



Marcel Pinas
(Surinamese, born 1971)

Biography

Marcel Pinas, a prominent Surinamese artist, is celebrated for his profound impact on contemporary art and his dedication to preserving the cultural heritage of the Maroon community in Suriname. Born on March 26, 1971, in Pelgrimkondre, a small village in the Marowijne district of Suriname, Pinas has risen to international acclaim through his unique artistic expressions that blend traditional Maroon elements with contemporary art forms.

Marcel Pinas grew up in an environment steeped in the traditions and customs of the Maroon people, descendants of enslaved Africans who escaped and formed independent communities in the Surinamese rainforest. This rich cultural heritage profoundly influenced his worldview and artistic direction. Pinas' early life in the village provided a deep connection to nature, community rituals, and traditional crafts, all of which later became central themes in his work. Pinas pursued his formal art education at the Nola Hatterman Institute in Paramaribo, Suriname's capital, where he was exposed to a variety of artistic techniques and philosophies. To further hone his skills, he attended the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts in Kingston, Jamaica. These academic experiences broadened his artistic perspective and equipped him with the technical proficiency to explore complex themes through his art.

Marcel Pinas began his professional artistic career in the late 1990s, quickly gaining recognition for his distinctive style that merges traditional Maroon motifs with modern artistic expressions. His work often incorporates symbols and materials from the Maroon culture, such as pangi cloth, a traditional fabric, and Afaka script, a syllabary developed by the Maroons. Through these elements, Pinas seeks to celebrate and preserve his cultural heritage while addressing contemporary issues.

One of the central tenets of Pinas' philosophy is the belief in art as a tool for social change and cultural preservation. He often states that "art must serve the community," a principle evident in both his individual works and his broader projects. Pinas' art is not merely an aesthetic endeavor but a means to foster cultural awareness, education, and community development.

Pinas’ body of work spans various mediums, including painting, sculpture, installation art, and public art projects. One of his most notable installations is "Kibii Wi Koni" (Protect Our Knowledge), which consists of a series of large wooden panels engraved with Afaka script. This work is a poignant commentary on the erosion of cultural knowledge and a call to preserve the linguistic heritage of the Maroon community.

In addition to his individual pieces, Pinas has been involved in several significant exhibitions and art projects worldwide. His works have been showcased in prominent galleries and museums, such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts in New York, and the Havana Biennial in Cuba. These exhibitions have introduced Pinas’ art to a global audience, fostering greater appreciation for Surinamese culture and the issues facing the Maroon people.

Beyond his individual artistic achievements, Marcel Pinas is also a dedicated community activist. In 2009, he founded the Kibii Foundation and the Tembe Art Studio (TAS) in 2010, in Moengo, a town in the Marowijne district. These initiatives aim to promote cultural education, provide art training for young people, and stimulate economic development through creative industries.

The Tembe Art Studio serves as a hub for artists from Suriname and abroad, facilitating cultural exchange and artistic collaboration. It has hosted numerous workshops, residencies, and exhibitions, significantly contributing to the cultural and social revitalization of the Moengo region. Pinas’ vision for these projects reflects his commitment to using art as a catalyst for positive change in his community.

In recognition of his contributions to art and culture, Pinas has received several awards and honors, including the Royal Decoration of Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau from the Netherlands in 2010. This accolade underscores his impact not only within Suriname but also on the international stage.

Marcel Pinas’ journey from a small village in Suriname to the global art world is a testament to his talent, dedication, and vision. Through his art, he has created a dialogue between tradition and modernity, local and global perspectives. His efforts to preserve and promote Maroon culture while addressing broader social issues highlight the transformative power of art. As an artist and community leader, Pinas continues to inspire and make a lasting impact, ensuring that the rich cultural heritage of the Maroon people remains vibrant and relevant for future generations.

Selected Literature

2013
Marcel Pinas, *Kibri a Kulturu*, Bargemon and Munich, ARC Magazine

2011
R. Perree, A. van Stipriaan and C. Cozier, *Marcel Pinas. Artist, more than an artist*, Uitgeverij Jap Sam Books, Heijningen

2009
H. den Hartog Jager, *Werk Pinas laveert tussen beeld en boodschap*, in: NRC Handelsblad

2006
V. Vlasblom, *Kibri a Kulturu, Marcel Pinas*

Selected Awards & Permanent Collections

2021
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
AFAKA Sculptures Hoorn municipal collection, The Netherlands

2010
Honoured Young Global Leader, World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland
Royal Decoration of Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau, The Netherlands

2007
Artist in Residence Rijks Acadamy, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2005
First price art structure, Internationaler Kunstwettbewerb *Bewegter Wind*, Germany

2003
Business Finance Art Award, Utrecht, The Netherlands

1999
Top Student 1999 - Edna Manley College for Visual and Performing Arts, Kingston, Jamaica

Selected Exhibitions

2024

Marcel Pinas - Isan Corinde, hedendaagse kunst uit Suriname, Stedelijk Museum Vianen, Vianen, The Netherlands; Moengo, Suriname

2023

ArtZuid Sculpture Biennial, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2022

Solo: *Kibii Wi Koni*, Club Solo, Breda, The Netherlands
Solo: Expo Chicago, SmithDavidson Gallery, Chicago, USA
Schurend Paradijs, Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort, The Netherlands

2021

Solo: *Kuubutu*, Hoorn, The Netherlands
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Textiel Biënnale, Museum Rijswijk, Rijswijk, The Netherlands
Kibi Wi Totem, ArtZuid Sculpture Biennial, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2020

Kerken & Slavernij, Luther Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2019

De grote Suriname tentoonstelling, Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
The visual life of social affliction, National Gallery, Bahamas

2018

Language is the only Homeland, Nestruimte, The Hague, The Netherlands
Hotel Maria Kapel, Hoorn, The Netherlands

2017

II Bienal del Sur, Pueblo en Resistencia, Venezuela
Jamaica Biennial, Jamaica

2016

Cuenca Biennial, Ecuador
Zwart Glas, National Glass Museum Leerdam, The Netherlands
De Nederlandsche Bank (Central Bank of the Netherlands) Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2015

Solo: *Marcel Pinas*, SmithDavidson Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
1st Moengo Triennial "Festival of Visual Art", Suriname

2014

SITElines.2014 – Unsettled Landscapes, Santa Fe, USA
Dance and Music Festival, Moengo, Suriname

2013

Exhibition with goldsmith Ivan Chevillotte, Munich, Germany
Atelier Michel Fedoroff in Bargemon, France

2012

Havana Biennial, Cuba

2011

Kibi Wi Totem at ArtZuid Sculpture Biennial, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Collection of Els & Vincent Vlasblom - A Detail, Kemzeke, Belgium
Solo: *Kibri A Kulturu*, Bergen, The Netherlands
Solo: *Kibii Wi Koni, La camp de la transportation*, St. Laurent du Maroni, French Guyana
Solo: *Kibii Wi Koni Marcel Pinas The Event*, Kibii Foundation, Moengo, Suriname
About Change, World Bank, Washington DC, USA

2010

Paramaribo SPAN, DSB Bank, Paramaribo, Suriname

2009

Kibri a Kulturu, 'Ease', Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Netherlands
Kibri wi, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, The Netherlands

2006

Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, The Netherlands
Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands