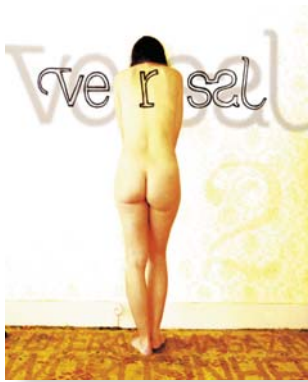


Melting Pot

By Nadine McNeil

VERSAL 2004, wordsinhere,
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'Amsterdam is a city defined through intense and temporary assemblies. Everyone has just arrived or is about to leave, but few are merely tourists to the canals and Red Lights; those visitors arrive to another city.'

The kaleidoscope of poems collected and presented in *Versal 2004* clearly attests to the bubbling melting pot that Amsterdam truly is. A transient resident myself, as I read through the works presented, my mind easily conjured up the diverse images of Amsterdam that we've come to know, love, hate, embrace and reject simultaneously.

Visitors – both long and short term – are drawn to Amsterdam primarily for its seemingly decadent nature and open attitude to life. Ah, we breathe a sigh of relief, whether we hail from London, Luxembourg, Luxor, Lebanon or Lesotho; irrelevant and irrespective really, as we inhale this 'canalised' city that nurtures and encourages lateral thought and action. *Versal* is a powerful compilation of creative minds using their stories and experiences as canvasses to produce this exquisite compilation – both in word and in art. The ordinary is seen through a 'different' lens and transcends to extraordinary through colour and imagination.

There were so many personal favourites from this collection of art, poetry and prose that to highlight any particular piece, one runs the dangerous risk of discrediting the works of so many talented others. *Versal* will make you cry, it will make you laugh, and it will make you think. One thing's for sure: it gives you the 'unplugged' version of Amsterdam!

Versal is not intended for the 'mainstream unconscious,' whose travelling experiences are limited to geographical distance; those that are addicted to the familiar.

Each piece presented in *Versal* provides the reader with the opportunity to merge the distance that exists between us. In short, *Versal* demands that we act, feel and think globally; breaking down intrusive, imposed barriers. As humanity, we are one.

Indeed, *'if you follow this line to its end, you will reach Amsterdam.'*