

Christopher Willemse

I AM DEPENDING ON WHO I AM





*"Perhaps I am extreme, or that
which results from averaged
extremes. Either way, something
that is considered in the middle
without being ordinary. "*

Mitar Mitar



Par excellence: I am not just stone or water; I am both, neither or something in between, depending on who I am.

Introduction

It all started with the journey to another country. In the most reactive phase of life, that is being young, things start to stand out. It is an awareness of the contradictions and similarities; a search for proper identity. This book illustrates this quest through photographs that symbolize the feelings and beliefs generated by a difference in environment. It is a representation of discoveries, thoughts and personality.

Leaving the small but free island of Curaçao to live in the large but restricted Amsterdam in the Netherlands, it is logical that forming one's identity guided by these two extremes is, to say the least, challenging.

This book shows an attempt to steer through or to get away from these personality defining extremes. It's never one or the other, black or white, it's something in the middle, navigating the nuances. This book is primarily a presentation of one's own identity formed by, and through the combination of encountered extremes.

This challenging of static and binary oppositions regarding identity is reflected in the photographs, their titles and supporting texts. It is an attempt to find middle ground without underestimating the power of opposites, but using them as a starting point.

The Dutch is often depicted in black and white, Curaçao in color, and the texts are written in both English and Papiamentu. Clichés are used not to confirm, but to escape fixed identities by using what is applicable and relevant of either opposite.

Christopher Willemse

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Struktura Kuadrá



"No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind."

- Edward Said (1935 - 2003)

Kura Kurason

Kòrsou: E isla ku ta kura kurason

The title *Kura Kurason* contains several meanings and word games. Curaçao is a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and is located right next to Venezuela in the Caribbean Sea. In 1634, Curaçao was conquered from the Spaniards by the WIC, a Dutch trading company. Before the Spaniards, Curaçao belonged to the Portuguese and it is also in this period that Curaçao got its name.

Two main theories about the origin of the name *Curaçao* are known. The first theory suggests that Curaçao originated from the Portuguese word *cura* which means healing. And the second theory proposes that Curaçao comes from the Portuguese word for heart, *coração*, which would refer to the island as a center of trade.

Centuries later, in this photo book, the two theories are combined and given a new application as a symbol of the effect of the island on the human condition. The two theories combined would make Curaçao the island that heals people's hearts. And that translated into Papiamentu is: *E isla ku ta kura kurason*.

Kura Kurason is therefore not only the definition, but also the effect of Curaçao.

Curaçao is the island of origin and the beginning of personality.

Yen i Yan



Discrete



Fachada Kòrà

Barku di Bor



Dak di Zim; Porta di Kurá





Porta pa Naturalesa

MARI

For the girl from Curaçao.

Hair in the wind, Heart in the ocean and Feet on the rocks.

**You are forever free. The doorway to your heart is through your nature.
It is always open for you, as you are its creation. No matter where you
are, stay as free as the wind, as passionate as the ocean and as strong
as the rocks**

Agave Maria



Datu Buladó



Te Laman ku Dios ke

Apesar di nos distansia, na laman nos ta
topa otro semper

Curaçao, the beginning of personality and with it this book, is an island surrounded by sea. Choose any direction to walk in and sooner or later you will end up at the coast.

In Papiamentu it is customary to say *te mañan ku Dios ke* after a conversation with someone, which means 'see you tomorrow, God willing'. You do this either because you have an appointment with that person the next day, or because, due to the small scale of the island, there is a good chance that you will meet the same person again tomorrow.

When meeting at the beach *te mañan ku Dios ke* was transformed and *te laman ku dios ke* was invented. *Laman* means sea, so now, instead of see you tomorrow, God willing, you say, see you at the beach, God willing. In this way the beautiful sea and coast of Curaçao are emphasized and displayed.

*The sea around us as the central point of
our relationships. A place where we can
always meet, regardless of our distances.*



Alanan di Pelikan



Bon Bui

Olanan



Kadushi Bista



Meimei Ta Laman

Nos tin un historia largu i un futuro huntu inskapabel. Tin biaha nos parse mas diferente ku uní.

Pero un kos ta sigur; loke ta separá nos, tambe t'e úniko kos ku ta mara nos na otro.

Meimei Ta Laman

Aunke e ta konektá nos tur, e tambe ta simbolisá nos distansia komun.

Su aparensia i su eksperensia ta reflektá nos idea di otro.

Mirando pa'riba e ta mustra grandi i brutu, batiendo kontra nos muraya konstantemente.

Mirando pa'bou e ta mustra trankil i trubel, bon na superfisio sin ta komprondé kompletamente.

Pa tin deskanso pabou, na kontrali, mester di fortifikashon pariba; t'asina e playa mester di e baranka.

P'e hendenan ku konosé bientu di un direkshon ta konta mes un kos.

Superá e bochincha di e olanan, kolektá e kurashi di mira su derotamentu di kantu i realisá ku piedat i kompashon nunca no ta duná.

E arma pa bringa su destrukshon ta optené después di krusa su forsa, no di skonde riba su tera.

No laga e kurpa di awa resultá na isolashon, ma komprondé ku meimei ta laman, dividiendo i konopando, formando un ruta pa kresementu.



Kosta Eterno



Lamanina

Desesperashon Ketu

Kana Planki



**Kabes den shelu
Kurason den laman
Pianan na tera**

**Mi kabes ta shelu
Mi kurason ta laman
Mi pianan ta tera**

**Liber
Dinámiko
Poderoso**

New Urban

The urban reflecting new emotions

From the small free to the large enclosed. The capital of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, is the new home. It couldn't have been more contrasting. Unknown urbanization, narrow streets, small rooms and no gardens. This is where it buzzes, this is where it lives. Fast, different, yet gray and cold.

Used to warm temperatures and sun, it is now a confrontation with dark days and heavy clouds. Life looks different here. It's either sink or swim in the bustle of the city.

The buildings, architecture and landscape of the city seem to reflect the newly encountered emotions. The photos and texts here do not only show the contrast with Curaçao, but also (un)consciously show how certain characteristics of the urban reflect impressions and feelings.

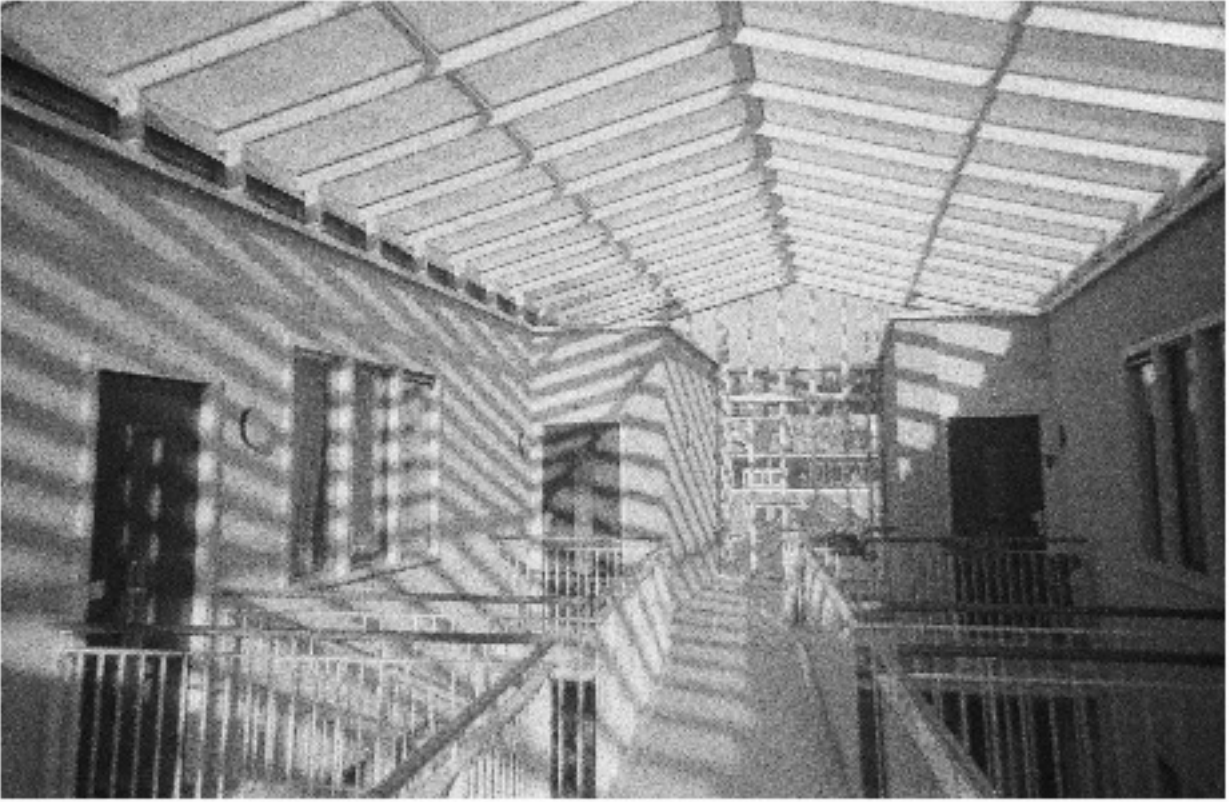
Just look at the differences recorded by an outsider, who necessarily, yet voluntarily, adopts a new identity. A representation of adaptation within the *New Urban*.

