

PHENOMENON



The Magazine of the World Intelligence Network



Edited by Krystal Volney and Graham Powell

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INTRODUCTION

Cover photos- Dr. Sebastian Müller (Research Scientist), Mr. Alwyn St. Omer, Dr. Christopher Harding

Welcome to the World Intelligence Network magazine 'Phenomenon'. It lives up to its name with this edition, the interviews of illustrious researchers and forward-thinkers explaining concepts and experiences that are truly out of the ordinary.

One topic that unites the interviews of Dr Aubrey De Grey and Dr Christopher Harding is ageing, the former considering this a factor of life that will be transformed by 2030. I trust it will make for enlightened reading for you.

We also have delightful contributions from Alwyn St. Omer, with visually stunning artwork and eloquent words of description and elucidation.

Krystal Volney and I also thank the interviewer Scott Douglas Jacobsen for his insightful questions and we wish everyone an enjoyable read.



Graham Powell

BIOGRAPHY OF DR. AUBREY DE GREY

Dr. Aubrey de Grey is a biomedical gerontologist based in Cambridge, UK and Mountain View, California, USA, and is the Chief Science Officer of SENS Research Foundation, a California-based charity dedicated to combating the aging process. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Rejuvenation Research*, the world's highest-impact peer-reviewed journal focused on intervention in aging. He received his BA and Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in 1985 and 2000 respectively. His research interests encompass the characterisation of all the accumulating and eventually pathogenic molecular and cellular side-effects of metabolism ("damage") that constitute mammalian aging and the design of interventions to repair and/or obviate that damage. Dr. de Grey is a Fellow of both the Gerontological Society of America and the American Aging Association. He discusses: new research on longevity and longevity escape velocity; promising anti-aging research; research all over the place; advancing research into the Hadwiger-Nelson problem; organizations to look into; books to look into; and final feelings and thoughts on the conversation.

An Interview with Dr. Aubrey de Grey on Longevity and Biomedical Gerontology Research Now

An Interview with Dr. Aubrey de Grey on Longevity and Biomedical Gerontology Research Now: Chief Science Officer & Co-Founder, SENS Research Foundation; Editor-In-Chief, Rejuvenation Research.

1. Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is new about longevity escape velocity and research into it?

Dr. Aubrey de Grey: I could spend a half-hour just talking about that question. It has been a while. Remind me, how long ago was our last interview?

Jacobsen: 2014.

de Grey: All right, things are unrecognizable now. There is a private industry in this. In 2014/2015, it was the time when we created our first spinout. We took out a project philanthropically at SENS Research Foundation. An investor found us.

Jacobsen: Is this Peter Thiel?

de Grey: No, no, another person who had been one of our donors. A guy who was our second biggest donor back then. A guy named Jason Hope. He decided that

one of our projects that we had been supporting at Rice University in Texas was ready to be commercialized.

Of course, it was early in terms of becoming a project. He felt that it was far enough along to invest as a project with his own money rather than as a donation. He created a biotech company of his own. He hired our people. He gave us a percent of the company and went off and tried to do it.

He did not have the faintest clue how to run a biotech company.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

de Grey: It changed our attitude to the whole thing. Since then, our business model has been to pursue this kind of thing. It is to pursue projects that are too early to be investible. It is to be in parallel with conversations with potential investors and to identify the right point, where the thing has achieved enough proof of concept.

So, it can be spun out into a company and can receive considerable amounts of support, more than can be provided philanthropically. We have done this half a dozen times. We have been able to do this due to

increasing investments at an increasing rate, including deep pocketed ones.

Something that happened 3 years ago with an investor named Jim Mellon who had made his money in a variety of other completely unrelated fields decided that he wanted to get into this. It was the next important thing to him.

He approached me. We started talking. We became very good friends, very quickly. The long of the short is he is the chair of a company called Juvenescence. Its model is basically to invest in other companies.

So, they have already put quite a bit of money into several start-ups. Some are spinouts of SENS. Others are closely aligned with what we do. It is transforming everything. It is fantastic. Around the same time, a guy came to us from Germany. A guy named Michael Greve who made his fortune in the early days of the German internet.

He made some of the most successful German websites. He has wanted to do this for a while. He has been investing in a variety of start-ups. The good news is most of these new investors, especially Michael

Greve, have been also donating to the foundation as well as investing in companies.

That is very, very important, of course. For the near future, there will be projects that are not far enough along to really join the dots to make a profit. They will need to be funded philanthropically. We try to make the case to investors, even if they are inherently more in an investor mindset than a donor.

We try to make the case. Even if they donate a smaller amount than they are investing, they have as much of my time as they want. They will have the opportunity to have the information, so they will be the founding investor of the next startup.

For me, it is extraordinarily gratifying. I am at the nexus of all of this. Everyone comes to me, whether the investors or the founders of companies who want to find investments. I spend a ridiculous amount of my time just making introductions.

What had not changed, we are still woefully low on the money throughout the foundation. Even though, I have been able, as I say, to put some money in; and we have some money from elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is far less than we need.

I am constantly spending my time on the road and camera trying to change that. That is the biggest thing that has changed. The next thing that we are changing is the huge spike in the value of cryptocurrencies. We benefitted quite a lot from that. Several of our investors who used to be relatively penniless and had not funded us financially suddenly became rather wealthy.

They ended up with a lot of money. We had four 7-digit donations adding up to a total of 6.5 million dollars. So, obviously, this was a windfall. That we are making us of now. Only one of the donors is likely to be a repeat donor because the others decided to give away most of their fortune.

That guy created Ethereum, Vitalik Buterin. He, basically, read my book when he was 14. He is now 26.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

de Grey: He is one of these true children of the revolution who never had to change their mind about anything. They always grew up knowing it was a sad thing and tried to fix it. So, that is cool. My life is largely the same in broad strokes, but, in the specifics,

in terms of the ways in which I can bring the right money to the right people; it has improved a lot.

2. Jacobsen: As aging is numerous processes, what programs of anti-aging, given individual processes of aging, seem the most promising within your remit?

de Grey: When I talk about what is more promising and less promising, I am always looking at the research. I am looking at how SENS is moving forward. Of course, there is a big spectrum to how far along things are.

On the easy end of the spectrum, we have hardly done anything throughout our 10-year existence on stem cell research, even though it is a key area of damage repair. It is a place for others too. Almost every area of stem cell research is important for cell damage and aging, which is being done by others and not us.

While at the other end of the spectrum, things like making backup copies of Mitochondrial DNA, hardly anyone else is working on it. That is a big spectrum. But if I look at the rate of progress, it is not the same at all.

One gratifying thing is making great advances in some difficult areas over the last few years. For mitochondrial DNA, we published a paper about 2 and a half years ago that sounded like only a modest step forward.

Basically, out of the 13 protein coding genes that we need to work in the nucleus, we were able to make two of them work at the same time, in the same cell. It sounds modest, but it is a huge progression from before. With the result now, we have a paper in review, which is a huge step forward from there.

We have these genes working now. We are understanding how we are getting them working. It is not so much trial-and-error now. More of the same thing is crosslinking. So, as you know, the extracellular matrix, this lattice of proteins that gives our tissue their elasticity. It gets less elastic over time because of chemical reaction with circulating sugar.

So, in 2015, the group that we were funding in that area, at Yale University, were able to publish a paper – our first paper in *Science* magazine – on the huge advance in that area. The advance sounded tangential at first hearing with the structure, which is one of the

structures responsible for the loss of this elasticity. We want to break it, therefore.

The advance made that was published was ways to create it, to synthesize it, from simple agents. As it turns out, there is an enabling step. It allows us to perform experiments that would be impossible with the very trace amounts of this material that would have been previously available, just making antibody tissue or finding bacterial enzymes that break it down.

That work is proceeding very much faster now, as well. That is one of the companies that we are in the process of spinning out.

3. Jacobsen: If you look at the projections of research that looked very promising, what ones were very disappointing? What ones came out of nowhere and were promising?

de Grey: Of course, they are all over the place. Some of the most important ones were the ones no one cares about. One is pluripotent stem cells created 13 years ago, and CRISPR, which was very much more recent, like 6 years ago.

We have been exploiting those advances. Same with the entire medical profession. But there are also isolated things that have been unexpected. Let us go back to mitochondrial mutations, one thing that we were kicking ourselves over. It will be talked about in the upcoming paper.

