordinary ways throughout the city. Here the Portuguese shop blasts reggae and the Chinese bakery sells plantain tarts. Roti, jerk chicken and patties are easy to find. Cumbia mixes with Soca and Kardinal Offishal is only one of a new generation of African-Canadian musicians who trace their roots to the Caribbean. On a Friday night you can find a bar full of Cuban musicians jamming with Hungarian violinists.

This and the remembered landscape of both north and south are the cultural and spatial impetus for this exhibition.

Torinus assembles fragments, energies and actions from different geographies in videos and objects and she places them in textured conversation with each other. The contemplative audio-visual installation *Sun in Pisces* (2014) is juxtaposed with a busy sonic montage of moving streetscapes. The down to earth aspects of Caribbean oral traditions ring out beside the transcendent and the sublime rendering of moving water and clouds. Here, Torinus performs both moving and stillness, silence and sound simultaneously so that the ebb and flow of motion itself becomes the still place from which home can emerge — not as a static immobility but as a generative crossroads, a cazuela bubbling with possibility.

*Olofi*, 2001–12 (video still)





### **Making Different movements: spatial, spiritual and sonic**

Carole Boyce Davies (2013) in her book *Caribbean Spaces*, reminds us, that movement beyond the fragmentation of borders is as much an exceptional quality of diaspora and Caribbeaness as it is a way of being and doing in the world. She argues: “It assumes movement as it makes and remakes the critical elements of Caribbean geography: landscape and seascape, sky and sun, but also music, food and style.” (Boyce Davies, 2014, p. 1) This imperative to move, to be moved and at the same time to remain grounded is what Torinus’ work, taken as a whole, makes possible and productive for the viewer. She comes back to the place she started from only to soar out and back again and again. This insistence on movement beyond rigid borders while remaining grounded in spirit would not be possible without the structures provided by Caribbean methods and the container offered by Caribbean space in Toronto.

*Into the Light* literally refocuses discussions about the region and its people away from images of trauma and poverty reminding us of what Wilson Harris (1995) called the limbo gateway. He argues for the generative power of middle passage in the cultures of the Americas, proposing that the violent moment where mourning, loss and restriction become an impetus for transformation symbolized in the graceful contortions of the limbo dance. Wilson Harris sees the archipelago as a bridge, a womb of space that mediates all cultural space. The dense history of violence begins to be repaired in the struggle to recreate, repair and repeat place of origin, only with a difference in the present.

Torinus’ audio-visual installation *Into the Light* (2014), is the largest work in the exhibition. It tells of movements that are physical and movements that are social and political acts. It travels Cuban streets while also recalling the social movements of the 20th century. As Cubans move through urban streetscapes absorbed in daily routines, so too do the video projections merge, swallow, overlay and encircle each other. The word Revolución disappears and re-appears over and over, forming a faded backdrop to the movements and noises of pedestrians, animals, cars, buses and bicycles crossing in front of it. Street cries and conversation mingle with the eerie noises of electronic music, dogs sniff the sidewalk, birds tweet and horns blow all at once. A rusty merry-go-round in Sueño, a barrio of Santiago de Cuba, creaks as it circles with its load of children. A horse drawn cart clip clops, a motor-bike zooms past and an antique car floats off left — all moving, constantly moving. All this contrasts with the faded but stable wall proclaiming the utopian aspirations that inspired the Third World revolutionaries of the generations of the mid 20th century. Perhaps their aspirations are now performed less as grand apocalyptic gestures than as smaller, imperfect, mobile acts that remake everyday space again and again. Torinus’ snapshots of childhood and school, also perform this everyday remaking for she writes over their frames and on top of the photographs. Framed with chalk-inscribed slate, torn here and there, she reassembles snapshots adding sonic fragments of oral wisdom. Mixing English vocabulary with West African mnemonic style, audio clips softly speak to the viewer offering traditional proverbial bites of wisdom like, “When belly full, bottom glad” or “ You lie down with dog, you get up with flea.”

### **Grounding beyond our Boundaries: Soaring and Stillness**

In an old recording called *Groundation* from the 1970s Count Ossie of the Mystic Revelations of Rastafari plays with the double meaning of word Caribbean. It was, he says, referring to the forced African migration, carried us beyond our borders. Count Ossie’s word play evokes a highly productive contradiction — that of the rhythmic interplay between being grounded, sometimes forcibly, while the spirit simultaneously moves beyond the limitations of that space across borders of land, air and sea, body and mind, human and non human. This is the essential but productive tension of diaspora and it organizes Torinus’ work within themes of migration, navigation, transportation, flight, swimming, walking and other forms of mobility.

*Into the Light* moves you for a moment beyond the literal stasis of the immoveable materialities that structure everyday spaces, into the low passing clouds, between mangroves and waves, sand and feathers, raindrops and small shoals of fish in the 7-channel installation *Soundings/Aweigh* (2014). Soaring with it you think about how you might re-imagine belonging, community and alterity in a world in which this mobile interconnection between things is acknowledged. A circle of stools stand inanimate. The seats open to reveal audio visual images of the sea, fish, sand, and feathers, human feet move through breaking waves, while a map projected on to the wall plots the homing patterns of birds and fish.

