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Signature:

Veerle H. Poupeye

Date

**Between Nation and Market:
Art and Society in 20th Century Jamaica**

by

Veerle H. Poupeye

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts

Ivan Karp
Advisor

Edna Bay
Committee Member

Jeffrey Lesser
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D. Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

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Veerle H. Poupeye
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An abstract of
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Abstract:

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This dissertation presents an inquiry into the social role of visual art in the postcolonial world. It considers the interplay between the ideological and economic forces that steer the development of art in the postcolonies and, conversely, the role of art in postcolonial social formation. Jamaica facilitates a rich case study on these subjects, because of its high level of cultural self-confidence; its well-established cultural infrastructure and art market; and its dependence on tourism. Fuelled internally by socio-economic inequities and ideological and political strife, postcolonial Jamaican culture exists in tension with the external world, because of the island's economic and political dependency, migration and cosmopolitanism, and the ambivalence towards the cultural hierarchies of the West. Particular attention is paid to the two main competing nationalisms - mainstream Jamaican nationalism and African diasporal nationalism - that have emerged as Jamaica has struggled to come to terms with its diasporal and slavery society origins and present-day realities and the conflicted ideas about art, as a tool for social transformation and as a commodity, that have been articulated in these contexts.

The study adapts two related social models of art - "art worlds" (Becker 1982) and the "field of cultural production" (Bourdieu 1993) - to the Jamaican context. It examines how notions of "art" and of cultural value and legitimacy have been negotiated in and between the "sub-worlds" of the mainstream, the popular and tourism, in a broad range of artistic expressions, including the nationalist school, contemporary art, traditional and contemporary popular art and visual culture, and the tourist arts. Special attention is paid to the politics of representation, audience responses and market forces that are at work in each of these worlds and the self-taught Intuitive artists are examined as a controversial mainstream construct that hinges on notions of postcolonial cultural authenticity but is uncomfortably perched between the dynamics of the mainstream, popular and tourist worlds. While questioning the efficacy of mainstream cultural production in postcolonial social formation, the study concludes that Jamaican society is more effectively forged by the counter-hegemonic thrust of its popular culture although this is powerfully mediated by its commodification.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Jamaica and Postcolonial Culture

For a relatively small island in the Caribbean Sea, Jamaica is well-known internationally for three main reasons: its turbulent socio-political life, the closely related phenomenon of Reggae music, and its contradictory role as a major tourist destination in the Caribbean. Jamaica earned its reputation for Third World political and cultural militancy in the 1960s and 1970s, a period of intense social and political upheaval in the island, which was driven by the ascent of Rastafari, the Caribbean Black Power movement and Third World Marxism. Jamaica became a visible and outspoken member of the Non-Aligned Nations Movement under the charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Michael Manley, whose People's National Party was in power from 1972 to 1980 on a Democratic Socialist platform.¹ The developments in Jamaica inevitably attracted the attention of the Cold War world powers, especially because of the island's strategic location near the USA, Cuba and the Atlantic access routes to the Panama Canal. There is a widespread belief in Jamaica that the arming of rival political gangs in the capital Kingston's inner-cities in the 1970s was supported by the CIA and its Cuban and Soviet counterparts and aimed at directing the local political support away from or towards Communism (Manley M. 1976 & 1982; Gunst 1996; Meeks 2000; Gray 2004). Irrespective of whether any foreign entities were indeed involved, the development of "garrison" communities in Kingston's inner cities fueled the crime and violence that

¹ Although Jamaica became independent in 1962, the Queen of England is still the "Queen of Jamaica" and is represented locally by a Governor General (unlike Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, which opted to become republics and have a President). The Prime Minister is, however, the effective head of government. Meanwhile, the idea that Jamaica should become a republic, like Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, is gaining local popularity and may bear fruit in the not so distant future (See for instance, BBC News 2003)

continues to disrupt Jamaica's social life today. Manley also failed to garner the support of the local elite and international "big business," such as the bauxite industry, whose interests were threatened by his administration's Socialist rhetoric and policies, and this fueled the escalating political and economic instability. The Manley administration's controversial and politically contradictory decision to resume negotiations with the IMF in 1976, to halt the collapse of the national economy, turned Jamaica into a tragic example of the economic vulnerabilities and dependency patterns facing the Third World (Ibid.).

The socio-political tensions of the 1970s came to a head during the violent 1980 general election campaign, which resulted in a landslide victory for the opposition, Edward Seaga's conservative Jamaica Labour Party.² The collapse of the short-lived Marxist revolution in Grenada, which had involved several well-known Jamaican militants, and the subsequent US intervention there reinforced fears of Communist insurgency in Jamaica and a growing popular sense that the post-Independence era of revolutionary experimentation had failed, at least in the Anglophone Caribbean (Meeks 2000). Prime Minister Seaga sought to capitalize on this moment by calling snap general elections in 1983 and Manley's decision not to contest these elections consolidated the JLP's political dominance.³ The local business class benefited significantly from the Seaga government's shift towards Neoliberalism and rapprochement with the USA but the radical elements within the intellectual and cultural community held on to the

² Seaga, a member of the economically powerful Lebanese-Syrian minority in Jamaica, remained in power until 1989, after which he reverted to his earlier role as Leader of the Opposition. He retired from political life in 2005. Michael Manley came back to power in 1989 but this time on a neoliberal platform. He retired from this position for health reasons in 1992 and died in 1997.

³ Manley's election boycott stemmed from the fact that the promised updated electoral lists were not yet available, which prevented many young, new voters from participating, and also protested the general principle of calling premature elections to capitalize on a moment of political advantage. The result was, however, that the JLP ruled without parliamentary opposition until the 1989 elections. (Gray 2004)

revolutionary rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s, fueled by the sense that Jamaica had been coerced to “step back in line” by the forces of Western imperialism and their local allies (e.g. Manley M. 1982; Meeks 2000). Popular discontent was also simmering. In mid January 1985, the country was paralyzed for nearly a week by a general strike and violent, island-wide riots, in response to the austerity measures arising from the structural adjustment program that was prescribed by the IMF and World Bank and, specifically, Seaga’s abrupt announcement of a 50 percent fuel price increase. This uprising, which was followed by another episode of unrest in June 1985 and several others since then, proved that the new political situation was far from stable. (Meeks 2000; Gray 2004)

These dramatic social and political developments made Jamaica a regular world news subject but it is the accompanying cultural production that really earned the island its disproportionate international visibility. Reggae music, which originated in Rastafarian circles in Kingston’s inner cities, made its entry in the international pop culture arena in the early 1970s, particularly with the release of Bob Marley and the Wailers’ *Catch a Fire* (1972) album and the cult success of the first Jamaican feature film, Perry Henzell’s *The Harder They Come* (1971) (Chang & Chen 1998; Bradley 2000). Reggae’s compelling messages of resistance and liberation – and, not to be underestimated, its advocacy of free marijuana use – appealed to the progressive politics and counter-cultural sensibilities of the era (Hebdige 1979) and leading exponents such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh quickly became international pop culture icons. Today, there is probably no part of the globe where Marley is not known and his music has helped to galvanize popular liberation struggles in places far removed from Jamaica, such as the Maori movement in New Zealand and the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa

(Cooper 2004).⁴ It is mainly for this reason that modern Jamaican culture is deemed exemplary of the political militancy and emancipatory potential of postcolonial culture.

Jamaica has also been a major tourist destination since the late 19th century and the national economy increasingly depends on tourism. In this industry, Jamaica has been marketed mainly as a tropical beach destination and an escape from the pressures of Western metropolitan life. The stereotypical tourist view of Jamaicans as happy-go-lucky and subservient people who live in a salubrious, pre-modern island paradise competes in the international arena with its less accommodating image as a hotbed of postcolonial militancy and social conflict. Tourism has itself caused significant social tensions within Jamaica and inevitably so, since it re-inscribes those colonial cultural and social hierarchies that postcolonial political militancy has sought to challenge. (Taylor 1993; Patullo 1996; Dunn & Dunn 2002) Tourism has nonetheless played a constitutive role in modern Jamaica's social and cultural development and has co-opted and commodified duly sanitized aspects of the island's rebellious culture, to the point where Rastafari and Reggae are currently part of the default Jamaican touristic identity.

In 1984, I had the opportunity to move to Jamaica, where my husband had been offered a two-year contract to work as a geologist. It hardly seemed like an ideal career move for a young Belgian art historian whose studies thus far had focused on modern and contemporary European art but the decision to go was readily made, fueled by my romantic image of Jamaica as a rebellious, culturally vibrant Third World nation *and* as an island paradise. I arrived in Jamaica in October 1984, in the period leading up to the January 1985 riots. Within weeks, I had found work in the Education Department of the

⁴ In August 2008, it was reported that the village of Banatski Sokolac in Serbia had erected a monument to Bob Marley, by the Serbian artist Davor Dukic, as an emblem of peace. (news.bbc.co.uk 2008)

National Gallery of Jamaica (NGJ) and as a part-time art history lecturer at the Jamaica School of Art (JSA)⁵ – formally trained art historians were, and still are, scarce in the Caribbean. Jamaican art soon became my primary research subject, which helped to motivate our decision to stay. My expectations about Jamaican art were reinforced by my contacts with emerging painters such as Robert “African” Cookhorne (now known as Omari Ra), Douglas Wallace (now Khalfani Ra and Makandal Dada) and Stanford Watson, who all belonged to my age group, and a few older artists such as Milton George. [Ill. 1]⁶ Their bold neo-expressionist paintings, which represented the cutting edge of contemporary art in Jamaica at that time, made politically provocative statements, informed by their radical Black Nationalist and anti-imperialist commitments, and they regularly visited the NGJ’s Education Department, wearing the inevitable beret or tam and dark sunglasses, doing their best to uphold their image as streetwise “Rude Boy” revolutionaries.⁷ They firmly believed in the social relevance and political potency of their work, as a necessary critical intervention into the post-Manley Jamaican society.

The NGJ, which was celebrating its 10th anniversary that year, was in the process of consolidating and publishing the art-historical narratives it had articulated during the

⁵ The school was in 1987 renamed as the Edna Manley School for the Visual Arts and is since the mid 1990s part of the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts (EMC), in which it is now known as the School of Visual Arts, along with the national schools of dance, drama and music.

⁶ I had originally planned to submit a more fully illustrated dissertation but had to scale down the list of illustrations because it was impossible or impractical to get the requisite copyright clearance for certain images. Much of this is a by-product of Jamaica’s informal social organization: there are many “orphaned” works of art, for instance in cases where the artist passed away within the last fifty years without leaving known heirs – works of art enter the public domain fifty years after the artist’s death under Jamaican *Copyright Act* (1995) – or could simply not be located. In three instances permission was denied. Where it was not possible or practical to obtain permission but relevant images can be found on reliable internet sources, a link has been included in a footnote. In those few instances where an image in copyright was not otherwise available but permission could not be obtained, the image was blacked out. All relevant images were however seen by my Dissertation Committee.

⁷ The “Rude Boy” or “Rudie” was an influential type in Kingston street life in the 1960s and 1970s. Poor, young, black and male, the “Rude Boy” expressed his antagonism to Jamaica’s entrenched race and class structures with his aggressive personal appearance and language and, often, anti-social acts such as gun crimes. The lead character Ivanhoe Martin in *The Harder They Come*, which was played by Reggae singer Jimmy Cliff, was modeled after the “Rude Boy” persona. The “Rude Boy” was the incarnation of what Obika Gray has described as “badness-honor” (2004) or, to use Peter Wilson’s terms, the “Rude Boy” embodies the powerful hold that “reputation” has long had over “respectability” in Jamaican popular culture (1973).

first years of its existence. The institution, which was initially housed at Devon House, a beautiful 19th century mansion near the New Kingston business district, had just been moved to a more spacious modern building in the Kingston Waterfront redevelopment zone, Downtown Kingston's former harbor district. [Ill. 2 & 3] While this relocation was problematic for other reasons, it for the first time provided the institution with enough gallery space for a permanent exhibition that represented the NGJ's model of Jamaican art history.⁸ The main components of this permanent installation were put in place between 1983 and 1984 and consisted of an overview of Jamaican art from the 1920s to the present, along with a specialized gallery dedicated to the work of the self-taught popular or "Intuitive" artist Mallica "Kapo" Reynolds, a pre-20th century gallery and an international gallery with a special focus on the Caribbean [Ill. 4]. The new building also provided the NGJ with temporary exhibition spaces that facilitated a more ambitious program of internally curated and traveling exhibitions.

The NGJ was at that time also engaged in the organization of a major survey exhibition of Jamaican art, *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, which was shown at venues in the USA, Canada and Haiti by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES) from 1983 to 1985. The introductory essay by the Director/Curator of the NGJ David Boxer, also titled *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, was the first systematic survey text on the visual arts of Jamaica.⁹ In Boxer's essay, Jamaican art was presented in an emphatic

⁸ Many in the art community saw the short-notice removal, which was occasioned by the decision to restore Devon House in time for a state visit of the British Queen, as a politically motivated decision of the Seaga government which wished to take control of what was seen as a "Manley institution." Among others, the relocation initially had a negative impact on local and tourist visitorship, because of the concerns many have about crime and violence in the old part of the city, but there is now a new redevelopment campaign for Downtown Kingston in which the NGJ plays an active role.

⁹ David Boxer is a Jamaican artist and art historian. He was trained at Cornell University (B.A.) and the Johns Hopkins University (Ph.D.). He was Director/Curator from 1975 to 1990, after which he became Chief Curator in the NGJ's new expanded staff structure, which includes an Executive Director as the new the head of the institution. This new position not filled until 2004, however, and Boxer remained the *de facto* head of the institution until then. Boxer's *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* essay was republished, with some minor updates, in the

cultural nationalist frame. The first sentence asserts that “[i]n Jamaica, when we refer to Jamaican Art, the Art Movement, or the Jamaican School, we speak essentially of the art that has developed as an integral part of the nationalist, anti-colonial consciousness underlying the cultural and intellectual life of the island since the 1920s” (Boxer 1998, 11). This single phrase suggested that there is a cohesive modern Jamaican art movement which originated in the struggle against colonialism. With its assertive use of the first person plural, this statement also intimated that this Jamaican art movement has fostered and represented a consensual and effective national cultural identity. Boxer granted a central role to the sculptor Edna Manley – Michael Manley’s English-born, half-Jamaican mother – as *the* defining national artist. He identified the year 1922, when she arrived in Jamaica, as the starting date of the Jamaican art movement and in his later monograph on her work even called her the “Mother of the Nation” (Boxer 1990, 50). [III. 5] In addition, he also highlighted the “Intuitives,” as he had named the self-taught, popular artists the NGJ had started exhibiting and collecting in the late 1970s, as a group particularly representative of postcolonial cultural and aesthetic inventiveness.

The cultural nationalist framing of the NGJ’s narrative is typical for the cultural narratives that have been produced in the postcolonies but glosses over several important aspects of Jamaican culture. For one, Boxer’s essay did not account for the deep social, political and cultural divisions that characterize Jamaican society and challenge the notion of coherent nationhood (Smith M. G. 1965). Second, its implied reliance on notions of “high art” caused it to ignore significant “low brow” art forms, such as street art and tourist art. Third, it did not address the acrimonious debates that have divided the

1998 coffee table book *Modern Jamaican Art*, to which I contributed an essay on contemporary Jamaican art (Boxer & Poupeye 1998).

Jamaican art community, mainly about the nature of Jamaican art, the relative value of various local artistic expressions, and the power and personal politics of some of the dominant personalities in the Jamaican art world. Not surprising, the reception in Jamaica of the narrative presented by the NGJ has been mixed and Boxer's strong focus on Edna Manley and the Intuitives, in particular, has been the subject of protracted polemics.

Since the 1980s, Jamaica has been less frequently in the world news but neoliberalism has failed to bring the promised economic growth and the country is racked by an out-of-control crime rate and worsening social tensions – some local sociologists and political commentators are now using terms such as “hegemonic dissolution” (e.g. Meeks 2000) and, even, “failed state” (e.g. Clarke W. 2005).¹⁰ In a 2002 opinion poll which was published in the local press, 53 % of interviewees declared that Jamaica would have been better off if it had remained a British colony and added that their discontent was fueled by concerns about crime and violence and limited economic opportunities (Observer/Stone Polls 2002). This poll reflects sentiments that are not uncommon in the postcolonies, or former dictatorships, but nonetheless made a remarkable statement in a country known for its restive, politically articulate black majority, all the more since it was held on the eve of the 40th anniversary of Independence. In the ensuing debates, indignant media commentators questioned the validity of the results and pointed out that all interviewees were under forty and had never experienced colonialism (e.g. Gloudon

¹⁰ William “Bill” Clarke was the President and CEO of the Bank of Nova Scotia Jamaica, one of the largest and most stable financial groups in Jamaica. The cited text is the controversial public speech he made on May 18, 2005, at the Carlton Alexander Awards of Excellence, an annual award for national business leadership, in which he lambasted the failures of postcolonial Jamaican government. While Clarke was not the first or only one to call Jamaica a failed state, his words gained particular poignancy from the fact that he was a successful black business leader but the response from the government was predictably dismissive and personally hostile (e.g. Office of the Prime Minister 2005). In 2010, Jamaica ranked 117th out of 177 states in the Failed States Index maintained by the Fund for Peace, a Washington D.C. think-tank that has published such annual rankings since 1996. Jamaica was thus not ranked as “failed” but landed in the second, “warning” category. (See: <http://www.fundforpeace.org>.)

2002; Morrison 2002). What these critics overlooked is that these responses did not necessarily reflect any genuine nostalgia for colonial times but a widespread perception that the independent Jamaican nation-state has not lived up to its initial promise, thus failing its citizens.¹¹

Around the same time, the Jamaican Ministry of Culture drafted its cultural policy, grandiosely titled *Towards Jamaica the Cultural Superstate* (2003). This document, which was articulated in the late 1990s by means of consultation with diverse interest groups in the cultural, educational and business sector, acknowledged the need to adjust cultural policy to changing global and local realities (Thomas 2004). It asserted that culture is Jamaica's most valuable national asset, socially and economically, and contended that developing the local culture industries could help to address the country's social problems, not only as an expressive outlet but also as a potentially significant part of the national and individual economy. The main basis for this claim was the experience with Jamaican popular music, which is rooted in popular resistance but has long been an economically lucrative enterprise, although a significant part of its profits has been absorbed by the metropolitan music industry (Cooper 1995).¹²

This cultural policy has not received the critical attention it merits although its effects are felt by local cultural institutions, which have been under pressure to support the culture industries and to provide more exposure to the commercial side of Jamaican art. However, the policy's naïve and under-researched assumptions about the feasibility

¹¹ On another level, this poll also illustrated that it is premature for cultural criticism to declare the end of postcoloniality (e.g. Scott D. 1999), since the colonial experience remains a crucial part of the popular imaginary in recently independent countries such as Jamaica.

¹² A 1999 study by the Recording Association of America estimated that Reggae music was worth \$ 14.5 billion in the US economy, of which Jamaica recovered only \$ 0.5 billion (Ministry of Culture 2003, 6-7). In comparison, Jamaica's national budget estimate for 2005-2006 totaled \$ 5.7 billion, more than half of was allocated to national debt servicing, which explains why there is this eagerness to cash in on Jamaica's actual and perceived cultural assets.

and desirability of marketing Jamaican culture as a brand and, more so, about the actual amount of money that could thus be made by Jamaicans resonate with the views of many in the local cultural and business sectors today, who argue, with some justification, that Jamaica needs to take greater control of the commodification of its cultural achievements (e.g. Cooke 2004; Stanbury 2005). This new perception of Jamaican culture as an industry is, however, a far cry from Michael Manley's defiant statement in 1976 that Jamaica was "not for sale" and illustrates how cultural nationalism is being recast in the age of neoliberalism.¹³ Considering the lack of public confidence in postcolonial governance expressed in the Stone Poll, the new Jamaican cultural policy document raises urgent questions about the perceived, actual and potential social roles of postcolonial culture and the long-term relevance of postcolonial cultural nationalism.

2. Postcolonial Cultural Nationalism

The problem with official cultural nationalism, in Jamaica or elsewhere in the postcolonial world, is that it significantly overstates the cohesiveness and ideological effectiveness of the national identities it seeks to promote. Critics of postcolonial cultural nationalism have argued that these homogenizing claims reflect its hegemonic function, as a means of consolidating emerging social hierarchies and the dominance of postcolonial elites in new nation-states that are in search for internal and external legitimacy (e.g. Bhabha 1990; Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1992; Chatterjee 1993). It remains to be seen, however, how much effect the official national culture has really had on social cohesion in countries such as Jamaica.

¹³ That Jamaica was "not for sale" was the subject of Michael Manley's keynote speech at the 38th Annual Conference of the PNP on September 19, 1976. The main focus of that speech on the pressures that transnational business interests, especially the bauxite industry, were exerting on his administration, which was then going through a phase of radicalization. The speech was published with an introduction by C.L.R. James and became one of the defining documents of 1970s thought in Jamaica.

The debates about postcolonial cultural nationalism have paid insufficient attention to the question of its social efficacy. Some, such as Partha Chatterjee in *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993), acknowledge the counter-hegemonic thrust in postcolonial popular culture. However, almost all make the mistake of treating postcolonial elites as clearly defined, monolithic groups that articulate and pursue their interests consensually and in binary opposition to those of the equally monolithic and resistant popular masses.¹⁴ The controversies around the NGJ's narratives on Jamaican art well prove that such unity cannot be taken for granted and that disagreements and divisions *within* the conventional class and racial groupings require as much attention as the struggles *across*. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that the conventional race and class groupings are, as such, reductive abstractions, which conceal significant instances of mobility and interaction (Smith R.T. 1961).

None of this contradicts that cultural nationalism has been a significant factor in postcolonial cultural production, not only in Jamaica but in most societies with comparable histories, and this certainly needs to be accounted for in postcolonial art-historical narratives. What accounts such as Boxer's crucially fail to recognize, however, is that postcolonial cultural nationalism is in itself a highly contested arena. Official Jamaican nationalism has always coexisted and competed with alternative nationalisms such as Rastafari, which represents a popular challenge to imposed notions of Jamaican nationhood in favor of a diasporal African nationalism. Official Jamaican nationalism does recognize the diverse diasporal origins of Jamaican society – it is enshrined in the national motto “Out of Many, One People” – but suggests that these have been

¹⁴ Some attention had, however, been paid in the political literature of the mid 20th century to the predicament of the radical postcolonial intellectual, as an advocate and leader of the people (e.g. Fanon 1963; Freire 1974)

superceded by a home-grown, unified postcolonial national identity. This Creole Nationalism, to give it a name, has been criticized for ignoring the enduring cultural and political pull of those diasporal origins but also for obscuring the tensions that arise from the competing, class-driven conceptions of Jamaica as a multiracial or a black society (Nettleford 1972). A more recent criticism is that it fails to consider that modern Jamaican identities are dynamically shaped by ongoing transnational exchanges, such as mass-migration, travel and exposure to the media (Hall 1996).

While these criticisms are pertinent, Creole Nationalism is not as essentialist as it has been made out to be and has sought to address some of these contradictions, be it not always consistently. The claim that Creole Nationalism promotes a multiracial view of Jamaica, for instance, overlooks that it has adopted “blackness” as the default Jamaican identity (Thomas 2004). This should not be mistaken for a spontaneous, unilateral declaration of racial solidarity on the part of the multiracial elite, since their nationalist movement had to contend with the potentially disruptive popularity of African nationalism among the working class and the poor, such as the teachings of Marcus Garvey and the emerging Rastafari movement. It was thus in the best interest of the middle class to advocate a racial sense of common cause that would appeal to the black majority. Postcolonial cultural nationalism in Jamaica, and among those of Jamaican descent elsewhere, is thus better understood as a cluster of competing, evolving, contradictory and sometimes downright opportunistic collective identifications (Knight 1978), which exist in tension with an individualizing cosmopolitanism (Wardle 2000).

As the case of Reggae well illustrates, Jamaica’s most compelling postcolonial cultural expressions are the ones that have been associated with those alternative

nationalisms that are, at heart, counter-hegemonic, such as Rastafari and the new notions of Jamaicanness that emerge within the Jamaican Diaspora. Even David Boxer's essay presented a more diverse and open-ended view of Jamaican art than my earlier discussion of its dogmatic cultural nationalist framing might suggest. Despite its restrictive title *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, which was in effect the title of the exhibition it accompanied, the essay included other aspects of art in Jamaica such as painting, sculpture and prints from the Pre-Columbian era to the 19th century. Boxer's account of modern art in Jamaica also included many expatriate artists, mostly white persons who came from Europe or North America, although he integrated them into his nationalist framework by arguing for the Jamaicanness of their work and persons – most poignantly in the case of Edna Manley, who he described emphatically as “Jamaican in every sense of the word” (Boxer 1998, 13). More important, his essay also discussed artists and trends that do not reflect the tenets of official cultural nationalism and sometimes openly challenge its limitations. Boxer's own work as a painter and new media artist has, as we will see, been an influential example of the latter. [III. 6]

Much of the recent critical literature on postcolonial culture emphasizes its hybrid, changeable and transnational character, which provides a valuable challenge to the essentialist tendencies of postcolonial nationalism (e.g. Bhabha 1990 & 1994; García Canclini 1995 & 2001; Appadurai 1996; Hall 1996). The accompanying suggestion that nationalism has become obsolete in the age of globalization is, however, contradicted by the daily experience of life in countries like Jamaica. As Benedict Anderson (1991) has compellingly argued, the nation-state remains a powerful defining fact in the lives of most of the earth's inhabitants and this even applies to those who live across national

borders, if only because of the legal frameworks and identifying documents that control such movements (Lazarus 1999; Puri 2004; Thomas 2004). The recent incidence of armed conflicts across the globe suggests that nationalism, whether in support of or in opposition to existing nation-states, is on the increase rather than on decline. Nationalist movements have also had positive effects, where they have allowed previously marginalized populations to assert their rights and renegotiate their position in local and global arenas. Postcolonial nationalism, therefore, is a much more complex and enduring phenomenon than many of its critics seem to assume and the project of studying its various incarnations is also far from complete.

As anyone who spends any time in Jamaica will readily observe, nationalism continues to have considerable popular appeal, this in a country where the entire population has diasporal origins and which has a growing diasporal population of its own in North America and England that almost equals the locally based population.¹⁵ Even those who are most dismissive of the Jamaican nation-state, such as the local Rastafarians, often hold on with remarkable tenacity to their self-definition as Jamaicans and even appropriate official national symbols such as the flag to assert their Jamaicanness. Not surprisingly, the Jamaican flag is one of the most pervasive symbols in the Jamaican streets [III. 7]. It is also frequently used as an identifier by members of the Jamaica diaspora, among others in the form of bumper stickers or rear view mirror ornaments on their cars. Even the Rastafarian colours have become a common signifier of

¹⁵ According to the Jamaican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the estimated number of Jamaican born persons and their immediate descendants who live abroad stands at about 2 million but it was pointed out that this figure is based on 1999 estimates and may no longer be accurate (e-mail from Tracey Blackwood of the Jamaicans Overseas and Consular Affairs Department, May 16, 2005). Most Jamaican migrants live in the large urban centers of the USA, Canada and England. There are also Jamaican populations in Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba and Colombia (Providencia island) but most of these descend from earlier migrants that left Jamaica in the late 19th and early 20th century. These older groups do not generally maintain active contacts with the island, even though they have retained many aspects of Jamaican culture, such as the Jamaican Creole language.

Jamaicanness and have thus lost some of their diasporal political significance, to the point where non-Jamaicans may think it is also the Jamaican flag.

Much of this may result from the rightful pride in the international impact of Jamaican music and sports. There have been episodes of “flag madness” – when the national soccer team, which was in a significant example of the “branding” of Jamaican culture dubbed the “Reggae Boyz,” went to the World Cup in France in 1996 and when Jamaica took in a record haul of track and field medals in the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2009 Berlin world championships – but such public expressions of Jamaicanness cannot be dismissed as a superficial, knee-jerk kind of patriotism. As Deborah Thomas’s recent study of popular responses to official Jamaican culture has documented, there is a remarkable awareness of the strategic importance of holding on to national identities, marginal and contradictory as these may be, against the homogenizing forces of globalization (2004). This contradictory, politically charged persistence of nationalist sentiments can also be observed elsewhere in the Caribbean (Puri 2004) and, indeed, in most of the postcolonial world. More attention thus needs to be paid to the complex reciprocal relationships that exist between official and unofficial postcolonial nationalisms, including those that reach beyond state-national borders.

Thus far I have used the terms “nationalism” and “cultural nationalism” rather casually but it is necessary to clarify how these are defined for the purpose of this dissertation. Benedict Anderson (1991) provides the most productive basis for such definitions. According to him, “nations” are cultural artifacts, as imagined political communities. Nationalisms, as the collective “imagination” that sustain such communities, are therefore better understood in comparison to “kinship” or “religion”

than to ideologies or political movements per se (1-7) although there are, of course, nationalist ideologies and political movements. Nor does this mean that notions of nationhood are static; as Partha Chatterjee rightly points out, nationalism is “a project of mediation” (1993, 72) that evolves continuously.

Anderson is primarily concerned with nationalism and the nation-state but the nationalisms I am concerned with here are not necessarily limited by sovereign territorial borders or, even, clear-cut definitions of community. As Shalini Puri argues, nationalisms and concepts of nationhood can be transnational (2004, 6) although they are even then still limited, in the sense that they involve theoretically finite social groups, such as particular ethnicities. Rastafari, as an African Zionist movement, has the essential characteristics of a diasporal nationalist movement but is based on abstracted, spiritual notions of Africa that bear little resemblance to the territorial and legal definitions of any modern sovereign nation-state, Ethiopia included. However, the fact that Rastafari has attracted at least some members who do not have any African ancestry at all, such as European and North American white, Japanese and Maori Rastas, raises the question of whether its ethnic and racial delineations are as secure as is often assumed. The unusual open-endedness of the imagined community of Rastafari may stem from the fact that it is also a religion, which has at least some universalist aspirations (Anderson 1991, 7), while, on a secular level, it also appeals to the global community of “the oppressed.”

It is common practice to separate cultural nationalism from political nationalism (and a few other forms of nationalism, such as economic nationalism). Cultural nationalism can be defined as the ideas and impulses that inform the symbolic production that arises from and sustains notions of nationhood, while political nationalism, naturally,

pertains to those aspects of nationalisms that involve political action. Benedict Anderson (1991) does not make an explicit distinction between the two but his focus on national imaginaries implicitly identifies cultural nationalism as the generative core of all nationalisms. Partha Chatterjee adds to this that cultural nationalism in effect preceded anticolonial political nationalism in many colonies (1993, 6). The claim that expressive culture was the “match that lit the fuse” of anticolonial and postcolonial nationalisms is, however, not new and actually constitutes a central dogma of many nationalist narratives.¹⁶ In Jamaica, the notion that the anticolonial “national awakening” first started in the arts is commonplace and appears, among others, in David Boxer’s writings (e.g. Boxer 1982 & 1990). That such claims play a central role in many postcolonial national mythologies warrants a degree of skepticism. After all, the influence of political nationalism on culture should not be underestimated, if only because of the significant interventions states and political organizations can make into the cultural sphere, which includes establishing and maintaining its supporting infrastructure and influencing the production of cultural narratives. Cultural and political nationalism effectively exist in a complex, reciprocal relationship and it is counterproductive to claim a necessary sequence or clear separation between the two. Any discussion of cultural nationalism therefore needs to pay attention to the relationship between the cultural and the political in official and popular nationalisms.

3. Ideas about Art and Postcolonial Society

One central assumption in almost all the literature on postcolonial culture, even in the most strident critiques of cultural nationalism, is the view that the arts can be mobilized

¹⁶ “The Match that Lights the Fuse” was the title of a *Jamaica Journal* article on early nationalist Jamaican art by the artist and art critic Gloria Escoffery (1988).

to effect, or prevent, social and political change. Such ideas were first put forward by pioneering anticolonial and racial activists from the late 19th to the mid 20th century. It became the foundation of cultural and educational policy for postcolonial states and a strategy for popular resistance and liberation movements alike.

The idea that art has socially transformative potential appears in two general, overlapping forms, which are by no means exclusive to the postcolonial world. The first is the propagandist view, which posits that the content, form and presentation of art can and must make a direct intervention in society, for instance by protesting injustice, by promoting a particular political, religious or ideological perspective, or by extolling or denigrating certain political leaders. This view has been influential in the postcolonial Caribbean although there has been resistance against the more doctrinarian forms of propaganda art on the part of many artists and intellectuals. C.L.R. James, for instance, scornfully dismisses “socialist realism” in *What is Art?* (1993, 200), an essay in *Beyond a Boundary*, his famous 1963 book on the politics of cricket, in which he argues for the “high art” status of cricket by appealing to universalist aesthetic concepts such as “beauty,” “structural perfection,” and “significant form.”

A similar reluctance to dismiss ideals of artistic freedom and aesthetic universality can be seen in the Cuban constitution of 1976, which states that “there is freedom of artistic creation as long as its content is not contrary to the Revolution. There is freedom of artistic expression.”¹⁷ With other words, the *form* of art is free but its *content* is subject to state interference. When exactly the content of art comes into conflict with the principles of the Revolution is, of course, subject to interpretation and

¹⁷ The official English translation of the Cuban constitution is available from www.parlamentocubano.cu/ingles/constitution.html.

this has varied significantly over time. Cuban government patronage has also actively interfered with artistic form, by rewarding artists who work in certain styles. There were times when it advocated a more dogmatic “socialist realism” – as happened briefly in the early 1960s and again during the 1970s, when Soviet influence was at its peak. Formalist trends, in contrast, have been tolerated but not encouraged and have, at times, been criticized for their association with American cultural imperialism. But generally, Cuban artists have enjoyed a fair degree of artistic freedom and this has made Cuban art more diverse and vibrant than in most other Communist countries. Cuban poster art from the 1960s and 70s, for instance, combined classic propagandist content with experimental form, including abstraction, and sophisticated visual caricature. Artists have occasionally challenged the Cuban government with overtly critical and satirical works, as could be seen in contemporary art from the 1980s and 1990s, but such episodes have usually been short-lived and subject to censorship. (Camnitzer 1994; Block & Mosquera 2001)

Propaganda art is nonetheless very common throughout the Caribbean and ranges from the crudest political propaganda to more subtle pedagogic approaches that advocate certain lifestyles or world views. Much of what can be classified as propaganda art has, naturally, been initiated by the colonial and postcolonial governments of the region, as is illustrated by the ubiquitous, and often controversial, official monuments, but a lot of popular art also qualifies as propaganda, as in Rastafarian street art which assertively promotes Rastafarian religious and political views. [Ill. 8 & 9]

The second cluster of ideas about the socially transformative potential of the arts is the more general and far less controversial view that expressive culture is essential to personhood and collective identity formation and that its production and consumption

should therefore be encouraged and facilitated. It is for this reason that art is almost always included in school curricula and used for therapeutic purposes with the mentally and physically ill. The political and ideological implications of the belief that art is a fundamental human need rather than a luxury are wide-ranging and can, among others, be used to justify public expenditure on cultural programs and institutions, even to those who would be critical of obvious propaganda art. Notions of personhood and collective identity are, however, in themselves deeply political and the promotion of art for its edifying power therefore often amounts to indirect propaganda.

Cultural institutions are a crucial part of the resources used to allow art to edify its designated audiences. The recent historical and critical literature on museums and exhibitions has paid significant attention to their social mission. According to Tony Bennett, in *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), the modern museum was established as a reformatory of manners, in which visitors were subjected to social rituals that are aimed at producing a good, self-regulatory sense of citizenship. Similar views were articulated in Carol Duncan's *Rituals of Citizenship* (1995), which specifically focuses on the universal survey art museum as the prototype of the national art museum in the metropolitan West in which national artistic achievements are legitimized by their insertion into the grand Western cultural narratives and hierarchies. Andrew McClellan's (1994) monograph on the establishment of the Louvre museum documented the direct relationship between the origin of the universal survey art museum and the very notion of modern citizenship in the context of the French Revolution. However, McClellan also usefully demonstrated that museums are not just the preconceived hegemonic plots of an abstract officialdom but have always depended on the efforts of dedicated individuals

who have negotiated the actual terms of their operations and even their very existence against sometimes great odds.

The volumes *Exhibiting Cultures* (Karp & Lavine 1991) and *Museums and Communities* (Karp et al. 1992) shifted the focus of the discussion to museums' function as public forums in which identities are not unilaterally imposed but actively negotiated between stakeholders, a perspective that makes much better sense of the recent culture wars. It is nonetheless necessary to remember that access to cultural resources such as museums is still a function of social and educational status and in effect helps to maintain those distinctions (Bourdieu 1984 & 1993; Bourdieu & Darbel 1990). What exactly the social function of the museum is and how this is viewed has varied over place and time but it is almost universally accepted that cultural institutions have considerable ideological and political potency, whether it is for the "greater good" or the pursuit of power. This explains why many postcolonies have a cultural infrastructure that seems disproportionate to their economic capabilities and insist on having "standard" institutions such as a national art gallery (Duncan 1995, 21 & 139 n2).

The idea that art serves a general purpose of personal and collective edification and empowerment takes on special urgency in the postcolonial world because colonialism imposed political, cultural and racial hierarchies that fundamentally challenged the personhood and cultural identity of the colonial subjects. This sense of urgency has been particularly pronounced in the Caribbean, where colonization started with the arrival of Columbus in 1492 and continues to the present day, since some of the islands are still overseas dependencies, which makes the region's colonial history arguably the longest in the world. To add to this, the social and cultural transformations

caused by colonialism have also been most profound. The indigenous Amerindians became virtually extinct in the early decades of colonization and the region was repopulated by involuntary and voluntary migrants from Africa, Europe and, in the 19th century, Asia. While the Spanish-speaking Caribbean has a higher proportion of European descent, the majority in the rest of the region descends from the West and Central Africans who were brought to the region as chattel slaves, mainly to work on the sugar plantations.

Consequently, it seemed that the Caribbean had no indigenous tradition to which its modern writers and artists could readily turn in their efforts to redress the social and cultural effects of colonialism. Because of this lack of a clear local “usable past,” the development of postcolonial Caribbean culture has been frustrated by deep-rooted insecurities about cultural legitimacy. The latter is perhaps best illustrated by V.S. Naipaul’s infamous statement in 1962 in *The Middle Passage* that: “History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies” (2001, 20). According to Naipaul, Caribbean people are doomed to be “mimic men” (1967) who operate within “a borrowed culture” (2001, 64). Predictably, postcolonial Caribbean artists and intellectuals have devoted significant energy to refuting this dismal view of Caribbean culture, which leaves no hope for any real sense of personhood and cultural identity, but it remains one of the most sensitive and pressing cultural questions.

Naipaul’s negative view of Caribbean culture can perhaps be attributed to his Indian-Trinidadian background. While Trinidadians of Indian descent represent about half of the current population and have acquired considerable economic and, more recently, political clout, the dominant notions of cultural and ethnic legitimacy in

postcolonial Trinidad have been assertively African-Caribbean and this has disaffected many Indo-Trinidadians from that country's national project. However, Naipaul's views were shared, at least in part, by his compatriot C.L.R. James, who was African-Trinidadian. James identified the lack of an indigenous tradition as a particularly acute problem in the arts and stated in his 1959 lecture *The Artist in the Caribbean*, which he presented in Jamaica at the University of the West Indies (UWI):

Is there any medium so native to the Caribbean, so rooted in the tight association which I have made between national surroundings, historical development and artistic tradition, is there any such medium in the Caribbean from which the artist can draw that strength which makes him a supreme practitioner? [...] So far as I can see, there is nothing of the kind in the Caribbean and none in sight to the extent that I, at any rate, can say anything about it. So far as I can see in the plastic arts, in musical composition, as well as in literature, we are using forms which have been borrowed from other civilizations (1977, 184).

This illustrates that such misgivings were not limited to those who were marginalized by Caribbean nationalism but there is one crucial difference: while Naipaul marked the “mimic men” syndrome as a fundamental existential state, James identified a way forward: “What the artist needs, [is] the creation of a national consciousness (Ibid., 189)” and he made it clear that he held the local intelligentsia responsible for effecting this change of climate. As we will see throughout this dissertation, the ultimately unanswerable question of the Jamaicanness, or Caribbeanness, of Jamaican art has been a crucial driving force of local artistic development.

It is not that there were no aspects of Caribbean history that could be mobilized as a usable past. C.L.R. James was among the first to identify the Haitian Revolution as a crucial enabling moment for African-Caribbeans in his *The Black Jacobins*, which was originally published in 1939 (1989; 2004). However, since the majority of the Caribbean

population is of African descent, artists and intellectuals not only had to identify an indigenous past but they also had to address the region's troubled relationship with Africa. About this, C.L.R. James wrote in 1963: "The first step to freedom was to go abroad. Before they could begin to see themselves as a free and independent people they had to clear from minds the stigma that anything African was inherently inferior and degraded. The road to West Indian national identity lay through Africa" (2004, 406). This quest has, however, been complicated by lingering Western notions of what constitutes civilization and the consequent lack of a civilizational discourse about "tribal" Africa (Karp & Masolo 2000).

This was well illustrated by the cultural views of Marcus Garvey, the Jamaica-born Pan-Africanist and founder of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey was politically active in Jamaica from 1927 to 1934, after being deported from the USA, and was then probably the first in the island to publicly articulate the idea that the arts could help to address the injustices of racism and colonial society. The 1929 manifesto for his People's Political Party called for the establishment of a cultural infrastructure in Jamaica, which included a "national opera house with an academy of music and art" (*Gleaner*, August 18, 1934, 27).

Garvey's keynote speech for the 1934 UNIA convention, which was held in Kingston, was on the subject of art. He reportedly said:

The Negro has not engaged himself in the building up of a Standard Artistic Civilization. He has had only Tribal Civilizations. [...] The Art of Sculpture has been raised by the White man. What do you have to compare. What expression of your art in sculpture? Nothing. [...] You can still find in Egypt lasting monuments of Negro Art. But it is not a credit to us today. As much as we are trying to develop ourselves in Business, Religion, Politics and so on, we have to build up ourselves in Art. [...]

must train the young Rubens, the young Rosetti, the young Reynolds, the young Michaelangelo of the Negro Race. (*Gleaner*, August 18, 1934, 27)

And:

If you go through the homes of the Corporate area, you would not find a painting of any Negro Character on the walls, and for a person of our group to invest one hundred pounds in a painting of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Booker T. Washington or Frederick Douglas, that would be considered madness.¹⁸ [...] Some of us have things hanging on our wall, but they are cheap reproductions of the work of other races. (Ibid.)

The call for portraits of black historical figures reflected Garvey's views about the need for positive black images in art to foster racial pride and dignity and his emphasis on the necessity of cultural development was consistent with the general ideas about the redemptive social function of artistic development that are being explored here. The blatant Eurocentricity of Garvey's remarks was, however, out of step with the logic of anticolonialism, especially since he was dedicated to the rehabilitation of Africa in the minds of its diaspora. That Garvey chose to focus on the artistic achievements of Egypt, while denigrating those of "tribal" Africa, illustrates that he was only comfortable with what matched his assumptions about civilization and "high culture." Likewise, Garvey expressed no interest in African-Jamaican popular culture as a potential source of cultural empowerment, because it did not meet his standards of cultural respectability. What he wished to encourage instead was the development of a black "high culture" that would, from his conflicted perspective, be on par with the achievements of Western civilization.

The view that developing the arts was essential to nation-building was shared by the Jamaican nationalist intelligentsia of that period, although many of them did not take Garvey seriously or were worried by the socially subversive potential of his popular

¹⁸ The term "the Corporate Area" refers to the "Kingston and St Andrew Corporation," the proper administrative name for Kingston, Jamaica's capital city.

movement, which focused on a transnational sense of black solidarity and on Africa rather than Jamaica as “home.” Prominent among that emerging intelligentsia were Michael Manley’s parents, Norman and Edna Manley. Norman Manley was a former Rhodes Scholar and a successful lawyer who became an influential nationalist political leader in the late 1930s; the sculptor Edna Manley was not only influential as an artist, but also as an organizer, advocate and patron of the nationalist Jamaican art movement.

Between 1934 and 1937, Edna Manley published several articles in the *Gleaner*, the daily newspaper of the Jamaican elite, that aimed to raise the artistic consciousness of her readers, to make them more aware of modern Western and traditional African art, and to sensitize them to the need for an indigenous art movement (Boxer 1990, 57). The first one of these appeared about a month after Garvey’s 1934 speech had been published in the *Gleaner* and may well have been written in response to it. Like Garvey’s, her article started with a negative appraisal:

Who are the creative painters, sculptors and engravers and where is the work which should be expressions of its country’s existence and growth? A few anaemic imitators of European traditions, a few charming parlour tricks, and then practically silence. Nothing virile, nor original, nor in any sense creative, and nothing, above all, that is an expression of the deep-rooted, hidden pulse of the country – that thing which gives it its unique life. To go into the cause for this barrenness is too big a subject for a newspaper – perhaps it is a still unrealized island consciousness; of one thing I am sure it is not – that there is nothing to be expressed (Manley E. 1934).

The article concluded with a call for a Jamaican art gallery and national collection.

Merely five years later, in his 1939 essay *National Culture and the Artist*, Norman Manley presented a more positive perspective on local art production and, in doing so, articulated the classic Creole Nationalist position on culture:

National culture is a national consciousness reflected in the painting of

pictures of our own mountains and our own womenfolk. [...] Becoming one people [...] is the ultimate good; absorbing all the influences from outside and remaining sturdily ourselves. [...] The immediate past has attempted to destroy the influence of the glory that is Africa, it has attempted to make us condemn and mistrust the vitality, the vigour, the rhythmic emotionalism that we get from our African ancestors. It has flung us into conflict with the English traditions of the public schools and even worse it has imposed on us the Greek ideal of balanced beauty. [...] Instead we must dig deep into our own consciousness and accept and reject only those things of which we from our superior knowledge of our own cultural needs must be the best judges. (Manley N. 1971a, 108-109).

Clearly, Norman Manley was confident that Edna Manley's earlier anxieties and appeals were already being addressed by a sudden "flowering" of national consciousness that challenged the imposed cultural values of English colonialism.

The contrasts and similarities between the views of the Manleys and those of Garvey are instructive. First of all, it is no coincidence that Garvey and Edna Manley both called for the establishment of national cultural institutions. These institutions, they both obviously felt, would provide their constituents with the kind of cultural and civic edification they needed to be transformed from colonial subjects into assertive, dignified citizens. This is consistent with the view that early museums and related institutions primed their audiences to be productive members of modern society, although Garvey and Edna Manley seemed concerned with the capacity of these institutions to empower and foster a vibrant civil society rather than to consciously exert social control. Jamaica, in fact, already had a major cultural institution, the Institute of Jamaica (IoJ), which had been established as a members' society in 1879 and was dedicated to the study of Jamaican history, natural science and society, be it initially from a decidedly colonial and elitist perspective. The nationalist intelligentsia, which belonged to the social group that had privileged access to the IoJ, made active efforts to insert its agenda into the policies

and programs of the institution and had, by the 1940s, been quite successful in this campaign, which shows that the political orientation of cultural institutions can change significantly when there are changes in their operational context (McClellan 1994).

Second, the Manleys did not share Garvey's overt ambivalence about the status of African culture. Norman Manley specifically made reference to the need to redress colonial prejudices about African culture and proposed a positive, even idealized reading of the "glory that is Africa" – which presumably meant "tribal" Africa – as a legitimate and defining part of Jamaican heritage. The Manleys were, however, not African nationalists but were specifically concerned with the promotion of a Jamaican culture. Therefore, they represented their relationship to Africa and Europe as a kind of cultural smorgasbord that was available for them to freely pick and choose, with emphatic confidence in the collective capacity of Jamaicans to use these resources to forge a new, modern and uniquely Jamaican culture. Unlike Naipaul, they believed that the Caribbean condition facilitated invention and innovation and this, to them, was the real challenge facing the modern Caribbean artist.

Third, and finally, Garvey and Edna Manley shared concerns that their constituents had not yet achieved the desired cultural consciousness and artistic development that was necessary to foster the desired sense of individual and collective self. However, in contrast with Garvey, Edna Manley did not suggest that Jamaican artists should endeavor to measure up to European historical models, but instead urged them to draw on the here and now, to reveal "the deep-rooted, hidden pulse" of Jamaican culture. To this end, they saw popular African-Jamaican culture as the main legitimizing resource available to local artists. Norman Manley later wrote: "We suddenly discovered

that there was a place to which we belonged and when the dead hand of colonialism was lifted a freedom of spirit was released and the desert flowered. Our best young men plunged deep into the lives of the people and came up with poems and paintings and with vivid and powerful books” (Manley N. 1971b, 111).

I have elaborated the cultural views of Garvey and the Manleys here because they are still tremendously influential in Jamaica today. The anxiety about the “high culture” status of Jamaican art as black, postcolonial art is, for instance, a major reason for the polemics about the NGJ’s promotion of the Intuitives. [Ill. 10] It also explains the popularity with local art patrons of the artist Barrington Watson, who paints black imagery in a grand academic style. [Ill. 11] Norman Manley’s 1939 essay virtually served as a blueprint for cultural policy in the 1970s, except for a shift towards the more egalitarian political rhetoric of that era and a greater focus on the African origins and blackness of Jamaican culture (Nettleford 1978; Manley M. 1990). Even the 2003 cultural policy is still rooted in the general ideas and rhetoric of the elder Manley’s essay, to which a new concern with building the culture industries has been superimposed. This does not mean that these foundational cultural views have escaped criticism. To the contrary, the weaknesses and contradictions of creole cultural nationalism have been a prime subject for debate in Caribbean cultural scholarship and criticism since the 1960s (Garvey’s equally conflicted cultural views seem to have escaped such critical scrutiny.)

The Manleys’ cultural self-confidence decisively separates them from Garvey and this may stem from differences in social background. While Garvey was an ambitious descendent of poor black peasants, the Manleys fully enjoyed the “cultural capital,” to use Bourdieu’s term, of the Anglo-Jamaican elite. More specifically, their views on the

sort of cultural modernity that was desirable for Jamaica were informed by their exposure to European artistic Modernism, an exposure which Garvey obviously lacked. Edna Manley's Modernist sculptures had received critical acclaim when they were exhibited in England in the 1920s and 1930s, so she had been directly involved in early British Modernism as an emerging artist (Brown 1975; Boxer 1990). The Manleys' idealized view of African culture, to which they attributed a psychological authenticity and cultural vigor that seemed to be lacking in modern Western culture, was therefore as indebted to Modernist Primitivism as to their anticolonial nationalist convictions (Price 1989; Karp 1991; Errington 1998). The same applies to their position on Jamaican popular culture. This simultaneous rejection of Primitivist stereotypes and the internalization of some of the foundational ideas of Primitivism is one of the key contradictions of the kind of anticolonial cultural nationalism that emerged in Jamaica.

Partha Chatterjee has pointed out that the challenge facing anticolonial cultural nationalism was to "to fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western" (1993, 6) and added that "the search for a postcolonial modernity has been tied, from its very birth, with its struggle against modernity" (75). Anticolonial and postcolonial Modernist art has indeed developed in a conflicted dialogue with Western Modernism, reinforced by the fact that many postcolonial artists and cultural scholars have studied or worked in the metropolitan West. Still today, it is one of the most charged questions in the postcolonial mimicry debate, as is illustrated by the Indian expatriate art critic Annie Paul's argument that mainstream Jamaican artists and art narratives "parrot" Western, high Modernist models, with a particular predilection for abstraction (1997).

Paul's position is, in itself, highly problematic. First of all, the relationship

between non-Western cultural nationalism and Modernism cannot be understood if Modernism is conflated with the formalist, High Modernist notion of art as an autonomous aesthetic preoccupation. Modernism is a much broader, more multifaceted phenomenon and the aspects of Western Modernism that attracted anticolonial and postcolonial nationalists are those equally important ones that accommodated social and political content and intent, such as expressionism and realism. While there has been some experimentation with abstraction, as is illustrated by the Cuban propaganda posters and a few “formalist rebellions” among artists who felt confined by cultural nationalism, representation has been the norm in most anti- and postcolonial art and this has certainly been the case in Jamaica, where art has always had a strong figurative focus.

Furthermore, the tendency to concede the authorship and rightful ownership of Modernism entirely to the metropolitan West needs to be challenged (Stam & Shohat 1998, 40). Modernism was a fundamentally transnational phenomenon, in which non-Western artists and intellectuals such as Wifredo Lam and Aimé Césaire and their international travels played a defining role. Latin American Modernism, in particular, has developed simultaneously with and sometimes ahead of European and US-American Modernism (Ades 1989, 125-149). While these contributions need to be reclaimed, the effects of Western metropolitan dominance in Modernism should not be downplayed either. There is an unresolved tension in anticolonial nationalist art movements between the desire to satisfy the cultural requirements of nationalism and those of the Western-focused “aesthetic internationalism” of Modernism (Shohat & Stam 1998, 40).

The primary means to make Jamaican Modernism “not Western” has been, to use Chatterjee’s term, the “appropriation of the popular” (1993, 72) but it has been a

selective, vertical appropriation that relegates popular culture to being a “low culture” source for “high art” rather than a full-fledged part of the national culture. Norman Manley’s 1939 speech suggests that the artists – and he called them “our best young men,” in a remarkable, gender-biased failure to acknowledge the role of female artists such as his own wife in the nationalist movement – belonged to a separate category from “the people” whose culture they embraced and ennobled in their work, although several of the young members of the nationalist Jamaican art movement they mentored originally came from poor rural and urban backgrounds. Such views about the exceptional status of the artist are also evident in the work of C.L.R. James, who wrote in *The Artist in the Caribbean*: “A supreme artist exercises an influence on the national consciousness which is incalculable. He is created by it but he himself illuminates and amplifies it, bringing the past up to date and charting the future” (1977, 185). The underlying issue is that nationalist art movements such as Jamaica’s have, in spite of the populist rhetoric and aversion to formalism, not fundamentally challenged the notion of “high culture” itself. The Jamaican nationalist movement may have originated in a genuine desire to transform society but it generated what was ultimately a new elite culture.

The ambivalence that surrounds popular culture in anticolonial cultural nationalism not only pertained to its cultural status but also to its apparent lack of modernity. Deborah Thomas has denounced the construction of African-Jamaican culture in creole nationalism as “folk blackness” (Thomas 2004), a traditionalist, folkloric view of popular culture that negates its political potency in the present. While popular culture has indeed been “folkorized” in nationalist Jamaican art, this assessment does not account for its thematic focus on the quintessentially modern figure of the black factory worker

and urban dweller, with which the nationalist intelligentsia had formed relatively successful political alliances through the labor union movement. Nor does it account for the kinship of the Manleys' cultural views with Alain Locke's New Negro concept, with which they shared their Modernist focus.

The question nonetheless arises whether genuine cultural and political common cause can exist between the postcolonial elites and popular masses. Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, was among the first intellectuals from the Caribbean to sound the alarm about the reductive and elitist tendencies in anticolonial cultural nationalism. He had particular misgivings about intellectuals' ability to fully grasp popular culture:

The culture that the intellectual leans toward is often no more than a stock of particularisms. He wishes to attach himself to the people; but instead he only catches hold of their outer garments. And these outer garments are merely the reflection of a hidden life, teeming and perpetually in motion (1963, 223-224).

Fanon also cautioned against an unproductive traditionalism in dealing with popular culture but expressed some confidence that radical intellectuals and the people could productively collaborate on a revolutionary art that existed in the now.

Rastafari, which had gained considerable public visibility in Jamaica by the late 1950s, posed a serious challenge to the social, cultural and racial hierarchies of colonial and postcolonial Jamaica and made it very clear that resistance and even outright revolution could take place without enlightened elite leadership. The challenge facing the intelligentsia and mainstream artists of the 1960s and 1970s in Jamaica was thus how to position themselves vis-à-vis the new political assertiveness of the black masses. The young politician Edward Seaga, a Harvard graduate in sociology and anthropology who had conducted research on Revival religions in Jamaica (e.g. 1983), used his political

clout to advance the scholarly study and public validation of traditional African-Jamaican culture, among others by setting up a Folklore Research unit at the IoJ.¹⁹ He also publicly accused the older nationalist leadership of cultural elitism. The aggrieved Norman Manley retorted that Seaga, as a member of the white business elite, was merely engaged in a populist repackaging of what had pioneered by his own generation (Manley N. 1971c). In fact, Seaga can be accused of “folklorizing” popular African-Jamaican culture to a greater extent than the Manleys’ generation, because his focus was on its traditional rather than its modern aspects (Thomas 2004, 69-70). Furthermore, he used his association with the rural and urban communities where he had conducted his field research to build an intensely loyal political support base in a way that contributed to the development of the garrison communities in the inner cities (Gunst 1996, 79-85; Gray 2004, 47-49).²⁰ Despite the one-upmanship, there was virtual consensus among post-independence political leaders and intellectuals that African-Jamaican culture should be validated as a foundational part of the national culture and that fostering social and cultural egalitarianism was the only way forward (Manley M. 1990; Nettleford 1972 & 1978).

More strident challenges of the local socio-cultural hierarchies came from the core of young radicals at the University of the West Indies (UWI), led by the Guyanese

¹⁹ The African-Jamaican Revival religions are conventionally divided in two major, related categories. One is Zion Revivalism, which combines elements of inspirational Protestant Christianity with spiritual beliefs and practices of predominantly West and Central African origin; the other is Pukumina which is more African and less conventionally Christian. There are also smaller but related traditional African-Jamaican religious practices such as Kumina, which originated in those parts of the island where Central African indentured laborers settled in the second half of the 19th century (See Chapter 5).

²⁰ The first such community was Tivoli Gardens in West Kingston, which was established by Seaga as a “model community” after the predominantly Rastafarian Back-O-Wall slum was bulldozed in 1965. The development consisted of modern low-income housing and facilities and was populated with hand-picked party supporters.

historian Walter Rodney who was banned from Jamaica in 1968.²¹ Rodney summed up their concerns in *The Groundings with My Brothers*:

The beneficiaries of [the nationalist, anticolonial] struggle had been were a nation's middle class sector whose composition was primarily brown, augmented by significant elements of white and other groups, such as Syrians, Jews and Chinese. Of late, that local ruling elite has incorporated a number of blacks in positions of prominence. However, irrespective of its racial or colour composition, this power-group is merely acting as representatives of metropolitan-imperialist interests (1969, 12)

The middle class was thus accused of having replicated and perpetuated the colonial social order and many of these young (middle class) radicals embraced Rastafari as a popular movement that embodied their ideals of social and racial equity.

The Barbadian poet and historian Kamau Brathwaite²², who lived in Jamaica at the time and was part of the radical core at the UWI Mona Campus, called for cultural and political solidarity and collaboration between the intelligentsia and the populace. Brathwaite wrote, in an essay on the self-taught artist and Zion Revivalist leader Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds [Ill. 4, 12], after first dismissing the conventional elitist model of culture:

But there is another way of looking at the artist and at society; and that is a view which begins by looking upon society as made up of elite **and** the masses (the people or folk); in according them an equality of consideration, equilibrium of attention. Within this more balanced framework, priest, politician, judge, critic, artist, inhabit the fulcrum of our consciousness, mediating that gap and gulf between the one and the other, creating a continuum between elite and folk, requirement of a healthy society” (1971, 5).

In keeping with the egalitarian ethos of the period, the artist was thus no longer hierarchically separated from “the people” but was still accorded special status as a social

²¹ He was prevented from re-entering the country after traveling abroad for a Black Writers' conference in Montreal, Canada, in October 1968.

²² He was still known as Edward Brathwaite at the time, a name he now refutes.

mediator and spiritual leader. Popular culture was thus increasingly seen as a model, rather than a source, that was in many ways superior to elite culture. Nonetheless, the high culture status of the official national culture was well-entrenched and the NGJ's Intuitive category can be seen as an attempt to selectively elevate aspects of the popular culture to such cultural status.

The ideals of solidarity between the people and radical intellectuals were inevitably compromised by the end of Jamaica's Socialist experiment in 1980 and the failure of Third World ideology globally. New developments in cultural theory and criticism, especially the critiques of the elitist, hegemonic nature of official postcolonial culture, have also contributed to the loss of interest in those ideals. This has contributed to a marked separation in the scholarship on mainstream and popular postcolonial culture and the focus of the latter has increasingly been on its function as resistance (e.g. Scott J. 1985 & 1990; Chatterjee 1993). Popular resistance has obviously played a crucial role in the development of Jamaican culture since the plantation era but construing popular culture entirely as resistance is as reductive as not paying attention to its political implications. While there has been one fairly substantial book on Rastafarian art which was published by German scholars (Bender 2005)²³, this new literature on popular culture has paid very little attention to visual art, perhaps because it is assumed that its elitist status is irredeemable but probably also because of the intellectual conservatism of the field of Anglophone Caribbean art history itself, which has been resistant to recent critical and theoretical developments.

The idea that there can be a consensual model for social upliftment and progress

²³ The full length version of this study had originally appeared in German in 1992. A shorter version had been published in 1984. Both German publications accompanied exhibitions of Rastafarian art.

has been virtually abandoned in the recent scholarship on Jamaican culture. Scholarly publications such as Carolyn Cooper's studies of Dance Hall culture (1995 & 2004) or Deborah Thomas's *Modern Blackness* (2004) increasingly cast black popular culture in Jamaica as an autonomous domain that is indifferent to the social and cultural values of the elite, which harks back to M.G. Smith's plural society model (1965). While there is undeniable evidence for its relative autonomy, this newer scholarship fails to address the question of the social efficacy of that resistance. Paul Willis (1977) has poignantly demonstrated that behavior that was construed as resistance by working class youths in England in the 1970s served to entrench rather than to challenge the social order, by keeping them locked in their "designated" social position, and this question certainly needs to be posed for Jamaica. Furthermore, romanticizing the aggressively oppositional character of much contemporary Jamaican popular culture overlooks that a society needs at least some shared values to remain viable. If not, the consequences are devastating for all involved and open the way for political and criminal manipulations and abuses, as Jamaica's current nightmare of crime, violence and civic disorder may suggest (Gray 2004). I thus have to ask with Shalini Puri (2004) whether the current scholarly focus on hybridity and resistance does not represent a "cop out" on the social and political responsibilities of postcolonial scholars, who are still well placed to explore and critique what could lead to a more just and equitable society.

4. Between Nation and Market

While there are significant disagreements about how and by whom art should be mobilized to effect social change, there is consensus in the postcolonial Caribbean that it can and, even, must have such effects. Insufficient attention has, however, been paid to

exactly what these effects are and how and under what conditions they may be achieved. All too often, it is assumed that the ideological content of postcolonial art automatically reaches its intended audiences or is only mediated organizationally by cultural institutions and public outreach programmes or popular initiatives such as the appearance of protest art in the streets. While these are important steering forces in the development and reception of postcolonial art, there are other factors that also determine whether and how the arts have any social effects.

In Jamaica, claims about the socially redemptive role of the arts derive particular authority from the international impact of Reggae music but even Reggae's revolutionary messages could not have reached their local and international audiences if it were not for the selective but formidable exposure that has been provided by the quintessentially capitalist and often exploitative pop music industry, in which profit-making is the primary objective. The music industry has not merely served as a conduit for Reggae but has deeply shaped its form and content. The social role of the arts can thus not only be understood in ideological terms but also depends on its commodification, which powerfully mediates its other roles. This is further complicated in the case of visual art, which particularly lends itself to serve as a luxury commodity.

The relationship between the ideological, aesthetic and economic functions of the arts has been an uneasy one in the modern world and has often been construed as a contradiction. At best, cultural commodification has been represented as a necessary evil and, at worst, as an undesirable source of corruption. To mid 20th century cultural critics such as Theodor Adorno (2001), the standardization and mass appeal of the modern culture industries threatened the integrity and survival of true art. These anxieties are

recast in the postcolonial world, where the notion of pure art is of limited relevance but where the question arises whether cultural commodification is compatible with the equally moralized postcolonial quest for cultural legitimacy, social change and nationhood.

The cultural effects of tourism were, for instance, a predictable source of concern for the Jamaican nationalist anticolonial intelligentsia of the 1930s. One poignantly claimed that tourism was “de-Jamaicanizing the Jamaicans” (*Public Opinion* January 29, 1938, 3) and the nationalist art movement positioned its campaign for cultural authenticity and legitimacy as the polar opposite of tourist art which, in their view, represented a superficial, stereotypical and even false image of Jamaica (Wingfield-Digby 1945). In practice, however, a much more pragmatic position was taken towards cultural commodification. For instance, the nationalist foundation Jamaica Welfare was established in 1937 by Norman Manley with the “promotion of crafts as means of earning a living” (Poupeye-Rammelaere 1990, 48) as one of its key objectives and one of the prizes attached to the 1938 *All Island Exhibition*, the first national art exhibition organized by the nationalist intelligentsia was the Issa prize for “crafts suitable for sale to tourists” (Waugh 1987, 90). The use of the term “craft,” rather than “art,” however, suggests that these income-generating efforts were not granted the same status and significance as the “high art” products of the nationalist movement.

Such unresolved ambivalence and pragmatism were also evident in the radical 1970s. The assertion by Michael Manley’s chief cultural advisor Rex Nettleford, in his influential *Caribbean Cultural Identity* (1978), that “[i]f the people of the Caribbean own nothing else, they certainly can own their creative imagination which, viewed in a particular way, is a powerful means of production for much that brings meaning and

purpose to human life” (XXV) resonated with Michael Manley’s “not for sale” rhetoric but, interestingly, did not preclude using culture for economic gain as long as it was controlled by its legitimate stakeholders. It is telling that the NGJ was established in 1974 as a limited liability company, with the stated objective that this legal status would facilitate income-earning activities to fund the institution, and housed in a historic building that served as one of Kingston’s main tourist attractions.

There is still considerable ambivalence and a remarkable lack of critical discourse about the ideological implications of cultural commodification in Jamaica today and one merit of the cultural policy draft, an otherwise deeply flawed document, is that it at least attempts to grapple with the dilemma. It indeed remains that most art cannot exist or circulate without some form of economic support and that a lot of art is created primarily to make a living. As Raymond Williams usefully put it: “[A]rt and artists acquire ever more general (and vague) associations, offering to express a general *human* (i.e. non-utilitarian) interest, even while ironically, most works of art are effectively treated as commodities and most artists, even when they justly claim quite other intentions, are effectively treated as a category of independent *craftsmen* or *skilled workers* producing a certain kind of marginal commodity” (1983a, 42). The only way forward, then, is to better understand the cultural implications of commodification and to recognize that commodification itself has important cultural and ideological dimensions.

One notion that needs to be dispelled is that commodification necessarily amounts to a net loss in the cultural legitimacy and significance of the products involved. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that cultural commodification is not something that “also happens” to inert cultural products but a process that shapes the very nature of those

products and negotiates their accrued value and meaning (Appadurai 1986; Marcus & Myers 1995; Phillips & Steiner 1999). While commodification results in certain symbolic gains, it inevitably also causes losses. For instance, Sally Price (1989) and Shelly Errington (1998) have both demonstrated that the notion of Primitive art is simultaneously propagated and undermined by its commodification: the desire for authenticity is its main selling point but the purist manner in which this authenticity is defined is fundamentally threatened by its involvement in the art market.²⁴

Another assumption that needs to be challenged is that the “native” is necessarily the victim or loser when the local culture is commodified. The trade in postcolonial art is undeniably embedded in asymmetrical power relations but it has been a much-needed source of income to artists and dealers at all social levels in the postcolonies. The recent scholarship on cultural commodification has shifted the focus to the agency of local producers and vendors and recognized that those previously disparaged intra- and transnational cultural-economic exchanges have provided an important arena for self-representation. Néstor García Canclini (1995) has, for instance, described the interactions of Mexican tourist art producers with the state and the market, as “strategies for entering and leaving modernity” that demonstrate their capacity to adapt to and take some measure of control of their relationship with globalized, late capitalist modernity. Although the private ownership of art can be exclusionary, the modern culture industries have also democratized and significantly increased the social reach of art, by providing unprecedented public access to cultural products of all kinds and from all over the world (Ibid., 64-65). Caribbean tourist art, for instance, has also provided local audiences with

²⁴ I use the term Primitive without the now-conventional quotation marks in this dissertation, for ease of reading, but it speaks for itself that I recognize its problematic nature.

affordable and accessible art objects that can be claimed as tokens of cultural identity, as is illustrated by the presence of such items in local middle class homes.²⁵

Most case studies on the trade in postcolonial art, such as Canclini's above-mentioned analysis or Christopher Steiner's (1995) work on the production of value and authenticity in mass-produced "traditional" African art, involve items that derive from long cultural traditions and originate in regions where tourism is important but not dominant as an economic activity. In the Caribbean, given the lack of deep indigenous traditions, tourist art was invented along with and sometimes ahead of the national culture. This makes the Caribbean a particularly revealing instance of how questions of authenticity and legitimacy that arise from cultural commodification are intertwined, no matter how uncomfortably, with those that arise from the political and ideological dimensions of postcolonial culture – an understudied subject to which this dissertation seeks to make a contribution.

5. Jamaican Art Worlds

This dissertation thus takes the form of a case study of the social role of visual art in the postcolonial world. Using the development of visual art in late colonial and independent Jamaica as my case study, I examine how postcolonial art is shaped by the internal and external social, cultural, ideological and political dynamics of postcolonial societies. Conversely, I also consider the impact of the production, circulation and consumption of postcolonial art on the societies in which it is created, especially its relevance to social formation. As the title of this dissertation implies, my specific interest is in the dynamics *between* the ideological and the economic, since these sometimes contradictory factors

²⁵ Figures on the local buying patterns of Jamaican tourist art are not available but I have personally observed the prevalence of such objects in middle class Jamaican homes.

act together as crucial driving forces of postcolonial cultural development. Jamaica is small but has the complex characteristics of an urbanized, cosmopolitan postcolony. It has a reputation for cultural, racial and political militancy and a well-developed art world but is also highly dependent on tourism. I have thus been able to expand the historical and thematic range of my inquiry beyond what would be feasible in a larger society and to produce findings of general significance on the role of collective imaginaries, cultural production and commodification in the postcolonial world. My dissertation also seeks to advance the scholarship on Jamaican culture by proposing a social history of art in modern Jamaica, which reflects and builds on the existing narratives (Baxter 1970; Boxer 1976 & 1982; Rothschild 1979; Waugh 1987; Archer-Straw & Robinson 1990; Boxer & Poupeye 1998).

These queries require a comprehensive theoretical and analytical model of art and society that accounts for the various social forces that shape the development of different kinds of art as well as the effects these arts have on society. Two such closely related models exist. One is Howard Becker's (1982) "art worlds" model; the other is Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) "field of cultural production." Both models apply to the arts in general and are based on the recognition that "art" is socially constructed and, as such, the result of collective rather than individual action. About this, Becker wrote:

Art worlds consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. [...] Works of art [...] are not the products of individual makers, "artists" who possess a rare and special gift. They are, rather, joint products of all the people who cooperate via an art world's characteristic conventions to bring works like that into existence. (34-35).

Becker's "art worlds" concept usefully dislodges the special, exalted status of the artist – the idea most Caribbean intellectuals have refused to abandon – and shifts the focus of

analysis to the complex social networks that negotiate the standards and conventions that determine how art is understood, produced, circulated and received in a particular context. Since this model's focus is on the negotiations that take place within this social sphere, it also accounts for dissent and change. Becker's "art world" actors include a wide range of active stakeholders – for the visual arts this would include dealers, curators, collectors, critics, gallery visitors, and the artists themselves – but his model is essentially open-ended and also considers the role of passive audiences, deliberate non-participants and outsiders, which is an important consideration in the postcolonial societies, where active participation in the mainstream art world is very contained. While Becker's focus is on the persons who constitute the art world, his model also considers the material and cultural resources that are available and mobilized in the collective production of art. As a unit of analysis, it can be applied to a particular cultural moment, in a particular geographic location, or a particular category of art, such as popular art (e.g. Vlach & Bronner 1992). It can thus be used to analyze modern Jamaican art as a whole or to look at specific aspects of it, such as mainstream, tourist and popular art.

Bourdieu's "field of cultural production" model explains the social construction of art in similar terms, as a field of struggle in which the possibilities and positions that shape art in a particular context are negotiated. Bourdieu's theory of art and society is, however, part of a more comprehensive social model of the relationship between cultural production and social formation. According to him, economic capital competes with symbolic capital to dynamically shape the relative position individuals and groups within the field of power that shapes class relations. Symbolic capital comprises cultural and educational capital and while the latter is obviously acquired, through formal education,

the former is deceptively naturalized, as if the capacity to make “correct” cultural appraisals were an innate quality of those who possess it. Bourdieu has demonstrated that this apparent disposition is, in effect, socially acquired and a function of social status (1984). However, Bourdieu complicates the relationship between cultural prestige and social power and posits that the field of cultural production is one in which the logic of the economic field is reversed and in which the economically dominated, such as the “penniless bohemian artist,” can be symbolically dominant, which potentially leads to challenges of the cultural hierarchies but also of the social order. This contrariness of the cultural field is, however, not cast in stone but, more correctly, involves an ongoing struggle between the autonomous hierarchies of the artistic field and the heteronomous values of the politically and economically dominant (1993, 40-45).

Bourdieu’s insistence on the complex relationship between economic, political and cultural hierarchies is tremendously useful to examine art’s dual capacity to question and consolidate power. It also sheds useful light on cultural conflicts within social elites, such as the ones that are obvious in postcolonial Jamaica, and on the contradictory role of notions such as authenticity in the art market. Like Becker’s “art worlds,” Bourdieu’s model is highly relevant and useful to my project, and both play a crucial role in the analysis I present in this dissertation. However, both models have limitations that need to be considered here, mainly because they were devised at particular moments in Western metropolitan culture. Becker’s book was researched and written in the USA in the 1960s and 70s, while Bourdieu’s theory was developed during the same period in France, both in social and cultural environments that were fairly well established and delineated. Their models presuppose a level of social and cultural cohesion that is lacking in contexts such

as colonial and postcolonial Jamaica. What Bourdieu and Becker could comfortably assume as “standard components” of the cultural sphere, namely the existence of a well-developed, clearly understood configuration of artists, institutions, critical responses and art patronage, cannot be taken for granted in more tenuous cultural, political and economic contexts. Furthermore, their views on the dynamics of consecration and change are heavily marked by the development of Western metropolitan Modernism and the narratives that surround it, especially their reliance on notions of progress and the role of avant-gardes. Postcolonial cultural development presents a much messier progression, in part also because of its conflicted relationship with external trends and hierarchies such those of metropolitan Modernism. Since the relevance of Western cultural models is part of the debates that have shaped postcolonial art, this study thus also critiques these theoretical and analytical models and their applicability to the postcolonial world.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the social efficacy of art in Jamaica and as I have emphasized earlier, I wish to consider the “high” and “low” aspects of Jamaican art. The “art world” model – and I will as of here use this term to describe an analytical model that is essentially a hybrid of Becker “art world” and Bourdieu’s “field of cultural production” models – provides an excellent tool for this purpose. One key problem with these models is, however, that they are most obviously applicable to mainstream Jamaican art, which has evolved in the more socially and culturally cohesive upper strata of Jamaican society, supported by the sort of system of ideas, cultural institutions and patronage Becker and Bourdieu had in mind when they devised their models. With other words, the art world model implicitly regards “high art” and its mechanisms as its vital center and relegates other aspects of art such as popular and

tourist art to its margins. It is for this reason that I am differentiating the “Jamaican art world” into “mainstream,” “popular” and “tourist” art worlds, three interlocking but distinct art worlds or spheres that have each been shaped by different ideological, political and economic configurations and cultural value systems and therefore shed different light on the relation between these shaping forces.

I should emphasize that these three Jamaican art worlds have been artificially separated, for the purpose of articulating a productive analytical model, but are in reality fundamentally interconnected. As substantive parts of the broader Jamaican art world – which is, in turn, part of larger regional and transnational cultural spheres – these three “sub-worlds” exist in constant, if conflicted interaction. Artists, imagery, styles, standards of judgment and audiences frequently move between all three, as is perhaps best illustrated by the Intuitives who are therefore a crucial case study in this dissertation. One question which certainly requires more attention than it has thus far received in the literature on postcolonial culture is how the notions of cultural authenticity that have shaped nationalist art relate to the notions of Jamaicanness that are marketed in the tourism industry and what mediating role popular culture has played in these constructions. More generally, the interactions between these worlds need to be related to the socioeconomic dynamics that shape them, especially Jamaica’s history of social conflict, the tensions between life in the urban, rural and tourist areas, and Jamaica’s troubled relationship with the metropolitan West. It is within these shifts that I hope to find some of the most revealing evidence of the social efficacy of Jamaican art.

6. Research

This dissertation builds on my earlier work on Jamaican art. Since 1984, my research

subjects for publications and exhibitions have included Garveyism and Rastafari, the Intuitives, contemporary art, institutional histories of the NGJ and the Edna Manley College (EMC), and individual Jamaican and Caribbean artists (e.g. Poupeye-Rammelaere 1987, 1991, 1992 & 1994; Poupeye 1998, 1999, 2004a, 2004b, 2007 & 2009a; Boxer & Poupeye 1998). Most of my working knowledge of Jamaican art, however, stems from my professional interactions with artists, cultural administrators, dealers, collectors, critics, cultural scholars, local art audiences, and, naturally, the art itself, especially as a curator at the NGJ. Addressing the queries I have outlined in this introduction required additional research in Jamaica, which was mainly carried out during the winter and summer of 2001 to 2003 and from January to December 2004, with regular updates in the 2005 to 2010 period. This involved archival work, interviews and correspondence with artists and other art world actors, and photographic documentation of the material record of Jamaican art. During this time, I was mainly based at the NGJ, where many of the resources I needed can be found. In September 2006, I was appointed as Research Fellow of the EMC and continued in this position until June 2009. This facilitated further research into art and tourism and the representation of violence and social trauma in Jamaican art. My current position as Executive Director of the National Gallery of Jamaica, finally, has engaged me more actively with questions about the social role of art museums.

That my dissertation is part based on more than twenty years of work in Jamaica poses its own peculiar challenges. It documents some developments in which I have played an active role and which have shaped who I am today, personally and professionally. My work as a curator and writer has at times been a source of

controversy, inevitably so because of my outsider-insider position as a white expatriate in Jamaica's small but querulous art community, my longstanding association with the NGJ, and my involvement in high-stakes projects such as my survey book on Caribbean art (1998). To add to this, I know most persons who are currently part of the Jamaican art community and this means that I am discussing the work and opinions of some of my closest friends and ardent critics. I could thus not avoid writing this dissertation as an "interested party" and can only hope that my awareness of this predicament has added to the acuity of my analysis.

Chapter 1 - A CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF JAMAICAN ART

1. Defining Jamaican Art

A key question I have avoided thus far is how exactly “art” and “Jamaican art” are defined for the purposes of this dissertation. This study is concerned with more than what is conventionally defined as “fine art” and also considers objects that are often classified as “craft” or “curios” and images in which visual communication takes precedence over aesthetic considerations, such as graffiti and informal commercial graphics – the “low brow” side of Jamaican visual culture. My definition of “Jamaican art” is likewise open-ended as the art, in the broadest sense, made by persons living in Jamaica and persons of immediate Jamaican descent who live elsewhere but self-define as Jamaicans. This does not imply that I believe that “Jamaican art” necessarily has any particular style or content or any other characteristic that makes it recognizably Jamaican; nor does it imply that I believe that there is a cohesive national Jamaican culture.

While it is necessary to clarify what I mean – and, equally important, what I do not mean – when I use the term “Jamaican art,” my own definitions are not the crucial issue here. It is much more important to consider how “art” and, specifically, “Jamaican art” have been defined in the Jamaican cultural sphere. Bourdieu has reminded us that “[t]he work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which shows and acknowledges it as a work of art” (1993, 35). Howard Becker has similarly argued that “[a]rt worlds typically devote considerable attention to trying to decide what is and isn’t art, what is and isn’t their kind of art, and who is and isn’t an

artist; by observing how an art world makes those distinctions rather than trying to make them ourselves we can understand much of what goes on in that world” (1982, 36). The title “art” is indeed bestowed as a form of consecration in itself and is, as such, a highly politicized concept. According to Eugene Metcalf in *Black Art, Folk Art, and Social Control* (1983):

Art represents and sanctifies what is valued in a society; the ability to create and appreciate art implies heightened human sensibility and confers social status and prestige. A people said to be without art, or with a degraded form of it, reputedly show themselves lacking in the qualities that dignify human experience and social interaction. They are said to be ‘uncultured,’ ‘Primitive,’ unable to participate in refined society. Definitions of art are therefore highly political. They are major battlegrounds on which the struggle for human and social recognition is waged. A people can ill afford to let others control the definitions by which their arts are classified and evaluated (271).

One of the crucial arenas in which this struggle is waged is, of course, in how art is represented in exhibitions and publications. This chapter therefore provides an overview of how definitions and narratives of Jamaican art have been evolved in key publications and exhibitions on the subject, many of which reflect an acute awareness of the political implications of such definitions and narratives. I also consider the critical reception of these representations, particularly the controversies that have surrounded some of them.

2. “Jamaican Art 1922-1982”

David Boxer’s *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* essay, which was partially discussed in the introduction, has been the main general historical text on Jamaican art since it was first published in 1983. It is useful to start this discussion with a closer look at this text, since it provides a benchmark to assess the rest of the material as well as a brief introduction to conventional Jamaican art history, especially since that essay has also served as the basis

for the NGJ's permanent exhibition.²⁶ Boxer's narrative, which in effect merely amounts to a ten-thousand word essay, is relatively easy to summarize, as I have attempted below, with special emphasis on how his argument is strategized.

After first establishing that, Jamaican art is “the art that has developed as an integral part of the nationalist, anti-colonialist consciousness underlying the cultural and intellectual life of the island since the 1920s” (1998, 11), Boxer moved on to sketching its “prehistory.” This started with a brief discussion of the art of the Taino, the now-extinct Amerindians who inhabited Jamaica at the time of Columbus's first arrival in the island in 1494.²⁷ He particularly praised four woodcarvings of Jamaican Taino *zemes* (or divinities), three of which are in the British Museum and one from the Rockefeller Collection in the Metropolitan Museum.²⁸ The 1998 version of Boxer's essay included a footnote in which he described three major Taino carvings that were recovered in the small town of Aboukir in central Jamaica in 1994 and are now housed at the NGJ (26). Another major carving, a *dujo* or ceremonial seat, has since been found in the Hellshire hills, not far from Kingston, and is now also on view at the NGJ. [Ill. 13] He then cursorily mentioned the Spanish period (1494-1670) and its main artistic relic, the so-called *Seville Carvings* (c1530), a group of decorative architectural stone and stucco carvings that were made to adorn the Governor's mansion in Jamaica's first capital of Sevilla Nueva. [Ill. 14]

²⁶ A refurbishing exercise that started in 2007 has introduced more engaging display strategies and more contextualization but has not fundamentally altered the narrative presented. The main permanent exhibition is now titled: *Jamaican Art: the 20th Century*.

²⁷ The Taino, the Amerindians who dominated the central Caribbean in the late 15th century, were previously known as the Arawak in the Anglophone Caribbean, named after the language group to which they belonged. Since this group also includes present day indigenous peoples who live in the Orinoco basin in Guyana and Venezuela, the term Island Arawak was introduced to distinguish the central Caribbean group. The current practice is, however, to call them the Taino, which means “the good people”, as they apparently called themselves in contrast with the “bad,” more bellicose Carib of the Eastern Caribbean (Rouse 1992).

²⁸ The Metropolitan Museum, based on recent scholarship (e.g. Kerchache 1994), now attributes this carving to the Dominican Republic but Boxer has refused to accept this reallocation, a good example of how nationalist agendas sometimes motivate attributions.

The discussion of the English colonial period, which officially started in 1670 when the island was formally ceded to Cromwell's England, was divided into three short parts. In the first, Boxer discussed the work by major European artists that was commissioned and imported into the island by the plantocracy, especially the Neo-Classical commemorative and funerary sculptures, such as John Bacon's 1789 *Rodney Memorial* in Jamaica's former capital Spanish Town.²⁹ [Ill. 15] In the second, he discussed the work of the itinerant naturalists and topographical artists, most of them Europeans but also a few US-Americans, who produced landscapes, depictions of the flora and fauna, and picturesque scenes, often as clients of major planters. [Ill. 16] In this section, he made special mention of Isaac Mendes Belisario, who, he stated, established a painting and printmaking studio in Kingston in 1835. [Ill. 17] The discussion of colonial art concluded with its most significant part, in which Boxer claimed that no African-Jamaican art of any significance had survived from before the 20th century and that very little such art ever existed, which he attributed to the forced deculturation of the African-Jamaicans under colonialism and slavery. This absence, he argued, set the stage for what "real" Jamaican art had to redress in the 20th century.

Boxer's section on modern Jamaican art, then, sought to establish when, how and by whom this heroic cultural act was accomplished (and this section was, except for two minor comparative references, limited to artists who were actually in the exhibition). It started with a long discussion of Edna Manley's early work which, Boxer contended, was

²⁹ Spanish Town, or Santiago de la Vega as it was originally named, was established as the Spanish Jamaican capital in 1538, in a location a few miles in-land from the island's south coast, after Sevilla Nueva on the north coast was abandoned because of the severe malaria problem there. The first capital under English rule was Port Royal, which is located on the tip of the Palissadoes peninsula (at times a chain of islands) in front of Kingston harbor, also along the south coast. This function was restored to Spanish Town after Port Royal was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692. Spanish Town remained Jamaica's capital until 1872, when it was replaced by the rapidly expanding harbor city of Kingston, Jamaica's current capital and the largest city in the Anglophone Caribbean.

the turning point in the “Jamaicanization” of local art production. As we saw before, he identified her arrival in the island in 1922 as the starting date of modern Jamaican art. [Ill. 18] He did cite the initial misgivings Norman and Edna Manley had about the cultural barrenness of Jamaica but suggested that this had already been redressed by her own work. He also mentioned the critical acclaim her work received in England at that time and her early influence, in the 1930s, on young Jamaican artists such as the photographer Denis Gick, the furniture designer Burnett Webster, the sculptor Alvin Marriott and the painter Albert Huie, as the earliest stirrings of a national school. [Ill. 19, 20] The Edna Manley segment concluded with a discussion of the group of carvings she produced between 1935 and 1937 – all Modernist and assertively black – which are signaled as the triumphant breakthrough of nationalist Jamaican art and coincided with her emergence as a prominent member of the nationalist intelligentsia who was now mainly addressing local audiences with her art. Most of this discussion focused on her best known sculpture *Negro Aroused* (1935), as the iconic art work of that period that has become central to the official Jamaican iconography. [Ill. 5] Edna Manley’s work, Boxer’s narrative implied, thus made up for the absence of African-Jamaican art from before the 20th century, although it was work *about* black Jamaicans made by an artist who was, for all intents and purposes, white, foreign-born and a member of the local elite.

Boxer’s discussion of the formative years of the nationalist school continued with a few paragraphs on “the Early Intuitives,” three self-taught artists to whom the term Intuitive was retroactively applied, namely the painter John Dunkley and the wood sculptors David Miller Sr and Jr. These artists were presented as personal discoveries of certain members of the nationalist intelligentsia – the “cognoscenti” (17) as Boxer called

them – in search of evidence of “native talent” although he insisted on the individuality and, especially, the visionary quality of their work as the primary reason for their classification as Intuitives. [Ill. 21, 22, 23] Most of the discussion of the “Early Intuitives” was devoted to Dunkley, who was categorically labeled as “Jamaica’s greatest painter” (17) and whose work was reproduced on the cover of the SITES catalogue and the exhibition poster, which virtually positioned him on par with Edna Manley. Boxer shored up his claims about Dunkley’s national and international significance by citing Edmund Barry Gaither of the Museum of Afro-American Art in Boston, who had written in 1969 that Dunkley was “at best [...] a little short of Henri Rousseau [and] the equal of American Primitives such as Grandma Moses and Horace Pippin” (17).

Boxer then continued with how the nationalist school developed during the 1940s and 50s and started with citing Norman Manley’s 1939 *National Culture and the Artist* essay as the foundational text of that period. Two sub-groups were identified. One was labeled “the Institute Group” and consisted of the young artists who were tutored by Edna Manley at her free adult art classes at the IoJ’s Junior Centre during the 1940s, such as Albert Huie, Ralph Campbell, David Pottinger and Henry Daley, and who consciously pursued the development of an indigenous iconography based on popular life and the physical environment. [Ill. 20, 24, 25, 26] The second group was presented under the heading “the Independents” and consisted of artists whose aesthetic and political pursuits departed from those of the Institute Group, such as Carl Abrahams and Gloria Escoffery, or who worked outside of Jamaica, such as Ronald Moody and Namba Roy, two sculptors who lived in England as adults. [Ill. 27, 28, 29] Boxer’s description of the work of the “Independents,” however, implied that there were significant parallels between

their pursuits and those of the “Institute Group,” so that they could still be regarded as part of a Jamaican school.

The third part of Boxer’s essay dealt with the decades following Independence, namely the 1960s and 1970s. Under the header “Mainstream,” Boxer pointed out that many of the pioneering artists were still active and briefly reviewed Edna Manley’s later work. [Ill. 30] He presented the period as one of continuity and change, in which younger artists, who had almost all studied abroad, in Europe, North America or Latin America, built on but also challenged the legacy of the older generation. He then proceeded to discuss what he described as the three dominant artists of the 1960s, namely the painters Eugene Hyde, Karl Parboosingh and Barrington Watson, who were more ambitious and adventurous about the formal aspects of their work than their predecessors and insisted on being recognized as professionals. [Ill. 31, 32, 33] The discussion started with Watson’s academic landscapes and history and genre paintings on Jamaican themes which, Boxer mischievously stated, appealed to “those whose artistic eye had been trained by the museums of Europe [and who] quickly elevated Watson to the role of the Jamaican painter *par excellence*” (19). The subsequent reference to the local commercial popularity of Watson’s formal portraits, nudes and erotica was also subtly disparaging – submerged affronts that reflected the personal and professional antagonism between Watson and Boxer at that time. The discussion then shifted to Hyde and Parboosingh, who were presented as artists who successfully applied the lessons of Modernist expressionism, whether abstract or figurative, to innovative and often provocative Jamaican subject matter, such as Parboosingh’s sympathetic portrayals of ganja-smoking

Rastafarians of the early 1970s.³⁰ [Ill. 34] Boxer wrote with great appreciation about Hyde's *Casualties* series of the late 1970s, which related to his own artistic sensibilities, although these works openly criticized the social deterioration during the Michael Manley regime.

The next part, a subsection of the larger section on the 1960s and 70s, was headed "Surrealism and other Influences" and two artists were highlighted. One was the Australian expatriate painter Colin Garland, who was credited with pioneering the sort of fanciful, meticulously executed Caribbean Surrealism that has been very successful in the upper echelons of the Jamaican and Haitian art markets, which may be the reason why Surrealism was foregrounded over other influences in this part of the essay.³¹ [Ill. 35] The other artist was the painter and sculptor Osmond Watson (no relation to Barrington Watson), whose Black Nationalist work was labeled as a hybrid of Cubism and Surrealism, to which he was exposed while studying in London. [Ill. 36] Finally, Boxer discussed what was headlined as "the Younger Generation within the Mainstream," younger artists who had emerged in the 1970s, most of them after studying abroad or as graduates of the Jamaica School of Art, which had started as an informal, part-time institution in 1950 but introduced full-time diploma programs in 1962. This group included the sculptors Winston Patrick and Christopher Gonzalez³² and the painters Milton George and Hope Brooks. [Ill. 36, 37] Their formally and conceptually innovative work more decisively departed from the nationalist tradition and announced directions that would become more dominant in the 1980s. Boxer would probably have situated his

³⁰ In Jamaica, marijuana is, among others, known as "ganja," a Hindi-derived word.

³¹ Garland taught at the Jamaica School of Art where the Haitian painter Bernard Sejourné was among his students in the late 1960s. Sejourné was an exponent of the so-called School of Beauty in Haitian art, which depicts Haitian women in a meticulous, elegantly mannerist style and has been very popular with the Haitian elite ("Baby Doc" Duvalier and his then wife Michelle included.)

³² This artist's surname is also spelled as "Gonzales."

own work here, had it been discussed in the essay.³³

The section on the 1960 and 70s ended with a long and enthusiastic discussion of the “Later Intuitives,” who were discussed in what seemed to be their order of appearance on the national scene from the late 1940s onwards, starting with Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds, Gaston Tabois, Sidney McLaren and Everal Brown, who were all clearly flagged as “masters,” and followed by several younger, less well-known names who are discussed in less detail. [III. 4, 12, 39, 40, 41, 10] As with Dunkley, Boxer made it a point to mention the support some of the artists had received from well-known international Primitive art enthusiasts such as José Gomez-Sicre, a Cuban émigré who was in charge of the art programs of the Organization of American States and during the 1970s acquired several Jamaican Intuitive works for the OAS collection, and the Haitian Primitive art promoter Selden Rodman, who, it was reported, had ranked Kapo “as a painter [...] probably equal to the late Hector Hypollite of Haiti” (24). Boxer also mentioned Kapo’s close association with Edward Seaga, who had been that artist’s most influential patron since the 1950s, and included personal recollections of Sidney McLaren that foreground his own friendly relationship with that artist. The Later Intuitives were informally divided into realist (Tabois and McLaren) or symbolist (Kapo and Brown). Some attention was paid to the religious background of the “symbolists” – Kapo was a Zion Revivalist while Brown was a religious Rastafarian – and Boxer mentioned the growing importance of Rastafari in Jamaican culture. Boxer rounded off the section on the “Later Intuitives” with mentioning his *Intuitive Eye* exhibition of 1979, as the landmark event that finally led to the naming and recognition of the Intuitives, and added a jab at what he called the

³³ Two of his paintings were, however, included in the exhibition, in a good example of the sort of overlap of functions that has been a regular source of controversy in Jamaica.

“conservative critics” (25) in Jamaica who had, in his view, failed to appreciate their cultural significance.

Boxer’s essay then concluded with a short section on “Art Schools, Associations and Galleries” in Jamaica, which includes the NGJ itself. The final paragraph somewhat deflated the confident assertions of cultural nationhood that were made at the start of the essay, by arguing that the process of national self-discovery was still ongoing and full of “contradictions and tensions” but ultimately concerned with forging links with the “wider community of man” (26).

To understand Boxer’s essay, we first need to consider why and in what context it was written. It was commissioned to serve as the main catalogue text for the like-named touring exhibition, *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, which was circulated in the USA, Canada and Haiti by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). While not the first overseas touring exhibition of Jamaican art, it was, and still is, the most ambitious and widely circulated such survey ever held. It came about after Vera Hyatt, a Jamaican who had been the Deputy Director at the NGJ since 1974, migrated to the USA in 1980 to take up a registrar position with SITES. The selection and logistics of the exhibition were jointly directed by Boxer and Hyatt and the whole project received significant support from the Jamaican embassy in the USA and its US counterpart in Jamaica (Smith-McCrae 1986, 1-2).

The SITES exhibition was thus one of those friendly cultural exchanges between nations and served as a promotional effort to give more visibility to Jamaican culture. Its timing related to the rapprochement between USA and Jamaica after Edward Seaga’s defeat of Michael Manley in the 1980 elections. The latter affected the NGJ in several

ways, ranging from the abrupt relocation from its original building to rumored plots to remove Boxer from his position. The high-profile exhibition and catalogue thus not only served to place the NGJ's narratives on record for the sake of scholarship, education and marketing but indirectly asserted the importance and achievements of the institution – and, with that, the Manleys' cultural legacy – in the national and international arena, in a way that would preclude political interference. The Manley-centeredness of the project was counterbalanced by its focus on the Intuitives, an interest Seaga shared with Boxer, which ensured that a workable sense of common cause was maintained.

The exhibition was mainly shown at community-based and university galleries as well as the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Museum of the Centre of Afro-American Artists in Boston, and the Inter-American Development Bank Gallery in Washington D.C., where it actually premiered in June 1983. It was generally well received in North America, where it attracted approximately 117,000 visitors (Smith-McCrea 1986, 2), and was reviewed in major newspapers such as the *Washington Post* (Forgery 1983) and the *New York Times* (Raynor 1984). The overseas reviews were almost unanimous in their praise of the Intuitives but several critics expressed reservations about what they saw as the Eurocentricity of the mainstream.³⁴ John Bentley Mays of the *Globe and Mail* of Toronto wrote: “The most intriguing paintings and sculptures here, however, are not the polished Euro-Jamaican descendents of [Edna Manley's] the *Beadseller*, but the home-spun, punchy pictures of the self-taught Intuitives” (Smith-McCrea 1986, 11).

While the project was supported by many, it was lambasted by some very prominent members of the local art community. Their objections were not so much about

³⁴ Excerpts from the reviews were compiled and published by the NGJ in the brochure *Jamaican Art 1922 – 1982 Returns* (Smith McCrea 1986)

its focus on Edna Manley – who was still alive at the time and probably too much of a venerable elder in the local art community to be publicly tackled – but about its perceived over-promotion of the Intuitives, who were represented with 27 out of 76 works and thus made up about 37 % of the exhibition (Smith-McCrea 1986, 2). Chief among the critics was Barrington Watson, who did not take kindly to the North American critical response and, no doubt, Boxer’s provocations of him in the catalogue essay. Watson found a willing spokesperson in Andrew Hope (a Polish expatriate whose birth name was Ignacy Eker), who was then the lead critic of the *Gleaner* newspaper.

A significant proportion of Hope’s reviews and columns of the 1980s was dedicated to questioning the NGJ’s promotion of the Intuitives, along with Boxer’s professional abilities and intentions.³⁵ The following excerpt from his bi-weekly *Gallery Guide* column, which commented on the 1986 Jamaican showing of *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, is typical and also shows how Hope pointedly refused to use the term Intuitive: “[T]he exhibition lacks a guiding intelligence and seems to have been thrown together with the objective of demonstrating that our Primitives are superior to those painters and sculptors who have received formal training and were ‘contaminated’ by European influences” (1986, 16). The controversy about *Jamaican Art 1922-82* and the Intuitives amounted to a full-fledged culture war, a struggle for control over the production of the dominant canons and narratives which erupted at a moment when the local art community was well aware of the NGJ’s political vulnerabilities.

Boxer’s essay fulfilled several purposes. One was, obviously, to contextualize the exhibition for its viewers and the “In Jamaica when we refer to Jamaican art ...” opening

³⁵ How this controversy panned out in the *Gleaner*, starting in the early 1980s and continuing until as late as 1990, is comprehensively documented in the NGJ’s newspaper scrapbook collection, with reviews, commentaries, published speeches and letters to the editor by most of major participants in this debate.

sentence suggests that Boxer addressed non-Jamaican audiences, not familiar with the basics of Jamaican culture and history. The exhibition was, however, deliberately toured to areas that had large Caribbean Diaspora populations and was also sent to Haiti before it was finally shown at the NGJ in 1986, so its audiences were not exclusively North American (Smith-McCrea 1986, 2). The long-term purpose of the catalogue was something the NGJ had thus far been unable to do on its own: namely to provide local readers with a well-illustrated survey text that recorded its emerging narrative on Jamaican art – overseas exhibitions of postcolonial art often serve such long-term purpose. By the late 1980s, the catalogue had sold out and the continued local demand for such a survey text led to it being republished in the coffee-table book *Modern Jamaican Art*, with only minor updates and corrections (Boxer & Poupeye 1998).³⁶

Boxer, a traditionally educated art historian with a 1974 Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University, wrote the history of Jamaican in the terms he had been trained to use. He gave full reign to his classificatory impulses and structured his story as a set of labeled trends and groups that were incorporated into a larger evolutionary framework that reflects the cultural logic of Jamaica's progression from colony to independent nation-state. His carefully periodized essay reflected a conscious effort at *creating* a national canon and a master narrative that ultimately, in the telling final sentence, inserted the "Jamaican school" into the artistic achievements of the "community of man," which is the strategy for the consecration of the national culture that has also characterized the development of the universal survey museum and its attendant narratives in the metropolitan West (Bennett 1995; Duncan 1995). Boxer thus asserted,

³⁶ The *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* catalogue was mainly sold in the USA and Jamaica. *Modern Jamaican Art*, which was mainly sold in Jamaica, is now also out of print.

by implication, that postcolonial Jamaica had a full-fledged art history of its own, on par and compatible with the grand narratives of the metropolitan West.

Boxer's focus was, also implicitly, on "high art" and the discussion of the Intuitives, in particular, was couched in a legitimizing language of exclusive connoisseurship which implied that its detractors were lacking the necessary insights. The exhibition itself was restricted to painting, sculpture and a few works on paper – the traditional "fine arts," much to the chagrin of some prominent local ceramists – and there were very few references in the essay of work in other media or the relationship of Jamaican fine art to a broader visual culture. A fair amount of general cultural and historical contextualization was provided but the race and class background of artists and their patrons was virtually absent from the discussion. Boxer's narrative on the Intuitives, for instance, paid disproportionate attention to its patrons and thus revealed that the Intuitives were more unilaterally dependent on patronage than their mainstream counterparts but this was not explicitly recognized or explained. The Intuitives are generally poor black Jamaicans, many of them of rural origin, while the "cognoscenti" who discover and support them are often white expatriates or light skinned elite Jamaicans. However, acknowledging the resulting race and class dynamics and the inevitable tensions and conflicts that surround these relationships would have disrupted the presented image of a diverse but essentially harmonious national culture.

The amount of space dedicated to pre-20th century art, most of it colonial, may at first seem contradictory to Boxer's nationalist project but this is, as Tony Bennett has argued, a characteristic part of national history narration in new nations:

In so far as they are "imagined communities" – ways of conceiving the occupants of a particular territory as essentially unified by an underlying

commonality of tradition and purpose – nations exists through, and represent themselves in the form of, long continuous narratives. [...] This process of stretching the national past so as to stitch it into a history rooted in deep time is particularly evident in the case of new nations where, however, it also gives rise to peculiar difficulties. In the case of settler societies which have achieved a newly autonomous post-colonial status, this process has to find some way of negotiating – or leaping over – their only too clearly identifiable and often multiple beginnings (1995, 148)

The negotiating strategy used by Boxer was twofold: namely to argue for the crucial absence of African-Jamaican art from before the 20th century, in spite of an otherwise rich Amerindian and colonial art history, and to insist on the essential Jamaicanness of Edna Manley's early work as the pioneering solution to that problem.

Boxer's toed a difficult line between his efforts to simultaneously establish the necessary autonomy of postcolonial Jamaican art *and* a legitimizing relationship with mainstream Western art history, and this is evident in his choice of vocabulary and cross-references and his insistence of a developmental taxonomy that conforms to the conventional Western art historical narratives. While he went through great lengths to introduce a few "Jamaican" terms and concepts, such as his own "Intuitives," his descriptive and analytical vocabulary is essentially that of modern Western art history and he made liberal use of labels such as "Cubist," "Symbolist" and "Abstract Expressionist." The discussion of the Intuitives, the exhibition's most contested component, relied heavily on references to prestigious outside endorsements that seem designed to counter local objections, mostly by ranking the artists on par with internationally recognized Primitives.

The self-conscious mannerism of Boxer's text is striking and suggests a desire to literally force it into canonical status. The essay includes statements such as "historians today date the beginning of the Jamaican Art Movement to the arrival in Jamaica [in

1922] of an especially gifted artist [Edna Manley]” (13), although the only “historian today” who then systematically used that date was Boxer himself, or “Sidney McLaren, affectionately called the ‘Grandpa Moses’ of Jamaican art” (23), although I have found no evidence of any generalized use of such a nickname (which, again, implies a comparative ranking in the international pantheon of Primitive art.) Likewise, labels such as “the Institute Group” and “the Intuitives” are presented as if these were well-established in Jamaica while they were in effect still very tentative and contested, perhaps in the hope that these labels would acquire greater credibility if endorsed in an international arena. While this “sleight of hand” proved relatively effective in shaping the critical reception of the exhibition in North America, where the terminology was mostly unconditionally accepted, it only added to the controversies in Jamaica. Problematic as it may be, Boxer’s essay is nonetheless a crucially important text and represents the culmination of what had previously been written on Jamaican art. It has been a point of departure, and a problem, for most of what has been written on the subject since then.

3. Early Definitions

The first systematic attempts at documenting a local cultural history had started with the founding of the IoJ in 1879, as a members society dedicated to the study and advancement of Jamaican history, culture and natural science. It was one of several such colonial cultural institutions to be established throughout the British Empire around that time.³⁷ The Englishman Frank Cundall was the IoJ’s Secretary and Librarian – effectively its Director – from 1891 to 1937.³⁸ In addition to developing its natural and

³⁷ In the Caribbean, the Royal Victoria Institute in Trinidad was another. It was established in 1892 and is now known as the National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago.

³⁸ Cundall was born in London in 1858. His date of death is uncertain but it seems to have been soon after his retirement from the Institute of Jamaica in 1937. Prior to his arrival in Jamaica in 1891, he had worked on several

cultural history collections and the West India Reference Library, Cundall was also a prolific researcher and writer on those subjects and virtually all IoJ publications during his period of tenure were authored by him. He is usually described as a historian but he had authored a book on 17th century Dutch landscape and genre painters that was published in 1891, so he appears to have had a background in art history.³⁹ Cundall's mission was clear: while the establishment of the IoJ implied an admission that there were things about Jamaican history, culture and the physical environment that were worth documenting and preserving, he had to demonstrate the civilizing effects of colonialism, especially the view that British colonial governance had been to the benefit of Jamaica, which was now equipped to progress as a modern outpost of the British Empire.

Cundall's many Jamaican publications included catalogues of the collections he was acquiring for the IoJ, such as its Portrait Gallery. This was accompanied by a detailed biographical guide to the historical figures portrayed, most of them English colonials who had played a role in Jamaica's history, which was first published in 1904 and updated in 1914. Despite Cundall's supposed art-historical background, his emphasis in compiling and documenting this collection was on historical rather than aesthetic value and only on what was deemed historically valuable from a colonial perspective. Many of the portraits in the Gallery were made outside of Jamaica and quite a few were copies or, even, mechanical reproductions.

Cundall's most ambitious publication was a regularly updated Jamaica settler

international exhibitions in England. He had, among others, been Chief Assistant Secretary to the Royal Commission of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1886 and wrote a book, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, on the subject. Cundall and the early Institute of Jamaica played a key role in the organization and accompanying publications of the Jamaica International Exhibition of 1891. (National Library of Jamaica, n.d.)

³⁹ Cundall's wife Frances was also active as a watercolorist in Jamaica around 1900, although watercolor painting was a common pastime for upper class ladies at that time.

handbook, which was remarkably similar to those that had been produced by planter-historians such as Edward Long (1774) a century and a half earlier.⁴⁰ These handbooks, which were published since 1891, addressed practical issues facing colonial settlers, such as climatologic, geological and agricultural information along with advice on how to stay healthy in the tropics and how to deal with wayward house staff. As the annual editions progressed, however, an increasingly significant part was dedicated to the cultural history of Jamaica, which Cundall was attempting to document.

The *Jamaica in 1918* edition included an annotated list of “engravings of Jamaican scenery” that had been acquired by the Institute. The notes focused on why, where and for whom those prints were made but, again, not on their aesthetic merit. *Jamaica in 1928* even had an illustrated chapter on the arts and crafts, the earliest published survey of Jamaican art history. This chapter focused mainly on pre-20th century colonial architecture and other colonial art forms but brief mention was made of Taino and African-Jamaican pottery and of traditional basketry. Cundall, however, glumly concluded that “artistic talent [was] lying almost dormant in the colony” (79) because of the lack of a supporting infrastructure and patronage and he presumably had the production of “high art” in mind. Cundall may not have contributed directly to any clear definition of Jamaican art but he collected and documented what are now considered as prime examples of colonial art in the island and contributed to the preservation of art-historical data that became the “raw materials” for Boxer’s overview

⁴⁰ The earliest edition seems to have been *Jamaica in 1891: A Handbook for Intending Settlers and Others* but this book is not available in local libraries. Other editions appeared in 1895, 1896, 1897, 1905, 1918 and 1928 and have been preserved in the National Library of Jamaica collection but additional editions may have been published during other years. This handbook is not to be confused with the *Jamaica Handbooks* which had been published annually by the Colonial Office since 1881 and only contained the “cut and dry” data that were more attractively and readably presented in the Institute’s handbooks. Cundall also took over publication of the latter in 1926.

of pre-20th century Jamaican art.⁴¹ He thus also helped to create the myth that there was no worthwhile art in Jamaica prior to the nationalist movement.

While Cundall was placing the colonial perspective on record, the poet and musician Astley Clerk was working on a manuscript titled *Art in Jamaica* (c1929-43), which was not completed or published, perhaps because it was too ambitious a project for its time.⁴² Clerk was a colored Jamaican who came from a similar background as the Manleys, although he was older and died at age 76 in 1944. He was fiercely nationalistic, to the point where he designed his own Jamaican flag and wrote his own national anthem, both well before Independence, and researched and self-published several items on Jamaican music and other aspects of the popular culture. (Jensen 2005, 68-70 & 84) In his manuscript and research notes, Clerk attempted to detail everything that could reasonably be construed as part of a Jamaican art history up to the 1930s, starting with the Amerindian legacy. Unencumbered by any distinctions between “fine art” and “craft”, his documentation includes furniture and curios and he makes a particular effort uncover evidence of African-Jamaican artistic traditions, especially those related to magic and religion. Much of the extensive photo-documentation accompanying the manuscript is of the early coconut and wood curio carvings of David Miller Sr and Jr (who had not yet produced their larger, more ambitious sculptures at that time), which he obviously regarded as evidence of African-Jamaican traditions. [Ill. 42]

Clerk’s chapter structure started with the Arawak (or Taino), followed by the

⁴¹ Primarily historical and archaeological scholarship on artefacts that could be defined as art has, of course, continued after Cundall. The *Jamaican Historical Review*, the journal of the Jamaica Historical Society, has made a significant contribution to this with several major articles. One such example is a 1948 research article on the Seville carvings by the amateur archaeologist Captain Charles Cotter, who had been part of the team that recovered the carvings in 1937. Another is Lesley Lewis’s *English Commemorative Sculpture in Jamaica*, which was published as a monograph in 1972 and is the most comprehensive publication on English neoclassical sculpture in Jamaica.

⁴² This manuscript and Clerk’s notes and press clippings on the subject were recently acquired by a private collector, who kindly provided me with access to these documents.

Spanish, African, Maroon, African-Jamaican, English and Jamaican. He had documented and completed sections of each chapter, except for the final part on Jamaican art and we therefore do not know how he would have defined and related it to the genealogy suggested by the other sections. His limited focus on the English legacy, compared to the planned sections on African, Maroon and African-Jamaican art, suggests that he found the African-Jamaican legacy most significant and had this research been completed and published, it would have provided an early challenge to the notion that there was no historical continuity in African-Jamaican art.

Clerk's manuscript was a sign of things to come and he actually got a Silver Musgrave Medal from the IoJ in 1937, for his contribution to cultural research. Under public pressure to change its policies, the IoJ also started to support modern Jamaican art with regular exhibitions and acquisitions, most of them of "fine art," although the publications that accompanied these were rudimentary. Most were simple brochures with just a catalogue list of the works in the exhibition. Only rarely did these contain an introduction or, even, biographical notes on the artists. One reason for this may simply be a lack of resources at the IoJ, especially since these early publications were produced during and shortly after the Second World War. Another, perhaps more important reason may be that the focus at the time was on encouraging and promoting the emerging nationalist school rather than, as yet, on documenting and analyzing.

Although it had become necessary to pay attention to definitions of Jamaican cultural identity and art, we mostly have to look elsewhere for such efforts. Among those were the press contributions of Norman and Edna Manley that were discussed in the introduction, although these set an agenda for future development – for what modern

Jamaican art should be and do – rather than to attempt to define or narrate what had already been done (Manley E. 1934; Manley N. 1971a). It is significant that they construed this agenda as one that had to address a critical absence, of the genuine Jamaican or, specifically, black Jamaican art. In the words of Krista Thompson, “by emphasizing the problem of black representational absence, artists like Manley could legitimate the significance, indeed the necessity, of their roles in the nationalist movement” (2004, 28), a role which was ultimately consecrated in David Boxer’s *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* essay.

There was one notable exception to the lack of analytical content of the early IoJ exhibition catalogues: the catalogue of the 1945 *Exhibition of West Indian Paintings*, the first regional exhibition of modern art in the Anglophone Caribbean (and it was quite common at the time to conflate “art” with “painting,” although this excluded already prominent artists such as Edna Manley.) The exhibition was organized as a joint project between the IoJ, the Trinidad Arts Society, which had been founded as a nationalist artists’ organization in 1943, and the British Council, which had become an active player in the funding and promotion of modern art throughout the West Indies and probably arranged the regional transactions. In addition to Jamaica and Trinidad, it also included work from Guyana (then still British Guiana), Barbados and St Lucia. The exhibition was slated to travel to Canada afterwards but it is not clear whether that actually happened.

The stylistic and iconographic similarity of the paintings from the different territories is striking, although these works were produced by artists who were at that time not in regular contact with each other. This illustrates that what happened in Jamaica was part of broader regional and even global developments – the end of European

colonialism, the global surge of nationalism, and the rise of Modernism – and that those cultural and political circumstances tended to lead to comparable artistic results, all the more when they took place in a geographically and historically related areas. That this exhibition was organized at that time also reflects the push for regionalization that accompanied the British policy shift towards colonial self-government in the West Indies and later resulted in the short-lived West Indies Federation.⁴³

The modest catalogue included an introduction by George Wingfield Digby, an English expatriate who later became Keeper of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum – another of the “enlightened” emissaries of the British Empire who helped to shape modern Jamaican art. While Wingfield Digby had been actively involved in the local art scene, there were Jamaican or other Caribbean intellectuals who were also well qualified to write this introduction but clearly it was deemed desirable to have an endorsement from a “cultured” colonial. The first part of Wingfield Digby’s essay was in essence a lesson in art appreciation which focused on how the formal aspects of painting should be analyzed. The assumption was thus still that local audiences needed to be educated about “art” before they could appreciate products of their nationalist schools, although this sat uneasily with the notion that these emanated from “the people.”

In the second part of his essay, Wingfield Digby ventured a definition of modern Jamaican painting.⁴⁴ He first observed, seemingly redundantly, that modern Jamaican painting usually represents Jamaican subjects but added that these are “seen

⁴³ Full adult suffrage was granted to Jamaicans in 1944, the first major step towards self-government and independence. The West Indies were originally slated to become independent as the West Indies Federation. This Federation, while not yet fully independent from England, functioned from 1958 to 1962. It was disbanded after Jamaica had seceded following its 1961 referendum on the subject, followed shortly thereafter by Trinidad. Both opted to become independent on their own in 1962. Norman Manley was one of the leading proponents of the Federation and his political career in essence ended with it.

⁴⁴ That he had nothing to say on the work from the other territories may stem from the fact that he was simply not familiar with other West Indian art, perhaps also because the works in the exhibition had not yet arrived in Jamaica at the time the catalogue had to go to press.

uncompromisingly through Jamaican eyes” (5), which he detected particularly in the bold, sometimes even crude treatment of tropical color and light. He also argued that the “Jamaican school” was characterized by a certain sobriety and restraint and repeatedly used the word “virility” to summarize its characteristics, which he contrasted with the, supposedly compromised and effete, “North Coast” paintings that were sold to tourists (6-7) – one the first times the “real” Jamaican art was juxtaposed to tourist art.⁴⁵ Wingfield Digby made no mention of the political context of modern Jamaican art although that might not have been politic in an exhibition sponsored by a colonial organization such as the British Council.

The term virility had also been used by Edna Manley, when she lamented the absence of this quality in local art production in 1934, and Norman Manley had later attributed the sudden emergence of nationalist art to the efforts of “our best young men” (1971b, 111). The notion of cultural virility seems to have part of the debates of the 1930s and 1940s and reminds of Belinda Edmondson’s argument that the Caribbean nationalist project had been primarily concerned with “making men” (1999), in a way that uncritically associated masculinity with maturity, autonomy and personhood and, by implication, femininity with dependence and passivity.

A small number of early publications on modern Jamaican art originated outside of the IoJ. One was *Jamaica Palette* (1955) by John Wood, an English (amateur?) artist who lived in Jamaica during World War II and was then in touch with many of the emerging artists in the island. This self-published book, which was illustrated with Wood’s Jamaican paintings, told the story of his years in the island and his attempts at finding the most effective way to paint its people and physical environment. While his

⁴⁵ Tourism has always been concentrated on the island’s north coast, hence the name.

often rather awkward paintings look as if they could have been made by a member of the “Institute Group,” and have at times been mistaken as such, the book’s irritatingly patronizing and at times decidedly racist prose illustrates that colonial attitudes towards Jamaica and Jamaicans were persistent, even when recast in a more benevolent, liberal vein. [Ill. 43]

Wood’s book contained a short chapter on Jamaican art, essentially an informal, descriptive enumeration of the documented artists of the early 1940s. Wood did, however, make a few noteworthy claims and while most of these are debatable, they were among the first dissenting critical statements on modern Jamaican art. His opening sentence contended that “[o]ne looks in vain for signs of a Primitive (say African) art amongst Jamaica’s modern people” (131). While this was partially in line with the conventional claims of a lack of cultural continuity, Wood also insisted that modern Jamaicans were not interested in their African roots, which ignored cultural and political developments he had surely encountered, such as Garveyism and early Rastafari.

Wood added, with more credibility, that modern Jamaican art derived from the application of European models to Jamaican subject matter, a situation he had deplored earlier on in a 1940 *Gleaner* article, in which he had encouraged Jamaican artists to use their African heritage as a source instead. Remarkably, however, Wood described John Dunkley’s work as “abstract and ‘Modernist’” (1955, 132) rather than as Primitive. While there is no sound reason to describe Dunkley’s visionary landscapes and figure paintings as abstract, his posthumous classification as an Intuitive has indeed obscured the Modernist, Art Deco quality of many of his compositions. This well illustrates that the placement of artists in the categories articulated by the NGJ is to some extent arbitrary

and often based on issues that are extraneous to the work itself, such as the class background of the artist. The fact is that most artists active in Jamaica during the 1930s and 1940s were initially self-taught and, while he was not a part of the “Institute Group,” Dunkley could certainly have been discussed among “the Independents” in Boxer’s essay, which includes another visionary painter, Carl Abrahams, be it one who came from an upper-middle class background. Wood also claimed, again with some justification, that young Jamaican artists received too much unqualified encouragement and would have been better served by a more critical environment (133).

The professionalization of art writing within Jamaica came after Independence. Increased access to advanced studies abroad or at the new University of the West Indies (UWI) and changing attitudes towards popular culture produced a growing corps of locally born cultural scholars and art writers.⁴⁶ The theatre and art critic (and later diplomat) Norman Rae was the first locally born writer to start producing serious and incisive criticism in the early 1960s, most of which was published in the *Gleaner*. He also wrote a short essay on Jamaican art for *Ian Fleming Introduces Jamaica* (1965), an upscale guidebook that was aimed at the “informed reader” with essays by Fleming, who wrote the introduction, and local specialists, all drawn from the elite, on the various subjects covered.⁴⁷ While Rae was primarily concerned with sketching the artistic landscape of the 1960s – from the “avant-garde” members of the Contemporary Jamaican Artists Association to emerging Primitives such as Kapo – he ventured an indirect definition. Emphasizing, like his predecessors, that modern Jamaican art was primarily

⁴⁶ The University of the West Indies began at Mona, Jamaica, in 1948 as a College of the University of London. It obtained full university status in 1962. The St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad was added in 1961 and in 1963, a third campus was established at Cave Hill in Barbados. The University is the main university in the Anglophone Caribbean and an important regional institution.

⁴⁷ Fleming died before the book was published. It was edited by the local journalist and satirist Morris Cargill, a white Jamaican.

about finding an authentic and legitimate artistic voice, he wrote:

Jamaican painters generally do not aim at the titillatingly decorative 'native' object or art/craft, the stylish decorations designed for the tourist market that one finds proliferating in many other Caribbean and tropical countries. The ever-present determination not to let the glittering island vistas lead them astray makes them avoid this. (169-170)

Rae's argument that avoiding seduction by the "Technicolor beauty" of the island was the main challenge facing local artists was not new, as we saw in George Wingfield Digby's 1945 essay, but never before had it been made in such radical terms in what was, furthermore, a primarily tourist-oriented publication. This well illustrates the uncomfortable manner in which the development of modern Jamaican art and culture related to the country's growing economic dependence on tourism.

This concern with juxtaposing the "real" Jamaican art with tourist art became less acute in the late 1960s and 1970s, which may be a reflection of the increased self-confidence of the Jamaican cultural movement and the advances in cultural research although definitions remained essentially reactive, always arguing that modern Jamaican art evolved *in reaction to* those forces that have attempted to deny the island its own cultural identity. This shift was evident in *The Arts of an Island* (1970) by Ivy Baxter, the first full-length book on the arts of Jamaica, which barely mentioned tourism. Baxter was a Jamaican cultural researcher who had been attached to the University of Florida in Gainesville, probably as a graduate student. She was also a dancer and choreographer and the founder in 1950 of Jamaica's first modern dance troupe, the *Ivy Baxter Creative Dance Group*, which sought to combine classical ballet with traditional Jamaican cultural forms. As a black Jamaican, she came from a more modest social background than any of the previous cited writers, which reflects the social broadening of the involvement in

cultural scholarship and patronage in the post-Independence era.

Baxter stated in her introduction that she wanted to integrate the study of the visual and performing arts of Jamaica into a larger historical, sociological and cultural discussion. Although her first-hand documentation of popular culture and efforts at historicizing and contextualizing Jamaican art history represented a pioneering effort, the fragmentary, sketchy narrative she actually presented was descriptive rather than analytical, riddled with minor factual errors and, furthermore, almost exclusively concerned with the performing arts. There was one short chapter on the visual arts (chapter 18, 232-244), which comprised an anecdotic overview of developments from the Taino (Arawak) until the 1960s. She also paid some attention to the development of the local cultural infrastructure, including the emergence of commercial art galleries in the 1950s and 1960s. Like the rest of the book, this chapter was, regrettably, not illustrated. The promised attempt at an integrated discussion had to wait until her final chapter, where she argued, be it in only general terms, that the arts of Jamaica represent a gradual emergence of a viable, modern cultural identity, shaped by the people's responses and survival strategies in the face of a troubled and diverse history – the nation-building process for which the early cultural nationalists were clamoring.

Although the anti-colonialists had challenged well-established colonial views of Jamaican culture, there is not much evidence about how these early definitions and narratives on Jamaican art were received. The examples I have discussed reflect diverse opinions and there must have been conflict and dissent, if only because pro-colonial sentiments and interest groups did not magically disappear in the late 1930s, but these are drowned out in the written record by the urgent calls for national artistic development. It

is only in the 1960s that signs of a polarization of opinion about the actual and desired nature of Jamaican art began to appear. As was discussed in the introduction, the political radicalization of that era led to accusations of elitism against the nationalist mainstream, in periodicals such as *Abeng* (1969) while the internationalist Contemporary Jamaican Artist Association sought to challenge the dogmas of cultural nationalism. But even then, there seems to have been a sense of common cause among those involved with art in Jamaica, with none of the deep acrimony that characterizes the local art world today.

4. Building Blocks of a Narrative

The opening of the NGJ in 1974, as a semi-autonomous division of the IoJ, represents the most important turning point in the development of the literature on Jamaican art and the NGJ quickly became the main publisher on the subject, most of it in the form of exhibition catalogues. With few exceptions, these catalogues are modestly produced and locally printed with black and white illustrations only and they are not always well edited. As a body of work, however, they are an invaluable resource on Jamaican art that also documents how the institution, its research and exhibition programs and its narratives have evolved. Since there was not enough space at Devon House to have a permanent exhibition, the NGJ's narrative was initially articulated through its temporary exhibitions program, a process that started systematically when David Boxer joined as Director/Curator in 1975.⁴⁸ The exhibitions and publications leading up to *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* are thus best understood as building blocks of the NGJ's emerging narrative.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Prior to Boxer's recruitment, the NGJ had an administrator at the helm and decisions about exhibitions and acquisitions were made by a subcommittee of the Board of Directors.

⁴⁹ The NGJ typically had about 5 to 6 exhibitions per year, 1 or 2 of which are touring exhibitions that originate overseas. The exhibitions I have chosen to discuss here thus represent only a sampling of the total offerings but were among the most influential ones. The frequency of exhibitions is now reduced to an average of 4 per year, although exhibitions have typically become larger and more ambitious.

The 1974 articles of association of the NGJ had specifically mandated the institution to exhibit and collect the Jamaican art that came out of the nationalist uprising of 1938, the date which had been marked as the official beginning of the Jamaican Independence movement. This definition posed several problems: it failed to provide modern Jamaican art with any deep, indigenous historical groundedness; it did not accommodate any art that was not nationalist; and, in a specific problem for those who wished to place Edna Manley at the center of modern Jamaican art, it did not account for the fact that her most groundbreaking and compelling works were created *before* 1938. This definition was soon challenged by Boxer in his first major exhibition *Five Centuries of Art in Jamaica* (1976), which was also the NGJ's first survey exhibition.

Five Centuries sought to provide “an opportunity to study contemporary Jamaican art against the varied background of past art produced in Jamaica or under Jamaican patronage” (Boxer 1976b, 1). Boxer thus added colonial art to the narrative of Jamaican art, starting with the *Seville Carvings*. He had intended but was, as he explained in the catalogue, unable to also include the pre-Columbian era because of the lack of significant artifacts in Jamaican collections at that time.⁵⁰ One year earlier, in the catalogue of the *Ten Jamaican Sculptors* catalogue, for an exhibition which had been organized with the Commonwealth Institute, Boxer had argued that Jamaican art history “would hardly begin with the first Jamaicans, the Arawaks, for they contributed little to the Jamaica we know today” (1975). By the time of *Five Centuries*, he was already less dismissive of the Taino and, at least in principle, willing to incorporate them into a longer, developmental view Jamaican art history. About this long-term view he wrote:

⁵⁰ A token loan request was made to the British Museum, who instead sent plaster casts of its main Taino carvings. There has been some discussion in Jamaica recently that the repatriation of the Jamaican items in their collection should be requested.

What is here we believe can admirably demonstrate the richness of our past, and can provide a suitable context within which we can view that segment of the exhibition – *The Twentieth Century* [...] which will perhaps be most meaningful to the majority of our visitors. Through the works in this exhibition too we will be able to trace our country's development – our history as a people. [It is] a road which many of us will travel with pride, with anger and with laughter (1b).

Using Tony Bennett's words, Boxer thus sought to “wrench those artefacts from the histories to which they were earlier connected – those of Empire, for example – and thus to back-project the national past beyond the point of its effective continuity” (1995, 148). However, because of the way it was presented, as a continuous, century-by-century development and with no mention of any popular art forms until the 20th century, *Five Centuries* could be read as a validation of colonial artistic standards. It was therefore not entirely successful in “leaping over” Jamaica's troubling national beginnings – despite the admission that visitors would find the 20th century segment more compelling – but this was attended to in the course of a longer articulation process.

Interestingly, these efforts to articulate a long-term national art history were not limited to “fine art” in its narrow sense. *Five Centuries*, for instance, included 19th century photography, 20th century ceramic works by Cecil Baugh, the pioneering modern ceramist in Jamaica, and Art Deco furniture by the pioneering Modernist furniture designer Burnett Webster. Since the NGJ has been fairly consistent over the years with the inclusion of these art forms in its exhibitions and collections, this suggests that the exclusive focus on painting and sculpture of *Jamaican Art in 1922-1982* was a matter of expediency, for the sake of a manageable and cohesive touring exhibition. The very selective inclusion of these art forms in *Five Centuries* should not be read as a departure

from the NGJ's "high art" bias, however, since the examples used had aesthetic and cultural characteristics that allowed them to be regarded as fine arts.

While he sought to incorporate the past, Boxer never abandoned the definition of Jamaican art in the true sense as a product of modern anti-colonialism but he had to address that question in a way that would account for the existence of modern Jamaican work with nationalist overtones that predated 1938. This was done with *The Formative Years: Art in Jamaica 1922-1940* exhibition in 1978. It was the first NGJ exhibition and publication in which the year 1922 was used as the starting date of modern Jamaican art, although no justification was as yet provided in that catalogue for the choice of this date, except for that the two earliest works in the exhibition, two Edna Manley sculptures, were from 1922. By documenting the nationalist, Modernist work that was produced between 1922 and 1940 by Edna Manley, Alvin Marriott, Albert Huie, Carl Abrahams, Burnett Webster, the photographers Dennis Gick and Roger Mais, and the painter Koren der Harootian, an Armenian refugee who was influential as an art teacher in the late 1930s⁵¹, the exhibition and catalogue effectively diffused the previous focus on 1938 as the starting date of modern Jamaican art. [Ill. 44] In *The Formative Years*, Boxer also refined his position on pre-20th century art, which he more explicitly subordinated to modern Jamaican art. While he acknowledges the contribution of colonial artists "to an interesting and even significant history of art", he adds that:

There is no painter, there is no sculptor from this period we can point to and say: 'This is a Jamaican artist; this is someone painting Jamaica and her people through Jamaican eyes'. Indeed, the true Jamaican artist is a product of the 20th century. (1)

⁵¹ Koren der Harootian's name is also spelled as Khoren der Harootian or Khoren Harootian.

The Formative Years also included work by John Dunkley and David Miller Sr and Jr, three self-taught artists, which required some chronological gymnastics with the estimated dates for undated works, since they had produced few significant and dated works before 1940 but Boxer was determined, from early on, to include them in the national canon. Although this was not elaborated on, he actually used the term *Intuitive* for the first time to describe these artists in the catalogue (1978, 1).

One last crucial addition to the NGJ's emerging narrative came in 1979, with the *Intuitive Eye* exhibition, which gave respectability to the work of the self-taught popular artists by assertively naming them "Intuitives," rather than Primitives, and by attributing to their work the cultural authenticity and legitimacy for which the entire Jamaican art movement had been searching (Boxer & Nettleford 1979; Boxer 1989). Key to this claim is the notion that these artists have evolved independent from Western cultural norms, another example of the autonomy versus dependency dilemmas that pervade Jamaica's modern cultural history.

These exhibitions and the NGJ's emerging art-historical narrative were almost exclusively the work of David Boxer, who was the sole Curator at the NGJ until 1980, when the Assistant Curator position was established.⁵² While Boxer's early exhibitions reflected certain political and personal interests, we should not overlook that they challenged then-dominant understandings of Jamaican art and culture. In spite of this, the NGJ's early exhibitions were generally well-received locally, by the public and by reviewers, who all seemed relatively supportive of the new institution's pioneering efforts. The first signs of serious dissent appeared in the critical reception of the *Intuitive*

⁵² There is since the late 1990s also a senior curator position but this and the assistant curator position have recently been unfilled and the NGJ, at the time of writing, only has one in-house curator, the Chief Curator, a position still occupied by Boxer. Some exhibitions, such as the biennial *Curator's Eye* series which was initiated in early 2004 are, however, guest-curated, which adds to the range of curatorial voices.

Eye exhibition, which more fundamentally challenged the established hierarchies of Jamaican art and started the debate that erupted full-fledged with the controversy about the SITES exhibition.

5. The Expository Years

As he acknowledged in a recent article, Boxer felt that his initial task of establishing a “baseline narrative” had been accomplished with *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* and he has actually called what followed the “expository years” (Boxer & Poupeye 2001). Since the mid 1980s, the NGJ has indeed mainly presented exhibitions and publications that deepened or updated its narrative rather than to adjust or challenge it in any substantive manner. The prime example of that is *Edna Manley: A Retrospective* (1990), the NGJ’s largest exhibition and most elaborate retrospective to date and Boxer’s ultimate tribute to the artist he had already placed at the strategic center of his Jamaican art narrative.⁵³

While a modest catalogue was also produced, the main accompanying publication was a full-length monograph titled *Edna Manley: Sculptor* (1990), which was published as a glossy, color-illustrated coffee-table book in conjunction with the Edna Manley Foundation, a new foundation which had been established to preserve her legacy. It was the first full-length, hard-cover book ever published through the NGJ. While this monograph is undeniably the most thoroughly researched and documented publication on any Jamaican artist to date and therefore a valuable document, the tenor of Boxer’s essay is, predictably, hagiographic rather than critical. Other publications related to NGJ retrospectives, such as Rosalie Smith-McCrea’s *Eugene Hyde: A Retrospective* (1984), have, in comparison, provided more balanced and critical perspectives but are not as

⁵³ Edna Manley had died in 1987. The Edna Manley retrospective was held the year after Michael Manley came back to power in 1989.

elaborate and have not received the same exposure as the Edna Manley monograph.

The only notable adjustment to the canon that was being created by the NGJ's came in the 1990s, in response to new and highly polarizing developments in the local art production and its markets. A new generation emerged of younger, contemporary artists, many of them trained abroad and some living outside of the island. These artists engaged critically with social and political issues relevant to Jamaican society. In the process, many moved away from the conventional, saleable art object and produced works in new media and formats such as installation and video. At the same time, a vigorous but increasingly narrow-focused local art market had developed, which supported primarily the work of the nationalist school and its routinized offshoots. While this reinforced the status of the conventional art object, the heavy commodification of conventional Jamaican art also undermined its "high art" credentials.

The NGJ enthusiastically opened its doors to the new contemporary art and actively intervened to promote its development. This reorientation had started with *Six Options: Gallery Spaces Transformed* (1985), the first exhibition of installation art in Jamaica, which was organized in a specific effort to stimulate the use of new media and forms in Jamaica.⁵⁴ The largest and most ambitious work in this exhibition was the installation *Headpiece: The Riefenstahl Requiem* by David Boxer, who rose to prominence as one of the most influential contemporary artists and controversially so because of the NGJ's role in this process. [Ill. 6] Several other exhibitions of contemporary art were organized, such as *Aspects III: Eight Jamaican Avant-Garde Artists* (1991), which I curated, and *Black as Colour* (1997), which explored the aesthetic

⁵⁴ This exhibition was curated by Rosalie Smith-McCrea, the Gallery's first Assistant Curator. Six artists were invited to create installations and were given a space, a small budget and the freedom to do as they wished. They were: David Boxer, Dawn Scott, Laura Facey and Colin Garland, as well as the African-American artists Joyce Scott and Sam Gilliam.

and political significance of the color black in contemporary Jamaican art. Both included Boxer's work although he was also the curator of the latter. In addition, contemporary Jamaican art was in increasing demand for overseas exhibitions and biennales and, while the NGJ did not always have control over what was selected, it was invariably held responsible for the selections and, more so, for the frequent inclusion of Boxer.

The NGJ in many ways helped to create the burgeoning art market, among others, through its very successful fundraising auctions in the late 1980s and 1990s, but the institution has maintained an ambivalent relationship with the commercialization of Jamaican art. Although the NGJ continued to represent the eclectic array of art and artists it had thus far included in its recurrent exhibitions and acquisitions, its rejection of the most commercially successful art forms gave credence to the view that its promotion of contemporary art came at the expense of the more conventional Jamaican art. Commercial success, however, became an alternate means of consecration and this resulted in a new, still ongoing "canon war."

While these developments repositioned the NGJ vis-à-vis the local art market, the artists and, once again, upper-middle class taste, they did not give rise to any revision of the basic narrative recorded in *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*. This is well illustrated by the fact that the NGJ permanent exhibition has in essence remained unchanged since 1983, when it was first put in place, and only includes two examples of the new contemporary art, in the form of installations by Dawn Scott and David Boxer, both from *Six Options* in from 1985. [Ill. 45] Likewise, Boxer's SITES essay was, except for some minor corrections, re-used "as is" in *Modern Jamaican Art* (1998), which was published by the Kingston-based Ian Randle Publishers and the University of the West Indies

Development and Endowment Fund. I was asked to contribute an essay on developments in Jamaican art since 1982, which suggests a view that the core narrative did not need to be substantially revised but merely extended into the present – a modular conception of Jamaican art history, to which contemporary art could simply be added.

The manner in which the *Modern Jamaican Art* book was handled is typical of how the NGJ has responded to its critics. In a somewhat feeble effort to make the process transparent and democratic, a committee was appointed but predictably consisted of David Boxer, Hope Brooks (then the dean of Visual Arts at the EMC), Glynne Manley (Michael Manley's last wife and the then Executive Director of the UWI Development and Endowment Fund) and myself, to select the artists who would be featured in the plates section of the book. The decision of which eighty-two artists to feature in the book was easily made – and the Intuitives and contemporary artists were well represented, while several commercially successful artists were left out – but more time was spent deciding how many illustrations each selected artist would get, ranging from six for Edna Manley, whose work also opened the plates section, to one for most of the other artists.⁵⁵ A few others were also marked as particularly important, such as Dunkley, Kapo and Osmond Watson, and got four illustrations each, while Barrington Watson and Albert Huie got three, the same number as Boxer. These numbers and the manner in which the plates were arranged and juxtaposed created a strong sense of hierarchy and this implied ranking contributed as much to the mixed reviews this book received in Jamaica as the choice of artists itself. To the NGJ's critics, *Modern Jamaican Art* represented the culmination of all the concerns that had ever been voiced about the institution, including

⁵⁵ One of the selected artists, the by then elderly Carl Abrahams, declined to give permission to reproduce his work in the book, so only 81 artists ultimately had illustrations.

Boxer's handling of his own work, and while there was only one negative review (Paul 1998b), it generated a lot of private discontent.

The local reception of my *Caribbean Art*, which appeared that same year, also revolved around who was and who wasn't "in the book" and the implications this had for artists' local and international standing. Although I was not on the staff of the NGJ at that time and presented what I considered to be an independent, more socially contextualized perspective, my book was seen by my critics as the Caribbean counterpart of *Modern Jamaican Art* and the incarnation of "the National Gallery line" (e.g. Paul 1999b).

While the NGJ has, to date, held on to the core narrative of *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* but there have been three noteworthy recent modifications, each of which involved extending the scope of Jamaican art history to before the 20th century. Chief among these was the consecration of the painter and printmaker Isaac Mendes Belisario (1794/95-1849), as the first Jamaica-born artist on record.⁵⁶ [Ill. 17, 46] The other two are: the recognition of 19th century Jamaican photography and the admission that African-Jamaican art forms in actuality existed before the 20th century. [Ill. 47] These changes came about in the last ten years and stem from shifts in Boxer's own research interests – a publication on early Jamaican photography is forth-coming and was co-authored with the Jamaica-born English art critic Edward Lucie-Smith⁵⁷ – and an increased focus on the 19th century in the cultural scholarship on Jamaica, especially around the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British territories.

The interest in Belisario had started in Jamaica, with research initiated in the late

⁵⁶ There is, in fact, another contender: the naturalist, anti-slavery activist, politician and magistrate Richard Hill, who was also born in the island in 1795 and belonged to the "free coloured" class. Hill, whose English father had been a miniature painter, produced illustrations of the local flora and fauna that have artistic merit, even though art was not his primary activity. (Cundall 1920; Waugh 1987, 36)

⁵⁷ Lucie-Smith's father was Assistant Colonial Secretary in Jamaica and his family has roots in Barbados and Jamaica that date from the 17th century.

1990s by local book publisher Valerie Facey of the Mill Press, a member of a wealthy and powerful Jamaican family with roots in the plantocracy. The most powerful endorsement however came from outside of Jamaica, in the exhibition *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds* (2007) which was held at the Yale Centre for British Art to mark the above-mentioned bicentenary and which was accompanied by a substantial exhibition catalogue. The Yale exhibition had emphasized the historical and cultural context of Belisario rather than his own artistic merit but this was reversed in the Jamaican version of exhibition, *Isaac Mendes Belisario: Art and Emancipation in Jamaica* (2008), which was curated by Boxer and shown at the NGJ, and repositioned Belisario as the first Jamaican master.⁵⁸

Belisario is best known for his *Sketches of Character: In Illustration of the Habits, Occupation and Costume of the Negro Population, in the Island of Jamaica*, a series of hand-colored lithographs on the customs and mores of the black population which was published in installments 1837 and 1838 (although only twelve of the originally intended forty-eight plates were actually published). The *Sketches of Character* are the earliest and main visual source on Jonkonnu, a creolized Christmastime masquerade of the black population which has survived to the present day. He also painted a series of six landscapes of the Jamaican estates of the Marquis of Sligo, who was the Governor of Jamaica around Emancipation. [Ill. 48]

The repositioning of Belisario as the “father” of Jamaican art poses a challenge to Edna Manley’s supremacy and earlier claims that true Jamaican art is a product of the 20th century but it is significant that his work is situated in the context of Emancipation, since this historical moment has been recognized, recently, as the enabling moment

⁵⁸ David Boxer now routinely calls Belisario the “first Jamaican master” (personal communication, July 5, 2008).

leading up to modern Jamaican nationhood (Dacres 2004b; Poupeye 2004b). Belisario's consecration is thus in actuality consistent with the general logic of the NGJ's core narratives. It is worth noting that he was Sephardic and that the Jewish community in Jamaica did not have full civil rights until 1831, which may have given him a sense of common cause with the Emancipation project (Snyder 2007). Belisario's work also suits the nationalist agenda because it documented and valorized the African-Jamaican popular culture, especially Jonkonnu, which had already in the 1950s been consecrated as a central part of the Jamaican cultural heritage as a potential equivalent to Trinidad Carnival (Bettelheim 1988, 43).

The other two modifications to the NGJ's core narrative – the recognition of 19th century photography and Plantation-era African-Jamaican art – are part of the same art-historical reclamation project. The Belisario exhibitions at Yale and NGJ each included a woodcarving that was attributed to the African-Jamaican population and may date from before or around Emancipation, which sought to substantiate that such art forms effectively existed. The recognition of 19th century photography hinged on the canonization of the French immigrant lithographer and photographer Adolphe Duperly, who had printed Belisario's *Sketches of Character*, as the pioneer of photography in the island. Duperly's work was the subject of a 2001 exhibition at the NGJ, which consecrated him as the artist who introduced the modern media of lithography and photography into the island – he started producing daguerreotypes in the mid 1840s and established Jamaica's first photographic firm – and whose documentation of the Jamaican people and environment, like Belisario, paved the way for the iconography of the 20th century nationalist movement. [Ill. 49]

6. Counter-Narratives and Critiques

It has been very difficult for other writers and curators to articulate credible alternatives to the narrative presented in *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, which, after all, has a strong empirical basis, despite its problematic interpretive frame. This was evident in the book *Jamaican Art* (1990) by Petrine Archer-Straw, a Jamaican art historian who had worked in the NGJ's education department, and Kim Robinson, a publications editor and literary scholar, which was published locally by the now defunct Kingston Publishers.⁵⁹ While this book benefited from Archer-Straw's M.Phil. research at the UWI on Jamaican cultural nationalism, which brought into focus the race and class background of its proponents, it in essence reproduced the narrative presented in *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*, down to the separation of the Intuitives from the mainstream.⁶⁰ In a clear indication that it was modeled after the NGJ's exhibition catalogues, the book has an appendix with fifty artist's résumés (this format, which is more common in exhibition catalogues than in art-historical surveys, was later also used in the NGJ's own *Modern Jamaican Art*). It, however, also bears the traces of the representational battles that had been triggered by the SITES exhibition. This is most obvious in its final chapter, *New Directions*, which was added shortly before it went to press. Given the title, one would expect to read about recent developments but instead it features a hodgepodge of already well-established artists who had been left out of the other chapters, including a sampling of the increasingly militant ceramists (the book had been in production since 1984, so there was

⁵⁹ The book was in 1998 re-issued, without revisions, by LMH Publishers which is owned by Mike Henry, the prominent J.L.P. politician who had also been the owner of Kingston Publishers. The new cover emphatically stated that it included Carl Abrahams, as the "father of Jamaican art," an obvious reference to that artist's omission from *Modern Jamaican Art*. A revised edition is in publication for late 2010.

⁶⁰ Petrine Archer-Straw is an English-born art historian of Jamaican parentage. Her M. Phil. degree in History was completed at the University of the West Indies in 1986. She subsequently embarked on doctoral studies in art history at the University of London's Courtauld Institute, where she finished in 1995. Her doctoral dissertation was later published as *Negrophilia: Avant Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (2000).

ample time for previously omitted artists to complain).⁶¹

This difficulty to move beyond *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* was also obvious in the overseas survey exhibitions of Jamaican art. One such was *Three Moments of Art in Jamaica* (1997) at the Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington D.C. whose curator, Felix Angel, boldly announced in the catalogue essay that he wished to present an alternative, consciously “outsider” perspective on Jamaican art (6) but then proceeded to replicate the essential structure of Boxer’s narrative, which is organized around the same three historical moments that were highlighted in Angel’s exhibition: the Plantation era, the anti-colonial movement of the 1930s and 1940s, and the immediate post-Independence years. His unacknowledged dependence on this model – and his failure to conduct in-depth research that would have allowed him to go beyond – was most obvious in his treatment of the post-Independence years, particularly his decision to represent the significant and diverse developments that took place since 1962 as a single “moment,” an approach that had some validity in 1982 but could not be credibly maintained in 1997.

The Jamaican academy has long had a hands-off attitude towards visual art, which is treated as if it belongs in its own specialized domain.⁶² However, there have lately been a few efforts at critical interrogation of the Caribbean art narratives, some of which have originated within the new cultural studies programs at the UWI and other tertiary institutions within the region although most have come from Caribbean Studies scholars in the North American and European academy. This urgent task requires thoughtful and

⁶¹ A new, more substantially revised edition was in press at the time this dissertation was completed.

⁶² At the UWI Mona campus, art instruction is only occasionally available as an extracurricular activity at the Sir Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts and no art history or criticism courses are offered. Students in history and the new programs in heritage and cultural studies at Mona occasionally produce papers and theses relevant to visual art but there is a sense that the academic study of the visual and performing arts is the domain of the EMC and the NGJ. UWI students can actually take credits at the EMC.

well-informed engagement with the issues at hand but the process has been marred by personal attacks and sensationalism. Sometime in 2003, for instance, UWI cultural studies professor Carolyn Cooper notoriously declared on a discussion program on local radio that Edna Manley had not at all contributed to the development of art in Jamaica.⁶³ While the personality cult that surrounds Edna Manley may provoke such iconoclastic reactions, Cooper's argument had no real merit and did not lead the necessary interrogation of Jamaica's cultural narratives into any productive direction. To the contrary, such over-the-top interventions have only sharpened the polarization of the Jamaican art world and further driven the "camps" into entrenched defensive positions from which meaningful dialogue is impossible.

The main publication vehicle for this new debate in Caribbean studies has been the journal *Small Axe*, which was established in 1997 by the anthropologist and cultural critic David Scott, who was then based at UWI's Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Research, along with his colleagues Nadi Edwards, a literary scholar, and Annie Paul, an Indian expatriate who is publications editor at the Institute.⁶⁴ The early issues of *Small Axe* served as the launching pad for Paul's art-writing career and she started out "guns blazing" with a full-scale, protracted attack on the NGJ, David Boxer and, for that matter, myself, who were marked as the producers of the "grand narratives"

⁶³ The statement was made on the Breakfast Club, then one of the main morning discussion programmes on national radio in Jamaica, on Power 106 FM. Unfortunately, I did not hear the actual programme, nor was I able to ascertain its airing date but the statement was widely discussed in the Jamaican art community.

⁶⁴ Annie Paul, who moved to Jamaica in the early 1990s, has a background in sociology and journalism. She has also occasionally participated in art exhibitions in Jamaica with works on paper. She was the sole contributor on art in all but one of the first five issues of the journal and also co-edited *Small Axe 6*, a special issue on Caribbean art in 2000, with the Trinidadian artist and critic Christopher Cozier to which she also contributed the lead essay. Since then, her active input into the content of *Small Axe* has diminished. She has recently co-edited *Small Axe 16* (2004) with Krista Thompson but only contributed to the introduction of that volume. She has, however, continued publishing in other forums, although her recent articles have been less polemical.

in the service of the hegemonic nation – part of the “big tree” that needed to be felled.⁶⁵

One of Paul’s early essays, *Legislating Taste: The Curator’s Palette* (1998) questioned David Boxer’s power as a tastemaker:

By and large, it is he who determines whose work is represented in the national collection, he who advises businessmen on which art to invest in and which artists to patronize, and he who decides who gets to represent Jamaica externally, either in international exhibitions of art or traveling exhibitions of Jamaican art. By default, he also has a formative effect on the very development of Jamaican art itself. (67)

This overstated Boxer’s influence on the international representation of Jamaican art and on local patrons but correctly identified him as the one who has been most publicly and systematically involved in articulating Jamaica’s artistic hierarchies. Paul further argued that Boxer shifted the NGJ’s focus to abstract art (80), in keeping with his own avant-garde ethos as an artist. While the contemporary art world of the 1990s was not very “painting-friendly,” this claim was simply untenable: Boxer’s own work, and much of what he has promoted as contemporary Jamaican art, is focused on the human figure and in essence representational. Paul hit the nail on the head, however, in noting that Boxer had challenged the existing canons with his promotion of Intuitive and experimental contemporary art and that this reflected his own interests as an artist and a collector. What she did not acknowledge is that these modifications have failed to become the dominant norm, which is still essentially the nationalist canon Boxer inherited in 1975, although the latter is now sustained by the market rather than by politics.

Other critics presented less nuanced perspectives on the NGJ’s hegemonic role. The following statement is characteristic: “As a result of its entrenchment and centrality

⁶⁵ The journal’s title is borrowed from the Bob Marley song *Small Axe*, an anthem of subaltern power. The chorus goes as follows “If you are the big tree, we are the small axe, ready to cut you down, well sharp, to cut you down.”

to the country's cultural fabric, [the NGJ] has been consistently interrogated by critics who argue that the institution is the leader of the middle-class oligopoly on the island and, therefore, hardly able to act as an objective judge [of artistic value in Jamaica]." It appeared in an essay in *Small Axe 16* by Andrea Douglas, a Jamaican who had just completed Ph.D. studies in art history at the University of Virginia (2004, 54). Certainly, the NGJ's powerful role in the Jamaican art world needs to be interrogated, especially in light of the political and personal interests it has served, but its perceived "control of the 'institution' of art in Jamaica" (Ibid.) has always been tenuous and contested within the very same "middle class oligopoly" it is supposed to represent.

The NGJ's response to these criticisms, which Boxer has mostly refused to engage in writing but denounced vociferously in his social circle, may have been spurred by the personal attacks that were embedded in them but reinforced the sense that the NGJ regarded itself above criticism. There are, however, signs that the debate may finally take a more productive turn, such as the recent work of Krista Thompson. Her essay "*Black Skin, Blue Eyes*": *Visualizing Blackness in Jamaican Art, 1922-1944* (2004), which also appeared in *Small Axe 16*, presents a well-researched, carefully contextualized rereading of how blackness was represented and politically mobilized in the work of Edna Manley and Albert Huie and the narratives that surround it, without being weighed down by personal rancor or knee-jerk criticisms of cultural nationalism.

The point is, however, that the critical discussion of canons and dominant narratives in Jamaica cannot be exclusively targeted at the NGJ, David Boxer or Edna Manley but must consider the other key players in that field, such as those that currently shape the local art market, and the dynamics between these different interests – important

issues which have been totally neglected in the debate. Likewise, it needs to be understood that there is no homogenous, hegemonic notion of “the nation” that aligns comfortably with any truly dominant narrative of Jamaican art, since the ideas of nationhood that have shaped modern Jamaica are as complex, fragmented, contradictory and contested as those that have shaped local art.

7. Publishing and Marketing

What is fundamentally at issue in the debates about art narratives and criticism in Jamaica is the gate-keeping power of those individuals who can make public value judgments, whether those are art critics or curators. In the current, market-driven situation, this especially applies to any appraisal that may threaten the status and marketability of an artist. One artist told me point blank during a forum about the NGJ in the late 1990s that it was my duty to faithfully reproduce the views of “The Artist” and that my own opinions were not desired. To this artist, and her views are typical of the sense of entitlement of many upper-middle class artists in Jamaica, art writers are “court scribes,” a role which has been accommodated in the essentially promotional, uncritical fare that at the time of writing appears in the local newspapers.

The refusal of certain Jamaican artists to allow any potentially unfavorable critical engagement with their work is perhaps most obvious in the growing body of artist’s monographs. In addition to the NGJ’s catalogues of retrospectives,⁶⁶ the bulk of recent monograph publications on Jamaican artists has been initiated by the artists themselves and all are promotional rather than critical. Sometimes these are just modest handouts to

⁶⁶ The Gallery has 3 to 4 major retrospectives per decade and publishes a catalogue for each of them, as it endeavors to do for all exhibitions. Retrospective catalogues are typically among the most substantial Gallery publications.

accompany a solo exhibition, with short introductions that are mainly written as “friendly favors” by local art writers (and I have myself written a few such essays when friends were having exhibitions). Others have, however, appeared in the form of expensive, glossy coffee-table books, with high-quality color plates, which are published and sold through an established publishing house and usually contain an introduction by a well-known art writer or public figure.

Several of these essays have been written by Edward Lucie-Smith, who has also published on Latin-American art (1993) and who had been trying to make inroads into the Caribbean art scene since the mid 1990s. He started visiting Jamaica more regularly and became friendly with the realist painter JudyAnn MacMillan, who helped to broker a coffee-table book on *Albert Huie* with an introductory essay by Lucie-Smith, which was published in 2000 by Ian Randle Publishers. Lucie-Smith subsequently also wrote an introduction for MacMillan’s own book, *My Jamaica*, which was published in 2004 by MacMillan Caribbean (no relation). Ian Randle has also published what, for now, amounts to four books on Barrington Watson: the first, *Shades of Grey*, was a set of short stories by the artist illustrated with related paintings published as a lavishly illustrated hardcover coffee-table book (1998); the second was a more modestly produced publication of his series of portraits of Pan-Africanists and contained an introduction to the subject by the noted Jamaican diplomat and politician Dudley Thompson (2000); the third was a catalogue-style general publication on Watson’s work (2005); and the fourth a book on his drawings (2010).⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, several such publications have come from those artists who have

⁶⁷ Watson had also printed a more modest, informally circulated book on his work in the mid 1980s but it is now out of print and I have not been able to locate a copy.

also been the most vocal critics of the NGJ, such as MacMillan and Watson, and who feel, rightly or not, that the institution has not given their work the prominence and recognition it warrants.⁶⁸ Getting an “independent” endorsement from the likes of Lucie-Smith and the imprimatur of an established publishing house thus also serves to counter the power of the NGJ to act as a gatekeeper. Another such book, not a monograph but a collection of 21 interviews with Jamaican artists titled *A Celebration of Jamaican Art* (2002), was published by the Jamaican Guild of Artists, the oldest and largest artist’s organization in the island, which served as the main organizational conduit for the challenges of the NGJ in the late 1990s and, increasingly, a lobby for the most commercial side of Jamaican art.⁶⁹ The interviews were collected by Wayne Lawrence, a medical doctor and amateur painter with no previous publication record on art. The book included Boxer, in an obvious effort to be evenhanded, but also several artists who had been left out of *Modern Jamaican Art* and had publicly voiced their objections, such as the one who had insisted that art writers should reproduce the artists’ views, as this book thus in effect did. The original book is now out of print but a revised edition, be it with only 18 artists, was published in 2010 under the title *Art of Jamaica: A Prelude*.

The Bank of Jamaica published a coffee-table book on its large Jamaican art collection, titled *The Garden Party* after a Barrington Watson mural in that collection

⁶⁸ Barrington Watson, Albert Huie and Judy MacMillan are represented in the NGJ’s permanent exhibition. Watson and Huie were included in the SITES exhibition, while Judy MacMillan was one of six artists to represent Jamaica in the 1986 *Caribbean Art Now* exhibition organized by the Commonwealth Institute in England. All three have invited artist status for the *Annual National/National Biennial*, although they have entered only intermittently, and are represented in *Modern Jamaican Art*. MacMillan publicly campaigned for a retrospective of Huie’s work in the late 1990s, which this was denied because the NGJ had already staged one in 1978. Barrington Watson was recently short-listed as a candidate for a retrospective by the Gallery and has now been confirmed for Fall 2011. Watson, who has been on the Board of the NGJ for many years, had previously requested that his Pan-Africanists series be shown there in the late 1990s, but this was declined because the NGJ has a policy against making itself available as a venue for artist-initiated exhibitions. The exhibition was subsequently shown at the nearby auditorium of the Bank of Jamaica (Jamaica’s national bank) in the summer of 2000.

⁶⁹ The Guild was established in 1975 by the painter Ralph Campbell, one of the members of the early nationalist schools. It was initially open to all locally based artists, as a professional organization for visual artists, but became more politicized and partisan in the 1990s. (see Chapter 4)

(Watson & Crompton-Nicholas 2002). [Ill. 50] This book, which was produced by the Bank's Public Relations department, is not available for sale but is used as a corporate gift item. In the plates sections, the hierarchical arrangement that was a source of controversy for *Modern Jamaican Art* was avoided by simply organizing the illustrations in alphabetical order. This resulted in some odd juxtapositions, which illustrates that attempts at representational neutrality are not always artistically or intellectually productive. The fact that the book is named after Watson's painting and contains his own introduction to that painting as its main text has not led to any controversy and suggests that the Jamaican art community is willing to tolerate such excesses as course corrections to the NGJ's dominance, although it may also stem from the book's limited circulation.

The most visible publications in this "battle of the books" have all come from commercially successful artists who acquired or already had the social and economic means to take some measure of control of how their work is publicly represented. Their books are launched with much fanfare and heavily marketed, with an obvious degree of success. Book publishing had previously been a precarious financial venture in the Caribbean, because of high production costs and limited markets, but there is clearly a local market for glossy coffee-table books that have "cultural cachet" and appeal to the artistic tastes and ideological inclinations of upper-middle class Jamaicans. *Modern Jamaican Art* was actually published to raise funds for the UWI Development and Endowment Fund, which further illustrates that glossy art books are now seen as fairly secure money-making ventures in Jamaica. Such books are an increasingly important part of how art is marketed in Jamaica, with a clear awareness of the powerful mutual endorsement that occurs when a work on someone's wall is accompanied by a

substantial, nicely produced book on the artist on the coffee table (all the more when the work in question is reproduced and discussed in the book). The repositioning of Belisario as Jamaica's "old master" and, therefore, one of the most collectible Jamaican artists, was similarly supported by the 2008 biography *Belisario: Sketches of Character*, written by researcher Jackie Ranston and published by Valerie Facey's the Mill Press. This 409 page volume is the most substantial art-related book published in Jamaica to date and was clearly meant as a rejoinder to the 2007 Yale publication on Belisario and his worlds.

The use of glossy publications as a marketing strategy by artists and dealers is not unique to Jamaica. During my research on Caribbean art in the mid 1990s, for instance, I encountered thriving vanity publishing industries in the Dominican Republic (where quality color printing and hardcover binding are done at very low cost), Puerto Rico, and, to a lesser extent, Haiti. Such publications have their own value, especially in an environment where published information and visual documentation on art is still scarce, and artists certainly have the right to promote their work as they see fit but not enough critical attention has been paid so far to why and by whom such books are produced. Nor has the content of these books been subjected to the careful critical scrutiny such self-promoting texts surely warrant.

8. A Field of Struggle

More than anything else, the record of publications on Jamaican art provides crucial evidence of how the Jamaican sphere of cultural production has operated. As an often-embattled participant in this sphere, I would surely prefer it to be a "peaceable kingdom" in which nothing but the most civil, equitable and productive negotiations take place but that is never the case, in Jamaica or anywhere else. As Bourdieu (1993) has argued, the

sphere of cultural production is a field of struggle and in the specific struggles this dissertation examines, the gloves have almost always been off. The intense conflicts that have shaped the contemporary Jamaican cultural sphere should not just be construed as evidence of postcolonial cultural insecurities but prove that the stakes are perceived to be high and worth fighting over. While it is true that, as Eugene Metcalf has argued, “[a] people can ill afford to let others control the definitions by which their arts are classified and evaluated” (271), what I have discussed here so far illustrates that the struggles about these definitions do not always revolve about big ideological principles but also involve more pragmatic and self-interested issues such as personal status and economic gain.

The sense of entitlement of Jamaican artists may seem extraordinary at times but the articulation of postcolonial cultural canons is necessarily a fraught process, which is complicated by colonial histories, the influence of the culture wars in the metropolitan West and, most of all, internal struggles for social and political control over a small but high-stakes turf. There have been similar controversies throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, except for Cuba where there is less opportunity for overt dissent. They have, however, been more pronounced in the smaller societies, where artists and other art world stakeholders have more direct access to the process of canon formation.

When the book *What Kind of Mirror Image: Art in Barbados* (1999) was published, many of the criticisms were targeted at that book’s authors, Alissandra Cummins, Allison Thompson and Nick Whittle. The debate in Barbados was less concerned with who was in the book and who not, because it included virtually every artist who has ever been documented in Barbados, but more with *how* Barbadian art and the individual artists were described. The most vociferous objections came from artists

such as Joscelyn Gardner and Annalee Davis who objected to being labeled as white and socially privileged in the text. The white minority in Barbados is not only economically and socially powerful but proportionately larger than elsewhere in the Anglophone Caribbean. In spite of this, this group has been marginalized in the (predominantly black) nationalist imaginary and predictably resists anything that questions its legitimacy in that island. It did not help that two of the authors of *What Kind of Mirror Image*, Thompson and Whittle, were white expatriates and their credentials to speak “on behalf of Barbados” were, predictably, challenged. (Davis 1999; Gardner 1999) The specifics of this polemic were different from those in Jamaica but the underlying issue was the same and pertained to the control of the local artistic narratives and hierarchies and the interests they should serve. It cannot be overlooked, however, that the necessary process of interrogating and challenging the national canons of the Caribbean depends on the pioneering efforts to articulate such canons in the first place and that is, if anything else, a role institutions such as the NGJ have necessarily played.

Chapter 2: JAMAICANNESS AND MAINSTREAM JAMAICAN ART

1. The Style of Jamaicanness

Benedict Anderson has argued that “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (1991, 6). Cultural nationalism is crucially concerned with articulating and promoting this “style,” which has been a major preoccupation in postcolonial art. This chapter examines in what “style” Jamaicanness has been negotiated, in the form and content of local mainstream art and, equally important, in what contexts this has been articulated, received and at times challenged. To this end, I am discussing landmark works by key artists from the early nationalist school to the Independence generation, a period in which questions of “Jamaicanness” were most acutely posed.

2. The Nationalist School

Like elsewhere in the colonies, the colonial representation of Jamaica and Jamaicans was typically reductive and exoticized. These stereotypes took on their modern form in the context of early tourism, as is exemplified by the “native market woman” or “native man with donkey cart” imagery in late 19th and early 20th century photographs, postcards and text illustrations. These stereotypes could have been easily dismissed if they had merely been imposed externally but they had also deeply shaped how black Jamaicans imagined themselves, to the point where they failed to see themselves as “worthy of artistic representation” (Thompson 2004, 3). In a 1968 discussion forum, Edna Manley cited her experience, somewhere in the 1940s, of seeing images created by black school children

that represented the iconic local market women with considerable accuracy, except for that they were, startlingly, blond and blue-eyed (Manley et al. 1968, 68). Manley also repeatedly cited the story of Frank Cundall's wife, who in the 1890s imported daffodils from England for her flower paintings (Manley R. 1996, 35).

The local internalization of this colonial imaginary was a key problem to the nationalist artists. They resolved to produce affirmative icons of Jamaicanness, that emphasized the cultural and racial distinctiveness and the competent individuality and modernity of the subjects depicted, and negotiated with the colonial authorities to accommodate these new cultural expressions. A group of young nationalists publicly challenged the unresponsive leadership and obsolete programmes of the IoJ, at its 1936 annual general meeting. One of the hecklers, the young lawyer S.R. Braithwaite, demanded that the portrait gallery be "torn down" and replaced with modern art (*Gleaner*, January 30, 1936, 6). This incident, which was deemed sufficiently important, or scandalous, for the entire meeting to be transcribed in the *Gleaner* (January 31, 1936, 16-17), has come to symbolize the nationalists' demands for a voice in the public cultural arena. The demands soon yielded success: by the early 1940s, the IoJ was exhibiting and collecting modern Jamaican art and hosted free adult art classes that were initiated and taught by Edna Manley.

There is no doubt that Edna Manley and Albert Huie were important pioneers in the "Jamaicanization" of Jamaican art and they have both long been consecrated as such. However, a more critical reading of their personal narratives on that subject is warranted, since some retroactive mythologizing is involved. Such tendencies are also evident in the general narratives about modern Jamaican art. In truth, the painting of imported daffodils

was the exception rather than the rule and even the turn-of-the-century ladies' watercolor and sketching clubs were primarily concerned with depicting the Jamaican environment: the people and their daily life, the flora and the landscape. The volume and reach of what they produced may have been limited and their conventionally representational work usually amateurish and bland but their subjects were similar to those of the nationalists. Violet Taylor, a photographer and painter, was active in the 1910s and 1920s. Her small oil on paper *Woman with Basket* (c1915), a sober, realist depiction of Jamaican market woman on an urban sidewalk, could pass for an early Pottinger. [Ill. 51] The work illustrates the persistence of the market woman theme but with the focus shifted from exoticism to individual dignity. Taylor's example also illustrates that artists' social activism did not suddenly start with the anti-colonial movement: she was best known for the so-called Children's Welfare Stamps of 1924, based on three of her photographs of poor rural Jamaican children (Poupeye 1999b, 38). [Ill. 52] The realistic portrayals are unadorned and sympathetic, as in *Woman with Basket*.

Most of the "lady watercolorists" belonged to the colonial elite and Taylor also belonged to a prominent white family. While there were almost certainly forms of black visual self-representation that have not been documented, its perceived absence was, as Edna Manley rightly observed, tied up with notions of what constituted a "proper picture" (Manley et al. 1968, 68) and popular expressions would not have been seen in such terms, the terms of high art. The substantive change brought on by cultural nationalism was thus that black artists such as Albert Huie were repositioned as legitimate *producers* of high art, on subjects relevant to their own culture and life, and that their artistic products were, furthermore, actively mobilized as part of the anti-colonial campaign.

Another claim that needs to be questioned is that the nationalist school emerged in an entirely contentious struggle with the colonial system. The promotion of local cultural expressions, as long as those were not overly oppositional, was, in actuality, in keeping with late British colonial policy. It reflected the general thrust towards self-government, which on a political level led to internal self-rule and universal adult suffrage in 1944. This change of course was not caused by sudden enlightenment on the part of the British colonial authorities but was motivated by changing circumstances, including the reformist influence of Fabian socialism, the growing global resistance to colonialism, and the loss of revenue from the colonies after the decline of their traditional agro-industries.

In the late 1930s, a new, more progressive generation of colonial administrators arrived in Jamaica, who were sympathetic with the cultural aims of the nationalists. This included the young English art historian Delves Molesworth, who succeeded the elderly Frank Cundall as the head of the IoJ in 1937 and stayed on for one year.¹ Molesworth's short tenure however represented an important turning point. He was part of the Manleys' social circle at their Drumblair residence – which served as a gathering place for the nationalist intelligentsia – and was actively involved in the scouting of indigenous talent. Most notably, he “discovered” John Dunkley, who operated a barber's shop not far from the IoJ. Molesworth, who later became Keeper of Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, was succeeded in 1938 by Philip Sherlock, a young white Jamaican teacher and historian with strong nationalist sympathies, who was the first locally born Secretary and Librarian.² The control of the IoJ was thus not unilaterally “wrested” from the colonial authorities but gradually Jamaicanized, with implied colonial support.

¹ His full name was Hender Delves Molesworth but he was better known as Delves Molesworth in Jamaica.

² Molesworth was, however, not the last expatriate head of the IoJ: the American natural historian C. Bernard Lewis was director from 1950 to 1975. The first black director was the poet Neville Dawes, who took over in 1975.

The main instrument of late colonial British cultural policy was the British Council, which had been founded in 1934 as a division of the Foreign Office and was established in the Caribbean in 1942, when its office opened in Jamaica.³ The British Council partnered with the IoJ and, among others, funded a new wing for its Junior Centre and assisted Edna Manley's art classes with materials. The Council thus immediately became an active presence in the Jamaican art world. Its reference library was an important resource for local artists and its scholarships allowed young talent to attend major art schools in England, which among others benefited Albert Huie, Ralph Campbell and Alvin Marriott. In spite of this, there is virtually no mention of its contributions in the main narratives on Jamaican art, which allows for the role of nationalist leaders such as the Manleys to be heroicized and the myth of a vigorous nationalist cultural struggle maintained (e.g. Boxer 1982).

While the dependency of early nationalist Jamaican art on Western Modernism has been well-acknowledged, not enough attention has been paid to the specific relationship with British Modernism, which was enhanced by the efforts of the British Council, visits by English artists and the overseas studies of the young artists. With the exception of some of Edna Manley's earliest works, which were more radically Modernist, Jamaican Modernism was not overly concerned with formal or conceptual experimentation. Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cezanne were obvious influences but the emerging Jamaican school was also indebted to English painters such as Roger Fry, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Walter Sickert and Augustus John. These artists had

³ The British Council's Caribbean headquarters were in 1947 relocated to Barbados. The Jamaican office closed in 1967, along with the offices in Barbados and Trinidad, but the British Council resumed its Caribbean operations in 1989. During the 1990s, the British Council was again very active in the region but has since scaled down its activities, because of significant budget cuts.

adopted continental post-impressionism to create a restrained Modernism of their own that was mainly concerned with portraiture and the depiction of the modern living environment. This moderate post-impressionism was readily adopted by the Jamaican nationalist school because it allowed for the depiction of Jamaican content in a manner that was accessible to novice art audiences.

Augustus John came on an extended visit in 1937 and his sensitive portraits of black Jamaican girls certainly inspired Albert Huie. John is also credited with having encouraged Carl Abrahams, who had started out as a cartoonist, to take up painting and thus participated in the talent-scouting of that era. Edna Manley participated in these exchanges and in 1937 brought a teaching collection of British Modernist art back to Jamaica. She had solicited these works as donations from the artists, including major names such as Grant and Fry, who seemed willing to mentor the Jamaican Modernists, be it indirectly. This collection was exhibited at the IoJ, along with works on paper by other European Modernists from the Empire Art Loan Collection Society (*Gleaner*, December 17, 1937, 19) – more evidence of the efforts at enlightened colonial cultural education. For most Jamaican artists this was the first direct contact with European Modernism, which was otherwise only accessible through the publications at the IoJ and British Council libraries. The donated works are now in the collection of the NGJ.

Contemporaneous developments in the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America are remarkably similar, at least in general terms, although direct interactions with these artistic communities seem to have been limited. Edna Manley maintained that she was not aware, at that time, of Cuban Modernism but her work invites comparison – formally, thematically and in terms of its nationalist politics – with Cuban contemporaries such as

the painters Antonio Gattorno and Carlos Enriquez and the sculptors Rita Longa and Teodoro Ramos Blanco. The parallels may be attributed to the similarities in sources and circumstances, although Jamaican labor migration to Cuba, which included middle class Jamaicans, provided channels of interaction that may also have played a role.

The interactions with the so-called Harlem Renaissance were less submerged, because of the involvement of high profile Jamaicans such as Marcus Garvey, who operated from Harlem from 1914 to his deportation to Jamaica in 1927, and the poet Claude McKay, as well as the international circulation of seminal publications such as Alain Locke's *The New Negro* (1925) anthology. Harlem was a major destination for early 20th century Jamaican migrants, so contacts also existed outside of the artistic and political realms. Conversely, the African-American sculptor Richmond Barthé lived in Jamaica during the 1950s and 60s and was friendly with the Manleys.⁴ Recent scholarship on the Harlem Renaissance has recast it as a transnational phenomenon and this has resulted in the inclusion of Jamaican artists in exhibitions such as the major Anglo-American touring exhibition *Rhapsodies in Black: Art of the Harlem Renaissance* (1997), which included the sculptor Ronald Moody, a Jamaican-born contemporary of Edna Manley who had moved to England, and *Challenge of the Modern: African American Artists 1925-1945* (2003) at the Studio Museum in Harlem, which included Manley. [III. 29] Early modern Jamaican art can be part understood in that transnational context but it should not be overlooked that its agenda was essentially *Jamaican* nationalist and that race was not its exclusive concern. While the circulation of persons and ideas between Harlem and the Caribbean was undeniable, direct contacts in the visual

⁴ Barthé produced a portrait bust of Norman Manley in the 1950s.

arts were minimal and the aesthetic similarities can, as with Cuba, be attributed to the common context rather than active collaboration.

a. Edna Manley (1900-1987)

Edna Manley was born in England as Edna Swithenbank, to the Jamaican Ellie Shearer, and her English husband, Harvey Swithenbank, a Methodist minister who had previously been stationed in Jamaica. She attended several art schools in London, including the St. Martin's School of Art, but did not complete any course of study. In 1921, she eloped with her colored, Jamaican-born first cousin Norman Manley, who had come to England to study law on a Rhodes scholarship and also fought in World War I.⁵ The couple moved to Jamaica in 1922. In a classic example of the sort of editorial interventions I cautioned about earlier on, Edna Manley later told David Boxer: "When I came to Jamaica I was totally and absolutely inspired. Don't forget my mother was Jamaican, and I'd grown up with the most nostalgic stories of Jamaica – and I just felt I'd come home" (1998, 13). The candid account by her biographer Wayne Brown (1975), in contrast, suggests that her move to Jamaica required painful adjustments. She abruptly returned to England in October 1923, declaring to her mother "that it had been terrible, that her marriage was finished and that she would never go back" (133) or, as Brown bluntly put it, "she had failed dismally to integrate" (134). She however returned to Jamaica and her husband in February 1924 and then began to settle in more successfully.

Edna and Norman Manley had both expressed disappointment at what they felt was the cultural and intellectual barrenness of Jamaica (Brown 1975, 121-133) but things were much easier for Norman Manley, who had grown up on the island. He quickly

⁵ Their mothers, Ellie Shearer-Swithenbank and Margaret Shearer-Manley were sisters. Margaret Manley had married a colored produce dealer, Albert Manley, which led to social ostracism and uneasiness within her own family (Brown 1975, 61).

became a successful lawyer which in turn provided both of them with the material comforts that made adjusting to their new life much easier. Both were keenly aware, however, that living in Jamaica could have had a negative impact on Edna Manley's budding artistic career which they initially defined in terms of her potential in the English art world. Norman Manley had written to her in 1919, when they were still courting:

This I'm determined on, that your work will go on – that you'll have the opportunities not only to work, but also to come over [to England] to keep in touch with things, to study more, to keep alive that side of you. There is no art in Jamaica, and you would miss it if you didn't have a chance to get to the heart of things every year or so (90).

Edna Manley exhibited in England in the 1920s and was elected into the London Group in 1930 (Boxer 1990, 21).⁶ It took until 1932 before she had her first Jamaican exhibition, with the painter Koren der Harootian, an Armenian refugee.⁷ [Ill. 44]

Despite the initial hesitations, Edna Manley eventually claimed Jamaica as her rightful home and her political and artistic cause but her Jamaicanness was always contested by others, by virtue of her foreign birth and ostensible whiteness. She had already in 1919 embraced the possibility that she was colored, much to the distress of her family (Brown 1975, 93), and asserted this publicly later in her life (e.g. *Gleaner* July 20, 1955, 1). Soon after her arrival in Jamaica, however, she encountered the animosity many black Jamaicans harbor towards white persons, an issue she had to deal with throughout her life (Brown 1975, 123). Annie Paul has rightly argued that Edna Manley, as a member of the local elite, had the luxury of choosing her racial self-definition, a luxury

⁶ The London Group was formed in 1913 as a collective of radical young artists, who wished to challenge the Royal Academy's control of the kind of art was shown to the public. Founding members included the painter (Percy) Wyndham Lewis and the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, two influential English avant-garde artists, and the more conservative realist painter Walter Sickert. Members were to be democratically elected and the group organized annual exhibitions which were to revitalize contemporary art by introducing new European developments in painting and sculpture, especially from France. The Group played a crucial role in shaping the direction of modern British art and is still active today. (See: www.thelondongroup.com).

⁷ Edna Manley did receive the IoJ's Silver Musgrave medal in 1929, as the first Jamaican artist to receive this honor, but it was granted because of her success in England.

which lower-class black Jamaicans do not have.⁸ She could, however, not control how she was seen by others and debates about her legacy still revolve around her racial and national identity and, therefore, her legitimacy as a Jamaican artist, despite her supposedly secure consecration by the cultural establishment.

Krista Thompson stated: “Almost immediately [after her 1922 arrival in Jamaica] Manley began to reinvent her approach to art making in order to render her new environment and its inhabitants, to overcome the ‘daffodil syndrome’ that affected so many earlier artists on the island” (2004, 22). Like Boxer, she identified Manley’s bronze *Beadseller* (1922) as the starting point of modern, nationalist Jamaican art. [Ill. 18] Certainly, as Thompson has argued, the work reinvents the iconic market woman theme but it also has personal meanings that supercede the specifically Jamaican content. The reference to Jamaica is, in effect, quite weak. The title is the only clear indication that it represents a vendor and the work is often mistaken as religious: it represents a kneeling female figure who holds what could be construed as prayer beads in her upturned hands.

It is well documented that *Beadseller* was inspired by Edna Manley’s visits to the Mandeville market, where she had done many sketches of vendors (Brown 1975, 123-126), but it is essentially a self-image: the thin, angular face and frame of the figure bear striking resemblance to her own. Wayne Brown has read the work as a plea for acceptance in her new home country: “The identification is one of suffering, of common exclusion from the established society, Jamaican market woman and English sculptor, they are both ‘beadsellers’ in this colony” (126). Its meaning may be even more personal than that. *Beadseller* had a male counterpart, entitled *Listener* (c1923), which is now lost.

⁸ E-mail from Annie Paul, March 8, 2006.

[Ill. 53] It was made shortly before the Manleys' temporary separation and took the form of a standing male market vendor with a vending tray on his head, who looks back because something has drawn his attention. It is noteworthy that the title of this work does not acknowledge any connection to the market vendor theme. According to Boxer:

The *Beadseller's* principal audience was Norman. Its iconological and stylistic complexities exceed anything she had yet done and it was meant to excite his intellect; but its supplicatory, prayerful attitude is also an appeal. We know from the biography that something was wrong with the marriage. We read of the lonely, neglected wife and her need for companionship. The *Beadseller*, I suggest, is an offer of reconciliation: the female offers herself. The *Listener*, the male counterpart, is given Norman's features, and its internal meaning is surely Edna's perception of Norman's response to the offer (1990, 18).

This raises the question whether these very personal works can credibly serve as the canonical starting point of the nationalist school. It certainly should not be read as a conscious challenge to the "daffodil syndrome," since it is only in the 1930s that Edna Manley began to express concern about such matters (e.g. Manley E. 1934).

If *Beadseller* and *Listener* were targeted at any other audiences than Norman Manley, these were initially located outside of Jamaica, and the works were not shown on the island until 1932, when they were included in her first local exhibition. *Beadseller* and *Listener* were Edna Manley's most radically Modernist works and diverged not only from her romantic-realist student work but also from the general direction of Jamaican art in the 1920s and 30s. The sharp-faceted stylization and dynamic twisted pose of the two bronzes, specifically, reflect her assimilation of Vorticism, the English answer to Cubism and Futurism, and a strong kinship with the sculptural work of Jacob Epstein, Frank Dobson and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska.⁹ As Boxer observed:

⁹ Vorticism was a short-lived but influential artistic movement in England. It was named by the author Ezra Pound and the main visual artists associated with it were Percy Wyndham Lewis, the leader of the movement,

It was as if in one fell swoop, nearly a hundred years of sculptural development had been bridged; we are suddenly transferred from the language of Delacroix, Barye, et al., to the world of the Modernists: Brancusi, Gaudier-Brzeska, Zadkine, Picasso (1990, 17)

It is significant that this quantum leap came *after* she moved to Jamaica, at a time when she was committed to launching her career in England, and the works can perhaps also be understood as efforts to contextualize her work in the British avant-garde. The classicist figure sculptures she produced in the late 1920s reflect a retreat from radical Modernism but such reactions were also evident in the work of her Europe-based counterparts, most notably in Picasso's Neo-Classicist phase in the late 1910s and early 1920s. While she continued producing occasional animal sculptures, which had been her primary subject as an art student in England, her focus shifted towards the human figure. This, also, may reflect the influence of Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska and Dobson, who were essentially humanist sculptors, but it paved the way for works about Jamaican identity.

Edna Manley's decision to start woodcarving in 1924 has often been presented as a deliberate rejection of the dominant media of Western sculpture in favor of local, non-Western one. Krista Thompson has argued that "Manley's interest in representing skin color informed her choice of medium. Mahogany also allowed her to render Jamaican themes in local materials" (2004, 24). Manley's decision to turn towards wood was, however, initially a practical rather than a political one, made because she had problems working in plaster, caused by the heat and humidity, and could not get her plasters cast in bronze – her original final medium – without sending them abroad. While in England in 1923-24, she consulted about alternatives with a former teacher at St Martin's, one

and the sculptors Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska. Frank Dobson was not an actual member but influenced by its ideas. Vorticism represented the most radical phase in early British Modernism which reverted to a more moderate course afterwards.

McCrossen, and he is the one who recommended that she start using wood, since tropical hardwoods such as mahogany were readily available in Jamaica. He also gave her woodcarving lessons. (Brown 1975, 142) There was a primitivism-influenced woodcarving revival movement within Modernist sculpture in Europe and one of its proponents, the English novelist and critic Kineton Parkes, discussed and praised Manley's work at some length in *The Art of Carved Sculpture* (1931, 104-106).

Manley quickly became an accomplished woodcarver, who worked mainly in mahogany, although she continued to use other media. Her most spectacular early woodcarving is the over life-size *Eve* (1929), a "Neo-Classical" freestanding nude. [Ill. 54] Krista Thompson has argued that it "portrays a rounded, corpulent and voluptuous black woman" (2004, 24) and that mahogany was deliberately used to represent the figure's black skin. *Eve's* straight long hair and straight nose, however, suggest that her racial identity is better described as undefined. Manley's choice of materials eventually became more politicized but may even then have been of less consequence than Thompson suggests: a key work of the *Negro Aroused* series, *Pocomania* (1936), was executed in off-white, imported Portland stone, one of several such stone carvings she produced in the 1930s, and the figure's race evoked only by its physiognomy. [Ill. 55]

Most of Manley's early works could easily have been shown and appreciated in London without specific reference to their Jamaican origin. It is only towards the end of the 1920s that her sculptures began to acquire distinctively black features, although this may initially have been a function of the models she had available. By the early 1930s, however, the depiction of the black physiognomy had become a deliberate preoccupation. Stylistically, she also came into her own and articulated a confident and distinctive Art

Deco style, in which, as Boxer put it, “the rounded forms of the artist’s ‘neoclassicism’ are tamed by the Cubist inspired structuring and faceting inherited from works like the *Beadseller*” (1990, 22). This provided her with a formal vocabulary that facilitated the Modernist depiction of black subjects and resulted in her most elegant works, such as the beautiful *Man with Wounded Bird* (1934). [Ill. 56] The choice of black subjects was, however, quite common in primitivist Modernist art of that period, including Art Deco, and does still not decisively separate her from her European counterparts.

In the mid 1930s, Jamaicanness and the racial identity of the Jamaican people finally became explicit, politicized concerns for Manley, when she produced her so-called *Negro Aroused* series, which started with the like-named 1935 woodcarving and ended with the bronze *Strike* in 1938. [Ill. 5] These heroicized, iconic representations of black Jamaican men and women were the most politicized of her career and they were also her first works with racially and culturally specific titles. *Pocomania* (1936) is the most striking example of the latter and depicts a dancing male Pukumina cultist (Pukumina is an African-Jamaican spirit possession religion).¹⁰ In general formal terms, the *Negro Aroused* works are comparable to what she produced in the first half of the 1930s but their tone could not be more different. The delicately built, passive black subjects of the early 1930s were succeeded by physically powerful, assertive black actors who, the works seem to suggest, were finally in charge of their own destiny: it is arguably at this point that Manley’s perspective shifted from primitivist to nationalist.

The *Negro Aroused* series captured the political ferment of the day. There was unrest throughout the West Indies in the late 1930s and in Jamaica this led to island-wide

¹⁰ Pocomania was in the past the preferred spelling but has been replaced by Pukumina (see Chapter 5).

strikes and riots in 1938, about labor rights and, more generally, against the colonial social order – the main episode of active rebellion in the otherwise peacefully negotiated Jamaican Independence movement. The works also reflect Edna Manley’s transformation from an artist who worked in relative isolation to one who was part of the emerging group of young artists and intellectuals of the cultural nationalist movement. These fertile interactions were not limited to the visual arts. One of Edna Manley’s young protégés, the poet George Campbell, wrote his *Negro Aroused* poem while his mentor was working on the like-named sculpture, one of several such collaborations. It starts as follows:

Negro Aroused! Awakened from
The ignominious sleep of dominance!
Freedom! Off with these shackles
That torment, I lift my head and scream to Heaven
(1981, 23)

Such strident rhetoric was new in the local cultural production and aligned the racial politics of the Jamaican nationalists with those of the Harlem Renaissance. Manley’s *Negro Aroused* series exemplified Alain Locke’s New Negro ideal and their focus on expressive profiles strongly reminded of the contemporaneous murals of Aaron Douglas, although Manley claimed not to have been aware of his work.¹¹ More likely, the resemblance stems from the fact that the two artists worked in a related political and aesthetic context.

In 1937, Manley had her first solo exhibition in England, at the French Gallery in London, but she decided to show the exhibition in Jamaica, at the Mutual Life Assurance Company, before the works were shipped.¹² This local exhibition reportedly attracted

¹¹ Personal communication, David Boxer, June 28, 2007.

¹² The Mutual Assurance Company had been established in the mid 19th century by a group of white and colored local businessmen which included George William Gordon, one of the instigators of the Morant Bay Rebellion. The company’s origin was thus historically linked to emerging Jamaican nationalism.

about 800 visitors in the one week it was open (Brown 1975, 213), which was a lot for a country that had no tradition of art exhibitions, and there was support in the local press (e.g. Chapman 1937 a & b; Sealy 1937). The London showing was also widely reviewed but the English press responded better to the earlier works, which suggest that the *Negro Aroused* works were out of step with English expectations about Modernist sculpture and perhaps too uncomfortably political (Brown 1975, 214-218; Boxer 1990, 26).

It is arguably at this time that Edna Manley ceased being an English artist who worked in Jamaica and redefined herself as a Jamaican artist. The manner in which she already then described her role in the nationalist movement betrayed her missionary zeal and sense of self-importance. In 1937, she wrote in a letter to Norman Manley:

I feel that for the last couple of years I have been carving for Jamaica and for a purpose – dragging out every ounce of life – I had to achieve a certain purpose *for them* [...] But the *Negro Aroused* etc. was trying to create a national vision – & it nearly killed me – it was trying to put something into being that was bigger than myself & almost other than myself (Brown 1974, 225-226).

She clearly saw the *Negro Aroused* series as a particular phase in her work and, even, as a project that mainly benefited others and, in the same letter, expressed a desire to move back to more personally meaningful work. The *Negro Aroused* series and related works of the late 1930s were also Manley's last assertively Modernist works.

In the 1940s, she returned to her romantic roots with works that reflected a mystical engagement with the forces of nature and the Jamaican landscape, particularly the spectacular Blue Mountain region, where the family acquired a vacation cottage – her *Dying God* series of the 1940s. The Modernist language of *Negro Aroused* was replaced by a more conventional representational style, influenced by the visionary iconography of William Blake. The *Dying God* series had a strong autobiographic dimension and the sun

and moon imagery it employed was metaphoric for the dynamics within her family, especially between herself, Norman Manley and her second son Michael Manley. The most ambitious work of the series was *Horse of the Morning* (1943), a technically spectacular half-body carving of a leaping horse with bulging “sun-disk” eyes and a shimmering textured surface. [Ill. 57] The *Dying God* iconography is, however, not politically innocent and alludes to the changes in the political order which were then in progress in Jamaica. The logo of the PNP, which was founded in 1944, is a stylized rising sun which is clearly related to Edna Manley’s style and iconography. It may have been designed by her although no conclusive evidence has thus far been found.¹³ Works such as *Horse of the Morning* thus equated the Manleys with the “new day” of independent Jamaica.¹⁴ Such self-mythologizing metaphors were also evident in later works, such as those of the late 1950s and 1960s in which the biblical Moses stood for Norman Manley, the political leader who led Jamaica out of the “wilderness” of colonialism but never entered the “promised land” of independent Jamaica, since he was in opposition for the rest of his active life after the 1961 collapse of the West Indies Federation. Norman Manley was, in fact, commonly referred to as Moses in the political rhetoric of the time.

Like her adjustment to Jamaica as “home,” the Jamaicanization of Manley’s work was a slower and less deliberate process than it has retroactively been made out to be. It illustrates that nationalist Jamaican art needs to be understood as the product of multiple, at times contradictory individual and collective driving forces and not as the heroic, near-miraculous achievement of a single individual, no matter how crucial her role may have

¹³ I contacted the PNP head office on this query in late 2005 and early 2006 but they were unable to provide a conclusive response. I did find a reference in her diary, however, that she was to judge the entries for the party emblem on March 10, 1944, which suggests that someone else did the design (Manley R. 1989, 15). The stylized rising sun theme also appears in some of Albert Huie’s prints and he may thus have designed the logo.

¹⁴ *New Day* is also the title of a 1949 novel by Vic Reid, another of the young intellectuals around the Manleys.

been or how iconic her work.

b. Albert Huie (1920-2010)

Albert Huie was born in the North Coast town of Falmouth and, like many young Jamaicans in search of opportunity, moved to Kingston in 1936, where he was discovered as a “young talent” by members of Edna Manley’s circle. He studied with Koren der Harootian, who organized art classes at his St Andrew home in the late 1930s, and subsequently participated in Manley’s Junior Center classes – he insisted as a teaching assistant rather than a student (Poupeye-Rammelaere 1990, 14). In 1943, a Huie exhibition was organized at the IoJ to fund his studies abroad but he had to go to the Ontario College of Art in Canada instead of to England, as he had hoped, because of the war. He however subsequently attended the Camberwell School of Art in London on a British Council scholarship, where he studied under Victor Pasmore. Pasmore later became a leading Constructivist abstractionist but was then an advocate of Modernist realism, approach that matched Huie’s interests.

Huie’s earliest works were mostly portraits, although some documented the popular culture, such as *Baptism* (1937), a river baptism scene. His best known early work is *The Counting Lesson* (1938), a portrait of a black girl that was shown at the 1939 New York World Fair, along with work by John Dunkley. [Ill. 58] The girl, who appears to be in her early teens, is dressed in a pretty blue polka dot dress and her hair is neatly coifed with a red bow. She is counting on her fingers and looks intently at what is in front of her, perhaps her teacher or a blackboard. The figure’s anatomical awkwardness reflects Huie’s lack of art training at that time but adds to its unaffected charm.

Krista Thompson argues that works like *The Counting Lesson* represent an

important turning point in Jamaican art: “By fitting the girl into the frame of art, Huie provided a rare representational mirror of black Jamaica, allowing black viewers to attribute to themselves the signs of distinction, prestige, and selfhood formerly reserved for the white colonial elite” (2004, 17) and: “The polka-dotted dress, the large bow crowning her head, and her very activity of counting pointed to the girl’s class, education, respectability, and civility, flying in the face of primitivist representations of blacks” (19). While it was not the first formal portrait of a black Jamaican – early examples, such as the anonymous portrait of the mathematical prodigy Francis Williams in the Victoria and Albert Museum, date from the mid 18th century (Smith-McCrae 1995) – it is among the first such portraits by a recognized black Jamaican artist. It should, however, not be overlooked that the girl is represented as an anonymous “type,” rather than an individual – a 1940 Huie portrait, presumably a commission, of a white girl from a prominent Kingston family, a “somebody” in Jamaican society, is titled with her name, *Anna-Kay Webster* – although it is certainly a much more dignified, realistic and modern “type” than the exotic stereotypes that previously represented Jamaica in the international arena. The girl also seems a bit old to be given such a rudimentary counting lesson and her too-large “Sunday best” dress may be a hand-me-down, which suggests that she was the recipient of middle class benevolence rather than a secure member of that class.

Public education efforts were among the most popular charities at the time, in keeping with the civilizing mission of the nationalist movement and late English colonial policy. It was not uncommon for elite Jamaicans and expatriates to offer informal literacy and arithmetic lessons to the children of their house staff or poor neighbors. It is instructive to compare Huie’s portrait with similar works by the English expatriate

painter John Wood, who lived in Jamaica during World War II and whose wife gave such lessons on her veranda, as he recorded in *School Children* and *Conversation Piece*, both circa 1941. [Ill. 59, 60] While the five school children in the former are well dressed and groomed, the three children in the latter, which depicts one of his wife's reading lessons, are barefooted and visibly poor. At least one of the children in the latter painting, however, also seems to appear in the former. The dress and activities depicted in Huie's *The Counting Lesson* should thus not be seen as secure markers of class.

Thompson also credits Huie for his pioneering attention to the “‘reflection and radiation in dark skin,’ in contrast to more popular uses of ‘asphalt black’ in touristic representation” (2004, 19). While his attention to the nuances of skin tone represents an important step in black self-representation in Jamaican “high art,” Huie's achievement should be seen, as with Edna Manley, in the context of broader developments in Jamaican and metropolitan Western art. When Huie painted *The Counting Lesson*, he was barely 18 years old and a student and the work was probably not as deliberately revolutionary as it has been made out to be. His teacher der Harootian's portraits of the 1930s, such as *Seated Woman Holding Sugar Cane* (1930), reflected a similar preoccupation with skin tone, as did Augustus John's Jamaican portraits of 1937. [Ill. 44] In fact, the “native portrait” was a minor genre among primitivist Western artists and the optical experiments of impressionism and fauvism had paved the way for such artists to look beyond the “asphalt black.” John Wood, for instance, stated in the description of one of his portraits, *The Garden Boy* (c1941): “The colours of native complexions are numerous and varied. Even the pure negro can be of a rich purplish black, greenish or coppery, brownish or reddish or even bluish black, with of course varying reflections on all these according to

the sky, and I find native portraits rather exciting” (1955, n.p.). [Ill. 61] Wood’s interests may have been influenced by the nationalists but his work illustrates that painting realistic skin tones did not necessarily de-exoticize the black subject and could even be attributed to the influence of scientific racism and its preoccupation with, as Wood succinctly put it, “the negro characteristics” (17).

In the 1940s, Huie also became active as a printmaker and his prints served as an indispensable source of income. His wood- and linocuts were sold as original prints and as offset lithographs through such channels as the PNP news weekly *Public Opinion*, which reproduced his prints on its pages and also sold them separately. Some of his prints also served as Christmas cards, published by Huie himself or sometimes by local companies such as the Jamaican branch of Horlicks, the producers of a popular malted milk drink. [Ill. 62] Many of Huie’s prints therefore focus on traditional Christmas-time activities, such as the sorrel harvest¹⁵, but the others also represent iconic aspects of the life of the working class and rural Jamaicans, such as *Pocomania* from the mid 1940s. (Eker 1973, 11) [Ill. 63] The most successful ones, such as *Pocomania*, are as iconic as Edna Manley’s *Negro Aroused* series, which may have served as a source for some of Huie’s images. Huie was initially self-taught as a print-maker but received formal training while in London, which led to more complex and detailed prints afterwards. His later prints, however, lack the powerful succinctness and iconicity of the earlier ones. Because of the multiple means of distribution, Huie’s prints had a wide reach and represent the first true attempt at democratizing ownership of and access to nationalist Jamaican art.

¹⁵ Sorrel is a fleshy red flower, which is related to the hibiscus and used to make a traditional Caribbean Christmas drink.

Although he continued to produce portraits, often as paid commissions from elite families, and earned income from his prints, Huie shifted his focus to the landscape and rural life in the early 1940s. This resulted in two of the most iconic painting in the NGJ's permanent exhibition, *Noon* (1943) and *Crop time* (1955). [Ill. 64, 20] *Noon* represents a group of sugar workers at rest in the shade of a large tree, in front of a factory building and framed by a serene mountainous landscape. The slight geometric stylization of the figures, the tight, tectonic structure of the landscape and the near-Cubist treatment of the building reflect his assimilation of Post-Impressionism, especially Cezanne. The sugar industry had been a common subject in Caribbean art of the plantation era, such as the work of the 19th century Spanish-Cuban painter Victor Patricio de Landaluze, but in such paintings, the workers, most of them slaves, were depicted as “worker ants” rather than as dignified individuals. The figures in Huie's *Noon* are all barefooted, which marks them as poor, but they look confident and relaxed and, since they are obviously employed, it is implied that they are productive, full-fledged members of Jamaica's citizenry.

By the early 1950s, when he had concluded his overseas studies, Huie's trademark style was fully developed. He abandoned the thick, heavily textured painting style that characterized his early works in favor of a more fluid style characterized by the thin application of muted colors, dominated by blues, greens and pale yellows, in which the influence of Cezanne was even more pronounced. *Crop Time*, a panoramic multi-figure depiction of the sugarcane harvest, in front of a large, modern sugar factory, is a relatively small painting – at 34.5 by 39 inches it is even smaller than *Noon* – but it has an epic, monumental quality that brings to mind Diego Rivera's multi-figure murals on Mexican history. It is not an explicitly political painting but it makes more subtle

references to nationhood and progress. The scene has a dynamic, almost filmic quality, which is achieved by using repetition: each of the figures in the line-up of machete-wielding cane-cutters, for instance, is positioned slightly differently, in a manner reminiscent of the photographic movement analysis of Eadward Muybridge, and this effect is reinforced by the flickering vertical patterns created by the sugarcane itself. Such suggestions of filmic movement were also used by Edna Manley, for instance in her relief carving *Diggers* (1936), which represents a group of men wielding pick axes. [Ill. 65] This rhythmic representation, as David Boxer has pointed out, reminds of the traditional work songs that served to energize and synchronize workers' actions (1990, 26). This conveys a strong sense of common purpose among the sugar workers, who become symbols a nation working in unison towards progress. In *Crop Time*, the sugar industry is not represented as an obsolete, exploitative relic of the plantation past but as a viable modern agro-industry and a pillar of the national hopes for economic and social progress.

Huie's mature work celebrates the land and the Jamaican people and represents an ideal and harmonious Jamaica: a prime example of the classicizing impulses in cultural nationalism and the deliberate efforts to create national icons. He was, not surprisingly, one of Jamaica's most popular and uncontroversial artists and, as a *bonafide* black Jamaican, his legitimacy has never been questioned. While Huie's early work was certainly groundbreaking, at least in the context of Jamaican art, it changed little after the 1950s. The familiarity of his style and imagery – its “brand value” – along with its affirmative, reassuring qualities have only made him more popular with local collectors and his sales and prices skyrocketed during the art market boom of the late 1980s and 90s. In the later years of his life Huie resided in the United States, in Baltimore, and was

inactive because of ill health but his popularity did not diminish. His works are in demand in the local second-sale market, with escalating prices. There is also renewed interest in his prints, although mainly in the African-American art market, where there are efforts to promote them along with prints by the likes of Elizabeth Catlett and Hale Woodruff.¹⁶ In Jamaica, the contemporary reception of his prints has been more guarded, mainly because many were mechanically reproduced and therefore do not qualify as conventional “fine art.”

c. David Pottinger (1911-2007)

Unlike Huie, David Pottinger’s talent was entirely homegrown: he attended Edna Manley’s free art classes at the IoJ’s Junior Centre and was among the first students at the Jamaica School of Art and Craft (JSAC), where he subsequently also taught. Pottinger’s primary subject has always been the life in the streets and yards of Downtown Kingston, his own living environment.¹⁷ The people in his paintings are, as in Huie and Manley’s work, represented as black Jamaican types rather than as individuals but his true focus is on the city of Kingston itself, as the cultural crucible of 20th century Jamaica where the traditional and the modern have made a potent mix. In contrast with Huie’s serene, idealized Jamaica and, more so, the colorful fantasies of tourist art, Pottinger depicts Kingston’s overcrowded inner-cities and the decaying, ramshackle infrastructure with unsparing realism and a keen sense for the old city’s dark, turbulent moodiness. *Nine Night* (1949), one of his best known works, depicts a streetside wake with Pukumina

¹⁶ His prints are, among others, carried by M. Lee Stone Fine Prints from San José, California, a dealer in fine art prints with a special interest in WPA era and African-American graphics.

¹⁷ Since Pottinger passed away less than 50 years ago and left no known heirs, his works are orphaned under Jamaican copyright law. It was therefore not possible to obtain permission to reproduce them in this dissertation. The relevant images can however be found on the NGJ blog: <http://nationalgalleryofjamaica.wordpress.com/2010/09/05/jamaicas-art-pioneers-david-jack-pottinger-1911-2007/>

cultists dancing around a single standing oil lamp, the first of several such scenes by this artist.¹⁸ [Ill. 25] Pottinger was not the first nationalist Jamaican artist to depict Pukumina ceremonies. Edna Manley and Huie had done so before him but their stylized, aestheticized interpretations are far removed from *Nine Night*'s naturalist grit.

Like most of Pottinger's works, *Nine Night* is an outdoor scene. The sociologist Diane Austin (1984) has observed the public, "outside" nature of the lives of the West Indian poor, which contrasts with the discrete, "respectable" privacy and domesticity enjoyed and valued by the middle classes. Krista Thompson (2004) has rightly observed that Huie's early portraits celebrate middle class domesticity and even his later outdoor scenes celebrate middle class values of progressiveness and respectability. Pottinger's work, in contrast, implies that there is dignity and respectability in the "outside lives" of the urban poor that needs not be "corrected" by aspiring to the status and lifestyle of the middle classes. Pottinger was less self-consciously concerned with creating national icons than Manley or Huie but instead depicted his lived experience of the popular urban culture, which is unembellished but no less nationalist.

Except for a handful of landscapes, Pottinger remained faithful to his main subject, Downtown Kingston, and, like Huie, developed a highly recognizable style which did not change much over time. His outlook was limited but he was less dependent on extraneous sources than Manley and Huie, which makes him one of the most original voices in the nationalist art movement. Some works from the late 1950s and early 60s, however, reveal an idiosyncratic interest in the formalist innovations of Modernism. The corrugated metal roofs and fencing of the slum dwellings in *Trench Town* (1959), for

¹⁸ A Nine Night is a wake normally held nine days after a person dies and marks the formal departure of the deceased's body, soul and spirit from earthly life. The rituals aim to prevent the deceased's "duppy," as the mischievous spirits of the dead are called, from roaming the earth after burial (Senior 2003, 353).

instance, are stylized into a tight, tectonic Cubist structure of interlocking planes that brings the image to the brink of abstraction. [Ill. 66] In actuality, all of Pottinger's compositions are structured along vertical and horizontal gridlines – the sort of focus on structure that was advocated in post-impressionism. Even the seemingly informal composition of *Nine Night* is anchored by the verticals of the standing oil lamp and dancers and the horizontals of the streetside curbstone and the throng of onlookers. Pottinger may be exceptional among his generation because of his proximity to the popular culture but he is not actually an outsider to the aesthetic pursuits of mainstream Jamaican art.

Pottinger came from a poor urban background and, like most of the Junior Center painters, struggled to survive as a young artist, mainly making a living as a sign painter. Despite the national recognition he has received and the popularity of his work in the local art market (be it at prices that are still well below Huie's) Pottinger lived in modest circumstances in Downtown Kingston until the end of life although he could surely have afforded to move out. He thus seems to have refused the opportunities for social mobility that came with his artistic recognition, which is consistent with his ethos as an "artist of the people." Pottinger's case also illustrates that the generalizations that are often made about nationalist art as a hegemonic instrument of the emerging middle classes should be questioned, since these mask the actual diversity of backgrounds and agendas involved.

3. The Independence Generation

The years around Independence were, as the artist and critic Gloria Escoffery (1986) has argued, characterized by a combination of great ambitions and sometimes naïve idealism. The period was marked by the advent of a new generation of artists, most of whom had

studied abroad. The three most influential among them were Karl Parboosingh, who had studied in Paris, New York and Mexico; Eugene Hyde, who had studied in California, and Barrington Watson, who had attended the Royal Academy in London and several continental European academies. Their choices illustrate that England was no longer the obligatory overseas study destination, as it had been for the previous generation. Each returned home with new ideas about art – high Modernist in the case of Parboosingh and Hyde and academic in the case of Watson – and an ambitious, cosmopolitan outlook which actively challenged the more limited outlook of earlier nationalist art. Their subject matter was still recognizably Jamaican but they combined this with formal experimentation, a preference for monumental scales that transcended the “living room format” preferred by the nationalist school, and a new critical attitude.

Watson, Hyde and Parboosingh, who were more securely middle class than most of their predecessors, presented themselves emphatically as professionals and made unprecedented public demands about the support Jamaican society should provide for their work. Along with the art collector and engineer-builder A.D. Scott, they founded the Contemporary Jamaican Artists Association (CJAA) which was active from 1964 to 1974 as the first professional artists association in Jamaica. Watson was in 1962 appointed Director of Studies of the JSAC which he, in a move that reflected his commitment to “high art” ideals, renamed the Jamaica School of Art, thus dropping the “craft.” He transformed the previously informal, part-time school into a full-time institution with a four-year diploma curriculum, modeled after the then English art school system. This further contributed to the professionalization of the arts and better equipped graduates for further studies abroad.

Predictably, there was animosity between these ambitious young artists and their artistic elders and this went beyond mere aesthetic differences. They were the first to openly challenge Edna Manley's dominance. Watson stated in a 1984 interview that the older artists "were in a different mould, and they were already established and not prepared to make the big breakout in the way we were" (Waugh 1987, 136) and:

The Edna Manley, the [Junior Center director] Robert Verity and that lot were doing a really good job in the arts before [but it] had something like a colonial approach to it in a sense. It was [a] sort of 'giving a break to a talented youngster' type of thing [...] They patronized a lot of the artists and kept them at a certain level, unfortunately or inadvertently, by this kind of patronizing approach. (137)

It could certainly be argued that the nationalist intelligentsia's missionary zeal to promote local talent replicated the colonial notion of the child-like native whose potential had to be awakened and nurtured. Watson and his colleagues were not interested in obtaining any "from the top down" patronage but in self-empowerment – and it is implied, as *black* postcolonial artists – and they were quite successful in becoming outspoken public figures that functioned as cultural icons *and* self-sufficient entrepreneurs.

The introduction of high Modernist ideas represented a departure from the populist beginnings of modern Jamaican art and this resulted in what could be construed as a more elitist and "foreign" kind of art. Yet this new generation was more proactively involved in bringing their art into the public domain than their predecessors and took the initiative to be involved in public art projects, to be visible in the local media and to establish new galleries. Parboosingh was a pacemaker and produced his first of several murals in 1956, on the theme of the Jamaican coffee industry, for the Ministry of

Agriculture.¹⁹ New opportunities were also created by the economic expansion in mining, manufacturing and tourism, and the associated bout of office and hotel construction, which facilitated mural commissions and corporate art collections. The artists' demands for active patronage from the private and public sector resulted in a proposed law that a set percentage of the cost of public buildings should be spent on art.²⁰ Organizations such as the Bank of Jamaica, Jamaica's central bank, which moved to a new high-rise on the Kingston Waterfront in 1975, voluntarily complied although the proposal was never enacted. The 1960s also saw the appearance of the first major art collectors in Jamaica – all persons who had benefited from the economic expansion around Independence – and the young artists formed close associations with them. In addition to A.D. Scott, this included the young entrepreneur Aaron Matalon and the hotelier and Director of Tourism John Pringle, although the latter was more interested in Primitive art. Matalon and Pringle were white Jamaicans – the former was of Lebanese-Syrian descent while Pringle came from an old planters' family – which illustrates that the white elite continued to dominate art patronage but also that these new patrons had no apparent difficulty with the artists' assertion of their blackness. The presence of a patron of Lebanese-Syrian descent, however, also illustrated that the composition of the white elite was changing.

The professionalization and expansion of the Jamaican art world was also evident in the establishment of commercial galleries. The Hill's Art Gallery, the first major commercial gallery in the island, had opened in November 1953 on Harbour Street in Kingston, and was operated by the English expatriates Christopher and Norah Hill. They

¹⁹ This mural was funded by the *Committee for Improvement of the Arts*, an initiative of the Norman Manley administration, which also commissioned murals by other, older artists, such the ones Carl Abrahams produced for the Banana Board around the same time (*Gleaner* May 17, 1956, 18).

²⁰ There are conflicting accounts about the actual percentage but I was told it was 5 %, which is quite high. Barbados is at the time of writing considering a 2.5 % requirement.

promoted and sold a wide range of Jamaican art, including the work of mainstream artists such as Alexander Cooper, Osmond Watson and Eric Smith and emerging self-taught artists such as Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds and Gaston Tabois, along with gift items and art materials. [Ill. 67, 40] The Hill’s published claim, in a contributed *Gleaner* article on the occasion of its 10th anniversary in 1963, that they had thus far organized 2060 shows – or some 200 per year – seems implausible and may have been a typographical error but they were certainly very active (Hill 1963). Tourists were still the primary buyers of Jamaican art but local patronage was developing. Norah Hill’s frequent letters to the *Gleaner* clamored for greater public awareness and more governmental support for the arts and indicate that the Hills saw themselves as significant players in that process. Their efforts seem to have paid off: the guest speaker at the Gallery’s 10th anniversary exhibition, the *Gleaner* editor Theodore Sealy, in 1963 claimed that 40 % of sales were to local buyers and clearly regarded this as a notable achievement. (Waugh 1987, 117) While it was quite successful for the first 15 years or so of its existence, the Hill’s Gallery lost its prominence in the late 1960s and eventually closed in 1977.

The Hill’s Gallery, with its shop-like atmosphere, did not meet the expectations of the CJAA generation. They wanted “proper” spaces and display methods that matched the high Modernist “white cube” gallery concept (O’Doherty 1986). In 1964, the CJAA opened its own gallery, simply known as the Gallery, which was the first modern gallery space in Jamaica. The Gallery mainly showed the work of its directors but also of like-minded artists such as Kofi Kayiga (né Ricardo Wilkins), Milton Harley and George Rodney – all pioneers of abstract painting in Jamaica. In 1970, Hyde opened his own gallery, the John Peartree Gallery, which provided space for avant-garde artists such as

David Boxer, who had solo exhibitions there in 1976 and 1979. Watson followed suit in 1974, when he established Gallery Barrington, although this gallery served primarily to promote his own work. When the CJAA folded in 1974, A.D. Scott established his Olympia International Art Centre, as an expansion of the hotel and apartment complex he had previously built near the UWI campus on the north-eastern outskirts of Kingston. In an effort to integrate art and life, Olympia housed his substantial collection, hosted occasional exhibitions and provided affordable housing for some artists.

As the name “the Olympia International Art Centre” suggests, the CJAA generation was not only interested in cultivating local patronage but wanted to see Jamaican art on the international stage and they clearly saw themselves as ambassadors of the modern, progressive image independent Jamaica was trying to project. Not surprisingly, it is during the 1960s that the first major survey exhibitions of Jamaican art were toured in North America and Europe. The main ones were: *The Face of Jamaica*, which toured England and Germany in 1963 and 1964, and *The Art of Jamaica* which was shown at the Kaiser Center Gallery, in Oakland, California in 1964. Both exhibitions illustrate the close association between the economic development efforts and artistic promotion at that time. The former was organized by Seaga, the Jamaica Tourist Board and the firm H.H. Prott, the largest importers of Jamaican rum in West Germany; while the latter was hosted by the Kaiser Bauxite Company. Another international exhibition, *A Generation of Jamaican Art* (1969) was shown in Montreal and focused on the CJAA generation. It was organized by the CJAA and UWI’s Creative Arts Center.

The CJAA generation not only wished to bring Jamaican art to the world but also wished to put the island on the map as an art destination. Parboosingh for many years

tried to establish an international artists' colony, initially in scenic St Mary and later in Port Henderson near Kingston, but was unable to rally enough public support to realize his plans – A.D. Scott's Olympia concept was, in fact, in part derived from these ideas and Parboosingh became the first artist-in-residence there. More intensive contacts were also fostered with the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America, mainly by means of exchange visits and exhibitions. A 1955 state visit by the Puerto Rican Governor Luis Muñoz Marin was accompanied by a much-publicized exhibition of Puerto Rican prints and paintings, by some of its best-known artists, at the Hills Gallery – the first time Jamaica hosted an art exhibition from a non-Anglophone Caribbean island. Aubrey Williams from Guyana and England and Erwin de Vries from Suriname visited Jamaica for extended periods from the late 1960s onwards and both were close associates of Watson, Parboosingh and Hyde. This new tendency among Caribbean artists to make active transnational alliances was also evident elsewhere, in initiatives such as the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) in England which was active from 1966 to 1972 and brought together artists, writers and intellectuals of Caribbean origin who had migrated to England or who were there temporarily as students. Barrington Watson and Aubrey Williams had both been CAM members. (Walmsley 1992)

While self-promotion was a factor in their public initiatives, the idealism of the CJAA members was genuine. They wished to create art that would be meaningful to the new, progressive Jamaica and to stimulate new thinking, shifting the focus of local art production from the affirmative to the critical. Hyde stated in 1964:

[The] artist needs to be aware of public interest. This doesn't necessarily mean compliance. In fact one wishes there was more counter-reaction to the artist from the public. It is hard to describe just what we're seeking, but it is a kind of friction, a sort of force, one against the other, which the

artist must have, if he is not to exist in a vacuum (Gloudon 1964a).

The CJAA artists were thus not interested in “art for art sake” but wished to produce art that played an active, productive role in Jamaican society.

It is also during this period that the first professional critics appeared: the Polish expatriate Ignacy Eker/Andrew Hope, the young Jamaican playwright and later diplomat Norman Rae and the poet and critic Basil MacFarlane. MacFarlane wrote for the PNP organ, *Public Opinion*, while Eker and Rae wrote for the *Gleaner*. Their sometimes harsh pronouncements regularly drew the ire of the affected artists who questioned their right to evaluate their work. The American expatriate ceramist and occasional critic Edwin Todd – who made provocative claims about Jamaican art in his own writings – objected to Rae’s dismissive tone in a letter to the Editor because “if the artist is sincere and worthwhile it is the duty of the critic to be helpful to him” and suggested that Rae, though an Oxford graduate, lacked the cosmopolitan vision required to write adequate criticism (1961). The critic’s gate-keeping power was thus already then debated and the underlying turf battles were in progress. The art community became much more polemical than before and public debate was actively fostered, among others by means of regular forums organized by the CJAA and UWI’s Radio Education Unit (Waugh 1977, 149-151).

While the CJAA played a defining role in post-Independence Jamaican art, other artists also contributed to its course. One such was Osmond Watson who had attended the JSAC in the 1950s, followed by overseas studies at the St Martin’s School of Art in London in the 1960s. His work was closer in form and spirit to that of the nationalists but equally groundbreaking because of its response to the radicalization of racial politics during the 1960s, when Black Power and Rastafari were becoming increasingly

influential in Jamaican society and culture.

a. Karl Parboosingh (né Karl Coy, 1923-1975)

Details about Karl Parboosingh's early life are sketchy but we know that he traveled extensively and among others served as a war artist in the US army. He lived in Paris, where he claimed to have studied with Fernand Leger, and attended the Art Students League in New York whose flexible, low cost programmes attracted several young Caribbean artists in search of an overseas education and exposure to the burgeoning New York art world. He also spent time in Mexico, where he familiarized himself with the works of the muralists and this deeply influenced his views on the role of the artist in society. He returned to Jamaica in 1952 and for a while taught at the JSAC, although he continued traveling afterwards. He permanently settled in the island in 1957, with his Lebanese-American second wife Seya Parboosingh, a poet and painter in her own right, and became an outspoken member of the local art community. (MacFarlane 1977)

Parboosingh was a mercurial artist, to the point where his oeuvre seems incoherent and at times uncomfortably close to sources such as Rouault. His search for an appropriate language for the changing cultural context of Jamaica was, however, a defining characteristic of his work and he openly criticized the earlier generation for their failure to explore and experiment (*Gleaner*, June 9, 1967, 28). He is nonetheless better understood as a transitional figure. This is obvious in his early painting *Jamaican Interlude* (1958) which depicts the pastoral scene of a group of market vendors resting by the roadside in front of a cane-field. [Ill. 68] Thematically, the work could have been Huie's but the scene is subjected to an unprecedented degree of stylization. The figures are represented in an elegant, minimalist linear outline style which brings to mind the line

drawings of Matisse. While asserting his identity as a Jamaican artist, Parboosingh was thus also claiming his place in the context of a much more eclectic and international Modernism than Manley and the early nationalists had embraced.

Another key Parboosingh painting is *Cement Company* (1966), a geometrically stylized portrayal of the cement factory near Kingston, with the Kingston harbor facilities in the background. [Ill. 32] Like Huie's *Crop Time*, the work can be understood as a tribute to industry and progress but there are some crucial differences. For one, it celebrates a new industry, unburdened by the historical baggage of the sugar industry, and thus seems to endorse the forward-looking, modernizing official ethos of post-Independence Jamaica, which sought to find its place amongst industrializing nations. Its futurist outlook is subtly enhanced by the absence of human figures in the scene, which is dominated by buildings, machines and boats, against the backdrop of a schematic landscape. On a formal level, the work is also more radically Modernist than Huie's and brings to mind the surreal-abstract depictions of industrial themes by Fernand Leger and the Welsh Modernist Handel Evans, who had lived in Jamaica in the early 1960s and produced haunting semi-abstract fantasies on the theme of Jamaica's industrialization, including a mural for Aljam, one of the new bauxite companies.

Parboosingh's dialogue with local and international sources took him in a radically different direction in *Jamaican Gothic* (1968), his answer to Grant Wood's iconic *American Gothic* (1930) although it lacks the satirical tone of the latter and is painted in a completely different style. [Ill. 69] The painting actually resembles a close-up of one of David Pottinger's urban scenes. In this painting, Parboosingh deliberately sought to present a Jamaican icon and thus engaged in more explicit social commentary

than in his previous works. It represents a black working class mother (or grandmother) flanked by two children, a young boy and a somewhat older girl. The girl sits away from the mother, while the smaller boy sits very close and is obviously more dependent on her protection and care. Anyone familiar with the debates that had started with Edith Clarke's *My Mother Who Fathered Me* (1957) would recognize that the work makes an implied statement about the absent father and the *de facto* matrifocal character of popular Jamaican society. The three figures look dressed up and both women wear head wraps. They sit on a street-side bench in an urban environment, perhaps waiting for a bus to take them to church, and the mother seems to have a book, probably a bible, on her lap. The gaunt, stick-like frames of the three figures echo the elongated "gothic" shapes of Grant Wood's composition but while the latter satirizes rural American protestant austerity, Parboosingh's suggests poverty and deprivation, an implied criticism perhaps of the failure of independent Jamaica's modernization efforts to bring prosperity to a broad cross-section of society. *Jamaica Gothic* also illustrates the extreme fluctuations in Parboosingh's style. While *Cement Company* is neatly painted and tightly structured, *Jamaica Gothic* is painted in broad semi-abstract, expressionist brushstrokes. The palette for the two paintings is virtually identical, however, and dominated by oranges, blues and whites along with heavy black outlines, thus revealing a less obvious formal continuity.

Like many Jamaicans with progressive political sensibilities, Parboosingh sympathized with Rastafari, which played a defining role in Jamaica's cultural and political life from the late 1960s onwards. This resulted in a series of iconic portrayals of Rastafarians, the best known of which is *Ras Smoke I* (1972) in the NGJ collection. [III. 34] By that time, it was no longer unusual for mainstream artists to produce sympathetic

portrayals of Rastafarians but Parboosingh's portrait is different: his Rasta is smoking a chillum pipe, which takes the central position in the composition, and with his wide-open, blood-shot eyes and aggressive stance seems to challenge the viewer. The confrontational quality of the work is enhanced by the bold, almost crude expressionist painting style. Such provocative images depart radically from the aestheticized representations of popular culture than were until then the norm in mainstream Jamaican art and reflect Parboosingh's sympathy for the counter-cultural politics of Rastafari.

Parboosingh died after a short illness in his early 50s and his oeuvre therefore came to an abrupt end. He continued to experiment until the end of his life, however, as can be seen in *Flight into Egypt* (1974), one of several religious works he produced in the last years of his life.²¹ [Ill. 70] The mural size painting consists of sign-like black and red images against a white background that remind of abstracted prehistoric rock paintings such as those produced by the Taino. It is hard to imagine that this was painted by the same artist who had produced the robustly expressionist *Ras Smoke I* just two years earlier. The painting also seems far removed from the preoccupation with Jamaicanness that pervades his earlier work. His interaction with Aubrey Williams, who used Amerindian pictographs as a source in his own work, was likely a factor in this shift.

While Hyde and Watson aimed for upper-middle class status and respectability, Parboosingh was bohemian and non-conformist. Although he was of mainly African descent, he adopted the East Indian surname Parboosingh – the name of a family that had fostered him as a child – because he believed that this more “exotic” name would result in less discrimination in the US army and was more suitable for an artist (Waugh 1987,

²¹ Parboosingh also carried out commissions for churches, most notably his large mural “The Resurrection” (1975) for the Anglican Church of the Resurrection in Duhaney Park, Kingston.

124). He was a heavy drinker, which contributed to his early death of liver disease, unapologetically smoked ganja and was fond of using colorful expletives. This public persona was new for Jamaican artists and aligned him with the counter-cultural trends in Jamaican and international culture. Despite his early death, he was influential and his “semi-abstract expressionism” had visible offshoots in the provocative, politically charged neo-expressionist paintings of Milton George, Eric Cadien, Omari Ra and Stanford Watson that defined contemporary Jamaican art in the 1980s.

b. Eugene Hyde (1931-1980)

Eugene Hyde is the only major Jamaican artist of his generation who studied entirely in the USA and who did not have an exclusive fine arts training: he had studied advertising design at the Art Center School in Los Angeles in the early 1950s and then obtained a scholarship to pursue an MFA in painting and graphic design at the Los Angeles Art Institute. He returned to Jamaica in 1960 but after failing to obtain a teaching position at UWI or the JSAC, he left again for the USA, to do further studies in advertising and architectural ceramics. He finally found a job at a Jamaican advertising firm in 1961 and permanently returned to the island. (Smith McCrea 1984)

Hyde’s inaugural Jamaican solo exhibition, which was held at the IoJ in 1963, is widely credited as the first local exhibition of abstract art although the works he showed were essentially figurative and perhaps best described as “abstracted expressionism”.²²

[Ill. 71] Hyde’s work was sometimes excessively influenced by the Italian-American painter Rico Lebrun, an exponent of the “New Imagist” stream in Modernist Western painting which focused on the human figure, represented in an abstracted,

²² Strictly spoken, the first exhibition of Modernist abstraction was Milton Harley’s solo show at the Hills Gallery in 1962. Harley, a contemporary of Hyde, is one of very few Jamaican painters to produce truly abstract paintings but never reached comparable prominence, perhaps because he has not continuously lived on the island.

expressionistically distorted manner to represent the anxieties of modern existence (Smith-McCrae 1984).²³

Hyde's solo exhibition included three mural-size multi-figure paintings, *Colonization I*, *Colonization II* and *The Lynch Mob*, but the entire exhibition, which also included etches and drawings, had an expansive, dramatic quality. This sense of scale and the gestural, abstract expressionist technique of Hyde's paintings – or, as Eker regretted, his preoccupation with the act of painting itself – was regarded as “American” by some local observers and their responses reveal a deep distrust of the emerging US-American influence in Jamaican culture. The fact that Hyde was primarily trained as a graphic designer was also invoked to suggest that the work lacked “deep” content. Eker denounced “the hectoring tone of the show. It was as though the artist – who, significantly, is also an advertising executive – were shouting ‘Listen to me! Listen to me!’ and when I listened, I found that they had very little to tell me” (1963b, 12). The American critic Selden Rodman, in his travel book on the Caribbean, also located Hyde's work outside of Jamaican culture and summarily dismissed it as “perfectly indigenous to Madison Avenue” (1968, 35). Despite these misgivings, Hyde became influential in the local art community and the ownership of the works in his 1984 retrospective indicate that he was supported by the professional class of his generation.

Hyde's work challenged local artistic conventions but, as with Parboosingh and Barrington Watson, is better understood in terms of its relationship with the rest of Jamaican art than in terms of any irredeemable difference. While he was certainly

²³ The term “New Imagist” refers to figurative expressionist work related to what was shown in exhibition “New Images of Man” (1959) at MOMA, which included artists such as by Picasso, Francis Bacon, Alberto Giacometti and Reg Butler, and which represented an alternative, content-oriented stream in high Modernism which rejected its then-dominant formalist tenets and reflected the existentialist anxieties of the post World War II era. The term, which has been used to describe such work in Jamaica, was apparently coined by David Boxer in his doctoral dissertation on the early work of Francis Bacon at Johns Hopkins University.

concerned with the act of painting (and drawing) in its own right, Hyde was no true formalist and many of his works make socio-political statements, as the titles of his early murals well illustrate. Like his nationalist predecessors and contemporaries such as Parboosingh, Hyde was preoccupied with the effects of colonialism and the challenges of building a modern, independent society but his perspective was more pessimistic. Hyde's political works, far from being empty rhetorical gestures, represented Jamaica as a wounded, blighted society, disabled by its past and present traumas. Works such as *Future Problems* (1962), an ink on paper portrait of a poor young man, prophetically captured the discontent among the youth as the main source of social tension in Jamaica.

Not all of Hyde's early works were political, however, and he also produced abstract, formalist paintings. He obviously preferred to apply the formal explorations of high Modernism to Jamaican subject matter, however, and this resulted in his extended series of *Sunflowers*, *Spathodias* and *Crotons* of the late 1960s to early 1970s. [Ill. 72] These highly abstracted explorations of the Jamaican vegetation were, with their bold designs and intense colors, as celebratory as Albert Huie's light-infused landscapes (although his *Sunflowers*, inevitably, also referenced van Gogh's more morbid use of this floral theme.)

Like Parboosingh, Hyde believed in the crucial importance of artistic experimentation and in a 1969 speech asserted this as a basic right of the artist, which had to be supported by society (*Gleaner*, April 16, 1969, 22). He experimented vigorously with various techniques and media, among others painting in acrylic on Perspex, even in works that were more focused on content. Hyde's style and subject matter were, however, more consistent and recognizable than Parboosingh's. This was evident in works such as

1938 - Mask A Come (1976), his main commission for the Bank of Jamaica art collection, which was at six by twenty-five feet one of the largest paintings ever produced in Jamaica. [Ill. 73] The semi-abstract, multi-figure composition directly relates to his earlier murals although it incorporated some of the formal characteristics of his floral abstracts – the almost baroque, dynamic and rounded forms and more intense and varied colours. The mural is perhaps Hyde most conventionally nationalist work, not surprisingly since it was commissioned for a public collection. It represents a charging Jonkonnu band – the creole title means “the masks are coming” – but also makes reference to the 1938 rebellion, thus emphasizing the revolutionary potential of popular culture.²⁴ The threatening, monstrous quality of the masquerade mob, however, adds ambiguity to the work’s message, which may relate to Hyde’s concerns about the social and political direction of the 1970s.

Those developments, especially the increasingly close association with communist Cuba, were a source of great controversy in Jamaican society but most artists were supportive or at least remained silent – the dominance of the Manleys in cultural patronage and the establishment of new cultural institutions that could make or break artistic careers may have been a reason for not wanting to rock the boat. Hyde was the only prominent artist to be overtly critical of the Michael Manley administration. The resulting spurt of activity produced two significant series of “protest works” that exemplify the dialogue between formalism and socio-political content in Hyde’s oeuvre. At first view, the mixed media works of his *Colour Is a Personal Thing* (1978) series

²⁴ Jonkonnu is a Christmas-time masquerade with complex African, European and possibly Native American origins. It originated during slavery, when the slaves got time off around Christmas, and is now on the wane, despite efforts to folklorize and preserve it. Similar traditions exist elsewhere in the Caribbean, most notably in the Bahamas, where Junkanoo, as it is spelled there, is the main annual cultural event.

may seem like formalist geometric abstractions but the works are in effect variations on the colors and patterns of the Cuban and Jamaican flags which seem to be merging into one, with the Cuban flag literally “invading” the Jamaican colors. [Ill. 74] Hyde thus presented the involvement with Cuba as a neo-colonial invasion, a position which challenged the Third World solidarity vision of the Manley government and implicitly questioned its nationalist credentials. The sardonic titles that echo the Cuban revolutionary rhetoric – such as, *The Landing of the Advisors*, *The Nucleus of a New Rainbow* and *Hand in Hand Across the Caribbean* – further added to the subversive tone of the works. The series illustrates that abstract paintings can make potent political statements and Jamaican audiences at that time would have been sufficiently familiar with the political symbols and controversies of the day to decipher them.

Hyde, who always gravitated towards the human figure, returned to his “new imagist” roots in the subsequent *Casualties* (1978) series, which was shown at Barrington Watson’s gallery, almost simultaneously with *Colour Is a Personal Thing* at Hyde’s own gallery. In the *Casualties*, Hyde combined abstract political color symbolism with figurative elements: ghostly bandaged figures inspired by the ragged, anonymous homeless persons who were becoming increasingly numerous and visible on the Kingston streets and, to Hyde, vividly symbolized the deprivation faced by the Jamaican people during the 1970s. In *Behind the Red Fence*, such a bandaged figure is partially concealed by a frayed but blood-red sheet of “zinc” or corrugated metal, one of the main recuperated building materials used in Jamaica’s urban slums. [Ill. 31] The red refers to communism and the bloodshed in Jamaica, thus linking the two. In *Good Friday* (1978), three bandaged figures invoke Christ and the two thieves, against a backdrop dominated

by the colors of the Jamaican flag and “slashed” with a horizontal line of “communist” red. [Ill. 75] These works also exemplify Hyde’s preoccupation with formal experimentation: he combined painting and drawing media on canvas and used irregular and multi-panel formats that added a three-dimensional quality to his paintings. *Good Friday* consists of six panels which must be hung together in two layers of three, with the two middle panels dropped two inches below the others, to reveal the over-all image of the work.

Hyde believed that he was penalized for his political views. His 1977 request for a retrospective at the NGJ was denied, on the grounds that he was still in mid career and that older artists should take precedence, but Hyde saw it as a deliberate slight (Smith McCrea 1984, 44). Around that time he told a fellow artist: “I am sure they are going to lock me up one of these days. I am not going to take it lying down. In fact, I have some work coming on stream which I am going to show, which is bound to land me in jail” (45). Hyde, in actuality, exhibited his political works without recorded difficulty but his concerns were typical of the era, when elite Jamaicans were leaving the country in droves to escape the threats, real or perceived, of Communism and totalitarianism.

While there were some attempts on the part of the Manley administration to curtail the increasingly critical local press, especially the openly anti-Manley *Gleaner*, freedom of expression was generally maintained in the arts. For Andrew Hope, Hyde’s 1978 shows provided an opportunity to air his own anti-socialist views (1978, 4) but even those art community members who did not share Hyde’s political views seemed to agree that his 1978 works were among his most compelling. Works from *Colour is a Personal Thing* series were even selected by the “Manleyite” NGJ for inclusion in an exhibition of

Jamaican art in Caracas in 1978 and works from that series and the *Casualties* were also acquired for the NGJ's permanent collection. Hyde's political works were, however, not as well supported by Jamaican collectors as his earlier paintings and most remained in his personal collection. The reason for this may not have been their political content *per se* but the fact that the anxious, ravaged images were not easy to live with, while local art patronage had been eroded by migration and economic crisis.

Hyde's suspicions were again aroused when the visual arts were left out of the Jamaican representation at the 1979 Carifesta festival in Cuba.²⁵ He vented his anger in an open letter to the Minister of Culture, Arnold Bertram which was, predictably, published prominently and in full in the *Gleaner*. The letter concluded:

It would appear to me that your new Colonial Masters have managed to completely brainwash you and have distorted your priorities, so that now it would seem that we have lost the meaning of national pride and independence in our cultural awareness, and is now reduced merely to a nation of political slaves and entertainers. Let me remind you, young man, that we have surpassed this stereotype image long ago and I am proud to say that this country can stand firm on its own merits in the Plastic Arts, and no thanks to you (August 27, 1979, 8).

Hyde lost much of his previous support within the art community because of this letter, not so much for the position he expressed, which was shared by many others, but for the condescending manner in which he addressed the Minister, in a country where respectful formality is the norm in such public exchanges.

Hyde died suddenly, by drowning while on a beach outing with his family in June 1980, just four months short of the general elections that ended Jamaica's socialist

²⁵ Carifesta is a regional cultural festival that was inaugurated in 1974 in Guyana, as a cultural goodwill initiative of the Forbes Burnham government. The second edition was held in Jamaica in 1976 and the third in Cuba in 1979. Jamaica's representation at the Cuban Carifesta should have included visual art but this was apparently left out at the last moment because of problems with air cargo restrictions on the Cubana Airlines flight to Havana (personal communication David Boxer, June 13, 2006). Carifesta still exists today and was last held in Guyana in 2008 although it is often criticized as a relic of the socialist seventies and a poorly organized showcase for predictable and mediocre products of a dated official cultural nationalism.

experiment. Like Parboosingh, he made a short but crucial intervention in the development of contemporary Jamaican art. He, too, helped to shape the “new imagist” figurative expressionism that dominated contemporary Jamaican art in the 1980s and carved out a new role for the artist as provocateur and independent critical commentator.

c. Barrington Watson (b1931)

Barrington Watson, also, spent most of his formative years outside of Jamaica. He studied at the London School of Painting and Graphic Art (1954-1957), following by studies at the prestigious Royal College of Art (1957-1960), where he was among the first black students. He returned to Jamaica in 1961 and, after a short stint at UWI, was appointed Director of Studies at the JSAC. It is during this period that he was most actively involved in the CJAA. He returned to London in 1967, to continue his studies at the Royal College of Art and embarked on a study tour to the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam, the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris, the Accademia de Belli Arti in Rome, and the Academia de las Bellas Artes in Madrid – a pedigree Watson enumerates in all his biographies. Watson also served as a visiting professor at the Spelman College in Atlanta from 1970-1972. He has lived in Jamaica since then.

While Parboosingh and Hyde represent the experimental side of post-independence Jamaican art, Watson represents its conventional, “bourgeois” side and most of his work, except for some early semi-abstracts, is academic realist. His work is consequently more accessible than that of his CJAA contemporaries, which contributes to his local popularity. His subject matter, generally, conforms to the norms set by the nationalist school and includes genre and history scenes and landscapes. Watson is also a sought-after portraitist, who has produced official portraits of Jamaica’s prime ministers

and governor-generals. [Ill. 76] He is also known for his nudes and erotica, the latter of which was new in mainstream Jamaican art of the 1970s. [Ill. 11] The substantive difference between Watson and his nationalist predecessors, however, was that he represented his subjects in the “grand manner” of Western academism, with sweeping, theatrical compositions on large canvases, classically posed figures, and virtuoso drawing and brushwork.

Barrington Watson makes it very clear that he defines himself as a “great master.” His illustrated book of short stories, *Shades of Grey* (1998) contains the story of a dream in which he encounters the 19th century European great masters Manet, Degas, Monet, Cezanne and Renoir, who assure him that they have been watching his progress and regard him as one of them (90-99). This may contradict the dominant view that postcolonial art needs to assert itself *against* that tradition but Watson counterbalances this in another short story, also based on a dream, in which he encounters the king of Ancient Benin who reveals that he is of royal blood and invites him to produce a bronze lion for his throne (50-58). To me, these grandiose stories are the stuff of comedy but Watson’s self-definitions are a serious matter to him and his admirers. By means of these two imaginary endorsements, he claims his dual legitimacy in the “Great Traditions” of Europe *and* Africa and thus asserts himself as a *black* “Great Master” – Marcus Garvey, who held similar high culture biases, would almost certainly have approved.

Watson is also the ultimate artist-entrepreneur who carefully nurtured and promoted his image of the “professional artist.” Elizabeth Waugh reports that:

Watson cultivated a ‘high status’ image to impress potential patrons in the business sector, always wearing a suit and tie and driving his ‘jaguar’ when approaching a business director, ‘like one of them.’ Both the CJAA and the JSA benefited from having their activities published in the

Gleaner. The 'high profile' strategy was one which Watson said that he had learnt from Seaga, who when a Junior Minister, promoted himself by presenting 'five and ten year plans' in frequent television appearances (1987, 140).

The image-conscious Watson is also fond of portraying himself, in his self-portraits and photographs, as the quintessential "artist" with beard, pipe and black beret or, alternately or in combination, in an elaborately embroidered dashiki which had become the uniform of the racially and culturally conscious in the 1970s. He is among the most publicly visible Jamaican artists and his name is well known beyond the art community *per se*.

Watson has a large and rather uncritical following among the elite and is well connected to the upper echelons of society. Beverley Anderson-Manley, Michael Manley's then wife and a political activist with radical feminist leanings, saw no problem with opening his *Woman in Sexual Captivity* (1975) exhibition, which was presented under the dubious motto: "In matters of love a woman is the captive of her thoughts, insecurities and jealousies." The paintings typically consisted of scenes with three nudes, with one unhappy-looking female nude looking on to a male and female couple having sex, oblivious to the distress caused by their pleasure. The compositions make use of transparency and overlap, as if to suggest that it was all happening in the jilted woman's mind. The overtly sexist agenda of this exhibition, which was furthermore held to mark International Women's Year, worried Ignacy Eker, normally Watson's most ardent supporter, who declared that "the show has no real message to give us and represents purely personal views of a very fine painter who is not a sound psychologist" (1975, 25). I have, however, found no evidence of any further controversy about this exhibition. The local consensus thus seems to be that Watson's problematic representation of women should be tolerated as a great master's legitimate eccentricity.

Watson's relentless self-promotion has, however, earned him criticism and enemies. In 1975, he was asked to chair the committee that was established to develop the art collection of the Bank of Jamaica, Jamaica's national bank and the apex of the local financial world.²⁶ He was accused of giving disproportionate attention to his own work and that of his associates and of excluding other established artists, such as Edna Manley. It is certainly true that Watson and his associates dominated the early Bank of Jamaica acquisitions and commissions. The production of a large environmental work for the main banking hall, titled *Trust* (1975) and designed and produced by Watson with help from the ceramist Cecil Baugh, was described by some of his critics as a "the biggest bank robbery in Jamaica" (Waugh 1987, 142) because it absorbed more than a quarter of the total budget allocated for the bank's initial art collection development.²⁷ Watson also received a significant honorarium for his services which departed from the voluntarism of the previous generation. (Ibid.) Watson may have felt that his choices for the Bank of Jamaica amounted to a necessary course correction in public art patronage. When the NGJ was established in 1974, the art collection transferred from the IoJ did not include any of his works and the acquisition of his *Mother and Child* (1958), shortly thereafter, was an unsolicited donation by two of Watson's patrons.²⁸ [Ill. 33] He could thus claim neglect by the local cultural institutions, despite the support he received from the business sector and private art patrons. That he invited Beverly Manley to open his exhibition that same year, however, suggested that he did not wish to publicly oppose the

²⁶ The other committee members were Karl "Jerry" Craig, then the director of the Jamaica School of Art; the painters Eugene Hyde and Melvin Ettrick and the interior designer Wanda Stephenson, who coordinated the building's décor. Ettrick replaced Parboosingh who had first been asked but died before the project could be executed. The four main commissions arising from the project went to Watson, Hyde and Ettrick who each produced a mural. Watson also designed the environmental sculpture *Trust*.

²⁷ The initial budget was Ja\$ 60,000 for commissions and Ja\$ 40,000 for acquisitions or, at that time, a total of about US\$ 120,000. Of this, Ja\$ 24,000, or about US\$ 28,800 at that time was spent on *Trust*. (Waugh 1987, 142) The Bank has continued collecting art since then but decisions about acquisitions are now made internally.

²⁸ Interview with Valerie Facey, book publisher and art patron, November 30, 2006.

Manleys, unlike the more strident Hyde.

Barrington Watson is a true cultural phenomenon and deliberately capitalizes on the cultural ambitions and insecurities of Jamaica's postcolonial elites. As must be obvious by now, I have difficulty with much of Watson's work and the pretensions that surround it but that may be a function of my outsider status in Jamaica and the notions about value and validity in modern art I have internalized as an art historian. There is no doubt in my mind that he is a gifted painter, however, who has produced some of the classic examples of Jamaican art. The best known of his early works in the NGJ's permanent collection is *Mother and Child* (1958). Painted while Watson was living in England, it represents a clothed, tired-looking black woman, his first wife, who is lying on a bed and looking onto her young son, who is seated on a potty. Although there have been occasional objections to the potty scene, the work is among the most popular at the NGJ and it is also one of my personal favorites there. What attracts me to the painting is its simplicity and lack of affectation. The work is painted in browns, blacks, grays and whites and the composition is dominated by the horizontal form of the mother and the vertical of the boy on the potty and the head board of the bed, all offset against the stark white of the bed sheets. The work has a strong iconic quality as a portrayal of an intimate family moment and holds its own as a Jamaican response to the proto-Modernist realism of Edouard Manet and James McNeill Whistler, especially the latter's *Arrangement in Grey and Black: The Artist's Mother* (1871). Barrington Watson's decision to abandon this direction in favor of a self-consciously academistic course seems to have been a response to the tastes and expectations of his patrons.

Another famous work by Watson is his large, mural-size painting *The Garden*

Party (1976), which was part of the commissions for the Bank of Jamaica where it is on permanent view in the lobby of its special events hall. [Ill. 50] While most of Watson's mature work is not deliberately humorous, *The Garden Party* is a surprisingly candid satirical portrayal of the foibles of Jamaican society in the mid 1970s. In a composition which was clearly inspired by Pieter Bruegel the Elder's multi-figure panoramas, *The Garden Party* is staged in an idyllic Jamaican landscape framed by a large blooming Poinciana tree. The complex composition comprises some 15 distinct vignettes of Jamaican life, some of them realistic, such as the cricketers, the market vendors and the worshipping Rastas and Revivalists, and a few others metaphorical. One of the key scenes, within the right hand side of the composition, represents a boxing match between Michael Manley and Edward Seaga, painted during the year Manley declared a State of Emergency in part because of rumors that the Seaga-led Opposition was plotting to overthrow his government. Below the boxing scene, a young black intellectual and his brown-skinned, long-haired female companion read Mao's Little Red Book with rapt attention. On the opposite end of the composition, a young tourist couple is held up by an equally young gunman while two uniformed police officers, distracted by the more mundane goings-on within the painting, stand with their back turned to the incident and the viewer. Partly hidden behind them, a well-dressed man with an Air Jamaica ticket and suitcase in his hands seems to be sneaking out of the picture, an allusion to the many middle and upper class Jamaicans who left the country in the 1970s, often without previously telling anybody.²⁹ The light-hearted tone of Watson's socio-political satire,

²⁹ This secrecy mainly stemmed from the stringent currency controls at the time, which prevented Jamaicans from carrying anything but a token amount of foreign currency when traveling overseas and prohibited the export of Jamaican currency altogether. Michael Manley famously taunted the "deserters" in a 1977 speech, where he said that there were "five flights per day to Miami" for those who were unhappy with his administration's policies. Although these departures involved significant capital flight, many of those who left in

which elides the more disturbing events in the inner cities, may be attributed to the purpose of the painting: it was, after all, a commission for the Bank of Jamaica, which might have objected to a more provocative approach, but it also suggests a refusal on the part of the artist to become overly involved in the politics of the moment. The composition includes a self-portrait of the artist, self-consciously in the tradition of Velasquez's *Las Meniñas* (1656). Watson tellingly depicted himself while painting a female nude in the bucolic landscape behind the main scenes, and thus asserted himself as a "master artist" who is primarily concerned with art and beauty, which transcended, it was implied, the tragicomic spectacle of Jamaica in 1976.

The final work selected for discussion here is Watson's *Conversation* (1981) which is on permanent view at the NGJ, in the same room as *Mother and Child* and also very popular. [Ill. 77] The work represents three young black women chatting with each other at what appears to be the community standpipe, with their aluminum water buckets standing on the ground. The three women are simply dressed in shirt and blouse, basic sandals and with their heads covered with tied head scarves. Clearly meant as a rural Jamaican "Three Graces," the sturdy-looking women stand in exaggerated *contraposto* poses that conform to classicist conventions about the depiction of the figure although he added details, such as the dress and the akimbo arms of two of the figures, which had already been codified in nationalist art as distinctively Jamaican. The background is neutral, without any detail, and the overall color scheme restrained, which adds to the monumentality of the figures. Watson thus succeeded in producing a deliberately classicized representation of Jamaican popular life, exactly the sort of image that captures

the 1970s owned real estate and other property in Jamaica, which they either had to sell below market price or abandon.

the imagination of the local public as the popularity of this work, which was reproduced in a poster format, well illustrates.

Although he is now in his late 70s, Watson is still painting and actively involved in the Jamaican art community. He in 2006 opened another commercial gallery, again named Gallery Barrington and his third one to date, which is exclusively dedicated to promotion his own work and that of his children, the sculptors Basil and Raymond Watson and the painter and printmaker Jan Watson.³⁰ As discussed previously, the Bank of Jamaica in 2002 published a coffee-table book on its art collection, which was titled after Watson's *The Garden Party* and its main essay was dedicated to the iconography of the mural. The disproportionate attention given to him in this book reflects the significant amount of clout Watson continues to have in corporate and public-sector Jamaica.

Watson's work has been consistently among the most highly priced in the Jamaican art world and he continues to enjoy significant business patronage. He also has a lot of support in political circles and in 2006 received the Order of Jamaica, one of the highest national honors ever given to a Jamaican artist, except for Edna Manley, who held the Order of Merit, which is ranked above the Order of Jamaica. While his original works are bought by those in Jamaica who can afford them, reproductions of his major paintings, some of them signed, are also very popular and he has several younger "followers" who have capitalized on his appeal, such as Richard Hall and Alphonso Blake whose much cheaper, quickly painted cast-offs sell in large numbers in the formal and informal domestic art markets. The NGJ has, however, never given Watson top billing comparable to Edna Manley or, for that matter, the Intuitives Dunkley and Kapo.

³⁰ His second gallery, the *Contemporary Art Centre*, which had opened in 1985, folded after he divorced from his second wife, Dian Watson, who was the manager of the gallery.

The uneasy relationship with Watson is, in effect, one of the reasons for the intense animosity that surrounds that institution and, specifically, Boxer, who has never concealed his dislike for Watson's academic art.³¹ The ultimate secret of Watson's success, however, may be that he is the "anti-Edna Manley" who has everything she lacked in terms of his social and racial background and whose legitimacy as a *Jamaican* artist has never been questioned. He may well be *the* defining Jamaican artist of the post-Independence period.

d. Osmond Watson (1934-2005)

The painter and sculptor Osmond Watson grew up in Jones Town, a West Kingston neighborhood, in a Garveyite working class environment. Africa had more concrete meaning for his family than most since his mother was born in Sierra Leone, as the daughter of a West India Legionnaire who was stationed there. After attending the Junior Centre's youth art classes, he received a scholarship to attend the JSAC. He subsequently received a British Council scholarship to attend the St Martin's School of Art in London (1962-1965) and returned to Jamaica in the late 1960s.

While his earliest work was in line with that of the earlier generation and mainly concerned with Kingston street life, it was during his stay in London that Osmond Watson developed a formal language and iconography that was uniquely his own and one of the most recognizable among Jamaican artists. Visits to the British Museum and other cultural institutions provided him a range of formal and iconographic sources, such as traditional African sculpture, cubism, Byzantine icons, stained glass windows and Early

³¹ At the time of completing, the NGJ is however preparing a major retrospective of Watson's work for late 2011. The exhibition will be curated by David Boxer and Claudia Hucke, a German art historian who did her doctoral research on the CJAA. The exhibition will undeniably be a politically fraught exercise but will hopefully open the door to more productive dialogue between the different factions in the Jamaican art world.

Flemish painting. Jazz and the Cuban artist Wifredo Lam were also important influences. His most important source, however, was Jamaican popular culture, not only in terms of his subjects but also in his *bricolage* aesthetic: he routinely combined conventional, meticulously executed oil painting and woodcarving with found objects such as decorated plastic mirrors and sparkly costume jewellery, thus lending dignity and value to these “low brow” tokens of local pop culture. Although he remained firmly committed to the art object and was perhaps the most skilled technician of his generation, Osmond Watson thus subtly undermined the “high art” pretensions that were promoted by contemporaries such as Barrington Watson. As David Boxer put it, Osmond Watson “strove to create works that could be understood and appreciated by all levels of society” (2004).

Osmond Watson’s affectionate engagement with the popular culture is evident in the painting *The Lawd is My Shepard* (1969) which, like Hyde later did in *Mask a Come*, appropriates the Jamaican Creole language in its title. [Ill. 36] It is a striking, monumentalized image of a market woman seated in a typical stall made from recuperation materials, surrounded by her produce, all lovingly detailed, and with an open bible in her lap, at the very geometrical centre of the image. The work was obviously conceived as a social icon which comments on economic self-sufficiency and the defining role of religion in Jamaican society, but unlike Parboosingh’s *Jamaica Gothic*, its tone is affirmative and celebratory rather than critical. The work exemplifies Osmond Watson’s style, which is characterized by ample, geometrically stylized forms influenced by cubism, a fondness for patterns, deep, glowing colours colors and heavy black outlines, which give many of his paintings a precious, stained glass appearance.

Like Hyde, Osmond Watson was attracted to the Jonkonnu masquerade as a

defining African-Jamaican tradition, which he depicted in his *Masquerade* series of the late 1960s and 1970s. One such work is *Masquerade No. 6* (1971), a depiction of a dancing “Horse head” masquerader in the Wallace Campbell Collection, one of the main private collections in Jamaica. [Ill. 78] Most of Osmond Watson’s other images are static but the *Masquerade* series depicts dance movement, for which he uses a Cubist, or rather, Futurist faceting and repetition of the forms, especially the limbs of the figure, which gives these images a dynamic, filmic quality. His Jonkonnu paintings have nothing of the threatening, disorderly quality that gives Eugene Hyde’s *1938 - Mask A Come* (1976) its political ambiguity but represent the masquerade in an aestheticized manner which is closer to Rex Nettleford’s National Dance Theater Company “high art” representations of Jamaican traditional culture than to the actual sources – a good example of what Partha Chatterjee has called the “classicization of tradition” in nationalist cultural products (1993, 73). While this may seem to contradict Osmond Watson’s anti-elitist agenda, it also reflects his resolve to represent Jamaican culture in an affirmative, dignified light.

The optimistic, seemingly harmless character of Osmond Watson’s images may suggest otherwise but he was a deeply political artist who was entirely committed to asserting “blackness” in his work. His political sympathies occasionally became more explicit, such as in *Peace and Love* (1969), which depicts Christ as a dreadlocked Rastafarian, a provocative merging of identities in a religious image, produced at a time when Rastafari was still controversial and marginalized in Jamaican society. [Ill. 79] Although Watson never wore locks, *Peace and Love* is also a self-portrait, which placed him at the center of the Black Nationalist politics he embraced. While this gesture was arguably as radical as Parboosingh’s portrayal of Rastafarians, the image lacks the

confrontational quality of the latter's *Ras Smoke I* and emphasized the peaceful socially transformative side of Rastafari rather than its disruptive revolutionary potential. The self-portrait aspect of *Peace and Love* also reveals the personal side of his work, which included many self-portraits and intimate, romantic and subtly humorous portrayals of women, couples and their children that often allude to his relationship with his wife Daphne. Osmond Watson was also an accomplished sculptor and he integrated painting and sculpture in some of his works, as is illustrated by the elaborate hand-carved, polychrome wood and metal frame that is an integral part of *Peace and Love* and, with the nails that are inserted along the edge, an obvious reference to Christian iconography but possibly also to the use of nails in certain African sculptures.

Watson's celebrations of "Black Jamaicanness" resonate with local audiences, especially the black middle class whose cultural values and racial politics it embodies, and his work has been in high demand in the local art market. He is well represented in major collections but his still-affordable works have also been a popular choice for more occasional art buyers. Reproductions of *The Lawd Is My Shepard*, can be seen in many local and Jamaican diasporal homes. His commercial success and the attendant pressure to produce negatively affected his later work, however, and resulted in the endless replication of his most popular images, which became increasingly cute and sentimental at the expense of their political potency. Nonetheless, Osmond Watson succeeded better than any of his peers in introducing edifying black imagery into the private living environment of Jamaicans, thus following Garvey's mandate to this effect.

4. Conclusion

Jamaican Modernism has been relatively successful in creating a confident, assertively

black Jamaican imaginary that is well supported by the local art market and specialized audiences and officially endorsed by the cultural institutions. Although there are lingering cultural and racial insecurities, not only in the arts but also in other aspects of Jamaican life, black religious imagery is, for instance, now the norm in locally produced religious art and imagery, mainstream and popular. The history of Jamaican art has, however, also been the history of a search for audiences, locally and elsewhere, and this search has yielded only mixed results. Despite the creation of cultural institutions, the inclusion of aspects of mainstream art history in the school curricula and scattered efforts at promoting public art, active participation in the mainstream visual arts is still today limited to the intelligentsia and business elite. One of the NGJ's main problems has been to attract sufficiently large and socially diverse audiences to justify the public expenditure on the institution. The local art market has grown steadily since Independence and is now well-established but also involves only a small segment of the population.

The local circulation of modern Jamaican art has thus been limited but cultural scholars and art professionals routinely claim that it has actively helped to shape modern Jamaican society and cultural identity (e.g. Nettleford 1978; Boxer 1982). Very little is known, in truth, about how mainstream Jamaican art has been received by local audiences, how these audiences have been configured, and how artists and middlemen have sought and succeeded or failed to communicate with them. Answering these questions with any credible data would require a massive, long-term audience study, which is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, but revealing evidence can be found in the reception of public monuments, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: PUBLIC ART AND CONTROVERSY

1. Introduction

While mainstream Jamaican art reaches only limited audiences, official monuments and other public art works necessarily exist in the public domain and elicit much broader responses, from specialist and non-specialist audiences alike. Despite the economic limitations, there is no shortage of public monuments in Jamaica, not only in Kingston but also in the smaller towns, and the erection of monuments has been an integral part of the nation-building efforts since Independence. Several of these public artworks have been highly controversial. Examining these controversies yields useful insights into the workings of the Jamaican art world in its broadest, most inclusive sense although the contestations have typically pertained to questions of collective symbolic representation rather than art *per se*. Most public monuments, however, use the conventions of mainstream nationalist art and the controversies thus also illustrate how non-specialist audiences respond to this type of art when it is brought into the public arena.

2. Nationalizing the Official Historiography

Several public monuments were erected during the colonial period and, predictably, celebrated the colonial enterprise. One such is the *Rodney Memorial* (1782) in Spanish Town, which was sculpted by the English neo-classicist John Bacon and commemorates Admiral George Rodney who had defended the English interests in the Caribbean against the French in the mid 18th century. [Ill. 80] Another is the *Queen Victoria* statue in the St William Grant Park in Downtown Kingston, which was commissioned by the colonial

government on the occasion of her diamond jubilee in 1897.¹⁰¹ [Ill. 81] Both marble statues are still on display today, the former in its original location (although it was briefly moved to Kingston in the late 19th century), but they are generally ignored and understood as representative of the island's colonial past rather than modern nationhood. This detachment is illustrated by the fact that there have been no calls to remove them or incidents of vandalism, although both are located in inner-city areas.

This contrasts strikingly with the beheading in 1991 of a marble statue of Josephine de Beauharnais in the main park of Fort-de-France, Martinique. [Ill. 82] The headless statue has not been repaired since then but there have been other interventions, such as splattering the torso with blood red paint, which leave no doubt about the deliberately subversive, theatrical nature of her mutilation. Josephine de Beauharnais came from a slave-owning planters' family and her Martiniquan origin is heavily promoted in local tourism. Public guillotine beheadings of aristocratic "exploiters", furthermore, were an integral part of the most radical phase of the French Revolution. Her beheading thus protested Martinique's ambiguous neocolonial status as an overseas territory of France.

As Jamaica moved towards self-government in the 1940s and 1950s, attempts were made to Jamaicanize public historical commemoration. A bronze Alvin Marriott portrait bust of Marcus Garvey was acquired by government in the late 1940s, although this required a personal intervention from Alexander Bustamante after the colonial authorities claimed not to have the necessary funds (Poupeye-Rammelaere 1991, 17). The

¹⁰¹ It was a replica of a statue of Queen Victoria by E.F. Geflowski, a Polish-English portrait and monument artist, which had been commissioned for the Singapore Colonial Office Hall, now the residence of the Singaporean head of state, on the occasion of her Gold Jubilee in 1887. Similar statues can be found in various other former English colonies. The Jamaican statue was in 1970 moved from its commanding original location on the southern edge of the park to its current less prominent site on the eastern side, to accommodate the new statue of Alexander Bustamante. (*Gleaner*, May 14, 1970, 1, 7)

Jamaica National Trust Commission – now the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) – was established in 1958 to identify and preserve historical sites and monuments.¹⁰² It took until the actual preparations for Independence, however, before any major public art works were commissioned that reflected a sense of modern Jamaicanness comparable to what had been evident since the 1930s in the more private forms of nationalist art.

The first such commission was granted to Alvin Marriott, a member of the early nationalist generation who became the most sought-after artist for public monument commissions and usually delivered uncontroversial, academic-realist sculptures. It consists of a 20 foot tall aluminum statue of a male runner in motion, as a tribute to the Jamaican athletes who had earned gold medals in the 1948 and 1952 Olympics.¹⁰³ [III. 84] Sports were thus from early on mobilized for patriotic purposes, as a significant area of Jamaican achievement in the international arena. *The Jamaican Athlete* was installed at the entrance of the National Stadium, which was itself built to mark Independence and served as the venue for the main public ceremony. Its dynamic shape echoes the technically daring, Modernist design of the stadium. The statue was unveiled on August 4, 1962, as part of the ceremonies leading up to Independence two days later, by Princess Margaret of England, who represented the Queen – the last time a public monument was unveiled by a non-Jamaican. The choice of aluminum as the material was significant, not only as a gesture of import substitution, whereby a material of local origin was used to replace the locally unavailable and expensive bronze, but as an implied tribute to the bauxite industry which was, along with tourism, the new Jamaican state's engine of

¹⁰² The Jamaica National Trust Commission was established with a mandate of declaring, preserving, maintaining, and promoting the cultural heritage resources of Jamaica. It was renamed the Jamaica National Heritage Trust in 1985 and is one of the main cultural institutions in the island. The trust has specific responsibility for public monuments (www.jnht.com).

¹⁰³ The statue most resembles Arthur Wint, the first Jamaican ever to win an Olympic gold medal in 1948, but it was intended as a composite figure in tribute of all pioneering athletes.

economic growth.¹⁰⁴

There was a spate of commissions in the 1960s and 1970s, which supplemented other efforts to instill a unified sense of Jamaicanness by means of national symbols and observances. Among these were the national honors that replaced the British system and came into official effect by an Act of Parliament in 1968. The highest such national honor is the Order of National Hero, which is granted to those historical figures that are deemed to have “built” the modern Jamaican nation, mainly by challenging the colonial order, and by implication seeks to redress the omissions in the colonial historiography.

While it took until 1969 for the first three National Heroes – Marcus Garvey, Paul Bogle and George William Gordon – to be legally declared, their official canonization had begun earlier. Garvey’s body, which had been buried in England where he died in 1940, was repatriated and re-interred in the George IV Memorial Park, now the National Heroes Shrine, in 1964.¹⁰⁵ The earlier-mentioned bust by Marriott, which had been erected elsewhere in the park in 1956, was relocated and incorporated into this monument. [Ill. 84] Bogle and Gordon, the leaders of the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, were next to be honored in 1965, on the 100th anniversary of what had been the main episode of social unrest in the aftermath of Emancipation.¹⁰⁶ While the JLP took credit

¹⁰⁴ Bauxite is locally processed to alumina, an intermediate stage between the ore and aluminum (which is also the most polluting part of the processing, since it involves caustic soda), and then shipped abroad for further processing. Aluminum thus has to be re-imported into the island for local use. Poor Jamaicans however recycle aluminum, among others to make the ubiquitous sand-cast aluminum cooking pots.

¹⁰⁵ The park was formerly the site of a horse race course. The large tract of land has been re-designated as a public park but most of the sections outside of the Shrine remain derelict.

¹⁰⁶ The Morant Bay Rebellion occurred when poor black Jamaicans started questioning their lack of socio-economic progress in the post-Emancipation period, a movement which was supported by George William Gordon, a wealthy colored member of the National Assembly. Paul Bogle, a local Baptist minister and farmer, led a band of his supporters into the eastern town of Morant Bay to demonstrate against the increasingly repressive conditions. In the subsequent clashes, several government officials and planters were killed. The rebellion was violently quashed by the British troops: nearly five hundred “rebels” were killed in reprisal, women and children amongst them, including many who had nothing to do with the incident. Bogle and Gordon were both summarily tried and executed as traitors, although the latter had played no direct role in the incident. While the Morant Bay Rebellion was in effect a small, localized insurrection, the British colonial authorities over-reacted because they feared they had “another Haiti on their hands”. The case caused outrage in England

for having provided Jamaica with its first national monuments in the 1967 election campaign (*Gleaner* February 9, 1967), the first calls for monuments to Garvey, Bogle and Gordon had been made by the PNP administration during the West Indies Federation in 1961 (*Gleaner* July 27, 1961).

Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante were officially declared National Heroes in 1973, although both had also been previously recognized as the leading political figures in the Independence movement and received public monuments in 1971 and 1970, respectively. Sam Sharpe, the leader of the 1831 Baptist Rebellion in western Jamaica, and Nanny of the Maroons were inducted in 1975. The addition of the last two was to some extent corrective and extended the nation-building process to the period before Emancipation and the struggle against Slavery. The legendary 18th century Maroon leader Nanny is the sole female among the National Heroes and was obviously added to address the gender imbalance among the officially acknowledged “nation builders” and to recognize the Jamaican Maroons as freedom fighters.¹⁰⁷

Significant efforts have been made to promote the National Heroes and their official histories in public life and in education.¹⁰⁸ Most of the public monument commissions in the first two decades of Independent Jamaica pertained to the National

and Governor Eyre was twice put on trial for murder although the cases never proceeded. Jamaica, which had previously enjoyed some autonomy, was declared a Crown Colony in the aftermath and as of then fell under direct British rule. (Heuman 1994; Dick 2009)

¹⁰⁷ The recognition of Nanny resulted mainly from the efforts of historian Kamau Brathwaite, who had conducted research on Maroon oral history in the early 1970s, and Beverly Anderson-Manley, Michael Manley's then wife, who modeled for Alvin Marriott's bust of Nanny. Although Maroon lore makes reference to a female leader known as Nanny, her historicity is unclear and she is perhaps better understood a part-historical and part-mythical composite figure (Bilby 2006, 39). The Maroons are a controversial subject in Jamaica because, after having resisted colonial rule by means of guerilla warfare, they signed peace treaties with the British in 1739 and 1740, which required them to assist with the capture and return of runaway slaves and the repression of slave rebellions, in exchange for land and partial autonomy from British rule. They also assisted the British militia during the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion.

¹⁰⁸ To give an idea of the extent and reach of these efforts: a Google search on “Jamaica National Heroes” (April 11, 2006) yielded more than 2 million hits, most of them websites pertaining to Jamaica and its diaspora, and the ones I randomly checked were all directly relevant to the subject (although most merely replicated the information provided by the Jamaican Information Service and National Library of Jamaica.)

Heroes, as public monuments in sites historically associated with the Hero in question and as part of the cenotaphs that were constructed in the National Heroes Shrine. Portraits of the National Heroes can also be found on coins, banknotes and stamps and as murals on the walls of most Jamaican schools, where their official stories are part of the curriculum. [Ill. 85, 86] Most of these official portrayals are standardized and based on period photographs although those of Sam Sharpe and Nanny are drawings that are loosely based on handed-down descriptions of their appearance, since photography did not yet exist during their lifetime.¹⁰⁹ Although Garveyite symbols could be found in popular art long before he was officially canonized, the National Heroes canon has been incorporated into the popular iconography and the official representations regularly feature in street murals and other such art. Garvey remains the most popular but the others are also occasionally seen, often along with unofficial “national heroes” such as Bob Marley.

Other national symbols and observances have been contested: for instance, the original flag motto “hardships there are but the land is green and the sun shineth” was deemed racist by some because it associated the color black with hardship and was in 1996 replaced by “the sun shineth, the land is green and the people are strong and creative.” One National Hero monument, the 1965 *Bogle* statue in Morant Bay, has been controversial since it was unveiled but the National Heroes concept is well accepted and most Jamaicans seem to have a good sense of each of the Heroes’ historical significance. [Ill. 87] The only noteworthy debate has been about whom else should be granted the honor. The many negative reactions to suggestions that Michael Manley should be added,

¹⁰⁹ Photography was introduced into Jamaica in the early 1840s, when a French migrant, the lithographer Adolphe Duperly started producing daguerreotypes. By the 1860s print photography was widely available and very popular (Boxer 2001).

made after his death in 1997, proved that the events of the 1970s were still too controversial for him to receive the ultimate national honor without opposition. There have also been calls that Bob Marley should become a National Hero, which were voiced with special urgency around his 60th birthday in 2005, thus far to no avail. All current National Heroes are political leaders or rebels and no creative artist or, for that matter, sports personality has thus far been so honored, although Marley's local and global impact far exceeds that of any current National Hero. Marley had, however, received the Order of Merit, the third highest national order, shortly before his death in 1981.¹¹⁰ The implied second-rank status given to Marley within the national pantheon may also be motivated by lingering prejudices against Rastafarians and the urban underclass.

3. The National Monument

Shortly after Independence, the art patron and civil engineer A.D. Scott launched a campaign for a *National Monument*. Several sites were considered but the organizers wished for it to be erected at the Harbour View Roundabout, where the airport road enters the city of Kingston. While the government had agreed to provide the land space, the monument itself would be funded by private subscription, with support from major corporations. This included Alcan, a Canadian aluminum company then active in the island, who had agreed to donate the aluminum that would, again, be used for the casting.

The proposed monument, a large structure more than 40 foot tall, was conceived as the embodiment of Jamaica's new national motto "out of many, one people." It would consist of a circular concrete base with the coat of arms, while the sculpture itself would be a conical relief sculpture of interlocking nudes, ascending from the passive to the

¹¹⁰ The second national order is the Order of the Nation, which is reserved for the Governor General and Prime Minister.

active and representative of the racial groups that make up the Jamaican population, to be surmounted by a free-standing nude couple. [Ill. 19] As Ignacy Eker described it: “There on top of this straining pyramid of people, two figures, that of a man and a woman, will give substance to a vision of youthful love, unabashedly romantic and tender, emblematic of the oneness of our nation, holding the promise of a happy future” (1963a, 3). The inclusion of male and female figures, as the “Adam and Eve” of the New Jamaica, represents a departure from the masculinist bias of earlier images of nationhood, such as *Negro Aroused*, and quickly became the norm in such imagery.

Marriott’s wood-carved maquette was featured on the front page of the *Gleaner Sunday Magazine* of April 28, 1963, followed by Eker’s endorsement and a crude photomontage that gave an impression of what the statue would look like at the Harbour View Roundabout (1-3). This launched the project into the public domain but the public response was overwhelmingly negative and came mainly in the form of a barrage of vituperative letters to the *Gleaner* during May 1963, although a few columnists and letter-writers presented more positive appraisals. The support for the proposal typically came from within the art community while most of the negative criticism came from without – a pattern that would be repeated in later monument controversies.

The bulk of the letters pertained to the appropriateness of the form and iconography to the purpose of the monument, which was to celebrate Jamaican Independence. The “writhing nudes” on the sides of the cone-shaped monument were a particular sore point: the public nudity and allusions to sexuality were, predictably, issues in their own right but many also found the imagery ugly and disturbing. Seven of the nine letters on the subject in the *Gleaner* of May 8, 1963, for instance, compared it to the

gruesome images of piled-up bodies in the mass graves of the Nazi concentration camps.¹¹¹ The monument was also criticized for being too formally and conceptually derivative of the work of the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland, particularly the *Monolith* (1924-25) in the Vigeland Sculpture Park in Oslo, a gigantic totemic form which represents the development of humankind as an ascending mass of nude figures that also progresses from passive to active. The *Gleaner* featured a photograph of Vigeland's *Monolith* on the front page of its Sunday edition of May 12, 1963 which further fueled the debate. There is no doubt that Marriott used Vigeland's totemic form as his model although the fact that he chose to apply the latter's universalist symbolism to the Jamaican situation is, in itself, significant, since it illustrates once more that cultural nationalism is not only concerned with asserting national specificity but also with a desire to be admitted into the "family of humankind" (e.g. Duncan 1995).

The *National Monument* proposal employed a symbolic vocabulary that was well established in nationalist art – the ascent towards nationhood is, for instance, comparably represented in Edna Manley's relief carving *Growth* (1958) which also included ascending nudes. [Ill. 88] It was also designed by an older, already well-established artist rather than one of the deliberately provocative "Young Turks" of the 1960s generation. The controversy thus suggested that what was commonplace in the local art circles was unacceptable and even incomprehensible to others. Many of the proposal's critics felt that the concept was too abstract and symbolic and that the monument should make more specific reference to Jamaica's history and achievements (e.g. Patmos 1963).¹¹² One

¹¹¹ These comparisons may have been influenced by Stanley Kramer's acclaimed film *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), which had opened in Kingston on February 13, 1963 (*Gleaner* February 10, 1963).

¹¹² Art world personalities such as Norman Rae retorted that the art terms "abstract" and "symbolic" were inappropriately used in the debate: they rightly argued that the design represented the abstract concepts of

proposed that the monument should provide a scene-by-scene overview of Jamaican history, from the Taino to Independence, and even outlined what each scene should depict (Lyon 1963, 21). The artist later acceded to the demands for historical specificity and modified the design to include niches in the base for busts of the National Heroes.¹¹³

Several commentators also objected that the *National Monument* had been unilaterally conceived by an exclusive, self-appointed group of “experts”. One particularly objected to Eker’s claim that he had been asked by the organizers to “enlighten” the public about the monument and added: “That a decision so vital to the nation could have been taken behind close doors after a precious (moneyed) few had been invited to enter and decide what the people ought to want, was transparent arrogance” (Smith E. 1963, 15). The controversy thus seemed to pitch the “art experts” against “the people” but this should not necessarily be understood in class terms. The *Gleaner* was the only periodical in which the proposal had been published, although Scott also printed a promotional booklet. The record of the controversy consists almost entirely of letters to the press and not just “anybody” could get those published in the *Gleaner* at that time: several of the letter-writers were public personalities. One columnist actually claimed that there was a lack of popular awareness of the proposal and called for a campaign to give it broader exposure (Patmos 1963, 8). Insufficient information is available on the popular reaction but, as it was recorded in the *Gleaner*, the *National Monument* controversy pitched one segment of the elite against another. This, in itself, challenges the notion that cultural nationalism is the consensual, homogeneous product of the postcolonial elites.

Independence and Nationhood but was, as such, figurative and that monuments are per definition symbolic (e.g. Gregory 1963, 10; Rae 1963, 9 & 15).

¹¹³ Scott, a visionary whose ideas were not always practical, at some point also planned to include loudspeakers and a sound system to play Jamaican music. The Harbour View roundabout is, however, a busy thoroughfare rather than a place where people linger. It is therefore unlikely that the music would have had a significant audience or impact.

As a result of the controversy, the Bustamante government withdrew its support but Scott and Marriott quietly continued working on the project and tried to raise the funds required to complete it. Several parts were cast and the rest was readied for casting but they did not succeed in completing the monument during their lifetime. Marriott died in 1992 and Scott in 2002 and since then there has been another attempt to revive the project, in the context of the 40th anniversary of Independence, but this also failed to lead to the completion of the monument. The male and female figures that should have adorned top of the monument were used as a placeholder in Emancipation Park, from mid 2002 to mid 2003 until the new Emancipation monument was ready and again drew criticism, this time from fundamentalist Christian interests, who objected to the nudity. The couple has since been temporarily installed on the *National Monument's* original base at the Harbour View roundabout, the only part that had been completed in situ. [III. 19] There the romantic, elegantly posed pair looks forlorn on its too-large base in the increasingly rundown and desolate environment of Harbour View, which was a model middle-income housing development in the 1960s – an unwitting representation, perhaps, of the deflated aspirations of independent Jamaica.

4. The Bogle Monument

The first commission pertaining to the National Heroes was the *Bogle* (1965) monument for the town of Morant Bay in the St Thomas parish. It was handled by the National Trust Commission, who organized a competition and granted the commission to Edna Manley. [III. 87] There is a photograph which is widely accepted to be of *Bogle* and serves as his official image – a c1865 portrait of handsome dark-skinned man seated in an armchair and wearing a “respectable” three-piece suit – but the monument looks nothing like this

formal portrait.¹¹⁴ [Ill. 89] As she put it in her diary, Manley wished to capture the bold, visionary spirit of the “warrior” Bogle rather than his physical likeness, a decision she made after interviewing residents of St Thomas about how they remembered him (Manley R. 1989, 67-71).

The statue is representative of Manley’s romantic visionary style, which was consciously influenced by William Blake. It consists of a standing male figure, eight and a half foot tall, who holds a machete in his hands, in a hieratic, cruciform pose. The figure is bare-chested and bare-footed, and his trousers cling to his legs because he was, as Edna Manley explained to journalist Barbara Gloudon, “soaked with sweat as Bogle’s body must have been after days and nights as a fugitive and fighter” (1965, 4). The head is oversized which, Gloudon also reported, deliberately reflects the conventional proportions of African and early Medieval art. The facial expression is contorted, “to portray two emotions – ‘angry on one side, terribly sad on the other’” (Ibid.). David Boxer considers it “one of her greatest achievements” (1990, 42).

Bogle was cast in black *ciment fondu*, or cast cement, a substitute for bronze that has two of Jamaica’s industrial products as its main ingredients, cement and aluminum – another nationalist choice of material.¹¹⁵ A smaller, truncated version of Manley’s *Bogle*, which was cast in bronze instead, was used in the *1865 Monument* in the National Heroes Shrine in Kingston, which also included a more realistic bust of George William Gordon by the young sculptor Christopher Gonzalez. The *1865 Monument* was unveiled a few

¹¹⁴ The photograph, a ferrotype, was previously attributed to the pioneering photographic studio of Adolphe Duperly and Sons but this studio did not produce ferrotypes until after Bogle’s death. As it currently stands, the photographer is unknown. Recent research suggests that this portrait may not actually be of Bogle, although it came from the Bogle family, but the original photograph is now lost and definitive authentication is not possible at this time. (Boxer 2010) The photograph had however already in 1959 been publicized as a portrait of Bogle (*Gleaner* 1959) and it has since the mid 1960s served as his official portrait.

¹¹⁵ *Ciment fondu* is a type of quick-hardening refractory cement that has high aluminum content for increased durability. It is suitable for cast indoor and outdoor sculptures and color can be mixed into the medium.

days after the *Bogle* and both events were part of the official centenary observations of the Morant Bay Rebellion.

Despite Edna Manley's efforts to make the imagery relevant to the residents of Morant Bay, the public response was mixed and this time involved the ordinary people, who objected that the sculpture was "too black." One indignant newspaper columnist reported that he had overheard a local peasant comment: "Cho, if him didn't was a black man, dem would never mek him so black"¹¹⁶ and chided that there would probably have been no objections if the sculpture had been made from white marble (Monroe 1965, 6). While such public responses can be part attributed to racial insecurities, this columnist missed the essence of the farmer's argument, namely that the conflation of the racial identity "black" with the color "black" is arguably racist. As was discussed in the second chapter, Krista Thompson (2004) has argued that the nuanced, realistic representation of black skin tones was a major preoccupation for early nationalist artists such as Albert Huie, who sought to represent "'the reflection and radiation in dark skin,' in contrast to more popular uses of 'asphalt black' in touristic representations" (1994, 19). The statue is in effect "asphalt black" although Edna Manley claimed that she chose that color primarily for technical reasons, because "it is the perfect colour for a public statue [and] can be clearly seen in a large open area" (Gloudon 1965, 4). The realistic representation of skin tone was nonetheless a crucial concern for its popular critics, as it has been in several other monument controversies, and illustrates that such subtleties are an important part of how individual identity is construed in Jamaica.

The debate about racial identity inevitably also extended to the artist. The Rastafarian self-taught painter and politician Sam Brown questioned Edna Manley's

¹¹⁶ English translation: "Aw, if he had not been a black man, they would never have represented him so black."

suitability, as a white, foreign-born woman, to determine how *Bogle* should be represented: “Paul Bogle’s statue depicts a fear ridden, harried and hunted undersized field slave, about to invoke his master’s pardon for being a truant. [...] It takes a black mind to comprehend dignity, fear or courage in the stature of a black man, even as the akete of Congo is remote from the waltz of Vienna, so are the minds of the European and the African.” (1965, 19). Obviously wanting to be diplomatic, Brown had, however, first praised Edna Manley’s general artistic accomplishments and complimented her on the technical and artistic merits of the *Bogle*. That the legitimate ownership of Bogle’s representation was claimed in explicit racial and ethnic terms should not surprise us, since 1965 marks the beginning of a period of intensified racial strife and black consciousness in Jamaica, which had included violent anti-Chinese riots in August, two months earlier.¹¹⁷

Despite the objections, the statue was kept in place but the controversy reappeared in 1971 and then took a more official form. The Mayor of Morant Bay and the St Thomas Parish Council (the local government body) formally requested that the sculpture be removed from the front of the Morant Bay Courthouse and transferred to Kingston. They claimed that they had not been consulted about the location, which had been decided by authorities in Kingston, and, again, objected to the manner in which Bogle had been depicted. Other public figures, such as the politician Emile Joseph also argued that the statue was not appropriate for the location and should be replaced by a more suitable memorial. Although he represented West Rural St Andrew in parliament, Joseph was a

¹¹⁷ The 1965 riots started when a Chinese shopkeeper allegedly beat a black female employee. Poor Jamaicans island-wide but especially in Kingston started attacking Chinese-owned businesses, especially the small grocery stores that could be found in many poor neighborhoods, claiming that their Chinese owners routinely cheated and abused their black customers. This incident spelled the end of what had been a thriving Chinatown in West Kingston, as most of the more affluent Chinese migrated or moved uptown.

native of St Thomas and his views coincided with those of the Parish Councilors. He stated in a pointed letter to the *Gleaner*:

We only know one picture of Paul Bogle, the same as that which appears on our \$2 bill [the photographic image]. The monstrosity placed before the Court House to us is an insult. To begin with, no one ever knew of Bogle dressing in the manner the symbol portrays in Morant Bay, and no one has ever seen a Jamaican, whether labourer or otherwise, carrying a machete in the manner depicted in the present statue. [...] We have been referred to as cultural ignoramuses – maybe this is because we do not grow beards and we do not smoke ganja, like some of our artists. One thing I know is that the people of St. Thomas are fully aware of their history, justly proud of it, will defend it at all times and will not allow anyone, I repeat, anyone, to try to distort it in any way or fashion (1971, 19).

This response again reflects a desire for historical specificity and compliance with entrenched visual codes of respectability, as well as specific criteria of likeness, no doubt because the monument is dedicated to someone whose physical appearance was more plausibly documented. It also reflects a deep-rooted aversion against unilaterally imposed collective representations. While Joseph's response mainly pitched rural "St Thomas" versus the dominant capital city "Kingston," his expressed contempt for the art community is also noteworthy. Critics of public art in Jamaica have typically presented themselves as representatives of the righteous majority whose sensibilities are being assaulted by alien cultural and aesthetic values. This contrasts strikingly with the common perception within the art community that artists are the true voices of the nation.

The monument remained in place for many years and served as Morant Bay's main heritage attraction but it never became uncontroversial. In the early 1990s a large hole had appeared in the chest, presumably made by a gun shot. It was unclear whether this was deliberate or accidental but the possibility that the statue had been "mortally wounded" certainly had symbolic potency. This damage was repaired but recently there

was further vandalism combined with damage from the fire that destroyed the adjoining Morant Bay Courthouse in 2007. The statue was sent to Kingston for restoration and a new controversy emerged when a group of Morant Bay citizens called the African Heritage Development Association opposed its return, by claiming that the statue did not represent a true likeness of Bogle and thus represented a deception. They demanded a statue of the “real Bogle,” based on the photograph, and also criticized the symbolism of the statue which, they claimed, implied submission rather than defiance (Davidson 2010). The JNHT engaged in dialogue with the group and initially offered the compromise of erecting a new statue, duly based on the photograph, in Bogle’s birth place of Stony Gut in return for returning Edna Manley’s Bogle to its designated location in Morant Bay (JIS, November 15, 2009). This was, however, rejected at a public forum organized by JNHT and subsequently by the St Thomas Parish Council, which passed a resolution to this effect on November 12, 2009. The latter was followed by a supporting resolution by the Kingston and St Andrew Corporation Council on March 8, 2010. (Davidson 2010) At the time of completing this dissertation in early 2011, the future location of the statue was uncertain but, it will probably find a permanent home in Kingston.¹¹⁸

5. The Bob Marley Monument

Several new monuments were unveiled during the 1970s, including Alvin Marriott’s full-length statues of Alexander Bustamante (1970) and Norman Manley (1971) in Kingston and of Marcus Garvey (1976) in his native St Ann’s Bay. [Ill. 90, 91, 92] These unveilings were incident-free, no doubt because they were all academic-realist bronze

¹¹⁸ The NGJ mounted the exhibition *Edna Manley’s Bogle: A Contest of Icons*, which was on view from September 26 to November 13, 2010. The exhibition, which was curated by David Boxer, examined the iconographies of Paul Bogle and the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, with a specific focus on Edna Manley’s Bogle monument and the assumed photograph of Paul Bogle. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue also examined the attribution of the photograph. (Boxer 2010)

statues that did not challenge common perceptions about official monuments and represented public figures whose appearance and social status was not in question. While these monuments have, as such, remained uncontroversial, the Manley and Bustamante statues are also symbols of the two main political parties and have, among others, served as a meeting point for political rallies. Located opposite to each other, on the northern and southern edge of Downtown Kingston's small central park, they have, not surprisingly, suffered repeated vandalism. The worst act of violence to date against a public monument in Jamaica occurred on August 17, 1994, when the Norman Manley statue was nearly cut from its base by crudely and partially severing the figure's legs. This act was widely condemned in the Jamaican press, however, and the statue was quickly restored and reinstalled.

The next monument controversy erupted in 1983, when Christopher Gonzalez's *Bob Marley* monument had to be hastily removed from its intended site *before* it was even unveiled. [Ill. 37] The monument had been commissioned by the Edward Seaga government in 1982, one year after Marley's death, and Gonzalez was chosen because he was a Rasta sympathizer, though not a Rasta himself, who used Rastafarian-influenced imagery in his work.¹¹⁹ The symbolic value of Marley was obviously a prime consideration but the commercial potential of the statue was also considered – the first time this was explicitly done for a monument in Jamaica – and the contract with Gonzalez gave the Jamaican Government the right to produce and sell reproductions (*Gleaner* February 1, 1983, 3).

While developing his concept, Gonzalez had proposed two possibilities and made

¹¹⁹ Apparently, Osmond Watson had first been approached but declined, graciously arguing that Gonzalez was the only suitable artist for that commission (Boxer 2006, 26).

clay maquettes for each. One was to represent him as “Marley the mystic,” a visionary leader and “roots man” whose naked upper body and long dreadlocks morph into a tree trunk with elaborate roots for the lower body, with his right arm pointing outward, as he often did during his concerts. The other was to represent him as “Marley the musician,” more conventionally dressed in shirt and pants, seated and playing his guitar, as he typically did while performing his *Redemption Song*. It is allegedly at the suggestion of Seaga that Gonzalez combined the two and produced a statue of Marley, as a half-naked, outward-pointing “roots man” but with guitar. The resulting seven foot and seven inch bronze is a challenging work of art, with its near-black, waxy patina, gnarly forms and overwrought symbolism. The physical resemblance to Marley is limited but on a symbolic level it does capture what he was about as a musician and popular visionary.

Gonzalez, who lived in Atlanta at the time, received enthusiastic press coverage in Jamaica during the production of the statue. An update in early 1983 announced that the work was ready for casting and described how Gonzalez had completely surrounded himself with Marley images, publications and, of course, music, in an effort to capture his spirit most effectively. The report also indicated that Gonzalez was in regular contact with the Marley family and the Office of the Prime Minister about his progress on the statue. (*Gleaner*, February 1, 1983) All seemed well until the day of the unveiling in Celebrity Park, as the then as yet undeveloped tract of land near the National Stadium was informally designated, on the second anniversary of Marley’s death on May 11, 1983.¹²⁰ While the statue was being installed for the ceremony, the crowds that had gathered to witness its installation scrutinized every detail, including the thickness of the

¹²⁰ The choice of date was, in itself, problematic. Rastafarians abhor anything that resembles a cult of the dead, as a reaction against the spirit worship in traditional African-Jamaican religions, and do not normally observe death anniversaries. It would have been much more appropriate to use Marley’s birth date instead.

locks, and decided that it did not adequately represent Marley. One eyewitness reported that members of the crowd were chanting “a no Bob, we no want it” and, as with the *Bogle*, “him no black so” (Ricketts 1983, 6).¹²¹ The crowds became increasingly unruly and threw stones at the statue, threatening to destroy it if it was not removed right away (*Gleaner* May 12, 1983, 1 & 11). Seaga claimed that he had not previously seen the completed statue and, after consultation with the Marley family, canceled the unveiling ceremony. He declared that “it did not bear sufficient resemblance to the late superstar to satisfy the requirements for the Celebrity Park,” although no such requirements had been previously conveyed to the artist, and decreed that it should be moved to the NGJ, which had just been relocated to Downtown Kingston. He also announced that a new, more resembling statue would be commissioned. (*Gleaner* May 13, 1983, 1)

The press coverage of the controversy was different from that of other such incidents in that only a handful of letters criticized the monument itself and several of those simply argued that the funds should have been used to attend to more urgent, socially beneficial projects (e.g. *Gleaner* May 24, 1983, 6 & August 4, 1983, 8). This time around, most letter-writers and columnists rallied behind the artist and berated the “ignorant” masses for reacting inappropriately. Many also felt that Seaga had abandoned the artist without warning or justification and that the public would have accepted the statue if he had stood by it. A.D. Scott, no doubt mindful of his own experience with the *National Monument*, wrote: “I wish to congratulate our Jamaican sculptor Christopher Gonzalez on an outstanding piece of artistic creation, representing the form, soul and spirit of the late Bob Marley. It is a disgusting shame that arrogance and/or stupidity have

¹²¹ English translation: “this is not Bob, we do not want it” and “he wasn’t this black.” Bob Marley was the biracial son of a black Jamaican woman and an upper class white English-Jamaican man.

denied the Jamaican society of this outstanding work of art in our National Park, thereby involving the Jamaican public in further expense [for a new statue]" (1983, 10).

Other commentators tried to understand what had happened. The *Gleaner* columnist Mark Ricketts offered the following perspective: "While we might debate at length the appropriateness of the government's decision, what was revealed on Wednesday, May 11, was how possessive the people are about the protecting their heroes and how much adulation there is for 'one a dem'" (1983, 6).¹²² The sense of popular ownership of Bob Marley was indeed very pronounced and much stronger than for Paul Bogle. Marley was a local and global celebrity – and probably the most photographed and recognizable Jamaican ever – who had died recently, in the prime of his life and career. The public that rejected the Gonzalez statue did not want a "symbolic Bob," they wanted his likeness, *exactly* as they remembered him, down to his "medium brown" skin tone and tight-fitting rock star clothes.

Gonzalez used imagery that is fairly common in Rastafarian visual culture, as is most notably illustrated by the "roots man" in Neville Garrick's cover design for Bob Marley and the Wailers' *Uprising* (1980) album.¹²³ The familiarity of the symbolism and its relevance to Marley's work probably explain why this statue was uncritically defended by the local intelligentsia. It is harder to understand why the popular masses failed to appreciate its symbolism, separate and apart from the question of likeness. A remark made by a young spectator to the art critic Gloria Escoffery, who was present to observe the installation, may shed some light on the matter. He said: "[This is n]ot for Jamaica [...] We already know that Bob Marley was a roots man; this is strictly for export" (1983,

¹²² English translation: "One of them" (or, from the perspective of the people, "one of us")

¹²³ Bob Marley album covers can be found at: <http://www.bobmarley.com/music.php>

6). This may suggest that Marley's public persona was more important to the popular masses than his spiritual and ideological message and that they preferred to remember him instead as a poor man from Trench Town who had because of his compelling music become virtually synonymous with his country in the international arena and thus represented their collective aspirations. The comment may also suggest a certain resistance against the co-optation of Marley's message and Rastafarian culture by the leftist intelligentsia, international pop culture and tourism.

The Gonzalez statue was in 1985 replaced by a safe, academic realist portrayal of Marley, standing upright while playing his guitar, by Alvin Marriott, which had been designed in consultation with the Marley family and his former art director Neville Garrick. [Ill. 93] The by then elderly and ailing Marriott actually used a body cast of Garrick, who resembles Marley. There was an agonizing moment of silence when the new monument was unveiled but the crowds quickly started cheering and the fears of a repeat controversy did not materialize (*Gleaner* April 1, 1985, 1). Two years earlier Mark Ricketts had cautioned: "The public's desire for an acceptable patina to reflect Marley's skin tone, as well as their desire for a plaster cast of the actual physical man, a photographic representation, means that we might end up with a physical shell but with no spirit" (1983, 6). The facsimile statue, which has the desired brown rather than black patina, indeed looks wooden and, ironically, quite unlike the energetic Marley. It stands in the increasingly cluttered environs of the National Stadium, where it has to compete for attention with the chaotic traffic, advertising billboards and crudely painted tribute murals of Jamaican star athletes on nearby walls, a new police station with a high chain link fence right across the road, and the ornate wrought iron and pink natural stone fence

which was built around the statue to protect it from vandalism. There have been a few minor incidents, such as the removal of the guitar strings, it is believed to make home-made bullets, but none have been serious enough to warrant additional protection for the statue. For Jamaicans, the statue has become part of Kingston's urban landscape and most of its actual visitors are the rare tourists, many of them Japanese, who venture to Kingston because of its association with Reggae music.

For Gonzalez, the Bob Marley statue controversy was, quite naturally, a grave professional disappointment and his sculptural work suffered afterwards. Until his death in August 2008, he mainly produced routinized watercolors, although this may also be an economic decision, since these are much cheaper and easier to produce and have been quite popular in the local art market. Twenty years after the debacle, he still blamed Seaga and Boxer (Campbell H. 2003, 5), although the latter played only a minor role in the execution of this project and did not endorse the rejection of the statue.¹²⁴ Gonzalez was to some extent vindicated, however, since his *Bob Marley* quickly became one of the most popular works at the NGJ. This suggests that public opinion about public art can change over time and, perhaps also, that the question of likeness became less important as the public sense of loss over Marley's untimely death waned. The positive response to the sculpture there may, however, also be explained by the change in context and audiences, which caused it to be appreciated as a work of art rather than a public monument.

¹²⁴ The Jamaican government had sent Boxer to Atlanta in late 1982 or early 1983 to report on the progress of the work and to, if it was deemed satisfactory, hand Gonzalez a cheque that was due to him when the work was 50 % complete. The work was, in effect, almost ready at that time. Boxer insists that he did not "approve" the work, as Gonzalez later claimed, but merely produced a progress report on its production and played no role in the decisions about the design and concept. He, however, claims that he had expressed some concern to Gonzalez about the inclusion of the guitar, which he felt was obtrusive, and about whether the Jamaican public would be receptive to a symbolic portrait. (Personal communication with David Boxer, August 5, 2008)

6. The Emancipation Monument

In 2003, a monument to Emancipation was unveiled in Kingston and caused the most intense controversy about a public monument in Jamaica to date.¹²⁵ [Ill. 8] The monument is located at the ceremonial entrance of the new Emancipation Park in the hotel and business district of New Kingston, on one of the city's busiest intersections. The park itself had opened to the public one year earlier in 2002, also on the eve of Jamaica's annual Emancipation Day holiday and as part of the 40th anniversary of Independence celebrations. It was constructed on a derelict lot of land, a former golf course, as a special public service project of the National Housing Trust, a government corporation which manages low income housing and is headquartered nearby. A monument competition for the park had been organized in Spring 2002 by the Housing Trust, with assistance from the NGJ and the JNHT. Sixteen anonymous entries had been received and three were short-listed. The first prize winner was *Redemption Song*, after Bob Marley's famous song, a design by Laura Facey, a well-respected contemporary sculptor and installation artist.¹²⁶ *Redemption Song* was subsequently commissioned and has become the national Emancipation Monument by default, although it was not originally meant to be the sole Emancipation Park statue.

Facey explained the concept in the program brochure for the unveiling: "My piece is not about ropes, chains or torture; I have gone beyond that. I wanted to create a sculpture that communicates transcendence, reverence, strength and unity through our

¹²⁵ Since this controversy occurred while I resided in Jamaica, I had the opportunity to observe and even to participate in some of its more ephemeral aspects, such as the discussions in public forums and in the media, and can therefore provide a much fuller analysis of the polemic.

¹²⁶ The other short-listed designs were by Fitz Harrack and by Repole Architects and Planners, who received the second and third prize respectively, although the judges recommended modifications to both. The Laura Facey sculpture was originally designed for the central fountain but was adapted for the ceremonial entrance, while a large fountain with musical waterworks was installed in the center of the park.

procreators – man and woman – all of which comes when the mind is free.” The main part consists of two bronze nude figures – male and female, both emphatically black and robustly built, and an imposing 11 and 10 foot tall, respectively. The figures face each other at a slight angle and stand up to mid-thigh in a round pool of water, their arms by their sides and gazing up to the heavens. The monument was entirely produced locally – the first time such large bronze statuary was cast in Jamaica.¹²⁷ The dome-shaped cast iron fountain base over which water continuously runs was completed one year later. The significance of the base and waterworks was emphasized in the artist’s statement: “The water is an important part of the monument. It is refreshing, purifying and symbolically washes away the pain and suffering of the past.” The temporary concrete base initially had the inscription “none but ourselves can free our mind,” words that were made world famous in Marley’s *Redemption Song*. This inscription was removed a few months after the unveiling, after a copyright challenge from the Bob Marley Foundation, although the words were in effect first used by Marcus Garvey, as the inscription acknowledged, and have such local and global resonance that they arguably belong to the public domain.¹²⁸

There had already been some debate when the results of the competition were released in mid 2002 but critics then seemed more concerned with the nudity of Alvin Marriott’s *National Monument* couple, which had been temporarily installed until the

¹²⁷ *Redemption Song* was cast by Caribbean Casting, an industrial casting company which had previously also cast Kay Sullivan’s *Sam Sharpe Monument* (1983). The latter, which is located in Montego Bay, is however much smaller and consists of a group of five detached life-size figures. For *Redemption Song*, the Florida-based bronze casting specialist Shawn Devaney was brought in to supervise the production (Dacres 2004a, 126).

¹²⁸ Garvey had said in a 1937 speech: “We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind” (Hill R. 1995, 791; e-mail from Rupert Lewis, 26 May, 2004). Marley paraphrased this in his 1980 *Redemption Song* as “emancipate yourselves from mental slavery; none but ourselves can free our minds.” The title of Marley’s song was itself taken from the title of a popular hymn book, *Redemption Songs*, which was first published in Scotland c1910 but reprinted many times. The challenge by the Bob Marley Foundation was in keeping with their campaign to exert tighter control of his frequently breached copyright but was almost certainly also motivated by concerns about the monument itself. Laura Facey has stated that another reason for removing the inscription is that she was dissatisfied with its appearance. The exact Garvey wording “none but ourselves can free the mind,” which cannot so easily be challenged on copyright grounds, may at some point again be added to the monument, this time on the pavement around the fountain base (interview with Laura Facey, June 8, 2004).

actual monument was completed. Trouble started in earnest at the unveiling of *Redemption Song* on July 31, 2003 and quickly escalated into a full-fledged public controversy which lasted several months. The debate played out in the print and electronic media – in newspaper columns, letters to the press, cartoons, Internet message boards and blogs and in the many call-in and discussion programs on Jamaican radio and TV – but during the first weeks it continued in and around the park itself, where small crowds gathered daily around the statues to debate their merits and failings. [Ill. 94] The controversy, especially the sensationalist question of the male figure's generous penis size, also reached the Caribbean and international media, including *Time* magazine, *BBC World*, Australian television and *Playboy's* February 2004 issue, although the latter was more concerned with the female figure's ample bosom.

Locally, many different concerns were expressed but they can be divided into six related groups. The first and most common objection was that the nudity of the figures constituted an affront to public decency and a national embarrassment. One early letter to the press stated plainly:

I must say I am appalled that a sculpture of that type has been installed at Emancipation Park. It would be interesting to know what the artist had in mind but I think it is in poor taste to have a sculpture with male and female genitals exposed, so exaggerated and erected in a public place. Many people find it offensive and we need to consider the numerous children who visit the park daily. (Jackson 2003)

As the controversy unfolded, some claimed that the statues posed an active threat to an already declining public morality, an accusation which came mainly from Fundamentalist Christians. The Reverend Earl Lewis wrote:

Like many others, the Association of Independent Baptist Churches regrets the erection of a pair of statues exhibiting nudity as representative of our emancipation. For the overwhelming majority of people in our

culture, nakedness is private. And while we live in a democratic society, we must maintain proper sensitivity to the moral cultural norms to which generations have been socialised. [...] Already, the negative results of the Emancipation statues are being seen: sensuous women are playing with the male genitals, while men can be seen fondling the breasts of the woman. [...] Unbridled passion and the expression of the baser nature of many in our society fed through the eye gate may lead to many in the park being raped, abducted or becoming the victims of other abuse. (2003)

Such concerns were also fueled by the fact that the unveiling of the monument coincided with a highly publicized spate of rape and murder cases that summer and mounting public concerns about the sexual exploitation of minors.

Alfred Sangster, the retired President of the University of Technology and a self-avowed Fundamentalist Christian, took the concern with respectability even further and his lengthy list of objections included the following: “Do we wish to give the foreigners who visit the park the image that we are promoting our nakedness? Remember the perception that some people have of black people’s supposed sexual prowess.” (2003, 7A) Several other letters and commentaries reflected a similar preoccupation with the monument’s effect on Jamaica’s international image, which was probably fueled by the international publicity the incident received and its proximity to Kingston’s main hotels.

Sangster’s statement also illustrated how the controversy was rooted in anxieties about race and sexuality, which are particularly pronounced in the tourism arena where black sexuality has been caricatured and commodified, for instance in the notorious “big bamboo” carvings – lifesize carvings of dreadlocked figures with enormous erect penis – that are displayed for sale in Fern Gully near the resort town of Ocho Rios. [Ill. 95] That the public outrage was focused on the male figure’s penis, while only a few specifically objected to the female nudity, also sheds revealing light on the contradictoriness of Jamaican sexual mores and the anxieties that surround even the faintest possible allusion

to homosexuality: the dub poet Mutabaruka, for instance, questioned why the male seemed indifferent to the nudity of the female. (Brown-Glaude 2006, 56-57) There were also mutterings that the statues were, again, “too black” – and they *are* again “asphalt black” – although these were quickly overshadowed by the debate about the nudity.

Proponents of the monument eagerly pointed out these contradictions and countered with calls for greater tolerance and open-mindedness about matters of sexuality and nudity and for more attention to the symbolic and artistic merits of the work. One wrote: “I think the people need to focus on the art and not on the nudity. The sculpture, I think, is saying that we are all the same; nudity expresses freedom, freedom for all” (Graves 2003, 5A). Another asked:

Are we so unexposed to art? Are we so uncomfortable with our own bodies, our own nakedness that we cannot see it mirrored in a form of a statue? The more fire we bring to this issue of taking it down, the more of a taboo stigma we will give to nakedness, sexuality and the beauty of the naked body interpreted in art form. As an artist myself, [I have] travelled and visited all major art cities, New York, Florence, Paris and London, especially Florence, with its famous David. This huge statue which is of a naked man, is almost revered. (Gardner 2003, 5A)

Such references to the prevalence of nude statuary in metropolitan cities and the comparisons between Facey and Michelangelo or Rodin, in turn, drew predictable accusations of neo-colonial mimicry and Eurocentrism from the statues’ opponents. Narda Graham, a young literary scholar, stated: “We do not need ‘our own Michelangelo’. Why do we always need to validate our own creations by pointing out their resemblance to something European?” (2003, F12).

It is not that there is no other nude public statuary in Jamaica. One is located nearby in New Kingston district but has not caused any documented controversy: Basil Watson’s *Emerging Nation* (2000) in the small park along the corner of Holborn and

Trafalgar Roads, which also represents ideals of nationhood in the form of a nude couple, posed in an active, upward-reaching embrace which is, in effect, more sexually suggestive than *Redemption Song*.¹²⁹ [Ill. 96] Unlike the commanding *Redemption Song*, however, this academically realist bronze is just under life-size and more discretely sited within the enclosure of that park. It may simply not have caught the eye of the public but the lack of public response to this statue also suggests that it was not just the nudity of *Redemption Song* that caused offense but its specific association with the public, official commemoration of Emancipation and slavery. One letter stated: “When one considers the understanding of Emancipation, one thinks of coming out of a serious situation/condition. How then can two naked people represent the situation of Emancipation? [I]t is my earnest view that this statue should be removed and given to Hedonism II.” (Malcolm 2003) This letter thus also suggested that the statues represent a decadent sexuality that appeals to some tourists – the Hedonism all-inclusive hotels are known for their risqué toga parties and group nude weddings – but is alien to Jamaican culture.

A second concern was that the identity of the artist, a member of a wealthy and influential light-skinned family with roots in the plantocracy, is irreconcilable with the subject and purpose of the monument. This was explicitly addressed by only a few but it was a persistent subtext. One commentator – whose name, while probably a pseudonym, suggested an Indian background – made it the subject of her letter:

Part of the problem with the Emancipation statues is that they were not made by someone in the same position as those they were intended to represent. Laura Facey is a very fine sculptor, but in the complex race-colour-class network that governs Jamaica, she is neither the right race, nor the right colour, nor the right class. Her ancestors, at least 99 per cent of them, were not subjected to slavery and thus not subject to

¹²⁹ This park was established and maintained by the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica, who also commissioned the statue.

Emancipation. Do you think that the Indian community would allow a person from a different ethno-racial group to construct an Emancipation from Indenture monument? [...] At least, part of the implication here is that after all these years Black people in Jamaica are incapable of representing themselves. (Krishnadatta 2003, 7A)

This letter implies that Jamaica consists of clear-cut ethno-racial and social groups, of which only one rightfully “owns” the subject of Emancipation, a view of Jamaican society that contrasts sharply with the ideal of a transcendent, unified Jamaican nationhood to which Facey’s monument design sought to appeal.

Laura Facey and her family responded, as Edna Manley had done before them, by invoking partial African ancestry dating from the 18th century, but there is no doubt that they are “socially white.” Facey’s claims of blackness did little to quell the controversy and only provoked critics such as the University of the West Indies professor and media personality Carolyn Cooper (2003, F10) to focus more on the racial dynamics of the controversy. One local art student went as far as to describe the male figure as “a white female fantasy of black men’s sexuality” (Dacres 2004, 143).

The arguments about race and class foregrounded what is arguably the fundamental conflict in how nationhood is understood and represented in postcolonial Jamaica – as unified and consensual or plural and antagonistic – and received even more stinging rebukes than those about nudity. Barbara Gloudon wrote, in a column which reported on a conversation with the then head of the NHT, Kingsley Thomas:

One feature of the ‘statue argument’ which he and others find particularly distasteful is the introduction of race into the argument. It has been propounded by some that the fact that the artist is ‘white’ is why she ‘dissed’¹³⁰ black people by presenting them without clothes. If it were not so painful it would be laughable. Since when does a person’s race

¹³⁰ To “diss” is vernacular for to “disrespect.”

determine artistic sensibility? ‘Lawks man, we ah sink low,’¹³¹ said someone in a ‘statue argument’ the other evening. (2003b)

Such arguments also suggest that art functions on a higher plane that transcends “mundane” preoccupations such as race and class. Race, however, crucially mattered in the controversy, although it is virtually impossible to securely delineate the rightful stakeholders in the public representation of Emancipation in Jamaica or to put it bluntly, to decide who is “black enough” to legitimately interpret Emancipation.

A third category of criticisms was that the iconography of the monument does not adequately represent the meaning of Emancipation, at least to the African-Jamaican majority. As with the previous controversies there was a persistent tendency to read the monument literally – some argued, for instance, that the slaves wore clothes in 1838 – and to demand that it should recognizably represent slavery and Emancipation. The journalist Desmond Allen suggested: “At the very least, and even with no other changes to the statue, Ms. Facey should be sent back to add the broken chains which literally symbolize our freedom from slavery. With that, we will not have to try to explain to our visitors that it is not nudity we are celebrating but our freedom from chattel slavery and oppression” (2003, 4). Narda Graham wrote: “The bottom line is, *Redemption Song* does not speak a language we understand readily. It does not employ our symbolic vocabulary. Race is not the issue. [...] The issue is the expression of the Jamaican experience using symbols that Jamaicans will find understandable, approachable, ours” (2003, F12). Unlike Allen, she did not specify what those collectively understood symbols might be. Facey did, in actuality, use culturally specific references, to the river baptisms and spiritual cleansing baths of African-Jamaican religions, but this did not resonate with the

¹³¹ English translation: “Lord man, we have sunk low.”

public, perhaps because these are only symbolically related to the broader idea of Emancipation and because such rituals are not normally conducted in the nude.

Carolyn Cooper went further and argued that the monument actually misrepresented Emancipation:

This prize-winning sculpture says absolutely nothing about the epic grandeur of the battle of our ancestors and us, their children, from the brutality of European slavery. In fact, the naked, blind, truncated figures remind me of newly arrived Africans on the auction block. A far cry from what they're supposed to represent. (2003, F10).

Defenders countered that the onus was on the viewer to read the monument correctly.

The columnist and liberal pastor Garnett Roper offered the following interpretation, as one of very few sympathetic views coming from the local Church community:

The intention of the author is most significant, because it sets some boundaries for everything else in the task of interpretation. This sculpture sought to present two images of the emancipated slaves emerging in the process of mental liberation. The images on the work are distinctly African, uninhibited, unembellished and uncovered. They are larger than life, pervasive by their visual impact, and impossible to miss. They are not distracted by each other's nakedness, and preoccupied with what is above them and beyond them. (2003, 6A)

Facey opted for a symbolic, conciliatory approach, in which she represented Emancipation as an open-ended spiritual concept that transcends the actual event. The judges' report of the monument commission praised Facey's design because it:

deliberately resonated with the nationalist iconography of works like Edna Manley's *Negro Aroused* which is its clear sculptural ancestor. Most of all the judges admired its highly spiritual character. The work had the potential to be a sculptural "Prayer of Thanksgiving". The judges also admired the title of the work, *Redemption Song*, as it was felt that this would assist in making the monument more accessible to today's audience (Boxer 2003).

There is an even more striking iconographical continuity between Laura Facey's design and those of Marriott's *National Monument* proposal, Basil Watson's earlier-mentioned

Emerging Nation and other Edna Manley works such as the relief carving *He Cometh Forth* (1962), which was done on the occasion of Independence for the newly built Hilton Hotel in Kingston. [Ill. 97] Each of these sculptures centrally features an iconic couple, nude in all but the latter example. The question arises whether this romantic, hopeful iconography is indeed a central part of the collective Jamaican imaginary, as the Emancipation monument judges seemed to assume, or whether the repeated controversies indicate that it is, at best, an iconographically naïve way of representing the heavily contested subjects of Jamaican national identity and aspirations.

Slavery and Emancipation have a long representational history in Jamaica. Popular, usually Rastafarian or Garveyite, imagery on those subjects is common in street art and broken chains are a frequent presence in such images. Public art on the subject thus has to accommodate these representational conventions or challenge them in a way that nonetheless speaks to the public. Obviously, Laura Facey tried to do the latter but Emancipation may be too heavily charged, morally and ideologically, to be successfully represented as an ahistorical philosophical concept or a “new beginning.”

While the notion that Emancipation was an act of divine or colonial benevolence had some currency in the past – a 19th century Jamaican folk song was titled “Queen Victoria Set We Free” – such interpretations were challenged by Black Nationalism, which emphasized the role of revolutionary struggle instead. The undeniable passivity of Laura Facey’s imagery did not conform to the now dominant understanding of Emancipation as self-empowerment. Most other slavery-related monuments in the Caribbean use more assertive, dynamic and historically specific imagery, although most

pertain to incidents of rebellion during the slavery period rather than the specific moment of Emancipation.

To date, there have only been very few credible attempts to use indigenous imagery and forms in such public monuments in the Caribbean and the calls to move away from Eurocentric models has been fraught with contradictions. Carolyn Cooper cited Albert Mangones's *Neg' Mawon* ("Black Maroon") monument in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as an exemplary Caribbean monument to the struggle against slavery. While the sweeping, dynamic design of this monument contrasts with the passivity of *Redemption Song*, it is nonetheless an academically rendered bronze figure sculpture on a pedestal and its iconography is as indebted the Greco-Roman mythological figure of the Triton as it is to the historical image of the conch-blowing Haitian Maroon. One exception is the *Cuffe* monument to the 1793 slave rebellion in Georgetown, Guyana, which combined the idiosyncratic Afro-Guyanese imagery of the self-taught artist Philip Moore, with the vision and technical know-how of socialist Guyana's "cultural commissar" and noted anthropologist Denis Williams. The central part of the monument is a colossal, fantastic warrior figure – the "guns" he carries threateningly in both hands are in effect crocodiles – covered with scarification patterns that remind of the Benin bronzes. Another is Jamaica's monument to *Nanny* (1999), which was designed by the Compass Workshop, a group of young architects, for the National Heroes Shrine. [Ill. 98] This monument, arguably the most unconventional and innovative public art design to date in Jamaica, is a kinetic sculpture installation which incorporates a large metal version of the *abeng*, the cow horn traditionally used for long-distance communication among the Maroons, and this metal horn makes a haunting sound when blown by the wind. *Cuffe*, which is located

on a major roundabout in the capital Georgetown, seems to have been well-received by the Guyanese population and has even become the site for impromptu Afro-Guyanese rituals but there has been no significant response to the *Nanny* monument, which is located within the walled and heavily guarded National Heroes Shrine and requires special effort to visit. Most Jamaicans have never seen the *Nanny* monument and it is unknown how they would have responded if it had been installed at a more public site.

As a fourth category of criticisms, some argued that *Redemption Song* is suitable for art galleries and their specialized audiences but not as a public monument because its meaning is too hermetic and personal. And the work certainly has personal significance for Laura Facey: it is consistent with recent developments in her work, particularly her efforts to address her own bodily anxieties by reconciling the spiritual and the sensual, a direction she took after recovering from anorexia and turning to inspirational Christianity (Archer-Straw 2003, 15; Dacres 2004, 141-143). Desmond Allen's earlier cited column was titled *The Nude Statue – Private Art versus National Symbol*, and economist Earl Bartley wrote: "Art is predominantly about self-expression. But art for public spaces has to be far less self-indulgent and be more cognizant of public sensibilities" (2003, G4-5). The inference here is that personal meaning should not enter a public memorial and that there are crucial differences between "private art" and "public art." Snide references to the art community were more widespread than in previous monument controversies, which suggests that the perception that artists and art-lovers are out-of-touch and self-indulgent has become more pronounced.

Very few of the monument's critics, however, questioned its aesthetic merits.¹³²

The entertainment journalist Barbara Blake Hannah, the Rastafarian daughter of the pioneering black journalist Evon Blake, wrote: "I can definitely say that Laura's statues of a healthy African man and woman deserve their place in a national cultural gallery. However, I am numbered among the majority of people of Afrocentric minds who are not satisfied that the statues are an appropriate monument to Emancipation" (2003, 13). This sentiment that the statues had merit but belonged in another, more specialized environment was voiced repeatedly. The columnist Balford Henry wrote: "Personally, I wouldn't have a problem if the statues were at the entrance to the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, where they would benefit from the type of expert analysis they seem to deserve. But, when they are unloaded at the entrance to a park dedicated to the issue of emancipation from slavery, they become subjected to clumsy appraisers like myself, who wouldn't know the difference between abstract art and graffiti" (2003). While several critics of the monument admitted, be it often sarcastically, that they were no "art experts," some of its supporters took great pains to distance themselves from the "philistines" who did not recognize the monument's artistic value, as the earlier-cited letter that compared the monument with Michelangelo's David well illustrated. Another wrote, after lavishly praising the artistic merits of the monument: "I appeal to the art lovers, commentators and opinion makers to interpret [the monument] for [the] people and educate them in the appreciation of art" (Young 2003).

Fifth, there were criticisms that there was insufficient transparency and public consultation in the selection of the artist and the design, by means of a short-notice

¹³² Narda Graham damned it with faint praise by giving it a 'C+' for aesthetic value (2003, F12) and one letter-writer insisted that it was "technically weak" (Stultz 2003, A5).

competition which was adjudged by a group of local “art establishment” members that included Rex Nettleford and David Boxer.¹³³ The panel of judges itself was a matter of contention since it comprised the same specialists who have been consulted for almost all such projects since the 1970s and whose power over official cultural matters is resented by others in the art community. The monument’s most vociferous critics implicitly targeted their remarks at Nettleford and Boxer. This argument was again dominated by Carolyn Cooper: “I blame the distinguished panel of judges entirely for failing to select an image that truly honours the spirit of Emancipation and acknowledges the accomplishments of our ancestors. If none of the entries met the bill, the competition should have been reopened” (2003, F10).

Such concerns had been voiced in Jamaica’s earlier monument controversies but have become more pronounced and relate to broader debates about the control of cultural representation that have been fueled by similar “culture wars” elsewhere. It is true that, as Narda Graham put it, “there is an elitist school of thought which holds that a selection of cultured experts should be allowed to define, interpret, and create our cultural norms” (2004, 171) but the unreflexive way in which prominent members of the intelligentsia such as Carolyn Cooper and Graham herself claimed to speak on behalf of the popular majority in these matters was as troubling as the real and perceived hegemonic power of the conveniently vilified and homogenized “art establishment.”

Ironically, the commissioning of this monument reflected recent efforts to make such projects more democratic and transparent. While the commissions discussed thus far were all given directly to the artist, the Emancipation Monument commission was based

¹³³ The other judges were the architects Marvin Goodman and Giulia Bernal. Hope Brooks, then the Dean of Visual Arts at the Edna Manley College, had also been invited but was unable to attend the judging.

on a blind competition which was, at least in theory, open to all and decided without personal favor. This did not amount to popular consultation but the question arises how such consultation could have been practically achieved. There should, for instance, have been mechanisms to ensure that all relevant views were considered, and not just those of the most vocal interest groups. The NHT put the winning entries on display for a while and Facey's proposal was widely publicised before the monument was completed, in press releases and as the park's logo, but by then it had been commissioned. No mechanisms were put in place to receive and act upon public comments, however, and there was only limited response until the monument was completed and unveiled.

Carolyn Cooper, the project's most consistent critic, had from the start objected to the passivity of the design. She had also decried the "Greco-Roman" aesthetic of the Marriott statues and expressed the hope that the permanent monument would represent "real" Jamaican bodies instead (2002). Laura Facey's attempts to address these criticisms, as she acknowledged on at least one television discussion, resulted in what I consider an unresolved hybrid between the romantic nationalist tradition of Edna Manley, Marriott and Gonzalez and the sexually provocative "healthy body" aesthetic of local Dancehall and fitness culture, which contributed greatly to the controversy about the nudity. The hefty physicality of the statues is a far cry from the elegant maquette that had won the competition and which even Carolyn Cooper has acknowledged was very beautiful (2003, F10). This is a telling illustration that it is not easy to accommodate public criticisms in the design of public art and that a comprehensive popular consultation process would have been a complex and time-consuming undertaking with no guarantees about the reception of the final product.

Sixthly and finally, there were a few concerns that the monument's production cost of 4.5 million Jamaican dollars (then about 75,000 US dollars) was not justifiable at a time of deepening social and economic crisis, similar to some of the objections to the Marley statue. It did not help that the NHT is supported by direct deductions from salaries while many in Jamaica believe they are excessively taxed and do not get adequate government services and infrastructure in return. There is, for instance, an acute shortage in lower- and middle-income housing throughout the island, a problem the NHT is mandated to address. One female observer, who despite the raging controversy insisted that the Jamaican public was not interested in monuments, wrote: "I also agree that most people don't care whether the Emancipation Park statue is naked or not, for there are far more important things for us to worry about at this time. Therefore, I am unable to understand why the government has spent \$4.5 million on another useless statue while progressively reducing the budget for many essential social services" (Edwards 2003, A5). Similar concerns had been voiced earlier on about the cost of the park itself, which had a price tag of 100 million Jamaican dollars with an anticipated annual maintenance bill of 8 million dollars, but these dissipated after the park's opening. Obviously there is some consensus that Kingston desperately needs safe, pleasant and well maintained public leisure spaces and the park immediately became popular with Kingstonians and visitors alike.¹³⁴ The disproportionate focus on the cost of the statuary (which is in effect low for a bronze monument that size) suggests that these complaints were motivated by other concerns about the monument or were, at least, amplified by its symbolic significance and the publicity it received.

¹³⁴ Meanwhile, to my knowledge, nobody mentioned that the cost of central fountain significantly exceeded that of the monument, although it operates to full capacity only a few days per year and could conceivably be considered by some to be even less "useful" than the monument. I tried to obtain information about the cost of the fountain from the Housing Trust but was unsuccessful.

At the popular level, the controversy was couched in a carnivalesque atmosphere that unsparingly mocked the “high culture” status of the monument. People came specifically to have their pictures taken in front of the monument and the statues were reportedly regularly fondled. Nearly two months after the unveiling, a woman stripped to her underwear and joined the two figures in the pool, only to be taken to the local psychiatric hospital. Ever-enterprising street vendors almost immediately started hawking unauthorized postcards of the monument which prompted the park management to post signs and advertisements to assert its commercial copyright. The popular radio talk show host Wilmot “Mutt” Perkins started calling the park “Penis Park,” a designation which still has some following today, and, not to be outdone, the dancehall-calypso singer Lovindeer launched a new song titled “Happiness in the Park”, which is pronounced in the song, in patois, as “(h)a penis in the park.” Not all the jokes were about the perceived display of sexuality, however: one letter-writer even suggested that the naked figures were looking up in despair because they had sold the clothes off of their backs to pay their taxes (Walcott 2003, A5). Even the critics of the monument were fair game: some commentators started calling the statues “Carolyn and Mutt” after the two most strident voices in the debate, Carolyn Cooper and Mutt Perkins.

There were numerous formal and informal calls and threats to have the monument removed or altered, primarily from church groups and members of the intelligentsia, but the government decided to keep it in place. Significantly, in a country where even uncontroversial monuments have been regularly vandalized, there have been no incidents thus far (although this can also be attributed to the presence of surveillance cameras and round-the-clock security guards in the park). Island-wide opinion polls a few months

after the unveiling suggested that the majority of Jamaicans actually wanted to keep the monument. The 2003 *Observer/Stone Polls*, published in September that year, disclosed that 56.8 % of those interviewed wanted the monument to stay, while 27.9 % wanted to have it removed and 15.3 % had no view on the matter (September 26, 2003). Unfortunately, the poll did not probe what motivated these responses, which deprived us of a unique opportunity to obtain the opinions of those who had not publicly participated in the debate. While the poll brought some closure, there were efforts to continue the debate in some arenas, such as the “no holds barred” public forum on the monument hosted by Carolyn Cooper and the Reggae Studies Unit at the UWI Mona campus on October 24, 2003. One year later, the *Observer* headlined that two pastors had in their Easter sermons cited the monument as “symbolic of a decadent society” (April 11, 2004).

The unprecedented intensity and degree of public participation in the debate about the Emancipation monument can be attributed to changes in the Jamaican media landscape, which have facilitated the development of a lively, intensely critical and at times downright belligerent public sphere. The number of print and electronic media houses has increased significantly in recent years and Internet services and dramatically improved telephone access have made these media more democratically accessible than ever before. Even non-residents can now listen to most Jamaican radio stations and read the local newspapers on the Internet. Jamaican and Jamaican Diaspora audiences are therefore not only more aware of what goes on locally and internationally, but are more empowered to participate as active stakeholders in local public debates. The most popular call-in programs even have toll-free numbers to accommodate overseas callers and many letters to the press were e-mailed in by Jamaicans abroad or outside of Kingston who had

never seen the actual monument but were following the controversy in the media. The debate about the Emancipation monument was thus the first such controversy in Jamaica to extend into the transnational arena. The proliferation of call-in programs has also made participation in this new public sphere less dependent on literacy and media interventions about the Emancipation monument indeed came from persons from all walks of life.

The psychologist and talk show host Leachim Semaj rightly argued at the earlier mentioned Reggae Studies forum that many extraneous issues were projected onto the Emancipation monument. Among other social factors, the controversy certainly needs to be related to the growing disenchantment of the population with postcolonial governance, especially the mounting concerns about crime and violence and a general sense of social and economic breakdown. The 40th anniversary of Independence celebrations took place in the months that preceded the October 2002 general elections. It was widely rumored then that the elections were deliberately timed to follow after these festivities and the construction of the park and monument commission could thus be understood as election projects, which also explains why they were so rushed. This contributed to the ensuing controversy, especially the sense that there was a lack of transparency in the commissioning process and suspicions that the park and monument were part of a “feel good” campaign on the part of the ruling party.

The question of whether and how to commemorate Emancipation, of course, has significant political potency in a former plantation colony, perhaps more so than any other matter of national commemoration. During the colonial period, Jamaica had observed Emancipation Day as a holiday, along with the other former British plantation colonies, but it was then represented as an act of colonial benevolence. This changed with

Independence, when the then Jamaica Labour Party government decided to subsume the Emancipation holiday into the Independence Day holiday, to be held on the first Monday of August. While this was represented as a forward-looking move – leaving behind the traumas of the past and focusing on the future – some critics, especially in Black Nationalist circles, have read it as an attempt to diffuse the socio-political tensions that surround slavery and emancipation and to serve the interests of the ruling elite by obscuring its roots in the plantocracy.

In the mid 1990s, the People's National Party leader, Prime Minister P.J Patterson appointed a committee, chaired by Rex Nettleford, to evaluate Jamaica's national symbols and observances. This resulted, among others, in the reinstatement in 1996 of the Emancipation Holiday on August 1, while the Independence Holiday was moved to the fixed date of August 6. The Emancipation Park and monument commission were part of this campaign to move Emancipation back to the center of the official identity politics, as the enabling historical moment that produced modern, independent Jamaica. While the timing of these initiatives suggests a strong link with the Patterson government's efforts to be recognized as the legitimate political leadership of Black Jamaica – especially since the then Leader of the Opposition, Edward Seaga, is white – the passion that fueled the Emancipation monument controversy suggests that there *is* a widely shared desire in Jamaica to commemorate slavery and Emancipation.¹³⁵ However, it is one thing to give Emancipation a central position in the national identity politics but quite another to come to a workable compromise on the public representation of what is inherently a contested subject. Carolyn Cooper suggested that the conciliatory tone of *Redemption Song* sought

¹³⁵ One of Patterson's slogans during the 1997 elections, which consolidated his succession of Michael Manley, was "black man time" and he billed himself as Jamaica's first black prime minister. Although Seaga had been the only white prime minister, the others were all "brown" Jamaicans.

to downplay its true meaning:

Instead of rebellion, we've been given 'redemption' as the most fitting monument to Emancipation. What a piece of wickedness! It's really the same old story of how and why Emancipation Day was taken off the national calendar at Independence. The white and brown elite and their black collaborators wanted to erase the memory of slavery – because it implicated them. (2003, F10)

The giant bronze figures are too assertively present on their busy street corner to be ever overlooked, as has happened to most of the uncontroversial public monuments in Jamaica. Most Jamaicans, at home and abroad, know what the monument looks like, if only from pictures, and know the name of the artist, who has joined Edna Manley, Barrington Watson and Kapo as one of the most famous Jamaican artists. Never before has a public art work so thoroughly entered Jamaican public consciousness. Its most positive effect has been that it has generated an unprecedented amount of debate, at all levels of society, about the significance of Emancipation to modern Jamaicans. It has also generated debate about how Jamaican history and identity should be publicly represented and offered valuable insights into how Jamaican and Jamaican diasporal audiences respond to public and mainstream art on the island. It is unlikely that *Redemption Song* will ever be deemed uncontroversial but that has become one of its attractions.

7. Appeasement and Restitution

Several new public monument statues have been commissioned or considered since the Emancipation monument crisis and all are somehow affected by the new sensibilities it has generated. Among the most recently completed commission was a statue of the Olympian athlete *Merlene Ottey* by Basil Watson, which was unveiled on December 29, 2005 in the Independence Park in front of the National Stadium, near the 1962 *Athlete* statue. [Ill. 99] The representational bronze has generated no significant public response,

positive or negative, although the unveiling was given significant media exposure. Ottey is still very popular and the form of this monument is entirely conventional but even this seemingly innocuous commission involved some damage control. First of all, it redressed the gender bias of *The Jamaican Athlete* by recognizing the contribution of a female athlete. Second, it also represents a gesture of appeasement towards Ottey, who now represents Slovenia where she moved after conflicts with the Jamaican sports authorities.

After many years of not quite justified complaints from Christopher Gonzalez that the NGJ was “hiding” his Bob Marley statue, it was in 2002 moved to the *Island Village* duty free shopping and entertainment complex near the Ocho Rios cruise ship pier on a rental agreement with royalties going to the artist. It was placed in the complex’s “village square,” near to its spectacular bamboo concert stage. [Ill. 37] It now appears that the statue has found its permanent location as a photo-op spot in what is essentially a well-designed tourist trap, where visitor access is free of cost but monitored by security guards who can keep out “undesirables.” The statue may thus have failed as a public monument for the benefit of the Jamaican people but it is now fulfilling its subsidiary role as a tourist commodity. That the artist, who died in 2008, and other Jamaican stakeholders regarded this as a satisfactory solution also demonstrates that the tourist-oriented commodification of the visual arts is gaining importance.

On March 6, 2006, Marley’s 61st birthday, the Bob Marley Museum, which is housed in the Hope Road mansion which was Marley’s home, was declared a national monument by the JNHT and a commemorative plaque was unveiled at the site. It was no coincidence that this took place one year after his 60th birthday, since the government had been criticized for ignoring that milestone and taking Marley’s legacy for granted. His

widow Rita Marley had even alluded that she might move his body to Ethiopia and pointedly staged the main concert to mark his 60th birthday in Addis Ababa, which deprived Jamaica of a major opportunity for international exposure. The recognition of the Marley Museum as a national monument can thus also be regarded as a gesture of reconciliation that, furthermore, endorses the work of the Bob Marley Foundation

The Robert Nesta Marley Foundation, as it is properly known, runs the Museum and also the Bob Marley Mausoleum in the village of Nine Miles, St. Ann, where he was born. Both are popular tourist attractions that are operated on a for-profit basis.¹³⁶ The front garden of the Museum, which is visible from the street, for many years featured a brightly painted plaster statue of Marley by the self-taught Rastafarian artist Jah Bobby.¹³⁷ It was in 2004 replaced by a life-size realist bronze of Bob Marley, which was based on a concert photograph.¹³⁸ It represents Marley in performance as a rock star, with his leather pants, Stratocaster guitar and characteristically pointing right arm – a dynamic counterpart to the static Marriott statue. The new bronze was created by Pierre Rouzier, who specializes in “the design and fabrication of character maquettes for the entertainment, theme attraction and merchandise industry.”¹³⁹ Rouzier had previously done a statue of Marley for Universal Studios in Orlando, another illustration of the extent to which Marley’s legacy has been drawn into the tourism and entertainment industry. The result is that there is still no satisfactory public memorial for Marley although debate about how he should be nationally honored is ongoing, especially as his

¹³⁶ Entrance fees are fairly high for Jamaican standards: Ja\$ 500 for adult admission to the Bob Marley Museum compared to Ja\$ 100 at the NGJ and the IOJ museums.

¹³⁷ The Jah Bobby statue is still featured on the webpage of the Bob Marley Museum: <http://www.bobmarley-foundation.com/museum.html>.

¹³⁸ Jah Bobby’s statue has been transferred to the Trenchtown Cultural Yard, a small cultural centre and performance venue at the location where Bob Marley spent much of his youth, which is operated by as a based cooperative by the Trenchtown Development Association. This community-based venue is also attempting to position itself as a cultural tourism attraction, with some degree of success.

¹³⁹ See company website: <http://services.creativecow.net/s/1353/pierre-rouzier-character-sculpture-maquettes>.

legacy is mobilized as the flagship of Jamaica's "culture industries."

The UWI history professor Verene Shepherd, the chair of the local organizing committee of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade bicentenary in 2007 and at that time also of the JNHT, has launched a call for a "war memorials" that celebrate the struggle against slavery (2006a & b). She started her campaign with a call for a monument to the 1760 Tacky Rebellion, which started in the Parish of St Mary and was one of the most widespread slave rebellions of the Plantation Era. There is already a small text plaque in front of the Port Maria courthouse, where the rebel leader Tacky and his supporters had been tried. Shepherd is, however, calling for a more significant memorial that recognizes the rebellion as an individual and collective effort to end slavery and that lists the names those who were recorded as having died in the struggle and the subsequent executions, thus retrieving them from historical anonymity (Ibid.).

The Tacky rebellion memorial has not yet materialized but a related project was completed during the 2007 bicentenary: a plaque to commemorate the 1781 massacre of the Zong – whereby 133 ailing Africans were thrown overboard from the Jamaica-bound slave ship Zong so that the owner could claim insurance compensation – was erected in the town of Black River, where the ill-fated slave ship eventually arrived. At the time of writing, an "arrival point" monument is in production for the Kingston waterfront, near where the Kingston slave market would have been, as another spin-off project of the 2007 bicentenary that seeks to make the history of slavery visible in the Jamaican environment. This commission was based on a blind competition but members of the public were given the opportunity to vote, although the information about the entries seems to have had only limited circulation. It was consequently commissioned from

Nakazzi Hutchinson, a sculpture graduate of the EMC (and Dawn Scott's daughter), who proposed a shrine-like structure that brings to mind the architecture of the slave-trading forts along the West African coast. There has been no progress with its production since then, mainly because of the recent economic challenges but there may also be reluctance on the part of the JNHT to erect another potentially controversial monument.

8. Conclusion

The question arises why some public monuments in Jamaica have been controversial and others not. Obviously, the conventional academic-representational ones, such as the statues of Norman Manley and Bustamante by Alvin Marriott, are least likely to provoke objections. Other factors are also at work. Chief among these is the sense of public ownership and degree of contestation that surround the subject of the monument. Less obvious factors also contribute, such as the location of the monument, since this helps to determine the degree and context of its insertion into the public domain, and even partisan politics. The latter has almost certainly played a role in the controversies about Edna Manley's *Bogle*, which is located in a predominantly JLP parish and each of the episodes of controversy about this monument has occurred while the JLP was in power.

It is significant that all Jamaican monument controversies have been unintentional and unanticipated. Public monuments are generally of what W.J.T. Mitchell has called the utopian type, which seek to "occupy a pacified, utopian space, a site held in common by free and equal citizens whose debates, freed of commercial motives, private interests, or violent coercion, will form 'public opinion'" (1992, 39). The problem is that such consensus *is* utopian and not sustainable in societies with deep historical fissures such as Jamaica. Those who have handled public art commissions in Jamaica, the artists

included, seem to subscribe to the view that art has the power and mandate to transcend such divisions. However, the Jamaican public does seem not respond well to such utopian representations, which draws into question the claims about their social efficacy.

The Jamaican monument controversies have all somehow pitched the “art establishment” against “the public” – or correctly, since positions are not necessarily class-bound, the “specialists” against the “laypersons” – with significant self-righteousness on both sides. The defenders of the controversial monuments have typically accused their opponents of ignorance and narrow-mindedness while the critics object to the unilateral imposition of collective symbols that fail to speak to the constituencies they seek to address. The former often believe that all that needs to be done is to educate the public but the latter have accused the “experts” of highhandedness and a failure to understand their audiences. This mutual alienation challenges the notion that the producers of mainstream nationalist art have a privileged capacity to articulate Jamaica’s collective imaginations. It also suggests that the positive public reception of mainstream Jamaican art has been mistakenly taken for granted.

Each of the Jamaican monument controversies occurred in response to specific circumstances but there are significant commonalities. Demands for greater literalism, especially, have been a consistent feature. This was not so surprising in the *Marley* and *Bogle* controversies, where the debate primarily revolved around likeness, but it was less predictable with the *National* and *Emancipation* monuments, since these represent historical events that have broader significance and necessarily call for a more symbolic approach. This insistence on realism and literalness cannot just be attributed to conservatism and a lack of exposure to modern art on the part of the public. Carolyn

Cooper, in a discussion of the homophobia in Dance Hall lyrics, has argued that metaphors play a crucial role in popular Jamaican culture (and, more questionably, that some of the deejays' vociferous appeals to kill homosexuals should therefore not be taken literally) (2004, 176). Certainly, the Jamaican patois and popular visual culture rely heavily on metaphors and the question thus arises why metaphoric approaches seem to be rejected in the case of public monuments.

Part of the postcolonial cultural project has been to redress the de-historicizing, de-individualizing impact of colonialism and to "write back" by means of "re-historicizing" the past and removing the veil of anonymity that had been imposed on the individuals involved. The establishment of the National Hero order itself was an important part of the official efforts to this effect but the same impulses are also evident in the popular culture, especially in the Rastafarian focus on imagining the deep historical origins of the African Diaspora. This may explain why the public wants to see monuments that focus on specific achievements and iconic details of the past – such as the shackles of slavery – rather than on any abstract ideals. Verene Shepherd's call for slave rebellion monuments that enumerate the known rebels also reflects this desire.

Peter Wilson (1973) has argued that in Caribbean popular culture there are two competing value systems that determine individual status, "respectability" and "reputation". The former represents status in the formalized hierarchies of the middle class and the Church while the latter represents status in the informal, action-driven world of the poor, and, specifically, poor black men, who live outside of "the system" and depend on braggadocio to establish their status. While Jamaica's official and unofficial National Heroes, especially the rebel-leaders among them, were initially exemplars of

reputation, their national consecration introduced them into the realm of respectability and the public seems to expect to see this represented visually. This explains why, in spite of Edna Manley's well-meant efforts to represent Bogle as a warrior, people have been clamoring to see him as he was represented in his presumed surviving photograph, a formal portrait of a suited "respectable citizen." The way Manley had chosen to depict Bogle, shoeless, shirtless and carrying a machete, suggested that he was "merely" a poor peasant – the wearing of shoes and a shirt, as the "no shoes, no shirt, no entrance" signs at the entrance of shopping malls and public offices remind, is a powerful marker of respectability and class in Jamaica. These conventions also explain the popular appeal of the formal photographs of Marcus Garvey in dress academic and military attire, which were distributed in large numbers through the UNIA itself, in obvious recognition of the power of such images. The insistence that the national recognition of significant popular leaders should emphasize their respectability also helps to explain the public preference for the conventional format and materials of a "proper" monument, or an academic-realist bronze on a pedestal, and the sense that it is somehow disrespectful to the memory of the person to represent him or her otherwise, as was evident in the reception of the first Bob Marley statue and the Emancipation monument.

The insistence on greater literalness in public monuments is thus not necessarily concerned with literalness *per se* but with popular visual conventions – metaphors in their own right – of respectability and historical rootedness. The uncontroversial public monuments, primarily those by Alvin Marriott, adhere to these. I am not at all suggesting that public art should necessarily conform to these conventions, which often result in works that lack any actual impact, but artists and cultural administrators cannot afford to

ignore them either. More generally, much of the acrimony that now surrounds the subject of public art in Jamaica could have been avoided if more attention had been paid to the social, political and racial dynamics involved in its commissioning, production and reception of public art.

This leads us to the vexed question of who should control of official symbolic representation and whether more public consultation should be involved. The divergent positions taken in the Jamaican controversies suggest that it may not be possible to reach any broadly shared consensus on public monuments and that debate on that subject is an inevitable and even desirable part of the local culture wars. Such debates are by no means unique to Jamaica. The recent, prolonged debates about how to memorialize Apartheid in South Africa and 9/11 in New York City, which both have involved panels of experts *and* public consultation, are but two examples of how difficult it is to bring public art works pertaining to contentious subjects to a satisfactory and timely conclusion. Even though the public obviously needs to be involved in some way, monuments cannot be designed by public consensus and populist attempts to “give the people what they want” have often led to the most predictable, pedestrian and ultimately ineffective results. For instance, if the Vietnam Veterans association had been asked to design the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C., it would probably have looked like the forgettable supplementary statue – a group of three US soldiers depicted in the requisite academic realist style – that was later added to appease the critics. Instead, the main monument was designed by an inventive young artist, Maya Lin, who defied conventions about public memorials and used ritual space, minimalist geometric form, text and interactivity to create what has, once the initial controversy subsided, become one of most moving and effective public

monuments around. With other words, a monument that goes against the grain of popular opinion can be more successful than those that conform and the much-loathed “art experts” do have an important role to play in ensuring that this is possible.

Maya Lin’s example also raises the question of who can legitimately speak on behalf of direct stakeholders in public memorials. Her identity as a young American woman of Asian descent was an issue when the Vietnam Veteran’s memorial was commissioned and executed, since it commemorated a war against an Asian government, but the resulting tension has only added to the work’s efficacy. This does not mean that this dynamic can be reproduced in postcolonial societies like Jamaica. Artists such as Edna Manley and Laura Facey do not only come from minorities whose interests exist in tension with those of the majority but who also hold significant power over those majorities, unlike Maya Lin. It is noteworthy that most Jamaican monumental sculptors are light-skinned, with the exception of Basil and Raymond Watson, and that all belong to the elites. Monumental sculpture is not a lucrative field of practice and requires significant commitments of time, expense and technical support – facilities that are not readily available to poor artists. This adds further justification to the claims that official representations of historical events and personalities are imposed from the top down.

Does this mean, finally, that the controversial Jamaican monuments have been failures? Monuments that attempt to make *the* definitive statement on inherently contested collective subjects have lost credibility in the wake of the culture wars in the West. The power of Lin’s Vietnam monument lies in the fact that it does not impose any interpretation of the Vietnam War but invites visitors to project their own. W.J.T. Mitchell argued, in an essay about contemporary memorials to violent histories: “What

seems called for now, and what many of our contemporary artists wish to provide, is a *critical* public art that is frank about the contradictions and violence encoded in its own situation, one that dares to awaken a public sphere of resistance, struggle, and dialogue” (Mitchell 1992, 47). While they were meant to be utopian, Jamaica’s controversial monuments have, inadvertently, fulfilled such a function and have generated significant public debate about the significance of the historical personalities and events to modern Jamaicans. They have also generated debate about how Jamaican history should be publicly represented and offered valuable insights about how local audiences respond to public art. This makes them arguably more socially effective than their uncontroversial counterparts. However, Mitchell rightly cautions that “exactly how to negotiate the border between struggle and dialogue, between the argument of force and the force of argument, is an open question” (1992, 47) – a question the Jamaican art world has as yet failed to tackle.

Chapter 4: ART, IDENTITY, AND NEOLIBERALISM

1. New Art in a Changing Context

The 1980s marked the start of a third major phase in the development of 20th century Jamaican art. The new directions paralleled global trends, especially in the postcolonies, but there were specific changes in the local context. The demise of democratic socialism and turn towards neo-liberalism had two significant effects on art, which inevitably conflicted with each other. One effect was that the assumptions that had until then guided modern Jamaican art were challenged, which resulted in new debates about the nature of art in Jamaica, including the notion of a Jamaican School. These debates, some of which were explicit in the art itself, reflected the general disillusionment with the ideology of post-Independence Jamaica. They also stemmed from the local art community's response to the publication of national art-historical narratives such as *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* and the "culture wars" in the metropolitan West, in which the Caribbean Diaspora played its own role as a group that clamored for greater access and exposure.¹⁴⁰

The other effect was that the idea that art could and should play a significant role in the national economy gained ground and was promoted by public and private sector interests alike. The turn towards neo-liberalism generated significant new wealth for the local elites and facilitated the development of a vigorous local art market, which was not only driven by prestige and the desire to contribute to the national culture but increasingly also by hopes for lucrative investments. This local development paralleled a

¹⁴⁰ One such example has been the activism of Eddie Chambers, an influential Bristol-based artist, critic and curator of Jamaican parentage, to demand and broker more exposure and support for Black British art in the 1980s and 1990s.

similar art market “boom” in the metropolitan West, in which some art from the postcolonial world, especially Latin American art, did remarkably well, which fueled hopes that a similar breakthrough was feasible for Jamaican art.

In this rapidly changing, ideologically fraught and conflict-ridden context, a new generation of artists emerged whose work employed new media and approaches, such as installation and photography- and video-based art, and defied established notions about art and culture in Jamaica. Although their work is, as before in Jamaican art, concerned with history and identity, it focuses on the specific politics of race, gender and sexuality in an overt, provocative manner that would previously have been socially unacceptable. Most are not as deliberately concerned with Jamaicanness as their predecessors and their work is often better understood in the transnational contexts of the postcolonial world and the African Diaspora, where similar developments have taken place.

Despite its apparent newness, contemporary Jamaican art is indebted to the queries of those post-Independence artists, Eugene Hyde prime among them, who challenged the affirmative tone of modern Jamaican art and advocated a more critical and provocative approach. This is also evident in the art career of David Boxer, who started exhibiting in the late 1960s and is closer, age-wise, to the CJAA principals but has been crucial to the post-1980 developments, as an influential albeit controversial pioneer and promoter. These developments coexist with more conventional Jamaican art, such as the offshoots of the nationalist school which are still numerically dominant and receive most support from the local art market. Post-1980 Jamaican art is thus much more divergent than before and this, in itself, challenges the notion of a cohesive national school.

2. Interrogating the Art Object

Given the inevitable friction between the forces of the local art market, the continuity of the aesthetic and political underpinnings of the nationalist school, and the new directions in local art, it is not surprising that the status of the art object and its role as a commodity have been pervasive concerns in contemporary Jamaican art. This section examines the work of four key artists who have, each in crucially different ways, been instrumental in this interrogation and related this to the broader political perspectives and critical queries that have defined their art and contemporary Jamaican art as a whole.

a. David Boxer (b1946)

David Boxer has a Ph.D. in art history but is essentially self-taught as an artist.¹⁴¹ While he also paints, he has pioneered new media and approaches, such as assemblage, collage, installation, video, and digital printing, in the Jamaican context. As an artist, he has played an important role in the recent questioning of the nationalist, anticolonial essentialism which he, ironically, helped to entrench with his concurrent art-historical and curatorial work. An artist's statement he wrote in the mid 1990s is instructive:

I feel that where the 'language' of my art is concerned, my work is very much part of the so-called mainstream Western tradition. Yet by virtue of much of its content, the ideas with which I wrestle, my art is definitely Jamaican and Caribbean. Racial hybridization and cultural pluralism, the results of a particular colonial history, are not only key molding forces of my art, but have become the essence, the substance of much of my iconography as well. My art [...] is an ongoing visual diary of the thoughts and memories, the fears and drives, of one twentieth-century man who lives through a life on one small, complex, disturbing Caribbean island (Lewis S. et al. 1995, 150).

This self-definition reflects important shifts in how Jamaican art is understood by those

¹⁴¹ He briefly studied with the New York School artist Fred Mitchell while at Cornell, which resulted in an abstract expressionist phase in the late 1960s but this does not significantly influence his current work.

involved in contemporary art: his focus is not on articulating a secure, affirmative identity but on probing the destructive *and* productive forces that shape Caribbean identity and its fundamentally hybrid nature – a concept in which Boxer perhaps has more investment than many black Jamaican artists because of his mixed racial background.¹⁴²

When he started exhibiting in the late 1960s, Boxer's work was dramatically out of step with the dominant trends in Jamaican art. His *Viet Madonna* (1968) was left out of the notoriously inclusive *Festival Fine Arts* exhibition of the annual Independence festival, because the organizers thought it had been submitted as a joke (Poupeye 2000, 27-28). [Ill. 100] *Viet Madonna* borrowed the Christian Madonna and Child iconography, which was subverted into an image of violence and suffering, in which a shell-shocked woman holds a wounded, screaming and grasping child. The expressive power of *Viet Madonna* derives from the combined effect of the disturbing image and the distressed, textured surface. The latter, which was created with a combination of art and non-art materials, such as burning plastic that was dropped onto the surface, graphically mimics the appearance of burnt, peeling skin. While inspired by press photographs of the Vietnam War, it was not a "get out of Vietnam" statement *per se* but a general meditation on violence, trauma, injustice and loss. (Poupeye 2000, 39) Boxer thus asserted himself as a world citizen concerned with the tragic failings of humanity and implicitly challenged the notion that Jamaican artists should preoccupy themselves with Jamaican subject matter.

Boxer was the first mainstream artist in Jamaica to systematically use found objects. His *Rack with Seven Heads* (1971), for instance, consisted of a small, two-tiered

¹⁴² He is of European, African and Asian descent.

wooden bookshelf with six Styrofoam wig stands, with a smaller head inserted into the cavity in the top of one of the larger ones, invisible except for those who knew where to look – an example of the macabre humor in Boxer’s work. [Ill. 101] The heads were partly melted and covered with tattered plaster gauze, which makes them look like mummified trophy heads. Although this work did not refer to any specific acts of violence, the accumulation of dehumanized heads evoked genocide and mass murder.

The provocative subject matter and innovative form of Boxer’s early work shocked conservative Jamaican audiences and gave him notoriety as the *enfant terrible*, as he likes to put it, of the Jamaican art world. Boxer however quickly gained recognition. During the 1970s alone, he had three solo exhibitions at the Bolivar Gallery and two at Hyde’s John Peartree Gallery, as well as three in the USA, including a 1979 solo show at the Art Museum of the Americas in Washington DC.¹⁴³ He also gained support in the emerging local art market and this perhaps accounts for the more aestheticized work he produced from the late 1970s onwards, which conveys a sense of material value that was absent from his early “head pieces.” The art-historical references in Boxer’s work also became more pronounced, which coincided with his ascent as an art historian and curator. These developments are exemplified by his *Transformation Collages*, in which he “re-worked” art reproductions which at first mainly came from the Great Western Tradition but later also from traditional African and Taino art, and his *Boxes*, surreal assemblages of found objects.

The best known *Transformation Collage* is *Three Variations on a Renaissance Head* (1978), which has been on display at the NGJ since 1983. [Ill. 102] The triptych is

¹⁴³ This museum was then known as the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America and is an OAS institution.

based on three reproductions of Masaccio's *Portrait of a Young Man* (c1425) from the National Gallery in Washington DC, which are progressively "assaulted" with collaged and painted forms that resemble bandages, to the point where the figure almost disappears – violent interventions into a type of image that conventionally represents harmony and stability. Some *Transformation Collages* consist of a single image but most are multi-panel works and the largest one consists of 30 panels: *Thirty Variations on a Renaissance Head* (1977).¹⁴⁴ These "frame by frame" transformations are strikingly filmic. Boxer had worked for national television, the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, in the early 1970s, where he directed cultural documentaries and this added hands-on experience to his interest in film and photography. The *Transformation Collages* are also indebted to the movement analysis photographs of Eadward Muybridge, whose objectified representations of the body predictably appealed to Boxer, as they had to Francis Bacon before him – a subject he had explored in his doctoral dissertation on the latter (1975).

The disturbing but elegant *Transformation Collages* are not obviously political but reflect his general concern with humanity's self-destructive tendencies. Several have autobiographical overtones: the portraits he chose to transform resemble himself or persons in his environment and in *Thirty Variations* the image actually morphs into a painted self-portrait in the final panel. The symbolic violence inflicted on these images reflects the predicaments of a well-educated, racially mixed and gay man in a turbulent, racially conflicted and homophobic postcolony. The assaults on images from the Western canon also refer to the violent, contradictory cultural dialogues of colonialism and

¹⁴⁴ The work originally consisted of thirty-six variations but six were subsequently removed (Poupeye 2000, 8). The portrait used in this case is *Portrait of a Man* (c1540) by the French Renaissance painter Corneille de Lyon, also from the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

creolization, which later became a central concern in his work. It is no coincidence, also, that the *Transformation Collages* appeared while Jamaica was going through a period of turmoil that shattered the hopeful idealism of the post-independence years – the climate that also inspired Hyde's *Casualties* and *Colour is a Personal Thing* series, which were created in active dialogue with Boxer's work of that period.

The method of appropriating and transforming images to create new meanings is also used in the *Boxes*, which became a major part of his production in the 1980s. In these assemblages Boxer uses actual objects, some of them valuable antiques, along with reproductions. While the *Boxes* lack the sequential quality of the collages, there is considerable thematic continuity, as is evident in *Queen Victoria Set We Free* (1988), which reflected Boxer's growing preoccupation with colonialism and slavery. [Ill. 103] The work consists of a small, rectangular hinged box, one half of which contains a delicate medical instrument to which he has attached silver wings and an animal skull while the other half contains string-tied stacks of Victorian one penny postage stamps, linked by meandering jewelry chains that are glued to the velvet lining. The title spoofed a 19th century folk song that represented Emancipation as an act of royal colonial benevolence as well as Jamaica's continued loyalty to the British royal house: Elizabeth II is nominally still the Queen of Jamaica, which Boxer sees as an absurd vestige of the colonial era. The silver chains and stacked and bound stamps, which feature a black and white profile portrait of the young Queen Victoria, and their popular designation as "penny blacks" provided evocative metaphors for the dehumanization of the enslaved and questioned whether this had been truly redressed by Emancipation. The preciousness of *Queen Victoria Set We Free*, however, exists in tension with its political content, to the

point of its negation.

Boxer is best understood as a visual storyteller who appeals to the viewer's ability to respond instinctively and intellectually to the multiple allusions and layers of meaning in his work. His narrative, theatrical instincts took full flight in the installations he started producing in the mid 1980s, which typically consist of interconnected but distinct "tableaux" which are to be viewed sequentially. He treats his installations as multi-media exhibitions in which visitors are subtly coerced to follow a choreographed path that conveys an overall experience and message – arguably a surrealist appropriation of the methodology of the classical survey museum (Duncan 1995). The installations thus reveal a functional link between Boxer's work as curator and as an artist.

The culmination, thus far, of Boxer's installations was *Passage: A Chorus of Souls* (2004), which was created as part of *Curator's Eye I* at the NGJ.¹⁴⁵ [Ill. 104, 105] This exhibition was guest-curated by Lowery Stokes-Sims, then Executive Director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, and mainly consisted of installations. The work also represented a culmination of his thematic preoccupation with slavery and creolization. While Boxer had started out by challenging the dogmas of nationalist Jamaican art, his thematic concerns have become more specifically Jamaican, although he continues to assert their ultimate universality.

The enormous, intricately detailed *Passage* installation consisted of three consecutive rooms, which housed 21 tableaux, which explored aspects of the conflict, trauma and ultimate cultural regeneration caused by slavery, in which the *Middle*

¹⁴⁵ The *Curator's Eye* exhibitions, which alternate with the *National Biennial*, were instituted in response to concerns that the NGJ was presenting a single curatorial vision. Noted overseas curators with a known interest in Caribbean art are invited to guest curate a major exhibition of contemporary Jamaican art. Another version of Boxer's installation was shown in 2007 in the loJ's *Materializing Slavery* exhibition, which was curated by Wayne Modest, the then Director of the loJ's Museums of History and Ethnography.

Passage becomes the violent “birth canal” of Creole Caribbean culture. Two recurrent motifs added coherence to the installation. One was visibly present throughout: the famous diagram of a slave ship that appeared in various forms in the Abolitionist literature from around 1800, a powerful image that not only evokes the dehumanizing experience of the Middle Passage but invites other visual and symbolic associations, as a phallus, womb or Gothic arch, which were all referenced in the installation.¹⁴⁶ The other was more subtle: the use of the unit of measurement of 72 by 16 inches, which was the paltry minimum space allotted to an adult male in the slave ships under the *Regulation Act* of 1788, which, ironically, sought to curtail the worst abuses of the trade.

The complexity of the *Passage* installation inevitably meant that its finer points were lost on the average viewer but this was compensated for by the emotive nature of the imagery, which included slave shackles and a gibbet borrowed from the IoJ, and, perhaps most of all, the strategic use of identification and interactivity, which constantly reminded visitors that the installation was about *their* history. [Ill. 106] The second room included two wall niches measuring 72 by 16 inches, in which visitors were invited to stand and personally experience its claustrophobic narrowness. Another powerful element was the *Chorus of Ibejis*, a large group of Yoruba twin sculptures, male and female pairs, which had also been borrowed from the IoJ, and looked like a miniature version of the armies of terracotta warriors in the royal tombs of the Qin dynasty in China. [Ill. 107] The Ibejis had been placed at eye level in a horizontal mirror box, which seemed to extend the grouping into eternity but also reflected the image of the viewer, who thus

¹⁴⁶ The best known slave ship diagram, and the one used by Boxer, is of the *Brookes*, a Liverpool-based slave ship, which was published repeatedly in the late 18th century, among others as part of the evidence presented in 1791 and 1792 by the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson to a subcommittee of the British House of Commons. The image effectively reflected the subhuman conditions in the slave trade, particularly the very limited amount of space available to each individual in the ships’ cargo hold.

became part of the scene.

Another crucial interactive component of the Passage installation was a set of three *Black Books*, which provide a “one page per year” visual history of colonial Jamaica, based on manipulated historical images that prominently featured the slave ship diagram. [Ill. 108, 109] The overview started in 1494, the year of Columbus’s first arrival in Jamaica during his second voyage and ended in 1838, when slavery was abolished. Visitors were encouraged to leaf through the books, a potentially destructive intervention into a rather delicate work of art that is not usually allowed in art museums.

The *Black Books* images were made using layered photocopy techniques, a medium he started using in the mid 1990s. Boxer has described his photocopy prints as “virtually disposable and cost effective” and part of his self-described “rebellion against commercialism in Jamaican art” (Art Museum of the Americas n.d.). His photocopies certainly challenge the conventions of the local art market, which privileges the handmade and unique, and they are usually sold at low cost or given away to friends.¹⁴⁷ Some of his assemblages and installations are by their very nature not saleable, because they are site-specific and ephemeral or because they include borrowed objects. Other aspects of Boxer’s work have, however, done very well in the Jamaican art market. The prices of his paintings, which deal with similar subjects as the works discussed here but are conventional art objects, are among the highest for living artists in Jamaica. He also has the support of several major local collectors, such as Wallace Campbell.¹⁴⁸ As one

¹⁴⁷ My claim that Jamaicans are strongly attached to notions of the handmade and the unique may be complicated by the recent efforts to promote so-called *giclée* prints of works by Jamaican artists, high-end inkjet, limited edition reproductions that are sold for prices that exceed those for original works of the lower-priced local artists. It is, however, too early to determine whether this new product will be successful and will play any substantive role in the local market. (See for instance: <http://www.jamagination.com.jm>)

¹⁴⁸ His 60th birthday exhibition in 2006 at Seaview Fine Art, Wallace Campbell’s new gallery in Kingston, nearly sold out, as have most of his sales exhibitions since the 1980s.

whose areas of activity have involved art valuations and the organization of fundraising auctions for the NGJ, Boxer has a privileged understanding of the mechanisms of the local art market and serves as an influential taste- and value-maker, controversially so. Boxer thus hardly qualifies as a rebel against the art market. His installations often include saleable components, such as framed paintings and works on paper that are sold separately and help to finance such projects. The manner in which he alters the antiques and collectibles in his assemblages and installations may seem to compromise their historical and economic value but he revalues these objects by turning them into “art.” Even his *Black Books* are half-hearted in their anti-commercialism: they are printed on high quality archival paper, hand-bound in fine leather, and displayed quasi-ceremonially on altar-like structures, which gives mixed messages about their material value.

Likewise, Boxer’s experimental works have challenged local conventions about the art object but their high art status has never been in question. He makes significant efforts to assert this, by means of often-arcane references to European, African and Pre-Columbian art history, Greco-Roman mythology and classical music and other displays of erudition, such as his foreign-language titles. The self-consciousness of these efforts suggests that Boxer’s work ultimately derives from, and capitalizes on, the same sort of cultural insecurities that fuel Barrington Watson’s desire to be recognized as a “Great Master,” although it derives from a more confident sense of distinction. Despite these contradictions but also because of them, Boxer’s work raises crucial questions about the nature of art in Jamaican society which have empowered younger artists, such as Petrona Morrison and Omari Ra, to pursue such queries in a less contradictory manner.

b. Petrona Morrison (b1954)

Petrona Morrison received her BFA at McMaster University in Canada and her MFA at Howard University, which involved a year in Kenya. She subsequently lived between Jamaica and the USA, where she was artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 1994-1995. She returned to Jamaica in 1995 but travels regularly for exhibitions, such as the *Havana Biennale* in 1997, and residencies, such as at Contemporary Caribbean Arts in Trinidad (2002) and the Bag Factory in Johannesburg (2005).

Morrison's residencies in Kenya, Harlem and South Africa have significantly influenced her artistic development. Her earliest works were fairly conventional figurative paintings and drawings with autobiographical overtones but her art took a different course in the late 1980s when she started producing textural reliefs and assemblages that incorporated discarded materials. These reflected her interest in traditional African art forms, such as Dogon architecture and the carved doors of Mombassa, but invoked these sources poetically rather than literally, as symbolic acts of post-diasporal reconnection. *Sentinel* (1992), a 12 foot totemic structure, was made from scrap wood and metal and topped by a horned form that reminds of the Chi Wara headdresses of the Bambara. [Ill. 110] Morrison's preoccupation with tall, vertical forms also has autobiographic dimensions: she has a congenital bone disease which has impaired her growth and required major surgical and therapeutic interventions. Her early assemblages signified, in her words, "transformation, renewal and healing" (Poupeye 1991), on a personal and broader social level, and these have remained central themes.

Morrison's Studio Museum residency resulted in larger, more three-dimensional constructions that incorporated urban debris such as wood beams and metal fragments

from nearby derelict buildings. These recuperation materials were turned into altar-like structures that evoke the frailty of the body and the restorative power of the spirit in the face of material transience. Several served as memorials, such as *Remembrance (124th Street)* (1995) which was dedicated to a homeless woman who perished in the fire that destroyed the abandoned building from which the materials were subsequently taken. [Ill. 111] These ritualistic works also mark a turn towards a spirituality related to African-derived New World religions rather than their African sources.

By the late 1990s, Morrison's interest in articulating ritual spaces resulted in room-sized installations that were at first constructed from the recuperation materials she had used in her earlier assemblages but gradually shifted to other, less materially dense media such as medical x-rays, placed in front of light boxes, and other ready-made images, often combined with a few evocative found or constructed objects. Her work also became more concerned with the here and now, referring to events in her own life and the social tensions in Jamaican society – a more pessimistic perspective than the hopeful spirituality of her earlier works although transcendence remained an important theme.

This new direction culminated in the room-sized installation *Reality/Representation* (2004) which was created for *Curator's Eye I*. [Ill. 112] In what was perhaps her most moving work to date, the autobiographical issues that had always been implied but not overtly acknowledged took center stage. She explicitly confronted her medical history and, in the process, questioned common assumptions about physical normality. The installation consisted of a fully black room, illuminated by light boxes covered with children's x-rays, of body sizes that could have been her own, combined with new photographs of herself taken from unusually high or low vantage points as well

as pre-existing family photographs, anthropometric images, and aerial photographs and maps. These images were organized in broad horizontal and vertical bands, and juxtaposed with two simple pieces of furniture, one short and one very tall white chair – ghostly skeletal presences in narrow alcoves in the black walls. The low placement of the images and the scale of the furniture challenged viewers’ expectations about what constitutes a “normal” vantage point and size. The central component of the room was a self-image in which Morrison became an exceptionally tall woman by splicing an over life-size photograph of herself with horizontal bands of black. This central image echoed the totemic formats of her earlier assemblages and installations, thus confirming the continuity of her thematic concerns, despite the change in media and symbolic vehicles.

Since then, Petrona Morrison’s work has become even more dematerialized and conceptual and she now mainly works with cheaply printed digital photographs that are wall-mounted in simple horizontal and vertical grid formations. The documentary tendencies in her work have become more pronounced, as in her *South African Diary* (2005), which documented her experience, as a black Jamaican, of the racial, social and cultural tensions of the post-Apartheid era. [Ill. 113] Her shift towards digital images and, most recently, video can be part attributed to practical considerations, such as her desire to produce work that is cheaper, less physically challenging and more portable. More important, the new economy of means and the ephemeral, site-specific nature of her recent installations more fundamentally defy conventional notions of the art object and its material value. By using unedited photographs that were made by others, she also challenges the question of authorship, which is an important aspect of how artistic value is conventionally construed. Her refusal to produce cultural commodities amounts to an

implied critical intervention into the conservative, market-driven context of Jamaican art.

Morrison has taught at the EMC since the early 1990s and has pioneered the teaching of installation art there. Her influence on recent fine arts graduates is noticeable, both in the work itself and the self-reflexivity they bring to their artistic practice. In 2005, she became Director of the EMC's School of Visual Arts and her views about art play an important role in how its programs are developed. In particular, she has helped to preserve space for experimental, a-commercial approaches, at a moment when private patronage and public policy alike pressure artists to conform to market demands.

c. Omari Ra (né Robert Cookhorne, b1960)

While the other artists discussed in this section came from relative privilege, Omari Ra was born in West Kingston, in an inner city area steeped in Rastafari and other forms of Black radicalism. He attended the precursor of the EMC, the JSA where he was part of a group of Black Nationalist, neo-expressionist painters who graduated around 1983 and included Stanford Watson and Khalfani Ra. He is the only artist discussed in this section who was trained locally although he has subsequently completed MFA studies at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. After teaching in high schools and part-time at the EMC for many years, he is now head of the Painting department at the latter. Ra has represented Jamaica in many overseas exhibitions, starting with the *Havana Biennale* in 1985. He also enjoyed local commercial success in the late 1980s and early 1990s although his work has since moved in directions that make it less saleable.

While Ra has achieved significant professional status he has actively resisted incorporation into the "system" of Jamaican society. This is evidenced by his refusal to declare a fixed address and his rather fastidious name changes, not only officially from

his “slave name” Robert Cookhorne to Omari Ra but also from his long-time moniker “African” to “Afrikan” and, even, “Afrikkan.” His image is also expressed in his self-designed “Afrikan” mode of dress and his informal leadership of an entourage of like-minded artists, all graduates of the EMC like himself. The group calls itself the “Afrikan Vanguard” and most members have also legally changed their names.¹⁴⁹

Omari Ra is fundamentally a political artist and his work grew out of the cultural and political aftermath of the 1980 elections, which was punctuated by the 1983 Grenada invasion and the 1985 gas riots. These events, along with the general tensions that pervaded the final years of the Cold War, the increased exposure to current events through the media, and the international success of reggae, made Jamaicans acutely aware of their vulnerability in these international conflicts but also their capacity to “talk back,” be it only symbolically. This was evident in the visual arts, in the work of artists such as Boxer and Ra, but perhaps most eloquently in Peter Tosh’s final album *No Nuclear War* (1987). Several of Ra’s early works specifically commented on the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Peter Tosh is a crucial reference in the work of Omari Ra and his peers: with his Stratocaster guitar in the shape of an M16 gun (in effect a present from an American fan) and his aggressive image as a tall, dreadlocked and antagonistic black man, he was the antithesis to the more conciliatory, redemptive rhetoric that had made Bob Marley international popular. Ra’s direct indebtedness to those more militant politics was asserted in a 1984 portrait of a crowned Tosh playing his M16 guitar.

The political reggae songs of that period, Tosh’s included, presented positions on

¹⁴⁹ This includes his former classmate Khalfani Ra (né Douglas Wallace and a.k.a as Makandal Dada) and several younger female artists such as Khepera Oluyia Hatsheptwa (née Alicia Lazarus) and Oya Tyehimba Kujichagulia (née Christella White). While they exhibit individually, these artists have also worked as an informal collective and have had several joint exhibitions, such as *The Afrikan Space Program* (2004) at the Mutual Gallery in Kingston. The painter Stanford Watson is the only associate of the group who has not “Afrikanized” his name.

race and world politics that now often seem sloganesque and simplistic. In contrast, Omari Ra is no pamphleteer and the power of his work from early on derived from a deliberate ambiguity of meaning. In the mid 1980s, for instance, he produced a series of portrayals of beggars and street people that defied their conventional representation as passive, powerless victims. His street people contrast strikingly with the receding, ghost-like presences in Eugene Hyde's *Casualties*. Crouched uncomfortably in the tight compositional spaces, they seem to growl and scowl at the viewer and aggressively display their sexuality, as if it were a weapon. Their confrontational stance brings to mind the concept of "dread" in Rastafari, which mobilizes the ruling elite's fear of the unkempt "lumpen proletariat" as a source of revolutionary subaltern power (Owens 1976).

Figure with Mask (1987), a late version of Ra's beggar imagery, features a crouching, male nude wearing an "African" mask and with large, prominent genitals. [Ill. 1] The squat, almost rectangular, chalky white figure is set against, or rather framed by an ominous blood-red background. This visual contrast adds to the expressive power of the work and helps to foreground the brown and black mask, which acts as the visual counterpart of the prominent white phallus. It is tempting to invoke Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* as a clue to the significance of this work, were it not that the metaphor has been inverted. The work could perhaps be construed as a comment on primitivism, specifically on the white adaptation or usurpation of black identities, but such an explanation would also be reductive and does not account for its relationship with Ra's previous representations of beggars and street people.

Ra's crouching figures are confusing, irritating and enigmatic presences, which are simultaneously animalized and demeaned and heroicized and ennobled (and some

wear crowns and resemble his earlier portrayal of Peter Tosh). They are early explorations of his broader thematic of race, sexuality and power which he has since explored through a variety of troubling, ironic metaphors in which animal imagery has played an increasingly important role. One such was his extended *Moby Dick* series of the 1990s, in which the story of the white sperm whale became a fable of white power and its discontents. Ra's titles became longer and more poetic, with bantering sexual allusions: a key work in the series was titled *The Dick is Killed (from the Opera "Samedi's Mind Set")* (1993). Ra's titles highlight the carnivalesque quality of his exploration of the perverse dynamics of world power, in which Baron Samedi, the lecherous Vodou divinity of death, becomes the black nemesis of the phallic white whale.

Although aspects of Ra's work derive from Jamaican culture and society, no effort is made to specifically mark it as Jamaican and the references to any broader African Diasporal identity are devoid of the concern with healing that characterizes Petrona Morrison's work. Ra thus rejects and subverts the search for certainties and affirmation that has characterized most modern Jamaican art and his works are best defined as "anti-icons." His thematic and formal pursuits are indebted to those of Hyde, Parboosingh and Boxer, who have all employed ambiguity and provocation in their work, but he takes these strategies much further, to the point where they are defining characteristics of his work and politics.

Most of Ra's early works are on a cheap but substantial type of paper sized about 38 by 25 inches that was readily available locally in the 1980s, when many conventional art materials were scarce. Working on this surface was economical but limited the scale of his works. This he resolved by creating multi-panel images, a solution also used by

other Jamaican artists who have to work in cramped living spaces but wish to produce larger works. In the earlier-mentioned *The Dick is Killed*, he aligned three panels horizontally, each with a section of the whale's body: the head, the body and the tail. The multi-panel format added to the significance of the work: the visual slicing of the whale can also be read as a symbolic slaughter or, to extend the phallic metaphor, emasculation.

Using paper also allowed Ra to work with and within the surface, which introduced an element of violence into the creation process. Sometimes he glued several sheets together and literally slashed and hacked into the layered surface, creating patterns of wound-like fissures. He also built up the surfaces by collageing found objects and images with textured substances to create dense, crusty, weathered surfaces that were suggestive in their own right and added to the multiple meanings of the works. [Ill. 114]

The use of standardized sheets of paper was ultimately too limiting and by the late 1990s, Ra was exploring larger formats without, however, reverting to conventional painting surfaces and methods. His MFA studies provided an opportunity to explore new possibilities and his subsequent full-time employment at the EMC lessened his dependence on sales and allowed him to venture into directions that are not supported by the local market. Ra then started painting on white bed sheets or other types of fabric such as military-style camouflage. This provided him with cheap, flexible large surfaces that do not require much space to work on or to store or transport. He thus moved away decisively from the conventional art object, with which his earlier work had kept an ambiguous relationship: the fabric paintings are tacked directly to the wall or casually suspended, with complete disregard for the polished presentation and material durability that conventionally signal value in the Jamaican art market. Fabric lacks the relative

rigidity of paper, which had allowed him to create heavily built-up surfaces. Ra thus has to rely more on the image to make his statement, although he manages to create an illusion of material density with the deep darkness of the paint and charcoal images. The first such works were in black and white, although he has since re-introduced color.

Ra's first major fabric work was *Bois Caiman's Foreign Policy Retro: Restruction Globe Shrugged* (2004), which was shown in the NGJ's 2004 National Biennial. It consisted of four painted white bed sheets that were hung in a curtain-like configuration that played up the theatrical quality of the work and allowed it to dominate the mixed exhibition space in which it was shown. Each sheet bore a monumental black male portrait head in what appeared to be a military uniform from the Napoleonic period. They reminded of the historical portraits of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, but were obviously also self-images – a shift away from the complex but depersonalized metaphors of his earlier work. As a group of portraits exhibited together, the work also challenged the traditional portrait galleries of the metropolitan West, which are mostly concerned with “dead white males.” The work was created during the bicentenary of the Haitian Revolution and the title refers to the site of the legendary Vodou ceremony that marked the start of the rebellion.

In subsequent works the references to the Haitian Revolution became more explicit and *Reconstruction: Legbara in Space* (2004-05) is a self-portrait in the guise of Toussaint Louverture. [Ill. 115] It more closely follows the official iconography of Toussaint, which was consolidated in 19th century portrait prints, while the background contains suggestions of a machete, the weapon/tool of the Caribbean peasantry, and linear patterns that remind of the Haitian vèvè drawings, abstracted ritual ground drawings that

symbolize the various Haitian Vodou divinities.¹⁵⁰ Ra thus foregrounded the association between Vodou and the Haitian Revolution as instances of rebellion and self-affirmation. The title refers to the West African trickster and crossroads or gatekeeper divinity Esu-Elegbara, or his Haitian counterpart Papa Legba, to which Toussaint's adopted surname Louverture ("the opening" or "the opener") seems to have deliberately referred.¹⁵¹ By turning this image into a self-portrait, Ra also alludes to his own subversive persona. This identification does not humanize Toussaint: with its looming monumentality and "supercharged" blackness, Ra's portrayal turns Toussaint (and himself) into a fearsome mythological being that exemplifies his notion of Black Revolution. Ra, characteristically, raises more questions than answers but presents Haiti as a site of a crucial and as yet unresolved symbolic struggle in the Black World.

d. Roberta Stoddart (b1963)

Roberta Stoddart is the daughter of a white Australian expatriate father and a white Jamaican mother. She attended primary and secondary school in Jamaica but conducted her art studies in Australia, at the Queensland and Sydney Colleges of Art. She returned to Jamaica in the early 1990s and was the first *Life of Jamaica* sponsored artist in 1992, a short-lived program by a local life insurance company which provided promising young artists with a one-year stipend and a solo exhibition at the end of the award period.

Stoddart moved to Trinidad in 1999 but her work of the 1990s posed a significant and influential counterpoint to what has been discussed thus far in this chapter. Morrison and Ra are representative of the contemporary Jamaican artists who have radically

¹⁵⁰ The extant portraits of Toussaint, most of them posthumous, can be found on the website <http://thelouvertureproject.org>. The best known of these is an 1838 engraving by the French artist Nicholas Eustache Maurin, in which Toussaint is shown in profile, wearing an elaborate Napoleonic uniform and hat. Ra's portrayals are derived from earlier images, in which Toussaint appears bare-headed and wearing more modest uniforms, such as an anonymous 1802 engraving, one of very few to be made when he was still alive.

¹⁵¹ Toussaint's original surname was Breda, after the plantation where he was enslaved.

challenged the art object conventions but Stoddart belongs to an equally important group that has embraced them wholeheartedly, with meticulously detailed representational oil paintings. Her work is, however, no less provocative than that of the others and offers biting, surreal critiques of Jamaican history and life and the uncomfortable politics of being white and lesbian in Jamaica. This makes it revolutionary in its own right since class privilege and alternative sexualities are not usually openly addressed in Jamaican art. Not surprisingly, her influences are different from most of her local contemporaries and include the Dadaist photomontages of Hannah Höch, the morbid fantasies of the American photographer Joel-Peter Witkin and, predictably, for an artist with feminist-autobiographical interests, the surreal imagery of Frida Kahlo. The tortured, transgressive imagery she borrows from these sources is, however, tempered by the satirical tone and highly finished, ornamental quality of her paintings, which also compares to the work of the Australian expatriate Colin Garland. These qualities gave her a favored position in the Jamaican art market, where there is space for controversial subject matter, as long as it is presented in a conventional, aestheticized art format.

Her *Endangered Species* (1993) is a satirical “formal” portrait of a light-skinned, obviously affluent Jamaican family, set in an upscale domestic environment (there are elaborately framed paintings on the wall and floral arrangements on column stands). [Ill. 116] The seated mother is the central figure in the composition. She is flanked by her two children, a boy and a girl, who are both standing – the ideal family size that has been promoted by the Jamaican government but has eluded many poor mothers.¹⁵² To the right of the girl, stands the father; to the left of the boy, the domestic helper, the only black

¹⁵² The slogan of the Family Planning Board in the 1980s was “Two is Better than Too Many.”

person in the scene. The portrait also includes a cat and a groomed white miniature poodle whose “upscale” name, Champagne, is engraved on the food bowl on the floor.

Each of the five humans in *Endangered Species* has comical symbolic attributes that represent their station in life and their problematic relationship with the others. The mother is startlingly naked except for a large amount of jewelry, long, pointy fingernails and fluffy, white and gold slippers – features that visually relate her to the pet poodle and mark her as a “St Andrew housewife,” as the privileged type is known in Jamaica. She literally wears the “emperor’s new clothes” and her apparent obliviousness to her exposed, vulnerable state suggests that she leads an indolent, pampered life and serves only as the nominal center of the family unit. She holds a telephone horn in her hands and its long curly wire is wrapped like a tether around the ornate chair on which she sits and, more tenuously, around the arm of her son. Her son is turned away from her and seems to pay her no mind, despite her feeble attempt to attach him to her, although the tied-up lizard he suspends close to her leg suggests that he delights in provoking her.¹⁵³ The girl seems even more disconnected from the mother and has the wire of her yo-yo wrapped around her own arm and her father’s foot, which suggests a reciprocally manipulative relationship between those two. The boy and girl both wear uniforms of top Kingston high schools and the girl holds a tennis racket – they are the sort of people who attend the “right” schools and play the “right” sports. The boy, however, seems to be attracted by aspects of working class culture that could threaten the stability and status of the family. The back of his head is replaced by a soccer ball, a much more proletarian sport than tennis. He also has a sling-shot, an attribute of poor rural boys who use it to shoot birds,

¹⁵³ Jamaicans are notoriously afraid of lizards, although the local varieties are small and innocuous, and typically burst out in hysterical attempts to kill or remove the animal when confronted with the presence of one in their homes (Senior 2003, 291).

in his shirt pocket and a (toy?) gun casually held in his right hand, which playfully reminds that the elite is not insulated from the crime and violence that pervades Jamaica.

The father wears the top part of a Superman suit under his sports coat and tie, but also wears short pants and sneakers. Despite his silly, incongruous outfit, he has all the smug attributes of the upper class “pater familias,” none of which relate to any productive work: he is smoking a pipe and holds a glass with liquor on the rocks and a golf club in his hands. The helper, in contrast, is defined by her labor and subservient status. She wears an apron and holds a tray with iced drinks, and her broom lies on the floor as if it was hastily abandoned for the sake of the family picture. In an example of the visual humor that suffuses the painting, the checkerboard pattern of her dress is echoed in the tile floor which reinforces the sense that her persona is defined by her domestic duties.

Instead of regular human heads, the five figures have monstrous, dinosaur-like head structures: fan-shaped with peacock-feather eyes for the female figures and more human for the males but with protruding, phallic tubular eye sockets. The female heads were borrowed from a photograph by Witkin, *ID Photograph from Purgatory: Two Women with Stomach Irritations, New Mexico* (1986), which features two seated female nudes with almost identical head-dresses – an instance of Stoddart’s sometimes excessive dependence on her sources. The eyes give further clues about the character of each figure. The mother has only one eye, which suggests that she has the most myopic outlook, while her daughter has three and may thus be more aware. The helper has seven eyes and perhaps the clearest vantage point of the three women. The father uses one of his tubular eyes to possessively ogle “his” wife but looks outward with the other – obviously, he has a “wandering eye.” The eyes of his son, in contrast, seem to be latched onto the ample

body of the domestic helper. The live-in helper is reputedly the source of sexual initiation for many elite Jamaican boys, a hangover from the plantation era when many house slaves had to provide sexual services, a historical context which is also alluded to by the painting of a Great House on the background wall. The helper, however, holds the boy firmly by the arm and seems to prevent him from using his gun, which suggests that she is also a much-needed source of stability in a dysfunctional family environment.

While it does not depict her own situation, *Endangered Species* has autobiographical dimensions since it represents the sort of family Stoddart comes from. It spoofs the “habits and mores” of the Jamaican upper classes and is offered to our scrutiny as if the subjects were rare butterflies mounted in a display box. The work provides a hilarious counterpart to Parboosingh’s *Jamaica Gothic*, which is no less “Jamaican” than the older work but turns its gaze to the patron class that consumes the iconic representations of *other* Jamaicans but usually stays out of sight as a subject. [Ill. 73] The only exception to the representational invisibility of the postcolonial elite is formal portraiture and it is no coincidence that Stoddart has chosen the family portrait as the vehicle for her parody. Although it is rare in 20th century Caribbean art, there are historical precedents for the satire of elite life, most notably in the *Johnny Newcome* cartoons of the early 19th century, which lampooned the decadent lifestyle of the West Indian plantocracy. [Ill. 117]

Stoddart’s privileged but marginalized position in Jamaican society has inevitably affected the reception of its political content. She was criticized by some of her peers in the late 1990s for her representation of black persons as powerless victims in works that were furthermore sold as luxury commodities and it was implied, and in some instances

openly stated, that such subjects were out of bounds for her as a white artist. She retorted by claiming to be black because, according to her, all Jamaicans are black.¹⁵⁴ Unlike Edna Manley and Laura Facey, she did not claim to be of part-African descent but, like them, asserted legitimate common cause with the black majority. This led to further criticisms that she was in denial about her position in Jamaica's race and class hierarchies, although she actually engaged with this subject in works such as *Endangered Species*. This again illustrates that the right to speak on behalf of the black majority is a central issue in the Jamaican art world and that racial, national and social identity determine how this legitimacy is construed, in a manner that is beyond the control of the artist in question.

Stoddart was also one of the most vocal participants in the local art world debates of the 1990s and questioned the NGJ's general politics but especially what she perceived as a bias against representational painting such as hers. Her accusations were to some extent misdirected, since representational art has always dominated the NGJ's exhibitions and collections and since her work was, in actuality, included in exhibitions such as the *Annual National*. She was, however, not included in the overseas exhibitions of contemporary Caribbean art that in the early to mid 1990s routinely included Morrison, Ra and Boxer. This obviously had to do with the more conventional nature of her work, at a time when representational painting was indeed marginalized at the expense of installation and new media art in the international exhibitions circuit. She was, however, represented in the 1996 *Santo Domingo Biennial*, which then consisted of painting only, and the 1998 *Cagnes-sur-Mer Biennial* in France, two exhibitions of contemporary

¹⁵⁴ These debates, in which I participated, were informal and did not make it to print, although Stoddart has referred to these criticisms in later interviews and writings (e.g. The Bookmann and Adele 2006)

painting, and won the Prize of the Public at the latter, thus providing her with vindication.

3. Contemporary Art and Jamaican Society

The art described above is, in various ways, politically motivated and its makers obviously wish to intervene into Jamaican society. Contemporary Jamaican artists share such social interventionist ambitions with the nationalist and Independence generations, but more actively interrogate the dominant aesthetic, cultural and social norms in the process. The question thus arises how the new art has been received in Jamaica and whether it has been any more or less effective in achieving its political goals than its predecessors. This section thus examines the local reception of contemporary Jamaican art and contextual issues that have shaped its development and reception alike, namely its transnational orientation and its institutional support.

a. Transnationalization and Jamaicanness

Contemporary Jamaican art emerged in the age of globalization and the artists are more internationally mobile than their predecessors. Most have been trained overseas, still mainly in the USA, England or Canada but, unlike their predecessors who obtained more basic training there, this now usually includes graduate studies at Master of Fine Arts (MFA) level. The more successful exponents also participate regularly in overseas exhibitions, conferences, residencies and workshops, mainly in the metropolitan West but also in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere in the Caribbean. This new mobility is aided by improved and more affordable travel and communications, the personal and institutional transnational alliances that have been created by mass migration, and the new funding opportunities for minority artists in the metropolitan West.

Several contemporary artists of Jamaican descent have gained prominence and

critical acclaim in North America and Europe, along with other artists from the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and Asia. The NYC-based installation artist Nari Ward, for instance, was part of the US-American representation in the 1993 Venice Biennale and was subsequently featured in the 1995 and 2006 Whitney Biennales and in *Documenta* in Kassel in 1997 and 2002.¹⁵⁵ He was born in Kingston in 1963 and moved to New York with his family as a child. He received his MFA from the Brooklyn College and is now professor of art at Hunter College. Much of Ward's work – large, site-specific installations made from funky urban debris, such as abandoned strollers and shopping carts – revolves around his experiences and social environment as a black Jamaican migrant who grew up in Harlem. Ward was featured in the *Modern Jamaican Art* (1998) and in the *Curator's Eye I* exhibition. Such incorporation efforts further complicate the increasingly diffuse definitions of Jamaican art and artists.

For artists who reside in countries such as Jamaica, international mobility inevitably correlates to their socio-economic background. Traveling or studying overseas usually requires visas and young, poor Jamaicans are less likely to receive those than their elite counterparts because they are often typecast as potential illegal migrants. The substantial, hard-currency tuition fees that are charged at major metropolitan art schools and universities are obviously unaffordable to most aspiring art students in Jamaica but merit-based scholarships are also out of reach for those who have been disadvantaged by the significant class-based quality differences in the Jamaican education system. If the latter at all get the opportunity to study art at tertiary level, they are more likely to do so only locally. Such social disparities are also evident in artists' access to overseas grants,

¹⁵⁵ More information on Nari Wards biography and work can be found at: <http://www.lehmannmaupin.com/#/artists/nari-ward/>

residencies and exhibitions, which rely on access to information about such opportunities and the ability to produce compelling proposals and documentation.

This does not mean that local education does not contribute to contemporary Jamaican art. There was a distinct polarization in the post-Independence years between the locally trained artists, who tended to produce work that followed the conventions of the nationalist school, and their more adventurous overseas trained counterparts but the EMC has recently become an important conduit for new directions in Jamaican art. Its precursor, the JSA had in 1976 been joined by the national schools of music, dance and drama at the newly constructed Cultural Training Centre (CTC) near New Kingston. This new campus facilitated the expansion of the student body and faculty, and the introduction of programs in textiles, jewelry and art education in the late 1970s. The CTC was renamed the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts in 1995 and introduced its first BFA degree in the visual arts in 2004.¹⁵⁶ The admission criteria, which had previously been fairly lax, have become more stringent and the earlier vocational orientation of the curriculum has been replaced by a focus on new media and critical reflection, in courses that are taught by key contemporary artists such as Boxer, Morrison and Ra, most of which have been trained abroad.

With few exceptions, contemporary Jamaican artists do belong to the middle and upper classes and this only amplifies the race and class hierarchies that were already evident at the time of the nationalist school. There is, however, one major change: Edna Manley celebrated the majority black Jamaican identity in her work while submerging

¹⁵⁶ As of the mid 1990s, some degree programs were offered in association with UWI and the local Joint Board of Teacher Education, but the College now issues its own degrees. At the time of writing, only Bachelors' level degrees are offered but the College already facilitates an on-line Master's degree in Art Education offered in association with the University of Ohio. The Schools of Drama, Dance and Music are also introducing degree programs.

her own privileged but marginal background but the new artists deal more openly and provocatively with the tensions and contradictions that arise from their social background, as could be seen in the work of Stoddart and Boxer. Even the perspectives of Morrison and Ra are separated from the mainstream because of their interrogation of physical normality and radical racial politics, respectively. While early modern Jamaican art sought to define and celebrate collective identities, contemporary art has interrogated such notions and, furthermore, asked those questions from openly acknowledged marginal positions.

Not surprisingly, the legitimacy of contemporary Jamaican art as *Jamaican* art has been questioned. Annie Paul made it her defining cause when she started writing about Jamaican art in the late 1990s. She argued in *Pirates or Parrots* (1997):

There is a dominant and unquestioned tendency on the part of many of those who *count* as ‘artists’ and the kingmakers in the Jamaican art world today to accept as hegemonic the Western or European art tradition and to produce art very much based on movements and developments in the metropolitan art world. The result has been a kind of well-behaved and obedient ‘parroting’ of various metropolitan styles, without any attempt to appropriate what are essentially ‘foreign’ developments and adapt them to a local aesthetic agenda (52).

Paul emphasized that this critique applies to contemporary Jamaican art only and not to earlier exponents such as Albert Huie (Ibid.). These claims are, as such, debatable: the external relationships that shape contemporary Jamaican art are less concerned with the metropolitan mainstream than with what happened in its margins, such as in African-American art, and contemporary Jamaican art is in many ways more original and distinctive than that of the nationalists. Paul’s emotive argument however struck a chord in the local art community, especially with those who disapproved of the NGJ’s role in contemporary art as the principal “kingmaker.”

b. Local Institutional Support

As of 1983, the NGJ was housed in spacious modern quarters in downtown Kingston that allowed it to accommodate contemporary art in its temporary exhibitions. The NGJ actively promoted innovation through initiatives such as *Six Options: Gallery Spaces Transformed* (1985), the first exhibition of installation art in Jamaica which was organized to promote the local development of this art form. This receptivity benefited from Boxer's own interests as a contemporary artist but his regular and prominent inclusion in major local and overseas exhibitions has inevitably been controversial.¹⁵⁷

There was an increased demand for overseas exhibitions of Caribbean art in the 1980s and 1990s, especially around the 1992 Columbus Quincentennial, which put the international spotlight on the history and culture of the Caribbean as the birthplace of the New World. The international circulation of Caribbean art also benefited from the establishment in the region of high-profile recurrent exhibitions such as the *Havana Biennale* in 1983 and the *Santo Domingo Biennale of Painting* in 1992.¹⁵⁸ While contemporary Cuban artists were the main beneficiaries of this growing international interest, some Jamaicans, especially Boxer, Morrison and Ra, also gained visibility. The NGJ's role in the Jamaican representation in these international exhibitions varied: sometimes it merely acted as a facilitator, as with the *Havana Biennale* which is centrally selected and curated by the Wifredo Lam Center in Cuba, while in other instances, such as the *Santo Domingo Biennales* in 1992, 1994 and 1996 or the *Sao Paulo Biennial* in

¹⁵⁷ He was, for instance, one of the six artists in *Six Options*, although this exhibition was curated by the then assistant curator, Rosalie Smith-McCrea. More recently, he was prominently represented in *Curator's Eye I*, whose guest curator Lowry Stokes Simms had been a classmate at Johns Hopkins University. In both instances, he presented the largest and most elaborate installations in the exhibition.

¹⁵⁸ The Havana Biennial was initially limited to Latin-American art but in 1985 expanded its scope to Third World art. Jamaican artists were included as of then. The Santo Domingo Biennial, which is now defunct, was open to painting from the Caribbean and Central America.

1996 and 1998, it had curatorial responsibility for the Jamaican representation. Although there were touring exhibitions that provided more inclusive surveys, such as *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* (1982) or *Caribbean Visions* (1995), a survey of Caribbean art which also toured in the USA, most of those recent international exhibitions were limited to contemporary art. Arguably the main reason for this is that contemporary Caribbean art is more attuned to the aesthetic and critical queries that have shaped the international art world since the 1990s, such as cultural hybridity and race and gender politics.

Contemporary artists thus became the dominant representatives of Caribbean art in the international biennales and touring exhibitions alike. Predictably, this generated discontent among the mainstream artists who were, again, marginalized in the international circulation of Caribbean art and held the NGJ responsible, which supplanted the earlier concerns about its promotion of the Intuitives. Similar conflicts have arisen elsewhere in the Caribbean, among others in Barbados (Hadchity 2007) and the Bahamas (Thompson 2007), but the controversies have been more pronounced in Jamaica, perhaps because its older and more developed cultural infrastructure and art market have added to the local art establishment's sense of entitlement.

The NGJ also experienced a decline in visitorship during the 1990s, which stemmed from the increasingly negative public perceptions of Downtown Kingston but, no doubt, also from the lack of popular appeal of its exhibitions and programs.¹⁵⁹ The loss of public participation added to the sense that the NGJ only represented the interests of a privileged few and promoted art that was alien to Jamaican culture. This raised

¹⁵⁹ In the 1980s and early 1990s, NGJ annual reports typically claimed about 20,000 visitors per annum but these were rough estimates that were not supported by actual records. My personal observations of NGJ visitorship however suggest that there was indeed a significant decline. Figures are now more carefully recorded, however, and the visitorship has increased, aided by more active marketing. Between 2005 and 2009, visitorship rose from 9,205 to 15,454 per annum and continues to increase (NGJ Visitor Statistics). Our current target is 30,000 per annum by 2012.

questions about the NGJ's relevance to the broader Jamaican public, which were mobilized against the institution mainly by artists who felt that their own interests were not duly represented. The question was also raised in the 2003 cultural policy document and marked as a matter to be addressed with urgency. Ironically, contemporary artists have been among the fiercest critics of the NGJ's role as the guardian of the national canons and gatekeeper for the international exposure of Jamaican art, and its increasingly tenuous relationship with Jamaican audiences. This should not surprise since their international exposure has made them more aware of the critical and theoretical implications of such representations than their predecessors.

Part of the problem is that the NGJ effectively serves as the main exhibition outlet for contemporary art in Jamaica, because of the lack of other exhibition facilities. Non-profit exhibition and studio spaces have elsewhere, especially in the metropolitan West, been essential to the sustainability of contemporary art but no such facilities have thus far succeeded on the island. This can be attributed to a lack of initiative on the part of the artists, who elsewhere usually initiate such projects, but also the unwillingness of local art patrons to provide support that does not involve the exchange of appreciable commodities. It is very difficult for non-profit arts entities in Jamaica to get the tax concessions that such initiatives require to attract sustained and substantial funding support, which in itself illustrates that art is regarded as a *for-profit* activity by the Jamaican government. Similar problems have occurred throughout the Caribbean: in Trinidad, Caribbean Contemporary Arts Limited, a private initiative of local artists and arts administrators, for ten years maintained an internationally noted studio residency and exhibition facility known as CCA7 near Port-of-Spain, but suspended these activities

effective August 31, 2007. While CCA7 had obtained significant support from overseas funders, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Reed Foundation in the USA, it had not attracted the substantive governmental and community support in Trinidad it needed to make it sustainable.¹⁶⁰

Until recently, Jamaica had, produced any noteworthy similar initiatives but this is now slowly changing. In 2008, the Australian artist Melinda Brown established the Rocktower – or, to use its patois name, Roktowa – as a contemporary art space in a disused Red Stripe brewery in the market district of West Kingston, within walking distance from the NGJ. The Roktowa, which operates under the motto “Plant Artists to Create Growth,” seeks to develop community art projects and international artist’s residencies. While the project has great potential, there are concerns that it lacks a sound organizational foundation and it is too early to tell whether it will make a tangible impact.

c. The Local Reception of Contemporary Art

Contemporary Jamaican art has found its primary outlet at the NGJ but that institution has historically attracted only small and socially delimited audiences. In addition to the occasional tourists and the schoolchildren who come for class visits or research assignments and represent the bulk of visitors, local visitorship has consisted mainly of members of the local art community – the artists, collectors and art professionals who mainly come to functions and educational events. And as we have seen, public art in Jamaica has been generally conservative and reflects the ideals of the nationalist school. The local exposure of contemporary art has thus been limited and this makes it hard to assess its actual and potential effect on the broader population. There are, however,

¹⁶⁰ Caribbean Contemporary Arts will continue to function in scaled down form as a contemporary art archive and is considering reactivation of its studio and exhibition programs if local circumstances change (e-mail from Charlotte Elias, Founder and Managing Director of CCA, August 10, 2007).

contemporary works that have elicited strong reactions at the NGJ and offer useful insights into how actual visitors respond. Two such examples are Dawn Scott's *A Cultural Object* (1985) and Natalie Butler's *Import* (2004). Both are installations, which is probably no coincidence since the participatory character of such works elicits stronger responses than more conventional formats that keep viewers at greater physical and emotional distance.

Dawn Scott (1951-2010) was a textile artist and interior designer who was best known for her realist batik paintings and, since the 1990s, her innovative "culturally appropriate" store and architectural detail designs for the local and tourist markets. She was one of the six artists in the NGJ's 1985 *Six Options: Gallery Spaces Transformed* exhibition and then produced *A Cultural Object*, her only installation, which was subsequently acquired for the NGJ collection. [Ill. 118, 119, 120] The room-sized work effectively brings the physical and cultural environment of the Kingston inner cities into the "high culture" space of the NGJ. It consists of a spiral-shaped "zinc fence", made from recuperated corrugated metal and lumber, obtained from a West Kingston recuperation lumberyard – the dominant building materials in the shanty towns. The surfaces contain the sort of street art, shop signs and graffiti that are commonly seen in Kingston's inner cities. It starts with a large sign that reads "Culture zone, enter at your own risk," which spoofs the "PNP (or JLP) zone, enter at your own risk" inscriptions that mark the borders of many garrison communities. The imagery and graffiti on the walls successively deal with popular music, street food, the street-side rum bars, the beauty culture, the attitudes towards women and sexuality, religion, politics and, at the centre, mental illness and homelessness, which takes the form of the reclining, rag-clad figure of

a male street person. At first sight, the installation appears unplanned, much like a squatter settlement, but it is in actuality carefully orchestrated: the claustrophobic, trap-like spiral corridor deliberately takes the visitor from amusement to horror, when the shockingly realistic street person in the middle is suddenly seen.

A Cultural Object is a scathing critique of the forces that, according to Scott, trap poor people into their marginalized socio-economic position, including the escapist nature of much of the popular music, poor dietary habits, self-deprecating beauty practices such as skin-bleaching and hair-straightening, socially counterproductive attitudes towards women and sexuality, disempowering religious beliefs, partisan political violence, and, ultimately, mental illness and social alienation. Much of its effect derives from its extreme realism: the street person sculpture in the centre was made from a live cast (although of an artist's model) and almost every detail of the work was based on something that then existed in Kingston's inner cities, which Scott had documented photographically.

Already during its original exhibition, *A Cultural Object* was popular with visitors and elicited strong responses.¹⁶¹ Most of these were positive but there were some concerns that the work represented Jamaica in a negative light and, even, that the political graffiti numerically favored the PNP – a sad illustration of the local tendency to see all references to politics in terms of polarized party loyalties, even when they are placed in an ironic or critical frame. Despite the objections, the work was acquired for the NGJ collection and reinstalled in a gallery of its own in the permanent exhibition. There it

¹⁶¹ As I member of the NGJ Education Department at that time, I organized a visitor's questionnaire in which visitors were asked to respond to and rank the six installations. Dawn Scott's was the overwhelming favorite, while David Boxer's ran second. This documentation served as justification to acquire the Dawn Scott installation.

remains popular to the present day and schoolchildren still come to the NGJ asking for “the Ghetto,” as it is popularly known. The work thus helps to attract visitors who might otherwise not have come to the NGJ.

While *A Cultural Object* obviously resonates with Jamaican audiences, the public response has always had a sensationalist, anarchic edge. Visitors almost immediately started adding their own graffiti to the walls and while the artist has accepted this *de facto* interactivity, the results have been unexpected and often disturbing. Most of the graffiti are simply juvenile – of the “Kilroy was here” variety – but many others are obscene or politically partisan and illustrate exactly those cultural attitudes Scott sought to critique. Even the “street person” sculpture has been vandalized – one of its legs was broken, which sadly mimics the abuse street people often encounter in Jamaica – and the at times unpleasant smell illustrates that some even urinate inside the installation. [Ill. 121]

A Cultural Object represents an instructive crack in the institutional armor of the NGJ. Security provisions in the galleries are only basic and, until 2008, did not include camera surveillance but most visitors spontaneously behaved in the disciplined and reverential manner that is the norm in museums (Bennett 1995). Somehow, the material and cultural ambiance of *A Cultural Object* suspends this disciplinary environment, in a way that reminds of how the presence of graffiti, broken windows, and derelict buildings contributes to social breakdown in urban environments, as has been observed in cities such as New York and, for that matter, Kingston (Gladwell 2002). Tellingly, this breakdown does not spill over into the adjoining galleries, which maintain the decorum of a traditional “high art” museum environment – the graffiti literally stop at the edge of the gallery space. [Ill. 122] Powerful and popular as it is, *A Cultural Object* thus raises

disturbing questions about artists' ability to direct audience responses and, thereby, the effectiveness of social criticism in contemporary art.

Natalie Butler (b1968) was born in Bristol to white English parents who subsequently settled in Jamaica. She started her career in the late 1980s as a self-taught painter of pretty watercolors of Jamaican scenery who was quite successful, commercially, but decided that she wanted to move into more challenging directions. She registered at the EMC and earned diplomas in painting and sculpture, followed by MA studies in site-specific art at the Wimbledon School of Art in London. Since then she has produced site-specific installations that decisively challenge the entrenched notions about the art object in Jamaica and also involve an element of institutional critique.

Her most ambitious work to date was the installation *Import* (2004) in *Curator's Eye I*, which was installed on two adjoining sides of the NGJ mezzanine area as well as one of the entry halls into the permanent collection. [Ill. 123, 124] It consisted of walls of empty cardboard boxes, all of imported consumer goods, which were stacked near to the ceiling and positioned so that they almost blocked the two aisles, leaving only narrow passageways for the visitors to walk through. The stacked boxes brought to mind the large container ships that constantly enter and leave the Kingston harbor, a reference which was driven home in the introductory section in a small hallway that leads into the permanent collection, which included two coarsely photocopied photographs of such ships along with a list of dictionary definitions of the word "import." The local production of consumer goods and processed foods has in the last 20 years been almost obliterated by imports, with devastating results for the local economy. The burgeoning Kingston container harbor, which is managed by a Norwegian company, is the main point

of entry for such imports and also serves as a transshipment hub for the rest of the region. The primary statement made by Butler's work was simple and direct, and pertained to the destructive economical and social effects of Jamaica's import-dependency.

At first glance, the *Import* installation seemed improvised but, much like Scott's *Cultural Object*, it was carefully orchestrated, in ways that contributed to its significance. The boxes had been painstakingly stacked so that no in-between spaces were left, in a way that reminded of the cyclopic walls of Mycenaean Greece or the Incas, and thus made the installation look like an impenetrable fortress. The work also stood out because of its explicit lack of material value, as a construction that could not be preserved, sold or owned, and it was discarded at the end of the exhibition (David Boxer encouraged Butler to sign some boxes as "relics" but she declined). *Import* also intervened in the NGJ space: it visually dominated the mezzanine area and interfered with visitor movement, since they had to negotiate the claustrophobic passageways to enter the permanent exhibitions. This subversion of the gallery space may have eluded those who are unfamiliar with institutional critiques but the work was otherwise devoid of the at times arcane allusions that make Boxer's work difficult to follow for the uninitiated.

The work met with mixed reactions, not so much because visitors did not grasp its meaning but because many did not recognize, or wish to recognize, it as "art." I was a visiting curator with the NGJ while it was on display and was approached almost daily with requests, some genuinely indignant, that we should remove our "packaging materials" from the display areas and show "art" instead. The question arises why the responses to Butler's work were more hostile than to other installations that challenged conventional notions about the art object, such as those of Boxer, Morrison or Scott. The

latter retain a sense of aesthetic worth that perhaps substitutes for the loss of conventional object value: Boxer's installations appeal to notions of high culture and look "precious;" the solemn ritualistic character of Morrison's work commands its own respect; and the dramatic realism of Scott's installation satisfies the local preference for narrative content. Butler's *Import*, in contrast, could not be recuperated as "art" in any conventional sense and was construed by its critics as an affront to the NGJ's cultural respectability and the entitlement of its visitors to see "high art." It thus became another instance of disconnect between the intentions of the artist and the expectations of the public and raises further questions about the political efficacy of contemporary Jamaican art.

Public indifference and the lack of support have contributed to a high attrition rate among contemporary Jamaican artists, who often either stop working or move elsewhere, although the latter is also part of the general "brain drain" in post-Independence Jamaica. Stoddart moved to Trinidad in 1999, to join a new life partner there but also because she was disenchanted with the Jamaican art world. Several other contemporary artists also left in the late 1990s, when the Jamaican culture wars were at their peak: Charles Campbell and Nicholas Morris, two noteworthy emerging painters, migrated to Canada and Germany, respectively. More recently, Natalie Butler married a Jamaican resident in Canada and moved there in 2007. Undeniably, there are more opportunities for artists in the metropolitan West, in the form of teaching positions, grants, fellowships and residencies, and more diverse chances for commercial success. As those who left have experienced, however, it is also much harder to get national-level recognition in the countries they moved to and most maintain active contacts in Jamaica and even continue exhibiting in the island. This illustrates that, tenuous and conflicted as it may be, local

support for contemporary art is not entirely non-existent and that the label of Jamaican artist is in itself a source of validation.

4. The Jamaican Art Market

Conservative, dismissive responses to contemporary art are to be expected from non-art audiences anywhere but may seem surprising from adult Jamaicans who come to the NGJ and are more exposed to art. One reason for this may be that the art market has become a dominant normative force in the Jamaican art world. For art to function in such a market-driven context, it must take a material form that can be owned and traded and the marketing of art is more effective if the product has a stable, recognizable brand identity, such as “Jamaican art” – exactly those conventions that have been challenged by contemporary artists. The art market thus provides a powerful alternative source of validation, by means of which reputations are made and incomes earned, at least within the local context and, and this exists in contentious competition with the current institutional and critical validation of contemporary art.

a. Collectors and Galleries

The local art market went through a period of significant growth in the 1980s, with soaring sales and prices. New collectors appeared and several of these amassed significant collections. Among those were Wallace Campbell, a supermarket owner, Paul Chen-Young, a banker, and David Boxer himself, who each acquired art that reflected their personal interests but also their desire to compile encyclopedic surveys of Jamaican art and, in the case of Campbell, other Caribbean and Latin American art as well.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Wallace Campbell has since sold his Latin American holdings and now focuses exclusively on the Caribbean, with a special focus on Cuba, Jamaica and, to a lesser extent, Haiti. He is one of the main private collectors in the Caribbean region and owns one of the most comprehensive collections of Cuban art from the

Several large companies, most of them financial institutions such as Chen-Young's Eagle Financial Network, the Jamaica Citizens and Century National banks, and the Mutual Life, Island Life, and Life of Jamaica insurance groups, also stepped up their art collecting and displayed art in their offices, which provided additional exposure for Jamaican art.

It thus became possible, for the first time in Jamaica, for artists and dealers to live fairly reliably off the sale of art and several high-profile commercial galleries opened in Kingston in the 1980s. This included the Frame Centre, the Mutual Life and the Upstairs-Downstairs galleries, which all opened in 1980, and Barrington Watson's Contemporary Art Centre, the successor of Gallery Barrington, which opened in 1985. A few older galleries also participated in the market expansion, especially the Bolivar Gallery, which dated from 1967, and the Hi-Qo Art and Framing Gallery, which had opened in 1970 but became more dynamic under new ownership in 1980. All were located in or near the New Kingston business district except for the Upstairs-Downstairs Gallery, which operated on Harbour Street in Downtown Kingston, near where the Hills Gallery used to be. These developments bolstered Kingston's position as the epicenter of the local art market but a few galleries also opened on the touristic North Coast. Chief among those was Harmony Hall near Ocho Rios, which opened in 1981 and, like the Hills Gallery before it, presents exhibitions and stocks that target local and tourist audiences alike.

At that time, most local commercial galleries presented formal exhibitions, in which the thoughtful presentation of art at least appeared to take precedence over sales considerations, in keeping with the modernist gallery conventions that had been

introduced by the CJAA generation, although most had to engage in other economic activities to survive. The Frame Centre Gallery also offered picture framing services and stock displays of more commercial art but kept these functions separated, in another part of its building. Bolivar, also, offered framing services and sold books and antiques, which it also kept physically separated from the gallery. Others broke convention and became more overtly geared towards sales. One such was the Mutual Life Gallery, which had been established as a non-profit by the Jamaica Artists and Craftsmen Guild, in space donated by a life insurance company. In the mid 1980s Mutual Life became the most commercially successful gallery in Jamaica under the direction of the art dealer and jazz promoter Pat Ramsay and presented back-to-back exhibitions, often two per month. Ramsay's focus was on brokering sales and Mutual Life quickly became the gallery of choice for artists who were more interested in selling their work than in having a "proper" exhibition. Hi-Qo pursued an even more radically commercial course and only offered stock displays, along with framing services, but did not stage formal exhibitions.

In the 1980s, the development of a vibrant local art market was almost universally regarded as desirable by the local art community. The NGJ was actively, and controversially, involved in promoting this market, mainly by means of its fundraising auctions, which started with the inaugural benefit auction for the Edna Manley Foundation in 1988, and by means of David Boxer's involvement in insurance valuations. The NGJ auctions of the late 1980s and 1990s were high-profile social events characterized by intense public bidding wars between leading collectors. These auctions helped to consolidate a strong market hierarchy, by driving up the prices and the demand for the work of artists who had already been consecrated critically as the "masters" of

Jamaican art, such as Edna Manley, Dunkley, Huie, Carl Abrahams, Colin Garland, Barrington Watson and Kapo, and by asserting the status of major collectors. The Jamaican art market of the 1980s and early 1990s was strongly hierarchical and based on notions of quality that echoed those articulated by the NGJ. The dominance of those hierarchies was also evident among the more commercially oriented galleries. Hi-Qo's stock displays consisted mainly of well-established artists, such as Osmond Watson, David Pottinger, Garland and Boxer, and Mutual Life also focused on the "big names," although it also made space for younger and less known artists who had sales potential.

By around 1990, when the Jamaican economy was reaching its post-1980 peak, the commercial gallery scene was growing even more rapidly. A 1992 *Jamaica Journal* article by Kim Robinson on the "gallery boom" reported that eight new galleries had opened in Kingston between 1989 and 1991, which had more than doubled the number of active galleries in the capital city, and a post-script mentioned that yet another gallery had opened just before press time. Robinson's article also reviewed the practices and offerings of the new and established galleries. She praised those that recognized "the importance of space, lighting, hanging, carefully curated exhibitions, discrimination, specialization, long- as opposed to short-term investment. And of nurturing artists, and demonstrating to them the importance of growth, careful development of a vision" (47) and chastised those that failed to observe those standards, which in her view included five of the eight new spaces. She also chided Mutual Gallery for its hard-sell tactics and hastily put-together exhibitions (43-44) but did not extend such criticisms to Hi-Qo, which she praised as a purveyor of "high quality art" (43). At that time, however, Hi-Qo already encouraged standardization of sizes, to accommodate the smaller "living room"

formats that are favored by its buyers and arranged its stocks according to color palette and theme – practices that signaled its primary commercial orientation and, more important, ushered the work of its artists in more deliberately commercial directions.

Overall, Robinson argued that gallery practices were deteriorating and that the integrity of Jamaican art would be compromised by indiscriminate, poorly managed commercialization. She was not alone with such concerns at that time and the debate on the subject unfolded, among others, in the art sections of the short-lived *Record* and subsequent *Herald* newspapers, in columns by Petrona Morrison, the young critics and artists Charles Campbell and Nicholas Morris, and myself, who presented moralized views about what we felt was a damaging, unprincipled “selling out” of Jamaican art. This debate fueled the anti-commercial radicalism in the art of Morrison, Ra and Butler but also augured a new polarization of the Jamaican art world, between those who were critical of excessive commercialization and those who embraced the emerging market or, in the case of many established and aspiring artists, simply wanted their share of the pie.

Since then, all the new galleries discussed in Robinson’s article have either closed or significantly scaled down or modified their activities. This suggests that most were indeed poorly managed, fly-by-night operations that tried to take advantage of the art market “boom.” Similar developments could however also be observed at the older galleries. Upstairs-Downstairs and the Contemporary Art Centre closed, in 1992 and 2000 respectively, and Bolivar and Frame Centre have shifted their focus to the auxiliary services they previously offered and now mainly have stock displays. Hi-Qo is one of very few survivors, which suggests that the “classic” art gallery has ceased to be economically viable in Jamaica. Several new galleries have opened but none currently

stage regular exhibitions and the “stock gallery” model that was introduced by Hi-Qo has become the norm. One of these is Galerie 128, a large gallery and framing complex operated by the children of Hi-Qo’s owner, which targets a younger clientele by including saleable exponents of contemporary art, such as Roberta Stoddart.

The Mutual Life Gallery had in the mid 1990s been relocated into a new, self-contained building in the expanded Mutual Life headquarters. It is now known as the Mutual Gallery and is no longer associated with the Guild, Pat Ramsay or Mutual Life, which did not survive the financial sector crash of the 1990s (hence the name change).¹⁶³ The Mutual Gallery is operated by a small collective of private stakeholders who seem to understand the necessity for a non-governmental gallery space that is not entirely driven by profit. It is currently the only private gallery in Jamaica which still presents regular, curated exhibitions and includes contemporary art that is not typically supported by the local art market. Although its income mainly derives from sales, the Mutual Gallery also attracts private sponsorship and operates the awkwardly named *Super Plus Under-40 Artist of the Year* competition. This competition is sponsored by art collector and businessman, Wayne Chen, one of the gallery’s backers and also the NGJ’s current chairman, and is named after his Super Plus supermarket chain. It provides monetary prizes and, for the top artist, also a guaranteed solo exhibition at the gallery. The prizes are relatively small but the competition represents a rare but symbolically important

¹⁶³ When FINSAC took over the Mutual Life holdings, a group of artists made representation to the Ministry of Finance to maintain the gallery space and this was granted. It was re-incorporated in 2001 as the Mutual Gallery, as a non-profit company which is mandated to promote Jamaican art locally and internationally. It is operated by a Management committee that at the time of writing includes that Gallery’s curator Gilou Bauer, the EMC Principal Burchell Duhaney, the collectors Wayne Chen and Alvin Fong-Tom, along with four other members, including two representatives of the former Mutual Life Assurance Company (E-mails from Gilou Bauer, Mutual Gallery Curator, January 9 and 14, 2008)

private effort to support contemporary Jamaican art outside of the market.¹⁶⁴

These changes in the gallery scene resulted in part from the financial crisis that hit Jamaica in the mid 1990s, when several major financial institutions crashed, including *all* of the art-collecting banks and insurance companies that were mentioned earlier on. While it put a damper on corporate collecting and affected the personal wealth of art patrons such as Paul Chen-Young, who left the island and lost his bank's corporate collection, the financial sector crash did not annihilate the local market altogether but caused significant shifts in its hierarchies and orientation. The stock galleries attracted a new clientele, many of them younger professionals and businesspersons, who typically acquired later, more deliberately commercial works by well-consecrated "masters" of the nationalist school that are often best described as potboilers and, to a lesser extent, the more conventional exponents of contemporary art. Their often almost identical, "generic" collections assert a comfortable sense of Jamaicanness and are believed by sellers and buyers alike to have significant long term investment potential. The desire for secure investments in the face of the financial melt-down was a factor in this market shift, which was deliberately targeted by the new art dealers: one of the newcomers was the tellingly named but short-lived Mint Investments, which combined a gallery with more conventional financial investment services and helped to promote the idea that art should be part of one's prudently diversified investment portfolio. Since the long-term economic value of art is conventionally based on notions of rarity and distinction (Bourdieu 1984 & 1993), it is unlikely that generic art investments will indeed appreciate significantly but this segment of the Jamaican art market was burgeoning, with high hopes attached. The

¹⁶⁴ The 2007 winner got \$Ja100,000 or then about US\$ 1450, the runner-up got Ja\$ 50,000 or US\$ 725. Each of the four short-listed artists also got a Ja\$ 10,000 or US\$ 145 preparation grant.

success of local alternative investment clubs such as Cash Plus and Olint in the mid 2000s, gave a further boost to this market but the impact of the predictable collapse of these pyramid schemes in 2008, followed by the severe effects of the global recession in 2009-2010, is not yet clear.

More substantial and stable new wealth was, however, also generated in the late 1990s, in the recovering financial sector and other business activities, and several ambitious new collectors appeared, such as Wayne Chen, who set out to acquire collections that are similar in scope and quality to those of Boxer and Wallace Campbell, who also continued collecting although the pace of their acquisitions dropped. Major collectors exert more control over their involvement in the market than occasional art buyers and often bypass dealers to buy directly from the artists and private sellers or at auctions. Since they generally aim to buy “masterpieces,” they also helped to boost the resale market, where the canonical status and market value of artworks are more conclusively negotiated.

Wallace Campbell has in 2006 established Seaview Fine Arts, a gallery located in the former home of the Art Deco designer Burnett Webster, which houses his collection and occasional curated exhibitions, only some of which have been sales exhibitions. In presenting these exhibitions, Campbell stresses that he is solely concerned with the trade in the work of “Jamaican masters.” He is openly reluctant to invest in younger artists who have not yet established a solid reputation and does not acquire work that departs from the conventional art object. Based on an exclusive invitation list, Campbell’s exhibition openings have been high-profile social events, with successful sales. (The Jamaican 2007, 114) This suggest that, despite the democratization of art buying associated with the stock

galleries, notions of artistic and social distinction still have standing in Jamaica and can be mobilized to shape the upper end of the art market. Boxer and Chen have been more supportive of contemporary art although they, too, gravitate towards work that has material durability and can be displayed in their homes. The local market thus provides limited economic support to contemporary art and there are few alternative sources of local patronage, save for modest corporate sponsorship and, more recently, the CHASE Fund, although very few artists have as yet sought or obtained such grants.¹⁶⁵

b. The Jamaica Guild of Artists

While contemporary Jamaican artists have thus far failed to organize and represent themselves, the development of the local market has been vigorously advocated by the Jamaica Guild of Artists (JGA), the main artists' association currently active in Jamaica.¹⁶⁶ This organization had been founded as the Jamaican Artists and Craftsmen Guild in 1977 by a group of artists headed by the painter Ralph Campbell, a member of the early nationalist school. Initially, it did not advocate any particular artistic philosophy or political position but sought to provide collective representation and opportunities for all Jamaican artists. Its initiatives included the Mutual Life Gallery, although the Guild had become less active by the time that gallery was most successful in the late 1980s and only nominally controlled its operations.

In the late 1990s, the association was revived as the Jamaica Guild of Artists, an initiative which was spearheaded by a group of female painters with powerful social and

¹⁶⁵ The CHASE Fund was established in 2002, as a government-controlled funding agency for non-profit initiatives in the fields of Culture, Health, Arts, Sports and Education, from which the acronym is derived. It is funded by the local lottery system. The Fund has, among others, provided funding for projects at the NGJ and the EMC.

¹⁶⁶ Other current artists' associations are: the Association of Jamaican Potters, the successor of Jamaica Potters Association. In addition, there are several photographic clubs, such as the Colour Photographic Club of Jamaica, but these attract mainly amateur members.

political ties, such as Lois Sherwood, the owner of the successful local Burger King franchise, and Vivienne Logan, an economist and planner who had been an advisor to Edward Seaga when he was Prime Minister in the 1980s.¹⁶⁷ The Guild's website states its new objectives:

In recent years, the Guild has gathered momentum following a series of changes in the art market in Jamaica. There are more artists on the scene in Jamaica today, operating against the background of a contracting economy. This has compelled the Guild to regroup and launch into international marketing of Jamaican art as part of its strategy to penetrate new markets and ease the economic burden of its members. The Guild's objectives have further expanded to address welfare needs, copyright protection, the removal of aesthetic discrimination and other broad concerns of its members while promoting and fostering a spirit of solidarity and integration among artists.

The reinvigorated Guild severed its ties with Pat Ramsay and, soon thereafter, the Mutual Life Gallery and established a new gallery over which it maintains full control, the Oakton Gallery in the Half Way Tree area near New Kingston, a bustling commercial and public transport hub. This gallery is housed in a restored 19th century mansion along with a Burger King outlet, which leaves little doubt about its essentially commercial orientation. The Guild's current focus is indeed on promoting Jamaican art as an economic activity, which concurs with the policy focus on developing the creative industries. Not surprisingly, the new Guild has obtained support from the policy-makers in the Jamaican government, to which its key members also have easy social access.

While the Guild remains theoretically open to all artists practicing in Jamaica, its membership now consists mainly of artists with a more conservative and commercial orientation and none of the contemporary artists discussed thus far are members. The

¹⁶⁷ Lois Sherwood's personal website is: <http://www.tigerlois.com>. Vivienne Logan's work is featured on the website of the Jamaica Guild of Artists: <http://www.jamaicaguildofartists.org>. Images of both artists' work can be found there.

Guild still attracts a few well-established, formally trained artists, such as Christopher Gonzalez, who was a member until his death in 2008, but many members, such as Sherwood and Logan, have no formal art training and skirt the boundary between amateur and professional.¹⁶⁸ The work that is shown in stocks and occasional exhibitions at Oakton Gallery focuses on the Jamaican landscape and flora, well-established genre subjects such as the traditional market scene and, in the case of Sherwood and Logan, also on the female nude, all painted in conventional representational styles and small, saleable formats and much of it is arguably poorly executed. Many of the newer Guild members have found it difficult to get into the NGJ's juried exhibitions, such as the *Annual National* and its successor, the *National Biennial*, although these are more inclusive than its curated exhibitions. This has been a source of much resentment and under Logan's presidency in the late 1990s, the Guild became an assertive critic of what they considered to be the exclusionary practices of the NGJ – the “aesthetic discrimination” referred to on their website. The Guild thus positioned itself as the representative of artists' rights and “what Jamaican audiences want,” against the perceived elitism of the NGJ. While their work is not necessarily more representative of popular taste than what is shown at the NGJ, it does reflect the aesthetic preferences and décor choices of the middle classes.

The Guild developed a close working relationship with the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC), the government agency which has responsibility for the annual Independence celebration and Heritage Week cultural programs, and its new membership has been prominently featured in the JCDC's annual *Festival Fine Arts*

¹⁶⁸ Exact membership information is not available from the Guild but of the 60 artists who are, at the time of completion, listed on its website, only about half have any form of formal training and several of those only attended evening school leisure classes at the EMC.

exhibition. This juried exhibition, which was first held in 1963, was initially fairly prestigious but many established artists had stopped entering in the mid 1980s because of concerns about the increasingly lax selection criteria and poor curatorial standards. The JCDC also failed to acquire a suitable exhibition space and showed the *Festival Fine Arts* exhibition at various venues, including commercial galleries and school auditoriums, none of which were equipped for an exhibition of that size and scope. The *Festival Fine Arts* exhibition nonetheless got significant media coverage because of JCDC's powerful promotional machinery – a facility the NGJ lacked. Excerpts of the *Festival Fine Arts* exhibition are also toured to other towns on the island, in an effort to address the excessive Kingston-focus of the Jamaican art world. The exhibition's generous awards system, which granted medals or certificates of merit to almost all exhibitors, provided the new Guild members with the national validation they did not get from the NGJ.¹⁶⁹

One key position taken by the Guild was that all artists are *entitled* to national exposure and promotional support, irrespective of the nature and quality of their work. This new, aggressive sense of entitlement fundamentally challenged the standards and hierarchies used by the NGJ as well as its institutional authority to articulate such standards – a dynamic which, as we have seen, also shaped the reception and handling of publications on Jamaican art. This challenge not only pertained to the power of the NGJ and, specifically, Boxer to shape the canons and international exposure of Jamaican but also, and perhaps even more so, to its direct and indirect influence on the local market hierarchies and the capacity of consecrated artists to earn significant income. The Guild's campaign yielded some success. Sherwood and Logan were both appointed to the NGJ's

¹⁶⁹ In 2002, for instance, 35 of the 110 participants won silver and bronze medals and all the others got certificates of merit. No gold medals were awarded that year.

Board of Directors in the mid 2000s and such appointments are made directly by the Minister in charge of Culture.¹⁷⁰ In 2007, the NGJ started hosting the *Festival Fine Arts* exhibition, which it had resisted doing for many years despite significant pressures. As a compromise between the NGJ and the JCDC Fine Arts Committee, the selection criteria were tightened somewhat and the number of awards reduced but the resulting exhibition was still below the NGJ's usual standards. The then Minister of Tourism, Entertainment and Culture, Aloun Assamba Ndombet, affirmed in her opening address that she had personally instructed that the *Festival Fine Arts* exhibition should be held at the NGJ. She argued that the Jamaican art movement was too young to concern itself with standards and that the NGJ should instead “encourage, encourage, encourage,” to use her words, by promoting the work of *all* Jamaican artists (Archer-Straw 2007) – an almost verbatim reiteration of the Guild's position. The exhibition has been held at the NGJ since then, although the NGJ has gained more control over the curatorial process. The EMC has thus far been spared such pressures although there are rumblings that its curriculum does not adequately support the culture industries and it is probably only a matter of time before these criticisms will have more tangible effects.

c. The Artist-Entrepreneur – Ken Spencer

Despite the political victories, the success of the Guild's collective marketing efforts has been moderate but there are other Jamaican artists who have devised effective individual marketing strategies and acquired significant wealth in the process. Barrington Watson, as we have seen, has controlled the promotion and pricing of his work by operating his own galleries. His friend and contemporary Ken Abondarno Spencer (1929-2005), who

¹⁷⁰ Sherwood resigned from that Board in early 2009 and Logan resigned in 2010, albeit for health reasons.

peddled his works to locals, expatriates and tourists, was a more extreme example.¹⁷¹

Spencer started out selling his sketches on a street corner in Downtown Kingston. He joined Barrington Watson in London in 1952 but did not study art there, as Watson had hoped. Instead he started selling his works directly to Jamaican professionals who were hungry for reminders of home. (Greenland 2006) On returning to Jamaica, he continued this direct marketing strategy and Watson remembered that “he would go around the island in a car, and sell his work in Montego Bay and Negril. He would put a bunch of works into a car and his idea was to come back with none” (Ibid.). He personally visited potential buyers, many of them first-time art buyers, and often left the hesitant with a stack of paintings to ponder, to come back a few days later to an almost guaranteed sale (Moo Young 2006). His paintings can be seen in many hotel and bank lobbies, the offices of doctors, dentists and other professionals, and middle class homes.

Most of Spencer’s works represent “traditional” Jamaican subject matter, such as market women and mento musicians – reassuring images of “Old Time Jamaica,” as one contributor to his obituary put it (Greenland 2006). [Ill. 125] They are painted in a recognizable, confident gestural style: typically, the image is invoked by just a few broad brush- or palette knife strokes and set against a monochrome background, often the white gesso undercoating of the canvas. Spencer’s sketchy semi-abstract style – which in itself challenges the assumption that Jamaican audiences do not respond to abstraction – also reflected his goal to produce and sell as many works as possible. He reputedly worked on several canvases simultaneously, which were lined up so that he would not have to clean off his brushes to change colors, and thus saved time and paints. (Moo Young 2006) He

¹⁷¹ He was commonly known as Ken Abendana Spencer during his lifetime but the lawyers responsible for his estate insist that his legal name was “Kenneth Abondarno Spencer” (Forth Blake 2006).

also once told David Boxer that a painting was not economical if it took more than 30 minutes to complete – the sort of stories that horrified “knowing” art lovers in Jamaica.¹⁷²

Spencer’s expansive, jovial personality played a crucial role in his sales and he cultivated his image as a notorious eccentric. He lived in Portland in a self-designed, six-storied castle and willingly entertained local and tourist visitors there, although it was implied that works would be bought. Spencer also frequented the New Kingston hotel bars in search of sales. The art dealer and framer Herman Van Asbroeck tells a story that illustrates Spencer’s ingenious “traveling salesman” tactics:

A year ago a man came into the shop and put a Ken Spencer on the desk. He wanted to have it framed. I asked him: ‘You bought a Ken Spencer?’ And he replied: ‘No, I won it!’ Apparently, he had come to Kingston for a builder’s conference and a group of them had gone out for a drink. They ended up in the Hilton at 2:00 a.m. Suddenly a gentleman approached their table and asked if they wanted to play a game. He told them he had a number in his pocket and then he marked out cards 1 to 5. Everyone took a number and the customer in my shop was the winner. Then Ken Spencer introduced himself. By the end of the night, all the people at the table had bought paintings! (Greenland 2006)

These anecdotes, also, marked Spencer as one who was not a “serious” artist.

While he occasionally produced more ambitious works, Spencer was not an artist who strove to produce “masterpieces” but one who deliberately produced generic paintings that were recognizably “a Ken Spencer.” Unlike the current Guild leadership, however, he did not significantly pressure local cultural institutions for public recognition and never had an exhibition in a gallery.¹⁷³ When asked why, he claimed that he did not need such exposure because all of Jamaica was his gallery (Moo Young 2006). His sense

¹⁷² Personal communication, David Boxer, January 11, 2006.

¹⁷³ The NGJ owns three Spencers but none are on permanent display. One of these works was transferred from the IoJ collection in 1974 and the other two were part of a major donation by the then Chairman of the NGJ Aaron Matalon in 1999, which sought to address lacunas in the NGJ’s collection. While there may have been other expressions of discontent on Spencer’s part, I know of only one incident, a year or two before he died, when he complained to the NGJ Registrar about not being adequately represented in the NGJ’s collection (personal communication, Roxanne Silent, Registrar, NGJ, March 12, 2008).

of achievement thus came from the prevalence of his work in the Jamaican environment. Others, however, took up his cause and already during his lifetime there were heated arguments within the art community about Spencer's artistic merits and the NGJ's neglect of his work was cited as evidence of the elitism of the Jamaican art establishment.

Spencer was an undeniably gifted painter and the local popularity of his work is a cultural phenomenon that warrants its own recognition. The recent attempts at inserting him into the national canons, however, obscure that had *he* handled his work differently, he could certainly have been a recognized member of the post-Independence mainstream. Spencer was unapologetic about being primarily motivated by economic gain and opted to disregard the processes by which artistic worth is conventionally determined. He thus represents an instructive counterpart to those contemporary artists who resist the forces of the market and, despite the fact that he had far less to say, succeeded where they have failed by reaching deep into Jamaican society. Spencer's choices also separate him from Barrington Watson, who uses more conventional art sales methods and has always asserted the high art status of his work. While Watson's exact position in the local art hierarchies has been contentious, his inclusion in the national canons is quite secure, unlike Spencer whose chances at consecration as a "Jamaican master" will always be tenuous, because he broke the codes of "high art" in his pursuit of commercial success.

5. Conclusion

Contemporary Jamaican art addresses important critical and aesthetic issues but has only limited audiences locally and this puts into question its socio-cultural relevance and legitimacy as Jamaican art. This argument has been invoked by supporters of the more conventional, commercially oriented exponents of Jamaican art, who posit that local

market success is a reliable indicator of social relevance and reject radical contemporary art as alien to Jamaican culture. The commercial mainstream may reach deeper into Jamaican society than contemporary art but is also socially limited, to those who can afford to buy art and regard it as a desirable thing to do. Furthermore, the local art market is stratified in ways that reflect Jamaica's social hierarchies and the diversity of values within the middle and upper classes. The controversies about public monuments, which were discussed in the previous chapter, also indicate that what is taken for granted within the mainstream may well be rejected by the broader public. The confidence in the social relevance and reach of conventional Jamaican art may thus also be misplaced.

Both sides in this as yet unresolved culture war have obstinately defended their positions and there has been little productive dialogue across the battle lines. Both, however, make important points. The notion that the Jamaican art community should not be a drain on the public purse cannot be taken lightly in an economically challenged Third World society. As we have seen, there are contemporary artists, such as Stoddart and Boxer, who have done well in the local market although their work questions some of its conventions. On the other hand, commercialization has led to an undeniable loss of creative vigor and the challenges and innovations of contemporary art are desperately needed to fend off stagnation. What is supported by the local art market and what challenges its premises does not exist in any simple, binary opposition but in a necessary, if fraught symbiosis. Nonetheless, the communicative failures of Jamaican art generally and contemporary art specifically need to be taken more seriously by the local art community, which still takes its social and cultural significance for granted.

Chapter 5: POPULAR VISUAL CULTURE AND ART

1. Contentious Definitions

For the purposes of this dissertation, popular art is defined broadly as the visual artistic expressions of the poor and lower-income groups that constitute the majority of the Jamaican population. Because of Jamaica's socio-racial make-up, these popular masses are predominantly of African ancestry which plays a defining role in popular art and visual culture although other groups, such as the Indian and Chinese minorities that descend from indentured laborers who came to Jamaica in the mid 19th century to work on the plantations after slavery was abolished, contribute to the ongoing creolization of Jamaican culture, its visual expressions included. The overview presented here includes the artisanal and traditional, some of which has already been consecrated as part of the national heritage, as well as contemporary street art and the technology-driven "pop culture" of the mass communications era, both of which have more contentious status.

While the mainstream art world is shaped by common, well-articulated definitions of art and its institutions, the notion of Jamaican popular art as a more or less cohesive field is an externally imposed construct. This does not mean that there are no shared standards, definitions and institutions within the popular sphere. In the summer of 1987, I conducted research on Garveyite art and iconography and wanted to photograph a street mural which featured Marcus Garvey, located at a train stop near the Tinson Pen airfield in a troubled part of West Kingston.¹⁹⁴ [Ill. 126] I had been advised that it would be best to just take the photographs and get out of there as quickly as possible. I tried to do so but was confronted by a small group of people who shouted indignantly that I had to "respect

¹⁹⁴ The Jamaica Railway is now obsolete and the mural no longer exists.

the artist.” I agreed to meet with him – one D.A. McLean, an older Rastafarian – and it turned out he simply wished to be acknowledged as the one who had painted the mural. He told me that he had done the mural circa 1970, as a public service, and that it was based on a set of stamps on the National Heroes.¹⁹⁵ After explaining my intentions, I was allowed to take and use the photographs. (Poupeye-Rammelaere 1991 & 1992)

This incident illustrates that this community and the artist himself shared a concept of “the artist,” as the legitimate author of the work and a special-status individual, in this case as a community teacher. The mural was seen as “art,” in the sense of a symbolic visual communication that played a valuable role in representing and shaping the values of the community. The community members who approached me also displayed a strong sense of collective ownership towards the mural, which they were willing to share with an outsider as long as the protocols of acknowledging its authorship and ownership were observed. The notions about “art” and “the artist” that came to the fore in this incident, however, existed in dialogue with those of the mainstream art world. Likewise, the imagery of the mural was derived from the official Jamaican iconography of the National Heroes. The Tinson Pen mural thus also illustrated the interconnectedness between popular and mainstream art and culture.

Much of what is discussed in this chapter could be regarded as “art” only by virtue of any external consecration, however, and is better categorized under the broader heading of visual culture. As we have seen, artistic consecration is a politicized and contentious process, even more so in places such as Jamaica because of the imperatives of postcolonial cultural self-affirmation. The consecration of popular art, in such a

¹⁹⁵ A set of Jamaican stamps featuring the then five National Heroes – Marcus Garvey, Paul Bogle, George William Gordon, Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley – was issued by the Jamaican post in 1970.

context, usually amounts to a process of recuperation, whereby what was previously ignored or disparaged is selectively validated and promoted as a source of cultural legitimacy and relevance, often in explicit juxtaposition to the dominant “high art” of the moment. This dynamic is evident in the recent writings of art critic Annie Paul, which juxtapose what she regards as the communicative failures and lack of relevance of the artistic mainstream with the cultural currency and dynamism of Dancehall:

[Jamaica’s] hyperfertile music scene, whose latest product, going by the generic name Dancehall, represents a vernacular modern or vernacular cosmopolitanism in fundamental opposition to the delicately constructed high modernism of its art world. [...] To put it another way, Jamaica’s official art scene, with its formal English affect, will have to learn to communicate in Patwa, the vernacular language of the Jamaican street, if it wants to reach a wider public. It will have to become at least bilingual. (2007, 29-30)

This echoes how the popular was construed as the source of “the Jamaican” in the nationalist movement of the 1930s and 40s and how the Intuitives were construed and promoted as a remedy to the failings of the local mainstream in the late 1970s and 80s.

This mainstream canonization of popular culture is surrounded by ambivalence and contestation and exists in tension with a desire for “high culture” respectability which is an equally important force in postcolonial culture. This tension is reinforced by the moralization of popular culture, as a source of cultural and social righteousness, but sometimes also as an anti-progressive, socially damaging force or an embarrassing sign of backwardness. The ongoing debate about the status of Jamaican Creole – the Patois or “Patwa” Annie Paul refers to – as the defining “nation language” (Brathwaite 1993, 260) or, conversely, as an obstacle to the education and social progress of Jamaica is a case in point (e.g. Lewis, R.A. 2008). There exists a similar tension between the protectionist notions of purity and autonomy that are implied in the selective canonization of the

popular culture, as a part of the national culture that needs to be sheltered from adulterating influences, and its actual, ever-evolving hybridity although this has also been valorized as a defining characteristic of postcolonial Caribbean culture.

These tensions are part and parcel of postcolonial culture and there also give rise to anxieties about how popular cultural forms should be “properly” understood – and, as we will see, how they should be correctly named. While primarily a concern of the intelligentsia, these concerns about representation are not entirely external to the popular culture and Garveyism and Rastafari, as we will see, are actively involved in the politics of their representation.¹⁹⁶ Such anxieties are not unique to Jamaica, as is illustrated by the debates about the correct orthography and pop culture representations of Vodou, and are part of the politics of postcolonial cultural representation. This chapter therefore also considers how popular art has been construed in Jamaica’s cultural history narratives.

2. Traditional Popular Art

This section examines religious and secular popular art that originated in the Plantation and post-Emancipation eras. The material record on these forms is limited and they are mainly known through colonial-era descriptions and illustrations. Such descriptions were often dismissive and, because of the repressive context, probably reveal only the tip of the iceberg of a richer field of popular visual expressions. The focus of recent scholarship on the subject has been on recovering and rehabilitating such popular cultural expressions, an inevitably selective and polemical process that reflects the cultural politics of the postcolonial intelligentsia.

¹⁹⁶ When in 2010, UWI organized a conference on Rastafari to mark the 50th anniversary of the coronation, for instance, there was also major resistance from certain Rastafarians in Jamaica, who claimed that they had not been consulted or involved and pointedly organized their own, concurrent conference.

a. African-Derived Sacred Arts

David Boxer has argued that the Africans who were brought to Jamaica as slaves came from societies that had well-established sculptural traditions, most of them related to magico-religious practices, and that it could be assumed that the enslaved brought some of these art forms with them (1998, 13). His assumption that any African-derived art forms in Jamaica necessarily had to consist of sculpture is biased by the Western consecration of magico-religious figural sculpture as the pinnacle of African artistic achievement. It is nonetheless plausible that some of these traditions traveled to Jamaica with the associated religious beliefs and other, more ephemeral sacred arts.

Plantation era chroniclers such as Edward Long (1774, 416-430) and Bryan Edwards (1801, 85-86 & 100-119) described Obeah and Myal as the two main African-derived religions but also used the term Obeah as a catch-all for African-derived magico-religious practices. These sources paid some attention to the material expressions of African-derived beliefs. Long, for instance, reported that “[b]its of red rag, cats teeth, parrot feathers, egg-shells, and fish-bones are frequently stuck up at the doors of their houses when they go from home leaving any thing of value within (sometimes they hang them on fruit-trees, and place them in corn-fields), to deter thieves” (420). None however made any reference to African-derived wood or stone sculpture. This does not mean that no such items were produced and a mid 19th century source reported on the prevalence of funerary carvings in the years before Emancipation:

Fifteen or twenty years ago, in a negro-burying ground, at no great distance from the author’s residence in Spanish Town, there was scarcely a grave that did not exhibit two to four carved images; and it was a common custom, for even comparatively respectable persons to strew the rude tombs with which it abounded with viands, and to pour upon them libations of wine and blood, as offerings to their supposed divinities

(Phillippo 1843, 283)

The source was the Abolitionist Baptist minister James Phillippo, who also claimed that:¹⁹⁷

Such practices have long been discontinued, and were any to adopt them at the present day it would affix to their character a stigma which would almost exclude them from the pale of society. [...] Idolatry, indeed, may be said to be entirely abolished. So little reverence do former deities now inspire that a short time since the author found an idol on the public road. The appearance of such an object three years ago, in such a place, would have created the utmost terror and alarm throughout the neighbourhood, but it was now either passed by entirely unheeded, or elicited only contempt or sallies of wit from the beholders (283-284)

In a revealing footnote, Phillippo reported that a black woman taunted the sculpture, saying that it would get “noting [sic] for nyam’ now” or nothing to eat (284). The woman addressed the carving as if it were a sentient being, albeit one which no longer held power over her, which in itself suggests that African-derived beliefs had survived.

While Phillippo acknowledged the existence of funerary carvings, he did not provide any details on what they looked like, what they were made of, what they represented, what specific purpose they served, or who made them. The question arises whether any such artifacts survived the vagaries of time and the post-Emancipation anti-superstition campaigns. Boxer in *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* controversially insisted that:

It is one of the tragedies of slavery that so drastic was the deculturation of Africans, so harsh the prohibitions against the manufacture of ritual objects, that with the exception of undecorated ceramic vessels not one object exists as evidence of the African artistic traditions in Jamaica. (1998, 13)¹⁹⁸

There are however a few objects that may challenge this assertion. The catalogue of *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds* (2007) at the

¹⁹⁷ Phillippo was one of the main promoters of the so-called Free Village system, new villages that were supported by the non-conformist churches and settled by the ex-slaves who wished to move away from the plantations, as part of the social reconstruction efforts after Emancipation (Senior 2003, 199-200).

¹⁹⁸ The 1998 edition, however, actually includes a footnote reference to Phillippo’s description of the grave markers (27, fn 10).

Yale Centre for British Art includes an essay by Robert Farris Thompson on the African heritage in Jamaican culture, in which he confidently dated a red-stained female figure carving from the IoJ collection to “before 1834.” [Ill. 127] He did not provide any supporting evidence, however, except for cursorily linking the redness of the carving to menstrual symbolism of the Kikumbu society (2007, 89-90).¹⁹⁹ The simple, geometrically stylized carving does have an “African” look but not more so than the carvings of the Intuitive William “Woody” Joseph (1919-1998), many of which are also stained red. [Ill. 128] While it could well be pre-Emancipation, the IoJ has no clear records on the dating, provenance or purpose of the carving and there is at present no basis to attribute it with any certainty, beyond placing it in the context of African-Jamaican culture.

More rigorous scholarship is required to provide a credible account of pre-Emancipation African-derived religious art, although there may not be enough surviving evidence to reach that point. Research energies are probably better spent on African-Jamaican culture *after* Emancipation. There had been only nominal efforts to convert the slaves to Christianity prior to the arrival of non-conformist evangelical churches: the Moravians in 1754, the Baptists in 1784, and the Methodists in 1789.²⁰⁰ These churches, the Baptists especially, were actively involved in the Abolitionist campaign but also sought to “rescue” the black population from what they considered to be superstition and backwardness and were thus more effective in disrupting African-derived traditions (Austin-Broos 1997, 254-255). While the slave laws were no longer in effect after

¹⁹⁹ I sought clarification on the dating via e-mail but Thompson responded that all he knew about the carving was in his essay (July 7, 2008). I had visited the IoJ Museums storerooms in the summer of 2001 to review the collection for possible evidence of pre-20th woodcarvings then but did not see anything then that could plausibly qualify. I was not shown the woodcarving in question at that time. I was, however, told that only the recently acquired artifacts in the collection have provenance records.

²⁰⁰ The introduction of the Baptist church effectively came in two stages. The African-American Baptist preacher George Liele (or Lisle) started missionary work amongst the slaves in 1784. The Baptist Missionary Society, which was based in England, subsequently sent its first missionary in 1814. Phillippo was part of this second missionary campaign of the Baptists. (Austin-Broos 1997, 254-255, fn 6)

Emancipation, a new Obeah law was introduced in 1845 (Robinson & Walhouse 1893, 210), which illustrates that such magico-religious practices had in fact survived.

African-derived beliefs were, however, being assimilated with evangelical Christianity, as could be seen in the Native Baptist movement, which was chastised by the expatriate missionaries for incorporating Myalist healing practices (Chevannes 1995, 18-19; Austin-Broos 1997, 54-55). The Native Baptists played a crucial role in the two main episodes of social unrest of the 19th century: the Sam Sharpe Rebellion or Baptist War of 1831-32, which was also the last slave rebellion, and the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, the main post-Emancipation rebellion, which was led by the Native Baptist deacon Paul Bogle (Barrett 1977, 38-63; Chevannes 1995, 12-13).

Popular religions were also influenced by the arrival of indentured laborers from Africa, India and China, who were brought in to replace the ex-slaves who had left the plantations after Emancipation. Approximately 10,000 Yoruba and Kongolese came to the island between 1841 and 1865 and about 8,000 of these stayed, mainly in St Thomas (Schuler 1980). Their presence reinvigorated African-derived religions there and produced Kumina, an ancestor worship religion which does not incorporate Christian elements (Houk 2001), and the related Convince, which incorporates older, more creolized Maroon beliefs (Hogg 1960; Brandon 2001; Bilby 2006, 110-112).

These factors – the social upheaval around Emancipation, the Native Baptists and the arrival of indentured labor – fueled Jamaica's Great Revival of 1860-1861, which was also influenced by the 1858-1859 Revival movements in North America and Britain. The Jamaican Revival intensified the interaction between the evangelical Christian and African-derived religions and produced the African-Christian religions of modern

Jamaica. (Seaga 1983, 3-4; Austin-Broos 1997, 55) These religions, which lack central organization, are usually divided into Zion Revival, which is closer to Christianity, and Pukumina, which is more African. Pukumina is now the preferred spelling for what was previously known as Pocomania, which was traditionally translated as “little madness,” and which is now deemed derogatory by cultural scholars (e.g. Seaga 1983, 4). Revivalists believe in and seek to engage with a pantheon of spirits, which include the Christian Trinity, the archangels, the prophets and apostles, biblical demons, the ancestral dead and nature spirits such as the River Maid. Communion with the spirits is achieved through dance possession, offerings and divination rituals and serves to achieve certain goals for the individuals and communities involved, such as healing.

African-derived religions thus not only survived beyond Emancipation but were invigorated in its aftermath. The question arises whether this also applied to the associated arts. Thanks to the emergence of folklore studies and, ironically, the efforts of the authorities to prosecute practitioners, some information is available on Obeah-related objects of the late 19th century. A member of the Constabulary, one Inspector Thomas, published a pamphlet titled *Something about Obeah* and collected seized artifacts. I was unable to locate this pamphlet but it served as a source for an early article on the subject in *Folklore* (Robinson & Walhouse 1893). This article, which is otherwise indebted to outdated descriptions by Bryan Edwards, is noteworthy because it has an engraved illustration of a purported Obeah effigy sculpture. [Ill. 129] It had been taken in May 1887 from one Alexander Ellis in Montego Bay, who was prosecuted for his practice of Obeah and given the relatively mild sentence of 15 days at hard labor. (212) The small clothed figure is reclining on what appears to be a small chair and holds a tied-up bundle

from which fowl feathers protrude. Assuming that the illustration is accurate, the bundle strikingly resembles the *pakèt Kongo* power objects of Haitian Vodou.²⁰¹

The Obeah figure had been taken to England in 1888 by one Commander Hastings of the Royal Navy but was temporarily returned to be included in Inspector Thomas' display of Obeah-related artifacts at the *Jamaica International Exhibition* in Kingston in 1891, where it apparently caused a sensation. The Obeah display was removed 10 days after the exhibition opening, when its Executive Committee declared it an "undesirable exhibit" (Robinson & Walhouse 1893, 213). The removal of the Obeah exhibit was reported in the local press and the official reason cited there was that would deter local country people from visiting (*Gleaner*, February 11, 1891, 3). More likely, the removal was spurred by worries that displaying evidence of "superstitions" represented Jamaica in a negative light, which was incompatible with the exhibition's objective of promoting the island as a progressive British colonial outpost.

Very few antique Obeah objects have been preserved, which is not surprising, given their clandestine and ephemeral nature. Some have, however, made it into major ethnographic collections, such as the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) of the Smithsonian and the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford University.²⁰² The NMNH owns an 11 inch wooden Obeah figure, which was accessioned in 1885 and had been collected by Charles Sibley, a Baptist missionary who was active in the Parish of Hanover, near Montego Bay. It has articulated limbs like a marionette and hook-shaped hands from which it could be hung. The posing of the figure in the 1893 *Folklore* illustration suggests that it may have been similarly articulated and the feet are carved in similar fashion. The

²⁰¹ For examples of Haitian Pakèts Kongo see: <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/vodou/tools4.html>

²⁰² The catalogue number of the object in the Smithsonian is E74836-0 and of the item at Pitt-Rivers, 1985.49.108. More information on these objects can be found on the websites of these institutions, at <http://nhb-acsmith2.si.edu> and <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/>, respectively.

NMNH figure is not clothed but may have been originally and it has mirror glass set into its abdominal area and eyes, cavities for magical substances in its side. The similarities between the two figures suggest that such objects were governed by convention, although each seems to have been uniquely designed, likely to fulfill specific magical purposes.

A new law, the *Obeah Act*, came into effect in 1898. While the prescribed punishments were less draconian than the 18th century laws, they were still significant – up to a year at hard labor – and included flogging (3).²⁰³ The main difference however was that the definitions were expanded, in a probable response to the constantly changing nature of such practices, to include “any person who, to effect any fraudulent or unlawful purpose, or for gain, or for the purpose of frightening any person, uses, or pretends to use an occult means, or pretends to possess any supernatural power or knowledge” (3) and the instruments of Obeah as “anything used, or intended to be used by a person, and pretended by such person to be possessed of any occult or supernatural power” (Ibid.). The new law also made consultation with Obeah practitioners illegal (4). It is still on the books today, with occasional prosecutions.

In the mid 20th century, the Caribbean became a popular subject for anthropological and sociological research and there was a growing sense that African-Jamaican religions not only deserved to be studied but also to be acknowledged as a legitimate and defining aspect of Jamaican culture – a departure from the condemnatory tone of the earlier scholarship. Several overseas researchers did field work on African-Jamaican religious practices and approached their subject with new sympathy. The pioneering folklorist Martha Beckwith of Vassar College made several visits between 1919 and 1924 (Luomala 1962, 342) and her *Some Religious Cults in Jamaica* (1923)

²⁰³ Flogging remains on the books as legal punishment in Jamaica but is no longer applied.

was the first major scholarly text on African-derived religions in Jamaica. Zora Neale Hurston visited Jamaica in 1936 on a Guggenheim fellowship to study West Indian Obeah (Gates 1990, 308). Her *Tell My Horse* (1938), among others, reported on the beliefs of the Accompong Maroons (25-30) in the parish of Trelawny and a Nine Night wake in St Thomas (39-56). Oberlin College's George Eaton Simpson did groundbreaking research about Revivalism in West Kingston in the 1940s and 1950s and the Yale Ph.D. student Donald Hogg did the first ever fieldwork on Convince around 1960.

Jamaican-born scholars also contributed to the emerging scholarship on African-Jamaican religions. The anthropologist, social worker and later politician Edith Clarke focused on kinship organization in *My Mother Who Fathered Me*, which was originally published in 1957. While she only briefly mentions Revival religions, she shared her field notes on a Nine Night in "Sugartown" with George Eaton Simpson, who reported on it in a 1957 article on Nine Night wakes in rural and urban Jamaica (331-334). The sociologist and later politician Edward Seaga conducted his initial field research on Revivalism in the 1950s. Seaga, as we have previously seen, had positioned himself politically as an advocate of Jamaican popular culture.

Revivalism also became a subject in nationalist Jamaican art. One such example is Edna Manley's *Pocomania* (1936), a stone carving of a male half figure with its right arm in the characteristic downward sweeping dance movement of Pukumina rituals. [Ill. 63] Manley reportedly attended Pukumina services in the mid 1930s and later wrote about her *Negro Aroused* series, of which *Pocomania* is a part: "It seemed to be an expression that flowed from trips I was taking at night listening to the Pocomania meetings – intensely religious – and then getting drawn into watching the political

meetings on the Parade. I felt something coming, very definitely something coming” (Boxer 1990, 25). To Manley, what may have been a resurgence of African-Jamaican religions in the 1930s was an integral part of Jamaica’s cultural and political awakening.

David Miller Sr and Jr, two Kingston-based self-taught artists who had started out producing curios for the tourist trade, caught the attention of nationalist talent scouts such as Astley Clerk and Robert Verity, the head of the IoJ’s Junior Centre, and started producing more ambitious woodcarvings around 1940. They are today recognized as major early Intuitives. Senior is best known for his fanciful carvings of strange animals, such as snakes and dinosaurs, and humanoid figures that are visibly influenced by his interest in African and Indian culture, such as the four-faced *Talisman* (c1940). [Ill. 22] Junior was best known for his exquisitely carved human heads that humorously explore the black physiognomy, some of which were based on actual photographs, and more fantastic horned heads that remind of the horned Songye power figures of Central Africa.²⁰⁴ [Ill. 130, 131]

It is tempting to speculate about the possible magico-religious significance of some of the Miller carvings. During a tour of the NGJ’s permanent collection in the mid 1990s, an EMC student insisted that Miller Sr’s *Talisman* was associated with a type of Obeah known as “de Laurence.” This form of Obeah – a 20th century, mainly urban development – appropriated rituals and objects from the books on occult practices of the de Laurence publishing and mail-order company in Chicago and is, among others, concerned with protective talismans (Elkins 1986; Senior 2003, 355-357).²⁰⁵ A title page

²⁰⁴ Junior’s carving tool box is preserved in David Boxer’s collection and the inside cover has photographs pasted in that obviously influenced some of his carvings.

²⁰⁵ Lauron William de Laurence (1868-1936), a white American, was a writer and publisher of occult books and a dealer in occult supplies who was based in Chicago. Most of his publications are based on fanciful interpretations of Hindu magic and the Kabala. His products were available by mail order and influential on

image from the 1939 edition of the de Laurence publication, *The Great Book of Magic*, in effect represents a Hindu-inspired, four-faced figure which may have served as the inspiration for the sculpture. Since de Laurence books were (and still are) banned in Jamaica, under the Obeah Act *and* the Jamaica Customs regulations, it is unlikely that the Millers would have used them openly as a source of fantastic imagery although some images from the books may have circulated in the popular culture and reached the Millers indirectly. There is, however, also a carving by Miller Sr of a grimacing figure with two antenna-like horns that is titled *Obi* (c1940). [Ill. 132] The word “Obi” is used to describe the practitioner and practice of Obeah but also specifically for a type of Obeah amulet or charm (Cassidy & Le Page, 326-327). While *Talisman*, *Obi* and, for that matter, Miller Jr’s horned heads were obviously made as art rather than as ritual objects, it cannot be ruled out that the Millers’ interest in Obeah went beyond representing it in their art. By the 1970s, however, they were devout Jehovah’s Witnesses, who condemned “graven images” and insisted that their carvings were secular (Boxer & Nettleford 1979, 33).

In the late 1950s, the self-taught artist Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds, a Zion Revivalist leader, appeared on the national scene. [Ill. 133] George Eaton Simpson and Edward Seaga had both used him as an informant on Revivalism and Seaga reportedly introduced him to the Hills Gallery. In the 1960s Kapo was heavily promoted as a defining Jamaican artist and cultural icon by the Jamaica Tourist Board. Local prejudices against African-Jamaican culture did, however, not suddenly evaporate. Kapo was tried for Obeah on two occasions, in 1945 and again in 1951 or 1952, and was fined and may

African-derived religious practices throughout the Americas and possibly even West Africa, including Hoodoo in the USA, Obeah in Jamaica and the Shango cult in Trinidad. His popular publications included *The Great Book of Magic* and the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, which have all been used in Jamaica although they were banned by the authorities (see: <http://www.jacustoms.gov.jm/customs/items.htm>).

have spent some time in jail as a result.²⁰⁶ The first time, he was arrested after a barmaid in the town of Linstead objected to the small carved figural stick he held up to her, he claims inadvertently (Small 1975, n.p.). The second incident started when his house in Whitfield Town, West Kingston, was raided and much of his art – “moldings in clay, paintings in gold and silver and carvings out of wood” (Ibid.) – taken away as evidence. In both instances, his art thus contributed to his arrest, which demonstrated the extent to which figural carvings, in particular, and art made by a Revivalist, generally, were associated with Obeah in the mind of the public and the authorities alike.

A 1964 newspaper article by Vivian Durham, a Marcus Garvey associate, titled *Scandal Aired Abroad*, lambasted a BBC documentary on Revivalism, which featured Kapo, in decidedly disparaging terms: “Mumbo jumbo, trance dancing, frantic emotional religious invocations – Pocomania balm yards with tattered flags – [...] dancing and hysterical frenzy all were portrayed in a kind of macabre contortion.” He left no doubt that his objections were class-based and claimed that the documentary misrepresented its subject as “[a] general mix-up of all sections of the Jamaican community, the high, the middle and the low as being prone to the superstitious made a kettle-of-fish that would sick the stomach of any Jamaican at home or abroad.” He then concluded that the documentary had caused “devastating damage” to Jamaica’s image as a progressive, developing nation. While some of these prejudices and anxieties about cultural respectability persist to the present day, the canonization of Kapo represented a major step in the validation of popular religion and the associated arts.

²⁰⁶ In an autobiographical statement, Kapo wrote that in 1945: “I was sentenced to six months at hard labour. I appealed against the conviction. I was set free at the appeal” (Reynolds, n.d.). Another source, an interview with Kapo, stated that his sentence also included 6 lashes (Willoughby 1977, 45). It is not clear whether he actually did time or received any lashes. The second time, the charge was commuted to vagrancy and he was fined £5 but subsequent received £5 compensation for the items he had lost in the raid (Small 1975, n.p.; Willoughby 1977, 46-47).

The sacred arts of African-Jamaican religions have been only peripherally noted in the scholarship, unlike the sacred arts of Vodou, which have been the subject of published research and high profile exhibitions (e.g. Cosentino 1995). I have, for instance, not found any discussion in the literature on the subject of the cornmeal ground drawings that are used in Revival and Kumina rituals, which are similar to the Haitian *vèvè* drawings, although the patterns are simpler. Resolving this scholarly gap is beyond the scope of this dissertation but one aspect of the visual culture of Revivalism, the so-called feasting tables, is now fairly well documented. Seaga had reported that a Revival mission house typically contains a ceremonial table which may be placed on a platform and serves as a type altar (1983, 6). Recent research and photo-documentation by Clinton Hutton (2009) captured the sumptuous visual beauty of the feasting tables and examined its various forms and types, such as cross-shaped “four pole” tables and festive feeding arrangements on ceremonial water pools for the water spirits. [Ill. 134]

The table is often quite large and used in major communal rituals, when it is laid out with carefully arranged “fruits, candles, drinks (alcoholic and carbonated), bread, vegetables, cooked food, and flowers”, as well as a bible and a hymnal (Seaga 1983, 9). The breads often take on fanciful sculptural forms, in animal shapes such as a crocodile or a dove or abstract shapes such as a cross or a star. Such feasting tables are organized to give thanks for a particular favor granted by the spirits, to remove evil spirits, as a memorial to a deceased member, or to cause harm to an enemy. The rituals around the tables involve drumming, spiritual dancing, possession, the singing of hymns, bible readings and may include blood sacrifices of chickens or goats. (Simpson 1955a, 91)

The ritual arts of Revivalism are almost exclusively used by its followers and do

not have high visibility in the Jamaican public domain. While several Intuitive artists have emerged from the Revivalist sphere, Kapo chief among them, and mainstream artists have occasionally used Revivalism as a source of iconic Jamaican subject matter, the impact of African-derived religions on modern and contemporary mainstream art is limited compared to Haiti and Cuba, where they have been crucially important sources to modern and contemporary art. This suggests that the efforts to give *traditional* African-derived culture defining status in the national Jamaican culture have not been entirely successful. This role was arguably overtaken by Rastafari, which has dominated Jamaica's cultural and visual identity since the 1970s.

b. Utilitarian and Decorative arts

The material culture of the slaves was limited, as a function of their lack of freedom and poverty, but they were involved in the production of utilitarian and decorative arts, for their own use, as part of their work on the estates, and for barter or sale to others and, thus, in response to the practical and aesthetic requirements of human life (Meyers 1999, 201). Some slaves worked as specialized craft producers and vendors, on behalf of their masters or as an additional source of income for themselves. And for those who had gained their freedom, the sale and production of such items could be a source of gainful and, sometimes, independent employment. (Heuman & Walvin 2003, 464-479)

Phillippo acknowledged that: "Most of the houses and public buildings – churches, chapels, courthouses – were built chiefly by the slaves: and to the slaves equally with the free blacks and people of colour have the white inhabitants been indebted, not only for their common work of art but for nearly every article of manufacture" (1843, 199). The furniture, architectural decorations and buildings

produced by these craftspersons reflected the tastes and lifestyle needs of the colonial elite, although they opened the door for dialogue with the popular culture. At the other end of the spectrum were the popular crafts which included pottery, carved coconut and calabash containers, basketry, and basic furniture – most of them humble objects that defy easy recuperation as “art.” These traditions derived mainly from African and European sources but some encapsulate the entire cultural history of Jamaica. Popular pottery, for instance, combines Taino, Spanish, English, West African and Indian influences, which were adapted to local needs and circumstances, including the availability of materials (Ebanks 1984).

Few early examples of such crafts have been preserved but there are descriptions and pictorial sources. Belisario’s *Sketches of Character* (1837-38) lithographs documented African-Jamaican culture around Emancipation and are among the earliest visual documents on traditional pottery. [Ill. 135] Belisario’s explanatory text for the *Water-Jar Sellers* provides useful clues on how such crafts were viewed by the local elites:

It may not be generally known to our readers, that we are not wholly indebted to Britain, or the Spanish Main for Water-jars – those in ordinary use are manufactured at Potteries near the City, and if they are not capable of producing vessels as tastefully moulded, or as fine in quality as those imported, their wares claim at least a decided preference in the porous nature of their surface, being unvarnished in most instances – such rough appearance may not be pleasing to the eye; but the water on that account is rendered much cooler from the freer admission of air: However we may favor these *plebeian* utensils, it must be observed, they are not presentable at the sideboards or tables of respectable families, nor are they usually admitted to the privilege of the *entrée*.

Belisario thus commented derisively on their coarseness and “plebeian” cultural status but defended their usefulness in the tropical environment.

Belisario's *Water-Jar Sellers* documents several important pottery types and one of the ways in which they were sold, namely by two ambulant street vendors who carried their wares on their head. The taller man carries an assortment of jars, including one type with a large overhead handle known as a "monkey jar." The other, much shorter man or boy carries a single, very large jar – a so-called "Spanish jar" – to obvious deliberate comical effect. An 1890 illustrated article in *Harper's Monthly* mentions "piles of great pots and bowls and queer jars of red earthen-ware" (Pyle 176) for sale in a Kingston street market and the accompanying illustration leaves no doubt that these were monkey jars and "yabbas", a type of large, bowl-shaped storage vessel. [Ill. 136]

Ceramics have been produced nearly continuously in Jamaica since the precursors of the Taino arrived and then served ritual, functional and, no doubt, decorative purposes. While there is a family resemblance between some traditional African-Jamaican forms and Taino examples, the main area of continuity was in terms of the clays used and the locations from which these clays were obtained, which include the Liguanea Plains on which Kingston is situated and nearby St Catherine. (Meyers 1999; Hauser et al. 2008) The dominant source of popular Jamaican pottery is West African, in form and decoration, and specifically relates to the ceramic traditions of the "Gold Coast" area, from which much of the Jamaican slave population originated (Meyers 1999, 208-209). The word "yabba" may, furthermore, be of Twi or Igbo origin (Ibid., 204).

African-Jamaican ceramic ware was essentially utilitarian and used for water and other storage and transport, as cooking vessels, and for specialized purposes, such as clay coal stoves. It uses only the most basic pottery technology – pots are hand-built and open pit fired – and traditional potters have typically lived and worked on or near useable clay

deposits. At a utilitarian level, such pottery was in the mid 20th century replaced by more practical mass-produced metal and plastic ware and only a few traditional potters remain.

One traditional potter “Ma Lou” Louisa Jones (1913-1992) received national recognition in the 1970s and is fairly well documented (Ebanks 1984; Hauser et al. 2008, 131). [Ill. 137] Ma Lou’s story illustrates the social context of African-Jamaican pottery: she came from a traditional pottery-making family in which the craft had been passed mainly from mother to daughter. She lived on St John’s Road in Spanish Town, in a poor neighborhood which is one of the historic pottery-making sites in Jamaica. She sold her pots from her yard but also at craft fairs, a departure from the traditional marketing of such pottery that accompanied its redefinition as part of the national heritage. Her daughter Marlene Rhoden, “Miss Munchie,” has continued the family tradition but is challenged to keep her pottery economically viable, due to a decline in public interest. For Miss Munchie the continuation of her craft is motivated by the knowledge that she is one of few remaining exponents of an important cultural tradition, but her children have shown only limited interest in taking over, no doubt because such pottery is back-breaking and economically unrewarding work. (Hauser et al. 2008, 131)

Traditional forms and techniques have however been incorporated into modern studio ceramics. Cecil Baugh (1908-2005), came out of the yabba-making tradition but received studio training in England with the famous English ceramist Bernard Leach and became Jamaica’s first “art” potter.²⁰⁷ While Leach’s fusion of Western and Japanese ceramic traditions was an important influence on him, Baugh was strongly committed to the use of use of local materials and used traditional forms such as the monkey jar,

²⁰⁷ For an more information on the links between traditional and art pottery in Jamaica, and interviews with Cecil Baugh and Miss Munchie, see: <http://www.ceramics-aberystwyth.com/jamaican-pottery.php>

although he transformed these into wheel-thrown, glazed, technically immaculate studio ceramics. (Tanna & Baugh 1999) Baugh received the national recognition which ultimately eluded Ma Lou (and, more so, Miss Munchie), no doubt because he was able to transcend the low cultural status of the yabba and was recognized as a “fine artist.”

The waning of traditional pottery does not mean that popular ceramics have disappeared altogether. New forms have appeared, such as the terracotta flowerpots that are now sold along urban streets. The vendors are usually also the producers and make use of the same clay deposits and techniques as the earlier yabba makers. Their livelihood is, however, also threatened by cheap, mass-produced ceramic imports which are more durable than the local pots.²⁰⁸ The flowerpot makers occasionally produce more inventive forms that move beyond the functional and one recently recognized Intuitive, Sylvester Stephens produces large jars with fantastic sculptural decorations that elaborate on the basic flowerpot types. In Stephens’ sculptural work, traditional pottery has, as with Baugh, transitioned into a form which is more readily recognized as “art.” [Ill. 138]

Other postcolonial societies, such as Mexico, have made significant efforts to document, cultivate and promote their indigenous craft, but in Jamaica this has been an area of comparative neglect, although its economic potential has been recognized. The most important effort to promote local craft was the establishment of Things Jamaican in the 1960s, a Seaga-initiated government company that marketed and developed local crafts for domestic use, tourist sales and export. Things Jamaican was actively involved in craft training and brought in foreign consultants such as the English ceramist Peter Cave and the Italian designer Sergio dello Strologo to direct product and technology

²⁰⁸ They are made from soft, low-fired earthenware and unglazed, which causes the surfaces to crack and erode easily.

development. Things Jamaican also established the popular Christmas and Easter craft markets at Devon House. It has now been scaled down and consists of a chain of tourist-oriented gift shops with outlets at the two international airports and a few tourist sites.

The scarcity of scholarship on traditional craft is telling and it is also of note that the scholarship on traditional pottery has been generated entirely by ethnographers and archaeologists, without involvement of art historians, and furthermore mainly by non-Jamaicans. None of this has been a major source of contention. Traditional craft, which is primarily utilitarian, only rarely has any symbolic content and is largely apolitical, is not an area over which the Jamaican culture wars have been fought. This is, in itself, a reflection of the deep-rooted high culture biases of the Jamaican cultural sphere.

3. Postcolonial Popular Art and Visual Culture

While there are continuities with the traditional, the popular forms that are discussed in this section reflect the socio-cultural changes that accompanied the end of colonialism and Jamaica's new existence as an independent state. The most momentous development in the popular sphere was the emergence of the Garveyism and Rastafari, which have common roots in religious Ethiopianism and the African repatriation campaigns of the late Plantation era but are, as such, products of the 20th century. Garveyism and Rastafari provided black Jamaicans with an alternative cultural and political identity as members of the African Diaspora and deeply politicized the popular culture and its visual expressions.

The island-wide strikes and riots of 1938 – the first significant uprising since the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, which was part of a wave of labor unrest in the British West Indies in 1937-38 – asserted the black majority's capacity to challenge the socio-political order and established a vigorous local labor-union movement. The introduction of

Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944 further contributed to the political empowerment of the popular masses, who now held the majority vote in the political system. Intensive rural-to-urban migration in the mid 20th century resulted in a rapidly growing population of urban poor who were increasingly aware of their ability to make demands of the political system, as they represent large, concentrated blocks of voters. In the 1960s and 70s, the stakes were raised by the ideological battles of the Cold War, which saw one major political party, the Manleys' People's National Party (PNP) gravitating towards Marxism and Cuba, while the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), supported the USA and the free market economy. It is in this context that Jamaica's current system of political patronage developed and included the establishment of political turf and the arming of political gangs – the birth of the so-called “garrison communities,” most of which are located in downtown and western Kingston. As criminal elements in these communities became involved in the drugs and arms trade, the stage was set for the emergence of “narco-political gangs” such as the internationally active Shower Posse. In several instances the “dons,” or “area leaders,” came to yield more power than their political patrons and the garrisons are, in many ways, self-governing, to the point where they are beyond the reach of the local security forces.²⁰⁹ (Gray 2004) Garrison politics have deeply influenced the popular visual culture, to assert affiliation to the parties and gangs.

Jamaican culture became more cosmopolitan in the late 20th century with modern travel, migration, and the new consumer culture and communication, news and pop

²⁰⁹ While this dissertation was being completed, there was civil unrest arising from the Government's decision, after months of vacillation, to comply with a US extradition request for alleged Shower Posse leader, Christopher “Dudus” Coke, for arms and drug running charges. Coke's followers and other gangs retaliated by attacking several Kingston Police stations on May 23, 2010 and the resulting confrontation between the gangs and security forces paralyzed the country for several days. At least 73 civilians and 4 members of the security forces died. Coke was arrested and extradited one month later. The security forces have since launched a campaign to dismantle gangs and garrison communities but the system is deeply entrenched in Jamaican society.

culture media. The contemporary popular culture has been labeled by Deborah Thomas (2004) as “modern blackness,” a new, urban and transnational sense of Jamaicanness which evolves with significant autonomy from and, in many ways, in explicit defiance of middle class Jamaican socio-cultural norms. This “modern blackness” also represents popular Jamaican culture’s modernity and some of the cultural expressions that have emerged from these socio-cultural changes challenge the assumption that popular art is necessarily artisanal, “low tech” and, by extension, a-historical.

a. The Garveyite Iconography and Visual Culture

The journalist and African Nationalist activist Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940) established the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in his native Jamaica in 1914 but moved to Harlem, NYC, in 1916.²¹⁰ There, the UNIA burgeoned into a transnational organization with significant membership in the USA, the Caribbean, Central America and Africa. Garvey returned to Jamaica when he was deported from the USA in 1927 and was politically active in the island until he in turn left for England in 1935, where he died in relative obscurity (Martin 1983a; Lewis 1987)

Garveyism is committed the welfare and development of Africa and its Diaspora or, as Garvey put it, of “Africans at home and abroad.” Garvey propagated black pride, unity and progress, which was enshrined in the UNIA motto “One God, One Aim, One Destiny,” and argued that black liberation required economic, social, political and cultural self-empowerment. This was actively reflected in the organizational activities of the UNIA, which included cultural and welfare programmes as well as economic activities, such as his Black Star shipping line (1919-1922) which was meant to promote

²¹⁰ The full name is the United Negro Improvement Association – African Communities League.

trade between Africa and its Diaspora. While the Black Star Line was poorly managed and short-lived, it gained iconic status as a symbolic reversal of the Triangular Trade and was pointedly named as the black counterpart to the White Star Line.

The UNIA still exists but has lost much of its earlier, transnational prominence. Garvey's ideas however paved the way for other such movements in Africa and the African Diaspora and contributed to the political mobilization of the black population in Jamaica, where his ideas continue to have considerable influence across changing post-independence class boundaries but mainly among the popular masses. (Lewis 1987). His body was repatriated to Jamaica in 1964 – an initiative of Edward Seaga – and he was the first historical figure to be declared a National Hero in 1965.

Garvey well understood the power of propaganda and the importance of visual communication in this context, which was reflected in the UNIA's extensive use of visual symbols and pomp and pageantry, such as the uniformed parades in Harlem's streets and the staged presentations of Garvey and his entourage as the Provisional President of Africa, as he had designated himself at the 1920 UNIA convention (Grant 2008).²¹¹ Garvey and the UNIA were actively involved in the development of a Garveyite iconography and circulated images that have had a long-lasting influence on African Nationalist iconography in general, as is illustrated by the national flag of Ghana, which incorporated Garvey's Black Star, and on Jamaican popular iconography in particular.

Central to the UNIA iconography were painted and photographic portraits of Garvey, in ornate dress uniform, academic gown or three piece suit and carefully posed in formal settings. Garvey's best known portraits were made in Harlem by James van der

²¹¹ The UNIA-related photographs and illustrations referenced in this section can be found on the website of the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers Project at UCLA: <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/>

Zee, who was contracted in 1924 to act as the UNIA's official photographer. Several portraits took on an iconic quality and were widely circulated by the UNIA, which also produced what are now widely used African Nationalist symbols, such as its red, black and green flag, the black star of the Black Star Line, and the map of Africa. The UNIA also circulated inspirational images, such as portraits of black historical figures, black Christian imagery, and scenes from African history.

Garvey's predilection for pomp and pageantry, inevitably, provided fodder for his critics. Zora Neale Hurston, for instance, lambasted Garvey's self-aggrandizing visual politics in 1922: "On the walls of his living room hung a large picture of Napoleon. On the opposite wall hung one, still larger, of himself." (Martin 1983b, 75-76). The Garvey scholar Robert Hill, in *Making Noise: Marcus Garvey Dada, August 1922* (1994), has however argued that the Garveyite pomp and pageantry was a deliberate subversive, carnivalesque strategy to challenge the hierarchies of the white mainstream and to foster black unity and self-confidence. As Garvey had explained: "[T]o organize Negroes we have got to demonstrate: you cannot tell them anything; you have got to show them; and that is why we have got to spend seven years making noise; we had to beat the drum; we had to do all we did; otherwise there would have been no organization" (188-189).

The unease that surrounded Garvey's flamboyant persona persists to the present day and has even led to comparisons with malignant 1970s African dictators such as Idi Amin Dada and Jean-Bédél Bokassa (e.g. Thomson 2008). Such ambivalence is also evident, albeit more subtly, in the official Jamaican representations of Garvey, which represent him in conservative civilian suit rather than his military or academic regalia. This can be seen on Jamaican currency notes, coins, stamps and on public monuments,

such as the Alvin Marriott bust in Kingston's National Heroes Park, and Marriott's full-length statue of Garvey in St Ann's Bay, the capital of his native parish. [Ill. 84, 92] Garveyite symbols are only discreetly included in such official representations, if at all, which elides the tensions between Garvey's consecration as a Jamaican National Hero and his pan-African allegiances (Poupeye-Rammelaere 1991, 16; Carnegie 1999, 51).

Garveyite representations of Africa focused on Egypt as the foundation of African civilization and avoided any reference to "tribal Africa." The masthead of the *Negro World* newspaper, for instance, had at its centre a stylized representation of the Sphinx of Giza. References to modern Africa focused on its progressive potential, as could be seen in the illustration on the Black Star Line share certificates. In the middle of the image is a map of Africa, centrally placed on the globe and emblazoned with "Africa the Land of Opportunity" – an African Nationalist counterpoint to how the USA had been presented to aspiring migrants. Benedict Anderson has argued the national maps take on logo-like characteristics in nationalist imaginaries and the Garveyite use of the African map is generally consistent with this observation (1991, 170-178). The map is flanked on the left by a black man, who towers over a tropical island landscape, and on the left by a Black Star Liner. The man is dressed in a shirt and rolled up pants but no shoes, which suggests that he is a West Indian field or dock worker – the social groups that produced most of Garvey's followers. He presses his hat against his chest and points at the African map, as an obvious statement of allegiance. Behind him stands a large basket filled with agricultural goods, and in the landscape, in front of a coconut palm, stands a woman with a basket on her head – references to the traditional plantation economy of the Caribbean and much of Africa itself. The image sums up the promise of socio-economic progress

for the Black Man – and Garveyism, like mainstream Jamaican nationalism, has a masculinist bias – from post-slavery plantation laborer to self-empowered modern trader and entrepreneur, with Africa at the centre of the transformation.

Garvey had strong ideas about the role of the arts in the Black World and these ideas have influenced the course of mainstream and popular Jamaican art alike. Garvey had in 1929 endorsed the young Alvin Marriott as “the Michael Angelo [sic] of not only Jamaica but of all the West Indies” (*Blackman*, September 26, 1929), but pointedly ignored Edna Manley, who had already achieved local and overseas acclaim at that time. Marriott was not only black but his academic sculpture style obviously also appealed to Garvey’s “high culture” biases. More recently, these have also been echoed in Barrington Watson’s promotion of black “high art,” and of himself as a black “great master.” With the exception of official representations, such as Marriott’s monuments, most mainstream artistic responses to Garveyism have however not used the Garvey iconography. Osmond Watson’s *The Madonna and St Marcus Mosiah* (c1980), a black Madonna and Child, for instance, responds to Garvey’s call for black religious imagery but makes obvious reference to Garvey only in the title. (Poupeye-Rammelaere 1992)

It is in the popular sphere that the Garveyite iconography has been most influential, however, be it in forms, such as the hand-painted decorations of street vendors’ carts, that might not have appealed to Garvey’s “high culture” sensibilities. There Garvey imagery appears autonomously, in specifically Garveyite environments or, as in the earlier-mentioned Tinson Pen mural, in the popular responses to Jamaica’s official national iconography. [Ill. 126] Its primary conduit into the popular domain has,

however, been the Rastafarian visual culture, which incorporates the Garveyite iconography. [Ill. 9, 139]

b. The Rastafarian Iconography and Visual Culture

The Rastafarian movement emerged during the 1930s and was triggered by the 1930 coronation of Haile Selassie I as the emperor of Ethiopia and the international uproar about the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-36 – events that resulted in an upsurge of racial pride and anti-colonial fervor in the African Diaspora (Weisberg 1970). Haile Selassie was the successor of an ancient dynasty which claimed descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and the sovereign of the only African nation which had not been colonized. The early Rastafarians identified him as the Black Messiah, whom they named Jah Rastafari, and themselves as the Black Israelites, with Ethiopia as the African Zion.²¹² Rastafari has characteristics of a millenarian movement, in which the apocalypse is regarded as the occasion of Black Redemption (Simpson 1985, 286).

Since most Jamaicans are of West or Central African descent, it may seem odd that Ethiopia was chosen as the African Zion but this stems from the historical conflation of Ethiopia with Africa in general, as well as a strong bias in African Nationalism, Garveyism included, for those aspects of African culture that are compatible with Western-derived notions of civilization and, furthermore, fall within the Judeo-Christian cultural sphere. Garvey is regarded as the prophet of Jah Rastafari because he frequently quoted the Biblical Psalm 68:31: “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” – which is seen as a reference to Haile Selassie’s

²¹² Haile Selassie’s pre-coronation name was Ras Tafari Makonnen, from which the name Rastafari was derived.

investiture. Garvey himself made the connection when he cited the psalm in his November 8, 1930 report on the coronation for his Jamaican newspaper *The Blackman*.

The world-wide coverage of the coronation of Haile Selassie represented a landmark event in the development of the modern news media and it is primarily via this conduit that Ethiopian imagery reached Jamaica. This probably included *National Geographic*, which provided a lavishly illustrated feature on the coronation and life in modern Ethiopia (Southard 1931; Moore 1931), and the news reels that were shown in the local cinemas.²¹³ These photographic images, which had an iconic splendor and historic authority that surpassed the more contrived pageantry of Garvey's African court, were central to the development of Rastafari and mobilized as visual evidence of the divinity of Haile Selassie, as the living Messiah. Their symbolic potency is illustrated by a now-legendary incident in 1934, whereby one of the pioneers of the movement, Leonard Howell, reportedly sold some 5,000 copies of a portrait of Haile Selassie as "repatriation passports" to Ethiopia. (Owens 1976, 14; Barrett 1977, 85)

The Rastafarians adopted Garvey's general philosophy but depart from its orthodoxies on several crucial points. Unlike Garveyism, Rastafari has no central organization or codified tenets, other than the defining belief in the divinity of Haile Selassie and Ethiopian Zionism. It consists of unattached individuals with personal interpretations of the Rastafarian beliefs; organized groups with more cohesive beliefs, such as the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the House of Nyabinghi; members of the

²¹³ The first major cinema company in Jamaica, the Palace Amusement Company, was established in 1921 and several cinemas were in operation in Kingston around 1930. A history of the Palace Amusement Company, which remains as the main local cinema company, can be found at: <http://www.palaceamusement.com/palace.dti?page=aboutus>. Digitized news reels of the coronation are now available online, for instance at: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1845622330460884817#docid=-4560496113473361454>. The National Geographic articles on the coronation can be found at: <http://dubroom.org/articles/053.htm>

Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which established a mission in Jamaica in 1969, although beliefs and practices have been significantly creolized by local adherents; and radical sects, such as the Bobo Shanti, who live in a closed commune in Bull Bay, St Thomas, and adhere to strict Mosaic proscriptions.

The UNIA's ritualistic propensities have caused it to be described as a "civil religion," but Garveyism is essentially a secular, political movement (Burkett 1978).²¹⁴ Rastafari, in contrast, is a religion with a strong political emphasis, which has syncretized local African-derived and Ethiopianist religious traditions with Ethiopian Orthodox beliefs and practices. It exists in an ambivalent relationship with traditional African-Jamaican religions. Many Rastafarians reject what they consider to be the superstitious backwardness and "death worship" of Revival and Obeah and in the early days of the movement there were instances of overt hostility between Rastafarians and Revivalists.²¹⁵ There are nonetheless areas of continuity, especially in the music, and Obeah does, in actuality, have a place in Rastafari. (Kitzinger 1969, 256-257; Spencer 1998, 373-374)

Garveyism is essentially conformist and concerned with claiming the righteous place of Africa and its Diaspora in the context of mainstream modernity but Rastafari has a strong non-conformist thrust. The Rastafarian defiance of the "Babylonian system" is illustrated by the ritual use of ganja, the anti-authoritarianism, the often strident Black Nationalism; the preference for independent self-employment, and the promotion of a natural or "ital" diet and lifestyle. More so than Garveyism, Rastafari has a strong patriarchal focus – "the Rastafarian" is by default a man and women only play a

²¹⁴ The UNIA is affiliated with the African Orthodox Church, which was established in 1921 as a black Episcopalian church, but that church operates autonomously, outside of the UNIA's organizational framework.

²¹⁵ George Eaton Simpson reports that he observed conflicts between Kapo's Revival group in West Kingston and Rastas who lived in the same community and recalls a specific incident whereby a group of Rastas disrupted an evening service at Kapo's yard, shouting that Revivalists were worshipping a "dead God" while their own was the "living God" (1998, 223).

secondary role in the movement – and this gender bias, too, represents an implied challenge to prevailing norms in post-slavery Jamaican society, which has a matriarchal focus (Kitzinger 1966, 35 & 1969, 252-255). Rastafari is a modern politico-religious movement fueled by modern technologies such as photography and the news media but it also represents a rejection and critique of mainstream modernity, which poignantly illustrates that, “the search for a postcolonial modernity has been tied, from its very birth, with its struggle against modernity” (Chatterjee 1993, 75).

The Rastafarian movement emerged in conflict with the colonial and early postcolonial authorities and was regarded as a threat to national security. Leonard Howell was in 1934 jailed for sedition, because of his fiery street sermons that advocated rejection of constituted authority and open antagonism towards all whites and his “fraudulent” sale the afore-mentioned photographs of Haile Selassie. In 1940, Howell established his maroon-style Pinnacle commune, which was located in a secluded part of the hills above Kingston and included a large ganja plantation. At its peak, Pinnacle may have been home to some 2,000 persons. Pinnacle was repeatedly raided and eventually destroyed by the Police in 1954, after which Howell sent to the mental hospital and most members moved to the slums of West Kingston, which, ironically, helped to propagate the Rastafarian movement. (Lee 2003, 4) The most violent confrontation between early Rastafarians and the Jamaican police, the so-called Holy Thursday Massacre, took place in 1963 in Coral Gardens, near Montego Bay. It started when two police officers and six civilians were killed and a gas station burned by what appeared to be a small group of radical Rastafarians. The reaction was a brutal police campaign against all Rastafarians in that part of the island, during which many were detained and beaten, and had, as the

ultimate insult, their locks cut.²¹⁶ (Owens 1976, 14-21; Barrett 1977, 84-88)

The academic study of Rastafari started while these conflicts were at their peak. George Eaton Simpson's research on African diasporal religions included pioneering work on the early Rastafarians (Simpson 1955a & 1955b; 1998). In 1965, Oxford University's Sheila Kitzinger also conducted seminal research on Rastafarian beliefs and rituals, including the use of ganja (1966; 1969). M.G. Smith returned to his native Jamaica in 1951 to join the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies.²¹⁷ He led the first major local study on the Rastafarians, *The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica* (1960), assisted by the younger scholars Roy Augier and Rex Nettleford. This report, which examined the Rastafarian beliefs and practices in the social context of Jamaica on the verge of Independence, had been commissioned by the Norman Manley government and challenged the notion that all Rastafarians were irrational, violent and hell-bent on overthrowing government and the social order. Haile Selassie's state visit to Jamaica in 1966 further legitimized Rastafari and attracted many new members (Kitzinger 1969, 244-245).

By the late 1960s, Rastafari was a major force in Jamaican culture and during the 1970s, aided by the success of Reggae, it became identified with Jamaicanness in the international arena. (Simpson 1985, 290) Today, the tensions between Rastafarians and the authorities have largely subsided, although the cultivation and use of ganja, which is still illegal in Jamaica, remains as a source of occasional friction.²¹⁸ The recognition of

²¹⁶ At the time of completing this dissertation, demands were being articulated for reparations to the Rastafarian community for the repression they initially suffered from the Jamaican authorities.

²¹⁷ This institute is now known as the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies, after its Nobel Prize winning founding Director.

²¹⁸ This agitation has met with some success: the Jamaican Government in 2000 appointed the National Commission on Ganja to make recommendations on the legal status of ganja in Jamaica. The Commission's report recommended the decriminalization of ganja for personal and religious use. (Chevannes et al. 2001)

Rastafari as a defining part of postcolonial Jamaican culture has placed a not always realistic moral burden on Rastafarians, to serve as the consciousness of Jamaica and, indeed, the postcolonial world, and to stand for black dignity, righteousness and peaceful resistance against the forces of oppression and exploitation. It is commonplace in Jamaica to claim that those who do not meet those high moral standards, such as the “rent-a-dread” male prostitutes in the tourist areas, are not “true Rastafarians,” irrespective of whether they define themselves as such.

As an all-encompassing, militant world view, Rastafari is emphatically and publicly affirmed by its adherents and has developed a vibrant visual culture as a result. Early accounts mention the wearing of the Rastafarian colors and the use of photographs of Haile Selassie (Kitzinger 1969, 247-248; Simpson 1998, 218-220). Dreadlocks appeared in the 1940s and quickly became the most obvious characteristic of Rastafarians (although not all Rastafarians wear locks, nor are all persons with locks adherents.) Most Rastafarians cover their locks in public, by wearing a knitted tam or, in the case of the Bobo Shanti, a tightly wrapped turban. Rastafarian informants have variously claimed that the locks were inspired by various Biblical passages, including the story of Samson, as well as photographs of locksed Maasai warriors, Mau-Mau rebels, Ethiopian warriors with lion mane headdresses, Ethiopian monks, and the young Haile Selassie, as well as the mane of the Lion of Judah (Smith et al. 1963, 25-26; Owens 1976, 153-157). Irrespective of its origins, the dreadlocks celebrate natural black hair and represent a defiant rejection of what is still regarded as a crucial mark of middle class respectability in Jamaica: straightened or neatly coifed hair.

The explanation of the origins of the dreadlocks underscores the role of mass-

reproduced photographic images in Rastafari but also illustrates how such sources are used. Visual and verbal symbols play a crucial role in Rastafarian philosophy and images, Biblical passages and, even, common words are mined for potential symbolic significance with regards to the history and status of black people, in a dialectic process of analysis and association called “reasoning” (Owens 1976, 185-187). Such reasoning, which can be collective or individual, often involves punning, as is evident in the Rastafarian amendments of the English language whereby, for instance, “oppressor” becomes “downpressor,” because it is argued that oppression involves holding people down rather than up (Pollard 2000). Rastafarians also reject the term “Rastafarianism” and insist that it is “Rastafari”, in a rejection of the Babylonian “isms and schisms,” as Bob Marley famously put it in *Get Up, Stand Up* (1973). At the visual level, the Rastafarian engagement with symbolic representation has resulted in a rich iconography which is highly recognizable but also open-ended and subject to diverse interpretations. The Rastafarian iconography combines religious and nationalist symbols and is as eclectic as the movement itself: its sources include the Garveyite iconography; traditional African-Jamaican religious symbolism; Masonic and Hindu symbolism; and, most of all, the Imperial Ethiopian and Ethiopian Orthodox iconography.

The most commonly seen component of the Rastafarian iconography is the red, gold and green of the Ethiopian flag. To Rastafarians, the gold and green respectively represent the mineral and natural wealth of Africa. Accounts on the significance of the red vary but a commonly held view is that it represents the blood that was spilled in the history of the Black race. The Rastafarian tricolor is often accompanied by black as a fourth color, symbolic of the African race, and thus overlaps with the Garvey colors as

well as the black, green and gold of the Jamaican flag. The Rastafarian iconography further includes emblems such as the Lion of Judah, the Star of David, a stylized ganja plant, and the map of Africa. The Lion of Judah, in its Ethiopian form, featured on the Ethiopian flag during Haile Selassie's rule and asserted his Solomonic descent and in the Rastafarian sphere, the lion is often anthropomorphized to resemble the dreadlocked Rastafarian. Meanings also shift in the Star of David, which merges with the African Nationalist symbolism of Garvey's Black Star, which was originally five-pointed. The Africa map appears as a conventional outline map but sometimes morphs into the profile of a bearded and locksed Rastafarian, which the map's shape actually resembles. Each of these examples involves visual punning and other forms of associative symbolism. (Barrett 1977, 136-145; Naliwaiko & Bender 2005, 1-13) [Ill. 139]

Portraits of Haile Selassie, on his own or with Empress Menem, hold a central position in the Rastafarian iconography, and serve as icons, in the narrow, religious sense of sacred representations of the Divine. Photographs of Marcus Garvey hold a similar, albeit secondary status. The coronation portraits of Haile Selassie, in full regalia, are by far the most popular, no doubt because they are most consistent with the conventions of religious imagery, and these are sometimes represented in an apocalyptic context, in which Selassie is represented as the Second Coming of the Messiah. In addition, Rastafarians use a wide array of official portraits and news photographs of Selassie at various stages in his life, many of them in dress military uniform. (Ibid.) Portraits of Haile Selassie are circulated as photographic reproductions or interpreted in other media, such as painting and drawing. Rastafarians actively seek out such images and there are now Rastafarian websites that aim to feature all known photographs of Haile Selassie – a

further illustration of the active role of modern technology in Rastafari.²¹⁹ In keeping with the Rastafarian belief that the Divine is incarnated in the self, the “I and I,” or, as Joseph Owens put it, that “Man is God, and God is Man” (1976, 130), many Rastafarians also portray Haile Selassie by modeling their personal appearance after him, as can be seen in their mode of dress or the poses adopted when photographs are made – the “pauper” thus becomes a “king,” a subversive challenge to the social order which was also evident in Omari Ra’s “beggar king” imagery of the 1980s (see Chapter 4). This identification with Haile Selassie typically involves approximations of his dress uniform or regalia and the adoption of a hand gesture used by Selassie in several formal photographs, whereby his hands are folded together with the thumbs and index fingers extended into a triangular shape – a symbol of the Trinity.²²⁰ [Ill. 140] Religious Rastafarians also model their appearance after Ethiopian priests, as is illustrated by the long priestly robes worn by the Bobo Shanti.

In the 2000 Jamaican census, Rastafarians amounted to only .93% of the population, in terms of religious affiliation, and thus remain a minority (Anderson 2001, 56) but the Rastafarian visual culture is a defining presence in the Jamaican physical environment. The colorful Rastafarian imagery is hard to miss and is a common form of decoration seen on shops, vendor’s stalls and carts and on motorcycles, cars and trucks operated by Rastafarians; on buildings and shacks occupied by Rastafarians; and on street murals in urban and rural areas with a strong Rastafarian presence. Photographs of paintings from 1980 by the sign artist Jah Wise Campbell on the walls of a Rastafarian compound on Church Street in downtown Kingston, for instance, illustrate the range of

²¹⁹ See for instance: <http://rastaites.com/HIM/selassie.htm> or <http://haileselassiei.tribe.net/photos>.

²²⁰ Haile Selassie’s name translates as “Power of the Trinity.”

imagery found in such contexts. [Ill. 141, 142] This includes a portrait of a Rastafarian elder in a khaki uniform similar to the one worn by Haile Selassie; the Star of Judah; the Lion of Judah, with beard and a Rastafarian tam; several representations of the ganja plant; a schematic view of the Egyptian pyramids; a map of Africa; a portrait of Marcus Garvey in dress uniform; various Rastafarian slogans, quotes from Psalms and Amharic phrases; and, abundantly, the Rastafarian colors (Bender 2005, 80).

The visibility of Rastafari in the Jamaican environment also stems from the Rastafarian involvement in the sale and production of art. Many Rastafarians come from poor backgrounds and for the poor and uneducated, petty self-employment often was, and still is, the only option. For those few who were in salaried positions, converting to Rastafari until fairly recently meant a forced drop-out from mainstream society and formal employment. Rastafarians have also gravitated to self-employment because they embrace the Garveyite ideology of black economic self-sufficiency. Their preference for natural materials, engagement with symbolic representation, and aversion for “Babylonian” mass-products makes art and craft production a logical choice. (Kitzinger 1966, 34; Simpson 1985, 290) Everything was thus in place for Rastafarians to play a significant role in the sale and production of art and craft in Jamaica and they have: even the secluded Bobo Shanti produce and sell brooms and Rastafarians artists and vendors are also well represented in the tourism sector, especially in the area of woodcarving.

The first Rastafarian artists were recognized in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the movement began to receive more public acceptance. This included Everald Brown (1917-2004), Albert Artwell (b1942), and Ras Daniel Heartman (1942-1990). Everald Brown’s work is apolitical and represents the mystical, religious side of

Rastafarian culture. He was a self-appointed missionary of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, who had in about 1960 established a small church community, the Assembly of the Living, on Spanish Town Road in West Kingston. His earliest art was for his church but he started exhibiting in 1969. Brown frequently used polymorphic images, which were inspired by dreams and meditations and which he reinforced with verbal punning. The title of his early painting *Ethiopian Apple* (1970), for instance, is a pun on the Otaheite apple, a common fruit in Jamaica, and its central image represents an Otaheite apple tree but also a hieratic figure, garbed in the Rastafarian colors. [Ill. 19] The figure seems to allude to Haile Selassie and the divine bounty of nature – a common subject in Brown’s work – but it is impossible to present any definitive interpretation. This is typical of Brown’s art which invites the viewer to “reason” with the images and the spiritual truths he sought to unearth. While idiosyncratic, Brown’s imagery and ideas are thus consistent with the Rastafarian philosophy. His work however also involves esoteric symbols and references to divination, such as the playing card references in *Ethiopian Apple*, which are part of Revival and Kumina culture, and illustrates that there is no clear separation between traditional African-Caribbean and Rastafarian beliefs.²²¹

In the work of other pioneering Rastafarian artists, political concerns are more prominent. Albert Artwell, for instance, uses biblical imagery to express a militant Afrocentric world view in which black persons are regarded as spiritually and morally superior to whites. This is evident in works such as the visionary *Last Judgment* (1979), where the only white figure in the painting is among the doomed in hell. [Ill. 143]²²² His work also reflects his awareness of Ethiopian religious painting and adopts some of its

²²¹ I guest-curated the exhibition *The Rainbow Valley: Everaldo Brown, a Retrospective* for the NGJ in 2004.

²²² While the paintings discussed here are not available on line, related examples of Artwell’s work can be found at websites that sell his work such as: <http://www.galleryofwestindianart.com/jamaicanroomthree.html>

thematic and stylistic conventions. Artwell is now a well-established artist who lives from the sale of his paintings, mainly to tourists, and his racial statements have become less strident. Recent paintings in which he associates the Ark of Noah with the Black Star Liner however illustrate his unwavering commitment to African Zionism.

Ras Daniel Heartman (Lloyd Roberts), who moved to Tanzania in the 1980s, was also self-taught but used academic realism to express his Rastafarian beliefs.²²³ He also produced more complex, visionary images but is best known for his photorealist portrait drawings of Rastafarians, in pencil or in pen and ink and usually based on photographs. Several of these were mass-reproduced and very popular in Jamaica in the 1970s. His best known work *Not Far Away* (n.d.) features a towering self-portrait accompanied by a smaller lion whose mane merges with his own locks as well as other familiar Rastafarian symbols, namely, a ganja plant, and, in the distance, the Lion of Judah and the imperial palace of Haile Selassie – an assertion of his identification with Ras Tafari and the Ethiopian Zion. Heartman's reliance on well-understood symbols, his photorealist drawing style, and the wide circulation of his work helped considerably to propagate Rastafarian imagery in Jamaican society but his work was rejected by the art establishment for being too commercial. It is only recently that there have been efforts to document his work as a defining part of Jamaican art of the 1970s. (Tafari 2007)

Rastafari also appeared as a subject in the work of non-Rastafarian artists and early examples record the initial attitudes towards the movement. Edna Manley's carving *Brother Man* (1961) – titled after Roger Mais' 1954 novel on the early Rastafarians – reflects the more sympathetic views of the intelligentsia while Kapo's painting *The Beards*

²²³ It was not possible to locate the copyright holder of Ras Daniel Heartman's work in time to obtain permission to use an image in this dissertation but a website dedicated to his work and managed by his son, Ato Robert, was set up shortly before the submission of this dissertation: <http://rasdanielheartman.com/index.html>.

at Large (1964) represents the brethren as belligerent outsiders and illustrates the antagonism between Revivalists and Rastafarians. [Ill. 144, 145] Other examples, such as David Miller Sr's carving *Rasta II: Do Not Touch I* (c1958) and Carl Abrahams' painting *Smokers* (c1965), have satirical overtones and respond to the perceived strangeness of Rastafari. [Ill. 146]

Attitudes changed in the late 1960s and 1970s and several major artists identified with Rastafari without however joining the movement. Osmond Watson's painting *Peace and Love* (1969), for instance, is at once a self-portrait and a "Rastafarianized" Christ image, an apt representation of the Rastafarian notion of the divinity of the self. [Ill. 79] Such empathy is also evident in Karl Parboosingh's archetypal portraits of Rastafarians of the early 1970s, especially his defiant, ganja-smoking *Ras Smoke I*, and the visionary work of Christopher Gonzalez, particularly his controversial *Bob Marley* (1983) monument in which Marley is literally represented as a "roots-man" — half man, half tree. [Ill. 34, 37]

The artistic impact of Rastafari is also evident outside of Jamaica. Two contemporary Barbadian painters, Ras Akyem Ramsay and Ras Ishi Butcher, for instance, are militant Rastafarians who use Rastafarian imagery in deliberately crude, graffiti-like expressionist paintings that make bold statements about race and gender in a society which is far more conservative in such matters than Jamaica. [Ill. 147] Examples can also be found in Africa and the Caribbean Diaspora, in the work of artists who are Rastafarian or use Rastafari as reference in their explorations of questions of displacement, gender and identity. This includes the ritualistic installations and manipulated photographs of Jamaican-born artist Albert Chong (b1958) in the USA,

which draw from traditional African-Caribbean religions, Rastafari and Chinese ancestor worship and include such personal items as old passports, family photographs and his own, cut-off dreadlocks. [Ill. 148]

As this short overview of Rastafarian-influenced art illustrates, the circulation of Rastafarian imagery has moved beyond the immediate Rastafarian sphere and has become a defining part of Jamaican and Caribbean visual identity. Not surprising, aspects of the Rastafarian visual culture have also been used in the tourist industry and, more generally, in the marketing of local products. In these contexts, the tricolor and other symbols are used on mass-produced items such as graphic T-shirts and caps, bath towels, and soft drink and rum bottles, in ways that are often far removed from their original meaning.²²⁴ It is Reggae music, however, which has been the primary conduit of the Rastafarian visual culture, locally and internationally, and in this context, its use has been more consistent with the Rastafarian world view.

c. The Visual Culture of Reggae and Dancehall

Reggae developed out of African-Jamaican and Afro-Cuban music traditions, 20th century Jamaican popular music such as Mento and Ska, as well as North American influences especially Jazz and Blues, but by far the most decisive influence was its association with Rastafari and its religious music. Many Reggae artists are Rastafarians and classic Reggae songs such as *Equal Rights* (Peter Tosh), *Redemption Song* (Bob Marley) and *Revolution* (Dennis Brown) express those beliefs and have also been used in other liberation struggles in various parts of the world. It would however be reductive to equate Reggae entirely with Rastafari and resistance: many Reggae songs are simply

²²⁴ See for instance the logo of the annual Reggae Marathon in Negril: <http://www.reggaemarathon.com>

about love and romance and some, such as those that celebrate gun violence or contain sexually suggestive lyrics, may seem to contradict the “righteous” Rastafarian ethos altogether. (Chang 1998; Bradley 2000)

Perry Henzell’s film *The Harder They Come* (1972), along with its now classic sound track, helped to propel Reggae into the international arena. The film is roughly based on a true story – of the legendary outlaw Ivanhoe “Rhyging” Martin who was killed by the Police in 1948 – and traces the life and death of a young man who moves to Kingston from the country and aspires to become a singer but becomes a notorious outlaw after he is shafted by a music producer. The film contrasts the lead character Ivanhoe Martin (played by Jimmy Cliff), a street-wise, confrontational “Rude Boy,” as the type was known, with the peace-loving Rastafarian Pedro (played by Ras Daniel Heartman). Pedro serves as the moral centre in the story but it is the famous still photograph of the troubled Rhyging, in a fanciful gunslinger pose, which became one of the icons of early 1970s Jamaican culture.²²⁵ The image alludes to the revolutionary potential of the Rude Boy as a “Robin Hood” type freedom fighter against systemic and individual injustice – such romantic perceptions are also a factor in the popular support of the dons in the garrisons. The film, which furthermore ends with a seemingly gratuitous scene of go-go dancers, thus complicates the moral juxtaposition between Rhyging and Pedro and suggests that the Rastafarian, the Rude Boy and the go-go dancers are close cousins, in a shared socio-cultural environment. (Collins 2003)

The Harder They Come is a portrayal of Jamaican popular culture but was made by a group of young, upper-middle class Jamaicans who were active in the local media

²²⁵ The image was incorporated into the film poster design, see for instance on the site of Criterion, the current distributor of the film: <http://www.criterion.com/films/623-the-harder-they-come>.

and advertising industry. This usefully reminds that the Jamaican music industry and its visual culture are not part of the popular culture *per se* but products of a fertile, if contentious dialogue with other factors, such as the local and international music industries, new media technologies, global trends in popular culture, pop music and graphic design, and the responses and expectations of local and overseas audiences.

The modern music industry makes significant use of visual devices such as album and CD covers, concert backdrops, concert and party billboards, posters and signs, graphic T-shirts and, more recently, the music video. Through these media, Reggae has developed a distinctive visual identity which relies heavily on Rastafarian imagery and ideas. The uncredited design of *Rastafari Liveth Itinually* (1986), a compilation album produced by Lee “Scratch” Perry’s Black Ark studios, for instance, features Perry as the Emperor in a chariot pulled by a raging lion over an apocalyptic landscape, while the album title is contained in a Rastafari-colored rainbow above – an image that, while more dramatic than most, is consistent with Rastafarian apocalyptic imagery.²²⁶

This is perhaps most obvious in the album and CD covers, which have a longevity that other such promotional devices lack. It has been argued that such cover art is the only Jamaican visual art that has broken through globally (Miller et al. 2007) but not all of it has been designed by Jamaicans. The standard of local designs is often lower than what was done overseas although major Jamaican labels, such as Island Records and Marley’s own Tuff Gong, have used the best local design talent. This includes Neville Garrick, an UCLA-educated Rastafarian who was Bob Marley’s art director and close

²²⁶ Because of the specific difficulties with determining the current copyright holder for Reggae record covers, especially since rights are not usually owned by the designer and have often been transferred from one record company to another, I have not sought permission to illustrate any of the record covers discussed here. They can, however, easily be found on sites that sell the records in question and can be located with a simple Google search.

friend. Garrick was responsible for most of Marley's album covers and also designed for Peter Tosh, Burning Spear, Steel Pulse and others. His cover for Marley and the Wailer's *Survival* (1979) is arguably one of the masterpieces of album cover design. It features the flags of what were then the independent African states – pointedly omitting South Africa, which was still under Apartheid in 1979 – and juxtaposes these to the slave ship diagram, thus confronting the colonial and postcolonial history of Africa and its Diaspora into a compelling, contemporary African Zionist statement.²²⁷

Reggae album covers appealed to the youth counter cultures of the 1970s. While perhaps not the greatest design, the cover of Peter Tosh's *Legalize It* (1976) gained notoriety because it provocatively portrayed the singer smoking a ganja chalice while seated in a ganja field. To make sure that the message was not missed, the original edition even had a ganja-scented “scratch and sniff” sticker attached. This album cover was conceived by the American designer Andy Engel, who did frequent work for Columbia Records, while the photograph of Tosh was by Lee Jaffe, an American artist, photographer, musician and music producer, who was a friend of Bob Marley. Another classic album cover was the one of *The Front Line* (1976), a compilation album for Virgin Records, and was designed by Susan Marsh, an English designer who produced the cover art for several Reggae albums. The photograph-based image consists of a bleeding fist clenched around barbed wire, with the blood dramatically offset in red against the black, gray and white of the rest of the design. The *Front Line* cover transcends the specific politics of Reggae and Rastafari to become a universal protest image against oppression that reminds of Cuba's iconic political posters. (Morrow 1999)

While classic Reggae, or “Roots Reggae” as it is now also called, continues to the

²²⁷ Bob Marley album covers can be found at: <http://www.bobmarley.com/music.php>

present day and maintains its association with Rastafari, Jamaican music moved in another direction in the 1980s, with what is now known as Dancehall, which emerged in dialogue with rap and hip-hop in the USA. Dancehall started with deejays “toasting” live, during dance sessions, on the dub side of Reggae records. In its current form, Dancehall is a product of the digital age and its “riddims” are produced electronically, often on nothing more than a laptop. Popular riddims are used in dozens of live and recorded “versions” by deejays with colorful names such as Bounty Killer, Vybz Kartel, Mavado, Buju Banton, Beenie Man and Lady Saw, who gain popularity by demonstrating their superior ability to “ride the riddim” with clever lyrics – a fiercely competitive process that often includes taunting, derogatory references to rival deejays.

A far cry from the solemn righteousness of Roots Reggae, Dancehall celebrates the “vulgarity” and “bling” materialism of contemporary Jamaican popular culture. Lyrics comment on the latest designer fashions, guns, “badmanism,” and the deejay’s sexual exploits and opinions about sexual matters. Notoriously, some songs advocate violent homophobia, as in Buju Banton’s infamous anti-gay anthem *Boom Bye-Bye*.²²⁸ This may seem like a departure from the “righteous” messages of Reggae but the glorification of gunmanship and provocative sexuality is not new in Jamaican music and can be traced back to the Rude Boy culture of the early 1970s – the hardcore “gangsta” posturing of a Bounty Killer is in effect a contemporary incarnation of Ivanhoe Martin in *The Harder They Come*. While there is a strong verbal focus, Dancehall is, as the name suggests, dance-oriented and the associated dance styles are as provocative as the lyrics, with names such as *Dutty Wine*, which translates roughly as “dirty gyrating;” *Drop Dead*,

²²⁸ The chorus is as follows: “Boom bye bye inna batty bwoy head. Rude bwoy no promote no nasty man, Dem haffi dead,” roughly translated: “Boom ‘bye bye’ [deadly gunshot] in a homosexual’s head. Rude boys do not support indecent men. They have to die.”

which involves dropping to the ground from sometimes dangerous heights; and *Hot Wuk* (“Hot Work”) and *Dagging*, both of which simulate violent sex.

The most striking visual expressions of Dancehall – the dance styles – fall outside of the scope of this dissertation but Dancehall generally has a strong visual emphasis and a distinctive visual style which is supported by new technological developments such as computer-aided design, digital printing and the increasingly accessible video technology. Rastafarian imagery occasionally appears, for instance in association with the firebrand Bobo Shanti deejays Capleton and Sizzla, but Dancehall’s visual culture is not usually deliberately political. Some prominence is however given to the Jamaican flag colors, which illustrates the defiant popular pride in contemporary Jamaican culture and a keen understanding of the marketing potential of the Jamaican brand. The style and content of Dancehall’s visual expressions is consistent with the thematic concerns in the lyrics and revolves around the figures of the male and female deejays and dancers.

“Dancehall queens” dress provocatively, in skimpy, skintight outfits and extravagant hairstyles, jewelry and makeup. [Ill. 149] Male Dancehall fashions used to be more modest and macho but the “gangsta” aesthetic has recently become equally flamboyant (and increasingly androgynous) although the norm is still for men to cover up. While verbal boasts about male potency are commonplace in the popular culture, the visual representation of sexuality in Dancehall is predictably focused on the female figure, in an extravagantly objectified manner. This suggests that men in Dancehall culture have a much stronger sense of ownership of their sexuality and bodies, which is also more easily assaulted, as is evident in the shrill homophobia (Brown-Glaude 2006, 56-57). Carolyn Cooper (2004a & 2009) has however argued that Dancehall’s

representation of female sexuality does not amount to mere passive objectification but represents a transgressive, self-empowering critique of mainstream postcolonial morality. Donna Hope-Marquis (2010) has pointed to the redefinition of male sexualities in Dancehall, such as the feminization of male fashion, which exists in tension with the homophobic rhetoric and significantly complicates its gender dynamics.

While Dancehall has not achieved the broad international acclaim of Roots Reggae, its flamboyant visual culture has circulated internationally, by means of CD covers and other promotional materials and the music videos which have become an increasingly important part of the global music industries since the late 1980s. Its role in contemporary Jamaican visual culture, however, stems mainly from its visibility in the daily physical environment. Dancehall fashion has moved into daily life where it riles conservative sensibilities, to the point where certain establishments, such as hospitals and government offices, have started posting dress codes that prohibit typical Dancehall styles.²²⁹ Dancehall is also visually present on the streets by means of the posters and painted signs for Dancehall sessions, which are attached to walls, utility poles and bus stops and, more recently, as decals on the windows of taxis and buses. [Ill. 150]

Dancehall posters and signs are of special interest here, since they are products of the cottage industries that surround the local music culture and are fully part of the contemporary popular visual culture. The early Dancehall posters were very simple, consisting mainly of text and only the most basic images, if at all, and were typically screen-printed in one or two colors. [Ill. 151] With the introduction of photo-screens, it became possible to add monochrome photographic images. More recently, aided by

²²⁹ Such signs can, for instance, be seen at the Bustamante Hospital for Children and the Police Records department in Kingston.

cheap, digital printing and desktop design software, screen printing has been replaced by full-color printed posters. Aided by these new technologies, designs have become more complicated, to the point where they completely lack clarity and arguably amount to bad design. It should be kept in mind however that such posters are primarily targeted at the lower income segment of the population, which is more likely to walk or use public transport and thus has the opportunity to read them up close.

Dancehall announcements typically include the name or motto of the dance; the names of the organizers, who may adopt comical aliases for the occasion; the place and date of the event; the sound system and deejays featured; and the cost of admission. Images, if included, are typically of anonymous curvy, skimpily clad women although portraits of the deejays or singers to be featured may also be included. Dances have names or mottos, which are often sexually suggestive and in some instances, downright bawdy. In late 2007, for instance, I drove behind a vehicle with a decal advertisement for a dance titled “Pum Pum Christmas” – “pum pum” is patois for vagina. [Ill. 152] Around that same time, hand-painted signs appeared in my neighborhood that advertised a dance held to be held in the area under the motto “Force It up Hard in Her.” [Ill. 153]

Until recently, much of the discourse about postcolonial Jamaican culture was premised on assumptions about the inherent goodness of the popular culture as a source of cultural legitimacy but this has been deeply challenged by Dancehall and its open defiance of law and order and prevailing social norms. Not surprisingly, Dancehall has been highly controversial, locally and internationally. A 2008 *Gleaner* column by the pastor and media commentator Ian Boyne argued that Dancehall represented a betrayal of Reggae and its commitment to positive social change. The controversy in the local media

came to a head in early 2009 over the lewd, violent lyrics of the *Dagging* songs and their effect on the socialization of young Jamaicans (e.g. Tyson 2009; Boyne 2009). In response, the Jamaica Broadcasting Commission banned songs with sexually explicit and violent content from the local airwaves, even when such content is “beeped out” (*Jamaica Information Service*, February 10, 2009), which has resulted in a toning down of Dancehall lyrics, at least in the recorded and broadcast versions.

Dancehall has also been controversial in the international arena, primarily because of its association with violent homophobia. Gay activist groups have initiated several campaigns to boycott Dancehall, such as the ongoing *Stop Murder Music* campaign of Outrage!, which was piloted by the English activist Peter Tatchell and has resulted in the cancellation and piqueting of a number of Dancehall concerts in the USA and Europe.²³⁰ These efforts have negatively affected the financial fortunes of the local music industry, which derives a significant part of its income from concert fees, but the economic losses have only reinforced local resentment towards homosexuality.²³¹

Defenders of Dancehall have cautioned against the broad-brush vilification of Dancehall and double standards that condemn lewdness in Dancehall but accept similar behavior in Trinidad-style Carnival, which has most of its support among the elites (e.g. Paul 2009). Such class-based assessments, which have come primarily from the local academy and predictably pitch “ghetto culture” against middle class prejudice, overlook that there is significant support of Dancehall among the younger generation of the ruling classes. They also overlook that much of the local criticism of Dancehall has come from fundamentalist Christianity, which has most of its followers among the lower working

²³⁰ See: <http://www.petertatchell.net/>

²³¹ Many Jamaicans are convinced, for instance, that Buju Banton, who was at the time of completion of this dissertation on trial in Florida for alleged drug trading charges, was set up by “the gay lobby.” See, for instance, Henry (2010).

class. While class prejudices certainly factor in the controversies about Dancehall, these cannot be understood in terms of simple binaries.

Since crime levels in Jamaica have risen in recent years, to the point where Jamaica now has one of the highest per capita murder rates in the world, the question arises whether there is a causal relationship with Dancehall's violent content and this has been a key part of the recent debates.²³² Carolyn Cooper (2004a & 2009) has retorted that Dancehall's violent lyrics are metaphorical rather literal and do not necessarily incite any actual violence. Donna Hope-Marquis directed a UWI-commissioned study on the correlation between Dancehall and crime and violence in Jamaica, which concluded that there was none. (Cooke 2009) The study was however entirely based on interviews with young Dancehall supporters and based on *their* perceptions of a possible correlation and not on any actual, statistically relevant relationship between involvement in Dancehall and in violent or lawless behavior. Irrespective, there is no doubt that the violent content of Dancehall is, at least, a reflection of the current situation in Jamaica.

Critical engagement with Dancehall is also evident in work of contemporary Jamaican artists such as Ebony G. Patterson, whose current body of mixed media collages and installations, titled *Gangstas for Life* (2008-present) – a reference to the title of a 2007 Mavado album – explores the shifting and contradictory notions of masculinity in Dancehall culture. [Ill. 154] The series, which consists of collaged prints and mixed media installations, consists of portrait-like images of young Jamaican males that are glamorized with glitter, paper doilies, and elaborately patterned wallpapers, fabrics, and wall stencils, and combined with gilded toy soldiers and Day-Glo colored toy guns that

²³² In 2004, for instance, Jamaica had the third highest per capita murder rate in the world, after South Africa and Columbia, at 55.2 per 100,000 (UNODC 2004)

ironically refer to trivialization of gun violence in contemporary Jamaican culture. Patterson thus probes the interplay between the macho posturing of the “Gangsta” and the feminized personal aesthetic that is now the norm among males in Dancehall and exemplified by such practices as skin bleaching, eyebrow shaping, and the wearing of flamboyant clothing and “bling” jewelry. (Hope-Marquis 2009)

Having a candid conversation about the tension between the violent homophobic rhetoric and homoerotic subtext of Dancehall may seem pertinent within the artistic and intellectual milieu but is alien to the popular sphere, where overt references to homosexuality can have deadly consequences. Patterson is adamant that her images, while based on photographs of fellow artists and members of a dance crew, are not portraits but types and that her subjects are not necessarily homosexual, but it remains that she has no control over how these representations would be received if circulated more extensively in the public domain. In 2008, Patterson posted some of the *Gangstas for Life* images on downtown Kingston street walls and the young men depicted got into difficulties in their community because the images were misread as “wanted posters,” related to a spate of rapes in the neighborhood – an example of how easy it is to misread such interventions in the public domain.²³³ Time will tell whether it is possible to have productive dialogue on the issues at hand which stretches beyond these socio-cultural boundaries, but, in the meantime, Patterson’s work does offer a more thoughtful critical perspective on the social “problem” of Dancehall culture than the self-righteous blanket condemnations and populist advocacy that currently limit this debate. The overwhelmingly positive reception of her work in the NGJ’s *Young Talent V* (2010) exhibition suggests that new possibilities are in fact emerging. [Ill. 155] This exhibition,

²³³ Personal communication from Hakeem Barrett, one of the dancers featured in the series, March 31, 2009.

which featured the work of 14 young Jamaican artists, represented a landmark in the NGJ's audience relations, as it attracted and engaged new, young adult audiences who responded positively to the artists' engagement with contemporary popular culture.²³⁴

d. Street Art and Graffiti

Street art is, by its very nature, the most public and visible aspect of contemporary popular art, but it is unevenly distributed in the Jamaican environment and this inevitably reflects the country's social geography. With the exception of the brightly painted vendor's carts along the main traffic arteries and the ubiquitous Dancehall posters, street art is primarily seen in the inner cities and poor rural communities. Much of it is related to Rastafari and the Jamaican music culture, as was previously discussed. This section focuses on three specific types, namely: hand-painted advertisements and decorations on shops, bars and vending carts; party-political and gang murals and graffiti; and graffiti and street-side installations produced by social outsiders such as mentally ill street persons. Most street art is, by its nature, short-lived and undocumented and therefore difficult to study in historical terms. Most of this section therefore uses recent examples.

Despite the advent of digital design and printing, hand-crafted signs and advertisements are still the norm for vending carts, small shops and other businesses in the popular neighborhoods. In July 2010, I counted 22 stalls, shops and bars with such paintings along an approximately one-mile stretch of Red Hills Road, a busy commercial artery in the north-west of Kingston where inner-city and middle class neighborhoods and formal and informal businesses co-exist. This gives an idea of the prevalence of such painted signs and advertisements in the urban environment. Most are matter-of-fact

²³⁴ *Young Talent V* was team-curated by David Boxer and myself, with O'Neil Lawrence as assistant curator. For more information on this exhibition, see: <http://nationalgalleryofjamaica.wordpress.com/tag/young-talent-v/>.

advertisements of the goods and services offered, painted by community-based sign painters, but they reflect the representational conventions in the popular culture.

Typically, shop advertisements are painted on the façade or perimeter walls of the premises and combine text, naturally including the name of the establishment, with realist depictions of the products sold, many of them clearly identified as brands that are popular in the Jamaican market. [Ill. 156] The purpose of such advertisements is primarily utilitarian, to signal to potential customers that the establishment stocks the relevant goods, but it is clear, from their stylistic consistency, that the ability of sign artists to produce life-like, near-illusionist renderings is valued and these advertisements are therefore not devoid of aesthetic considerations. Such painted advertisements also provide free publicity for popular brands and, not surprising, the idea has been appropriated in formal marketing campaigns. The most ambitious such example thus far was local brewer Red Stripe's 2006 *Live Red* campaign, which involved the repainting of small, street-side bars in the Red Stripe red, with illusionist decals of giant Red Stripe bottles mounted on the red background. [Ill. 157] The resulting prevalence of the Red Stripe brand in the Jamaican environment apparently even aided its international marketing, by adding to its promoted image as a small company rooted in Jamaican popular culture.²³⁵

The prevalence of illusionist painted product advertisements may suggest that there is a preference for realist representation in the popular sphere but more imaginative and abstracted decorations are equally common, for instance on bars, beauty parlors and barber shops – establishments that offer services rather than products and of which

²³⁵ See: *Success Story: Red Stripe - the Great Jamaican Beer* Kingston: JAMPRO - Jamaica Trade and Invest, 2006, accessed August 8, 2010; Available from: <http://www.jamaicatradeandinvest.org/index.php?action=investment&id=29&oppage=5&opid=1>.

Dunkley's barber shop was an early and artistically outstanding example. While some such paintings amount to mere decoration, others present romantic images of beautiful ladies and happy couples which suggest that the establishment provides its customers with beauty and enjoyment. Bar decorations are often sexually suggestive: the colorful bamboo patterns, now destroyed, on the exterior of the Big Bamboo Lounge, a rum bar on Arthur Wint Drive in Kingston referred, along with the name of the bar itself, to a well-understood phallic symbol in Jamaica and the boasts of sexual potency that are part of the rum bar culture. The decorations were immortalized in Dawn Scott's *A Cultural Object* (1985). [Ill. 158] This illustrates that the choice of style in painted advertisements depends on the communicative needs of the establishment rather than any entrenched bias in favor of realist representation.

The painted decorations of vending carts and stalls typically involve images of the products sold, and the Rastafarian and Jamaican colors and slogans – to many Jamaicans, there is no contradiction in combining the two. [Ill. 159] Fairly often, they also feature sayings such as “In God we Trust” or “Who God bless, no man curse” or, more creatively “Don't ask for Trust, he hanged himself yesterday” which allude to the challenges facing street-side vendors, such as conflicts with customers, who may not be able to afford their products, and other vendors, with whom they are competing for space. [Ill. 160] One telling example was a grocery stall that stood on Shortwood Road in Kingston, which was photographed in 2007 and no longer exists. Its painted decorations were, as such, not very skilful but included the Lion of Judah; portraits of Rastafarians, presumably the operators of the shop or persons in their environment; the Jamaican flag; and crude depictions of the grocery products sold. [Ill. 161] In an illustration that expediency

sometimes takes precedence over symbolism, the decorations did not use the Rastafarian colors but mainly the same red, white and blue that was used on a nearby barber shop, probably because those paints were available. Most remarkable however, was that the entire stall was enclosed in a metal cage structure, in an over-the-top effort to combat the break-ins and pilferage that commonly affect such shops.

Street murals are common in popular neighborhoods and, as we have seen, many are related to Rastafari and Garveyism. There are however several other types. One increasingly common type consists of death announcements and memorials for dons and young men who died violently which are usually painted on the street corners of their communities. [Ill. 162] The designs are often quite sentimental, with little of the machismo one might expect to see in association with the gun culture, and include decorative motifs like heart shapes, flowers, references to “bling” jewelry, and poems – not coincidentally, the aesthetic of these memorials is consistent with Ebony G. Pattersons’ “blinged out” *Gangstas*. These memorials are related to another new phenomenon: the extravagant inner-city “bling” funerals, with fairytale glass hearses and coffins and mourners in the latest Dancehall fashions, that illustrate the normalization and, even, glamorization of (violent) death in Dancehall culture (Paul 2007).

Inner city walls also feature murals commissioned by politicians who represent the area. Some of these are direct political advertisements and typically appear during election periods, but others are naïve efforts to promote positive values in those communities. The Barbican and Grants Pen communities in Kingston for instance are full of rather boring murals with inspirational words combined with close-ups of flowers, commissioned by the local MP, Delroy Chuck. [Ill. 163] There have also been non-

political initiatives, such as the Red Rubber Band project that uses a more engaging approach to the street mural as a form of social intervention: the project, which is part of the annual Kingston on the Edge arts festival, brings together mainstream artists and community members in various Kingston inner city areas to collectively paint colorful, graffiti-inspired murals with positive messages. [Ill. 164] There is no evidence, however, of the effectiveness of such interventions other than beautifying the areas involved.

Political graffiti, colors and other party symbols are actively used in the garrison communities to mark off turf. The party colors are orange or yellow for the People's National Party (PNP) and green for the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).²³⁶ This territorial marking gets particularly pronounced during election periods, when persons in those communities also assert their allegiance by wearing T-shirts with the party colors and attaching flags and posters to available utility posts and walls. During the 2007 general elections an effort was made to reduce political violence and Delroy Chuck decreed that his constituents should tone down their displays of allegiance and not use political flags. Members of the Barbican Square community however circumvented this directive by attaching green plastic soft drink bottles to every available surface along the main entrance to the neighborhood, which effectively looked like a sea of green. The subversive intervention was understood and quickly removed, unfortunately before I was able to photograph it. While amusing at times, party graffiti are not harmless and mark the geography of much of the violence in Jamaica's inner cities. Some garrisons actually have cautionary graffiti such as "PNP (or JLP) zone, enter at your own risk" at their

²³⁶ The color of the Worker's Party of Jamaica, a small Marxist party in the 1970s and 1980s, was, naturally, red. The reformist National Democratic Movement, which although it never gained any seats in parliament is the only party other than the JLP and PNP to have made any political impact in the 1990s and 2000s, adopted blue as its party color. The "neutral" NDM colors do not carry the same weight in Jamaica's public life as the PNP and JLP colors, although the WPJ's red was, of course, associated with the "threat" of communism.

entrance – a phenomenon that was spoofed in Dawn Scott’s *A Cultural Object*.

Graffiti are also used to insult and taunt persons in public. Graffiti that satirically corrupted the names of Edward Seaga and Michael Manley – most commonly to “CIA-ga” and “Men-lie,” respectively – were commonly seen in the mid 1980s, along with other taunts, such as “Poor Natasha Pa,” which referred to PNP and Michael Manley’s youngest daughter Natasha. [Ill. 165] One disturbing recent trend is the use of graffiti to shame persons over matters of sexuality. For several years now, for instance, there have been graffiti that state “Esmie AIDS” and “Esmie has AIDS” along East Street, a major thoroughfare in downtown Kingston. [Ill. 166] Since persons with HIV often encounter severe social ostracism in Jamaica, these graffiti no doubt serve to “out” Esmie in her community as an AIDS sufferer.²³⁷ I have also witnessed several incidents over the years whereby the homes of homosexuals were publicly identified by means of graffiti. The lax attitude of the Jamaican authorities towards graffiti and the protection of such vulnerable groups, regrettably makes such public shaming efforts quite effective.

Conversely, graffiti have also been used for promotion and self-promotion. Graffiti in support of the aspiring deejay L.A. Lewis can be seen throughout Kingston and environs. [Ill. 167, 168] Lewis attributes these to fans but they are all obviously by the same hand, more than likely Lewis himself. Lewis’ self-promoting tactics are a source of considerable hilarity in Jamaica and his rare public appearances at Dancehall events usually provoke heckling and the throwing of projectiles. While he has failed as a musician, he has however succeeded in becoming a local cult figure. (Rickards n.d.)

In 2009, graffiti that simply stated “Gully” or “Gaza” began to appear throughout

²³⁷ The anthropomorphic, truck-like image to the right of the “Esmie” graffiti, which is more typical of the “outsider” street art found in Jamaica, appeared more recently and I have not been able to ascertain whether there is any connection between the two.

Jamaica and referred to the rivalry, initially expressed in their lyrics, between two popular deejays, namely Mavado, whose supporters are known as the Gully crew, and Vybz Kartel, whose supporters are known as Gaza. [Ill. 169] The graffiti marked respective turf, which roughly coincided with the territorial divisions of the garrisons. This should not surprise, since there is a direct connection between Dancehall and the gang culture, and the two deejays in question have on several occasions been detained by the Police because of suspected gang-related activities. The rivalry quickly got out of hand, with several incidents of violence.²³⁸ Tensions subsided only after the two rival deejays were summoned to a public reconciliation meeting at the Office of the Prime Minister on December 8, 2009 – an unprecedented intervention from the Government which illustrated that the turf battles had become a national problem. (Smith 2010)

The street art discussed thus far all had clear communicative objectives but the motives behind the third type of street art up for discussion here – the graffiti and constructions of social outsiders – are less easy to fathom, as it reflects their psychological state, although it often also relates to popular religion. In the 1980s, a tree hung with paper scrolls with psalms and other biblical excerpts could be seen along National Heroes Circle, on an empty lot of land now occupied by the Ministry of Finance building. [Ill. 170] Apparently the work of a single individual, the scroll tree may have been related to Revivalism or Obeah but its striking, visually cohesive appearance also appealed as a sculptural form. Another, more recent example is the work of a mentally ill man from the Barbican Square community, in the vicinity of a Revival church, who covers the walls near his home with writings and symbols that are organized in fairly neat

²³⁸ In one much-publicized incident on September 7, 2009, a Canadian tourist couple went to a Gaza-affiliated dance in Kingston but inadvertently played the music of the rival deejay Mavado on their car radio. They were severely beaten and had their rental car vandalized.

rectilinear patterns. [Ill. 171] Some of his symbols seem to be Revivalist but he incongruously combines these with acronyms of various local organizations and companies and promotional slogans from advertisements. His irrational markings have a poetry and visual beauty of their own but seem to be source of embarrassment in his community.²³⁹ The walls are regularly whitewashed but he promptly starts over and covers all available surfaces in record time.

Some “outsider” street artists have been scouted for entry into the Intuitives canon. One such example was Arthur Thompson, a former convict, whose raw, expressionist paintings were “discovered” in the late 1980s and included in the NGJ’s *Fifteen Intuitives* (1989) exhibition. His patrons found his extreme aggression difficult to deal with, however, and he vanished back into obscurity after they withdrew their support. Street art has also served as an inspiration to contemporary artists with an interest in assemblage and installation and photographers with an interest in the Jamaican urban environment. Dawn Scott photographed and copied Kingston graffiti and shop decorations in her *Cultural Object*, which therefore also provides a snapshot of street art in 1985, while the photographer Donnette Zacca recently produced a photo-essay on current street art for the journal *Small Axe* (2010). [Ill. 172] There has also been some commodification: Dancehall signs have become collectibles and “fake” painted signs are now being sold in some craft shops, with the requisite crude lettering and imagery, boisterous statements and “cute” misspellings, which points to the marketability of notions of the “natives” as a quaint but harmless lot, especially in the tourist market.

²³⁹ I attempted to identify and locate him on several occasions but did not any further than being told by members of the community that he is “not right in his head.”

4. Conclusion

Compared to the mainstream art world and, as we will see next, the tourist art world, the popular art world may seem to lack structure and cohesion and is certainly more open-ended. Notions of “art,” which are constructs of the mainstream art world, cannot easily be applied to much of what was discussed in this chapter and the field is therefore better understood when considered in its broader sense, as the field of popular culture, with special emphasis on its visual expressions. This broader field is shaped by various dynamic tensions – among others between the traditional and the modern, between Revival and Rastafari, between Reggae and Dancehall, and between the Jamaican in its narrow, localized sense and its cosmopolitan and diasporal dimensions – which provide it with an internal cohesion which may not be immediately obvious.

The acts of actual and symbolic marronage that were discussed in this chapter may furthermore suggest that the popular cultural field evolves autonomously, in isolation from the mainstream, and thus supports M.G. Smith’s (1965) plural or segmented society model. What was discussed in this chapter however also illustrates that the popular field cannot be understood without considering its external relationships, especially its complex, fraught but ultimately very fertile interdependence with the cultural mainstream. The now-conventional criticism is, as we have seen in the sections on cultural nationalism, that the postcolonial mainstream’s relationship to the popular necessarily amounts to a selective, vertical and unilateral appropriation, in which the popular retains its low cultural status while its mainstream interpretations are accepted as high culture – a subject that will also be addressed in the chapter on Intuitive art. The work of artists such as David Pottinger, Ebony Patterson, Dawn Scott and, for that matter,

the self-taught Ras Daniel Heartman however suggests that a more reciprocal and mutually meaningful dialogue between mainstream art and the popular is possible.

In this context, it is somewhat misleading, as Annie Paul (2007, 29-30) has done, to impose the narrowing the lens of “art” on the mainstream while the popular culture field is regarded in its entirety and to conclude that there is a communicative breakdown between the two. When the view is expanded to the entire cultural field for the popular and the mainstream alike, the mutual nature of these dialogues becomes more evident, as is illustrated by the interactions between the visual culture of Rastafari and Reggae and the local and global graphic design and music industries. Popular Jamaican culture’s transgressive defiance against mainstream cultural values and direct challenges to the social order, especially in Rastafari and Dancehall, is however also an example of this interrelationship, which indicates that dialogues involved are not necessarily agreeable. Nor are they free of internal contradictions: the Garveyite and Rastafarian preoccupation with the politics of representation and the status of black culture by implication challenges the hierarchical relationship between mainstream and popular culture but also reiterates mainstream notions of high culture and civilization. It is however by means of these tensions that Jamaicanness is being negotiated and it is the contrary, “un-Jamaican” part of Jamaican popular culture, rather than the traditional or mainstream cultural nationalism, that defines contemporary Jamaican culture and has given Jamaica its unique cultural voice and identity in the global arena.

Chapter 6 – TOURISM AND TOURIST ART

1. “Dangerously Close to Tourist Art”

While the popular, despite the ambivalence and contention that surround it, is generally recognized as the source of cultural truth and authenticity in Jamaican culture, tourism is seen as its negation. Phrases such as “this is dangerously close to tourist art” have been part and parcel of the critical discourse about Jamaican art, as if “tourist art” were some dreadful disease from which true Jamaican culture had to be quarantined. Much of what is discussed in this chapter *is* “airport art” and emphatically “for sale” and thus challenges my own prior assumptions about cultural authenticity, aesthetic value, the ideological role of art and good taste – moralized judgments which, as we have seen, are shared by many core players in the mainstream art world and which have caused tourist art not to be recognized as a part of modern Jamaican art production. Scholarly attention has been paid, recently, to early Caribbean tourist imagery (e.g. Thompson 2006), and there are now a few collectors of early Jamaican tourist art and imagery, aided by the eBay internet auction craze. While these vintage items have been consecrated as “Jamaicana” – an effect of their rarity and age – tourist art as such remains virtually unstudied, save for a few criticisms of its often racist and sexist content. There can be no credible analysis of the dynamics of the Jamaican art world without considering tourist art on its own merits, however, and for this purpose, preconceptions have to be put aside.

The term tourist art covers a wide range of possibilities, from cheap, mass-produced souvenir trinkets – much of which is now imported from East Asia or Haiti and only tenuously customized for the Jamaican market – to works that conform to the norms

of mainstream art but are marketed to tourists, usually because the subject matter and formal characteristics match the expectations of that market. Somewhere in the middle are handmade but standardized items such as the Rasta-themed woodcarvings that are currently the most “typical” locally made tourist art [Ill. 173]. Not all of what I have listed here as tourist art would be defined as “art” by their makers, sellers or buyers but I regard them as such because they have, as Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner have argued, “all the communicative and signifying qualities of ‘legitimate’ or ‘authentic’ works of art” (1999, 15) and generally employ the same media and techniques.

Tourism is a quintessentially capitalist and, in postcolonies such as Jamaica, neo-colonial endeavor, of which tourist art has been an integral part. To quote Phillips and Steiner again: “The inscription of Western modes of commodity production has been one of the most important aspects of the global extension of Western colonial power. Moreover, the role of this process in transforming indigenous constructions of the object has intensified rather than diminished in many parts of the world since the formal demise of colonial rule” (1999, 4). I am therefore skeptical of the celebratory tone of some of the recent literature on tourism, cultural commodification and cultural agency (e.g. Appadurai 1986; Carcía Canclini 1995). Too often, it is implied that commodification is inherently empowering for all involved and that the global spread of capitalism into every aspect of human life is as desirable as it has been inevitable. I believe that the jury is still out on both counts. As Jamaica Kincaid has powerfully argued in *A Small Place* (1988), tourism and economic need make an unwholesome combination in poor postcolonial societies, especially those that were shaped by the experience of slavery, the ultimate form of human commodification. Tourism poses serious social and cultural challenges in

such countries and any critical appraisal of tourist art must be regarded in that context.

The sort of tourist art that is produced and sold in Jamaica is by its very nature a transcultural form, which is highly consumer-driven and made primarily for metropolitan Western audiences. This distinguishes the tourist art world from the mainstream and popular art worlds, which are more internally negotiated. Nelson Graburn, one of the pioneering scholars on the subject, has written about the “hybrid” tourist arts:

While acknowledging that the patron or consumer places constraints on all producers of art, the difference between the situation of the “hybrid” arts and the stereotypic functional arts of the prior anthropological analyses is that the artists dependent on the cross-cultural market are rarely socialized into the symbolic and aesthetic system of the consumers who support them. [...] The rules of the game lie outside of their society, at least until structural assimilation has drawn them into the metropolitan art school and gallery circuits. Thus these artists live in a minefield of rules that they overstep at their peril (1999, 347).

Most of the rules of the tourist art game hinge on the notions of cultural authenticity that shape tourism and exist in uneasy tension with those that shape postcolonial societies.

Graburn has argued that “it is the tourists who are most concerned with authenticity” although they are “doomed to failure because tourist attractions were created just for them” (1999, 351). How much authenticity a tourist expects and receives, however, varies, depending on the background and intentions of the tourist and the nature of what is visited. The desire for authenticity is not a major factor in the most “industrialized” forms of tourism, such as theme parks, where most visitors knowingly participate in the supplied fictions. At the other extreme are the “tourist-connoisseurs,” who are usually highly educated and travel individually rather than as participants in packaged arrangements. These “knowing” tourists, who are often in denial about being tourists, want to experience the “genuine” local culture but their expectations often derive

from notions about non-Western cultural self-sufficiency that do not measure up to reality. In-between are the “average tourists,” who want what is best described as “authenticity *lite*,” a selective semblance of authenticity that distinguishes their destination as a place worth visiting but does not make any unpleasant demands on their vacation, for instance by confronting them with poverty or environmental degradation.

Dean MacCannell (1976) has introduced the term “staged authenticity” to describe what is typically offered in tourism. He identified six degrees of staging, in an elaboration of Erving Goffman’s (1986) model of the front and back regions in performance, which juxtaposed the fully staged with the behind-the-scenes. MacCannell’s first stage equals Goffman’s front region, which has no pretensions to being anything but staged. The remaining five stages move from front regions that are made to look like back regions, to selectively accessible back regions that still contain staged elements, ending with the actual back region, which usually remains inaccessible for tourists or is not even recognized as “authentic” because it does not match preconceptions about what that particular back region should be like.

Staged authenticity is a crucial factor in tourist art but MacCannell’s model does not explain *how* notions of authenticity are negotiated between the tourists and the “natives.” Sally Price told the story of a Saramaka carver who had difficulty convincing his buyers that his work was essentially decorative rather than symbolic, a misconception which is also reflected in much of the scholarship on the subject. She went on:

[The artist] purchased Muntslags’ dictionary of Maroon motifs [...], even though he could not understand it because he had never learned to read. He then used its illustrations as models for the motifs in his carvings, and simply showed the book to his customers so they could look up the meaning of their purchases. Through this self-service technique, the man’s life became more tranquil, his profits picked up considerably, the tourists

boarded their planes in better spirits, and the myth of a pervasive iconography in the arts of the Maroons circumvented a potentially troubling setback (1989, 118).

This story brings to mind Selden Rodman's description, in his book *The Caribbean*, of a painted sign at the entrance of the Zion Revivalist artist Mallica "Kapo" Reynolds' yard:

King of Wood.
 No Weapon That Is Formed Against Thee Shall Prosper.
 Whatever You Do Be Careful – Kapo.
 Kapo's snow-cones: Cool off here.
 Works of Kapo in Primitive Art: Buy Jamaica.
 Brown rice 9c. fag 4. Small sardines.
 See the Afro-American Self-Taught Artist (1968, 12).

This bizarre combination of invocations of divine protection with grandiose self-acclamations and expressions of popular wisdom and entrepreneurship was no doubt recorded because of its picturesque appeal but also reflected Kapo's awareness of how he was labeled in the scholarly and promotional literature. While the phrase "buy Jamaica" should probably have read as "buy Jamaican," it may also allude to the efforts that were then spearheaded by Edward Seaga to market Kapo as the defining Jamaican artist.²⁴⁰ Rodman actually called Kapo "Mr Jamaica" (11) elsewhere in his chapter on Jamaica.

Both examples illustrate that externally imposed labels and interpretations, accurate or not, can be adopted as marketing strategies by those whose work it seeks to describe. The "rules of the game" may be articulated elsewhere but this does not prevent local producers and vendors from participating actively and even cunningly in the "authenticity games" that drive the tourist art market. More generally, these two examples illustrate that tourist art cannot be exclusively understood in terms of the

²⁴⁰ There have also been regular "Buy Jamaican" campaigns in post-independence Jamaica, in efforts to reduce the local preference for imported goods that have locally manufactured equivalents.

externally vectored producer-intermediary-consumer dynamics to which Graburn and MacCannell have paid most attention.

Some Caribbean tourist art, such as basketry and calabash carving, is rooted in older traditions of utilitarian and decorative art, which were adapted to tourist market demands, often merely by adding images and inscriptions that identify them with the destination they represent. As has also been observed elsewhere (e.g. Ettawageshik 1999), tourism has contributed to the preservation of traditional arts that would otherwise have disappeared when they were replaced with modern products. Most Caribbean tourist art is of recent vintage, however, and was developed primarily for the tourist market. Among those are the “Rasta carvings” that appeared in Jamaica in the 1970s and spread throughout the region and beyond, to other “island destinations” such as Hawaii. Many of these carvings represent dreadlocked and bearded males, with locks and beard and often smoking ganja or playing drums, although couples are also common. They derive their sense of authenticity from their association with Rastafari, as *the* defining part of Jamaican culture, and many are made by Rastafarians. Although Jamaica has a history of popular woodcarving, the Rasta carvings are not based on preexisting forms. As we have seen, Rastafari makes extensive use of visual symbols, such as the Ethiopian colors, the image of Haile Selassie I and the Lion of Judah, and ritual and symbolic objects, such as the chalice, the tam and the walking staff – items which also enter the tourist market – but it does not call for the representation of Rastas engaged in “typical” activities. Most tourist carvings are therefore, quite simply, what they are: new transcultural commodities that emerged from the dialogue between the culture and economic needs of the popular masses and the expectations of the tourist market.

While cultural purists may question the legitimacy of the touristic Rasta carvings, the only Jamaican tourist art that can rightly be described as inauthentic are the mass-produced imported items and the colorful and pricey faux-naïf paintings that are mainly produced by white expatriates. The latter are quite popular in the upper end of the tourist market and the fact that those artists' foreign origin is usually acknowledged does not seem to negatively affect their sales, probably because the work matches some buyers' preconceptions about "authentic" Caribbean art better than the work of many native artists – a good illustration of the contradictory appeal of staged authenticity.

The Rasta carvings are highly standardized and often poorly made, which contrasts with the requirements of originality and *métier* that are conventionally applied to fine art. Christopher Steiner (1999) has rightly cautioned that tourist art should be judged on its own terms, as a particular type of cultural commodity. In tourist art, Steiner has argued, repetition is a necessity, since that is how its legitimacy is established, as a characteristic product of the culture it is supposed to represent. This is, in fact, something tourist art and the routinized offshoots of cultural nationalist art that dominate the domestic Jamaican art market have in common. Not surprisingly, the decoration of local commercial buildings and middle class homes often includes items that qualify as tourist art, which are bought from the same sources where tourists buy and such items frequently serve as gifts for other Jamaicans or overseas friends. These are often the cheapest, most generic "North Coast" carvings but they convey a useable, easily recognizable and affordable sense of Jamaicanness to "non-art" Jamaican audiences. Locally, these tourist art forms thus fulfill a function similar to nationalist art, without having its "high art" status or price tag.

2. Tourism, Tourist Art and Social Conflict

As Frank Taylor (1993) has observed, Jamaican tourism has always involved image control: at first, Jamaica was promoted as a health resort, despite the prevalence in the 19th century of malaria, yellow fever and cholera, and soon thereafter it was marketed as a tropical escape from the stresses of Western metropolitan life, against the island's reputation for social instability and antagonistic "natives". Only occasionally has the problematic context of Jamaican tourism been acknowledged in its promotional literature, but even then it is usually promptly neutralized. The foreword of *Pleasure Island: the Book of Jamaica*, a 1955 guide book that was edited by the English expatriate journalist Esther Chapman, contained the following, delicately worded statement:

[I do not] wish to appear to give the impression that Jamaica is a paradise ... or at any rate a paradise without tears. There are troubles, problems and difficulties, the chief of which are concerned with the human element; there is need for patience in dealing with them. But they occur against so glorious a background, in so happy and ambient a climate, as contrasted with the normal cares of life in a country where winter strikes, where servants cannot be found, where the overhanging menace of international disharmony is a constant oppression, that the minor irritations can well be overlooked in gratitude for the peace and harmony of the scene (10).

Chapman thus appealed to the "knowing" tourist who could appreciate the pleasures and comforts the island had to offer, despite its "minor irritations."

Late 19th and early 20th century travel accounts about Jamaica, however, constantly harped on the "minor irritations" arising from the "human element," often in comparison to more welcoming destinations such as Barbados or the Bahamas (e.g. Franck 1921). The complaints usually include the aggressiveness of food and curio vendors. The colonial authorities responded with repressive measures that must have added to the resentment that caused the problem in the first place. Taylor reports that:

So intolerable did the situation become by 1913 that the authorities launched a crusade against curio vendors, ‘street arabs,’ and others who pestered the tourists. The police put on special duty a few constables in plainclothes to keep a close watch for such proceedings, and [the judge] fined, or more readily confined any adult brought before him for that offense. Juveniles convicted on such a charge had an option of six strokes with the tamarind rod (1993, 119-120).

And:

Between December 1936 and September 1937, 630 persons were apprehended and prosecuted in petty sessions for selling on the streets. In each case the charge was the result of visitors being pestered in downtown Kingston (153).

In postcolonial Jamaica, the authorities have attempted to mediate a more constructive relationship between peddlers and tourists but what is now routinely called “tourist harassment” is still tackled with repressive measures rather than substantive efforts to address the root causes. Recently, this has included the introduction of special resort patrols and night courts that allow for “harassers” to be prosecuted promptly.²⁴¹ Annual arrest figures for harassment in the resort area of Negril alone ranged between 684 and 1,102 in the 1991 to 2000 period (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 130). Tourist harassment is seen as a major obstacle that prevents Jamaican tourism from being fully competitive in the Caribbean, as the then Minister of Industry and Tourism reiterated in a public speech on June 18, 2005 (Evans 2005). While Jamaica has a strong reputation for tourist harassment, it also occurs elsewhere in the Caribbean, such as Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and is perhaps better understood as a product of the socio-racial tensions that are embedded in Third World tourism than as a specifically Jamaican phenomenon.

Like their predecessors in the early 20th century, most present-day “harassers”

²⁴¹ “Harassers” can be prosecuted under various local laws, among others for solicitation, vending without a license, and the possession and sale of illegal drugs. Until the currency exchange was liberalized in the mid 1990s, peddlers also offered illegal cambio services, for which they (and the tourists!) could be prosecuted.

aggressively try to sell small craft items such as carvings or beads or services such as beach massages, hair braiding, informal tour guiding and, inevitably, drugs and sex. The sale of tourist art, in particular, has been a constant area of conflict. Most resort areas have large numbers of unlicensed, ramshackle craft vending stalls, usually near or even inside the most popular attractions but attempts by the authorities to remove or regularize these have generally resulted in public protests. Even the licensed vendors in the government-managed craft markets regularly resort to demonstrations because of the poor maintenance of the facilities and because they feel marginalized by the attempts of the all-inclusive resorts, cruise-ships and taxi drivers to shepherd the tourists to the duty-free shopping centers, where they receive commissions and where sales methods are less intimidating to the tourists (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 29-30).

3. Tourism and Jamaican Modernity

According to MacCannell, the tourists' desire for authenticity is fundamental to the modern experience:

The progress of modernity ("modernization") depends on its very sense of instability and inauthenticity. For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles. In other words, the concern of moderns for "naturalness" their nostalgia and their search for authenticity are not merely casual and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs. They are also components of the conquering spirit of modernity – the grounds of its unifying consciousness (1999, 3).

The emerging Jamaican tourism industry positioned the island as such a pre-modern "elsewhere" but was, ironically, also deeply connected to Jamaica's own project of modernity, as an engine of economic and infrastructural development.

Jamaican tourism became a systematic economic activity in the 1890s, when the Boston-based United Fruit Company – the dominant company in the emerging banana industry throughout the Caribbean and Central America – started using the excess capacity on its banana boats to transport passengers to Jamaica, and built or acquired large hotels, such as the Titchfield in Port Antonio, which opened in 1897.²⁴² [Ill. 175] Consequently, most early tourists were wealthy Americans from the cities along the Atlantic seaboard but they also came from England, mainly with the Elder, Dempster & Co. Steamship Company, a Bristol-based banana trader, and soon also from continental Europe. The three main destinations were Jamaica's main seaports at that time: Port Antonio, the centre of the banana industry, Montego Bay, and Kingston. (Taylor 1993)

Tourism thus emerged while the USA was becoming a major economic and political influence in the region but was also supported by the colonial government and the emerging local business elite, who competed actively with the American investors for the control of the industry. In the late 19th century, Jamaica was the main outpost of the British Empire in the Americas and significant efforts were made to rehabilitate the island, which had been placed under direct Crown Colony rule after the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, as a modern, thriving colony and to replace its failing sugar industry with new, viable economic ventures, such as bananas and tourism. The colonial governor Sir Henry Blake called it the “awakening of Jamaica” (*Gleaner*, January 28, 1891, 5).

One key initiative was the *Jamaica International Exhibition* in Kingston in 1891. While enthusiastically supported by the governor and colonial authorities, the project was underwritten by leading local business people, including George Stiebel, Jamaica's first

²⁴² The Titchfield Hotel was, in effect, built and initially owned by the Boston Fruit Company, which was incorporated into the United Fruit Company when it was established in 1899.

colored millionaire and the owner of Devon House, and further funded by public subscription, with contributions coming a wide range of Jamaicans, presumably from the middle and upper classes. (Blake 1891, 183; Tortello 2002b) It was organized through the IoJ whose mandate included the organization of such exhibitions. The Jamaica Exhibition was modeled after Crystal Palace, be it on a much smaller scale, and housed in a wood and glass Moorish-style building. In addition to England and the West Indies, exhibits came from continental Europe, the USA, and Canada, which had the largest display.

The West Indian exhibits were primarily concerned with the local agro-industries, but also included art and craft, with live demonstrations by native craft makers from different parts of the region. St Vincent sent six basket-weaving Carib – representatives of the few Amerindians to survive in the Caribbean. In the previous chapter, reference was made to the removal of an exhibit of Obeah objects, obviously because of concerns that displaying local “superstitions” represented Jamaica in a negative light. [Ill. 129] The IoJ display included a working potter, apparently the first time a potter’s wheel was used in Jamaica, where hand-built pottery was the norm, which reflects the modernizing agenda of the exhibition, even in the field of craft production (Cundall 1928, 79). The art gallery included work by locally based photographers and painters, mainly the lady watercolorists, and from the various national delegations, including a set of official portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (Blake 1891, 184).

The exhibition was not profitable, unlike Crystal Palace, but added to Jamaica’s international visibility and contributed to the articulation of island’s identity as a tourist destination – local commentators observed that Jamaica was henceforth “on perpetual exhibition” (Taylor 1993, 67). Kingston’s original grand hotels, the Constant Spring and

Myrtle Bank, were built to accommodate the anticipated visitors.²⁴³ The Jamaica Hotels Law of 1890, the first tourism-related legislation, offered government assistance for hotel construction (Blake 1891, 190; Senior 2003, 490). The paintings and photographs of Jamaican sights in the exhibition helped to codify the island's beauty and exotic culture as two main selling points in the tourism industry while the displays of "native craft" identified potential cottage industries that could produce items for export and for sale to tourists. There was an active, island-wide search for such products and Sir Henry Blake, in a promotional article on the exhibition for the *North American Review*, reported on an encounter with a young black aspiring stone-carver:

At a turn in the road we found him standing, bareheaded, and in his hands a box containing a number of rude carvings of horses, cows, sheep, etc., some of which showed the germs of real merit. [...] The boy, about thirteen or fourteen years of age, was an exceedingly bright and intelligent lad, and the conflict between modest shyness and anxiety to submit his efforts for my approval was very apparent. Every evening after his labor in the fields was over he had devoted himself to carving these figures in the soft cretaceous limestone of the district. His joy was extreme when we purchased some of his work. (1891, 186)

The juxtaposition of traditional rural and artisanal culture with actual and projected large-scale industrialization was a common characteristic of world exhibitions that reflected their fundamental relationship to colonialism. By means of such juxtapositions, Tony Bennett has argued, world exhibitions proposed an evolutionary trajectory that implied a "promissory note" of economic and social progress (1995, 82).

The promotional literature that surrounded the exhibition asserted that the people of Jamaica, including the uneducated peasantry, were to be the primary beneficiaries of

²⁴³ A smaller guest house, Gall's Myrtle Bank, had opened there in 1870 first but the first large hotel at the Myrtle Bank site was built for the exhibition and replaced by an even grander, more modern structure after it was destroyed in the 1907 earthquake (Deeks 2002, 358).

the project – a good illustration of the benevolent paternalism of late English colonialism in Jamaica – but there was a broader agenda, which Sir Henry Blake acknowledged:

While the primary object of the exhibition is the industrial education of the people of Jamaica, the commissioners look farther afield and hope that it may be of great service in stimulating the production the production and foreign trade of the entire West Indies. [...] Beyond this, we want to induce people of education to come and settle in Jamaica, and manufacturers to see for themselves how favorably circumstanced is the island for the investment of capital. (1891, 187)

The encouragement of immigration was also evident in the Jamaica handbooks, which were first published by the IoJ on the occasion of the exhibition, as handbooks for prospective settlers.²⁴⁴ These attempts to reposition Jamaica as a settler colony – and probably also to “whiten” the increasingly “brown” local elite – existed in close relationship with the development of tourism, which arguably started out as a variant of colonization in which the natural beauty and climate of the island were the resources to be exploited. The main part of Blake’s afore-mentioned article, in fact, outlined Jamaica’s tremendous potential as a tourist destination (187-103).

The 1907 Kingston earthquake, the two World Wars and the global economic crisis in-between temporarily slowed the growth of Jamaican tourism but indirectly led to improvements in the supporting infrastructure: hotels that had been damaged in the quake were rebuilt and upgraded while the wars helped to usher in airline travel. Regular passenger service was introduced in 1930 when Pan American established a water plane route from Miami to Kingston. Several airstrips were constructed by the American and the English military during World War II and the Kingston and Montego Bay airstrips were subsequently developed into international passenger airports. Other airlines also

²⁴⁴ These efforts met with some success. Several Lebanese migrants, for instance, came in response to the publicity caused by the Exhibition (Tortello c2005).

started regular service to the island, such as KLM in 1941, BWIA (British West Indies Airline) in 1944, and BOAC, the precursor of British Airways, in 1952. (Nelson 2002) Local promotion efforts also improved. In 1910 the Jamaica Tourist Association was established, as the first association of tourism interests in Jamaica, and published an annual guide book and information brochures. This was followed in 1922 by the Jamaica Tourist Trade Development Board (JTTDB), the first public board to promote Jamaican tourism, mainly by means of ads in American and English magazines. (Taylor 1993)

Despite the growth of early Jamaican tourism, local perceptions of its benefits were mixed. On 29 January 1938, the nationalist weekly *Public Opinion* published an informal poll in which respondents had been asked to articulate their views on the subject. While some presented a positive view of tourism's economic benefits, most expressed concern about its negative social and cultural effects and almost all argued that tourism benefited only a minority, locally. The young journalist Ken Hill, cautioned: "Develop the tourist trade and perhaps you may have a 'nation' of waiters" (3). These responses suggest that tourism was perceived as a threat to the nationalist efforts at fostering social mobility and a dignified sense of personhood.

There is little doubt that the benefits of tourism failed to reach the increasingly restive black underclass. Those who did come into direct contact with the industry were relegated to the role of supporting cast, as the subservient waiters, muscular banana loaders and picturesque market vendors, or ostracized as the uninvited guests, as is illustrated by the actions against the "harassers." That harassment proved impossible to eradicate implies that the social dynamics of tourism were from early on challenged by the popular masses and regular complaints about poor service in the hotels suggest that

there was passive resistance among tourism workers (Taylor 1993, 90; Pattullo 1996, 64).

Since most tourists were white and wealthy and the popular masses black and poor, racial tensions were from the start part of the social dynamics of tourism, which was *de facto* segregated until the mid 20th century and, among others, prevented non-white Jamaicans from accessing the best beaches. A major symbolic challenge was made in 1948 when the young black journalist Evon Blake demonstratively jumped into the “whites only” pool at the Myrtle Bank Hotel – Jamaica’s version of Rosa Parks’ historic act of defiance in the USA.²⁴⁵ Esther Chapman, herself a white expatriate, stated confidently in 1955 that “[t]he colour problem, though still having its thorny edges, has been solved in essence” (14) but it took until the 1970s before the racial barriers in tourism were substantially removed and they arguably still linger today.

4. Early Tourist Art

As we have seen, Jamaica had a tradition of craft production for local consumption, which included toys, straw goods, pottery and carved calabashes and coconut shells, and such items were sold by ambulant and sidewalk vendors and in specialized sections of the local markets. Those markets initially doubled as a tourist attraction, as most late 19th and early 20th century travel accounts suggest. As discussed in Chapter 5, the American writer and illustrator Howard Pyle mentioned the sale of traditional African-Jamaican ceramics in a Kingston street market as a noteworthy sight. [Ill. 136] He did not suggest that such pottery should be bought – the elemental, unadorned terracotta pots would probably not have matched the taste of 19th century metropolitan visitors – but mentions elsewhere that

²⁴⁵ The hotel had been acquired by the Issas, a local family of Lebanese-Syrian descent, after it was put up for sale by the United Fruit Company in 1943. For a full discussion of the Evon Blake incident at the Myrtle Bank see Krista Thompson’s *An Eye for the Tropics* (2006), 204-251.

he bought tropical fruits pre-packaged in pretty miniature baskets specifically made for the tourists (176). [Ill. 176] Traditional local products were thus quickly adjusted to the needs of tourists and this involved miniaturization and embellishment, a common characteristic of tourist art (Kasfir 1999, 79-80).

The written and pictorial record suggests that the market for Jamaican souvenirs was well established by the start of the 20th century. Guide books such as *Through Jamaica with a Kodak* (1907) detailed where souvenirs could be bought and provided illustrations of the “typical” products. [Ill. 177] In the 19th century, *Gleaner* advertisements for local gift shops typically listed imported items, with explicit mention of their place of origin, but around 1900 the listings began to include locally made curios. Several of these stores were located in or around the main hotels, such as the Myrtle Bank, and their ads often explicitly addressed tourist buyers. [Ill. 178] There are also accounts about informal markets appearing near to tourist attractions such as the Castleton Botanical Gardens along the road between Port Antonio and Kingston. A 1913 account reported that Castleton was becoming a popular stop for tourists and added, illustrating that tourist art is essentially opportunistic and appears whenever there is market demand:

Local arts are running high also. The craze of the folks in the proximity to Castleton is in the making of curios from John Crow beans, Job’s Tears, Cocoon seeds and bamboos. These they sold for pretty fine prices. The extent of these trades can be better conjectured when it is known that small children sell as much as forty shillings’ worth of curios daily when the rush of tourists is large. (*Gleaner*, February 28, 1913, 14).²⁴⁶

The article concluded that the economic benefits of this trade were evident in the community and resulted in more children going to school. The enthusiastic tone of the

²⁴⁶ John Crow beans, Job’s Tears and Cocoon seeds are large, strikingly shaped and colored seeds from local plants that can, when dried, be used as beads.

article illustrates that the local business class, whose interests were typically represented by the *Gleaner*, believed that the development of tourism was beneficial across social classes and was in denial about the social problems involved, since no concerns were expressed about child labor or the likely incidence of harassment at the Castleton site.

Many early souvenirs had a practical function – as decorative containers, made from materials such as calabash, dried coconuts and bamboo sections, or as fashion accessories, such as the jippi-jappa straw hats, beads and fans made from tropical bird feathers.²⁴⁷ In addition, the offerings included decorative items and curiosities, such as mounted sea shells and corals, small paintings of typical scenes and new objects such as the so-called “Obeah heads,” grotesque “negro” heads made from dried coconut, with or without the husk. As we have seen, Obeah does make use of sculptural objects but these do not resemble the touristic Obeah heads.²⁴⁸ Obeah was thus invoked to accommodate the tourists’ expectations about African-Jamaican culture, despite the *Obeah Act* of 1898 and local middle class disapproval of such practices. Innovation played a role in early tourist art but the new products had a quasi-traditional, “primitive” quality which implied that the “natives” who produced them were pre-modern.

With few exceptions, early 20th century travel writers were enthusiastic about local tourist art, although the hard sell tactics were noted. A 1927 article in the *National Geographic* magazine, for instance, warmly recommended a visit to the Jamaican market, to observe the sale of tropical produce and native crafts. In addition to the obligatory jippi-jappa straw hats, the writer described a range of exotica: “All sorts of strange things

²⁴⁷ Jippi-jappa straw items are made from the frond fibers of the jippa-jappa tree, an indigenous palm.

²⁴⁸ The Obeah heads bear some resemblance to the clay and shell ritual sculptures associated with Elegguá trickster divinity of the crossroads in Cuban Santería but there is no equivalent in African-Jamaican magico-religious practices. It is, of course, possible that Jamaican migrant workers to Cuba brought back the idea or prototype of the “obeah head.”

are offered here, from a shark's backbone strung on metal and turned until it is fashioned into a cane, lace bark whips – the butt and long plaited lash made from one piece of wood – to dagger-work fans, coolie bangles, and fern albums, and few visitors can long resist the salesmanship of the native Jamaican in her own market” (La Gorce, 16). This description also reminds of the traditional dominance of women in the Jamaican markets, a site in which poor black Jamaicans had been able to assert their economic and social independence in the post-slavery period. In spite of the ambiguous representation of the market vendor in tourism imagery, the “higgler,” as she is locally called, was within popular Jamaican life an icon of successful resistance against an oppressive socio-economic system through small, independent entrepreneurship. It is ironic, then, that these markets became a prime space for unmediated encounters between tourists and “natives,” which helps to explain why these were from early on laden with conflict.

Written accounts suggest that straw work was most popular but the material record of early tourist art consists of items made from more durable materials, such as woodcarvings and coconut and calabash carvings and a few paintings – usually small, colorful “typical scenes.” The earliest dated carved coconut I have come across – a lidded container made from a single shell and mounted on a section of another shell which serves as the base – is from 1906 and closely resembles other dated examples from the 1920s and 1930s, which suggests that the “typical” tourist art forms were standardized quickly and remained in use for several decades. [Ill. 179, 180] Like most tourist items, these curios are usually inscribed with the words “Jamaica, B.W.I.” (British West Indies) and they have incised decoration, usually in the form of stylized, silhouetted tropical scenery and flora and fauna motifs. Many are dated and some have names carved into

them although it is not always clear whether these are the signatures of the makers or dedications to the buyers, as a memento of a particular trip.

The production of tourist crafts was more private than its sale and less is known about it, beyond the existence of traditional gender roles which, for instance, caused men to dominate woodcarving and women embroidery. Some names of early tourist painters are recorded and indicate that some of the turn-of-the-century lady watercolorists embraced tourism as a source of income. One of those was Stella Shaw who produced pretty, highly stylized hand-painted postcards of “typical scenes” and was mentioned in 1934 by Edna Manley as one of the few known painters then practicing in the island. [Ill. 181] David Miller Sr started producing tourist curios around 1920, well before he was recognized as a Primitive, and sold these to tourists in Downtown Kingston, where he also lived. [Ill. 182] His entire family, but especially his son David Jr, was involved in producing such items when they had no commissions for their carpentry shop (Boxer & Nettleford 1979, 33). The production and sale of tourist art is indeed often linked to acute economic need. The Millers appear to have used various methods to sell their products, on the streets and in the Victoria Jubilee Market near the Kingston passenger ship pier.

The Millers usually signed their products and added their address and samples have remained in the estate and in local collections, so there is a good sense of the range and quality of their production. In addition to the calabash and coconut carvings and Obeah heads, which had by then become conventional types, they also produced small carvings of market vendors, musicians, and the young coin divers around the tourist ships, as well as carved wooden containers and animal figures. The humorous figurative carvings are in line with the prevailing “native” clichés but the containers and animal

carvings reflect their distinctive interest in the bizarre and the fantastic. The Miller estate also included several painted cast plaster statues of Hitler in the satirical guise of a John Crow – a local species of vulture characterized by black and white plumes and a red neck, the colors of the Nazi flag. Obviously, the Millers were not afraid to politicize their offerings when the circumstances called for it, with a statement that would have resonated with the predominantly American and English visitors.

It is difficult to reconstruct whether it was the recognition of the exceptional quality of their curios that encouraged the Millers to produce more ambitious art works or whether it is their recognition as major artists that has caused their tourist work to be remembered. Astley Clerk (c1929-43) seemed unconcerned, however, to cite their curios as evidence of the African element in Jamaican culture. This suggests that he saw their work as part of an emerging national culture in which, it was implied, tourism played a catalytic role, if only by providing the occasion for intensified production – a more realistic view, no doubt, than the dismissive view of tourism of other members of the nationalist intelligentsia. The local survival of some of the Millers' curios also suggests that the production of tourist art helped to bring local craft products into local elite homes and to “Jamaicanize” their décor, which was one of the objectives of the nationalists.

5. Modernization and Glamour

Jamaican tourism as it now exists is a product of the economic boom after WWII and the concurrent development of modern travel. The expansion of the industry was an important part of the efforts to turn Jamaica into a modern economy around Independence and local business and government interests aimed to take control of the process this time around. This was spearheaded by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB),

which in 1955 succeeded the ineffective JTTDB. This new board brought together key public and private sector representatives and was provided with a substantial budget and offices in major Western cities. The JTB, which was initially chaired by Abe Issa, a successful hotelier of Lebanese-Syrian descent, embarked on an ambitious campaign to promote Jamaica as the prime Caribbean destination and was reportedly the first such entity to advertise on US television in the 1950s (Morrison 2005). After Independence, tourism became a ministerial portfolio and the post of Director of Tourism, as the national tourism czar and president of the JTB, was established in 1963. The efforts of the JTB were complemented (and sometimes criticized) by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association which was established in 1961 and is still today the most influential private-sector tourism organization.

Aided by its proximity to the USA and the speed and ease of air travel, Jamaica quickly became one of the region's chief "pleasure islands." Annual visitor arrivals increased more than tenfold between 1945 and 1968, from just under 35,000 to nearly 400,000 per annum (Taylor 2002, 912). During the 1960s, Jamaican tourism also benefited from decline of Cuban tourism after the Revolution and the deteriorating conditions in Haiti under the dictatorship of "Papa Doc" Duvalier, which all but eliminated its nearest Caribbean competitors. As in Cuba, where much was made out of the regular presence of Ernest Hemingway, mid-century tourism in Jamaica was highly celebrity-driven: Ian Fleming, Noel Coward and Errol Flynn had homes in the island and Clark Gable, Lauren Bacall, Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor were regular visitors, who received significant attention in the local press and Jamaica's international tourism promotion campaigns alike.

The touristic representation of Jamaica and Jamaicans changed dramatically in the 1950s, in keeping with broader changes in tourism and Jamaican culture. Fleming's James Bond novels were inspired by his experiences in Jamaica and the books and films represented the Caribbean as a place of exotic adventure and political intrigue which acknowledged its strategic position in the Cold War. Advances in film, photography and printing technologies allowed for the island's beauty to be represented in Technicolor splendor while the rapidly developing international pop music industry typecast Calypso – in effect a slick, commercialized fusion of Trinidadian Calypso and Jamaican Mento, made popular by the Jamaican-born singer Harry Belafonte – as *the* defining music of the Caribbean. Calypso music and Limbo dancing became standard components of Caribbean hotel entertainment and are still popular today.

Previously the “natives” had been typecast as a-sexual, subservient and backwards but they were now foregrounded as glamorous, modern entertainers, still subordinate to the tourists but assertively present. In these images, the smiling “natives” wear colorful, frilly clothes that are loosely based on traditional local dress but altered to reveal their attractive bodies. The women are often carrying a stylized fruit basket on their head, à la Carmen Miranda, a “de-functionalization” of the market woman icon which reinforced the message of tropical bounty, cheer and availability. Earlier depictions of “native life” had some local specificity but this is almost absent from this “Calypso imagery” which blended into a generic fantasy of exotic glamour associated with the entire tropical Americas, from the Bahamas to Brazil. This “genericization” reflected the confluence of the emerging mass tourism and media-driven international pop culture of which Miranda and Belafonte were prime exponents.

Despite the new focus on exotic glamour and luxury, Jamaican tourism also became more democratic and cheaper summer rates began to attract middle income tourists who now had paid vacation leave.²⁴⁹ The 1960s also introduced a countercultural element when hippies started coming to the then still undeveloped beaches of Negril on the west end of the island, attracted by its permissive environment. This alternative tourism existed in direct contact with local Rastafarians, which facilitated the introduction of elements of Rastafarian culture into the touristic mainstream and it is in that context that the “rent-a-dread” – male prostitutes who present themselves as Rastas – first appeared.

The tourism infrastructure developed rapidly and the emphatic modernity of the new facilities reflects the ambitions and contradictions of that era. Most new hotels were high-rise modernist concrete buildings, characterized by an open structure to accommodate the tropical climate and novel luxuries such as modernist furniture made from local materials and air conditioning. Many of these construction projects were handled by the Urban Development Corporation, the new government agency which was also responsible for the development of the Kingston Waterfront. The new properties were leased to international hotel chains, such as the Hilton and the Sheraton (Taylor 1993). The modernization of the industry also led to the upgrading of the international airports which were both constructed in the “tropical modernist” style that also characterized the new hotels – Montego Bay in 1959 and Kingston in 1961 – and the establishment of Air Jamaica in 1969 (Nelson 2002, 360-361).²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ The official tourist season is still today in winter and runs from December 15 to April 15. Hotel and villa rental rates are still significantly higher during this period.

²⁵⁰ An earlier version of Air Jamaica had been established in 1966, as a joint venture of the Jamaican government, BOAC and BWIA. Air Jamaica had been loss-making for many years and was on May 1, 2010 subsumed under Caribbean Airlines, the Trinidad-based successor of BWIA.

Some efforts were made not to exclude the local population: local access to beaches was safeguarded, at least in principle, by the establishment of the Beach Control Authority in 1955.²⁵¹ Tourism's rapid expansion in the postwar period, however, coincided with Jamaican mass migration to England and North America and the escalation of rural-to-urban migration within the island. Both were driven by the lack of local opportunities for poor, black Jamaicans and the dismal conditions facing the migrants in the slums of West Kingston, on the aging, overcrowded, racially segregated passenger vessels, and in the unwelcoming recipient countries contrasted strikingly with the hyped glamour of the tourism industry. Not surprisingly, local criticism of tourism was mounting, in the context of the broader questioning of the social order that accompanied the Rasta-influenced political radicalization of the popular masses and, quickly thereafter, the intelligentsia and some of the political leadership. Director of Tourism John Pringle deplored in 1966 that "the biggest problem we are facing isn't 'selling' Jamaica to the tourist, but 'selling' tourists to the Jamaicans" (Pattullo 1996, 10).

At the same time, however, there were tourists who demanded to experience "authentic Jamaican culture" and this could not be satisfied with the generic Calypso entertainment at the hotels. The introduction of what we now call cultural tourism provided the solution by focusing on those traditional, seemingly apolitical aspects of popular culture that did not challenge the social order and, thereby, the tourism enterprise itself. Rastafari and Black Power, predictably, did not receive much attention in tourism promotion of the 1960s but the Zion Revivalist leader and artist Kapo was promoted as the quintessential Jamaican cultural icon. Selden Rodman, in *The Caribbean* (1968),

²⁵¹ Under the Beach Control Act (1956), the foreshore of any beach remains the property of the Crown, irrespective of who owns the adjoining land and public access to the section below the high tide line can thus not be legally denied.

stated reassuringly that “Kapo, operating in a fringe of society shrill with preachments of separatism and Black Power, advocates class integration and the union of all races under God” (11). Such accounts reassuringly suggested that the “real” Jamaican culture was, at heart, racially inclusive and welcoming to white visitors.

6. The Professionalization of Tourist Art

Photographic evidence suggests that the early hotel interiors were Spartan, in keeping with their function as health resorts. The Titchfield’s barn-like dining room was decorated with two giant, draped US-American flags, combined with a smaller British one – a décor choice that also left little doubt about the expansionist US-American politics that fueled early Caribbean tourism. [Ill. 175] The shift in circumstances in the mid 20th century Jamaican tourism precipitated a different approach to interior decoration. The now mainly locally owned hotels started patronizing local and visiting artists with mural commissions and insisted that these be on local themes. The prestigious Tower Hill Hotel in St Mary, which was opened in 1949 by the Issa family, featured murals by three of the main tourism-oriented artists active in Jamaica at that time: the American John Pike, the Englishman Hector Whistler, and the Jamaican Rhoda Jackson, who also had regular exhibitions at the hotel during the 1950s. Other artists also did tourism-related commissions: the Polish expressionist painter Michael Lester (né Leszczynski) settled in Montego Bay in 1950 and produced a body of work on Jamaican themes that included majestic panoramas of Montego Bay and several hotel murals.²⁵² Save for a few relics in public and private collections, most of these hotel murals were destroyed or covered up when hotels were redecorated or demolished and very few were

²⁵² For more information on Michael Lester’s work in Montego Bay, see: <http://www.focuspublicationsint.com/lester/anchorage.htm>

documented, which suggests that they were merely considered as décor and not as items of great cultural significance. John Pike's murals at the former Tower Isle Hotel, now the Couples Tower Isle all inclusive resort, were however recently uncovered and restored (or more correctly, repainted) by EMC students, which suggests that attitudes towards tourism-related cultural expressions may be changing (McGibbon 2009).

Although these expatriate artists also interacted with the local mainstream and produced work for local audiences – Pike was the architect of the 1938 Carib movie theatre in Kingston, a major Art Deco landmark in the Caribbean – their work was primarily geared towards the tourism industry and reflects the specialization that was taking place in that arena. The dominance of expatriates in this field may suggest unwillingness on the part of Jamaican artists to work for the tourism industry but, on a more practical level, most local artists probably also lacked the social contacts required for such commissions. The most lasting contribution to the professionalization of tourism-oriented design was, however, made by a local artist who had the required social clout: Rhoda Jackson, a white Jamaican and the niece of a turn-of-the-century watercolorist of some note, Harold Jackson. She had returned to the island in 1936, after studies at the Reading University art school in England. Jackson executed several hotel mural commissions but also designed advertisements, postcards, textiles and book covers, such as the dust jacket of Esther Chapman's earlier-cited *Pleasure Island* [Ill. 183, 184].

Rhoda Jackson was an undeniably talented and innovative designer. Her work represents Jamaica by means of a repertory of iconic images consisting of picturesque gingerbread cottages, idyllic fishing beaches and waterfalls, and rollicking cane-fields and mountain-scapes, peopled with pretty ladies, dandyish men and cute children, most

of them black and all in colorful, frilly “native” costumes. Her work is colorful and forms are simplified and stylized into patterned compositions that often have a tapestry-like quality. This made her designs very versatile and suitable for large panoramic paintings and small embroidery motifs alike. [Ill. 185].

Jackson is best known for tourism-related work but she was also involved in the mainstream art world. She taught art at the prestigious St Hilda’s High School for Girls in Brown’s Town, St Ann, a few miles inland from the North Coast, where Gloria Escoffery was among her students. Her work was included in IoJ exhibitions and she was a member of its influential Art and Crafts Committee. It is nonetheless telling that, other than some complimentary reports on her exhibitions, there was no substantive critical response to her work in the local press, while significant efforts were made to engage Edna Manley’s work at an intellectual level. She is also virtually unmentioned in the later art narratives, such as Boxer’s *Jamaican Art 1922-1982*. This suggests that her work has not been taken seriously as significant “art” by the cultural establishment.

Jackson’s iconography, with its focus on rural life, is similar to that of the nationalist school but the tone of her work could not be more different. Her painting *Wash Day* (1945) was bought by the IoJ and hangs in the permanent exhibition of the NGJ, side by side with Albert Huie’s *Noon* (1943). [Ill. 64, 186]. Jackson’s painting depicts women and children washing clothes in a river while Huie’s features a group of sugar factory workers who are lounging under a tree while on their lunch break, with the factory and a mountainous landscape in the background. In Jackson’s painting, the figures are frolicking, carefree and anonymous “natives” while in Huie’s they are dignified modern workers and citizens. Such contrast also is evident in the depiction of

the Jamaican environment – as a riotous backdrop of color and pattern in Jackson’s painting and a sober, geometrically structured Cezannesque landscape in Huie’s. These differences remind of the contrast between the “let them eat cake” frivolity of Rococo art and the orderly civic-mindedness of Neo-Classicism in French painting.

It was increasingly clear in the 1950s that Jamaican art could gain significant exposure and income in the tourist market, beyond the tourist arts per se. Neighboring Haiti had developed a successful art tourism and export industry in the late 1940s, which was largely the creation of the American promoters Dewitt Peters and Selden Rodman and focused on the Primitives, who had the greatest appeal in the Western art market. Developing a parallel industry in Jamaica thus seemed feasible. It helped that the first Director of Tourism John Pringle was a Primitive art enthusiast, who regularly visited Haiti and in Jamaica collected major works by Kapo. The JTB was actively involved in promoting Jamaican art, by featuring it at their offices and in publications, by including visits to artists such as Kapo in their tours (Waugh 1987, 120), and by facilitating exhibitions such as the *Face of Jamaica* (1963-1964) in England and Germany.

The Jamaican efforts at developing art tourism were nonetheless tempered by the critical backlash against the commercialization of Haitian art. Consequently, the promotional literature on Jamaican art was guarded and several authors expressed concern about the negative cultural effects of tourism, especially on the self-taught, popular artists. Norman Rae wrote in *Ian Fleming Introduces Jamaica* (1965) that the artists who succumbed to the “glittering island vistas ... retain little standing in the art world and indeed the tourist temptation has sometimes proved calamitous for some promising painters. Gaston Tabois once charmed with his fresh, naïve, gaily primitive

vignettes of country and city life, but he found it hard to recover after Elizabeth Taylor had bought some of his work.” (1965, 169) [Ill. 40] Although he had played a key role in the commercialization of the Haitian Primitives, Selden Rodman expressed similar sentiments in *The Caribbean* (1968). A large part of his Jamaica chapter was dedicated to Kapo – a powerful endorsement from the man who had “made” Haitian artists such as Hector Hyppolite. While Rodman praised Kapo’s painting, he rejected his sculpture as “grotesque and inelegant, influenced perhaps by what passes for ‘African’ in the tourist shops” (Ibid.). Tourist art, clearly, was a danger to be avoided at all cost. [Ill. 133]

Rae and Rodman did not limit their discussion to Primitive Jamaican art. Rae’s overview documented major trends in contemporary mainstream art, while Rodman mentioned Hyde, whose high modernist work he dismissed as un-Jamaican (35), and Parboosingh, whose Mexican muralist-influenced work was more to his liking. [Ill. 72, 68] He recounts a visit to Parboosingh and his Lebanese-American wife Seya, who were living in St Mary along the road from Ocho Rios to Port Antonio, where they operated a roadside gallery. Rodman was not impressed with the Parboosingsh’s petty entrepreneurialism:

Today, like most of the talented painters of his generation, Parboo is painting pictures for the tourists. [...] In Jamaica neglect isn’t countered with defiance. Nor does an artist join with his peers to demand his share of the state’s largesse. Instead, he moves to the highway where the action is – the passing cars, the bargain hunters, the decorators who want their bars and lobbies to look different but not too different. Parboo and his wife, with their roadside showroom, where they hospitably served us rum-sodas under the tattered pergola with its forlorn view, are sweet people, not fighters. And Jamaican art, unless it fights hard and in some kind of unison, is never going to get off the ground. (Ibid.)

Curiously, Rodman did not report that Parboosingh was a founding member of the CJAA, which was already in operation at the time and fairly successful with its demands for

government and private sector patronage. Nonetheless, Parboosingh *was* a “struggling artist” and, since the local art buying culture was just beginning to develop, capitalizing on tourism was a necessity more than a choice. Parboosingh was not the only mainstream artist to sell his own work in the tourist areas: Michael Lester operated a gallery in Montego Bay; Joe James, another painter, opened a gallery in Rio Bueno which is still open at the time of writing; and Kapo for a while operated a roadside stall near the Constant Spring Hotel in Kingston. Rodman’s comments thus reminded that promoting Jamaican art in the tourism arena existed in tension with the drive towards professionalization in mainstream art and the development of a local art market.

The desire to reconcile these demands and opportunities was also evident in the activities of the Hill’s Gallery which was, not coincidentally, located near to the Myrtle Bank hotel in Kingston. As we have seen, they were cultivating local audiences but the flipside of their 1963 boast that they were selling 40 % to local buyers still meant that 60 % went to foreigners, most of which would have been tourists (Waugh 1987, 117). No data are available, however, on the comparative preferences of local and tourist buyers or how both categories were defined. The Hills also operated a “mobile gallery,” a van which took small shows to North Coast hotels and other tourist venues. While they played a broader role in the development of Jamaican art, the Hills’ most notable contribution was giving visibility to Primitives who could compete with the Haitians as prime attractions in Jamaican art tourism. Kapo, Gaston Tabois and Sidney McLaren all had their first exhibitions at the Hill’s, which was also successful in attracting celebrity patrons: they sold a Tabois to Elizabeth Taylor in the late 1950s and Winthrop Rockefeller was also a customer (Rae 1965).

There were other galleries that catered to the tourist market, although most were short-lived. This included the White River Gallery in Ocho Rios and galleries and gift shops in the major hotels. The Kingston Sheraton gallery was operated by the American expatriate artist Vera Feldman while the Myrtle Bank gallery was operated by Carmen Manley, the wife of Edna Manley's eldest son Douglas and an actress, writer and collector in her own right. The emergence of Kingston-based galleries that focused on local audiences, such as the CJAA Gallery in 1964 and the Bolivar Gallery in 1965, however, marked the inevitable separation between the tourist and local art markets.

As local art patronage developed, hotel commissions were no longer limited to artists and works that had obvious tourist appeal. Edna Manley, for instance, produced the large wood relief *He Cometh Forth* for the Kingston Sheraton in 1962, as an allegory of Jamaican Independence. [Ill. 97] Predictably, however, the most significant example of the new, more culturally receptive hotel patronage involved Primitive art: Larry Wirth, the American owner of the Stony Hill Hotel in the hills above Kingston, became the main collector of Kapo's work, which he put on display at the hotel. Wirth's substantial collection of Kapo paintings and sculptures is now on permanent display at the NGJ, which acquired the collection after Wirth's death. [Ill. 4] The Jamaican government also engaged in tourism-oriented art patronage. In spring 1968, the JTB and Seaga's Ministry of Finance and Industry commissioned a mural for the downtown Kingston redevelopment project, which was to include the construction of a modern cruise ship harbor and marina although this part of the project was never completed. The work, titled *The Good Shepherd*, was executed by the American illustrator and muralist Seymour Leichman, a friend of Rodman, with help from local art students. [Ill. 187] It provides a

summary of Jamaican history from colony to independent nation, surmounted by a symbolic portrait of Kapo, the Revivalist Shepherd to which the title obviously referred.

What, then, was the impact of tourism on the development of Jamaican art? It had become dogma among the intelligentsia of the 1960s that its effects were necessarily negative and *The Star*, the *Gleaner's* evening tabloid, gleefully reported that Selden Rodman had declared in a 1966 interview that “[t]he worst way to develop indigenous art is to make painters depend on tourism.”(Waugh 1987, 121) Yet, as this overview has illustrated, the dependence on tourism was not as pervasive as is often assumed and the associated debate may even have stimulated the development of local patronage. Tourism naturally had an impact on the work produced and this was especially obvious in the work of the new Primitives, who routinely added “Jamaica, West Indies” (or, before Federation, “British West Indies”) to their signature which signals that they were anticipating a tourist clientele. Several of Sidney McLaren’s vivid but idealized portrayals of Kingston life, such as his views of Hope Gardens, were based on popular postcards but this did not compromise the integrity and originality of his work – another illustration of how imagery that was generated by tourism became part of the local imaginary. [Ill. 41] Tabois survived his brush with celebrity patronage just fine and, likewise, nobody in Jamaica today would describe the early work of Kapo or, for that matter, Parboosingh as “tainted” by tourism. The work these artists may have produced with tourist audiences in mind is virtually indistinguishable from what they produced for local audiences. This is not to say that the impact of tourism was all positive and that significant talent was not “wasted” on the production of stereotypical tourist art but for those artists who managed to transcend its limitations, tourism served as an opportunity

that jumpstarted and financially sustained their careers.

In the mid 1950s, specialized craft markets were established in the touristic areas, in an attempt to separate the grassroots sale of craft from the increasingly rowdy general markets and to curtail illegal streetside vending.²⁵³ Chief among those was the Victoria Craft Market near the Kingston cruise ship pier which replaced the general market that had been housed in the beautiful brick and cast iron complex since the late 19th century.²⁵⁴ Today, these specialized markets have low status but initially they were desirable venues for artists and vendors of diverse backgrounds and ambitions. In 1956, for instance, an artists' cooperative that included major names such as Edna Manley, Albert Huie, Alvin Marriott and Carl Abrahams established a stall in the Victoria Crafts Market (Waugh 1987, 119). This new tendency towards self-organization was also evident among embroiderers, who joined forces under collectives such the Jamaican Embroidery League and the Allsides Workshop in Kingston. The latter produced work based on standardized embroidery patterns that included designs by Rhoda Jackson.

Handmade curios were still popular but mechanically produced souvenirs became more common, in response to the increased demand for cheap products created by mass tourism and the simultaneous drive towards modernization and professionalization. New materials, such as plastic, were introduced and traditional materials were used in novel ways: for instance, woven, pressed and plasticized bamboo strips were used to make plates and platters that are decorated with screen-printed compositions. The functionality

²⁵³ There is little documentation on the history of these markets but most of the major ones seem to have been established in the 1950s. Smaller markets, such as the one at Dunn's River Falls, are of more recent date and were often established to regularize illegal vending at those sites.

²⁵⁴ This historic market, originally built as the Victoria Jubilee Market had a ornate cast iron fence and central fountain and a neoclassical main gate, as well as several brick courtyards shaded by almond trees. The building was, quite unfortunately, demolished in the late 1960s to make way for the Waterfront development project. A new, modern craft market was constructed nearby and is still in operation today, despite the lack of tourist visits to Downtown Kingston, although the facilities are now derelict.

of souvenir objects also changed and now included items that could be used in the “modern household,” such as salt and pepper sets, coasters, ashtrays and cigarette lighters. [Ill. 188, 189] These mass-produced souvenirs were decorated with what had by then become a standardized tourism iconography, consisting of tropical flora, fauna and landscape motifs and the Calypso imagery, although some efforts were made to reassert the Jamaicanness of these products. Jamaica’s competitiveness as a mass tourism destination, after all, depended on retaining a semblance of specificity and the nationalist fervor around Independence also played a role. Mass-produced souvenirs from that era therefore often featured national symbols, such as the flag and the coat of arms, as well as celebratory pictorial maps of the island.

Many of the new, mass-produced souvenirs were, however, rather unimaginative and something clearly needed to be done to improve their quality. Some initiatives to raise design standards came from private entities, such as the local photographic firm Stanley Motta, which in the 1950s produced a collection of simple but “tasteful” ashtrays with Jamaican motifs that were designed by local artists such as Rhoda Jackson but manufactured in Sweden.²⁵⁵ The most significant effort was the establishment of Things Jamaica as the national craft promotion agency in the mid 1960s, as part of Seaga’s Five Year Plan for industrialization and development. Things Jamaica used local artisans and foreign consultants, such as the English ceramicist Peter Cave and the Italian-American designer Sergio dello Strologo, to develop new products. Things Jamaican also provided training and distribution for local craft producers and vendors. Dello Strologo’s products include a series of reproductions of pewter household objects recovered from archaeological excavations in Port Royal, which reflects the drive to give more cultural

²⁵⁵ Personal communication David Boxer, October 12, 2005.

prestige to Jamaican craft. Most Things Jamaica products were attractive and well-made and, not surprisingly, also found their way into local homes.

7. The New Tourism and the Rasta Carvers

In 1972, the JTB published a poster of a young, ample-breasted woman who clad in a clingy wet t-shirt with the word “Jamaica” emblazoned across her chest [Ill. 190].²⁵⁶ Few people knew that the woman in the picture, Sintra Arunte, was in fact an Indo-Trinidadian visitor who had been asked to pose on an impromptu basis, no doubt because her appearance well served the inclusive, multi-racial image Jamaica was trying to project. This overtly sexualized image moved well beyond the earlier Calypso imagery in representing Jamaica as a luscious and available woman. The poster proved very popular, locally and internationally, and remains a collector’s item today. (Silvera 2001)

Despite its popularity, the poster raised the question of whether Jamaica was going too far in its efforts to sell itself as a tourist destination. Tourism itself became increasingly contentious the Jamaican public sphere, inevitably so, given the political radicalization of that period. Abe Issa’s optimistic credo that “tourism earns money and sells nothing” (Miranda 2002, 222) was discredited and the disparaging slogan “tourism is whorism” gained local popularity, especially in Black Power circles (*Time* August 3, 1970, 26; Patullo 1996, 10). When Michael Manley declared in 1975 that “Jamaica is not for sale,” he was referring to much more than tourism but it was certainly on his mind.

Yet it was also recognized that countries like Jamaica could not afford to give up on tourism as an economic activity and that the only solution was for tourism itself to be

²⁵⁶ The poster was part of its 1972 advertising campaign, which was managed by Doyle Dane Bernbach, the international advertising agency which handled JTB advertising for the early 1960s to the mid 1970s. The company had in 1972 hired former Director of Tourism John Pringle in an executive position.

reformed into a more dignified, inclusive and equitable exchange. The JTB consequently attempted to promote the New Tourism, a term coined by Michael Manley in 1972. This led to the *We're More than a Beach, We're a Country* campaign of the late 1970s, which encouraged visitors and locals alike to move beyond the stereotypes and to experience the “real” Jamaica instead. The *Discover Jamaica* campaign further encouraged Jamaicans to make use of the tourist facilities, at significantly reduced rates, while the *Meet the People* program, which actually dated from 1969, facilitated greater interaction between tourists and Jamaicans, although participation in these programs inevitably reflected local class structures. The 1978 establishment of the Reggae Sunsplash festival in Montego Bay contributed to Reggae’s popularity and represented an early, private initiative to market Jamaica’s romantic rebellious appeal. (Pattullo 1996; Taylor 2002)

Popular artists had from early on found a commercial outlet in tourism and repeated efforts on the part of governments and tourism interests to control the resulting socio-cultural interactions had not been entirely successful, as the continued incidence of street vending well illustrated. Although Rastafari had become a visible and at times disruptive presence in society by the 1950s, it took until the 1970s before it became a significant factor in Jamaican tourism. The JTB brochures of the 1960s do not refer to Rastafari at all, although they foregrounded Kapo and other aspects of Jamaican culture. Erudite travel writers of the 1960s, such as V.S. Naipaul (2001), Rodman (1968) and the contributors to *Ian Fleming Introduces Jamaica* (1965) all discussed Rastafari as a significant cultural and social movement but make no mention of any related art and craft production, although such already existed in the 1960s, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

That it took so long for Rastafarian art and craft to enter the tourist market or, more correctly, to be recognized as a presence, is likely a reflection of the marginalization of early Rastafari by mainstream Jamaican society and, not to be overlooked, the rejection of that same society by radical Rastafarians who critiqued the perpetuation of colonial socio-cultural patterns. There were three major reasons why this changed in the 1970s: one was the growing acceptance of Rastafari by the local intelligentsia; the second was Michael Manley's New Tourism; and the third was the growing international popularity of Reggae. For the tourists, it was the counter-cultural appeal of the music (and the ganja) that attracted them to Rastafarian culture, rather than its specific religious and political beliefs and practices.

It is telling, however, that the work of the first Rastafarian artist to receive national and international attention, Everal Brown, was initially only shown at non-profit venues such as the galleries at the UWI and the IoJ, in 1969 and 1971, respectively. [Ill. 10] This suggests that those who originally supported him felt his work had limited commercial appeal and should also be sheltered from "corrupting" market forces such as tourism. Some early efforts were, however, made to promote Brown as Kapo's Rastafarian counterpart. Margaret Bernal, a young sociologist and later art promoter, worked for JTB at the time and organized for the English photojournalist Penny Tweedie, who visited Jamaica in 1971, to visit and photograph Everal Brown and his church community.²⁵⁷ Tweedie's evocative photographs are among the most important visual records on Brother Brown's work and life but they do not seem to have been widely published. Bernal also brokered the 1974 commission of a mural for the Inter-Continental

²⁵⁷ Penny Tweedie is best known for her coverage of the Vietnam War and the Aborigines of Arnhem Land in Australia. I had wanted to use her Everal Brown photographs in this dissertation but she passed away unexpectedly on January 14, 2011 and it was not possible to obtain the necessary permissions from her heirs within the available time.

Hotel, one of the new high-rise hotels in Ocho Rios. The mural depicted Columbus arriving in Jamaica – an unlikely subject, perhaps, for a Rastafarian artist but one which tourists would have appreciated and which allowed Brown to engage in one of his meditations on the spiritual significance of Jamaican history.²⁵⁸

These promotional efforts did not have the same success as Kapo's, however, and Everald Brown only reached the tourist market in the 1980s and never was a big seller in that field. Rastafarian artists who produced less esoteric work, however, quickly gained visibility. Among those was Bongo Silly (Sylvester Ivy), a wicker craftsman who in 1970 established his *Lion's Den* guest house in Ocho Rios and built it with wicker walls – the place gained cult status after Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones became a regular patron (Bender 2005, 47-49). [Ill. 142] By the late 1970s, the presence of Rastafarian producers and vendors and Rastafarian-themed work was well established in the tourist art market and the “Rasta carving” displaced earlier prototypes as the most “typical” Jamaican item. The ascent of the independent Rasta carver, however, also encouraged and politicized informal vending and set the stage for subsequent conflicts.

It should not be overlooked, however, that the Rasta carvings became prominent while concerted attempts were made to de-center tourism as a cultural force and a central tenet of the New Tourism was that a healthy cultural self-respect was a pre-condition for a healthy tourism industry. In the early 1970s, Edna Manley embarked on a project of visiting formal and informal craft markets and workshops along the North Coast to uncover sculptural talent. Such talent-scouting illustrated that tourist art was seen as a field of potential rather than accomplishment in its own right and one from which the

²⁵⁸ This mural is now destroyed. The (much expanded) hotel now operates as the all-inclusive Renaissance Jamaican Grande.

“real” artists, and Rastafarians, had to be rescued. Very few have made that transition, however, and Zaccheus Powell, who was recognized as an Intuitive in the early 1980s, still sells primarily to the tourist market. [Ill. 192]

8. “Make It Jamaica Again”

Despite the efforts at reforming tourism, the sociopolitical instability of the 1970s took its toll and the industry was virtually annihilated by 1980. After the general elections, the JTB embarked on a vigorous campaign to dispel Jamaica’s negative image, under the motto *Make It Jamaica Again*. Aided by the global expansion of mass tourism which had started in the 1970s, this campaign quickly reestablished Jamaica as a major Caribbean destination although Kingston never recovered from its tarnished reputation as a dangerous “urban jungle,” despite recurrent efforts to rehabilitate it as a cultural attraction. Port Antonio also declined, mainly because its distance from the two international airports, via notoriously bad roads, made it unsuitable for tourists on short packaged vacations (Taylor 2002, 910).²⁵⁹ The more accessible Ocho Rios and Negril, in contrast, developed rapidly and joined Montego Bay as Jamaica’s main resort areas.

The *Make It Jamaica Again* campaign pointedly reversed the New Tourism rhetoric of the 1970s and sought to reassure tourists and overseas industry interests alike that the “natives” were, once again, friendly. Period advertisements featured emphatically non-threatening images, such as happy children and friendly elders. [Ill. 193] The sexy tourism poster reappeared and again featured provocatively posed, semi-nude women, most of them voluptuous and brown-skinned. Most were the work of Brian Rosen, a

²⁵⁹ There are efforts to revive Port Antonio tourism by focusing on its potential as an exclusive yachting destination. An impressive new cruise ship pier and marina complex was recently constructed, although this new facility is underutilized. Other rehabilitation programs are, however, underway.

Jamaican photographer who specializes in “soft porn” and glamour photography, and some featured popular Jamaican fashion models and beauty queens such as the popular 1983 Miss Jamaica World, Cathy Levy. While their appropriateness was hotly debated in feminist circles, these posters were, again, very popular locally and I recall seeing a Cathy Levy poster at the Kingston Immigration office in the mid 1980s, which illustrated that the local discomfort about such images is primarily limited to the intelligentsia.

The *Make It Jamaica Again* campaign did not only signal that, quite literally, the coast was clear for tourists to return but, more subtly, also suggested a return to the old colonial order, be it in a sanitized modern form. Other factors, such as a global “retro” fashion in tourism, may also have played a role, but it is probably no coincidence that the tropical modernism of the 1950s and 60s was abandoned in favor of a nostalgic romanticism that idealizes the island’s plantation past. The dominant architectural style of the newer (or refurbished) upscale properties is that of the Great House and many advertisements uncritically invoke the colonial past as a key selling point. A local 2005 ad for a Jamaican-owned Ocho Rios hotel, for instance, read: “Surround yourself with the charm and beauty of Colonial Jamaica and the gentle scent of the Caribbean Sea.”²⁶⁰

While this may seem contradictory, it is during this period that Rastafari and Reggae truly took center stage among Jamaica’s touristic attractions. This was inevitable, given Reggae’s international popularity, but it should not be overlooked that Rastafari has been co-opted in ways that diffuse its political implications. This could be observed in the JTB’s *One Love* campaign of the mid 1990s, which appropriated Marley’s famous song as an anthem of Jamaican hospitality and racial harmony and used reassuring

²⁶⁰ The advertisement is for Couples Ocho Rios, an all-inclusive hotel of the Superclubs chain, and appeared in the Jamaican yellow pages, although it probably just repeats the copy of ads that were placed overseas.

images, such as cute Rasta children playing with white children. The *One Love* campaign was revived after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and presented Jamaica as a welcoming escape for the weary metropolitan. The romantic appeal of Reggae also accounts for the growing popularity of the “shack” style in resorts, as a counterpoint to the plantation style. Hip properties such as Jakes in Treasure Beach on the South Coast, which is owned by the family of Perry Henzell, the director of *The Harder They Come*, provide an illusion of participation in popular life by appropriating elements of the traditional rural architecture, but naturally with all modern amenities – a sophisticated example of staged authenticity which Vogue magazine has labeled “the chicest shack in the Caribbean.”²⁶¹ [Ill. 194] Such “disneyfication” is also obvious at Island Village, a duty-free shopping and entertainment complex near the Ocho Rios cruise ship pier owned by the reggae promoter Chris Blackwell, which was designed to look like a “vintage” Jamaican village and now houses Gonzales’ *Bob Marley* statue. [Ill. 37]

Another response to the island’s reputation as a “difficult” tourist destination was the development of the all-inclusive resorts: carefully packaged and controlled environments designed to keep the “natives” out and the revenue in and marketed at very reasonable rates that often include airfare. The first all-inclusive hotel in Jamaica, the Negril Beach Village, opened in 1976, as a property of the Issa family, who had been among the pioneering local players in the industry since the 1940s (Samuels 2002, xxi). By the mid 1980s, the all-inclusives had become dominant and offered facilities that cater to different kinds of tourists, ranging from wholesome family resorts such as Beaches to adults-only playgrounds such as the Hedonism hotels. Cruise ship tourism also grew rapidly, as another way to insulate tourists from the local realities, since they stay for

²⁶¹ See: <http://www.islandoutpost.com/press-quotes.htm>.

only a few hours which are usually spent on prearranged tours to tightly controlled attractions such as Dunn's River Falls and the duty-free shopping complexes.

Despite the Caribbean-wide homogenization caused by mass tourism, there has also been an unprecedented degree of diversification in the tourism product. This has been necessary to keep Jamaica competitive at a time when many other destinations also offer the conventional "sun, sea and sand." Niche markets have been developed for music, heritage, sports and eco-tourism, along with newer touristic sites, such as Treasure Beach and the spectacular Blue Mountains. Sex tourism has also become an increasingly important part of the industry, often along with drugs, but its role is difficult to quantify and qualify, since it involves illegal and therefore undocumented activities (Patullo 1996; Kempadoo 1999; Dunn & Dunn 2002).

Jamaica now also attracts a wider range of tourists than before, from the wealthy owners of winter residences to the middle and working class tourists in the all-inclusives and the backpackers who come for the Reggae, ganja and nature experiences. The majority is US American – some 70 to 75 % (JTB 2005) – but tourists also come from Europe, especially England, Germany and Italy, and from East Asia, especially Japan. There have also been efforts to niche-market Jamaica to "special interest" groups such as African-Americans and black Britons who often have Jamaican family connections or an interest in African-Jamaican culture. Most tourists are still white and middle class, however, and far removed, culturally and economically, from the Jamaican majority.

In terms of absolute numbers, Jamaica has recently been the fifth most popular destination in the Caribbean, after Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Cuba (CTO 2004). The contribution of tourism to the GDP of Caribbean nations

stands at approximately 25 % (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 3) but, like Cuba, Jamaica falls below this average, because its economy is larger and more diversified, with tourism revenues amounting to about 7 % of the GDP in 2004 (BoJ 2004). Tourism is nonetheless an important, steadily growing component of Jamaica's national economy and a major earner of foreign exchange. In 1999, some 1.25 million stopover visitors were recorded, along with about 750,000 cruise ship visitors and by 2004, these figures had increased to 1.4 and 1.1 million, respectively, despite a temporary decline after 9/11. This increase does not correlate to an equivalent growth in revenue, however, because Jamaican tourism is now heavily discounted and spending per visitor varies.²⁶² The gross income from tourism for the equivalent period grew from 1.3 to 1.4 billion US dollars or only about 7 % compared to the 20 % growth in visitor arrivals. (PIOJ 2005)

Until recently, the Jamaican tourism sector stood out in the Caribbean because of the high degree of local ownership of hotels, estimated at about 80 % (Samuels 2002, xxi). Major Jamaican-owned all-inclusive chains such as Superclubs and Sandals have even spread elsewhere in the region, such as Cuba and the Bahamas. The ownership of large properties is, however, mainly in the hands of newly and historically wealthy white Jamaicans, such as the Issas, the Lebanes-Jamaican owners of Superclubs, Gordon "Butch" Stewart of Sandals, and Chris Blackwell of the Island group. Black ownership is found in the smaller properties, which have difficulty competing with the marketing and deep discounts of the large chains. Local ownership patterns thus reflect the racially and socially differential access of the local population to the economic benefits of tourism. The current and anticipated construction of several mega-resorts by Spanish investors

²⁶² Not all "stopover" visitors are tourists, since the figures also include visitors who come for other reasons, such as business or study. On the other hand, reported tourist revenues do not consider that a significant part of visitor spending takes place in the informal economy.

will, however, significantly change the local-to-foreign ownership ratio and, while it has been welcomed by the government, this Spanish “reconquista” is, predictably, a source of discontent among competing local tourism interests as well as environmentalists who are concerned about overdevelopment (e.g. Maxwell 2006).²⁶³

Recent studies have documented that most Jamaicans now recognize tourism as a necessary part of the national economy but one aftereffect of the 1970s has been that they are well-informed and articulate about its social implications (Dunn & Dunn 2002; PIOJ 2005). As the frequent demonstrations in the touristic areas illustrate, the popular masses deliberately use the country’s “image problem” as a bargaining chip in their struggles to get greater access to the benefits of tourism and to address other social issues, such as the bad roads – another example of the political intelligence of the Jamaican poor (Gray 2004).²⁶⁴ It is almost redundant to point out that the long-term success of Jamaican tourism depends on the country’s general socio-economic circumstances but the national economy would probably collapse if it were not for tourism – Jamaica is one of many postcolonies to face such dilemmas. Recent government initiatives have included the establishment of the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) in 1996, to monitor quality standards in the industry and to sensitize, involve and train local stakeholders. These interventions have, however, not adequately addressed the problems associated with tourism. There has, for instance, been a failure to develop housing for formal and informal tourism workers, despite the rapid expansion of the industry.

²⁶³ Several of these new resorts have more than 1,000 rooms and the biggest, the Bahia Principe in St. Ann, will have nearly 2,000 rooms when it is completed. It is of note that most of the criticisms of the new Spanish hotels, environmentally and socio-economically, have been published in the *Observer*, which is owned by Butch Stewart of the Sandals Resorts.

²⁶⁴ There was, for instance, a major, violent demonstration, in full view of the Montego Bay airport, on October 25, 2003, after the Police had shot and killed two elderly taxi drivers from the nearby squatters’ community of Flankers, apparently mistaking them for gunmen.

Consequently, some of the island's fastest growing, most troubled squatter settlements are located near Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril and this endangers the welfare of the slum dwellers, the others who live and work nearby, and the tourists alike (PIOJ 2005). One tourist worker put it plainly, in a recent study of popular attitudes towards tourism: "When we are comfortable in our homes, we will welcome visitors" (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 143). Jamaican tourism may have grown exponentially but the associated social problems have changed depressingly little.

9. Harmony Hall

With the decline of Kingston as a tourist destination, the relative independence from tourism became a defining characteristic of mainstream Jamaican art, in contrast with other Caribbean islands such as Barbados and the Bahamas where tourism remains a major influence on art in general. There have, however, been some recent efforts to reconcile the two. The most high profile initiative was the establishment of Harmony Hall, a small but upscale gallery, gift shop and restaurant complex near Ocho Rios. [Ill. 195] Edward Seaga was the guest speaker at the opening on November 14, 1981. He said:

We start from scratch again, but this time we start with a greater ambition – one Devon House is not enough. We intend to rebuild it and restore it, but even if we can make it as good as it can ever be, one is not enough. There needs to be many Devon Houses, scattered throughout Jamaica and especially along the North Coast where visitors can be able to see something of art, craft and culinary skills. Harmony Hall, therefore, is a step in that direction, and an excellent one. A model of what can be done and better yet, what can be done by private initiative, so there wouldn't be the need for more Devon Houses financed by public funds (*Daily Gleaner*, November 18, 1981).

The political rhetoric of that period was replete with references to needing to rebuild the country "from scratch" after the Manley administration which, it was implied, had

negated the progress that had been made during the 1960s. His remarks also reflected the view that culture is a crucial economic resource, not surprising for one whose ministerial portfolio, as it had been in the 1960s, included culture and finance.

That Seaga compared Harmony Hall with Devon House illustrates how the lines between public and private, and profit and non-profit initiatives had become blurred. The speech was made around the time Seaga decided to remove the NGJ from Devon House and to revive what he had planned for the mansion in the late 1960s when it was first acquired by government. The restoration of the house included the addition of a new courtyard at the back, in “period style,” with craft shops and food outlets. Devon House also became the headquarters of the revived Things Jamaican agency. With its restaurants, ice-cream stands, brick oven bakery, and well-maintained park, Devon House quickly became a popular attraction for Jamaicans of all walks of life and those tourists who still ventured to Kingston. Harmony Hall can thus indeed be described as a scaled down, private version of Devon House, although it is more exclusively tourist-oriented. Like Devon House, Harmony Hall stages craft fairs around the Christmas, Easter and Independence holidays, which are well-patronized by locals and visitors alike.

The planning for Harmony Hall predated the 1980 elections but the project perfectly fit the economic and cultural policies of the early 1980s. It is the cultural equivalent of the all-inclusive where carefully edited aspects of Jamaican art are made available for sale to visitors and local clients in a sheltered, non-threatening environment. Harmony Hall was the brainchild of Annabella Proudlock, an English-born former fashion model who had moved to Jamaica in 1967.²⁶⁵ Before Harmony Hall, she had

²⁶⁵ Annabella Proudlock moved to Jamaica with her first husband, David Ogden, who established a TV commercial production company with Perry Henzell. David Ogden died in 1978 and she later married Peter

worked for the local charity Operation Friendship for which she produced Christmas cards that featured Jamaican art and this resulted in close contacts with art world personalities, most notably Kapo.

Annabella Proudlock's résumé describes Harmony Hall as "Jamaica's foremost art and craft center."²⁶⁶ While this overstates the scale of the enterprise, Harmony Hall has been particularly important in the commercial promotion of Intuitive art, which is still seen as Jamaican genre that has most potential for art tourism. Its displays are not exclusively devoted to Intuitive art, however, but include work by mainstream Jamaican and expatriate artists, with selections that focus on the more decorative and accessible aspects of mainstream art, as well as by several "faux-naïf" expatriate artists.

Whereas local patrons and winter residents seem to buy most of the art, the "average tourist" tends to buy the more moderately priced but carefully selected craft items. Most of the craft offerings are Jamaican, and Proudlock has been vocal in her condemnation of the importation of cheap mass-produced items, but in recent years a few items from elsewhere in the Caribbean and Central America have been added.²⁶⁷ Harmony Hall has actively scouted local craft talent but many of its craft offerings are produced or designed by European and North American expatriates who, like the "faux-naïfs," seem to be well-attuned to the expectations of their clientele, no doubt because they come from similar cultural backgrounds. Reproductions of the "faux-naïf" paintings,

Proudlock, one of her partners in Harmony Hall. The biographical and historical information in this section is derived from my interviews with Annabella Proudlock on December 27, 2000 and January 10, 2001 and the material in the Harmony Hall press clipping collection, which was put at my disposition by Mrs Proudlock.

²⁶⁶ Annabella Proudlock's contribution has been duly recognized in Jamaica. In 1992 she received the Institute of Jamaica's prestigious Silver Musgrave Medal for "her outstanding contribution to craft promotion." She was for many years on the board of directors of Things Jamaican and is still a member of the board and the exhibitions committee of the NGJ.

²⁶⁷ During the course of the 1990s, Harmony Hall established branches in Antigua and Costa Rica, although these are primarily as restaurants and guest houses. The Antigua branch was subsequently sold to an Italian couple but still uses the Harmony Hall name.

whether as note-cards, small posters or pasted onto cedar trinket boxes – the so-called Annabella Boxes, a house product designed by Proudlock – have also been among the best-sellers.

Harmony Hall’s presentation of Jamaican art and craft is carefully staged and contextualized. According to its promotional material, the building dates from 1886 and was originally the “great house” of a small pimento plantation and later a Methodist rectory. I have not found any records of the original appearance of the building – except for a 1980 photograph of the modernized building before restoration – but it appears to have been sober and unadorned, in contrast with the fanciful gingerbread style of its current incarnation. The “restoration” in 1980-81, especially the addition of the fretwork decorations that were designed by the Jamaican designer and artist Dawn Scott, an early partner in the project, amounted to a transformation of the building into a key element of the “Harmony Hall package.” Likewise, the East tower was not a part of the original structure but was added in 1990 and designed by the Jamaican architect Patrick Stanigar, in a gingerbread style consistent with the rest of the “restored” building.

The building’s current appearance is based on an actual tradition of such Victorian era buildings in Jamaica.²⁶⁸ More elaborate and well-preserved examples of the Caribbean gingerbread style can be found elsewhere in the region, especially in Haiti and Trinidad. In Port-au-Prince, the Centre d’Art and the Hotel Olofson, the two prime attractions in Haiti’s art tourism industry, are housed in such mansions.²⁶⁹ Annabella Proudlock had been a regular visitor of Haiti and had also traded in Haitian art so the resemblance is probably no coincidence. Locally, Devon House obviously served as a

²⁶⁸ The building is, in spite of its substantial modifications, registered with the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. Annabella Proudlock is also a member of the Georgian Society of Jamaica, a local preservation society and has been actively involved in the documentation of Jamaica’s architectural heritage.

²⁶⁹ The Centre d’Art building was destroyed in the 2010 Port-au-Prince earthquake but will probably be rebuilt.

model although that mansion is much larger and statelier and lacks fretwork decoration. Harmony Hall and Devon House are both safely removed from the “taint” of slavery because they were constructed after Abolition, but are good examples of the prevalence of the “plantation style” in contemporary Jamaican tourism.

Notions of authenticity are crucially important to the upscale clientele Harmony Hall seeks to attract and its management has actively engaged in its own “invention of tradition.” The history of the building is repeated in virtually every promotional text on the gallery. The building also appears, in ways that embellish its actual history, in several paintings that have been shown at the gallery, most of them by the “faux-naïfs” who are, by the nature of their work, willing participants in such staging efforts. Most such works represent a genteel view of Harmony Hall’s imaginary history but the English expatriate Jonathan Routh (1927-2008) was “naughtily” politically incorrect.²⁷⁰ Routh was a former comic actor and writer who starred in the BBC’s *Candid Camera* in the 1960s. Routh painted satirical works, in a faux-naif style in brilliant, “Caribbean” blues, greens and pinks, on subjects such as Queen Victoria’s (imaginary) secret vacation in Jamaica in 1871, which also resulted in a coffee-table book, published by Harmony Hall in 1980. In these paintings, Queen Victoria is attended to by a retinue of suited dwarfs, who stand in for the “natives,” and together they frolic in an idyllic landscape in which the Harmony Hall building frequently appears, naturally with fretwork. The paintings often include other incongruous presences, such as fried eggs and the Venice Doges palace, which is identified as the local “dwarf market” in the bantering, handwritten subtitles. Routh also organized dwarf tossing tournaments at Harmony Hall’s craft fairs, be it, mercifully, with wooden carvings commissioned from local carvers and painted by him.

²⁷⁰ For more on Jonathan Routh, see: <http://chisholmgallery.com/jonathan-routh>.

Routh's tiresomely witty work reiterates the representation of the "natives" as amusing diminutive and subservient figures and alludes to the slave trade as if it were merely a quaint and harmless local tradition. His work has not attracted any noteworthy criticism and it has in essence been ignored by the local artistic mainstream. It is not included in the NGJ collection, since Boxer has consistently refused to recognize the faux-naïfs. His work has, however, been well-patronized by upscale tourism interests and can, among others, be seen at the exclusive Round Hill hotel and villas near Montego Bay, which illustrates the cultural insensitivity that still prevails in that arena.

Initially, Harmony Hall was quite successful but it has recently faced a downturn in business. The reasons for this obviously include the general crisis in the Jamaican economy and the effects of 9/11. Annabella Proudlock has also cited the bad roads, Jamaica's "image problem," the onslaught of the "cheap tourists," and the government's unwillingness to seriously invest in the industry. Like many other local stakeholders, Proudlock thus explains the decrease in her business in terms of the macro-problems facing the industry which should be addressed by government. The quality and diversity of the offerings at Harmony Hall have, however, also declined and previously successful programs such as the seasonal craft markets have been abandoned or scaled down, in part because the owners are near retirement age and have clearly lost some of their earlier enthusiasm. The decline of Harmony Hall also raises the question of the sustainability of upscale art tourism, a high maintenance endeavor, in the era of mass tourism.

10. Mass Tourism and the Politics of Craft Vending

Mass tourism makes different, "genericizing" demands on the local culture and requires and the production of cheaper, more stereotypical tourist art inevitably mushroomed,

along with the importation of cheap, generic items, many of them substandard, from East Asia and Haiti. Such products include a near-endless supply of cutesy “Rasta Mickey” shot glasses, dreadlocked teddy bears and Rasta T-shirts (which probably involve countless copyright violations).²⁷¹ It is remarkable how little it takes to “Jamaicanize” the imported items but, also, how Jamaicanness has been diluted in the mass tourism arena, since almost identical items are sold throughout the Caribbean, where Rasta and Reggae have replaced Calypso as the default tourism identity.

The tourist art and craft market is now more diversified than ever. On one extreme, there are the more “discriminating” shops and galleries, whether independent like Harmony Hall or inside the upscale resorts or attractions, in which significant emphasis is placed on the décor of the shop and the quality and semblance of “cultural authenticity” of the items for sale. The majority of these are operated by white Jamaicans or expatriates, who often buy directly from producers or work on consignment. These arrangements are often short-lived and succumb to conflicts about compensation and the reliability and quality of the supply that reflect the disparity of expectations in such transactions across Jamaica’s race and class divide. Somewhere in the middle are the cheaper souvenir shops that proliferate in the airports, the large hotels and the shopping malls. These are most likely to sell the mass-produced, locally produced or imported items that are distributed by local wholesalers, the largest of which is Jamterra Sales in Kingston, which is, again, owned by a white expatriate, a German who has lived in Jamaica for many years. At the other extreme are the formal and informal craft markets.

[ill. 173, 174] These are still today the only venues in which tourist art buyers interact

²⁷¹ The Bob Marley Foundation has recently embarked on a campaign to control the use of Marley’s image and creative legacy. They have, among others, successfully sued T-shirt companies that used unauthorized reproductions of Marley’s image. The Marley Foundation campaign represents an example of broader efforts in Jamaica to claim and protect local copyright, especially of Jamaica as a “brand” (e.g. Seaga 2005).

directly with poor and working class black Jamaicans, many of whom moved to resort areas from more self-sufficient rural areas because of the actual and perceived opportunities there (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 94-95). These vendors cater to that segment of the tourist art market that is not willing to pay high prices but is nonetheless concerned with acquiring “authentic,” handmade items in an equally “authentic” Jamaican setting.

The majority of vendors in the formal craft markets are women – 55.4 % in the case of Negril – in keeping with the traditional dominance of women in the Caribbean markets (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 93). Few are involved in production and most merely act as retailers of products they buy from producers or through wholesalers such as Jamterra and the local graphic T-shirt manufacturers. Their offerings include basketry, souvenir T-shirts, patchwork dolls, woodcarvings and paintings that replicate the most commercialized Haitian art although most are locally made. The craft markets have deteriorated significantly since the 1980s. Many of the goods look uninteresting and dated, compared to the more fashionable items in the upscale shops, and items are often shopworn, which suggests a slow turnover. The offerings in the different stalls are usually almost identical, which causes vendors to put more pressure on visitors since they have little else to compete with.

Craft market vendors frequently complain about their declining business but seem to ignore that tourists complain about the high prices and poor quality and range of their offerings (Dunn & Dunn 2002, 101). A surveyed group of Negril vendors attributed their poor sales to the “meanness” of the tourists (96) and 44 % rated their products as “excellent,” 50 % as “good” and only 6 % “average.” None described their wares as substandard. (100) The vendors’ apparent resentment of their clientele again underscores

the deep-rooted Jamaican ambivalence towards the industry, even among tourism workers. Their inability or unwillingness to adjust to change may also be an unwitting result of the regularized environment of the formal markets, which causes them to be complacent because they believe that their business share should be guaranteed. The stagnation of the formal markets also suggests that the tourism authorities fail to provide the vendors with the feedback they need to keep their businesses viable.

Despite ongoing efforts at controlling craft vending, illegal roadside stalls have proliferated along with the burgeoning squatter settlements around the tourist resorts. In contrast with the formal markets, most of the informal vendors are male and many are also carvers who work on-site. The products they sell are similar to those found in the formal markets but Rasta-themed woodcarvings feature more prominently. Many vendors are Rastafarians or at least present themselves as such to tourists. While their products are often more accomplished than what is available in the formal craft markets and gift shops, they also have difficulty to attract customers, in their case no doubt because many tourists are afraid to engage with persons they perceive as “threatening black males” in an uncontrolled environment. In my experience, however, the informal vendors are more accommodating than those in the formal markets, who are often unpleasantly pushy.

One major illegal vending area is Fern Gully, a rare and delicate rainforest ecosystem that is, controversially, also a busy traffic thoroughfare and part of the main road between Kingston and Ocho Rios. An attempt in 1997 to relocate the vendors, some of whom had occupied their spot for more than 20 years, to a nearby but less visible authorized vending site led to violent riots in which the road was blocked for an entire day and the vegetation and fixtures allegedly vandalized by protesters (*Gleaner* March

12, 1997, A3 & March 14, 1997, A2). While environmentally regrettable, this incident made a strong statement about the vendors' sense of ownership of the site (Walsh 1997). Thus far, the various attempts to remove the vendors have not been successful: some were temporarily relocated but have since returned and several others have joined them. Fern Gully thus remains as a prime illegal craft vending site.

Among the most remarkable items seen in the Fern Gully stalls are life-size carvings of dreadlocked, ganja-pipe smoking males with giant erect penis, which is often detachable, lest there be any doubt about the reference to the commodification of black male sexuality in tourism. [Ill. 95] Phallic carvings are fairly common among the exotic tourist arts but in Jamaica their life-size, publicly displayed and specifically Rastafarian incarnation seems to date from the late 1990s. While they have also appeared in other formal and informal craft markets, they seem to have occurred first and foremost in Fern Gully.²⁷² The carvings have been controversial in the local public sphere, much more so than the (admittedly more modest) sexy tourism posters from the early 1970s and 1980s. In 2002, the then Minister of Tourism Portia Simpson-Miller, expressed her outrage at the lewd statues when she visited various tourist sites and the journalist Barbara Gloudon waged a campaign against them on her radio call-in programme during 2003. The Fern Gully vendors have countered that tourists like the carvings and stop to have their photographs taken with the larger, less saleable examples – they can do so for a small fee

²⁷² In September 2008, I observed yet another variation on this theme: mass produced Rasta figurines with a giant, yellow banana-shaped phallus, in the gift shop of the Sunset Beach Resort, a family-oriented Montego Bay All-Inclusive.

– turning them into scandalous attractions that bring much-needed attention to the stalls.²⁷³

The carvings are in potential breach of Jamaica's *Obscene Publication (Suppression of) Act* (1927) which prohibits the making, trading or public exhibition of "any obscene writings, drawings, prints, paintings, printed matter, pictures, posters, emblems, photographs, cinematograph films or any other obscene objects." This law may seem stringent but does not define what constitutes obscenity and the punishment is a maximum of 40 Jamaican dollars fine, less than 50 US cents, or imprisonment for up to three months. Not surprisingly, the attempts at censoring the carvings have thus far been ineffective and, to my knowledge, nobody has been taken to court over them. Explicitly erotic art is regularly shown at the NGJ, where it is sheltered from accusations of obscenity by its "high art" status. This does not mean that such work can readily be taken into the public domain, as was illustrated by the furor about the Emancipation monument in 2003. [Ill. 8] Several critics then made comparisons to the "Big Bamboo" or "Ready Freddy" carvings, as they are popularly known, and expressed concern that the monument would reinforce tourists' already problematic perceptions about black and, specifically, black male sexuality. Interestingly, Gloudon was one of the defenders of the monument, which reflects the double standards that are typically applied to high and low culture, although the fact that Facey's nudes were not actively sexual of course also played a role.

Obviously, the public and comical representation of black male sexuality for tourist consumption strikes a raw nerve with many Jamaicans but the controversy reveals

²⁷³ The large carvings are for sale and cost about 60,000 Jamaican dollars or about 700 US dollars (*Observer*, November 30, 2006). The same carvings have been seen in the stalls for several years, however, so they obviously do not sell very well.

several other interesting issues. It is noteworthy, for instance, that criticisms have mainly come from middle class commentators, which supports Peter Wilson's (1969 & 1973) argument that the conflict in Jamaican popular culture between "respectability" and "reputation" is class- and gender-driven. To their critics, the "Big Bamboo" carvings also represent an affront to Rastafarian dignity – an example of the high moral burden imposed on the figure of the male Rastafarian in Jamaican society.

The least recognized aspect of the controversy is, however, that the objections are not so much about the production and sale of the carvings *per se* but about their public display, in a place where Jamaican audiences are confronted with them. Portia Simpson-Miller, for instance, plainly stated: "But I am saying that if, as they claim, they have a good market for it and people are buying (they can be allowed to sell in selected areas) but we are not supporting the public display" (Clarke C. 2002). A similar position was implied in a 2007 editorial in the industry weekly *Hospitality Jamaica*, a supplement of the *Gleaner*. It stated:

Whatever is in the minds of the merchants who peddle this type of ware, in my mind it is pornography being forced on the public, our innocent children and the people who take the route through this beautiful gully. It is sad that some of our so-called artisans cannot find more innovative ways to attract the lucrative tourist trade. Our Jamaican men and their supposed 'big bamboos' are already an attraction; we don't need wood carvings on the streets. (Silvera 2007)

The carvings thus also represent a rare and, to many in Jamaica, unwelcome public admission that sex *is* an integral part of what is transacted in contemporary tourism.

The moralistic condemnation of these carvings, however, obscures other aspects of their significance as culturally expressive objects. The carvings can also be read as a carnivalesque gesture in service of the politics of informal vending: the "Big Bamboo"

man, for all his shortcomings, forcefully claims space and visibility in a tourism industry that has marginalized his producers and vendors and it is probably no coincidence that he has appeared primarily in the contested space of Fern Gully.

11. Conclusion

The question arises whether what was discussed in this chapter can be regarded as an “art world” in its own right, as a socio-cultural field in which artistic standards and hierarchies are negotiated that reflect and help to shape society. The Jamaican tourist art world does not have the institutions and critical frameworks of a conventional art world but it is certainly a “field of struggle” and the context of the tourist industry provides it with a level of cohesion that is absent from popular art. On a practical economic level, tourism provides a much-needed outlet for lower class art producers but one in which the interests of producers, vendors and tourists inevitably clash. Much of this conflict stems from the incompatibility between the popular postcolonial ethos of self-sufficiency and sense of economic entitlement and the forces of “big capitalism” that shape tourism as a whole. Within Jamaica, the production and sale of tourist art actively involve a much wider social cross section than the mainstream and popular art worlds and the conflicts within this socio-cultural sphere are more directly revealing of the underlying social dynamics than those that occur in the other two art worlds. That the trade is dominated by white expatriates foregrounds the survival of those colonial socio-cultural hierarchies that cultural nationalism has sought to undo while the belligerence of the lower tier craft producers and vendors mirrors the unresolved tension between the political intelligence and disempowerment of the popular masses that makes Jamaica such a turbulent society.

Unlike the mainstream art world, the conflicts of the tourist art world are not focused on the cultural “right or wrong” or “better or worse” but on profit and market share. In the process, values and hierarchies are negotiated that are specific to the tourist art world, such as the fictional and often problematic notions of authenticity that make tourist art appealing to its buyers, and these are more actively involved in shaping external perceptions of Jamaica than the other local art forms. Tourist art is therefore inevitably subjected to moralized judgments such as those that have come from the mainstream art world, which has singled out tourist art as a negative benchmark to measure its own significance and legitimacy. Tourist art is, of all local art forms, most exclusively concerned with Jamaicanness, however, which makes some of it appealing to local audiences. This sheds revealing light on the contradictions that shape the other art worlds, such as the often equally fictional notions of authenticity and elitist notions of high culture that prevail in nationalist art. While it is by no means unproblematic, the cultural and historical significance of Jamaican tourist art should thus not be dismissed.

Chapter 7 – THE CASE OF INTUITIVE ART

1. A Canon for True Believers

In the introductory chapters, I mentioned the controversies about the Intuitives and its promotion by the NGJ and may have given the impression that the Intuitives were simply supported by one faction in the Jamaican art world and challenged by another. The questioning of the Intuitives concept has never been a one-way affair, however, and one contributing factor is that such art is *expected* to be misunderstood and underappreciated by the “uninitiated.” I fully grasped this at a panel on Outsider art at the 2003 College Arts Association conference in New York City. During the discussion segment, which was dominated by the panelists and a few other well-known Outsider Art *aficionados*, I was struck by the extraordinary missionary zeal and sense of ownership the participants brought to the subject.²⁷⁴ I objected publicly that I had never heard the words “we,” “us” and “our field” that frequently in *any* discussion about art and was surprised not to get any defensive responses to my somewhat antagonistic remarks. One panelist affirmed that he saw himself as a, to use his words, “true believer” who had found in Outsider art a refuge from the failings of the mainstream art world.

The Outsider art circuit has played an important role in uncovering, documenting and promoting compelling art that would otherwise have been denied recognition by the

²⁷⁴ The panel was one of a suite of two that were chaired by Colin Rhodes - Professor of Art History and Theory, Loughbourn University, UK, and the other panelists were: Norman Girardo - Professor of Religion at Lehigh University; Randall Morris - curator, Cavin-Morris Gallery, NYC; Kristin G. Congdon - Professor of Art and Philosophy at the University of Central Florida; Pamela Sachant - Doctoral Candidate in Art History at the University of Delaware; Cheryl Rivers - president of the Nek Chand Foundation; Bernard Herman - Professor of Art History, University of Delaware; David Parker - Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Univ. College Northampton; Susan Baker - Associate Professor of Art History, University of Houston-Downtown; Jeffery Hayes - University of Wisconsin; Michael Bonesteel - Pioneer Press Newspapers; and Allison Thompson - Doctoral Candidate, SUNY Stony Brook.

mainstream. The more recent critiques of Primitivism have infused the field with a new concern with political correctness, especially with regards to race and ethnicity, and much debate about the appropriate terminology. The Primitivist premises on which the Outsider art notion is based have, however, not been fundamentally challenged, especially its concern with authenticity and reliance on exclusive, often downright arcane connoisseurship. To the “true believers,” Outsider art is an under-appreciated but easily corrupted field of primal artistic expression, a privileged turf that has to be carefully scouted, nurtured and protected by “those in the know.” It is also a field in which the artists, who are often socially and economically vulnerable, remain highly dependent on the mercies of specialized patronage, no matter how benevolent and “knowing.”

This exaggerated sense of ownership is also evident among the Intuitives enthusiasts in Jamaica. Boxer’s account of the discovery of Leonard Daley is instructive:

It was during the run of the *Intuitive Eye* exhibition [...] that the then Brazilian ambassador, an enthusiastic collector of the Haitian Intuitives, excitedly entered my office. ‘I have found the Jamaican Hypollite! Come, you must see.’ In a darkened garage on Donhead Avenue, just up the road from Devon House, I entered a room that overwhelmed me with its intensity.²⁷⁵ My unease at the unabated *angst* that streamed from the walls was tempered by the extraordinary inventiveness of the depictions of the various animal and human forms, and the distorted tortured heads. No Hypollite, I thought ... Bosch reincarnate! Enigmatic surreal transformations accompanied by dramatic shifts in scale and most unusually, ironic superimpositions: one image lying on top of another – the concept of surrealist juxtaposition in its most natural state. [...] The *huis clos* atmosphere of the garage walls was encapsulated in the one available easel painting *Dream* which I promptly acquired and after pleading the case for more portable surfaces, I left Brother D, as the creator of these visions was called, to work out his nightmares and day traumas without the meddling of the trained critic. It was, I believe, a year or two later that I heard that Brother D had moved to the hills of St Catherine [...] The Jamaican artist Judith Salmon was in touch with him and showed me some of his work – mostly on rough bits of plywood. She was hoping to organize

²⁷⁵ Daley actually lived in this garage, which adjoined an older middle class home. At that time, he earned his living as an (untrained) car mechanic.

an exhibition. But to me, they lacked the intensity of the garage and of the earlier *Dream*. (1987, 8-9).

He concludes that Daley re-emerged in the mid 1980s as “a true creator already worthy to be ranked with the masters of Jamaican Intuitive art [and] at the height of his powers” (9). [Ill. 196] Boxer thus describes his own interventions as exemplary of the careful handling that is required with Intuitives but gently rebukes Daley’s other “discoverers” for being somewhat misguided in their actions and interpretations. It also illustrates that Daley’s work was immediately regarded by Boxer, who is a major collector of Intuitive art, as something that could be recast into a collectible form without compromising its integrity. This stands in contrast with the notions of purity and autonomy that are central to the constructs of Intuitive or Outsider Art – one of many such internal contradictions.

The sense of common cause among Intuitives enthusiasts is undermined by the fierce competitiveness most of them bring to their relationships with the artists and the self-righteous infighting about the true nature of the work. The question arises why the patronage of this field is so much more competitive than that of other artistic genres in Jamaica and why the stakes attached to claiming connoisseurship are so high. Part of the answer is, no doubt, that the notion of Intuitive art is associated with fundamental cultural and psychological truths but there are other, social reasons. To understand these, we first need to examine the dynamics of Primitivism and high and low culture.

2. Primitivism, High and Low Culture

As the Jamaican art historian Petrine Archer-Straw has argued, Primitivism says much more about the “primitivizers” than about the “primitivized” (1995, 14-16). In the previous chapter, tourism and its attendant search for authenticity were presented as products of Capitalist modernity, particularly the desire of the new metropolitan leisure

class to counteract the alienating effects of modernity (MacCannell 1976). Primitivism stems from the same impulses and tourism's conflicted concern with authenticity and the unspoiled can in actuality be seen as a form of Primitivism (Metcalf 1994, 216-217).

Colin Rhodes, in *Primitivism and Modern Art* (1994), provides a useful summary of the meanings of Primitivism (7-22). As an ideology, he defines Primitivism as a set of ideas that coalesced during Enlightenment and were closely linked to European colonial expansion. These ideas found their most cohesive articulation in Social Darwinism, which pitched the civilized, rational "self" against the savage and irrational "other" in a teleological evolutionary framework in which "high culture," or the "Great Western Tradition," is juxtaposed with "low culture" of the "uncivilized," which includes the uneducated masses of the West. While this way of thinking has been rightly critiqued as racist, ethnocentric and classist, it contains a crucial built-in ambivalence about which of the two is, ultimately, superior. About this, Ivan Karp has written:

This attitude expresses the underside of the high and low distinction – the suspicion that the low are better endowed by the high, that *their* values are more natural and truer than all the refined judgments of artist, curator, critic and collector, precisely because they are not in touch with the 'grand Western traditions.' This submerged belief may be an even greater source of discomfort in the art world than the elitist values overtly claimed by the use of the categories of high and low. (1991, 16-17)

The sense that the Primitive has retained what the civilized has lost is not unique to art but it also informs "back to nature" movements and certain fundamentalist religions.

Primitivism has been a crucial shaping force in the development of modern Western art. As Ivan Karp has reminded us, "modern art began as a political gesture directed against the definition of high art that ruled the art world" (1991, 17) and Primitivism provided Modernist Western artists with material for this challenge (although

Modernism quickly became consecrated as “high art” in its own right). According to Rhodes, Primitivism in modern Western art took two forms. In the first, what was designated as Primitive art served as a formal source, as could be seen in Picasso’s use of African sculpture in the development of Cubism. In the second, it served as a guide for those interested in uncovering the spiritual and psychological foundations of art, such as the artists of the Blue Rider movement in Germany and many of the Surrealists.

Rhodes insists that “Primitivism describes a Western event and does not imply any direct dialogue between the West and its ‘Others’” (8). While the Western construction of the Primitive must be questioned, I suggest that Primitivism is not exclusive to the West but also an integral, if usually unacknowledged part of postcolonial cultural nationalism. As we have seen, postcolonial cultural nationalism has been concerned with recovering a sense of cultural and aesthetic autonomy, “uncontaminated by colonial reason” (Chatterjee 1993, 73) and more recent “adulterating” contacts with Western modernity. In response to this quest, postcolonial art movements have used the popular and traditional cultures of their communities in a manner that unwittingly parallels Western Primitivism. A lot of postcolonial art *is* arguably Primitivist and this includes much of the work of, for instance, Edna Manley and Parboosingh. [Ill. 55, 68] Dismissing this as evidence of how Western thought has “infiltrated” anticolonial nationalism, however, devalues the political significance of these nationalist gestures, no matter how conflicted and ineffectual.

While Primitivism necessarily involves a degree of identification, such as the desire to “go native,” its classic form implies a necessary, mutually defining distance between the “civilized” self and the designated Primitive – Ernst Gombrich’s closing

sentence in *The Preference for the Primitive* (2002) was “The more you prefer the Primitive, the less you can become Primitive” (297). In the most radical anticolonial variant of Primitivism, however, the Primitive is defiantly embraced as the self. Such political “auto-Primitivism” can, for instance, be seen in the work of the Martiniquan poet-politician Aimé Césaire, one of the founders of the Negritude movement, who wrote the following provocative verses in his epic poem *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*:

Come to me my dances
 my bad nigger dances
 come to me my dances
 the breaking-the-yoke dance
 the jump-jail dance,
 the-it-is-beautiful-and-good-and-fine-and-legitimate-to-be-a-nigger dance
 (1995, 133)

That this identification was an explicit political gesture, in the form of high literature by an intellectual, nonetheless illustrates that this socio-cultural distance cannot truly be bridged. It is largely because of this conflicted desire to overcome and maintain this distance that the Intuitives concept has met such mixed reception in Jamaica.

Colin Rhodes rightly insists that *Primitivist* art should not be confused with *Primitive* art (8) and does not substantially discuss the latter. Other Primitivism scholars have turned the tables on the subject and examined the ideas and assumptions that surround Primitive art, a Western construct that derives from the same stock of ideas. Sally Price, in *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (1989), has critiqued the “proprietary attitude toward the idea of aesthetic sensitivity” (123) of the Western ruling class, particularly the sense that “objects of Primitive craftsmanship do not constitute art until Western connoisseurship establishes their aesthetic merit” (68), often based on notions of value and authenticity that are irrelevant to the cultures that produced them. A significant

part of her analysis is devoted to the peculiarities of Primitive art connoisseurship, particularly the decontextualization and editorial interventions that accompany the elevation of select “ethnographic specimens” to “art object” status, such as the removal of fiber components from African carvings or the use of fine arts display methods. To Price, the only remedy is a more self-reflexive approach that considers the cultural relativity and social implications of aesthetic concepts and judgments.

While Price’s discussion is primarily concerned with Primitive art connoisseurship, she also examines the characteristics that have been commonly attributed to Primitive art, as anonymous, static and a-historical and representative of the wild, primeval side of humanity, although such art does, in fact, evolve and is often individually authored. She also acknowledges the contradictoriness of this hierarchical, evolutionary thinking, which is evident in the view that the capacity of the Primitive to produce significant art is proof of a shared, universal humanity. The contradictory rootedness of Primitive art in notions of authenticity and progress is the main subject of Shelly Errington’s (1998) *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*. As she puts it:

Like the discipline of art history itself, the discourses of ‘authenticity’ and ‘the Primitive’ were made possible by the metanarrative of progress. The idea of progress, in turn, rests on the notion of linear time, which took its modern form during the course of the nineteenth century. Linear time became the microstructure of the idea of progress – an infinite, gradual gradation of cause and effect that leads upward and onward, ever better (5).

With other words, “progress” produces the category of “authentic Primitive art” but ultimately leads to its demise, since it is incompatible with the advance of capitalist modernity. On a more practical level, this implies that “authentic Primitive art” represents a finite and therefore increasingly rare pool of objects since the modern-day production

of such art, no matter how technically competent and ingenious in its response to market expectations, fundamentally challenges the premises of authenticity. This, to Errington, is the first “death” of “authentic Primitive art.” Its second and concurrent “death” stems from the temporality of the concepts of the Primitive and authenticity, which have been deeply questioned and destabilized in the recent cultural debates.

Price and Errington are primarily concerned with the consecration and reception of traditional art forms and for specific insights on modern Primitive, Naïve or Outsider art and its social implications, we have to turn elsewhere. John Berger (1991) has examined the relationship between the modern Primitives – or Naïves, as he calls them – and the professional artists. According to Berger, the professional artist derives his status from, but is also limited by, the prevailing artistic conventions and hierarchies. He argues that the work of Naïve artist is free from these limitations and presents a more immediate and compelling vision of the world. Berger pays no attention, however, to the social implications of the subordination of these Naïve artists in the conventional cultural hierarchies. One would expect this to be of some concern to the authors of the art worlds and sphere of cultural production theories, since these pertain to the social dynamics of culture, but their writings also yield only limited results.

Howard Becker (1982) discusses the special case of the Naïve artist in some detail but locates that artist essentially *outside* of the conventional art worlds. Becker acknowledges that certain types, such as Naïve easel painting, adhere to art world conventions but, like Berger, celebrates Naïve art for its perceived autonomy. He describes the most eccentric forms of Naïve art as follows:

The difficulty in describing it arises exactly because it has been made without reference to the standards of any art world outside its maker's

personal life. Its makers work in isolation, free from the constraints of cooperation which inhibit art world participants, free to ignore the conventional categories of art works, to make things which do not fit any standard genre and cannot be described as examples of any class (260).

While he acknowledges that some Naïve artists have been recognized by the art world – which is, after all, how the rest of the world knows about them – he argues that they are resistant to being incorporated into the mainstream. Becker thus fails to recognize that Naïve art is, in itself, a powerful and constraining art world construct and, like Berger, is not concerned with the social marginality of its makers.

To Pierre Bourdieu, in contrast, the Naïve artist is merely a passive participant in the field of cultural production and plays no direct role in its struggles. He cites the example of Rousseau, who he describes dismissively as a “*plaything* [who is] made by the field, a ‘creator’ who has to be ‘created’ as a legitimate producer, with the character of ‘Douanier Rousseau,’ in order to legitimize his product” (1993, 61). The Naïve artist is thus a cultural producer who possesses no cultural or educational capital and whose work and persona are created and arbitrated by others who, in contrast, possess significant cultural and educational capital – by implication, the interested mainstream artists, connoisseurs and scholars. Bourdieu thus recognizes that Naïve art is a *creation* of the mainstream art world. He is more concerned with the reception than with the production of art and, like Becker and Berger, has nothing explicit to say about the position of the Naïve artist in the broader social field, although it is implied that he is lowly ranked.

More directly useful views that build on the sphere of cultural production models can be found in Eugene Metcalf’s *Black Art, Folk art, and Social Control* (1983). Metcalf critiques the construction and social implications of the category of Black Folk art in the USA. He discusses the bias of the black elite towards black popular culture, which has

been simultaneously validated as authentic black culture and devalued as something that needed to be outgrown and superceded by a more competent and respectable black high culture. This attitude, which Metcalf detects in the New Negro concept and the work of noted African-American art scholars such as James Porter and David Driskell, parallels the ambivalence of the Jamaican postcolonial elite towards the Intuitives. Metcalf, however, also points to complicity of certain Harlem Renaissance artists and promoters in maintaining those Primitivist stereotypes the New Negro movement sought to dismantle because these facilitated white patronage.

Metcalf then discusses how the category of Black Folk art has been historically constructed and promoted, primarily by white scholars and promoters, as a special-status subset within the emerging construct of American Folk art. In this context, Black Folk art is seen as an antidote to the limitations of Puritan America, in the sense “that black Americans might possess a gift of the primitive and simplicity that preserved them from the technological sterility of American society,” a special gift of spontaneous emotionality and Primitiveness which is often described “in terms of African origins” (276). The notion of Black Folk art thus relies on an extra layer of “Primitivism within Primitivism” that reflects the marginalized status of African-Americans within US-American society. While Metcalf welcomes the growing interest in black folk culture, which has brought attention to a rich but neglected field of cultural production, his concerns about the concept go beyond its obvious Primitivism. He points out that much of what has been most vigorously promoted as Black Folk art, among others in exhibitions such as *Black Folk art in America, 1930-1980* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1982, is not Folk art at all as it lacks its communal, traditional and functional

characteristics and is instead highly idiosyncratic and aestheticized. At the same time those cultural products that could be more credibly categorized as Folk art, such as the furniture arts, have been ignored. While the former lends itself well to the sort of external patronage that grants it fine art status, he argues that the ignored Folk art forms exemplify the relative autonomy of black cultural life, which is often antagonistic to the values of ruling elite. Metcalf thus interprets the reductive definitions that are imposed on black art as evidence of their use as tools for social control that reflect and reinforce the social and racial hierarchies of the USA. According to him, the alternate scenario would be: “To admit that it is as complex and significant as academic art suggests the validation not only of the art itself but of the culture, the attitude and the people it represents as well. Thus the aesthetic and social dominance of the elite is challenged” (Ibid.).

Metcalf’s somewhat simplistic discussion of the social dynamics involved in the definitions of black art needs to be refined and updated – and, for our purposes, adapted to societies that have a black majority such as Jamaica – but his essay usefully demonstrates how the “fine arts” components of the Black Folk art construct have been located in a no-mans land between “high” and “low” culture, which is precisely the ambivalent position where the Intuitives have found themselves. In a later essay, *From Domination to Desire: Insiders and Outsider Art* (1994), Metcalf finds a similar ambivalence in the notion of Outsider art, as a category of Western thought that is closely related to Primitive art and virtually identical to what Becker and Bourdieu had in mind when they used the term Naïve art. The “Outsider” is, per definition, located outside of the social and cultural mainstream. According to Metcalf, who turned to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, Outsider art has transgressive characteristics, both at the individual

psychoanalytical and the collective socio-cultural level. This is sanctioned by the mainstream art world because it serves to define its margins. The category of Outsider art can therefore be seen “as one of the many symbolic cultural devices by which social groups in modern, industrial societies come to know, measure, and control their world by considering its inversions” (224). The outsider is thus, in a sense, the ultimate insider while Outsider art defines the essential characteristics of art as a whole. The Intuitives are also defined as insider-outsiders although this status is even more complicated in socially stratified, majority-black Jamaica where art has been charged with defining collective postcolonial identities.

3. Defining the Intuitives

The primary voice in the definition of Intuitive art in Jamaica has been David Boxer, who coined the term and has been one of the Intuitives’ main champions. Boxer’s take on the Intuitives reflects, but does not quite reconcile, his commitment to postcolonial cultural nationalism and his interest in the psychological foundations of art. The latter is not surprising for one who started his art-historical career as a Francis Bacon scholar and whose own artistic work has been influenced by the methods of the Surrealists. In the catalogue of *The Intuitive Eye* – the NGJ’s first survey exhibition of Intuitive art which was held in 1979 – Boxer defined the Intuitives as follows:

We meet in this [Intuitive] School with art that some term ‘Primitive’ – yes, and others ‘Naïve,’ – art that includes elements of what is sometimes called ‘Folk art’ or ‘Popular Art.’ [...] These artists paint, or sculpt, Intuitively. They are not guided by fashion. Their vision is pure and sincere, untarnished by art theories and philosophies, principles and movements. They are for the most part self-taught. Their visions, (and many are true visionaries) as released through paint or wood, are unmediated expressions of the world around them – and the worlds within. Some of them – Kapo, Everal Brown, William Joseph in particular – reveal as well a capacity for reaching into the depths of the subconscious

to rekindle century old traditions, and to pluck out images as elemental and vital as those of their African fathers (Boxer and Nettleford 1979, 2).

Boxer implicitly contrasts the Intuitives with the mainstream and argues for their ultimate superiority – one of the reasons why the discussion at the aforementioned CAA Outsider art panel drew my attention. The main weakness of Jamaican mainstream art, Boxer thus argues, is that it is overly dependent on “art theories and philosophies, principles and movements” (2) and, as he wrote later, the Intuitives presented “an impressive counterbalance to the increasingly cosmopolitan Mainstream artists” (1998, 25). Boxer’s claims about the autonomy of the Intuitives parallel the views of Berger and Becker on Naïve art and strikingly echo their language on the subject.

Boxer separates Intuitive art from popular art, as primarily the product of individual imaginations. He does acknowledge the role of African-derived cultural traditions in some of their work but describes these as submerged and rekindled by the unique Intuitive abilities of these artists. While Boxer’s definition is deeply indebted to the cultural primordialism of Western Primitivism, it also allows for the Intuitives to be given a crucial role in the postcolonial cultural recovery project, despite their individualism. The latter is not unusual in postcolonial nationalism. As Ivan Karp and Dismas Masolo have put it, in a way which also sheds light on the connotations of the term Intuitive: “[T]he project that nationalist historians impose on the subjects of their research is the nascent nation – intuitively sought by untutored natives who are unconsciously acting on behalf of the goals that will be achieved by the first leaders of independent nations” (2000, 2). The Intuitives classification thus canonizes the artists as the ultimate cultural *insiders* of postcolonial Jamaica but unwittingly retains the ambiguous marginalization implied in the Outsider art concept. It is significant that

Boxer discusses the Intuitives entirely in the third person, while his general discussions on Jamaican art typically use the collective “we” and “us” (e.g. 1982).

Boxer also firmly separates the Intuitives from tourist art and meanwhile subtly implies that their main regional rival, the Haitian Primitive School, had already been contaminated by excessive commodification:

A stream emerges, a school if you will, that rivals, and for me outshines, the other great Caribbean outpouring of ‘Primitive’ art – the Haitian School. It is a school of authentic creators whose works have nothing to do with the pseudo-Primitive, or more specifically, the pseudo-African that approaches Kitsch, the so-called ‘airport art’ which we find, not only in Jamaica, but in every island across the Caribbean (1979, 2).

Boxer thus ignores the fact that many Intuitives have found their main commercial outlet in the tourist market, to which they have catered in their work, and that key figures, such as David Miller Sr and Jr, Gaston Tabois or, more recently, the alabaster carver Doc Williamson, actually started their career in that arena. [Ill. 22, 23, 40] Although Boxer himself has, as the English art historian Leon Wainwright has rightly argued, contributed significantly to the local and international commodification of the Intuitives (2005, 18), his role in their commercial promotion has relied heavily the “commercial appeal of anti-commercialism” (Phillips & Steiner 1999, 15) and therefore necessarily remains unacknowledged.

Some of what has been classified as Intuitive art was originally created for ritual purposes, to advertise religious or political beliefs or commercial services, or in response to a genuine inner compulsion. Once recognized as Intuitive art, however, most of it is primarily created as “art,” in response to the demands of local and overseas cultural institutions, patrons and markets. Its exposure to specialized scholarship, markets and patronage propels this “art” along its own lines of development that separate it from

popular art in any broader sense. The notion of Intuitive art is therefore best understood *as a canon*, that holds a special position in the broader artistic and cultural canons that are being negotiated in Jamaica, and not merely as a politically correct synonym for “Primitive,” “Naïve” or “Outsider.” While Intuitive art also needs to be understood in the context of the popular and the tourist art worlds, it is an artifact of the mainstream art world, as Bourdieu rightly argued (1993, 67). As a canon, it has significantly shaped the work of the artists who have been designated as Intuitives. Recognizing the canonical nature of the category usefully reveals its fundamental internal contradiction: namely, its dual rootedness in postcolonial nationalist populism and the sort of exclusive connoisseurship that characterizes the Primitive art scene.

In all, Boxer’s definition of the Intuitives revolves crucially around the notion of their *purity*, the view that their work is unmediated and uncontaminated by external influences. Boxer’s Intuitive canon is consequently very exclusive and no other area of Jamaican art has been “policed” with such strict and moralized standards. Boxer often cites examples of artists who were “spoiled” by thoughtless exposure. For example:

An artist like Roy Reid, more knowing than others, has occasionally been *sidetracked* into an *alien* [emphasis added] form of expression – as was [William] Rhule who naively took the advice of a well wisher who showed him paintings by [Albert] Huie and implored him to start painting like the Jamaican master. The results were ghastly. Rhule stopped painting and slipped into oblivion for nearly five years (1987, 4).

Boxer leaves no doubt that he sees himself as the legitimate “gatekeeper” of the Intuitive canon although the implicit admission that Intuitive art “proper” is at least in part the *creation* of the connoisseurship he and other “knowing” patrons have brought to the field is, in itself, inconsistent with his thesis of its autonomy. [Ill. 197] The point is, of course, that Boxer’s claims about the defining autonomy and purity of Intuitive art are as

untenable as those made by Berger and Becker. Even the most individualist, rurally based Intuitives are members of a rapidly changing, cosmopolitan culture and cannot be assumed to be completely unaware of the artistic and cultural developments that surround them. Their very inclusion into the Intuitives canon has resulted in new kinds of exposure, such as contacts with fellow artists and their works at exhibitions. Their work is thus best seen as the product of the dynamic hybridity of postcolonial culture, where changeable collective identities exist in tension with a strong individualizing thrust (Wardle 2000).

Predictably, for a concept that is so mired in its internal contradictions, the Intuitives label has been used in ways Boxer had not intended or anticipated. Boxer's attempt to reconcile two incompatible notions – Intuitive art as a “truly Jamaican art” that is solidly anchored in the traditional and emerging elements of a national identity and as an uncontaminated, spontaneous and often visionary expression of individual creativity – has, in itself, been a source of diverging interpretations. As we have seen in previous chapters, Boxer tends to avoid delineating Jamaican art in racial terms. His initial definition of the Intuitives did not include the racial identity of the artists although the reference to “their African fathers” (1979, 2) implies that most are black. The latter has, however, been a central concern in the work of Afrocentric writers such as Patricia Bryan (1985) who, much like Astley Clerk (c1929-43) did before her, argued that the work of the Intuitives provided crucial evidence of the Africanness of Jamaican culture. Boxer used his catalogue essay for the *Fifteen Intuitives* (1987) exhibition, which was also presented as a public lecture, to respond to Bryan and what he saw as an undesirable shift in the definition of the term. There he, remarkably, states that his rejection of the term

Primitive was not so much motivated by its pejorative connotations but by the “already uncomfortable burden which the word must bear in its linkage to the tribal arts of Africa, Oceania and Precolumbian America. To have labeled our Jamaican Intuitives ‘Primitives’ would have placed too much of an emphasis on an admittedly important aspect of our Intuitives, who *are* essentially Black people descended from Africa, namely the African retentions which are clearly evident in the work of some of the Intuitives” (2). While this suggests that, rather inconsistently, he sees no problem with designating the “tribal arts” as Primitive, it also asserts, by implication, that Intuitive art is a modern, creolized cultural product. Boxer then reiterates, with more emphasis than in 1979, that the Intuitives are idiosyncratic “self-taught artist of vision,” insisting that they have developed “in isolation from the [...] artistic mainstream [...] and in essential isolation from each other” (3). He also states that there is no Intuitive style and, like Becker, that such artists defy classification. The commonsense question arises why the Intuitives, as essentially individualist and unclassifiable artists, need to be grouped under a common label at all but Boxer preempts this by arguing that they belong “to a genus in which each represents a species of one” (Ibid.). Boxer again fails to acknowledge that the Intuitives are not a spontaneous phenomenon but a canon that has been created by patrons, himself crucially included, who are actively scouting for supposedly primordial forms of self-taught art and have a strong, if not always clearly articulated sense of what that art should be like. He also fails to consider that the common social identity of the artists who have been grouped as Intuitives, as mostly poor, scantily educated and marginalized black Jamaicans, is almost as important in determining their classification as their work itself.

It is pointless to insist on orthodoxy for what is essentially an unstable, contradictory and contested concept but the term has gained broader acceptance in the Caribbean and elsewhere to describe aspects of Jamaican, Caribbean and African-American art. It has, among others, been promoted by the African-American art historian Leslie King-Hammond, a friend and former classmate of Boxer at Johns Hopkins and herself of Barbadian and Guyanese descent, to describe self-taught artists of the African Diaspora. In the USA, the term has taken on a life of its own as part of a cluster of closely related terms that circulate in specialized Outsider and Folk art circles – there seems to be no consensus about its exact meaning but it seems to serve mainly as an alternative to Outsider art that places more emphasis on its (mainly Jungian) psychological implications. A non-profit gallery in Chicago is named *Intuit: the Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art* while the Anglo-American periodical *Raw Vision*, which was founded in 1989, states that it is dedicated to “Outsider art, art brut, contemporary folk art, Intuitive & visionary art from around the world.” Boxer’s poetic title *The Intuitive Eye* has had its own following, such as the book *The Intuitive Eye: the Mendelsohn Collection* (2000), which documents a major private collection of “contemporary American Folk art.”

Several sympathetic writers, such as the Jamaican critic and artist Gloria Escoffery (e.g. 1985) or the American critic Edward Gomez (e.g. 2005), a contributing editor to the Outsider art journal *Raw Vision*, have used the term Intuitive “as is,” as Boxer intended, to describe the artists who have been so classified, without analyzing or questioning its definition. But other commentators on the subject have been more conflicted about the concept and term, in ways that imply concern about its

contradictions. Even Rex Nettleford expressed reservations in his otherwise celebratory contribution to the *Intuitive Eye* (1979) catalogue:

The National Gallery has come up with the felicitous designation – ‘Intuitive artists’ [...] But all good artists are Intuitive. Rather, they had better be or else they will have little to show the world that the world does not already know or that the academic ‘schools’ will not have already churned out in uninspired replications. What can be said about the designation is that it succeeds in locating a primary source of energy that feeds the creative imagination of some of our better artists. (5)

Nettleford wisely avoids declaring that the Intuitives are necessarily the “better artists” but contends that their work presents a model for postcolonial cultural production: it “must be closely observed as guides to that aesthetic certitude which must be rooted in our own creative potential if the world is to take us seriously as creators rather than as imitators” (Ibid.). Others, still, have embraced the concept but not the term. The American dealer and curator Randall Morris, for instance, subtitled his *Redemption Song* (1997) exhibition as *The Self-taught Artists of Jamaica* and justifies his preference for self-taught by claiming that it is the most widely used term in the USA (28). The term Intuitive has been used with more confidence in the commercial arena where it arguably serves as a brand name but coexists with terms that still have significant marketing value such as Primitive and Naïve (although these are usually framed with disclaimers that anticipate common objections, as in “the so-called Primitives.”)

Since the NGJ’s promotion of the Intuitives has been controversial in Jamaica, one could expect that the concept itself was closely scrutinized by its critics but it has received surprisingly little attention. Some of the milder voices used the same argument as Nettleford – that all good artists crucially rely on intuition – but did not question the legitimacy of the artists who had been labeled as Intuitives. Others rejected the artists and

their work wholesale or ranked it well below the mainstream. Andrew Hope, Boxer's most vocal opponent, dismissed the Intuitives as "a group of elderly rustics" (1988) who needed proper training and suggested that they should be sent to Haiti for that purpose (1987). He also claimed that Boxer promotes the Intuitives because he is himself self-taught and, according to Hope, a technically deficient painter (1988). In the increasingly antagonistic back and forth between Boxer and Hope and their respective supporters during the mid 1980s, however, Hope eventually articulated a more or less coherent point of view on the subject. He insisted that the term Primitive was adequate to describe the artists Boxer had labeled as Intuitives, and claimed that their work was mostly substandard, while the term Intuitive designated something quite different, a very rare quality found in the work of exceptional artists who tapped the depths of the human psyche. According to Hope, only John Dunkley deserved that title in Jamaica. In a good illustration that the controversy was as much a clash of egos and a struggle for personal supremacy in the local artistic community as anything else, Hope then suddenly took credit for having been the first one to use the term Intuitive in Jamaica, in a review of a 1960 Dunkley exhibition (1988).²⁷⁶ [Ill. 198]

In recent times, more useful critical attention has been paid to the term. Petrine Archer-Straw examined the concept in a tribute essay for Boxer's 20th anniversary at the NGJ. After demonstrating the general inappropriateness of the term Primitive and its underlying ideology, she argues that one effective counter-strategy is for the "Primitivized" to develop their own language and cultural scholarship:

A distinct advantage of developing scholarship in places such as the Caribbean is that it is cognizant of its otherness. Today, our scholars are

²⁷⁶ I assume this refers to the *Dunkley and Daley* exhibition at the loJ that year but have not found any review of that exhibition by Andrew Hope, then Ignacy Eker.

exploiting that otherness in order to challenge traditional Western ways of seeing and defining the world. Language is an important aspect of that act of self-definition. The term 'Intuitive,' despite existing references within the West's art-historical canon, is just such an example of how terms can be redefined and re-aligned in our favour. The issue, then, becomes not one of whether a term is being used in keeping with tradition, but rather how we can best appropriate terms to teach ourselves about ourselves (1995, 16).

While Archer-Straw provides an important reminder of the political intent behind the naming of the Intuitives, she does not discuss the term's ultimate suitability and fails to recognize that the designation re-inscribes parts of the Primitivist ideology she decries.

Finally, the matter of the Intuitives has also received attention in the recent critiques of cultural nationalism. While the notion is, correctly, identified as a crucial component of Jamaica's nationalist art narratives, little or no attention has thus far been paid to its own peculiar significance and shortcomings and the reasons why it has been so vigorously contested. Andrea Douglas, in *Facing the Nation* (2004), rightly argues that Intuitives concept is clouded by problematic notions of purity and nationhood and that such artists' work is better understood in terms of its hybridity. Douglas is also right to claim that it constitutes a category that re-inscribes the conventional art-historical hierarchies. These are rather casual and predictable observations, however, that do not delve deeply into the conceptual problems of the Intuitives designation and the critical debate on the subject thus remains unresolved.

4. The Early Intuitives

When the concept was introduced in 1979, several Intuitives were labeled retroactively and, in the case of John Dunkley and David Miller Sr and David Miller Jr even

posthumously.²⁷⁷ [Ill. 198, 146, 199] We therefore need to examine how these artists were represented before they “became” Intuitives. It is significant that the label has not been extended to the pre-20th century period. There was a creole painting tradition that derived from the Western great tradition but also had Naïve characteristics, such as the disregard for conventional perspective and three-dimensional modeling that can be observed in the work of Belisario. That there has been no attempt to recuperate pre-20th century artists into the Intuitives canon specifies that it is a postcolonial construct, linked to the notion of an emergent national culture, and not a generic label that can be applied to any art with similar characteristics. The exclusion of popular craft, such as the utilitarian African-Jamaican pottery, further illustrates that the concept is exclusively concerned with what can readily be consecrated as “fine art” while the absence of anonymous artists suggests that it is crucially tied to its makers’ individual identities.

Far from being spontaneous, the appearance of Jamaican Primitives in the 1920s and 1930s was a product of the growing interest in popular culture and talent-scouting efforts of the nationalist intelligentsia, combined with the emergence of markets for such work, especially in the field of tourism. Institutional patronage of their work started around the same time. The IoJ’s early efforts at exhibiting and collecting modern Jamaican art included the work of Dunkley and the Millers. Dunkley was, in fact, immediately granted special status and his work was featured in the Jamaican representation at the 1939 New York World Fair, along with Albert Huie’s. The IoJ also staged a memorial exhibition in 1948, one year after Dunkley’s death, and his widow’s biographical sketch in the catalogue is still the main source on his life (Dunkley 1948).

²⁷⁷ Sidney McLaren, furthermore, died just before the pioneering *Intuitive Eye* exhibition opened.

Dunkley and the Millers were commonly referred to as Primitives in IoJ publications of the time and their woodcarvings were praised for their Africanness, without any apparent anxiety about connecting these two concepts (e.g. Wingfield Digby 1945). At that time, the term did not yet have the negative charge it has today although the ambiguous sense that such work was less advanced than the Great Western Tradition but also had characteristics that made it superior was obviously already present. While there was an apparent consensus that their work belonged in a different category, the social background of Dunkley and the Millers was not substantially different from Albert Huie, David Pottinger, Ralph Campbell and Henry Daley who also came from relatively poor urban or rural backgrounds. [Ill. 58] While some of the latter, such as Huie, were upwardly mobile, others remained poor and had to continue working as artisans to survive. Pottinger and Campbell both worked as sign painters while Daley was a plumber. Dunkley's family, in contrast, was moving up in the social ranks and his descendents now solidly belong to the professional middle class.²⁷⁸ The earliest work of Huie, Pottinger, Daley and Campbell could, furthermore, certainly have been classified as Primitive, although they quickly assimilated aspects of Modernism.

Dunkley was reportedly invited by Robert Verity, the director of the Junior Centre to join Edna Manley's classes but declined, arguing that he saw "things a little differently" (Boxer 1998, 17). While that anecdote may be apocryphal, it is corroborated indirectly by his wife: "His work was criticized by many who did not know his worth as he was the only imaginative painter in the Island and one could not teach him for he was self-taught" (1948). The decision to remain separate from the emerging mainstream thus

²⁷⁸ Several of Dunkley's descendants, in Jamaica and elsewhere, are artists in their own right. The best known of those is his granddaughter Tina Dunkley, who is also director of the Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries.

appears to have been Dunkley's own, based on his own sense of difference. He may not have agreed with the Institute Group's political or aesthetic agendas or may have been reluctant to accept the benevolent but intrusive patronage to which artists like him were subjected. He may also have felt that he had already achieved artistic proficiency and would not benefit from formal training. While he sold a few pieces to the IoJ, Dunkley reportedly refused to part with most of his work, which he wanted to keep together as a museum for the benefit of the Jamaican people (Dunkley 1948; Boxer 1998, 16).

Cassie Dunkley's biography repeatedly suggests that her husband's worth was not publicly acknowledged until after his death and concludes: "His funeral was largely attended by rich and poor. A lot was said of him for days in the papers which was the only time his worth was ever told" (n.p.). These complaints seem unwarranted, given the attention Dunkley received from the late 1930s onwards, but local art patronage was still in its infancy and did not provide artists with any substantial or reliable income or improved social status, which may have been the true source of Mrs Dunkley's discontent. Dunkley's contemporary Henry Daley, for instance, died young and as a pauper in 1951, although he was already then recognized as an important member of the nationalist school.

The hierarchies of the small artistic community of the 1930s and 1940s nonetheless seem to have been fairly weak and flexible, informed by a sense that *all* artists of talent deserved encouragement as members of an emerging national school. The only obvious exception to this was Edna Manley, who had special status as an internationally exhibited and locally prominent artist. This casual and apparently relatively peaceful hierarchy in early modern Jamaican art stands in sharp contrast with

contemporaneous developments in Haiti, where the Primitives, who were promoted internationally by the Americans Dewitt Peters and Selden Rodman, were quickly pitched against the nationalist mainstream artists, who balked at the one-sided, Primitivist manner in which Haitian art was represented in the international market and exhibition circuit.

What then, in the work itself, made these early Jamaican artists different from their contemporaries and allowed for them to be labeled as Primitives and, later, as Intuitives? Dunkley was primarily a painter, although he also sculpted in wood and stone, and his work exemplifies many of the characteristics that have been attributed to Intuitive or Outsider art. Most of his paintings, such as his famous *Banana Plantation* (c1945), depict dark, densely layered tropical scenery, teeming with oversized vegetation and furtive small animals such as spiders, frogs and rabbits.²⁷⁹ [Ill. 21] Although the human figure occasionally appears in his work or is implied, for instance by the presence of footprints and manmade objects and structures in *Back to Nature* (1939), Dunkley's real subject is the supreme power of nature and the inescapable cycle of life and death. [Ill. 200] His work readily lends itself to psychoanalytical interpretations: his landscapes are full of phallic plants and vagina-like crevices and his depictions of women, with their obsessive focus on their feet and shoes, have a decidedly fetishist quality – two of his carvings, one in wood and one in stone, actually represent a high-heeled toeless woman's shoe. [Ill. 201]

Dunkley may be the quintessential visionary, who produced idiosyncratic “landscapes of the mind,” but his work is more attuned to the visual cultural and physical environment of his time than is often assumed. His paintings have the tightly structured,

²⁷⁹ Many of Dunkley's paintings are undated. Some have been dated based on their exhibition record but most have been dated by Boxer based on Dunkley's assumed stylistic development. I have used his dates but further research is needed to develop a more reliable chronology.

pattern-like quality and high horizons often seen in self-taught art but his confident and expressive use of deep space – especially the vertiginous winding paths that lure the viewer into the hidden depths of the painting – defies the notion that self-taught artists do not understand perspective. His *Diamond Wedding* (c1940) depicts an elderly couple joined together in a heart-shaped composition that features other symbols of matrimonial bliss, such as wedding bands and knots, which would have been well-known in Jamaica. [Ill. 202] His claustrophobic landscapes draw inspiration from the dark, narrow valleys in the Jamaican mountains, the rainforest gorges of Panama and the swamps of Cuba, sources he acknowledged in the titles of his *Panama Scenery* (c.1940) and *Cuban Scenery* (1945). [Ill. 203] Dunkley's work may also challenge the notion that self-taught artists are unaffected by modern technology. According to his wife, he had worked as an assistant to one Clarence Rock, a photographer in Panama. Dunkley's near-monochromatic paintings, with just hints of color added, remind of certain subtly hand-tinted black-and-white photographs and hand-tinting may well have been among his tasks.

It is tempting to juxtapose Dunkley's brooding scenery with the light-infused serenity of Albert Huie's Jamaican vistas and to attribute this to the contrast between the classicizing impulses of nationalism and Dunkley's Intuitive explorations of his inner worlds. This juxtaposition has some validity but cannot be generalized to separate the Institute Group from the Primitives. The landscapes of Henry Daley, especially his depictions of ominous, gnarled tropical trees, are as tormented as Dunkley's although they seem to have been influenced by Vincent van Gogh's cypresses. [Ill. 204] The kinship between these two artists was, in fact, recognized by the 1960 exhibition *Dunkley*

and Daley at the IoJ. Likewise, David Pottinger's depictions of night life on the streets of Kingston have a mysterious, slightly sinister quality that is akin to Dunkley's work. Conversely, some of Dunkley's works, such as *Banana Plantation*, have iconic Jamaican qualities such as one would expect to see in the work of the nationalist school.

Dunkley's work also questions whether the Intuitives are indeed unaffected by "art theories and philosophies, principles and movements." Paintings such as *Banana Plantation* and *Jerboa* (1939) contain recognizable elements of Art Deco stylization, such as the use of curvilinear framing devices in the composition, and influences of that style can also be seen in some of his woodcarvings, especially his depictions of fashionably dressed, elegantly posed women. [Ill. 198] Art Deco was popular in Jamaica in the 1930s and Dunkley would certainly have been exposed to it, if only through the architecture of new buildings, furniture design and the design of newspaper and magazine ads. Dunkley's concern with humanity's insignificance in the face of nature also brings to mind the nature mysticism of 19th century romanticism and comparisons have been made with the work of the English Romantic painter Samuel Palmer or the American Albert Pinkham Ryder (Boxer 1998, 16). Because of Dunkley's modest background, it is unlikely that he would have been familiar with these relatively obscure artists, but he was well-traveled and quite aware of the world around him so it cannot be ruled out entirely.

Finally, Dunkley's work was not entirely apolitical and sometimes commented on the same issues that preoccupied his nationalist counterparts. He produced satirical portraits of Norman Manley and Bustamante. Only the latter has survived and depicts Bustamante as a giant benevolent shepherd tending to his flock while behind his back a few wayward goats escape through a hole in the fence, presumably to join Norman

Manley. He also carved a kneeling, praying male figure titled *Deliverance* (1940), which made reference to the negative impact of WWII on Jamaica (Dunkley 1948), which included a sharp increase in poverty and hunger because of the downturn in international trade and reduced support from England. [Ill. 205] These works make cryptic political statements, however, and not enough is known about him to reliably assess his political views.

Similar questions arise from the woodcarvings of David Miller Sr and Jr, although their work, which was already discussed in the previous chapters, aligned more directly with the development of tourism and the popular carving tradition. As of the late 1930s, and perhaps in response to the attention their work was receiving from the intelligentsia, they started producing works that were more ambitious in form and content. Although, as we have seen, tourism was identified as a crucial cultural problem by the anticolonial nationalists, the Millers' involvement in that market does not seem to have been held against them. While I have found no written evidence for the reasons, it may be that it was felt that their work transcended the limitations of typical tourist art and was sufficiently rooted in local cultural traditions to be legitimate. [Ill. 22, 23, 42]

While they sold their tourist curios to anyone interested, the Millers were reportedly very selective about those who could buy their major works and often gave eager collectors the runaround before they were deemed deserving.²⁸⁰ They obviously regarded these works as more valuable and important than their tourist works and, like Dunkley, may have hoped to keep some of them together for posterity. The production of

²⁸⁰ Personal communication from David Boxer, July 6, 2006. Boxer remembers that it took many visits, spread over several months, to convince David Miller Jr to even show him certain works, let alone allowing him to buy them. After his death in 1977, he finally had the opportunity to see the family storeroom, which was full of major works by Sr and Jr. Some of these remained in the family until about 2001, when Allon Miller, who was facing health problems, finally agreed to sell them.

their “serious work” was, like their tourist art, family-based and father and son – who even shared the same middle initial “A,” for Allon – worked so closely together that it is impossible to attribute some of their woodcarvings. The family tradition was after David Miller Jr’s death carried on by a younger brother, Allon Miller who started carving and took care of the estate, although he never became as prominent as his brother and father. Such family traditions, where identities are merged, are more common in popular art production and contradict the individualist premises of the Intuitives concept.

Unlike Dunkley, the Millers did not make political references – except for the Hitler-vulture figurines that were mentioned in the previous chapter – but Junior’s portrait heads reflected the era’s concern with racial identity, even though they provided a caricatural perspective. Senior also produced some of the earliest documented representations of Rastafarians in Jamaican art, two deliberately comical works that are now known as *Rasta I* and *Rasta II*, both from c1964.²⁸¹ [Ill. 146] The Millers approached aspects of Jamaican life – and, as we have previously seen, Obeah perhaps included – with an irreverent, critical wit that the mainstream nationalists may not have deemed acceptable. Their work is, however, not more eccentric or irreverent than that of Carl Abrahams, who was also self-taught. [Ill. 27] While Abrahams displayed greater awareness the Great Western Tradition, a case can be made that the primary reason why he was not labeled as a Primitive, was his social background as a member of an elite family. The Millers came from modest circumstances and Allon Miller, who died in 2009, still lived in a poor area of Central Kingston.

²⁸¹ Although David Boxer had originally dated these works to the late 1930s I have found credible evidence in a 1964 newspaper interview with the Millers that they, in fact, date from the early 1960s. The original title was, reportedly, *John the Baptist – Touch Me Not for I Am the Lord’s Anointed*, a reference to an incident at the Junior Center whereby David Miller Sr jokingly tried to pull a Rastaman’s beard and got a hostile response in the form of the biblical quote he included in the title. (Gloudon 1964b)

The case for labeling Dunkley and the Millers as Primitives was weak, based on fairly arbitrary aesthetic and social criteria and, no doubt, the sense that Jamaica *should have* Primitive artists. Re-labeling them as Intuitives has imposed alien notions of purity on their work, which actually evolved in dialogue with their cultural and historical context and the aesthetic and political pursuits of their mainstream counterparts. Doing so fulfilled a crucial role in the NGJ's narratives, however, since it allowed for these artists to be positioned as a crucial component of the local art history that emerged as a part of the same cultural flowering that produced the nationalist mainstream.

5. Primitives and Professionals

As we have seen, the earliest organized market for Primitive Jamaican art appeared in the 1950s and 1960s and was fueled by the growth of tourism and the international interest in Haitian Primitive art. This facilitated the appearance of several new artists, such as Gaston Tabois, Sidney McLaren and Mallica "Kapo" Reynolds. [Ill. 40, 41, 133] As the notion that there was, or at least could be, a Jamaican Primitive school gained ground, market forces were marked by some as a source of corruption of its cultural and artistic integrity. The critic Norman Rae, whose concerns about the negative effects of tourism were discussed in Chapter 1 and 6, was probably the first to claim that a Primitive artist, Gaston Tabois, had been "spoiled" by his engagement with the market (1965, 169).

The work of this "second generation" – McLaren was in effect of the same age group as Dunkley and the elder Miller – was quite different from that of the earlier Primitives and took two overlapping directions. One was secular work that focused on Jamaican urban and rural life in a precise, detailed and colorful realist style, such as the work of McLaren and, and the other was work related to popular religion and often had

visionary qualities. Kapo's work, the earliest example of the latter, was directly related to his role as a Revivalist leader and depicts the spiritual world of Revivalism in brightly colored, pattern-like narrative compositions and bold, dynamic sculptural forms. Kapo, however, also produced work that fits in the first category and idealizes the way of life of his social cohort and the physical environment of rural Jamaica.

These two trends also occurred in Haitian Primitive art and may have been partly shaped by market expectations but the new cultural scholarship on Revivalism and Rastafari by George Eaton Simpson, M.G. Smith, Edward Seaga and others also played an important role. The resulting validation was also related to the political changes around Independence, particularly the shift towards popular empowerment and populism. Seaga's personal association with Kapo, as one of his main and earliest patrons who straddled the scholarly and political domain, greatly helped to propel the latter's name in the national and international arena.

The number of overseas enthusiasts for Jamaican Primitive art was also growing and several powerful figures in hemispheric cultural affairs became champions, who often attached their name to the promotion of a single artist. Kapo, for instance, benefited greatly from the support of Selden Rodman, the controversial American promoter of the Haitian Primitives. In addition to his already cited travel book on the Caribbean (1968), which included a vivid portrait of Kapo as Revivalist preacher, Rodman and Dewitt Peters, the American director of the Centre d'Art in Haiti, co-organized an exhibition of Haitian and Jamaican Primitives, titled *Artists of the Western Hemisphere: Art of Haiti and Jamaica* for the Center for Inter-American Relations, now the Americas society, in

New York (Rodman & Peters 1968).²⁸² Jamaica was represented by Kapo and the less-known Primitive painter Benjamin Campbell.

The Primitives thus acquired greater international visibility than the mainstream and, as with Haiti, Jamaican art was increasingly conflated with Primitive art in the international arena. This did not mean that the canonization of the Jamaican Primitives reached outside of the specialized domain: works by Tabois and the Millers that were probably bought as souvenirs by tourists have recently turned up in unlikely places, such as flea markets in the USA or eBay, and it is usually clear that the sellers have no idea what they have or, even, where it comes from.²⁸³

These developments coincided with the professionalization of mainstream Jamaican art, which was, as we have seen, part of the agendas of Karl Parboosingh, Barrington Watson and Eugene Hyde. The inevitable result was greater polarization of the Jamaican art world, between the “old-school” nationalists, the Primitives and the young professionals, and the first signs of animosity between these three groups. In this context, the Primitives were relegated to an ambivalent, segregated status as representatives of a “folklorized” popular culture and producers of quaint cultural commodities for tourists while the young professionals asserted themselves as the rightful embodiment of the national aspirations for postcolonial modernity.

²⁸² Rodman later also included Kapo in his book *Artists in Tune With Their World* (1982) and owned at least one major Kapo painting, which is now in the Selden Rodman Collection at Ramapo College in New Jersey. The Center for Inter-American Relations was established in 1965 by a group of noted businessmen led by David Rockefeller. The Center aimed to inform leading professional, academic, business, artistic and government people of the value, the achievements and the problems of other countries of the Americas. The Center for Inter-American Relations organized many exhibitions of Latin American art in the late 1960s and 1970s. It was absorbed into the Americas Society in 1985, which is still an active art exhibition organizer.

²⁸³ David Boxer recently bought three David Miller Jr heads on eBay, which were offered there as “African sculptures.” The auction price was well below the market values for such pieces in Jamaica. A Gaston Tabois painting was acquired around 1995 by Edward Sullivan of New York University at a street-side market near Washington Square, for about US 5.00. The Hills Gallery label was still attached on the back. The work had a tear, however, and had to be extensively restored.

The pluralism of the late 1930s and 1940s was thus under threat, as is illustrated by the changes in the IoJ's exhibition policies. According to Gaverley McGowan, who then coordinated its art programs, the increased dominance of the "professionals" in the juried *All-Island* exhibitions came at the expense of other artists. This required the establishment of another, more inclusive juried exhibition, the *Self-Taught Artists* exhibition, which was launched in 1968. (Waugh 1987, 176-177) David Boxer was critical of this segregation, which he undid when the NGJ took over the IoJ's annual exhibitions in 1977 and established the *Annual National*:

The old IoJ *Self-taught Artists Exhibition* had been invaluable in bringing to the fore many of the major Intuitives, but it always had the status of a second class exhibition, segregated as it was from the *All Island Exhibition* for so-called 'Professional' artists, and lumping as it did, genuinely creative artists, the Intuitives, with a whole range of 'untaught' amateurs, true 'Sunday Painters' striving after the academic vision. In so doing, this *Self-Taught Artists Exhibition* fostered a belief in the general public that the art of all self-taught artists, Intuitives or not, is essentially an aberration of mainstream art (1987, 2).

Boxer's statement is somewhat misleading, since established Primitives were in actuality included in the *All-Island Exhibitions* and also got solo exhibitions and, even, awards from the IoJ. Kapo had a solo exhibition at the IoJ in 1970 and received a Silver Musgrave Medal in 1969. Newer artists such as Roy Reid were, however, relegated to the *Self-Taught Artists Exhibitions* and thus given second-rate status. [Ill. 197, 206] There was a growing perception within the mainstream that the "problem" of the Primitives should be addressed with training. Such views were propagated by Barrington Watson, the director of studies at the JSA from 1962 to 1967, who felt that that the inability to handle art materials "properly" was a key weakness of Jamaican artists and that successful professionalization required greater technical proficiency (Waugh 1987, 133).

6. Political Radicalism and the Intuitives Concept

The high profile overseas patronage of the Primitives continued into the 1970s. Everal Brown attracted the interest of the founder of the Organization of American States' Art Museum of the Americas, the Cuban émigré José Gomez Sicre, who included his work in several exhibitions at the museum and acquired two pieces for his museum's collection, and the African-American singer Roberta Flack became involved in the promotion of Kapo. The latter's involvement, however, reflected the changes in the context and interpretation of their art, particularly the shift towards defining it as black art.

The young radicals of the late 1960s had attacked the very class that had provided the initial patronage and leadership of the Jamaican artistic community and, not surprisingly, they challenged the subordination of the Primitives and asserted their blackness. It is in this context that the religious Rastafarian Everal Brown's work was first brought to national attention. Brown had been painting and sculpting since around 1960, to produce ritual objects and images for his small, unofficial Ethiopian Orthodox church community, *The Assembly of the Living*. [Ill. 207] He was in 1968 discovered by Janet Grant-Woodham, a young protégé of Seaga and a Folklore Research Officer at the IoJ. The following year, Brown was invited to exhibit at the UWI Creative Arts Centre, along with his young son Clinton (b1954) and son-in-law Arnold Tucker, who were also painting. [Ill. 208] The exhibition was reviewed in the radical weekly *Abeng*, which had also helped to publicize the event. The reviewer, the Barbadian writer and painter Timothy Callender, concluded: "And when we come to appreciate the truly meaningful indigenous art of Jamaica, middle class techniques and ideas of art are certainly going to

take their true second place” (1969, 17) – a pointed retort to the likes of Barrington Watson.

These new ideas greatly influenced cultural policy in the 1970s. The *Exploratory Committee on the Arts*, which was established shortly after Michael Manley came to power in 1972 and consisted of a broad cross section of the older and emerging cultural establishment, was mandated to address the “imbalances of history” and to make cultural institutions more accessible and relevant to the broader population. The NGJ’s receptiveness to self-taught, popular art therefore not only stemmed from its Curator’s personal interests but also reflected the cultural policies of the Manley era. This in turn contributed to the animosity that surrounded the Intuitives concept, which was seen as a PNP construct, and it is no coincidence that the main controversy erupted after the 1980 general elections. Andrew Hope had given *The Intuitive Eye* exhibition a relatively good review but had suggested that the younger Intuitives were technically deficient and should be sent to art school, which resulted in his first, still relatively benign public disagreement with Boxer (Hope 1979, viii; Anonymous Eye 1979, 11). Hope later claimed that he had been forced to write positively on the subject during the 1970s (Waugh 1987, 180-181) but this is unlikely since the *Gleaner* was a vocal critic of the Manley government.²⁸⁴ There is no doubt, however, that Hope felt empowered after the 1980 elections to go after Boxer and the NGJ because they no longer had the secure political support they had enjoyed in the 1970s.

The NGJ’s revisions represented the first substantive efforts to address the marginalization of the Intuitives within the local art hierarchies. Already established

²⁸⁴ Hope was, for instance, able to write about the Manley government’s cultural policies during that same year: “Its attitude towards the visual arts is closely linked to its political aim which is to turn us into slaves of Cuba and the Soviet Union, employing the artists merely as propagandist [sic] of its pernicious, totalitarian regime” (*Gleaner* September 30, 1979, VII).

Intuitives were also included in those pioneering exhibitions that established the NGJ's core narrative, such as *Five Years of Art in Jamaica* (1975) and *The Formative Years: Jamaican Art 1922-1940* (1978). The NGJ also staged a 1976 retrospective of Dunkley's work, which reestablished that artist's reputation nationally after it had lapsed into obscurity and included work that had remained in the estate. The NGJ had inherited some work by the older Intuitives from the IoJ but the newer artists were systematically included in the expanding permanent collection and efforts were made to help them economically. Everalld Brown in 1978 benefited from the NGJ's short-lived artist-in-residence program and this resulted in several significant additions to the collection.²⁸⁵

The *Intuitive Eye* exhibition not only introduced the term Intuitive but, equally important, represented the first systematic exhibition statement on what was rapidly shaping up as the Intuitives canon. The exhibition included artists we have previously encountered – Dunkley, the Millers, McLaren, Tabois, Everalld and Clinton Brown, Roy Reid and Benjamin Campbell, who were thus relabeled as Intuitives – along with several newer names: the wood sculptors Lester Hoilett, William “Woody” Joseph and Leon Maxwell, the alabaster carver John “Doc” Williamson, the painters Albert Artwell, Sam Brown and Birth Livingston “Ras Dizzy” and the lone woman in the exhibition, Fea, Daughter of Zion, a mystic-seer who produced trance drawings in pencil on paper. As Boxer has acknowledged (1979, 1987), the Intuitives canon brought together a much more diverse group than the Haitian Primitives and no recognizable style has emerged.

The gender imbalance of the original Intuitives canon is striking, especially since women, most of them of upper-middle class background, were increasingly prominent in

²⁸⁵ He shared that year's award with Milton George. Everalld Brown, who lived in the country at the time, never used the studio space at Devon House but received the financial support.

mainstream art. One reason may be that social conventions and economic obligations have prevented poor women from choosing painting or sculpture as their profession, while their own cultural products, for instance in textiles, did not meet the “fine arts” criteria of the Intuitives canon. Another may be the patriarchal tendencies in Rastafari, which was very influential in the 1970s, and it is telling that Feea belongs to the Revivalist sphere, where women play a more prominent role.

The aesthetic and cultural trends that were set in the 1950s and 1960s – particularly the interplay between realism and visionary spiritualism – also continued. Rastafari became a more visible influence although Revivalism remained important. Woody, for instance, was not a religious artist but his imagination was influenced by the spirit world of Revivalism. The two main new artists from the Rastafarian sphere, Everaldo Brown and Albert Artwell, expressed their spiritual and, in the case of Artwell, political views in visionary imagery that represent idiosyncratic interpretations of the Rastafarian visual culture. While Artwell’s work is, generally speaking, more recognizably Rastafarian, Brown’s mystical “readings” of the evocative limestone formations and vegetation in the Jamaican landscape are more idiosyncratic but invite the viewer to “reason,” or engage dialectically, with the images and the ancient spiritual truths Brown sought to unearth. [Ill. 209] The Rastafarian artists and others such as Woody, whose carvings have undeniably African proportions and who used dye and stain methods that compare to traditional West and Central African techniques, also provided the strongest arguments to date to define the Intuitives in African diasporal terms. [Ill. 128]

Many of the Intuitives see themselves as social commentators or messengers of the divine. The secular side of this didacticism was evident in Roy Reid's dark expressionist paintings that comment critically and sometimes humorously on current events and tendencies in Jamaican society and elucidating text segments are often included in his compositions. This didacticism is less obvious in the work of Ras Dizzy, who had been a militant Rastafarian associated with *Abeng* but had a mental breakdown and retreated into a fantasy world in which he appropriated various heroic identities, such as Wild West marshals and champion boxers. [Ill. 210] While these works were delusional, they also reflected his desire to restore a just moral order to what he saw as an increasingly corrupt, violent and anarchic society, not unlike the tragic morality tale presented in the film *The Harder They Come*.

Reid's crude, gloomy painting style contrasted strikingly with the polished, colorful style of Kapo, MacLaren and Tabois. A similar improvised, expressionist aesthetic is evident in rough-hewn figure carvings of Woody and Hoilett and the bold, sketchy paintings of Ras Dizzy. It is probably no coincidence that this new, less saleable aesthetic came to the fore in the 1970s, when market considerations were less important. Boxer's aesthetic preferences and interest in *art brut* probably also played a role, as they shifted the focus away from conventional technical accomplishment. The Intuitives canon thus more convincingly separated the artists from the mainstream than in the days of Dunkley and the Millers.

7. The Heyday of the Intuitives

Some may have hoped that the Intuitives concept would die a quiet death after the 1980 elections but the 1980s were its heyday. The Intuitives actually allowed the "Manleyite"

Boxer to find common ground with Seaga, which resulted in the acquisition of the Larry Wirth Collection of Kapo's work and its installation at the new NGJ building in Downtown Kingston as the first gallery dedicated to a single artist. The political implications of this gesture should not be overlooked, because the Kapo collection provided a counterbalance to Edna Manley's dominance at the NGJ.

Predictably, the controversies about the Intuitives were also at their peak, led by Andrew Hope and Barrington Watson and in the mid 1980s the pages of the *Gleaner* contained almost weekly attacks on Boxer, the NGJ and the Intuitives, as well as occasional counterattacks. This polemic only bolstered the enthusiasm of the Intuitives supporters, as it united them in the conviction that they were the ones "in the know" who furthermore had a rightful "cause" to defend. The enthusiasts – and I was one of them – were vindicated by the positive reception of the Intuitives in international exhibitions such as *Jamaican Art 1922-1982* in the USA and *Jamaican Intuitives* (1986) which was staged by the Commonwealth Institute, as a prominent part of its year-long *Caribbean Focus* program, and shown in London and Wolverhampton, to similar critical acclaim as the Intuitives had received in the USA. The NGJ as a whole was energized by the sense that its standards and narratives represented the righteous path for Jamaican art and this only fueled the hostility of those who felt that their views and interests were not given due consideration. Increasingly, the Jamaican artistic community was divided into Boxer's supporters and detractors, a division which persists to the present day.

Boxer's supporters included a small but enthusiastic group of Intuitives collectors, which included Jamaicans such as the advertising executive Deryck Roberts and the publisher of the short-lived *Arts Jamaica* (1983-1985) journal Margaret Bernal,

and expatriates such as the English Annabella Proudlock of Harmony Hall, the Swiss environmentalist Andreas Oberli, the NGJ's English deputy director David Muir and the Australian artist Colin Garland. The high ratio of white expatriates and lighter-skinned Jamaicans among the enthusiasts fueled the perception that the Intuitives canon was a product of how white people see black culture – a remarkable reversal of how the Intuitives had been presented in the 1970s.

A climate was nonetheless created in which the Intuitives could thrive and several major new artists appeared, such as the painters Leonard Daley and Allan “Zion” Johnson and the woodcarvers Errol McKenzie and Zaccheus Powell. [Ill. 196, 192] Daley, Zion and McKenzie were showcased in the NGJ's second Intuitives exhibition, *Fifteen Intuitives* (1987), which along with Kapo, Everald Brown, Albert Artwell, Lester Hoilett, Woody, Ras Dizzy, Roy Reid, Gaston Tabois and Doc Williamson and the less-known newcomers Charlie Bird, William Rhule and Arthur Thompson. Some of these newcomers, such as Zion, produced cheerful, colorful interpretations of popular life but others presented more idiosyncratic and troubling visions of the “worlds within” (Boxer 1979, 2). Chief among these was Leonard Daley, although his chaotic, hallucinatory semi-abstract paintings tell morality tales about the interconnectedness of good and evil which are rooted in popular ethics. Daley's double-sided tarpaulin paintings, which have the visual impact of Jackson Pollock's action paintings, dominated the NGJ's central exhibition space during *Fifteen Intuitives*. Since his work most decisively challenged the aesthetic standards of the conservative mainstream, it came as no surprise that it received

the most scathing feedback from Andrew Hope and his associates who questioned its artistic legitimacy (Hope 1988).²⁸⁶

The Intuitives also received a boost from the opening of Harmony Hall in 1981, which gave their work a central position in its exhibitions and stocks and was actively involved in scouting and encouraging the artists. Harmony Hall adopted the NGJ's concept without significant modifications and has also exposed more "difficult" Intuitives such as Ras Dizzy, McKenzie and Daley, whose troubling work strikingly contrast with the slick, decorative "villa art" and the colorful craft items it shows alongside. It is not clear how its clientele has responded to this sort of work but, as far as representation is concerned, Harmony Hall succeeded in maintaining the delicate balance between the stringent criteria of the Intuitives concept and the necessity of its commodification, without substantially undermining the sustaining fiction of its purity and authenticity.²⁸⁷

8. The Death of Intuitive Art?

Things have changed considerably since the 1980s. Several major artists have died – Kapo in 1989, Woody in 1998, Zion in 2001, Everal Brown in 2002, Doc Williamson and Leonard Daley in 2006, Ras Dizzy in 2008 and Roy Reid in 2009 – and others such as Lester Hoilett and Gaston Tabois are now inactive. Several new noteworthy artists have appeared, such as the ceramist Sylvester Stephens, the woodcarver Vincent

²⁸⁶ There is also a somewhat bizarre review of *Fifteen Intuitives* (1987) by Rudolph Murray, a Jamaican-born professor of aesthetics at Ryerson Polytechnic in Canada. Murray was invited to present a series of lectures on aesthetics at Barrington Watson's Contemporary Art Centre in 1987, in an obvious effort to give more intellectual weight to Watson and Hope's position, and his lecture, which took the form of the review in question, was published in three lengthy segments in the *Gleaner* on August 2, August 16 and September 11, 1987. Murray devised ascending one to ten scales for artistic and aesthetic value. While he declined to rate any Intuitive work for its artistic value, which he claimed was very low, he rated a handful as "fives" and "fours" on his aesthetic value scale. With other words, he conceded that some of the works had aesthetic, or cultural, value but refused to acknowledge them as "art" and relegated them to the status of ethnographic curiosities. Daley got zeroes on both counts.

²⁸⁷ Interviews with Annabella Proudlock on December 27, 2000 and January 10, 2001. The Harmony Hall management insists that a significant portion of its clientele is Jamaican but is unwilling to provide specific data on its clientele and their acquisitions because they wish to protect their privacy.

Atherton, the metal sculptor Reginald English, and the painters Paul Perkins, Kingsley Thomas, Byron Johnson, Eli Jah, Sylvester Woods, and Michael Parchment. [Ill. 138, 212] None of these are young, however, and English, Johnson, Atherton and Woods have since died.

These new artists produce work that is of undeniable interest but none are as compelling or original as Kapo, Everal Brown or Dunkley. Stephens is noteworthy because he adds an innovative sculptural dimension to African-Jamaican earthenware, which is traditionally undecorated and functional, by producing large vessels with figurative embellishments and text inscriptions – whimsical, didactic sculptural forms that remind of the work of the Millers. One of the more startling “discoveries” was Eli Jah (Geneva Mais Jarret), the female leader of an independent church community with Revivalist and Rastafarian influences in West Kingston. [Ill. 211] She paints large-scale interpretations of biblical scenes in a beautiful cloisonné style dominated by the Rastafarian colors. Remarkably, this artist had been painting for many years and had previously exhibited at the Collection de l’Art Brut in Lausanne, Switzerland but had not caught the attention of the Jamaican artistic community. This indicates that local scouting efforts have declined, since Eli Jah is fairly well known in her neighborhood.

There have been significant shifts in the gender balance among the Intuitives. While Eli Jah has emerged independently, as one of very few female Intuitives to do so, several other newcomers are the domestic partners or children of well-known artists, such as Deloris Anglin, Atasha Artwell and Moses Artwell, respectively the life partner, daughter and son of Albert Artwell, Evadne Cruikshank, the life partner of Sylvester Woods, and Everal Brown’s son Joseph and his daughters Ruth, Sandra and Rebecca –

their brother Clinton had started exhibiting with his father in the late 1960s but now works only sporadically because of mental health issues. [III. 213] These artists use imagery and styles that are derivative of the patriarch and usually subscribe to his beliefs but paint or sculpt primarily to contribute to the family income. That women play a prominent role in this development confirms that their social responsibilities are more closely tied to income-earning. The production of Intuitive art thus becomes a family business, which takes us back to the tourist art beginnings of David Miller Sr and Jr. The only noteworthy exception this pattern could be seen in the case of Vincent Atherton and his sons and his sons Errol Lloyd “Power” Atherton (who died in 2008) and Leroy Atherton who have, as a group, worked almost exclusively for a single, specialized collector, Wayne Cox.²⁸⁸ While the Athertons have not entered or sought to enter the mass market, it is thus also patronage that has motivated them to treat their work as a family business.

While the anticipated international breakthrough of Jamaican Intuitive art has not materialized, the domestic market has widened and includes more occasional buyers. This has to a great extent been the work of the Belgian expatriate art dealer and framer Herman van Asbroeck, who has played an important role in the recent local popularization of Intuitives such as Ras Dizzy, and Grosvenor Galleries, a Kingston gallery and antiques shop whose owners developed a close working relationship with Woody, Leonard Daley and, subsequently, their estates. Non-specialist established collectors are also buying more Intuitive work, although they tend to focus on securely consecrated Intuitives and buy in the secondary market rather than directly from artists. The recent art auctions, in particular, have played an important role in moving up the

²⁸⁸ More information on the Athertons can be found at: <http://cavinmorris.blogspot.com/>.

prices for artists such as Dunkley, Kapo and McLaren. With some exceptions, the development of Intuitive art is now more blatantly driven by market forces and there are new efforts to find outlets in the tourism sector. Several new tourist-oriented galleries have appeared, such as the Ja-Ja Gallery in Negril, but these primarily function as gift shops and do not maintain any “high art” pretensions. This commodification has significantly impacted on the work itself, since there is pressure on the artists to conform to what is most saleable. Artwell’s work, for instance, has become repetitive and devoid of its earlier visionary and political edge and similar developments could be seen in Everaldo Brown’s later work, much of which was made with the help of his family.

The concern with authenticity that underpins the Intuitives concept is incompatible with such commodification, which has furthermore shifted the work of many Intuitives beyond the control of its *aficionados* and, thus, moved the concept away from its sustaining turf. The controversies about the Intuitives have, by and large, subsided. That this has been accompanied by a loss of interest among former enthusiasts confirms that their earlier enthusiasm was, at least in part, a product of its contestation and the sense of exclusive ownership they brought to the subject. The NGJ still exhibits and collects Intuitive art but Boxer no longer has the close relationships with the artists he had in the past. The owners of Harmony Hall are no longer actively involved in scouting and, as we saw in the previous chapter, the gallery has struggled to survive.

On an international level, also, the interest in the Intuitives has declined. This can also be attributed to the recent debates about Primitivism, which have made overseas exhibition organizers wary of representing Jamaican art in a Primitivist frame. Another factor is the changing international preconceptions about Caribbean art, which are no

longer fueled by the “Haitian Renaissance” but instead by the success of contemporary Cuban art in the international exhibition and biennale circuit. In the 1980s, Intuitive art was routinely included in overseas exhibitions of Jamaican art but, as I have experienced, overseas exhibition organizers now often stipulate that they do *not* want to include any Intuitives. When they are still included in general exhibitions, they are not strongly marked as Intuitives but integrated with the rest, as was done in *New World Imagery* (1995), an exhibition of contemporary Jamaican art which was curated by the Jamaican art historian Petrine Archer-Straw and toured in England. It featured Ras Dizzy and Leonard Daley, along with Omari Ra, Anna Henriques, Milton George and Albert Chong. The work of Daley and Dizzy is most related, thematically and formally, to the neo-expressionist mainstream painting which was represented by George and Ra. Most recent overseas exhibitions of Intuitive art *per se* have been initiated by and circulated in the Outsider art scene. The main example is the earlier-mentioned *Redemption Songs* (1997) exhibition, which mainly consisted of works from the Wayne Cox collection, the only collection exclusively dedicated to the Jamaican Intuitives.

Wayne Cox, an American tax lobbyist who lives in Jamaica part-time, started collecting around 1990 and has amassed a large and comprehensive collection of what he prefers to call Self-Taught art. Cox was well-placed to negotiate “first pick” arrangements with the artists, since he buys large numbers of works, which he pays in the coveted US dollars, has enough free time to visit regularly and liberally supplies “his” artists with scarce art materials. His rapid ascent to dominance in the field may, however, have contributed to the decline of local interest because it caused earlier patrons to lose their privileged association with the artists. His unorthodox methods of pressuring artists

such as Everald Brown and the Athertons into production and, when he started collecting, of even commissioning work were frowned upon by local enthusiasts who felt that he was manipulating the work too much. Cox has, however, also scouted several of the newer names and has made a valuable contribution to the documentation of the Intuitives by means of transcribed interviews and photo- and video-records, which he readily makes available to other researchers.

There have been several efforts, lately, to revive interest in the Intuitives and to counter the effects of its commodification. The critic Edward Gomez has promoted their work in the international press (e.g. 2005) with articles that highlight major Intuitives such as Ras Dizzy and Leonard Daley. I curated an Everald Brown retrospective for the NGJ in 2004 and David Boxer in 2006 staged an *Intuitives III* exhibition, a short-notice project that sought to document how Intuitive art has evolved since *Fifteen Intuitives* in 1987 and, particularly, to showcase the new artists that had appeared since then. Many of the works in *Intuitives III* were borrowed from the Wayne Cox collection. The exhibition was perhaps also a belated attempt on Boxer's part to regain some control over the slipping canon. The exhibition, the largest and most inclusive Intuitives show thus far, was, however, less dogmatic than the previous ones and even included two – Llewellyn “Bongo” Johnson and Ralph Cameron – who work primarily in the tourism industry. Cameron is, in effect, one of the notorious “Big Bamboo” carvers but was represented by a safe carving of a horse and carriage. [Ill. 173] Increasingly, also, critics are challenging some of more problematic premises of the Intuitives without thereby resorting to the rejection or subordination of the work. Some have, for instance, questioned the exclusion of artists such as the David Marchand, Beverly Oliver and Hylton Nembhard who are not

regarded as Intuitives by Boxer because he feels they had too much exposure although their work and life stories have much more in common with the Intuitives than with the mainstream. If anything, the current revival efforts are ambivalent and the Intuitives construct, in its classic sense, is petering out – the inevitable “death” of Intuitive art (Errington 1998)?

9. The Intuitives and their Patrons

While there has been much debate *about* the Intuitives, virtually no attention has been paid to how *they* feel about how their work has been represented. In 2001, I interviewed Gaston Tabois, Everal Brown, Ras Dizzy and Leonard Daley to get their views on the subject.²⁸⁹ Only Tabois objected to being labeled as an Intuitive. Unlike the others, who received little or no formal education, he was educated at tertiary level and worked as an architectural draftsman at a government office.²⁹⁰ He insisted that the designation had been an obstacle to his desired ascent into the hierarchies of the Jamaican art world. Tabois’ observations are, as such, insightful but, ironically, the formal qualities and subject matter of work embody common expectations about Naïve art. In his admittedly unique case, it is the work far more than the person that determines the classification but it has prevented him from using his more advantageous social background to get “up there with Barrington Watson”, as he put it during our interview. The others had not given the matter much thought, but expressed general satisfaction with how they have

²⁸⁹ Interviews with Ras Dizzy, January 9, 2001; Leonard Daley, January 11, 2001; Gaston Tabois, January 12, 2001; and Everal Brown, January 14, 2001. Conversely, Milton George, an essentially self-taught expressionist painter who is usually categorized with the contemporary mainstream, often claimed publicly that should be labeled an Intuitive.

²⁹⁰ He attended Dillard University in New Orleans. His wife was a teacher. Both are now retired.

been labeled, since the term “Intuitive” resonated with their inspirational view of art and gave a sense of dignity and recognition to their efforts.²⁹¹

All four were vocal, however, about their positive and negative experiences with patrons and dealers. The Intuitives typically belong to the poorest classes in Jamaican society. Oftentimes, the sale of their work is their only source of income, which has to be shared with extended families that are entirely dependent on them to maintain a feasible standard of living. Contrary to the romantic image of the “natural mystic” who creates art from inner compulsion and devoid of worldly considerations, most Intuitives attach as much importance to the sale of their work as to its symbolic significance and they are active participants in its commodification. It is on this count that I have to part way with interpretations of postcolonial popular culture that fail to consider the implications of cultural patronage and commodification. Individual entrepreneurialism, as we have seen, plays an important role in Jamaican popular culture and is actively encouraged by Garveyism and Rastafari. To the artists, the commodification of popular art is therefore not incompatible with its political and spiritual agendas. Everal Brown even provided a mystical explanation in his painting *Bread out of Stone* (1977, now lost) in which David Boxer is seen exchanging money for a stone carving with Brown, set in the limestone landscape that inspired his visions, which thus allowed him to feed his family.

This does not mean, however, that the Intuitives have much control over the commodification of their work or are even its main beneficiaries. In the Jamaican art market, the Intuitives find themselves at the bottom of the food chain, being more unilaterally dependent on patronage than their mainstream counterparts and obtaining the

²⁹¹ Everal Brown stated in a 1994 interview with Wayne Cox that he preferred the term “Primitive,” which to him designated his closeness to the spiritual sources of art and not backwardness.

lowest prices. Sidney McLaren insisted on pricing his work based on the Jamaican minimum wage, one of the innovations of the Manley government.²⁹² He simply multiplied his hours of work on a painting by the then minimum wage rate and firmly resisted any suggestions from concerned patrons such as David Boxer that he should increase his prices in keeping with the growing critical acclaim for his work, a disturbing indication that he “knew his place” in the socioeconomic and cultural hierarchies of Jamaican society.²⁹³ While he could undoubtedly have gotten more, it would still have been well below the prices commanded by his mainstream counterparts. Up to a few months before he died in 2008, Ras Dizzy could still be seen on his weekly trek around Kingston, peddling his small paintings to regular patrons for the equivalent of US\$ 30 or less apiece while at the other extreme of the Jamaican art market, prices for Colin Garland or Barrington Watson paintings routinely surpassed US\$ 30,000.

While some Intuitives make a relatively good living, none have amassed any real wealth or have been able to climb significantly in the socio-economic ranks, as mainstream artists such as Barrington Watson have been able to do. A few earlier Intuitives such as Dunkley, Kapo and, ironically, McLaren now command high prices – Dunkley is currently one of the most expensive Jamaican artists, whose work sells on par with Watson, although this is also a function of its rarity – but this has happened only after their death and in the secondary market or, with Kapo, later in life, when his work had already been securely consecrated. It is a telling illustration of the economic

²⁹² While guaranteeing a minimum income for wage earners, the Jamaican national minimum wage has always been very low. The current rate (2011) is Ja\$ 4,500 or about US\$ 52 per week or US\$ 2,720 per annum. A significant portion of the (informal) work force, such as domestic helpers and day workers, earns even less, because they cannot find full-time employment. In 2004, the official poverty line for an individual was set at Ja\$ 58,508.5, which was then about US\$ 1000 per annum, but, with a cost of living, in terms of utilities, food and consumer goods, which is close to averages in the USA, this is well below the effective poverty line (National Poverty Eradication Programme 2004)

²⁹³ Personal communication from David Boxer, July 6, 2006.

vulnerability of the Intuitives, however, that Kapo's young widow and children were left virtually penniless after his death in 1989, with no long-term financial reserves, although there were attempts to assist them on the part of the NGJ and a few concerned patrons, be it mainly by buying the few remaining works and sketch books.

Kapo had received regular help from Seaga. This included medical assistance when his legs had to be amputated due to circulation problems in the early 1980s and the provision of a customized car afterwards. Other artists have also benefited from charity, although none had any long-term effects. In 1983, a group of enthusiasts organized a fundraising exhibition of Woody's work and the proceeds were used to acquire land and build a small stone house for him near the Castleton botanical gardens (before that, Woody lived as a squatter in Stony Hill.) In 1997, another fundraising exhibition was organized at the Mutual Gallery in Kingston, spearheaded by David Boxer, the gallery's director Gilou Bauer and Wayne Cox, to start a permanent fund for indigent Intuitives. Woody died soon after, however, and part of the small fund was used up for his funeral.²⁹⁴

Mainstream Jamaican artists usually work on consignment arrangements with dealers but Intuitive art is usually bought outright from its makers. Most Intuitives prefer such arrangements, since it gives them much-needed "cash in hand" and does not require complex record-keeping or follow-up. Outright sales, however, limit the artists' control over what dealers can ultimately charge for their work and the mark-ups are sometimes high, especially in the international arena. Work by Ras Dizzy, for instance, was in the early 2000s offered for around US\$ 600 at Cavin-Morris Gallery, a New York gallery

²⁹⁴ More recently, a group of patrons who helped to pay for Ras Dizzy's funeral are trying to revive and develop this fund.

specialized in Outsider art. I am citing this example to give a sense of the scale of the mark-ups but not to suggest that this is motivated by greed or dishonesty, since that price was still low and that gallery has to offset its high monthly rent and operational expenses.

The examples I have cited above, however, also illustrate that the Intuitives are aware of their cultural and commercial worth and realize that the labels that have been imposed on them have market value, which they can use to their own advantage. Although it was to his detriment, McLaren took control of the pricing of his work and implied that he would not accept any *less* than minimum wage or leave the matter to market forces. Most Intuitives seem to feel that the recognition of their work involves an obligation on the part of institutions and private patrons to ensure their economic survival, an expectation which is the most frequent source of conflict with their patrons. In some instances, patrons are to blame – artists, especially those who are illiterate or mentally ill, have sometimes been blatantly exploited – but some artists *are* unreasonable and even threatening in making their demands. The most successful Intuitives are those who are able to develop positive, long-term relationships with patrons and dealers. Wilfred Francis, who has been active since the 1960s and produces astonishingly beautiful fantastic images in pen and ink on paper, only recently started receiving the attention his work warrants.²⁹⁵ The reason was not that his artistic worth was not recognized by the likes of Boxer but that he was not interested in selling and priced his work well above what collectors were willing to pay. The elderly but still active Francis has now developed a working relationship with some local collectors and lowered his prices, although they are still higher than average for the living Intuitives. He had his first solo exhibition at the Mutual Gallery in 2005 and was also included in the NGJ's

²⁹⁵ For more information on Wilfred Francis, see: <http://cavinmorris.blogspot.com/>

Intuitives III exhibition. His belated ascent into the Intuitives pantheon again illustrates the extent to which that canon is generated by its patronage.

The dependency of the Intuitives stands in contrast with the long-term gains that can be made by their specialized patrons. Few have the sort of wealth that is usually required to build a significant art collection. Among the exceptions are the pioneering reggae music executive Chris Blackwell and the diplomat John Pringle, who have both also been active in tourism. Pringle was a major collector of Kapo's work while Blackwell owns many works by Albert Artwell. It is still possible, however, to compile a significant Intuitives collection, in terms of quantity and quality, on a relatively small budget and the work has the potential to appreciate significantly in the second-sales market, much more so than most mainstream artists. As pointed out earlier, most are white expatriates or lighter-skinned Jamaicans and their outsider status has certainly contributed to the mixed reception of the Intuitives in Jamaica, since it reinforces the sense that it is an externally imposed construct that is out of step with the "true," albeit highly conflicted cultural values of mainstream Jamaica. It is also significant that Pringle and Blackwell are white Jamaicans who descended from the plantocracy and are not part of the newer black Jamaican elites who have expressed discomfort with the Intuitives concept because it questions their own cultural status.

10. The Intuitives and their Communities

Most of the Intuitives live in poor rural and urban communities, far removed, physically and socially, from the life environment of their patrons. Visiting their homes is essential to the sort of first-hand relationship specialized patrons or researchers typically maintain with these artists and this often takes the visitors into areas of Jamaica that are only rarely

visited by persons of their social background. The artists' sometimes spectacularly decorated homes and eccentric personalities add to the sense of embarking on an exotic, slightly dangerous adventure, which contributes to the attraction of the Intuitives. The Intuitives are usually well known in their communities and directions are easily obtained, especially when it is clarified that the person sought is "the artist who lives here."

Most of the Intuitives thus seem have some standing within their communities, although their renown may also be a function of the outside visitors they regularly receive. Their homes often serve as landmarks and several, such as Everald Brown and Leonard Daley, added to the visual identity of their communities by painting signs and decorations for neighbors' homes or businesses. Those who head church communities, such as Kapo, Everald Brown and Eli Jah, enjoy more obvious leadership positions but other Intuitives often also regard themselves as spiritual leaders and social commentators. Errol McKenzie notoriously corners whoever attempts to speak with him about his work with intense, lengthy visionary sermons about sin, corruption and redemption and routinely complains that his views do not get the nationwide exposure he craves. The more benign Leonard Daley liked to entertain his visitors with amusing riddles and tall tales about personal experiences, which always involved a "lesson." Dunkley's wish to keep his work together as a museum is evidence of a similar sense of social mission. Such sense of vocation and desire to contribute to society's wellbeing is not unique to Jamaica. Some classic examples of Outsider art, such as Simon Rodia's *Watts Towers* (1921-1954) in Los Angeles, are public art works that make a dramatic intervention into their environment and help to define their communities.

It is tempting to romanticize the Intuitives as popular leaders and teachers but this would obscure the significant amount of community-based conflict that surrounds their work and lives. Kapo, as we have seen earlier, experienced hostility from members of the communities where he lived because of his suspected involvement in Obeah. As we saw in Chapter 5, Kapo suffered a tense relationship with a neighboring Rastafarian group which involved stone-throwing and other incidents, although this was consistent with the general strife between militant Rastas and traditional Revivalists at that time. (Reynolds n.d.; Small 1975) Leonard Daley had in the mid 1980s moved to rural St Catherine where he lived on a large, well-fruited lot of land and had constructed a wooden shack that was covered and surrounded by fantastic painted images and carvings. Boxer rightly called them apotropaeic, an interpretation which was confirmed by Daley himself (Boxer 1989, 10), but this did not prevent members of the community from capturing and destroying his home while he was in hospital in the late 1990s. He had to move back to Kingston to live with family afterwards although he was apparently the rightful owner of the land. Ras Dizzy was in essence homeless because he was unable to integrate himself into any of the communities where he attempted to live, which was also a function of his paranoid behavior. Allan "Zion" Johnson was in the mid 1980s forced to move from his original home in August Town because of harassment from neighbors and was shot in his face during that episode but survived that attack. Even the mild-mannered Woody had difficulties with a member of his own family who regularly stole from him and tried to force him out of his Castleton home. Many other examples could be cited and most Intuitives have had to share their income with their communities, often involuntarily. Several have also suffered from violent crimes: Byron Johnson, a former neighbor of

Daley in rural St Catherine, was shot to death at his gate and it was rumored that Zion, whose official cause of death was a heart attack, may have died during an assault.

These tragic tales can be attributed to the generally high crime and conflict levels in Jamaican society but the unique situation of the Intuitives also plays a role. Visiting patrons often leave laden with paintings or carvings which publicly signals that cash has been left behind. This naturally makes the artists, many of whom are elderly, vulnerable to attacks and extortion. The fear of occult practices and of mental illness also plays a role. Most of the Intuitives are deemed “strange” by their communities, which only adds to the resentment about the outside endorsement and economic support they receive. The outsider-insider position of the Intuitives in the Jamaican art world is thus mirrored within their own communities, in which their status is equally ambivalent and contested and, ironically, this is to a considerable extent the result of their consecration.

11. Conclusion

Although it derives selectively from popular art and intersects uncomfortably with tourist art, there is no doubt that Intuitive art is essentially a construct of the mainstream art world and the necessarily contested product of the negotiation of Jamaica’s postcolonial cultural narratives. As such, it sheds revealing light on the largely unacknowledged and unresolved assumptions about “high” and “low” culture and cultural legitimacy that shape the postcolonial Jamaican art world.

While the Intuitives construct can be easily critiqued, it cannot be dismissed altogether. More so than the previous attempts to identify a Jamaican Primitive school, it has allowed for previously marginalized talent to be recognized and nurtured. Everald Brown would probably never have made his spectacular *Instrument for Four People*

(1985) – a large, intricately painted and carved combination of a guitar, harp, rumba box and drum incorporated into the overall, symbolic shape of a dove – if he had not been bolstered by the support of the NGJ and Harmony Hall. [Ill. 214] In turn, he would not have made at least five more versions of it, some of them more beautiful than the original, were it not for the specialized market demand. [Ill. 215] The uneasy synergy between the canonization and commodification of Intuitive art thus provided the opportunity and space for some of the most exciting art ever made in Jamaica.

Despite its theoretical and ideological shortcomings and the problematic social dynamics and intense contestations that have surrounded it, the Intuitive construct has played a significant role in the development of 20th century Jamaican art. I therefore believe that the term Intuitive should be retained to designate the historical category and canon – and nothing else – but that it should be placed in a self-reflexive, critical frame that makes it clear that, as Metcalf has argued, “definitions of art mean little in themselves, but their use to elevate human expression and the human beings who are expressing themselves makes these definitions potent tools in the development and control of society” (1983, 289).

CONCLUSION

This dissertation presents an inquiry into the social role of visual art in the postcolonial world and, particularly, the interplay between the ideological and economic forces that steer its development. Jamaica facilitates a rich case study on these subjects, because of its high level of cultural production and self-confidence, which is supported by fairly well articulated cultural and political ideas; its sizeable art community and well-established cultural infrastructure and art market; and its dependence on a substantial tourism industry in which art serves both as a product and an attraction. Jamaica's postcolonial cultural characteristics have emerged in a context of significant socio-economic inequities and ideological and political strife, which has been complicated by several factors: the political empowerment of the popular masses and the geo-political dynamics of the Cold War; the development of a vigorous and at times downright tumultuous public sphere characterized by deep distrust of the political and cultural establishment; and a troubled relationship with the metropolitan West and its cultural values and hierarchies which has been intensified by migration and exposure to the international media. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that key stakeholders in the Jamaican art world have paid significant attention to the ideological and economic potential of art, with high expectations about its efficacy in both areas.

I proposed to use as an analytical tool two related concepts that are relevant to the questions raised by this dissertation, namely "art worlds" (Becker 1982) and the "field of cultural production" (Bourdieu 1993), which both consider the social forces that shape cultural production and the definitions and hierarchies therein. Bourdieu's model,

furthermore, considers the role of the field of cultural production in social formation and particularly, the interplay of economic and symbolic capital in these processes. For the purposes of this dissertation, I distinguished three closely related “worlds” within the broader context of the Jamaican art world or field of cultural production, namely the mainstream, popular and tourist worlds, which each have their own dynamics and in which different interactions occur between the ideological and the economic. In discussing these “sub-worlds,” I however also focused on the relationships between them and particularly on how the concepts of “art” and “high” and “low” culture, which are, as such, constructs of the mainstream, are mobilized with regards to the popular and tourist worlds. In the final chapter, I examined the case of the Intuitives as a specific product of those interactions.

1. Narrating Jamaican Art and the Politics of Representation

The intense culture wars of the postcolonial Jamaican art world, which were discussed throughout this dissertation, reflect a self-conscious preoccupation with the politics of representation, which has been one of the crucial driving forces in the development of local art. This should not surprise, since colonialism had deprived its subjects of control over their cultural representation and since the displacements of the Middle Passage and colonial migration had precluded a legitimizing connection to any clear or local past. This has been perpetuated in the postcolonial socio-racial hierarchies and in the anxieties about continued dependence on social and cultural norms and forces that are external to Jamaican culture and society – the “mimic men” syndrome against which much of the postcolonial Jamaican and, indeed, Caribbean culture has been arguing (Naipaul 1969 & 2001). These driving concerns are evident in the art itself, in its audience reception and

also in the how art-historical narratives have been constructed and critiqued. The mainstream Jamaican art world, in particular, has not just preoccupied itself with defining Jamaican art, as it “happens to be,” but also with debating *what* “legitimate” Jamaican art should represent and *how* this should be done or, conversely, whether it should be “Jamaican” at all. Equally important, these debates have concerned *who* should control these representations, a question which has been applied to the artists, art historians, critics and cultural administrators who are active in this field.

The orthodoxy is, we have seen, that modern Jamaican art has galvanized the national psyche and embodies its emerging national identity and ideals – a nationalist conception of cultural production as a crucial instrument in the struggle against the detrimental cultural, social and political legacies of colonialism. This conception of the social role of modern Jamaican art is exemplified by the NGJ’s consecration of the mahogany sculpture *Negro Aroused* (1935) as the central national, anticolonial icon and of its maker, Edna Manley, as the artist who defined the modern Jamaican art movement. [Ill. 5] Such narratives have been questioned in recent postcolonial criticism, where it has been argued that postcolonial cultural nationalism serves to promote a fictitious sense of national cohesion that represents the hegemonic interests of the postcolonial elites (e.g. Paul 1996 & 1999; Douglas 2004). As was discussed in chapters 1 to 4, however, the postcolonial Jamaican “master narrative,” and Edna Manley’s dominance therein, has been challenged *from within* Jamaica’s mainstream and from well before it was institutionalized by the NGJ.

The first major such challenge came from Independence era artists such as Barrington Watson, who openly contested the narrow aesthetic and ideological outlook of

the earlier nationalist school and claimed national recognition as a black professional artist. That Watson was able to position himself as Edna Manley's most credible mainstream rival, despite the lack of endorsement from the NGJ, and became an influential, high status public figure in his own right, represented a successful challenge to the social and racial dynamics of postcolonial cultural nationalism. It is of note that this challenge coincides with the emergence of a successful and politically powerful black business class in the 1960s. This underscores that what was posited in the Introduction, namely that mainstream cultural nationalism, as it has appeared in Jamaica, is not a stable, cohesive ideology supported by any stable, cohesive social group but a much more complex, contradictory and evolving phenomenon, in which diverse interests actively compete and in which dominant positions are far more tenuous and contested than is often assumed.

Watson has always insisted that he is an artist first and a *Jamaican* artist second – a pointed reversal of the position taken by the early nationalists – but he has nonetheless produced paintings of Jamaican subjects that are as iconic as the work of the early nationalist school. His painting *Conversation* (1981), which represents a “typical,” albeit heavily classicized village scene of women chatting at a communal stand pipe, implicitly competes with *Negro Aroused* as an icon of Jamaicanness and, if the popularity of its poster reproductions is anything to go by, more effectively reflects the modern Jamaican self-imagination. [Ill. 77] *Conversation*'s uncontentious popularity also suggests that Jamaican audiences prefer the dignified academic realism and ostensible political neutrality of Watson's Jamaican imagery, over the loaded, more easily misread political symbolism and abstracted modernist language of *Negro Aroused*. The identity of the

artists also plays a role in these dynamics: Watson's legitimacy as a black Jamaican artist has always been incontrovertible while Manley was never able to transcend the fact that she was foreign-born and white, despite the vigorous efforts to assert the quintessential Jamaicanness of her work and of her persona as the "Mother of Jamaican art."

Similar racial dynamics and preferences for historical specificity were evident in the controversies about public monuments, although in these pertained to collective representations that were taken outside of the specialized realm of "art" per se and into the public domain. The intensity of these controversies however illustrates that collective symbolic representations matter a great deal in Jamaica and are held to fairly well-articulated, if restrictive representational conventions and standards of cultural respectability. They have also illustrated that the popular masses feel empowered to express their views on such matters publicly and to make specific demands for the accommodation of their preferences, including threats of the destruction of the "offending" monument. These controversies are fuelled by assertive notions of entitlement and rightful ownership and explicitly challenged the authority and expertise of the art establishment to make representational decisions on their behalf. Perhaps even more significant, the critics of these monuments have unhesitatingly challenged the legitimacy of the artists who produced them to serve as spokespersons of their collective identities – a crucial challenge to how the role of such artists was construed in the official narratives. These controversies, it should be noted, have not pitched one clear-cut social group against another: public critics of the controversial monuments have come from a broad range of the social spectrum, from the lower to the upper classes – another indication that the social dynamics of mainstream cultural nationalism are far more

complex and interwoven than they have been made out to be in the critical literature on the subject.

Popular culture has been construed by the mainstream art world as the wellspring of postcolonial Jamaicanness. While this has generally been a selective process of vertical appropriation, in which the mainstream has appointed itself as the arbiter of legitimacy, this relationship has also destabilized the dominant narratives. The canonization of the Intuitives, in particular, has posed a serious challenge to the mainstream art hierarchies: Edna Manley and Barrington Watson have not only competed with each other for supremacy in the local art hierarchies but also with artists such as Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds and John Dunkley, whose canonization has furthermore questioned the cultural superiority of the mainstream. [Ill. 4, 21] The central role given to the Intuitives in the NGJ’s narratives has, as we have seen in Chapter 7, been a source of significant controversy in the mainstream art world, exactly because it challenged the supremacy of the mainstream. What is singled out by the mainstream as legitimate and desirable in the popular culture has furthermore evolved significantly since the start of the nationalist movement and has moved from the traditional African-Jamaican to Rastafari and now, albeit still tenuously, to Dancehall. This, also, supports that there has never been a fixed, consensual mainstream narrative about Jamaican art and culture.

The internal conflicts of the mainstream cultural narratives are significant but the most formidable challenges have come from without, from the popular cultural field, although most of these challenges have been indirect and implicit in the cultural popular cultural production itself. Garveyism and Rastafarianism have however produced their own legitimizing African diasporal cultural narratives, which have promoted black

cultural self-awareness and self-assertion and defined black Jamaicans as part of the transnational community of “Africans at home and abroad.” As we have seen, both movements have very actively used visual propaganda, even more so than mainstream cultural nationalism and arguably with greater success. While the broader socially transformative efficacy of nationalist art works such as *Negro Aroused*, the controversial monuments, contemporary art, and, for that matter, Watson’s *Conversation* is questionable, there is no doubt that a significant number of Jamaicans have been galvanized by the iconic photographs of Marcus Garvey and Haile Selassie and related imagery that have circulated in association with Rastafari and Garveyism. [Ill. 9]

The question arises as to why those Garvey and Haile Selassie images have been so much more successful, in terms of their social impact, than mainstream nationalist icons. Other than the obvious popular appeal of African diasporal identities, as redress to the displacement and dispossession of colonialism, slavery, and racism, and a challenge to the race-class hierarchies of Jamaican nationalism, this has much to do with their historical specificity, in contrast with the symbolic anonymity of *Negro Aroused*. While the symbolism of *Negro Aroused*, with its bare torso and upwards tilted head, is ambiguously perched between self-affirmation and supplication, furthermore, the Haile Selassie and Garvey images unambiguously signify success and high status as formal, affirmative representations of internationally renowned black leaders. As widely reproduced photographically based images, they are easy to read and have the authority of the “real,” and, in the case of Haile Selassie, are further legitimized by their rootedness in deep history and biblical prophecy. They have circulated widely in the public domain, without necessarily being consecrated as “art,” which reminds that this designation is, in

itself, socially restrictive and suggests that this limits the capacity of images to intervene deeply into society. As we have seen, several critics of the controversial monuments have argued that these sculptures would have been acceptable for an art gallery but not for the public domain, which further supports that different representational standards apply to public collective symbols and “art.”

The unease that surrounds the symbolic and formal language used in the controversial monuments and the indifferent response to contemporary art also pertain to the conflicted notions of cultural status and respectability that pervade Jamaican culture as a whole. Such concerns are, I have argued, powerfully present in Garveyism and Rastafari although the understandings of what constitutes cultural respectability depart from those of the mainstream: Garvey’s flamboyant self-promotion collided with elite notions of good taste while Rastafari has specifically positioned itself against the “Babylonian system” and embraced practices, such as the growing of locks and smoking of ganja, that directly challenged its social norms. The cultural standards of these two movements are not insulated from the mainstream, however, and the Garveyite conception of a black “high culture” has for instance played an important role in how Barrington Watson has presented himself as a “black great master.”

Postcolonial Jamaican cultural politics may have questioned the Western cultural hierarchies but they have done so mainly in terms of claiming rightful space for black and Jamaican culture in these hierarchies and not by questioning such hierarchies *per se*. In fact, the preoccupation with the politics of representation in the mainstream and popular culture alike hinges crucially on this unresolved ambivalence about “high” and “low” culture. It also relates to what Peter Wilson (1969 & 1973) has coined as “respectability”

and “reputation,” as two crucial competing social value systems in Jamaican society with the former representing status within the formal hierarchies of the middle classes – for instance the pastor or the teacher – and the latter in the informal, action-driven world of the poor – for instance the rebel leader or the notorious gunman. While “reputation” has significant traction in the popular domain, and, as was evidenced by the reception of the film *The Harder They Come*, significant romantic appeal beyond, there is a widespread conviction in Jamaica that upward social movement necessarily equates achieving “respectability.”

There are, however, significant recent developments in the popular culture that point in other directions. Dancehall arguably reflects a brazen, carnivalesque privileging of “reputation” over the moralized dictates of “respectability,” in aggressive defiance of conventional notions of propriety, civil responsibility and good taste, including those standards which have been articulated in the “politically conscious” aspects of the popular culture. [Ill. 154] The practice of skin bleaching, for instance, not only reflects a physically and psychologically harmful desire to move up in Jamaica’s lingering socio-racial hierarchies, as is conventionally argued, but also a rejection of what has become entrenched as the “right and proper” values of black postcolonial pride. Dancehall fundamentally challenges the postcolonial cultural hierarchies, to the point of their negation. Its association with the current escalation of violence and disorder in Jamaican society – if there is indeed a causal link – however leads to the uncomfortable question whether these powerfully counter-hegemonic developments are symptoms of unproductive social disintegration rather than of popular liberation.

Dancehall lacks the self-reflexive character of other mainstream and popular Jamaican cultural expressions but similar questions have been raised in contemporary art, which has positioned itself more explicitly as a critique of postcolonial Jamaica's cultural hierarchies and orthodoxies. Artists such as David Boxer, Petrona Morrison, Omari Ra, Roberta Stoddart, Dawn Scott, and Natalie Butler have gone far beyond challenging the internal hierarchies of the mainstream, although they have also questioned the gate-keeping powers of the local artistic establishment, and their works reflect critically on the very premises on which conventional notions of what constituted "Jamaican art" were based. While still concerned with issues of identity and the specific question of what, if anything constitutes "Jamaicanness," it interrogates and critiques rather than affirms and considers broader African diasporal or creolized identities or, conversely at the personal level, issues of race, class, gender and sexuality. That these interrogations are evident in the artistic work of David Boxer, who has been the NGJ's Chief Curator since 1975 and, ironically, the author of its nationalist narratives, including the canonization of Edna Manley and the Intuitives, once again underscores the lack of consensus and internal cohesion within the artistic mainstream.

The work of the contemporary Jamaican artists also challenges entrenched notions about "art" itself and thereby also questions how the cultural hierarchies of "high" and "low" have been constructed in postcolonial Jamaica. The audience response to these challenges has, however, ranged from indifference to misunderstanding and rejection. This was evident in the puzzled public reactions to Dawn Scott's *A Cultural Object* (1985) and Natalie Butler's *Import* (2004) installations, although it is significant these were mild in comparison to the monument controversies, no doubt because they were

shown in the relatively sheltered environment of the NGJ and did not face the representational burdens attached to collective national symbols. [Ill. 118, 123] This disconnect has been a critical concern in its own right. Eugene Hyde, one of the precursors of these developments in the post-Independence period, had already in the mid 1960s expressed regret at the lack of a “counter-reaction to the artist from the public” and wished to create a productive critical “friction” between the two (Gloudon 1964a). More recently, the critic Annie Paul (2007) has identified this communicative breakdown as a fundamental failure on the part of local contemporary art and has questioned its entire relevance on the basis of its failure to speak to the popular masses, in contrast to the powerful popular voice of Dancehall. The most recent developments in contemporary art have sought to address this disconnect and tap more directly into the language and dynamics of contemporary popular culture. Ebony G. Patterson, whose work uses the visual language of Dancehall, has been fairly successful in engaging local audiences, as the positive response to her contribution to the NGJ’s *Young Talent V* (2010) exhibition illustrated, but even those efforts are subject to miscommunication, especially pertaining to the challenging issues of gender and sexuality she explores. [Ill. 155]

A major reason for this disconnect is that by abandoning the conventional formal and conceptual codes of “art” and visual representation in general, contemporary Jamaican art speaks a language that is deemed alien by most local audiences, whose perceptions about “art” have been trained by the nationalist school, even though these are socially restrictive in their own right. Ironically, then, it is perceived as more inaccessible and incomprehensible than conventional mainstream art, precisely because it challenges the designation of “art” and requires even more rarefied cultural skills to decipher. This

raises the question whether the critical interventions of Jamaican contemporary art are futile, since its social reach and impact are even more limited than that of the nationalist school. The questions asked in contemporary Jamaican art are however entirely relevant to contemporary Jamaican society and culture and it is important that there is critical debate on these subjects, although it is equally important to recognize that this occurs in a socially limited and limiting context. There must, furthermore, also be room for artistic expressions that do not address collective identities but engage with individual issues instead and it is inevitable that this will have less collective audience appeal. The failure to recognize that there is a strong individualizing cosmopolitanism that exists in tension with the collective impulses in Jamaican society (Wardle 2000) is, in actuality, one of the fundamental problems in how its postcolonial culture has been narrated.

The assertiveness, productivity and self-reflexivity of contemporary Jamaican popular culture and the force of the recent popular challenges to the status quo may be exceptional, but the overall trajectories sketched in this section are not unique to Jamaica. On the contrary, with allowance for local specificities, the general developmental patterns, in the art, its representation and its reception are replicated throughout the Caribbean. Nationalist schools motivated by comparable social dynamics emerged in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Martinique, Trinidad, Guyana and Barbados and the Caribbean diasporas and were followed by similar critical challenges and departures to those that have occurred in Jamaica – shared patterns which have been well recognized in the recent collective representation of modern and contemporary Caribbean art (e.g. Poupeye 1998; Mosaka 2007). In fact, these dynamics are arguably characteristic of postcolonial culture as a whole and this challenges how the dynamics of

postcolonial cultural nationalism have been understood in the critical literature on the subject.

2. Tourism and Cultural Commodification

Up to the 1960s, mainstream postcolonial Jamaican art, and the critical discourse that surrounded it, argued explicitly against the reductive cultural effects of tourism, which was moralized as a “selling out” of Jamaica and Jamaicans and, with its disregard for authenticity and native dignity, as a threat to the efforts to articulate a legitimate, autonomous and “respectable” postcolonial cultural identity. With other words, postcolonial Jamaican art has not only argued against the “mimic men” syndrome, but also against the “minstrelisation” of Jamaicans and Jamaican culture in tourism – an equally contentious subject that takes on special significance in a post-slavery society which continues to struggle with racism in its internal and external social dynamics.

While the cultural effects of tourism continue to rile local sensibilities, as the recent media-driven controversies about the “big bamboo” carvings in Fern Gully illustrate, it has become a less immediate concern to the mainstream Jamaican art world, to the point where it is now virtually absent from the critical and art historical literature on the subject. [Ill. 95] Part of this is no doubt because Kingston, where mainstream artistic activity is concentrated, ceased being a major tourism destination in the late 1960s, which minimized the direct interaction between tourist and mainstream cultural production – a situation which may again change if current efforts to revive Kingston as a tourist destination succeed. Jamaica’s current geographic separation between the mainstream and tourist art worlds is fairly unique in the Caribbean. In other major tourist destinations such as the Bahamas and Barbados there is no such separation and

mainstream artists and critics continue to engage actively with the cultural effects of tourism (e.g. Thompson 2006 & 2007).

It remains, however, that Jamaican tourist art predates mainstream modern art by more than thirty years. Jamaican tourist art also far exceeds the relatively small field of mainstream art, in terms of the volume of work produced and the number of persons actively involved in its production and sale. It has also been more exclusively concerned with representing “the Jamaican” than any other artistic category, no matter how problematic these representations may be. It has, by virtue of its international circulation, been more actively involved in shaping external perceptions of Jamaica than most of the other local art forms – the visual culture of Jamaican music excepted – and the more innocuous forms of tourist art has also been consumed by Jamaicans, for whom it provides accessible and affordable visual tokens of Jamaicanness. There are also instances where the dividing line between tourist art and more “legitimate” Jamaican art forms is very subtle and a matter of context and interpretation rather than the substance of the work itself. Jamaican mainstream icons such as Karl Parboosingh’s *Jamaican Interlude* (1958) or Osmond Watson’s *The Lawd is My Shepard* (1969), for instance, both represent market vendors, a subject that features prominently in tourist art, and stand out from the latter only because of the more sophisticated formal language and the shift in tone, which focuses on the dignity rather than the exotic appeal of the figures – distinctions which are both highly subjective. [Ill. 68, 79] Conversely, much of the work of the Intuitives, an artistic canon that relies crucially on notions of purity and authenticity, has circulated in the tourist market and was created, at least in part, in response to its market demands. [Ill. 40, 42] The failure to recognize tourism as a

constitutive part of postcolonial Jamaican culture, whether positive or negative, is therefore untenable and inevitably results in an incomplete, lop-sided representation of the dynamics of modern Jamaican culture and society.

Some notions of “high” and “low” are evident within the hierarchies of the tourist art world itself – the higher end, original products of, say, Rhoda Jackson versus the mass-produced trinkets for the mass market [Ill. 186] – but tourist art as a category has conventionally been relegated to the lowest status in Jamaican cultural hierarchies, mainly because it fails to meet the standards to which “righteous” postcolonial art is held and cannot be selectively canonized, as has been done to aspects of popular art. As I argued in Chapter 6, however, tourist art is not concerned with the cultural “right or wrong” but primarily with profit and market share. The struggles for position within and control over the market hierarchies of tourism have, in turn, been as pronounced and contentious as the mainstream art world’s struggles over the cultural narratives. As we have seen, these have included intermittent public protests, some of them violent, by formal and informal craft vendors and overt defiance of laws and regulations by means of illegal vending and tourist harassment and more carnivalesque provocations of mainstream morality such as the infamous “big bamboo” carvings. Invariably, such transgressions have been justified by the need and the right of the artists and vendors involved to earn a living and the recognition of this need weakens the case against the culturally detrimental effects of tourism.

Access to economic advancement is indeed one of the main areas of social contestation in postcolonial Jamaica, which should not surprise given the level of poverty and economic inequality. It is therefore only normal that the economic potential of the

visual arts has been at issue in the *entire* Jamaican art world, even though this exists in tension with how the ideological role of postcolonial art has been conventionally construed. The most balanced, matter-of-fact position on the subject is arguably found in the popular art world, especially Rastafarian circles, where the ideological and economic functions of art are generally seen as complementary and commodification as a means to achieve economic self-sufficiency, as long as the modalities are within the control of the artist and vendor and free of exploitation. The anxieties about cultural commodification, in contrast, have been almost entirely confined to the mainstream art world, among those who maintain a purist view of ‘art’ and its social imperatives in the postcolonies. This very same mainstream art world has however recently produced a vigorous local art market, in which many have successfully made a living, as producers or as dealers, and in which art has become an appreciable asset to those who own it. And, as we have seen, the contentions about the gate-keeping power of the NGJ and its Chief Curator David Boxer, ultimately also pertained to their direct and indirect influence on the market hierarchies and the capacity of consecrated artists to earn significant income.

The commodification of mainstream Jamaican art has thus had a dual effect. On one hand it has been seen as a threat to its cultural status and legitimacy and it must be acknowledged that commercialization has encouraged predictability and routinization and produced what are, at least to me, some of the least engaging forms of Jamaican art. Mainstream cultural commodification has encouraged conformity, as it has entrenched the formally and thematically conventional and it has also challenged the viability of those art forms that depart from those norms, since these are not supported from other, non-profit funding sources in the Jamaican context.

On the other hand, the commodification of mainstream art has provided Jamaica with a significant area of economic activity – the value of which is almost impossible to quantify because most of it has been part of the informal, “off the record” economy – and provided commercially successful artists with a potent source of alternative validation in the mainstream hierarchies. The local commercial success of Jamaican art market has also contributed to significant shifts in cultural policy and art is increasingly regarded as a primarily “for profit” activity by the Jamaican government, with significant effects on arts funding since art’s perceived connection to wealth suggests that the local art institutions should be less dependent on the public purse. If this trend continues, this may restrict the ability of institutions such as the NGJ and the EMC to support those art forms which are not deemed to be marketable in the Jamaican culture industries but which are equally important to Jamaica’s cultural health.

Generally speaking, cultural commodification has provided many Jamaicans with socio-economic opportunities and has, indeed, made much of its artistic production possible, but it has also been a limiting force, which has constrained artists to producing what is marketable, whether that is socially problematic, as in some tourist art, or conformist, as in the mainstream. Given these realities, it is not productive to be dismissive about commodification or, conversely, to overlook its negative effects altogether and to celebrate the culture industries uncritically as Jamaica’s source of socio-economic salvation. Instead, it should be recognized that ideological and economic steering forces have always been intertwined in the development of Jamaican culture and that understanding the contrary, dynamic relationship between the two is crucial to understanding the social role of art in postcolonial Jamaica.

3. Art and Social Formation in Postcolonial Jamaica

Modern and contemporary Jamaican art, whether mainstream, popular or tourist, presents a revealing and at times troubling mirror of the realities, experiences and aspirations of Jamaican society, but the assertion that art has played an active formative role in postcolonial Jamaica, because of its ideological capacity to consolidate power or to bring on social change, is much harder to substantiate, as are the mechanisms by means of which such social effects are achieved. While there is no doubt that there are strong hegemonic and counter-hegemonic impulses in postcolonial Jamaican cultural production, the relationship between these two is very complicated. Much of what has been discussed in this dissertation indeed serves as a cautionary tale against using reductive binaries to describe the dynamics of postcolonial societies and cultures and, regrettably, such binary interpretations have been the norm rather than the exception in postcolonial cultural criticism.

The “art world” (Becker 1982) and “field of cultural production” (Bourdieu 1993) models, in contrast, allow for the complexity and contradictoriness of Jamaica’s cultural negotiations to be appreciated, whether this is within the specific context of the mainstream, popular or tourist worlds, or the broader context of the Jamaican art world as a whole. In the Introduction of this dissertation I had, however, also questioned the relevance of these models, which were derived from the cultural context of the metropolitan West in the mid 20th century, to the specific context of postcolonial Jamaica. As I argued there, it is the mainstream Jamaican art world which most closely resembles the empirical context on which Becker and Bourdieu based their models but this does not mean that there are no substantive differences in that field either. Based on the

development of metropolitan Modernism, Becker and Bourdieu could assume a more or less linear development whereby the status quo is challenged by an avant-garde which then becomes the new status quo only to be challenged again by new avant-gardes, and so forth. While this pattern is to some extent replicated in the development of mainstream Jamaican art, the nationalist school has retained its dominance within the mainstream and has been substantively challenged only from without.

The development of mainstream Jamaican art has also been complicated by other dynamics, such as the ambivalent external relationship with the development of Western mainstream art and the powerful alternative trajectories of the local tourist and popular art worlds. In the Jamaican context, the latter two sub-worlds are too substantial and influential to be relegated to the margins of the art world and the popular art world, in particular, has posed such significant challenges to the mainstream world that the question arises about which of the two is in effect the dominant centre of the Jamaican art world. The tourist and popular worlds do not resemble the mainstream art world much, in terms of its supporting institutions and internal hierarchies, but the dynamic negotiations that shape these fields are very similar, internally and in terms of the contentious dialogues between these sub-worlds that shape the Jamaican art as a whole. The question to be addressed, then, is what role these dialogues have played in social formation in postcolonial Jamaica.

Pierre Bourdieu has posited that economic capital competes with symbolic capital to dynamically shape the relative position individuals and groups within the field of power that shapes class relations. He specifically argued that cultural capital – the capacity to articulate informed interpretations about cultural products and to make

decisions that shape its development – appears deceptively innate but is in fact socially acquired and part of the attributes by which ruling elites establish and maintain their social dominance (Bourdieu 1984). As we have seen, the ownership and nature of such cultural capital has been challenged in many ways in the development of Jamaican art. The cultural dominance of the colonial elite was challenged by the emerging postcolonial elites whose newly acquired dominance has itself been continuously challenged, to the point where it has never achieved any true or stable dominance. This was illustrated by the internal struggles for control over the mainstream's hierarchies, narratives, and dominant mode of artistic representation but the most significant challenges have come from without, in the form of the disregard for mainstream cultural norms and hierarchies that is evident in tourist and popular art alike. Despite the conflicted concern with cultural respectability in Garveyism and Rastafari, even more active and fundamental challenges have recently come from the popular domain, which has defied mainstream notions of good taste and cultural propriety with uncommon self-confidence and energy.

Far from being a passive source of cultural content for the mainstream articulations of Jamaican nationhood, it is indeed Jamaica's turbulent popular domain which has produced the most compelling, socially transformative and defining symbolic capital in the development of postcolonial Jamaican culture and the mainstream has been continuously challenged to renegotiate its terms of engagement with this socio-cultural force. This is echoed in the subaltern political empowerment of the popular masses in postcolonial Jamaican democracy, as a force with which the political system has had to reckon and negotiate in order to maintain a semblance of social stability and to make modern Jamaican statehood possible (Gray 2004). These combined cultural and political

dynamics may not have led to a more socio-economically equitable society – in fact it could be argued that they have worsened the socio-economic divide and made it harder for Jamaica to achieve the conventional markers of development – but they have deeply undermined and destabilized the social dominance and control of the postcolonial Jamaican elites.

Bourdieu acknowledged the relative autonomy of the cultural field, in which the economically dominated can indeed be symbolically dominant, and argued that the social field is shaped by an ongoing struggle between the contrary dynamics of the cultural field and those of the politically and economically dominant, which may not only lead to challenges of existing cultural hierarchies but also of the social order. He specifically cited the example of the “penniless bohemian avant-garde artist,” as an agent of cultural and social change. (1993, 40-45) The role of the penniless artist is not a role most Jamaican artists willingly play, however, which should not surprise since Jamaican society was born in mercantilism and retains strong mercantile and entrepreneurial values. In recent times, only a small and relatively marginal group of art world stakeholders has held on to the view that Jamaica’s art and culture needs to be safeguarded from the “contamination” of commodification to maintain its ideological integrity. While there are lingering concerns about the “minstrelsy” in tourist art and the excessive materialism of Dancehall culture, the dominant view, across the cultural spectrum, is now that cultural commodification is in actuality desirable and an important factor in the social utility of art. Where the contemporary Jamaican cultural world departs from Bourdieu’s model, then, is that the economic value of art is not necessarily seen as a

threat but as a legitimate source of cultural status and a powerful ally to its capacity to transform society.

4. Conclusion

The Jamaican field of cultural production is a field of struggles that are arguably more intense than in those societies that do not have such uncertain, fragmented origins and present-day socio-cultural tensions and economic inequities. It is shaped by complex and contentious internal and external dynamics, many of them irresolvable conflicts about ownership, representational control, hierarchies, cultural legitimacy, moral authority, and economic entitlements. While not unique to Jamaica or the postcolonies – much of the current global cultural landscape has, after all, been shaped by the culture wars of the last fifty years and these have revolved around issues that are very similar to the ones discussed in this dissertation – the intensity and contentiousness of the Jamaican cultural struggles mirror the socio-political conflicts that shape postcolonial Jamaican society as a whole. It is tempting to use this to support the thesis that Jamaica is a segmented or plural society with only limited socio-cultural cohesion (Smith 1965). This, in turn, may lead to the conclusion that there is no such thing as “Jamaican art” and, more broadly, that any attempt at defining cultural Jamaicanness is futile.

It would be reductive, however, to represent the intense conflicts and communicative failures that have shaped the contemporary Jamaican cultural field as evidence of postcolonial cultural or societal failure for there are no winners yet, and there perhaps need to be no winners, in this field of struggle. It cannot be denied, after all, that Jamaica *is* a culturally vibrant society and that the country has, despite its socio-political turbulence, thus far retained a level of functionality which is lacking in true failed states,

such as Somalia or nearby Haiti. The conflicts that rack the Jamaican cultural field, more than anything else, prove that the stakes are perceived to be high and worth fighting over and the various artistic expressions discussed in this dissertation do reflect an undeniable degree of cohesiveness, in terms of the shared iconographies, formal characteristics and underlying ideas about art, culture and society.

It may be misguided to expect cultural consensus and cohesion in a postcolonial society such as Jamaica and it is arguably in the crucible of conflict and contradiction, in this constant and necessarily unresolved questioning and in the interplay between divergent answers, rather than in any resolutions or certainties, that postcolonial Jamaican culture and identities are being forged. And it is in these struggles, also, that the capacity of Jamaican cultural production to challenge the prevailing social order is most obvious. The question remains, however, whether this will eventually lead to a more equitable and peaceful society, whatever that may ultimately be, or cause Jamaica to descend into anarchy and failed statehood.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Introduction

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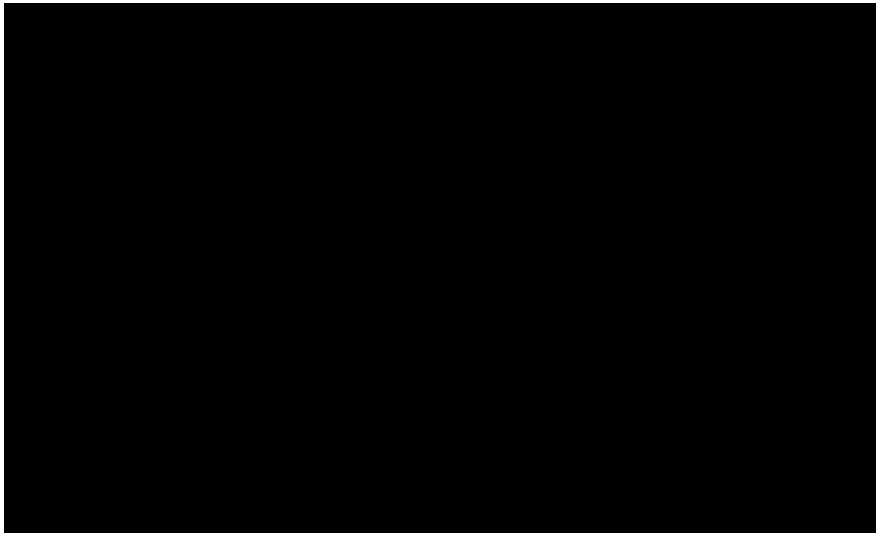
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12. Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds – *Be Still* (1970), Larry Wirth Collection, NGJ (*permission not available*)



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13. Jamaican Taino – Djuo
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21. John Dunkley – *Banana Plantation* (c1945), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



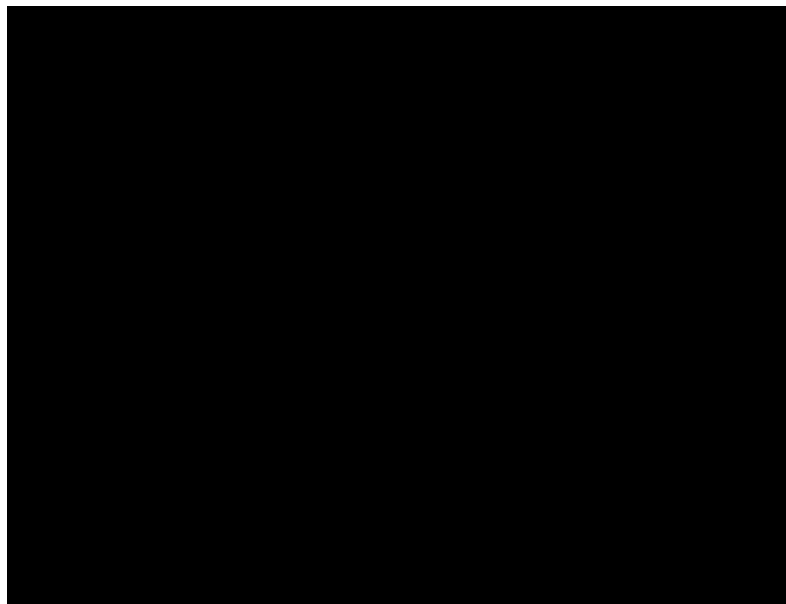
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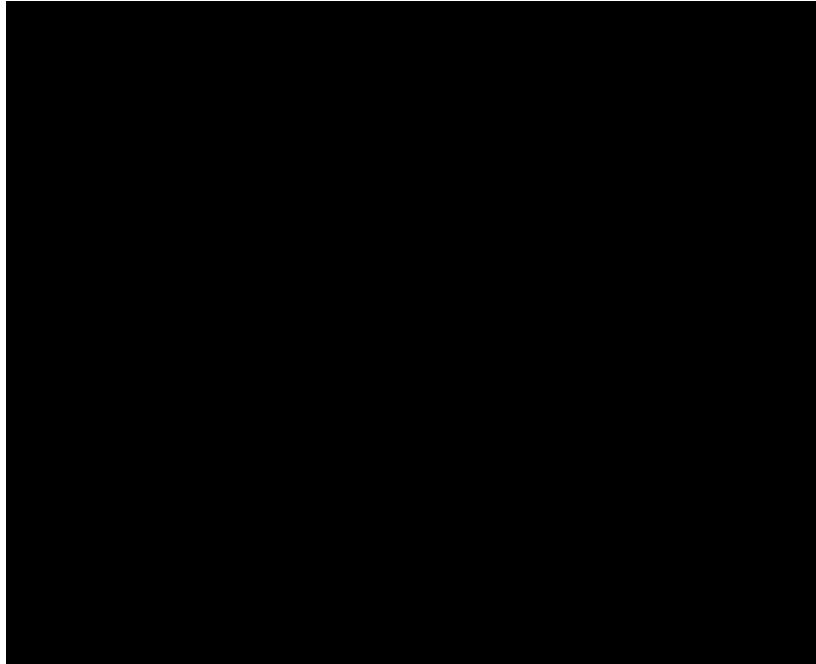
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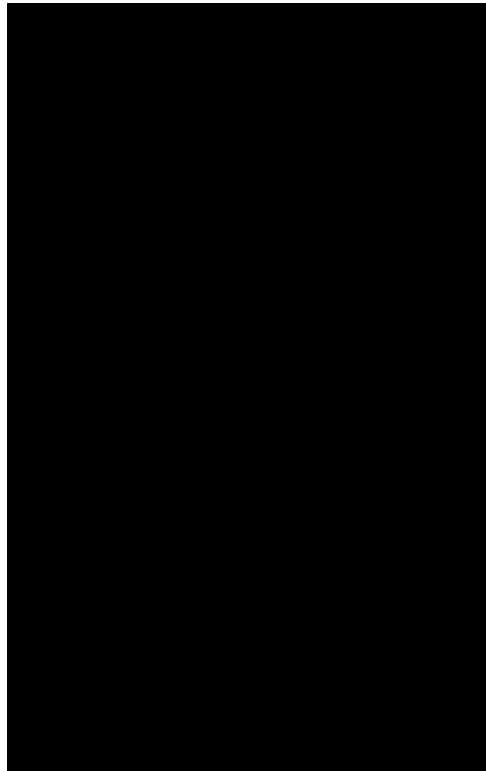
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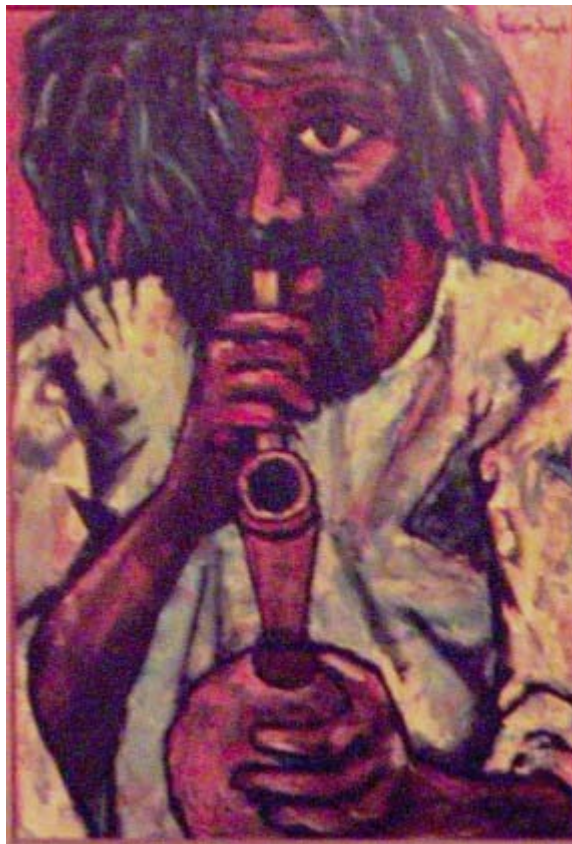
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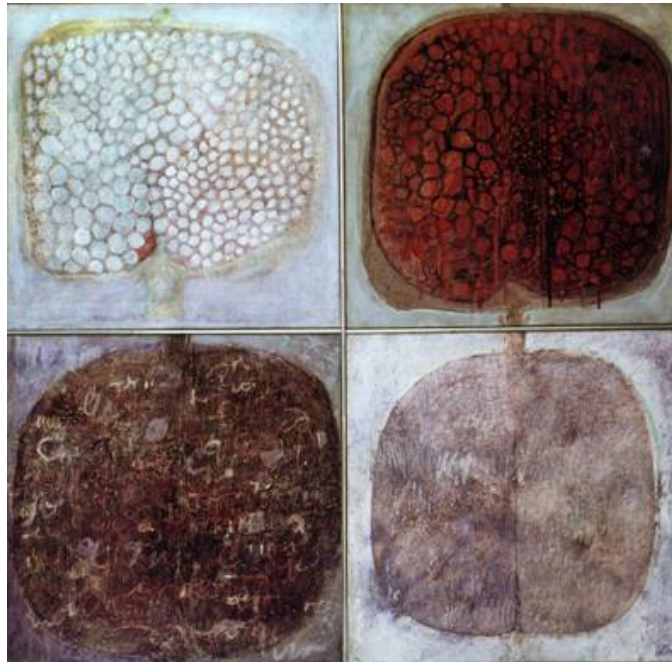
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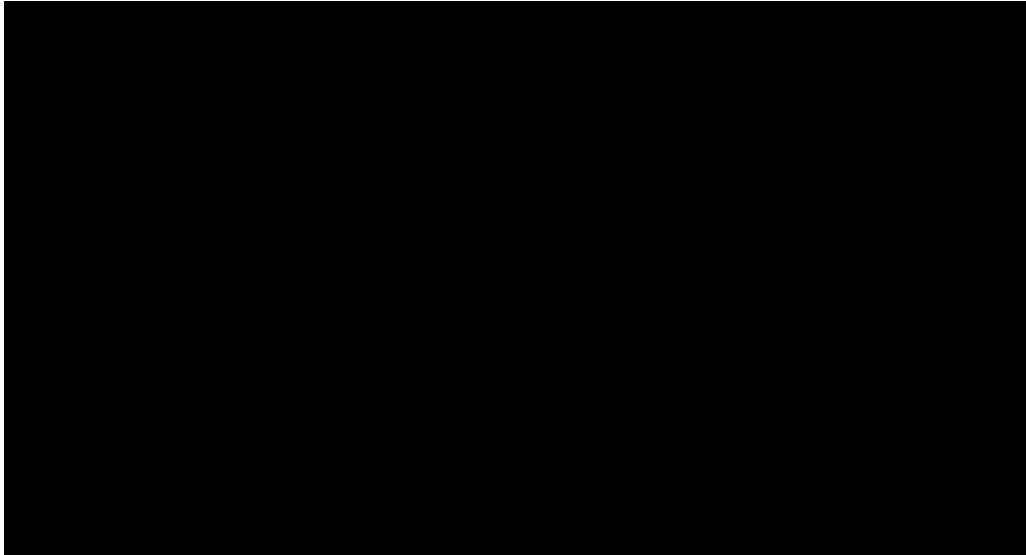
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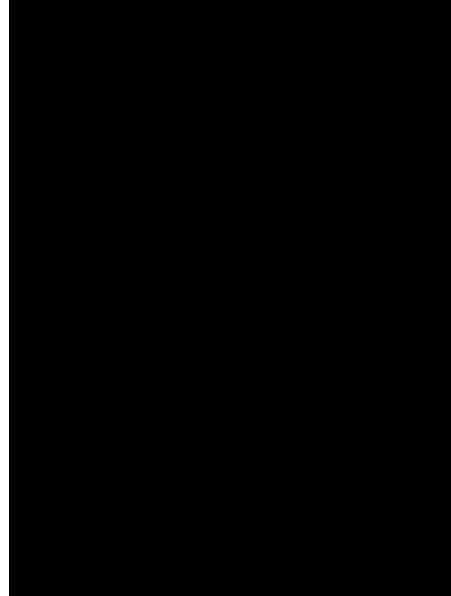
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42. David Miller Sr or Jr - assorted curios (n.d.), