WRESTLING WITH THE IMAGE
CARIBBEAN INTERVENTIONS

CURATED BY CHRISTOPHER COZIER AND TATIANA FLORES

THE WORLD BANK
Lead sponsor and organizer: The World Bank Art Program
To celebrate the role that artists play in the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean region, the World Bank Art Program conceived About Change, a program of exhibitions of contemporary visual arts organized in collaboration with the Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of American States (OAS).

The exhibitions include artworks selected during an open Call for Entries (January-April 2010) as well as a small selection from the permanent collections of the partners. Works chosen during the open Call for Entries are by contemporary visual artists from all member states in the region. The exhibitions provide a comprehensive overview of current artistic spheres and specialties. The categories of visual art for About Change are the following: fine arts (painting, sculpture, drawing, video, printmaking, photography, mixed media, video art, experimental film and digital animation); decorative arts, including design (product design, graphic design, textile and fashion design); and folk art (popular art, indigenous art and craft).

The Project Committee, appointed and led by the World Bank Art Program, was in charge of the Call for Entries and the curatorial decisions related to the individual exhibitions. Wrestling with the Image is part of the About Change program.

Project Committee members:

- Marina Galvani (The World Bank Art Program, Manager and Curator; Chair of the Curatorial Committee)
- Felix Angel (IADB Cultural Center, General Coordinator and Curator, Washington DC)
- Clara Astiasarán (Independent Curator, Costa Rica)
- Christopher Cozier (Artist and Independent Curator, Trinidad and Tobago)
- Evangelina Elizondo (The World Bank Art Program, Artist / Assistant Curator)
- Edgar Endress (Artist and Independent Curator, Chile)
- Tatiana Flores Ph.D. (Art Historian and Independent Curator, Rutgers University)
- Valeria Gonzalez (University of Buenos Aires, Independent Curator and Professor, Argentina)
- Maria Leyva (Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of the American States, General Coordinator and Curator, Washington DC)
- Fernanda Ramirez (The World Bank Art Program, Consultant and Exhibition Coordinator)

About Change is based on an original idea by Marina Galvani.

For an updated calendar of openings and events of About Change visit: www.worldbank.org/artprogram.
The Caribbean region was traditionally narrated as Spanish, English, French and Dutch, with their respective traditional and creole forms, but many other languages also shape the Caribbean experience: indigenous languages from the northern Amazonian region in the Guyanas, those of the various Maroon ethnicities derived from Africa and the Garifuna who reach into Central America, Bhojpuri, Cantonese and creoles like Papiamento. The Caribbean continues to expand and shift. In this manifold space, experiences produced through the visual create meeting-points breaking through a multiplicity of barriers.

The Caribbean is a site of investigation for the artists in Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions. This is a constantly expanding space shaped by wherever they may travel, reside or imagine. It is articulated by individual acts of visual inquiry seeking to transgress the usual and fixed cultural, political or geographic parameters. The works of art on display are often in contest with a much longer history of distorted representations that continue to be internally and externally manufactured.

Wrestling with the Image is not a survey or inventory of linguistic, ethnic, cultural or national modes. Even though similarly engaged artists from many countries or language groups may not be represented in this exhibition, their works remain in dialogue.

As part of the wider About Change project, Wrestling with the Image investigates contemporary Caribbean visual thinking and its trajectories: our experiences or ways of understanding and moving through the world. Some of these artists were born in one island and live and work in another. Some are born in the "Caribbean diaspora" and continue to investigate how that shapes their ways of thinking. For them, the Caribbean is also a site of memory, where they process family histories or the vast archives of former colonial powers. They may live in places like Japan, Austria or Germany, not traditionally located in diasporic mappings. Much of their work is inspired by one location, produced in another and presented yet elsewhere. It reflects the way Caribbean people have always been on the move.

Abigail Hadeed’s photographs of elderly people with their UNIA and Black Star Line certificates were shot in Costa Rica. These images of Afro-Caribbean populations on the Central American coast discuss the movement of people and ideas in the region, knitting together communities often unknown to each other. Sheena Rose’s videos are about Cape Town. Marlon Griffith’s images of school girls with “powder on their chest” in “bling” patterns were shot by Gerard Gaskin, a Trinidadian photographer living in New York, while he was visiting Port of Spain. Many of these works are collaborative enterprises between artists, derived from shared observations and interests.

1: Where is this Caribbean?

Being an artist within, of or from the Caribbean requires dexterity and wit. The definition often feels illogical or ill-fated, perhaps because it cannot fully describe the expanse of ocean and the archipelago of islands, nation-states, colonial territories, departments, and unions with diverse populations, languages, geography, cultures and histories. When one is on a metropolitan subway train or in an airport looking at an advertisement with hammocks, palm trees and blue skies with available bodies and smiling faces — or looking at the object “silhouetted” cramped in sloops on a CNN report, or moving in the background of historical photographs — these become troubling and anxious questions.

The Caribbean region was traditionally narrated as Spanish, English, French and Dutch, with their respective traditional and creole forms, but many other languages also shape the Caribbean experience: indigenous languages from the northern Amazonian region in the Guyanas, those of the various Maroon ethnicities derived from Africa and the Garifuna who reach into Central America, Bhojpuri, Cantonese and creoles like Papiamento. The Caribbean continues to expand and shift. In this manifold space, experiences produced through the visual create meeting-points breaking through a multiplicity of barriers.

The Caribbean is a site of investigation for the artists in Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions. This is a constantly expanding space shaped by wherever they may travel, reside or imagine. It is articulated by individual acts of visual inquiry seeking to transgress the usual and fixed cultural, political or geographic parameters. The works of art on display are often in contest with a much longer history of distorted representations that continue to be internally and externally manufactured. Wrestling with the image is not a survey or inventory of linguistic, ethnic, cultural or national modes. Even though similarly engaged artists from many countries or language groups may not be represented in this exhibition, their works remain in dialogue.

As part of the wider About Change project, Wrestling with the Image investigates contemporary Caribbean visual thinking and its trajectories: our experiences or ways of understanding and moving through the world. Some of these artists were born in one island and live and work in another. Some are born in the “Caribbean diaspora” and continue to investigate how that shapes their ways of thinking. For them, the Caribbean is also a site of memory, where they process family histories or the vast archives of former colonial powers. They may live in places like Japan, Austria or Germany, not traditionally located in diasporic mappings. Much of their work is inspired by one location, produced in another and presented yet elsewhere. It reflects the way Caribbean people have always been on the move.