It is codon optimization. It is well-known. Mitochondrial DNA has a separate DNA. Codons code different things, different amino acids, compared to the nucleus (in the mitochondria by comparison). One thing is true, which we thought was relevant.

Out of the range of the codons that code for a given single amino acid, let us say the 4 that encode for lysine, there may be one of them used more often than others. This will affect the speed of translation of the messenger RNA among other things.

Nobody had bothered to try to optimize that for expression of these genes in the nucleus. It turns out that if you do then things go far, far better. It was a serendipitous discovery. Science, itself, is full of serendipitous discoveries.

4. Jacobsen: Also, you solved a math problem, recently. What was it?

de Grey: [Laughing] right, that was about 18 months ago. It is a problem called the Hadwiger-Nelson problem named after some mathematicians from 1950s. The question is normally stated, "How many colors do you need to color all of the points on the plane in order that no pair of points that is one inch apart is the same color?"

The answer was immediately shown back in 1950 to be somewhere between 4 and 7 inclusive. I was able to exclude the 4 case. Many, many, many mathematicians have worked on this in the interim. So, it was quite surprising that I was able to do this, as I am a recreational mathematician. I got lucky, basically.

I would describe this as a game. What you do is, you have a two-player game. The playing surface is an initial blank sheet of paper. Player 1 has a black pen. Player 2 has a bunch of colored pens. The players alternate. When player 1 makes a move. The point is to make a new dot wherever player 1 likes.

Player 2 must color the dot. He must take one of his pens and put a ring around the new dot. The only thing that player 2 is not allowed to do is to use the same

color as he used for a previous dot that is exactly one inch away from the new dot.

Of course, there may be more than one dot. Player 1 wins the game if he can arrange things so that the new dot cannot be covered. All the player 2's pens have been used for other dots that are exactly an inch away from the new dot, right?

The question is, "How many pens does player 2 need to have in order so that player 1 cannot win?"

Jacobsen: Right.

de Grey: So, if player 2 only has one pen, obviously, player 1 can win with just two dots. He puts a dot down. Player 2 uses the red pen. Player 1 puts down a second dot exactly an inch away. Player 2 cannot move. If player 2 has two pens, then player 1 can win with three dots by just placing a dot; player 2 can use the red pen, places another dot an inch away.

Player 2 uses the blue pen. Player 1 uses third dot in the triangle with the two, so an inch away from both of them, then player 2 cannot move. So, then, it turns out. If player 2 has 3 pens, player 1 can also win. It is a little more complicated.

Player 1 needs seven dots. But again, it is not very complicated. It was already worked out back in 1950 as soon as humans started thinking about this kind of question. The natural question would be the number of dots go up in some exponential way, but player 1 can always win.

It turns out that that is not true. It turns out if player 2 has seven pens. Then player 1 can never win, no matter how many dots that he puts down. But what I was able to show, if player 2 has 4 pens, then player 1 can win, but with a lot of dots.

The solution that I found took more than 1,500 dots. It has been reduced by other people since then, but it is still over 500 is the record.

5. Jacobsen: [Laughing] if we are looking at the modern landscape, especially with the increase in funding, what organizations should individuals look to – other than your own as well?

de Grey: Things are looking good. There is a huge proliferation of investment opportunities as well, in this area. They are certainly raising money, as they are investing in more start-ups. In the non-profit world, there are plenty of organizations as well.

I should probably mention the Methuselah Foundation, which is the organization from which SENS Research Foundation arose. They are funding a bunch of research as well as doing prizes. They are choosing well and the right things to fund.

Then there is the buck institute, which is a much more traditional organization on the surface. In other words, it is mostly funded by the NIH and by relatively conservative funding sources. But! They understand the scientific situation. It has become much more acceptable to do work that is overtly translational, even if you are getting money from these types of sources.

We work closely with them. We have two ongoing projects there. We send summer interns there. We have been able to work with them on funding, in terms of bringing in new sources of funding. That is something that I would include.

In terms of the world, one important organization is called LEAF or Life Extension Advocacy Foundation. One in the UK. One in the US. One in Russia. They focus on advocacy and outreach. They are extraordinarily good and play a key role in elevating the level of debate in this whole area.

In Europe, the Healthy Life Extension Foundation was founded by two people from Belgium. They run a nice conference every year, every couple of years anyway. They have a vibrant mailing list and spread useful information about this area. They could use some more money. The list goes on now.

There are increased organizations, now, not just in this space but really know what they are doing. They know what the priorities ought to be. One thing I have always known since the beginning. No matter how good I get at outreach and advocacy. I could never do this all myself, not just for lack of time, but because different people resonate with different audiences.

So, there are people who will overall inspire. Others will not like people with beards.

Jacobsen: [Laughing].

de Grey: People may not like my act. So, there are people around now who are very capably complementing the kind of style that I have in communicating the value of this work. That is also extraordinarily important.

6. Jacobsen: Any new books that can provide a good introductory foundation into this kind of research? Also, what about advanced texts as well?

de Grey: On the introductory side, there is one guy named Jim Mellon. So, Jim, this businessperson, has a very interesting of going about his job. He preferentially gets into very emerging new sectors. What he does is, he creates his own competition.

He, essentially, writes newsletters and blogs and books about this new area whose intended audience is other investors. That is what I mean by making his own competition. The reason he does this is, basically, that when a sector is just beginning. That the faster it grows, then the better.

Essentially, it is floating all boats by increasing the buzz around something. He wrote a book based on conversations with me over the previous year or so. It is called Juvenescence, which is the same as the name as his company. It is targeted to other investors.

It is very good. I was able to help with this a fair bit with the technical part. But it is written in a style that is very, very appealing, which is not a way that I would

be able to write. He has a second edition upcoming. This is one that I would highlight.

In terms of advanced texts, I would not move to texts right now. Things are moving so fast. One simply needs to read the primary literature. One needs to identify that, which is not necessarily an easy thing to do. I would point to our community's effort.

Probably, the most important one is to fight aging in the blog done by *Reason*. Even though he has become one of the CEOs of our start-up companies, he is running the blog. He is extremely good at highlighting the important points of the research.

7. Jacobsen: Any final feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

de Grey: I would say, "Thank you for having me on your show again," and for the opportunity to give an update to your audience. I think, really, the conclusion that I would give is that it is extremely exciting that things are moving much faster than before. But we must not be complacent.

There is still a long way to go. My estimation for how long we must go has gone down, but it has not nearly

gone down enough. We still need to be putting in every effort that we possibly can in whatever way.

8. Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. de Grey.

de Grey: My pleasure, Scott, thank you!



BIOGRAPHY OF DR. CHRISTOPHER HARDING



Christopher Harding is the Founder of the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (ISPE), and a Member of the OlympIQ Society and the ESOTERIQ Society. He was born on August 4, 1944 in Clovelly Private Nursing Home at Keynsham, Somerset, England, United

Kingdom. He has never married. He arrived in Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia, on the morning of October 11, 1952. He remains there to this day. He has held memberships with the Eugenics Society (1963-1964), the British Astronomical Association (1964-1969), the International Heuristic Association (1970-1974), the Triple Nine Society (1979-1990 & 1992-1995), the 606 Society (1981-1982), the Omega Society (1983-1991), the Prometheus Society (1984-1990), the International Biographical Association (1985-1990), Geniuses of Distinction Society (1986-1988), the American Biographical Institute Research Association (1986-1990), the Cincinnatus Society (1987-1990), the 4 Sigma Group of Societies [incorporating all groups having 4 Sigma plus cut off points] (1988-1990), The Minerva Society [Formerly the Phoenix Society] (1988-1990), The Confederation of Chivalry (1988-1990), the Planetary Society (1989-1990), Maison Internationale des Intellectuels [M.I.D.I.] (1989-1990), TOPS HIQ Society (1989-1990), the Cleo Society (1990-1991), the Camelopard Society (1991-1992), the Hoeflin One-in-a-Thousand Society (1992-1993), the Pi Society (also like the Mega Society for persons with 1 in one million I.Q. level (5th

April 2001 – 2002), INTERTEL [The International Legion of Intelligence] (June 1971-March 2010), The Hundred (1972-1977), the New Zealand National Mensa (1980-1982), and the Single Gourmet (1989-1991), among numerous other memberships, awards, and achievements. For the most recent or up-to-date information, please see the ESOTERIQ Society listing: <https://esoteriqsociety.com/esotericists/esoteriq-id06/>. IN it he discusses the *National Enquirer*; the gap between cognitive abilities and record of employment; living situation without a record of work; alone; the professionals test someone just shy of 1-year-old; parents react to being called “liars to their faces”; genius; intelligence tests; publications or periodicals; artificial constructs; the factors making genius; God as human idealism; the Concept of God; science; the areas most affected by this despoilment; the areas least affected by this despoilment; 6-sigma; the ESOTERIQ Society; conclusions; and the information in Quantum Physics.

***Conversation with Dr. Christopher Harding
on Genius as Individualistic, God as the
Universe or Non-Existent, Science's
Despoilment, Feynman, and the Quantum:
Founder, International Society for
Philosophical Enquiry***

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What Royal Houses were the main connections with family?

Chris Harding: Most prominent – French side.

Jacobsen: In the *National Enquirer* published on June 25, 1991, there was an article about a certain man with the “world’s highest IQ” who is a “jobless janitor.” What did this particular media attention do for you?

Harding: Nothing.

Jacobsen: I state the caveat of “absolutely nothing at all” as the response to the work experiences question. It is *reported* that you have worked in menial jobs and had stretches of unemployment, e.g., in the *National Enquirer*. What explains the gap between the cognitive abilities and the cognitive demands of the jobs

for you? Alternatively, what explains the gap between cognitive abilities and record of employment for you?

Harding: Unknown.

Jacobsen: How did you sustain yourself in terms of living situation without a record of work?

Harding: Family.

Jacobsen: Why the “non-existent” life with peers and schoolmates? Did you feel alone?

Harding: Violence and exclusion.

Jacobsen: How did the professionals test someone just shy of 1-year-old? It seems odd, even stranger than the 2-and-a-half-year-old, or thereabouts, cases entering Mensa International (or their national group).

Harding: Mental age in my case 3 years 4 months made that easy!

Jacobsen: How did your parents react to being called “liars to their faces” when ‘speaking of you’?

Harding: They were taken aback by this.

Jacobsen: Does this desire of cultures wanting genius while not wanting *the genius* create a toxic dichotomy in the general culture? Something to which only lip service is paid, while wanting to kill in former times, and 'kill' in modern times, the genius.

Harding: It comes from competitiveness [jack is equal to his master]. In many cultures submissiveness is considered politeness. That is considered standard in communication. It is why first world cultures see themselves as superior.

Jacobsen: As these intelligence tests have been a part of life before even 1-year-old, may I ask, what has been the life lesson from them for you?

Harding: Look, people see IQs as not valid above their own. Everybody does this. It is very noticeable that children asked who in their class is smartest will name themselves!

Jacobsen: As you recalled the quote from the *Journal of the British Eugenics Society*, I'm sure many will be interested now. What publications or periodicals do you continue to

read now? What ones did you previously read and no longer do so?

Harding: No preference; I am a total generalist.

Jacobsen: With Leonardo da Vinci as "a Master Genius in an age of Genius," do you think artificial constructs could fill the gap between genius seen before and unseen genius now, i.e., artificial constructs with the capabilities of the highest human genius?

Harding: They have provided little evidence they are going to solve this one: My Mother once said the process was 'ant like' rather than a G-function.

Jacobsen: What are the factors making genius "creative ability of the highest possible kind"? Other than the qualities inherent in 'marching to the beat of their own drum.'

Harding: Genius by definition would be individualistic. As one person said to me, I was very 'singular'.

Jacobsen: If "God is purely human idealism; largely what you can't attain," what are some exceptions to this thing one "largely... can't

attain” or the things attainable within this definition of God as human idealism?

Harding: What I meant was the problem lay beyond the nature of logical process. It is answerable in terms of the proof of the last theory of sets. But you still get back to the conclusion that if God exists he either is the Universe or does not exist.

You are still dealing with value judgments or in assigning names; which amounts to the same thing. My Brother agreed with me that the highest form of reasoning was EVALUATION. Since to invoke reason one must first evaluate a proposition.

Jacobsen: Is the setting of the “Concept... beyond what can be considered” a defense against formal knockdown critique of the Concept of God?

Harding: No.

Jacobsen: When did science begin this despoilment with the obsession with “consensus and ignorance”?

Harding: Always was there. In our own time many people use science to moralize, and science has become the new religion. This can't be done of course.

There is no bridge either between philosophy and religion.

Jacobsen: What are the areas most affected by this despoilment?

Harding: It is seen in notions of anthropomorphism with regard to climate change. Not so! The real cause is the Sun. Note, Astronomers had long ago pinned this down to Sun Spot Cycles. A new 11+ year Cycle began last year and rising temperatures have turned back. One Russian Woman Scientist predicts the onset of a period of dropping temperatures starting around 2030, though this figure is very uncertain!

Jacobsen: What are the areas least affected by this despoilment?

Harding: Human aging and Quantum Physics—much progress continues at the moment.

Jacobsen: What were the tests when scoring above 6-sigma several times?

Harding: Most of these I have forgotten. I'm 76 and most were over 30, 40 and up to over 75 years ago!

Jacobsen: For the ESOTERIQ Society, it states, "Christopher Harding (Australia): 197 on SBIS-

Oxford-Analysis-New-Zealand in 1976.” What is the full name of the SBIS-Oxford-Analysis-New-Zealand, particularly the “SBIS” part?

Harding: Don’t know.

Jacobsen: While, fundamentally, dispensing with ethical philosophy, social philosophy, economic philosophy, political philosophy, and metaphysics, even philosophy as “word juggling” (!), I see some common points. One is science, though “less and less” with its despoilment, meaning as a “PATTERN” made by each person individually, an emphasis on some of Freud, “QUANTUM PHYSICS” in terms of “truth” with its preservation of information (neither gained nor lost), and the bounded nature of nature (including humans) as “a condition of being defined.” So, there *is* a *there* there. I have to ask, “What makes these conclusions more sound, at this time, to you than other possibilities?

Harding: Feynman once said no one understands the Quantum. And yet to further agree with his point “Quantum Superiority” has been proved for the D-

Wave Orion Computer. I liken this to statements about the Aleph series in the mathematics of infinity theory.

Jacobsen: Any speculation as to why the information in Quantum Physics simply “IS”?

Harding: I once thought it through and concluded there was another stage beyond Quantum Physics. Simply IS would represent in turn a ‘single one’ off any general group of abstractions.

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BIOGRAPHY OF MR. ALWYN ST. OMER



Born in 1958, Alwyn St. Omer is the fourth child in a family of nine. His Mother Cynthia was a personal assistant in the Prime Minister's office and his father the late Hon. Sir Dunstan St. Omer, a widely acclaimed international artist of Saint Lucian origins.

As a child, Alwyn was inspired by the plentiful supply of picture books around the house, which served to motivate him to draw and paint pictures. Also, at about age six he was introduced to Illustrated Classics and Marvel Comics, which stimulated his appetite, not only for graphic designs, but also for fairytales and storytelling in a pictorial format. Growing up in an artistic environment provided further stimulus.

Alwyn as a young inspiring artist was privileged to witness plays performed by the famous local company—Saint Lucia Arts Guild—adding a dimension of realism to what he saw and read on the page. He was enamoured by plays steeped in the island's rich folk and musical traditions that included some of the early works of the island's Nobel Laureate, poet Derek Walcott and his playwright twin brother Roderick.

It is from this launching pad that Alwyn, the artist and storyteller was thrust into orbit, a creative artist with very deep passion and lifelong desire to document his island's cultural heritage through his drawings and paintings. For him rediscovery and preservation of all the treasures forming the formidable expanse loosely termed the Saint Lucian Environment, History, Culture and Folklore would be his life's achievement. Its art, myths, writings and traditions.

Alwyn studied Art at the Edna Manley School for the Visual Arts in Jamaica and Video Production and Audio Visuals at Portsmouth College in England. Alwyn is a master draughtsman and colorist defining and refining images in a style that is uniquely his own. His work is numerous including paintings in Acrylics and oil on

canvas, Pen and ink illustrations and wall murals. Of note are his Design of St Lucia's National Independence Monument, the Semi Dome Mural in the ceiling of the ancient River Doree Anglican Church in Choiseul, the Castries City Council commissioned outdoor murals at Faux- a-Chaud on the outskirts of the city, his Moon Dancer Series of abstract Paintings based on the lost Masquerade Tradition of St Lucia and Soucoyan, a Graphic Novel on St Lucian Folktales.