Photographs made of new experiences, lessons and visions show this urbanizing experience as the confronted differences. The urban is not only experienced as newness and unfamiliarity, but also as opportunity for growth and progress. This is important, since the unknown within the chaos forms the basis for new beliefs and developments.

Diverging Individuality

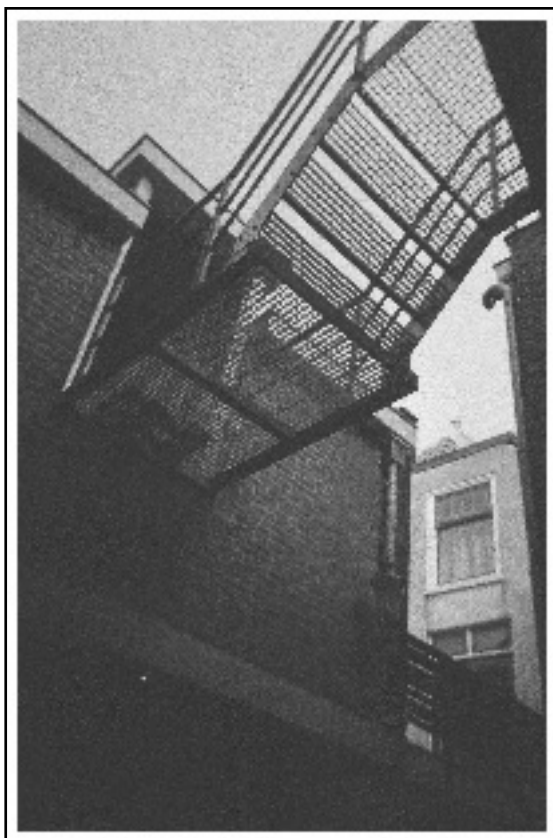


Glass Enclosure

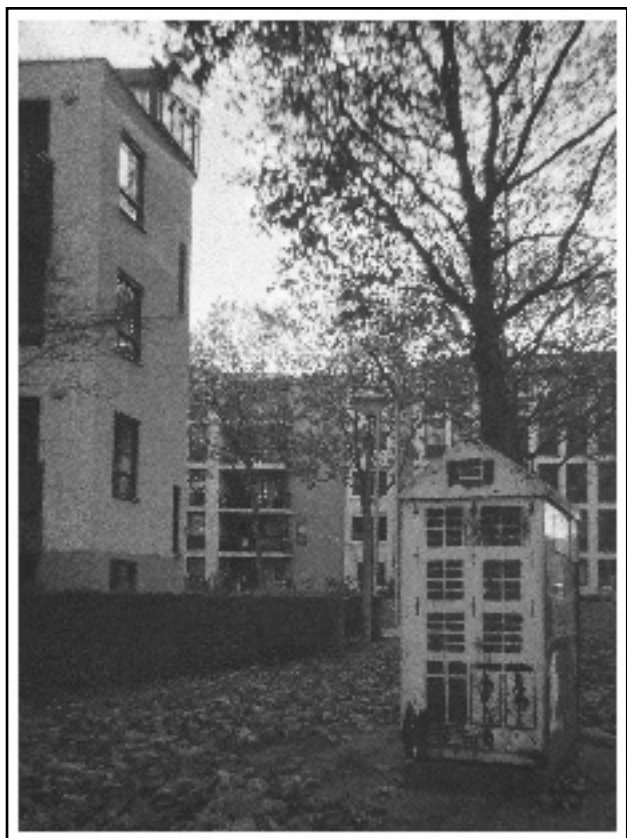


Framed within a Framed Set





Transparent Connection



Civiu Puppet-show



The Upside Down Direction

The Upside Down Direction

Normally used for clarity, a sign shows you which way to go in order to reach your destination.

In a world where we are increasingly and constantly bombarded with instructions and means to navigate through life, it has become inevitable that we live and experience through the supply and consumption of persistent, hard-to-dodge instructions from our surroundings.

In a sense, our perception and understanding of the world have been reduced to signs, following each and any of them, like there is no way to navigate without them.

How do you know if what you feel, follow, understand or express is real and genuine if it is, in fact, or maybe not, a product of manufactured directions?

Life and the world are actually more than our encircling guiding agents suggest. Signs function by efficient guidance through space and time, and therefore prove to neglect the world outside the fabricated straightforward, systematic representation of existence. In fact, you follow what thousands of others followed without choosing your own path. The surrounding instructions rob the opportunity for error and chaos, the source of innovation, new ideas and personality.

Maybe these signs don't help us navigate through life after all, as they don't represent (all of) it.