Abigail Hadeed’s photographs of elderly people with their UNIA and Black Star Line certificates were shot in Costa Rica. These images of Afro-Caribbean populations on the Central American coast discuss the movement of people and ideas in the region, knitting together communities often unknown to each other. Sheena Rose’s videos are about Cape Town. Marlon Griffith’s images of school girls with “powder on their chest” in “bling” patterns were shot by Gerard Gaskin, a Trinidadian photographer living in New York, while he was visiting Port of Spain. Many of these works are collaborative enterprises between artists, derived from shared observations and interests.
2: Looking and contending

I got the idea for the name of this exhibition while looking at a series of images by John Cox, with titles such as I am not afraid to fight a perfect stranger. We see the artist rendering himself in training, as a runner, as a boxer or sometimes as a wrestler. He presents himself, in various combative postures and sequences, as a contender, but with an image of himself. This entanglement or engagement of the other-self, a shadow or mirror image, is an ongoing story. Will these selves ever merge and find cohesion, or will one be split asunder in the search for "true" self-consciousness and awareness? The Caribbean artist is always in competition with a long history of expedient labelling of their world and their very selves — externally and also internally.

In Nikolai Noel’s Toussaint et George, iconic portraits of two American revolutionary liberators and “founding fathers” face off and mirror each other, highlighting the unanswered questions of our varied histories and dreams. If we shift to very traditional historical art world imagery, they could be replaced by portraits of Wifredo Lam and Pablo Picasso. There is something intriguing about the miniature scale of these images — visual commentaries which function like discrete interpersonal notes placed in the public domain. These works recall Noel’s earlier miniscule public works, with images not much larger than postage stamps, placed on grates, walls and lampposts in Port of Spain.

Ebony G. Patterson’s Entourage is a constructed studio group portrait of friends and family — many of them fellow artists — dressed and made up to look like stylish dancehall characterizations, complete with ironic bleached faces and androgynous attire. This is real transnational culture, initially driven by a social underclass, which has become a viral vernacular reaction to ideas of high and low culture within the class warfare of urban Kingston. The engagement of this language informs the “carnivalesque” — not as folk spectacle co-opted by nationalist regimes, but as social contestation in the urban space, satirical and virile.

Marlon James’s Mark and Giselle look back at us from within the frame, but not as generic nameless silhouettes. They are fellow artists and friends living in Kingston, and co-conspirators in this declared moment. Their clothes and expression defy our expectations, along with the empty background. They could be young people anywhere — Toronto, Port of Spain, Johannesburg? Perhaps only a sense of time or the “now” is conveyed when we encounter these images.

In a place like the Caribbean, we cannot take the agency of portraiture for granted, in the aftermath of a much longer history of topographical and anthropological representations. The subject position — or the role of the subject — within the frame or field of pictorial representation is highly contested. Standard regional historical narratives of the Caribbean recount or register developmental shifts from persons being privately owned property — indentured workers and colonial subjects — to being citizens — of a republic, for example. But in the pictorial domain, we are still anthropological, cultural, national, ethnic or electoral commodities and signifiers. We remain labelled but nameless images. The moment of encounter and of exchange is what is at stake. The question is whether the purpose for taking the image shifts to real portraiture and not simply image-capture, in the worst sense of the term, leaving us as subjected signs of ourselves, in a kind of cultural dopplegänger-ing that...
disturbingly reminds us of our traditional role within a visual territory not exclusively of our own making, or coyly performed.

3: Space vs place

In viewing this work, we are asked to understand the Caribbean as a space rather than a place: a space that is shaped by wherever Caribbean people find themselves, whether in the Americas at large, Europe, Africa or Asia. It is a conversation about movement in the Atlantic world — a dialogue about dispersal, rather than just displacement.

Charles Campbell’s Bagasse Cycle is a graphic codification of the things we know on a daily basis about our work and our experiences, but transformed into patterns and signs. His investigation of over-familiar Dutch slave ship designs transforming into DNA or atom-like forms transforming into flocks of migrating birds convey the story of the “migrations”, as he sometimes calls them, in which our experiences are taken back — made into aesthetic forms, seeking out the dissonance between what the forms mean and or feel like when manipulated or reclaimed.

Blue Curry uses elements associated with the tropical and tourism to bring our attention to the status of the Caribbean island as a contemporary industrial site. His work engages these signs mischievously to conceptually alter our awareness of history and the current social space. In a recent installation in Liverpool, he placed gallons of sun-tan lotion into a perpetually oscillating cement mixer. Many of his “untitled” works reveal their intent through Curry’s listing of the materials, which read like alternative titles. It is a deeply ironic commentary on formalist language. His video Discovery of the Palm Tree Phone Mast — one of his few works with a declared title — makes fun of the language of “discovery” in its scrutiny of a cellular tower designed to look like a palm tree, so as not to spoil the view of tourists. The work refers to the ongoing development of the tropical as an artificial construction with roots in the 19th-century post-sugar era.

For artists like Roshini Kempadoo and Joscelyn Gardener, the archive becomes an archeological site for reconstructing memory to rethink historical or received knowledge and mythologies — to tell new stories. Heino Schmid’s pursuit of balance or a fleeting order in Temporary Horizons infers something about the artist and his society. His act of balancing bottles looks like a sleight of hand — a performative feat like a street hustler’s to gain critical attention and to discuss predicaments in a postcolonial world. Each time the bottle falls, one flinches.

The idea of “living history” — history in the perpetual present tense — is conveyed through re-telling or re-enactment, but through newer markers more related to contemporary signs, in a process of visual reconstruction via the imaginary. This is not a form of escapism, but a distortion aimed at “re-seeing”. The piece of Nicole Awai’s Specimen From Local Ephemera: Mix More Mediul is a fluid potent form in motion — organic and free-flowing, but having no specific form or shape as it adapts to new spaces and new relationships in its altered state. Like the topsy-turvy dolls of the colonial era in which the artist splits herself, sometimes another self becomes the inverted other or someone else altogether. This chameleon-like form is alarming to a world that requires fixed and readable signs and boundaries.