This movement beyond inner and outer borders, beyond the guarded prisons of embodied social identity performs the desire to re-imagine home as a mobile and pleasurable interconnection between places and between the human and the non-human. *10,000 Monarchs*, Torinus’ performance at the Art Gallery of Windsor, is an example of this pleasurable act of bridging inner and outer worlds through multiple ways of soaring and landing and through exchanging one physical form for another. She was inspired to create a performance by watching the monarch butterflies on Point Pelee, Ontario take off for their winter home in Mexico. In *10,000 Monarchs* she brings together science and art, inner and outer, flight and stillness, human and nature, exchanging one form of travelling for another. Working from a meditative trance, she interprets participants’ mental pictures of how they navigate the spaces between home and away. These ‘pictures’ are placed in a dialogue with images of monarchs taking off or landing within scientific explanations of their navigational tools.

What might it mean if such a subjunctive experience could in turn inspire interconnected ways of knowing, being and doing in the world of the everyday?

Honor Ford-Smith  
May 27, 2014

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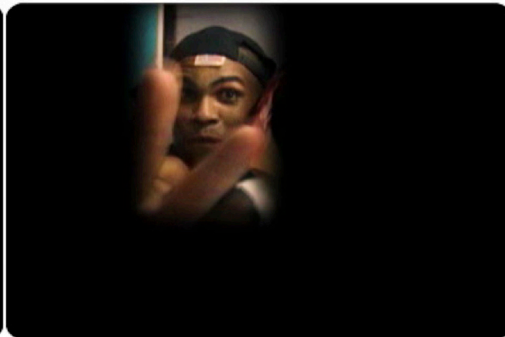
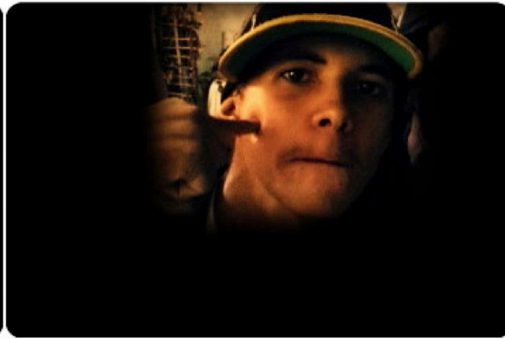
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**Honor Ford-Smith** is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Community and Environmental Arts at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto. Her most recent work focuses on memory, urban violence and performance in Jamaican communities and includes the performance cycle *Letters from the Dead*, a series of public interventions commemorating those who have died as a result of neo-liberal violence. Her publications include *Lionheart Gal: Life stories of Jamaican Women*, (with Sistren) Kingston: University of the West Indies Press; *3 Jamaican Plays 1976–1986*, Kingston, Paul Issa Publications; and *my mother's last dance*, an anthology of poems. Toronto: Sister Vision Press available through the University of Toronto Press.

*Into the Light*, 2014 (video still)







*Mirame Pero No Me Toques (Look, But Don't Touch)* confronts the viewers with the competing gaze of a group of adolescent men who perform popular hip hop hand gestures energetically all the while looking back at their audiences as if questioning them of their assumptions on young black males in mainstream media culture. In another vignette, Torinus offers viewers glimpses into a domestic ceremony with Santeros (a spiritual practitioner of the Yoruba system of beliefs called Santería), conducted to invoke the well-being of an ailing family member, during her visit to Cuba in 2003. While the video gradually reveals the multiple players in the ceremony, including her, she grants viewers permission to witness glimpses of a highly personal experience and question the invisible and perceived boundaries between self and 'other'; insider and outsider; expat and tourist as she looks back into the camera. Paired together, the dramatic divergences between the boisterous youth and the hypnotic rituals of the ceremony open up questions of cultural difference and agency, both parties claim their space in different ways and challenge viewers and the artist herself to broaden understandings of place and identity as performative, complex and hybrid spaces.

## Artist Statement

As an artist born and raised in the Virgin Islands, and since traversing between the Caribbean and the North, I've been creating a series of works investigating the island (sun-drenched, white-sanded, lush, with blue-watered coastlines) as a metaphor situated somewhere between isolation and uniqueness, the fascination of the faraway, the promise of a slower pace, shipwreck and utopia...

My work plays with notions of how we inhabit space that are both tangible and at other times elusive to the body. We are constantly recording 'pictures' — they are stored in the body and contribute to a huge database of non-linear, embodied, physical and spiritual information. Everything is composed of energy, and awareness moves energy. I am fascinated with the process of how we negotiate this space and create change.

I situate my research in the space between conceptual objects and material sensuality. I love working with video, as it appears as "liquid light": ethereal and in constant flux. I believe in complexity, dialectics, affinities, portability, flexibility, keeping the energy moving, and the interconnectedness of all.

