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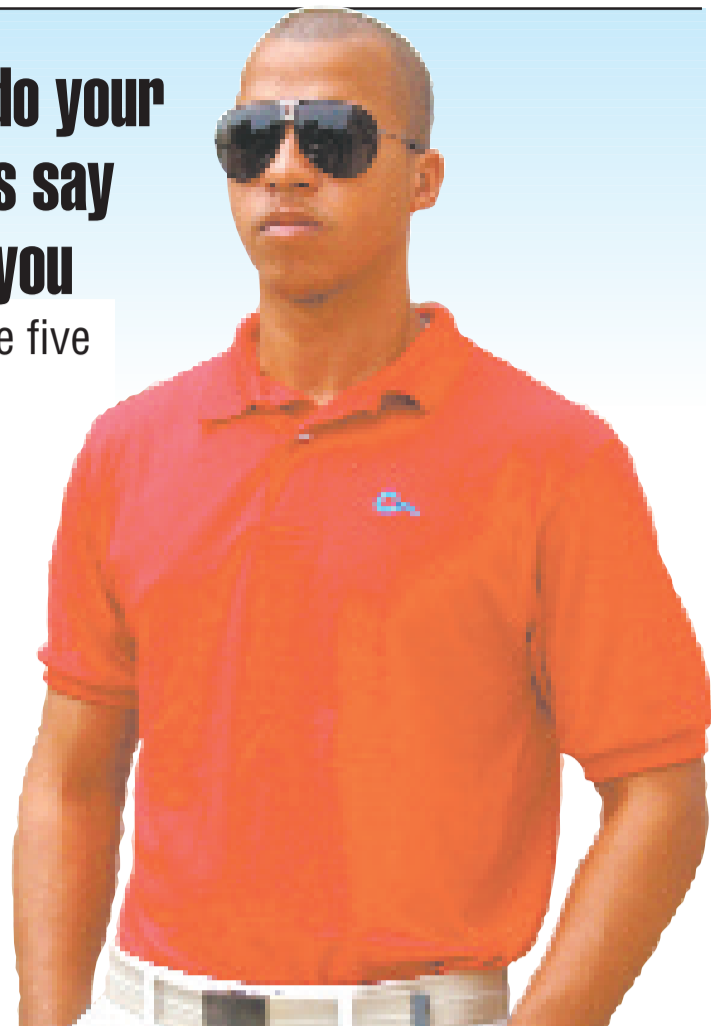


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The Arts

The Tribune SECTION C •

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2008



» ANTONIUS ROBERTS sits among his sculptures, the "Original Bahamians" at Sculpture Pointe, Junkanoo Beach Club. The sculptures were made from the remains of Casuarinas lining Taino Beach that were uprooted during the hurricane season of 2004.

ANTONIUS ROBERTS GOES INTERNATIONAL

■ By **PETURA BURROWS**
Tribune Feature Writer
pburrows@tribunemedia.net

» One can easily call Bahamian sculptor **ANTONIUS ROBERTS** an artistic ambassador - especially since his work took on more of a social and cultural significance with the introduction of Sacred Space at Clifton Pier in 2005. That one project opened a new dimension to Roberts' career...and the world has taken notice.

On July 5-6, Mr Roberts will be in participating in the Caribbean Summer Festival at the Westfalenpark in Dortmund, Germany.

The festival will include performances of steel drum orchestras, the youth steelband Pan Gang, percussion workshops for children and adults, stage performances and games during the whole weekend as well as a marching procession of Junkanoo costumes through the park.

Organisers of the festival met Mr Roberts during a tour in Grand Bahama earlier this year during the unveiling of his Taino Beach project, "Original Bahamians".

Mr Roberts, who operates a studio on that beach, launched this clean-up/art project in honour of Taino Indians. He transformed felled Casuarina trees (from the 2004 hurricane season) into sculptured works of art, and placed them back into their natural environment. The project and beautiful sculptures caught the eyes of the festival's organisers and Roberts was invited to participate.

Despite the international fanfare surrounding his work, Mr Roberts would probably blush at being called an ambassador, and then downplay his role in the promotion of Bahamian art inter-

nationally - though this trip to Germany is his fourth invitation to show work internationally.

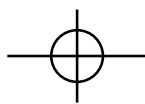
Roberts' first invitation came from the Chinese government to participate in the Changchun International Sculpture Conference. The second invitation came from Italy where Mr Roberts, and fellow Bahamian artist John Cox, stayed for one month. Mr Roberts was also invited to participate in "Funky Nassau: Rediscovering and Identity", at the Nassauischer Kunstverein Museum in Germany.