These artists display a defiance against being pinned down to a single location, and the expectations ascribed to being here or there. Defying these territorial boundaries brings up questions of license and approval, and indeed images of passports, certificates, and associated coats of arms and official insignias move through many of the works, underscoring the way that bodies and land are constantly commodified and licensed. So much of Caribbean reality has to do with stamps and certificates and “papers”, and the visual vocabulary of these images is another way in which these works are in dialogue with each other, from Hew Locke’s appropriation of obsolete bonds and certificates, to the passport stamps on Jean Ulick Deesert’s colour-by-number diagrams, the royal insignia that becomes a mark of identity in Holly Byrom’s Imperial, or the Natives on the side of the coat of arms in Nikolai Noel’s image. Tonya Wiles
These artists display a defiance against being pinned down to a single location, and the expectations ascribed to being here or there.

 sticks her tongue out at us through a china bowl “certified” by the British crown. This record of her playful, performative act of transforming colonial-era crockery into a mask provokes traditional readings of “whiteness” or “blackness” in the Caribbean space. Around her wrist we see a coloured string, placing the gesture within contemporary life in the islands.

4: Digital natives

In the recent Caribbean past, the relationship between home and away or onboard and abroad was always one of tension or competition around discussions of authenticity and access. Over the last ten or fifteen years, the Internet, cheaper travel and digital media have facilitated new ways of working and of collaboratively creating critical dialogues that defy traditional boundaries (national, cultural and even linguistic). Perhaps the Caribbean may be redefined by these exchanges across this new “critical space”?

Online media allow individual artists in various locations to share ideas and images and to think more expansively. New relationships or new conditions are in the process of being produced for how Caribbean people can relate not just to each other, but also to wider audiences. For some, the Internet is a site of memory and historical investigation. For others, it is an actual site of daily experience. For all, it becomes a dialogue about visual vocabularies, sensibility and even a particular social awareness.

The digital world so far has no overly determined and owned history in the field of representation, so these artists are not burdened by the baggage of, for example, the history of painting or the status of the black body within the frame or field of representation. It is open season. And access to digital equipment allows a new generation of artists to create images and to disseminate them in ways that break down traditional hierarchies of skills and specialized knowledge as means to define value — for example, in video and photography.
They are not waiting to be the subject of discovery, but daring themselves to transgress boundaries and new experience.

Rodell Warner’s worker photographs tackle the idea of the labourer in a long history of social documentation. But these individuals’ work attire has the feeling of costumes, and their place within the landscape takes on the look of 19th-century topographical images of people and places — images of slaves and peasants. The artificiality of the light creates a slightly absurd quality, rendering both the subject and the place unfamiliar.

The powdered neck and bosom, long a confusing sign in the class warfare of the Caribbean, is embraced and asserted in Marlon Griffith’s Powdered Girls, his take on street-level glamour and pride. Griffith creates templates for the application of the powder from the logos of high-fashion houses — a whole new reading of bling and self. The talcum powder often refers to freshness, as in just-having-bathed — being cool in the hot sun and not sweaty. Did it originate from the powdered hair and bosoms of the European courts that once colonized these islands?

A sense of place of origin may shape these artists’ interests, but they are not satisfied to represent a fixed site or territory. They are not waiting to be the subject of discovery, but daring themselves to transgress boundaries and new experience. As curator, I have tried my best not to do a “Caribbean” show. In shifting back and forth between my visual and curatorial forms of enquiry, I feel a tremendous empathy with the ambitions and concerns of these artists within the current moment. For them, the region remains an ongoing work in progress.
In a recent article, the Venezuelan artist Alessandro Balteo Yazbeck is quoted as saying, "If the grid is the new palm tree of Latin American art, we are making progress." This bold statement is striking because in the Western hemisphere, the area that is most characterized by palm trees is the Caribbean. Nowhere else is the palm tree a defining motif—certainly not in Mexico or the Southern Cone, two major centers of Latin American art. So in this artist's assessment the landscape of the Caribbean is what is wrong with "Latin American art." Yet, the Caribbean encompasses much more than parts of Latin America. Historically colonized by Holland, Denmark, England, the United States, and France, in addition to Spain, the Caribbean spans a region of astounding diversity and syncretism with the common threads of colonialism and slavery. It is a place of rich complexity that is more than the sum of its parts. How unfair to imply that this locus of staggering beauty, tragic history, and uncertain future is synonymous with lack of progress, as though the Caribbean should be held responsible for the consequences of its colonial past. What does progress even mean, and why use it as a model from which to judge art?

The solution implied by the quotation is that artists should reject their surroundings and opt for a rationally-based abstract visual language. It is clear from the works in this exhibition, however, that the grid is not the answer for artists from the Anglophone, francophone, and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. Neither are palm trees, for that matter, but what we do find are works laden with content. Photographs, videos, paintings, prints, sculptures, and installations allow us a glimpse into the multifaceted contemporary experience of the Caribbean.

Wrestling with the Image is an apt title for this exhibition because it conjures up the sheer difficulty of making pictures. Perhaps the task of image production is not so hard in other contexts, but the quandary formulated by Dominican intellectual Silvio Torres-Saillant applies here: "What literature and thought can come from a civilization that is aware of its catastrophic beginning?" Furthermore, present-day experience in the region is full of challenges, with staggering poverty rates and limited opportunities for employment. Haiti alone is both a tragedy of epic proportions and a global model of hope. As a result of the precarious economies of the Caribbean, migration is a part of life, and diasporic communities abound in the United States and Europe. Under these conditions, being an artist is not an easy choice, whether one stays or goes. To remain in the Caribbean and survive as an artist implies both a level of relative economic privilege and the constant judgment in the eyes of others that one is not a productive member of society. To leave involves facing the often painful experience of the immigrant, being subjected to stereotype and prejudice, and needing to address topics that are intelligible to a global public. Becoming an artist is a difficult decision in any context; in the Caribbean, it is almost an existential question.

This exhibition includes work in various mediums and by artists of Caribbean origins, regardless of their current place of residence. They demonstrate an astounding wealth of creativity, but what most unites them thematically is the ways in which they point out the opacity of images. Artists and art historians know that pictures are constructs, never transparent, but too often representations are taken at face value. Images of white sandy beaches, palm trees, and sunsets have molded contemporary perceptions of the Caribbean; the tourism industry promotes these locales as though they were devoid
of history and culture. As a result, the region’s artists are particularly sensitive to stereotype, and much of their work calls attention to images as illusory and insufficient.