Special Awards:

- 1, National Award, the Saint Lucia Medal of Honour, for Eminent Service rendered in the field of Art and Culture (Gold, 2021)
- 2, Catapult Caribbean Art Award (2020)
- 3, Design of St Lucia's National Independence Monument (1988)

ART FROM MR. ALWYN ST. OMER



Painting: "Adan sé moun-an ka dansé, mé adan yo ka pléwé." (Translation from St Lucian Kwéyòl, "Some of the people are dancing but some of them are weeping".) Moon Dancers, an abstract painting done in acrylic on canvas, by Alwyn St Omer, size 3ft x 5ft.



ART EXHIBITIONS:

Solo:

The Embassy of Mexico (St Lucia 2009)

Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2010)

Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2010)

The Embassy of Mexico and the Embassy of Spain (St Lucia 2019)

Group/Family:

Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 1989)

St Lucia National Trust (St Lucia 1992)

Pointe Seraphine (St Lucia 1996)

Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 2002)

Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 2004)

Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2009)

Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2010)

Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2011)

Martinique Gallery (Martinique 2013)

Alliance Francaise Pyramid (St Lucia 2015)

Folk Research Centre (St Lucia 2016)

The National Archives (St Lucia 2017)

St Lucia Consulate (New York 2019)

Castries City Council Hall (St Lucia 2019) ABSTRACT
ART



THE MOON DANCER MASQUERADE SERIES
(Principal series)

Kité Flit-la Menen Lèspwi-Ou... (Let the Flute Lead Your Spirit). Masquerade Paintings by Alwyn St Omer.

The Moon dancer series is an abstraction of the Masquerade, my attempt in painting, to revive interest in and to Save the Traditional Masquerade. The "Masquerade" was an old time Street theatre, including the Toes and the Pie Banan. They roamed the streets of Castries at Christmas time, stopping at innumerable locations, they performed for rich and poor alike, up to the mid 1970's, the time of Everton Lawrence, the last of the Toes, or Pa Pa Jab. They were ritualistic gifts from our African past emanating from secret acts of rebellion. In those days, slaves whenever the plantation owners permitted any form of celebration, would transform themselves into various forms of mask tradition. A quiet revolution and secret link to the motherland from where they were so savagely torn. It was a silent conquest over those who sought to be their masters.

These ritualistic gifts provided quiet comfort to our ancestors, the traditions continuing through the ages, becoming an Integral part of our cultural and Christmas celebrations, until strangely disappearing over the last forty-five years in St Lucia, with no credible explanation, or why, of the great departure. As I become more curious about the Masquerade, I started to look for old photographs to draw and paint from, but soon realized that there was hardly any documentation of their existence. In fact, Research led me to discover that the disappearance was part of a wider circumstance and related to a problem of environmental and social degradation, leading to cultural degradation. It was my awakening to the fact that many of the cultural/folk traditions that, at one time, sustained viable environmental practices were fast disappearing. As I freely borrow from my friend Peter Murray's research, in 1999, at an international conference in Italy by the World Bank and UNESCO to strengthen links between cultural and financial development, it was discovered that there was a corresponding decline in the folk traditions of St Lucia and its once pristine environment. It was out of this profound reality that my "Moon Dancer" Masquerade series was born. An attempt in painting, to revive interest in and to Save the local Masquerade, as a medium to acknowledge our rich biodiversity and to promote the concept for the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.



A La Mòd Lézyèl.... translation: in the way of the ancestors #2 Masquerade Series, 3ft x 5ft painting available for sale, done in Acrylic on Canvas by Alwyn St Omer. Poetic interpretation, George Goddard



"Moon Dancers in shades of Blue, Black and Red.



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LANDSCAPES:



Petit Piton



the Night & the Piton



Esperance, Monchy

MARINE CREATURES AND THE SEA



ABSTRACT ART:



"Dreams" a painting series, based on the landscape in the mind of a man, paralyzed by indecision and fear...Palette Knife painting done with acrylic on canvas



The Holy Family



La Mare Haut....

ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE:
Design of the National Independence Monument of St Lucia



MURAL ART:



GlZ Ridge to Reef Environmental Mural



Working on the Dome Mural in the River Doree Anglican Church in Choiseul

St Omer paints Wall of History

Seventh month ago drawings began to appear on the walls, next to the St Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA) Customs passageway were painted to find out who was the most talented behind this magnificent piece of artwork.

The use of scaffolding in St Lucia was the reason St Omer, Always can take all the credit.

The 27th was up with Always St Omer as he put the finishing touches on his work of art.

St Omer said he has been painting for as long as he remembers. He developed a love for painting at a very tender age.

"As children we used to say up to watch my father paint," he said. "We never wanted to go paint. We used to stand by because to paint, he would be all the time when he could not find his brushes. We were very privileged to have someone like Clerk, Watson and Louis



Always St Omer as he works on his masterpiece

St Omer coming home to paint in music and study had all his 40 years and

European books.

St Omer said he did not have a passion for drawing

and not painting.

"My father gave me these classes (drawing and painting). He said to me, 'I want to see you

draw.' I was curious about what the game was and that is how I began to read."

no emphasis is being placed on developing the arts. He would like to see arts become an industry.

"Something has to be done in St Lucia. Everywhere I am surprised when I see the amount of talent we have in St Lucia," said St Omer. "The kids have incredible talent but they are frustrated. Some of them are very gifted and you will never know because they have no avenue to express themselves."

St Omer was contacted to paint the mural by the Customs City Council. He said he got the idea of what he would paint on the wall when he heard someone on a radio show stating that they did not see the relevance of independence.

"I thought why not do something positive. I used the St Lucia flag as a model for the paintings," said St Omer. "The paintings will give you a glimpse into St Lucia's culture, people and where we come from."

The public response to the mural, said St Omer, has

Newspaper clipping on SLASPA/CCC Mural



Faux a Chaud, Castries City Mural







“Moon Dancer”

The Secret Slave Rebellion

The Masquerade was a Secret Act of Rebellion; as Caribbean slaves at rare opportunities of celebration, would transform themselves into various forms of African costuming and Mask tradition. This would occur when the unsuspecting plantation owners permitted any form of gaiety from their misery. It was a sort of quiet revolution and a secret link to the motherland from whence they were so savagely torn. A silent conquest over those who sought to be their masters.

These ritualistic gifts provided quiet comfort to our ancestors. These mask traditions continued through the ages becoming Street theatre in St Lucia and all over the Caribbean, The Toes, The Pie Banan, the Masquerade as they roamed the streets of Castries at Christmas time, becoming an Integral part of our cultural and Christmas ethnicities, up to the mid 1970's the time of Everton Lawrence, the last Toes or Pa Pa Jab.

Today the Masquerade has mostly disappeared with no credible explanation or why, of the great departure,

and sadly, with hardly any evidence or documentation, they ever existed...In fact, research led me to discover that the disappearance was part of a wider circumstance and related to a problem of environmental and social degradation, leading to cultural degradation. It was my awakening to the fact that many of the cultural/folk traditions that, at one time, sustained viable environmental practices were fast disappearing.

It was out of this profound reality that my Masquerade “Moon Dancer” series was born, an abstraction of the Masquerade and my principal series, an attempt in painting, to revive interest in and to Save the local tradition, as a medium to acknowledge our rich biodiversity and to promote the concept for the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.

It is hoped that this work will serve as a small contribution towards the re-awakening of interest in the Lost Community Traditions of St Lucia, our beautiful Landscape, People, Art and Culture for the next generation and the world.

Alwyn St Omer

Ex-communication, by Graham Powell

Navigating through the
password-ridden world,
usernames abounding,
officers demanding that
buttons be pushed,
all too often unleashing
the rage of deferment,
not help;

no comforting voice,
humanity swept
from the interactive phase,
bland phrases, unfamiliar,
requiring a series
of numbers to press;

and hope persisting that
the next number may speak,
with wisdom,
with passion,
the desired result;

forlorn elders,
recalling
better times,
a homely chat,
and a reluctant click,
till the next chance to help
comes fluttering into life.