"Maybe in order to gain true perception, you need to follow the upside down direction".

Texel as Cardinal Point

Far from my attained individuality,
closer to my original singularity

The Dutch Wadden Island of Texel has several reasons to be seen as a *Cardinal Point*. A cardinal point traditionally means one of the four directions (North, East, South, and West) on a compass, and is a beautiful concept to describe Texel.

To escape the bustle of the city, Texel has become the location where peace can be found and where the free feeling of an island can rise again. Texel is a place that remedies the shortages of peace of mind originated in the city. In that sense Texel has become that what is often searched for; *A Cardinal Point*.

Besides the fact that Texel is a desired location, the concept of a cardinal point is also hidden within its name. *Texel* comes from the Germanic word *Tehswa*, which was used to mean 'southern'. Texel, as the southernmost Wadden Island, owes its name to this. Meaning southern, Texel can then again be implemented as one of the four *Cardinal Points*.

The funny thing is that to get to *Texel as a Cardinal Point*, one has to travel to the north.

In other words Texel, reached by traveling to the north, in its name, is a cardinal south point where the old familiar tranquility of an island can be experienced.

Texel is where the newly formed urban and independent identity is left behind, and where the original distinctive personality can resurface.



Familiar Anarchy



Noordzee at Tehsua





Honorable Photographs:



Tjill

"We must clamor for the right to opacity for everyone."

- Edouard Glissant (1928 - 2011)

Opacity as an alterity that is unquantifiable, a diversity that exceeds categories of identifiable difference.