Now comes this Caribbean Summer Festival invitation for Dortmund, Germany. While the festival itself goes from July 5-6, Mr Roberts will be in Germany a week ahead of time in order to prepare. He is taking wood from the Bahamas and will be producing the work in the Westfalenpark.

"I am so pleased because I can say that the work that I'm sharing internationally are indigenous to the Bahamas. These are works that are inspired by using authentically Bahamian material; that is things that are grown and found out of the earth of the Bahamas like wood and stone."

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Artist set to showcase his work at the Caribbean Summer Festival in Germany



ARTS

Book review

'A Good Indian Wife' contrasts Indian, American marriages

By DINESH RAMDE
Associated Press

"A GOOD Indian Wife" (W.W. Norton & Co., 320 pages, \$23.95), by Anne Cherian: For first- and second-generation Indo-Americans, the exercise of courting a mate can be fraught with cultural conflict.

In parts of traditional India, casual dating is still almost unheard of. When children come of marriageable age, generally about their mid-20s, parents and matchmakers collaborate to arrange a wedding for the "boy" and "girl."

But what happens when an Indian man, long assimilated into American culture, is confronted by fiercely traditional parents who ogist he marry a woman of their choosing? It's a story that has played out countless times — in real life, in Bollywood and now in fine literary form by fiction newcomer Anne Cherian.

Raised in India and educated in part in California, Cherian has written a tale that will be familiar to Indo-Americans and intriguing to Westerners.

In "A Good Indian Wife," Cherian tells the story of Neel, a Stanford University-educated doctor who is proud of the American life he has carved out for himself. He never told his parents about the blond vixen he dated in school, nor of the white secretary he's been seeing for the past three years.

His mother frets half a world away, bowed under by social pressure from a community that wonders why she and Neel's father are shirking their parental obligation to marry off the boy. So they lure Neel back home on the pretense of a family illness and then insist he meet one of their marriageable acquaintances. Neel grudgingly agrees.

The "girl," Leila, is beautiful and well-educated. But suitors have repeatedly rejected her, put off when her destitute family can't offer a lavish dowry. So she's unsure what to expect from Neel.

After the two finally meet, the ensuing scene is fascinating. Through a series of cultural misunderstandings Neel's family thinks he has agreed to marry the girl. Neel is stunned when he discovers that both families have fixed a wedding date for two weeks hence.

Neel, who still loves his secretary, feels trapped. He can't violate family honor by backing out so he figures he'll go through with the wedding and then get a quick divorce back in California.

Here the story becomes an absorbing tale of contrasts.

Leila, oblivious to Neel's plan, wonders why her new groom barely acknowledges her. But she's a traditional Indian woman so she tries to please him with her dutiful ways — hence the book's title.

Neel, meanwhile, continues to see his secretary on the side. In his heart, he wants to do right by Leila but he still plans to get divorced if only life would stop getting in the way.

Cherian tells the story with quiet strength. Her scenes are less action-packed than laced with a hint of suspense that keeps the tale intriguing. She also endows her characters with a depth that renders both as likable figures — even Neel, whose cheating ways a reader might overlook given the sudden manner in which he was thrust into a marriage he never wanted.

"A Good Indian Wife" also provides a glimpse into Indian culture that non-Indians may appreciate. Cherian sprinkles the tale liberally with references to Indian customs, food and religion, although Western readers may get frustrated by the terms that aren't always explained.

That's about the only drawback.

BAHAMIAN artist Antonius Roberts stands among some of his sculptures, the "Original Bahamians" at Sculpture Pointe, Junkanoo Beach Club. The sculptures were made from the remains of Casuarinas lining Taino Beach that were uprooted during the hurricane season of 2004.



Antonius Roberts goes international



ANTONIUS ROBERTS stands by one of his sculptures, "Mother and Child", at Junkanoo Beach Club. The work is part of his collection "Original Bahamians". This particular sculpture is made from local Madeira wood.

FROM page one

Mr Roberts said. "And that's particularly why I find that people are interested in the work that I am doing because of the indigenous and unique nature of the material," he added.

With this installation though, Mr Roberts is bringing indigenous materials together with indigenous German wood in order to create an art piece that speaks to a cultural union.

"That is exciting for me and important to me because this work will speak to the whole issue of cross-fertilization and collaboration and cultural exchange," he said.

