

Bound Waters - Confluence

Curated by Segolene Py
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Artists: RICHARD NATTOO - ROISIN JONES

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Bound Waters - Confluence is a duo exhibition that delves into Caribbean identity, celebrating its cultural richness while addressing its fragmented histories through storytelling and folklore. Bringing together the distinct yet interconnected practices of Jamaica based painter Richard Nattoo and UK-based interdisciplinary artist Roisin Jones, the show explores the enduring, evolving relationship between Jamaica and its diaspora. Using water both as a metaphor for connection and resilience, and as a medium, locally sourced from rivers, it is infused into the works with watercolours, ceramics, sculpture and mixed media pieces, creating works that carry place, spirit, and memory within them.

The show developed as an extended discussion—beginning with a joint residency at Artisan House in Kingston (Jamaica), where both artists immersed themselves in local riverscapes, research on storytelling and collective memories. Through this shared experience, they found connections within each other's practices through water and explored the mythology around it. Through their research they were taken with the mythology of the River Mama and her symbolic connection to the diasporic history. What began as an artistic exchange developed into a broader conversation around themes of mythology, identity, and belonging explored through material and form.

Water becomes a narrative thread through the show: a powerful symbol of cultural continuity and transformation, a force that connects and separates. In this way, the exhibition becomes a confluence—a place where multiple waters meet and mix, where identities, stories, and histories flow together, and find new meaning in a symbolic and physical merging of two worlds. People of the Caribbean are intrinsically linked to water, and the River Mama emerges here as a potent emblem of that relationship.

Through a cross-Atlantic dialogue between land and longing, rootedness and rupture - a dialogue between home and away - the artists reimagine the story of the River Mama as a vessel for reconnection and cultural continuity. Among her many names - Mami Wata, Rubba Missis, Manman D'lo - across the Caribbean and further in West Africa, she is best known in Jamaica as River Mama, highly esteemed by some and feared by others for her beauty and the spiritual power that she holds. It is said she lives in every fountainhead, deep pools, and clean waters of Jamaica, performing malevolent actions towards those who dare infringe her domain or fish from her waters — known as her children, as depicted in Nattoo's *River Baby*. The story of the Golden Comb dominates the narrative of the show. It is said that if a someone sees it lying on a river bank and attempts to take it, they will disappear. The comb, often seen in River Mama's hand as she sits beside the water combing her long hair as seen in *River Mumma III - The Golden Comb* (Nattoo, 2025) and *High Noon* (Jones, 2025), becomes both a symbol of her allure and a caution —representing the power of nature, the consequences of greed, and the spiritual laws that govern the seen and unseen worlds.

Familiar to many as the mystical guardian and ruler of Jamaica's waterways, the River Mama resurfaces in this show through a unique lens. Rather than retelling the story, the artists created a new dimension of her mythology: a site of feminine power, ancestral connections,

and ecological reflections. Through new narratives, *Bound Water - Confluence* invites the viewers into her realm, and converges around her not only as a myth but as an immersive experience offering the audience a rare and intimate glimpse into her world.

As visitors step into River Mama's realm, they are welcomed by offering vessels—ceramic pots placed at the heart of her sanctuary, inviting for gestures of reverence, or as another temptation that might bring misfortune. In Richard Nattoo's dreamlike universe, she encounters the Queen of the Night, a recurring figure in his recent work, who offers her the Golden Comb—an act of quiet sovereignty, granting her power and presence. In *Gift of the Night*, Nattoo reimagines River Mama origin story, where night and day merge and two water worlds embrace, it speaks of mutual recognition and a sacred exchange, but also how the the Golden comb came to be.

Jones continues this thread, drawing us into a deeply personal communion with River Mama. Through her sculptural and delicate metalwork, she reframes the entity as a woman—graceful, and rooted in the natural world, a figure of both vulnerability and wild, untamed power. In *Spirited Away*, Roisin Jones depicts a scene where two entities meet, exchanging a moment of stillness, shared wisdom, and respect, where borders dissolve and new narratives begin. Jones invites the viewer to step closer, to inhabit the quiet spaces of nature, and to witness the entity not as myth alone, but as memory, sensation, and presence. Her work creates moments of closeness—intimate altars to feminine strength and spiritual ecology. *River Sisters* and *Lucky Sight*, placed on either side of the alcove, frame golden doors reminiscent of the comb, inviting the viewer to open them and engage in an act of quiet interaction.

Carved in an alcove, Jones and Nattoo's collaborative piece displays River Mama's golden comb, resting upon a stone—an object of both beauty and peril. It draws the eye and stirs curiosity, echoing tales of those who were lured into her waters after attempting to take it. One of the stories of people lost to River Mama is depicted in Nattoo's “..Do not mourn me for I am not dead”, 2025 and Jones' *Adrift*, 2025, a boy who became obsessed with her and who one day disappeared. *Red Covenant* also echoes stories of disappearing people depicting Flat Bridge where many were drawn to the green waters of Rio Cobre.

At a time when identity and memory are closely examined and widely debated across disciplines, this exhibition brings together two perspectives—one rooted in the Caribbean, the other shaped by its diaspora. Together, Jones and Nattoo reposition River Mama as a powerful symbol of resistance and a link between land and diaspora, myth and lived experience, inviting audiences into a non-linear space of confluence where stories shift, and collective histories flow together. In this exchange between home and away, *Bound Waters – Confluence* creates a space for reconnection, celebrating and nurturing the shared histories and creative forces that continue to shape the Caribbean and its diasporic communities.

ARTISTS BIO

Richard Nattoo (b. Spanish Town) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Spanish Town, Jamaica. His work encompasses a diverse range of mediums, including painting, sculpture, and textile art. Profoundly influenced by his Jamaican heritage and a strong connection to nature, Nattoo's oeuvres delve into themes of identity, memory, and spirituality. He employs storytelling as a central narrative device within his work. His art, often characterised by its dark, yet magical and dreamlike qualities, underscores the significance of emotional authenticity, seeking to evoke a deep resonance with both personal and collective experiences. Through his artistic practice, Nattoo aims to recover and reanimate stories that have been marginalised or erased by colonialism, offering them anew to the world as a means of cultural preservation and remembrance.

The genius of his mastery is in the use of watercolours, pen and ink on canvas using water from natural sources in Jamaica. These works reflect an intimate exploration of identity, connecting deeply personal growth to the collective narratives of Jamaican heritage.

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Roisin Jones (b. London, UK) is an interdisciplinary artist working across performance, video, installation, photography, sculpture, and archival research. Her practice explores how the body and memory function as living archives, preserving personal and collective histories. By examining cycles of care, transformation, and resilience, Jones's work reflects on identity, belonging, and cultural memory. Through this exploration, she seeks to offer pathways for connection while confronting displacement and healing within communities. Embracing love as a radical act of resistance and restoration, she crafts narratives that invite audiences to engage with vulnerability, empathy, and hope.

Rooted in her British-Caribbean heritage and experiences within the diaspora, Jones's work navigates the fluidity of identity and belonging. She weaves together folklore, symbolism, spirituality, and storytelling, using her art as a medium to honor the complexity of cultural identity. By drawing from ancestral memory and mythological motifs, she creates immersive worlds that bridge personal narratives with collective histories, celebrating the transformative power of storytelling.

Through a nuanced blend of personal narrative and historical context, Jones creates layered, multidimensional works that challenge conventional storytelling. Her practice is deeply informed by archival research, material experimentation, and performance, allowing her to explore the intersections of identity, memory, and transformation.

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