Ora Solo Baha

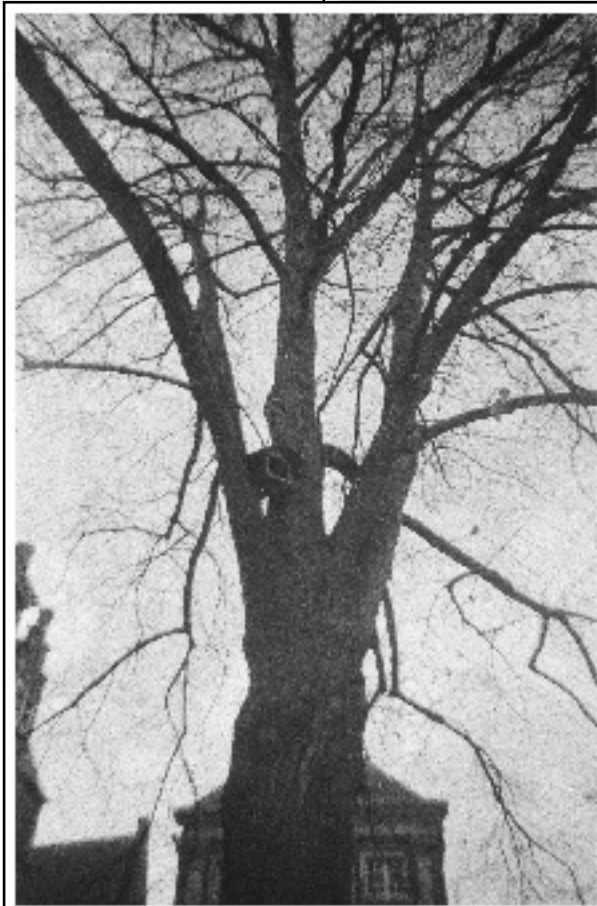


Water Looplein



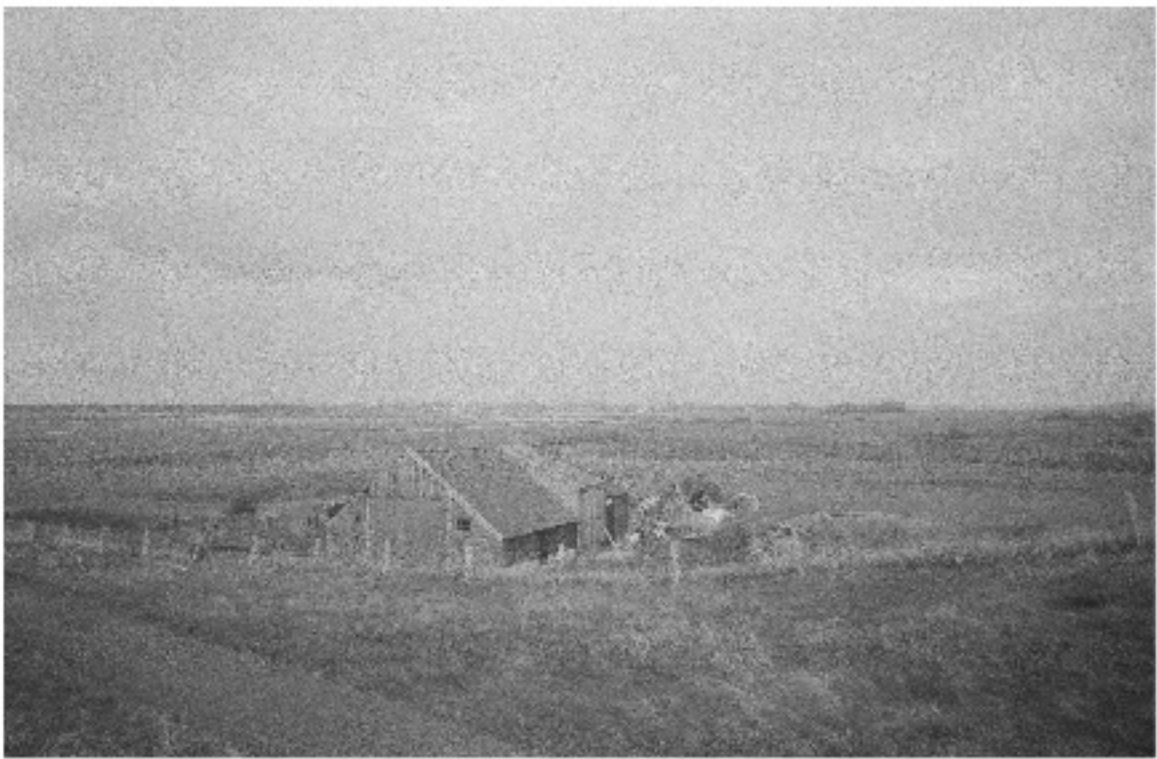


Mirador



The Departed Essence

Molina di Bientu



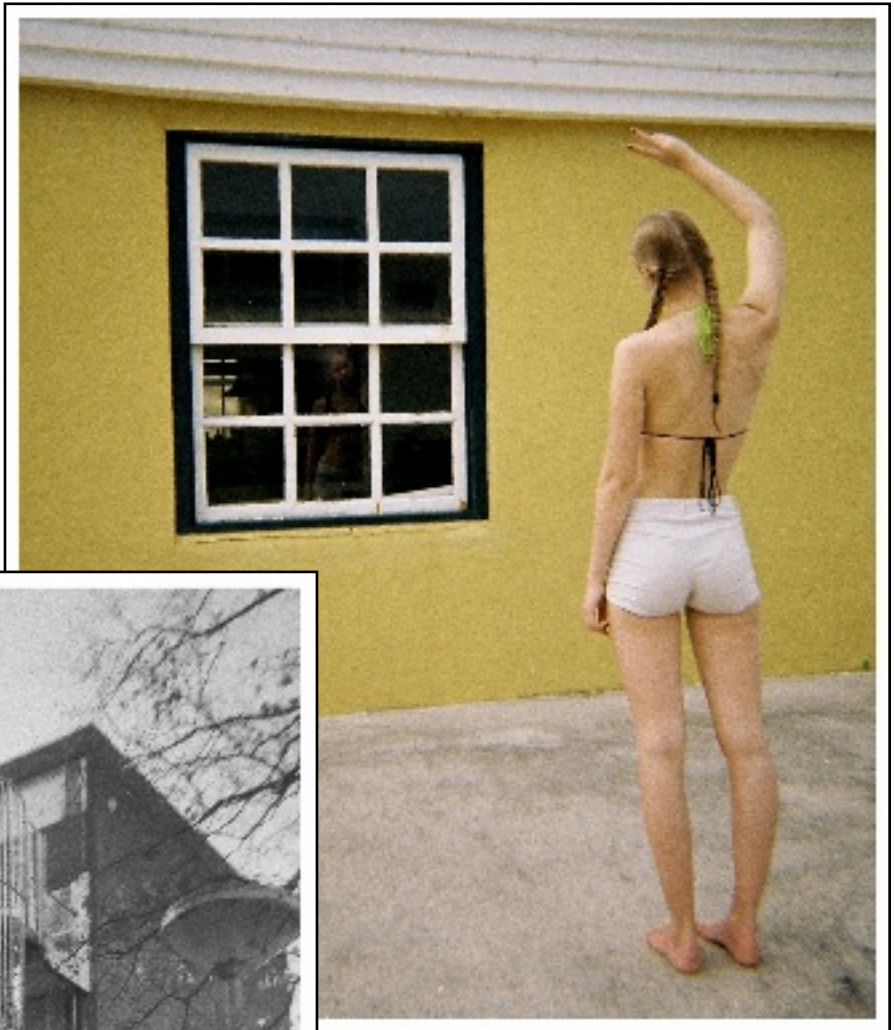
The Entropy of Isolation

Piedra di Playa



Urban Pride Rock





Reflekshon Kaptivá

Caged Identity



Author and Photographer

My name is **Christopher Willemse** (21), born and raised in Curaçao, and I live and study in the most beautiful city in the Netherlands, Amsterdam. When I moved to the Netherlands I decided to study Biology at the UvA. After two successful years of study, however, a desire arose to broaden my horizons. That is why I started a 2nd bachelor in 2021, namely Media and Culture. With this I not only try to satisfy my curiosity and inquisitiveness, but also hope to build a bridge between science and society.

This photo book is a summary of ideas, photos and texts that I have developed and collected over the past three years. It reveals how I, situated in a new environment, try to express my feelings and visions using conflicting concepts. I am fascinated to find middle ground with the help of opposites.

E Diferente Meskos



The Different Same