This installation, while inspired by the "Original Bahamians", will not be an exact replica because as an artist, he tries not to reproduce the same work. With this presentation, Mr Roberts can't predict what it will look like since he always allows the space to dictate composition.

"The works that I do actually are inspired by the space that the work will be in. So I won't know what it will look like until I get there. And actually, what makes it so unique and so different is that the work is so site-specific," Mr Roberts explained.

With such international exhibitions to his name, Mr Roberts can surely give advice to other artist on how to follow suit. These invitations didn't automatically jump into his lap though. Mr Roberts believes that in order for any artist to be successful, he/she must really reinvest in their talent. Moreover, whenever they are presenting themselves, they must think in terms of documentation and be able to clearly articulate their artistic philosophies, he noted.

And it also doesn't hurt to have a website either. Mr Roberts revealed that many of his invitations and the global interest that his work has created has come through his website -www.antonius-roberts.com. In fact, his first major invitation, the Changchun International Sculpture Conference, was a result of this website.

INTERNET EXPOSURE

In seeking participation, the organisers searched the Internet for talent from around the world. After viewing the calibre of his work, an invitation was extended. Mr Roberts was one of the few artists to be invited - not having to compete for participation.

"They sent me a letter saying that 'I gat to have you'. I do now have a 12-foot bronze sculpture in the world sculpture park in China."

This year, Mr Roberts has been re-invited by the Chinese government to participate in Changchun in September. He will met with 500 sculptors from around the world to talk

about the art of sculpting and the future of sculpting.

Frankly, these opportunities may not have been possible had it not been for this website and Internet exposure.

While the Internet allows for international exposure...local artists may also need to find a way to expose themselves to their fellow countrymen throughout the Bahamas.

"Artists should not only focus on presenting themselves in New Providence, this is only part of the Bahamas. We need to look outside of Nassau. We need to look into showing in Exuma, Eleuthera, Abaco," and in his case, Grand Bahama.

"That is how we really come to understand the Bahamas and the natural beauty of this country. And also, we are exposed to the real stories that



I'd like for my work to be a little bit more significant, a little bit more community based.



ANTONIUS ROBERTS

are told by the elders that we find throughout the Bahamas," said Mr Roberts.

Mr Roberts decision to open a studio in Grand Bahama came by invitation also. When he visited, Grand Bahamian friends presented the idea to him.

"Again, I'd like for my work to be a little bit more significant, a little bit more community based, as Sacred Spaces was. And again, if I am an environmentalist and my work is based on the environment, then why not be inspired to protect the environment throughout this whole clean up campaign."

After seeing the ravages of the 2004 storm, and the Casuarina trees on the shoreline, he felt compelled to at least contribute to the clean up of the beach, "but not only clean up and discard, but also clean up and transform," he said.



A Madeira chair by Antonius Roberts

Mahatma®
Grains Of Wisdom
For Rice That's Right Every Time...

"Tarte de Ecrevisse au Riz"

Mahatma BROWN RICE **Mahatma**

3-3/4 cup Mahatma® Long Grain rice
3 tbsp. softened butter, divided use
2 tbsp. parsley
1/2 teaspoon goat pepper (finely chopped)
1 tbsp. red sweet pepper (finely chopped)
1 tbsp. yellow sweet pepper (finely chopped)
1 tbsp. green sweet pepper (finely chopped)
4 spring onions (chopped)
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 cup crawfish (cooked, chopped)
1/2 cup sliced mushrooms (sauteed)
1/4 cup corn
1-2 cloves garlic (minced)

Lemon Garlic Sauce:
1 tbsp butter
2 cloves garlic
3 tbsp flour
2 c milk
1 lemon grated rind and juice
salt/pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease 4 individual pie pans. Cook rice, saute mushrooms. Combine rice, half of the softened butter, parsley, goat pepper, sweet peppers, onion, salt, and a little black pepper. Mix well. Press evenly around the sides and bottoms of 4 individual pans. Bake for 20 minutes. Make lemon garlic sauce. Melt butter in a small pot, add garlic. Stir in the flour. Cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove from stove. Stir in lemon rind. Stir in the milk a little at a time, until all the milk is added and the mixture is free of lumps. Add the lemon juice, return to heat, cook until the sauce thickens and bubbles, stirring all the time. Stir crawfish, corn and mushrooms into sauce, heat through and adjust seasoning. Pile filling into rice crust. Serve warm or cold.

Mahatma GOLD **Mahatma BASMATI** **Mahatma JASMINE**

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