Sigi Torinus, 2014

*Mirame Pero No Me Toques (Look, But Don't Touch)*, 2011 (video stills)





## Artist Biography

Sigi Torinus was born and grew up in the US Virgin Islands. She studied Fine Art, Philosophy and Art Education in Germany and received her MFA from the Braunschweig Art Institute, Germany, and San Francisco State University in California. Informed by her nomadic life, Sigi's work explores our perceptions of the migratory journey, through time and space, in both physical and digital worlds. Her art returns time and again to the themes of origin, departure, navigation and destination. Playing with concepts like presence and absence, visibility and intangibility, her hybrid new media installations often combine sculptural elements with video, audio, and performance, creating an immersive environment that activates our different senses both viscerally and intellectually.

Sigi Torinus has presented internationally on New Media / Electronic & Temporal Arts / Performance Art in both universities and galleries, among them York University Toronto, Museum London, White Mountain Academy (Canada); Braunschweig University of Art/HBK, Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Berlin (Germany); TV Gallery Moscow (Russia); Maryland Institute College of Art, the San Francisco Art Institute, Siggraph California, Southern Exposure Gallery, San Francisco, the San Francisco Film Arts Foundation (USA); Sydney College of Art, Canberra School of Art, University of Melbourne, Monash University, the Adelaide Film & Video Festival, The International Symposium on the Transition from Analog to Digital Imaging (Australia).

<http://sigitorinus.com>

*Into the Light*, 2014 (installation detail)



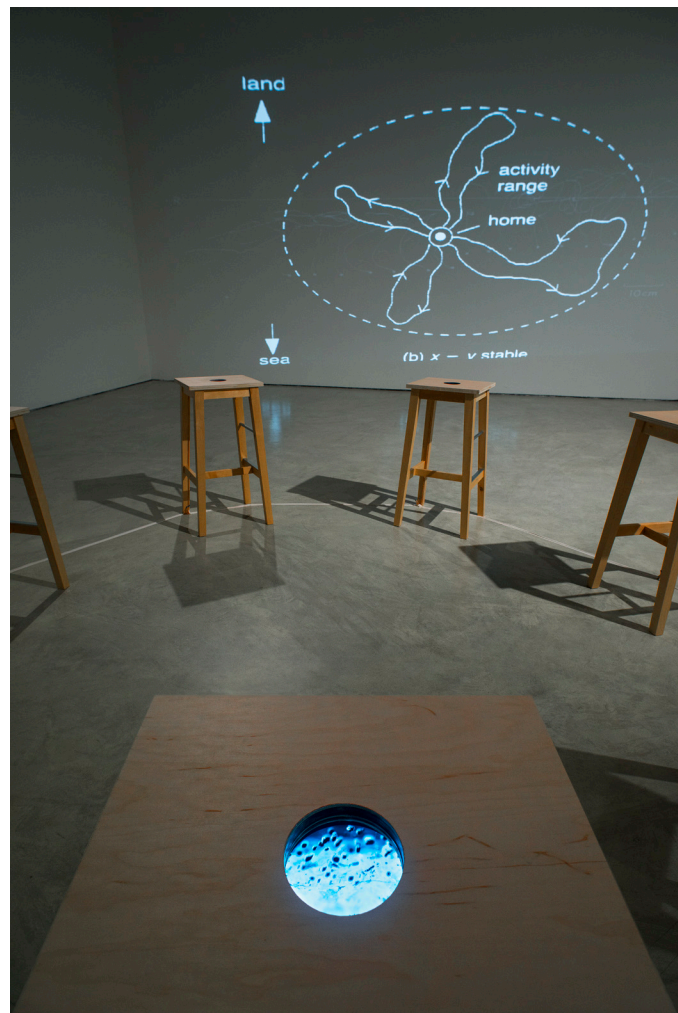


installation view: *Bleached by Nostalgia*, 2014 (foreground); *Into the Light*, 2014 (background)



*Zenith*, 2014





## List of Works

*Olofi*, 2001–12

1 channel video, 2:40 min.

collaboration with José Seoane and Teatro Macuba (Santiago de Cuba); narration Fatima Patterson

*Mirame Pero No Me Toques (Look but Don't Touch)*, 2011

video 5 min., camera José Seoane and Sigi Torinus

*Aweigh (animal homing and navigation)*, 2014

video projection, 6 min. loop

*Bleached by Nostalgia*, 2014

photo/video installation with postcards

(3:30 min. loop and 8 min. loop)

photographs Waltraud Torinus; Super 8 Eckhard Torinus; Virgin Islands truisms Elroy Sprouve and Felicia Torres

*Into the Light*, 2014

audiovisual generative installation

sound composition Brent Lee, percussion Nicholas Papador, Max/Jitter, programming Martin Slawig

special thanks to José, Javier and Yuri Seoane

*Soundings*, 2014

7-channel video installation, 2–4 min. loops

*Sun in Pisces*, 2014

video installation, 7 min. loop

*Zenith*, 2014

video installation with chairs; 3 min. loop

Installation view: *Soundings*, 2014 (foreground); *Aweigh (animal homing and navigation)*, 2014 (on wall)



## Sigi Torinus: Into the Light

April 26 – June 15, 2014

Curator        Srimoyee Mitra  
Essay            Honor Ford-Smith  
Editors          Sarah Jarvis, Srimoyee Mitra, Sigi Torinus  
Photography   Frank Piccolo, Sigi Torinus

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