Taking the theme of the exhibition at its most literal, specific works engage the theme of fight and struggle. John Cox’s representations of boxers often feature a black man who seems to be sparring against his doppelgänger. In one instance, the man is hitting his own face while his partner stands back. These paintings tend to be deeply textured, with multiple layers or various shades of colors, and they give the impression that the image did not come easily, appearing worked and reworked. The final products themselves create uncomfortable tensions, both within the composition and for the viewers. They seem to allude to a process of self-examination that is never fully resolved. Ultimately, they succumb to a kind of powerlessness, ironic for representations of fighters, and somehow the spectator becomes implicated in their defeat. The photographs of Nadia Huggins problematize the image in similar ways. In *The Quiet Fight* is a striking scene of two men wrestling under the clouds. Executed in high contrast black and white, the men’s faces are obscured by shadows while the clouds gleam in the upper register. As in Cox’s boxing scenes, they would almost appear to be the same bald, dark-skinned man, except for the fact that they are captured in a photograph. Black masculinity here is examined through the stereotype of the African-descended male as strong, violent, and interchangeable (i.e. lacking a distinct identity). Another image Black Hole probes the theme further, focusing here on the adolescent body of a boy as seen from above his head. The title refers to his black hair, forming the almost perfect shape of an oval; his face remains invisible. There is a certain sadness pervasive to Nadia Huggins’ images, whether these be empty or peopled. Regardless of her working with color or in black and white, she uses dark tones in very expressive ways, evoking melancholy and desolation. Though her images of black men play up to stereotype as a way of examining preconceptions, her landscapes challenge the picturesque views of the Caribbean.

The idea of the double is also an integral part of the work of Nicole Awai. In *Specimen from Local Ephemera: Mix More Medium*, Awai depicts herself in a double self-portrait wearing a light colored camisole and a green skirt with a batik print of sea turtles. Lying on a surface covered with discarded materials, the version of herself on the left looks out at the viewer confrontationally, making a gesture of resistance. Her other self seems relaxed, and her attitude is more receptive. With a downcast gaze and her hand held out in salutation, she acknowledges the viewer in an apparently friendly manner. The image is complicated and puzzling, with references to the artistic trade interspersed with a map legend made up of nail polish colors and their names, abstract colorful shapes, three water towers, and a collaged landscape of a deteriorating house in split perspective. Deliberately unresolved, it plays with illusion and representation to call attention to the lack of transparency of visual language.

Richard Fung points out how illusion is created cinematically in his video *Islands*. Here, he deconstructs the Hollywood film *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison* (1956), directed by John Huston and starring Robert Mitchum and Deborah Kerr. The movie tells the story of an American marine stranded in the South Pacific during World War II but was filmed in Tobago using locals of Chinese descent as extras playing Japanese soldiers. The artist’s uncle Clive had such a role, and Fung’s video intersperses clips from the film with suggestive commentary, such as “Uncle Clive has never seen a Japanese person in his life and later, when returning the uncle’s experience of seeing the film, “He strains to see himself.” The video calls attention to how, in the hands of Hollywood, the Caribbean becomes a blank slate on which to project fantasy and desire. In juxtaposing close-ups of the actors with shots of the masses of extras running across the beach, it exposes how difference is created and perpetuated. *Islands* begins and ends with a shot panning over clusters of palm trees, revealing how, in the popular imaginary, the tropics are interchangeable.
The work of Blue Curry also plays up stereotypes of tropical islands, employing motifs associated with the tourist industry, such as palm trees, conch shells, and sunscreen. In the video *Discovery of the Palm Tree: Phone Mast*, he shoots a landscape, focusing on a lone, scrawny palm tree in the distance. As the camera closes in, it is revealed that it is not a tree at all but, rather, a phone tower that has been camouflaged to blend in with the landscape. Employing a defining trope of the Caribbean, the video humorously shows us that appearances are not always what they seem. Heino Schmid's video *Temporary Horizon* shows a different take on the production of images. In it, we see two glass bottles precariously balancing each other on an angle. A few moments later, the bottles fall, and a man appears to put them back in place. As he balances the bottles, the viewer is only able to see his arms and waist. The process continues endlessly, a Sisyphean task. The piece carries a resistance to meaning reminiscent of the work of Marcel Duchamp, yet the introduction of the producer makes the point that it is a construction, not a readymade. Refusing to stay put for posterity, the two bottles must become images rather than objects in order to function as an artwork. Furthermore, the transparency of the bottles belies the ethnicity of the piece's producer. It is only when they fall and he puts them back together that we become aware of his tanned arms. In hinting heino schmid
Installation views:
Temporary Horizon,
2010, Alice Yard

at his racial identity, the artist plays with the notions of visibility and invisibility.

Whereas Schmid uses the trope of transparency to obscure meaning, opacity is another tactic that this group of artists employs to great success. Patricia Kaersenhout's *Invisible Men* project takes Ralph Ellison's classic novel as a point of departure. She blacks out the text and draws multi-layered images on the book's pages in order to render it useless as a vehicle of written information. Nevertheless, her intervention evokes the book's theme: the plight of an African-American man completely overlooked by society. Dhiradj Ramsamoedj's constructions embody the very notion of opacity. They consist of life-sized figures completely covered in colorful squares of cloth, as intensely visual as they are menacing. Actively posed, they bring to mind African traditions of masquerade and aesthetics of excess; nevertheless, to a Western audience, they are impenetrable and exotic, mysterious and unknowable. Charles Campbell's painting *Bagasse* negates the traditional association of a painting as a window onto the world and as a beautiful object to offer instead a bleak vision of an anti-landscape. In a stark palette of black and white, the artist portrays a bird's-eye view of crushed stalks of sugar cane on the ground. The title is the French-word for the fibrous byproduct of the sugar cane after all the juice has been extracted. The image suggests chaos and destruction; instead of the scenic view of the tropics, we witness the traces of suffering that remain, stark reminders of the legacy of slavery.

The trope of opacity is an effective way with which to deal with the region's legacy of slavery and subsequent racial oppression. To represent atrocity and injustice iconically turns the risk of trivialization; therefore, several of the artists in the exhibition seek oblique ways to visualize what is essentially irrepressible. In her series of stone lithograph prints, *Creole Portraits III*, Joscelyn Garner recovers the history of slave women in hauntingly beautiful images each depicting a typical hairstyle of an African woman that is juxtaposed to an iron collar and a sprig of flowers. Rendered in a meticulous, detailed manner, the prints belie the horror of their subjects. They refer to the abortion practices of slave women in the Caribbean, who would ingest the herbs pictured in order to end unwanted pregnancies and resist the perpetuation of slavery. In punishment for these actions, their masters would force them into the types of collars depicted. Gardner's suite of images renders homage to countless unnamed victims. Terry Boddie also tackles the subject of slavery throughout much of his mixed-media work. The artist transfers photographic images to canvas or paper and intervenes these to produce multilayered compositions that reflect on the processes of history and memory.

Heino Schmid
Installation views:
Temporary Horizon,
2010, Alice Yard
that he contributes to this exhibition, he juxtaposes mechanically reproduced images depicting coins and a gun with paintings of objects evocative of farming, ritual, or the slave trade. The resulting small-scale images appear fragile and unassuming. Deliberately difficult to interpret, they evoke the past but in a way that underscores its fragmentary and incoherent nature. The work of Nikolai Noel also engages with the construction of history, challenging traditional expectations of the depiction of “great men.” His drawing *Toussaint et George* juxtaposes the hero of Haitian independence Toussaint L’Ouverture with George Washington in a thoroughly unconventional manner. The two portraits appear as mirror images, with each character similarly posed and gazing at the other. While Washington’s features are drawn in pencil and his skin rendered with a light gray wash, L’Ouverture’s face is painted in a thick black acrylic, and his eyes, nose, and mouth are etched into the paint, giving him a gruesome mask-like appearance. Like Nicole Awai and John Cox, Noel here explores the notion of the double in an interesting way. Clearly, L’Ouverture is Washington’s Haitian counterpart, but the picture is structured so as to make him appear as the American’s other, his dark side. Serving as a reminder of George Washington’s background as a slave owner, the work deconstructs the notion of the hero and intertwines the histories of the United States and the Caribbean.

Through numerous visual tropes, the artists in the exhibition insistently remind us that appearances are deceiving. One group of artists applies techniques of formal layering to call attention to the fact that images are complicated things. Lilian Blades’ collages and sculptures employ a maximalist aesthetic; through different textures and patterns, she creates objects that often a visual overload. Marcel Pinas’ installation *Fragment abibaki bini* consists of thousands of bottles all covered in colorful pieces of cloth. The patterns identify specific Maroon villages—historically, the communities of runaway slaves in Suriname—and thereby celebrate local traditions. Sri Irodikromo presents a monumental batik cloth with multiple patterns and perforated with tree vines. The cloth combines the artist’s Indonesian heritage—through the use of the wax-based method of batik dying—with the symbols and traditions of the African and indigenous inhabitants of Suriname. Through formal layering, she calls attention to the cultural complexities of her native country. Pauline Marcelle too is inspired by textiles in her paintings from the series *Bend Down Boutique*, but her approach is also informed by photography and installation.

The artist photographs bundles of second-hand clothing that she seeks out in Africa, where the trade in used garments forms an important part of local economies. Coloring over mechanically reproduced images, she creates intriguing compositions and makes a singular contribution to the visual language of abstract painting. Holly Bynoe approaches the act of image-making through digital means. Her collages question the ability of photographs to capture “truth” through techniques of decomposition and fragmentation. She arranges her subjects into new configurations that both argue that all images are constructions and challenge traditional assumptions about gender, place, and history. An eloquent writer, Bynoe’s pieces are often accompanied with poetic text that further precludes a straightforward reading of the image. In her view, reality is unknowable, and the production of meaning is inherently a fictitious process.

Just as place, history, and process are made complicated in the hands of these artists, so are subjectivities. Those who engage the human figure—Sheena Rose, Marlon James, Ebony G. Patterson, Marlon Griffith, Phillip Thomas, Onoeika Russell, Ewan Atkinson, Natalie Wood, and Tonya Wiles—offer numerous visions on contemporary experience. Rose, James, Patterson, Griffith, Wiles, and Thomas each approach their subject matter in insubordinate ways. Thomas, Atkinson, Russell, and
Wood delve into worlds of fantasy and fiction as well as endowed with new meanings through the eyes of certain of these artists. Jamie Lee Loy deconstructs the traditional still life through her pictures of flower petals that are pinned down or bundled together, clam shells arranged around upright nails, and utensils transformed to look like weapons. Her compositions confound expectations, recasting Surrealist experiments from a twenty-first century perspective. La Vaughn Belle’s video Porcelain Diaries brings decorative objects to life, humorously exposing middle class sensibilities in a sympathetic and playful manner. Santiago Cal’s grouping of wooden hammers transform a mundane tool into a sculptural object. The pieces are hand carved with numerous variations ranging from the whimsical to the absurd. Despite their toy-like nature, they have a serious subtext, considering that timber was the main export of the artist’s native Belize during the colonial era. In this light, the hammers function as emblems of futility; they call attention to the predicament of colonized peoples.

The Caribbean has been referred to by scholars as the “laboratory of globalization.” It is one of the first places in the world where so many cultures came together and learned, for better or for worse, to coexist. Thus, Caribbean artists are by nature global citizens, and their works call attention to the porosity of borders and the multifaceted nature of contemporary experience. Kishan Munroe has traveled the world, seeking to connect with peoples of different cultures and locate the ties that bind all of humanity together. Hew Locke and Jean-Ulrick Désiré take a more cynical view of globalization, offering bodies of work that challenge and ridicule colonial and post-colonial power structures. Abigail Hadeed and Roshini Kempadoo reflect on the experience of migration through the filter of nostalgia. Hadeed sought out the Afro-Caribbean peoples who migrated to Costa Rica and documented their continuing connection to the Pan-African movement of Marcus Garvey. Kempadoo turned her attention to the experience of diasporic communities in England and created a series of digitally altered prints that reflected on the solitude and isolation that accompanies the immigrant.

Though this essay began by evoking the most jaded tropical image, I hope it has been clear that my intention has not been to advocate for more beachscapes but rather to identify the common threads that bind the dizzyingly dynamic visual production of contemporary Caribbean artists. For too long, the region has been subjected to stereotype, but it is encouraging that artists nevertheless choose to engage local subject matter—broadly understood—instead of retreating into a hermeticist visual language that would have them deny their surroundings and backgrounds altogether.
ARTISTS


