

Michael Lees

B. 1992 in England, UK, Lives & works in Salisbury, Dominica



Artist Statement

"In my films and photographs, I like to explore 'connection'. Often aiming to connect the dots between seemingly disparate subjects - connection to self, connection to nature, connection to the divine, and connection through time. It is my aim to shine a light on our Caribbean 'beingness' and present an alternative to the current unsustainable global hegemony which threatens to envelop us."

Artist Biography

Growing up between Dominica, the US, & the UK, Michael Lees became acutely aware of the many intangible "priceless" things that exist in abundance in the Caribbean - often overlooked - such as pristine nature, community, heritage, and a good work-life balance. His series of Moving Forward, Looking Back series of photographs allow his audience to pause and ponder on these everyday 'assets' that are constantly under threat as Western-style development constantly seeks to infiltrate our existence. His pieces are at times testament that we are left facing the consequences - climate change being a major one.

Michael Lees is a Dominican award-winning filmmaker and photographer whose work focuses on the themes of nature, development, and our relationship to the natural world. Michael graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he transitioned from majoring in business at the Kenan-Flagler Business School to a degree in Communication Studies with a focus on Media Production, minoring in Business & PPE (Political Science, Philosophy, & Economics).

In 2017 Michael ventured into the forests of Dominica planning to document a 6 month communion with nature and one's innate ability to be nourished by his environment. But it was not to be, within a few weeks, he faced a 7 hour ordeal with the region's deadliest storm, Hurricane Maria, alone in his collapsed palm leaf and bamboo hut. Out of this experience and documenting other Dominican's survival stories, Michael released his debut documentary, 'Uncivilized'.

The film premiered at the *Trinidad Film Festival* in 2019 and went on to screen at festivals across America, Europe and the Caribbean. It won the *Caribbean Spirit Award* in 2020 at the Barbados Independent Film Festival, as well as the best documentary at the *Cinestar Festival* in Guadeloupe in 2022.

Lees has written, shot, and edited for clients including National Geographic, Lonely Planet, UNICEF & Billboard. He has exhibited his photography work at national exhibitions as well as the OECS exhibition *Climate Change: An Eastern Caribbean Journey*.

Michael is an Executive member of both the Waitukubuli Artist Association & SHAPE (Society for Historic Architectural Preservation & Enhancement).



Artist Resumé – Michael Lees

B. 1992 in England, UK - Lives and works in Dominica

Education

- 2015 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- BA in Communication Studies (Media Production)
 - Minors in PPE (Philosophy, Political Science, Economics) and Business, Graduated May 2015

Work Experience

- 2017- **Founder** - One Off Productions /Michael Lees Media. **Dominica**
- Current
- Produce/shoot non-fiction film content for clients including UNICEF, FAO, US Embassy Bridgetown, National Geographic, CETI
 - **Producer/ Director** of the Award-winning Documentary *Uncivilized*
 - Offer production services for clients ranging from Royal Caribbean Cruise line to local artists
 - Created an immersive 360° Virtual exhibition for The Waitukubuli Artist Association
 - Photos for ad campaigns for local & international brands including IB Designs
- 2018- **Public Relations Officer** - Waitukubuli Artist Association. **Dominica**
- Current
- Serves on the Executive Board assisting in running of the organization
 - PR duties including media appearances and press releases
 - Steering large projects such as nationwide mural drive, WCMF Installations etc.

Exhibitions

- 2020 **WHOOSH 2**
- Group Exhibition, hosted by Waitukubuli Artist Association, Roseau, Dominica
 - Also filmed and produced 360 Virtual aspect of exhibition
- 2022 Climate Change: An Eastern Caribbean Journey
- OECS-held regional exhibition. Artwork used for the exhibition's flyer
- 2023 Exhibitor at CAFA 2023
- Regional art exhibition featuring 46 artists from Caribbean & Diaspora. Bridgetown, Barbados

Extra Curriculars & Awards

- SHAPE** (Society for Historic Architecture Preservation & Enhancement) - VP, Current
- Barbados Independent Film Festival - Winner of Caribbean Spirit Award 2019 for *Uncivilized*
- African Diaspora Film Festival - Winner of Villa Romana Award 2021 for *Uncivilized*
- Crash Campaign Client Winner – UNC-CH School of Journalism and Mass Communication, 2015
- Rick Dees Scholarship – Funding for advanced project at UNC-CH, 2015
- Full Frame Fellow – Opportunity to workshop with esteemed documentary filmmakers
- Swain Lot Film Festival – Official Selection for “Letting Go”
- NC TV Award – For significant contribution to the Communications Department