WRESTLING WITH THE IMAGE
CARIBBEAN INTERVENTIONS
WHEN I WAS A CHILD I WOULD REGULARLY INTERRUPT MY FATHER TO ASK HIM WHAT HE WAS DOING. HE WOULD REPLY THAT HE WAS “BUILDING A WIGWAM TO WIND-UP THE MOON.” THIS CONFOUNDING PHRASE BECAME THE KEY TO STARMAN’S MISSION. HE WAS TO SEARCH FOR A PLACE TO BUILD HIS OWN WIGWAM TO WIND-UP THE MOON. HIS QUEST INVESTIGATES THE ROLE OF THE “OUTSIDER” IN A TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY AND QUESTIONS THE PURPOSE OF STRUCTURE AS MONUMENT OR A SYMBOL OF BELONGING.
I respond to people’s interaction with me as an Anglophone Caribbean body living an American life. There is a constant and inherent state of duality in this existence. Not a state of confusion or a crisis of identity but an acknowledgement, acceptance – an owning of simultaneous multiple realities. I have an impulse to “mirror” and play with visual languages in a way that forestalls quick readings. The viewer is suspended in “local ephemera” – the world of in-between – always in between this world and another. (In between layers. In between meaning. In between definitions)
THE AESTHETIC OF MY WORK IS INFLUENCED BY SEVERAL ANCESTRAL CRAFTS: MEMORY JARS (THAT WERE PLACED ON AFRICAN AMERICAN GRAVES IN THE SOUTH), MEMORY BOARDS (‘LUKASA’ BY THE LUBA PEOPLE OF WEST AFRICA), AND QUILTS BY AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SOUTH. THESE BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED OBJECTS WERE ASSEMBLED TO CELEBRATE AND INTERPRET OUR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE.
I wish to investigate and illustrate the relationship between two kinds of memory: the kind that is documented by mechanical recording devices, such as the camera, or preserved through historical materials such as birth certificates, ledgers, and the kind of memory which resides in the recesses of the mind.
I SEEK WITHIN STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION TO CONSIDER THE COLONIZATION OF LANGUAGE AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT PASSAGES.

THE SEA IS HISTORY AND WITHIN THAT HISTORY THERE IS ONLY FICTION.

Holly BYNOE

St. Vincent IMPERIAL, 2010. COLLAGE ON ARCHIVAL DUROTONE NEWSPRINTAGED, 84 X 106 CM.
FIRST, I LIKE THE HAMMER AS A SYMBOL FOR LABOR, PROGRESS AND POWER; THESE ARE ASSOCIATIONS FAMILIAR TO EVERYONE.

SECOND, ALL THE HAMMERS HAVE TO FIT MY HAND.

THIRD AND FINAL: THEY ALL HAVE TO BE NON-FUNCTIONAL. EVEN THE ONES THAT LOOK BEEFY WILL BREAK IF PUT TO THE TEST.
Bagasse, the trash left over after sugar cane cultivation, is used as a metaphor for an economic system that views society and human relationships as by-products. Ultimately, the work attempts to re-image the past in a way that liberates the future.
MY REFLECTION ON THESE LATEST WORKS PRESENTS ME WITH THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EARLIEST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHER AND BABY AND THE SYMBOLIC FORMATION OF LANGUAGE FORMED BETWEEN THEM THROUGH UNCONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION....DESPITE ITS CAPACITY FOR DARK DEEDS, THE SHADOW OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IS THE SEAT OF CREATIVITY THAT INFORMS MY WORK.
I find my work challenging to create and challenging to the viewer as well. One thing I’ve come to realize is that people don’t like to be challenged. They find it intimidating, a strain to actually have to think about the work and to question something.
Blue Curry
Bahamas

Blue Curry’s work conjures alluring fantasies of the Native, the Tropical and the Exotic while slyly disrupting the mythic components intrinsic to these familiar narratives. His minimalist objects, films and installations float ambiguously between the modes of the Ethnographic, the Souveniristic and the Contemporary.
Jean ULRICK-DESERT
Haiti
Generalsekretarins Hustru, 2009. Ink and rag on paper, 120 x 90 cm.
The Seventh Secretary General of the U.N., 2009. Ink and rag on paper, 120 x 90 cm.

FOR TEN YEARS GENERAL SECRETARY KOFI ANNAN WAS THE FIGURE-HEAD OF THE UN, FUNCTIONING AS A BORDERLESS DIPLOMAT. HIS TENURE SUGGESTS THAT A BRANDED-ICON IS OFTEN A SIGN OF COLLECTIVE CONSENSUS CREATED BY MULTIPLE MEANS INCLUDING EDUCATION, AWARDS, INVESTITUDES AND TROPHIES.

THE “TROPHIES” SERIES PRESENTS SEVERAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE FOR THE VIEWER: A) THE FAMILIAR MOTIF KNOWN AS PAINT-BY-NUMBER PAINTINGS. B) A CONFIDENCE TO INTERACT WITH ART. C) IMAGINATIVE INTRICACY IS OFTEN SIMPLE WHEN ANALYZED. D) MODEL DIPLOMACY FOR HOPE AND CHANGE IS OFTEN REWARDED.
I had long mulled over a larger project about my family’s enlistment as movie extras because they were Chinese in funny places—my brother was an extra in a Fu Manchu film when he was a university student in Ireland in the 1960s…. Part of the narrative in Islands is the way that the awkward masculinity of the Mitchum character paralleled my uncle’s. He was a very manly man and his passion was hunting. He had his buddies, but to my knowledge and according to my mother he never had a romantic relationship—with either gender.
WORKING WITH STONE LITHOGRAPHY, SHE RUPTURES PATRIARCHAL OR COLONIAL VERSIONS OF HISTORY BY RE-INSERTING IMAGES OF THE WOMEN OMITTED FROM THIS HISTORY.
Marlon Griffith is an artist whose practice is based upon a reciprocal dialogue between Mas (the artistic component of the Trinidad Carnival) and art as a means of investigating the phenomenological aspect of the embodied experience: it is situated at the intersection of the visual and public performance.
TREES WITHOUT ROOTS WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE KINDNESS AND SUPPORT OF VIRGINIA PÉREZ RATTON. SHE WAS A CHARISMATIC AND WONDERFUL WOMAN WHO ADVANCED THE WORK OF MANY CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS. THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO HER MEMORY.
HER WORK TAKES APART THE EVERYDAY AND EVERYDAY-NESS. THE JUXTAPOSITIONS SHE EMPLOYS ALONG WITH HER ATTENTION TO COMPOSITION, LIGHT AND PRESENCE INFUSE THE FORM AND CONTENT, THEREBY ADDRESSING IDEAS OF VEILED BEAUTY.
IN MY FASCINATION FOR SURINAMESE CULTURES I TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO WITNESS AND EXPERIENCE THEIR LIFESTYLES AND TRADITIONS. MY LATEST WORKS ARE LARGE MULTI MEDIA BATIK PIECES IN WHICH I EXPLORE THAT PART OF THE WINTI CULTURE FROM SURINAMESE MAROON TRIBES FROM AFRICAN DESCENT, WHICH CONTAINS CLEAR INFLUENCES FROM INDIGENOUS AMERINDIAN CULTURE.
CAPTURING THE SOUL OF SOMEONE WAS NEVER MY INITIAL OBJECTIVE. I JUST WANTED MY SUBJECTS TO BE RELAXED IN FRONT OF MY CAMERA. I DON'T LIKE TO IMPOSE ANY DIRECTIONS ON THEM, I JUST LET THEM BE AND THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN FASCINATING, ESPECIALLY TO ME, AS THESE PEOPLE UNVEIL IN FRONT OF MY LENS.
In my earlier paintings I was busy making black people very visible by painting them very emphatically, without a background, emotion, a painterly touch or signature. I specifically want to be as minimal a presence as possible in my work.
Roshini KEMPADOO
GUYANA

Her research and artwork re-interprets and re-imagines contemporary and historical experiences of the everyday. She explores the link between British and Caribbean culture through the use of photographs, digital media, and networked environments.
I investigate concepts and narratives surrounding mortality, the fragility and impermanence of familiar spaces, gender discourse, and social politics. I am interested in the universal phenomena of loss, the politics of space, and negotiations of control.
I HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH SHARE CERTIFICATES AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS OF COMMERCIAL COMPANIES WHICH NO LONGER EXIST OR HAVE UNDERGONE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH TAKEOVERS, BANKRUPTCY, NATIONALIZATION OR OTHER ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL CHANGES. I HAVE PAINTED AND DRAWN OVER THESE. IN SOME CASES, THESE LAYERS OBSCURE THE UNDERLYING INFORMATION AND IN OTHERS, DRAW OUR ATTENTION TO IT. SOME TELL OF MORE RECENT GLOBAL EVENTS.
MY PAINTINGS DERIVE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE SERIES BEND DOWN BOUTIQUE IS BASED ON MY JOURNEY TO GHANA, TAKING ME TO THE COASTLINES WHERE PILES OF T-SHIRTS, TROUSERS, TEXTILES, FISHERMAN’S NETS, SHOES, ROPES AND CONTENTS OF THE OCEAN FORMED SCULPTURAL BODIES OF SEA WASHED DEBRIS ON THE BEACH.
MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MOMENTS, PERIODS, ERAS WHEN WE MAKE TRANSITIONS FROM LIFE TO DEATH, FROM JOY TO SADNESS, IGNORANCE TO UNDERSTANDING, ECSTASY TO AGONY, SUPERFICIALITY BUT NOT INTERESTED, ETC. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. RIGHTEOUSLY DEFENDING IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES WE HIDE AND PREJUDICES WE UNCOVER AND PRIVILEGES WE HOPE NO ONE NOTICES. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE. MY ART INHABITS LIMINAL SPACES OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE.
THE PURPOSE OF MY WORK IS TO QUESTION THE WAY WE STRUCTURE OUR CIVILIZATION. WHY ARE THE INSTITUTIONS THAT GOVERN THE WORLD WE KNOW, THE INSTITUTIONS THAT GOVERN THE WORLD WE KNOW? COULD WE HAVE EVOLVED AN ALTERNATIVE, MORE EQUITABLE FORM OF ORGANIZING OURSELVES? IS IT TOO LATE TO DO IT? DO WE HAVE THE WILL OR DESIRE FOR THAT KIND OF THING? I AM INTERESTED IN THE MILLIONS OF YEARS OF OCCURRENCES THAT BROUGHT US TO THIS POINT.
THE ONGOING BODY OF WORK
GANGSTAS, DISCIPLEZ + THE DOILEY
BOYZ EXPLORES FASHIONABLE
TRENDS WITHIN JAMAICAN
DANCEHALL CULTURE. WHILE THE
EARLIER WORKS WITHIN THIS BODY
FOCUSED ON THE PRACTICE OF
SKIN BLEACHING, THE MOST RECENT
WORK EXAMINES SO-CALLED "BLING
CULTURE" AND ITS RECONSTRUCTION
OF NOTIONS OF MACHISMO.
WITH HIS ART MARCEL PINAS AIMS TO CREATE A LASTING RECORD OF THE LIFESTYLE AND TRADITIONS OF HIS MAROON HERITAGE AND HOPES TO CREATE A WORLDWIDE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE UNIQUE TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES IN SURINAME.
AFTER THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, MATERIALISM HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED AMONGST MANKIND, AND BEHAVIOR HAS SUBSEQUENTLY CHANGED GREATLY ALSO. WE HAVE ENTERED A TIME WHERE HUMAN BEHAVIOR HAS BECOME UNPREDICTABLE, AND THUS REMAINS LARGELY A MYSTERY.
The primary focus of my animation is something that I can arguably say everyone struggles with, and that is constantly thinking about our daily problems. There are not very many times during the day when our minds are at rest. We are always dwelling on something that we need to do: a broken relationship, how we are going to manage paying the electricity bill as well as buying new school uniforms at the end of the month...
I seek to create a new narrative from old stories, which say something about my cultural experience and continued understanding of myself through the media.
USING SELF-REFERENTIAL EXPERIENCES AS AN AVENUE TO ILLUMINATING COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES I HOPE TO REVEAL THE SUBTLE SOCIAL DRAMAS THAT INFORM OUR LIVES AND ULTIMATELY BRING THOSE REALITIES TO THE FOREFRONT FOR DISCUSSION.
I intend to manufacture cultural reliquaries, artifacts and social curiosities that represent the cultural tapestry of the Caribbean and the wider “New World”, using mediums and other agents of the Old World.
IN THE SUNRISE. THESE COSTUMED CHARACTERS PLAY OUT A STREET DRAMA IN SLOW PROCESSION. A DRAMA THAT HAS AMAZINGLY LITTLE TO DO WITH CHANGE AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH MAINTENANCE OF A STATUS QUO.
THE OBJECTS PROVOKE THE VIEWER TO INTERACT WITH THEM. THE VIEWER BEGINS TO EXPRESS A POSTURE TOWARD THEM, POSSIBLY TOUCHING THE LEATHER, OR STICKING HIS/HER TONGUE INTO IT, OR POSSIBLY NOT UNDERSTANDING THE OBJECT’S INVITATION TO PLAY AT ALL.
The material I am presently working with is corrugated cardboard, which I find is an apt metaphor for my blended subjects. Cardboard, often associated with trade, transport and movement, is also known for its adaptability, a curious mixture of strength and fragility and is seen as a low cost option that is easily discarded and often recycled.
Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions forms part of the About Change emerging artists’ program, an initiative conceived and sponsored by the World Bank Art Program in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, the OAS, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. About Change is a series of juried exhibitions of contemporary art from Latin America and the Caribbean that will take place throughout 2011 and 2012 at different venues in Washington, D.C., including the World Bank, the Art Museum of the Americas, and the galleries of the Inter-American Development Bank. It has been organized by the World Bank Art Program under the auspices of the World Bank Vice Presidency for Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXHIBITION CURATORS
Christopher Cozier - Artist and Independent Curator
Tatiana Flores - Assistant Professor, Department of Art History and Latino and Caribbean Studies, Rutgers University

ART MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAS
Lydia Bendersky - Director of Cultural Affairs
Matias Cuevas - Designer and Special Events Planner
Adam de Boer - Exhibitions Assistant
Fabião Concalves - Exhibition Coordinator
Jenna Kleoppel - Intern
Maria Leyva - Curator Emeritus
Charo Marroquin - Administrator
Andrés Nava - Managing Director
Adriana Ospina - Education Coordinator
Trinidad Saldivar - Specialist
Greg Svitil - Public and Media Coordinator

PUBLISHED BY
ARTZPUB/DRACONIAN SWITCH  • www.artzpub.com

DESIGN BY
Richard Mark Rawlins

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Aura Graciela Andrade
Marielle Barrow
Caribbean InTransit
John Cox
Annalee Davis
Richard J. Demato
Friends of the Art Museum of the Americas
Ifigenia Flores
Leonardo Flores
Michele Greet
Paul Hedge
Jay Koment
Nicholas Laughlin
O’Neil Lawrence
Bahamas Mission to the OAS
Monique Mouh Chaia
Amb. Albert R. Ramdin
Richard Mark Rawlins
Paul I. Romero
Aldo Lauria Santiago
Jantine Schoonover
Brit Swan, Jr.

THE WORLD BANK

WORLD BANK ART PROGRAM
Celia Bravo - Program Assistant
Roxana Bravo - Photographer and Shipment Coordinator
Matthew Burke - Registrar
María del Carmen Cossu - Senior Education Coordinator
Anne Dronnier - Media Coordinator
Evangelina Elizondo - Assistant Curator
Adam Cape - Shipping
Marina Galvani - Curator and Manager
Elena Grant - Art Historical Research
Fernanda Ramírez - Exhibition Coordinator
Richard V. Sukhu - Art Handling
Amber Van De Genachte - Volunteers Coordinator
60. Pauline Marcelle (Dominica/Austria), Bend Down Boutique 25, 2008. Oil on canvas, 160 x 120 cm.


62. Nikolai Noel (Trinidad), Toussaint et George (Two Rooms), 2010. Acrylic, graphite and linseed oil on panel, 25.4 x 20.3 cm.

63. Nikolai Noel (Trinidad), Toussaint on Horseback, 2010. Graphite, linseed oil, and ballpoint on paper, 22.86 x 30.48 cm.

64. Nikolai Noel (Trinidad), Toussaint Greeting, 2010. Graphite and linseed oil on panel, 20.3 x 25.40 cm.

65. Nikolai Noel (Trinidad), Natives on the Side, 2010. Graphite, linseed oil and spray paint on panel, 61 x 61 cm.

66. Nikolai Noel (Trinidad), A Record of Angels Passing (polyptych), 2010. Graphite, linseed oil and white charcoal on panel, 12.7 x 17.8 cm.


68. Marcel Frans (Suriname), Fragment iki w jari, 2007. Bottles and cloth, variable dimensions.

69. Dhiraaj Ramsamoedj (Suriname), Caribbean Woman Project, 2010. Textile metal and concrete, 185 x 75 x 80 cm.

70. Sheena Rose (Barbados), Town, 2008. Digital video, variable dimensions. Duration: 00:02:44.

71. Sheena Rose (Barbados), Cape Town, 2009. Digital video, variable dimensions. Duration: 00:01:10.

72. Oneika Russell (Jamaica/Japan), Porthol, 2008. Digital video, variable dimensions. Duration: 00:03:56.

73. Heino Schmid (The Bahamas), Temporary Horizon, 2010. Digital video, variable dimensions. Duration: 00:05:03.

74. Philip Thomas (Jamaica), Censura, 2009. Oil on canvas, 198.1 x 442 cm. Courtesy of Richard J. Demato Fine Arts Gallery

75. Rodell Warner (Trinidad), Relief series, 2010. Digital print, 74.9 x 49.5 cm.

76. Tonya Wiley (Barbados), Nanny Nanny Boo Boo I, 2009. Digital print, 151.5 x 101 cm.

77. Natalee Wood (Trinidad/Canada), Right On, 2006. Deconstructed cardboard, 45.7 x 61 cm.

78. Natalee Wood (Trinidad/Canada), Satellite, 2006. Deconstructed cardboard, 45.7 x 61 cm.

Ewan Atkinson: http://www.ewanatkinson.com/

La Vaughn Belle: http://www.lavaughnbelle.com/

Lillian Blades: http://www.lillianblades.com/

Terry Boddie: http://www.terryboddie.com

Holly Bynoe: http://hollybynoe.com/

Santiago Cal: http://www.santagocal.com/

Charles Campbell: http://www.charlescampbellart.com/

John Cox: http://www.johncoxnoise.com/

Blue Curry: www.bluecurry.com/

Jean-Urick Dessert: http://www.jeansrickdessert.com

Richard Fung: http://www.richardfung.ca/

Joscelyn Gardner: http://www.joscelyn gardner.com/

Marlon Griffith: http://marlontgriffith.blogspot.com/

Nadja Huggins: http://www.nadjahuggins.com/

Marlon James: http://mjamesstudio.com/

Patricia Kaersenhout: http://www.kaersenhout.com/

Roshini Kempadoo: http://www.roshinikempadoo.co.uk

Hew Locke: http://www.hewlocke.net/

Jamie Lee Loy: http://jaimeleeloy.blogspot.com/

Pauline Marcelle: http://www.paulinemarcelle.com/

Kishan Munroe: http://www.kishanmunroe.com/

Natalie Wood: http://www.nataliewoodart.com/

Nikolai Noel: http://nikolainoelprojects.blogspot.com/

Ebony G. Patterson: http://artgirl.zoomshare.com/

Oneika Russell: http://oneikarussell.net/

Heino Schmid: http://heinoschmid.com/

Rodell Warner: http://www.rodellwarner.com

Tonya Wiley: http://www.tonyawiles.com/
installing
Sri Irodikromo,
Frekti kon na wan,
2010.
THE WORLD BANK
Lead sponsor and organizer: The World Bank Art Program

2011
Inter-American Year of Culture
Our Culture, Our Future

Art Museum of the Americas
Organization of American States

Organization of American States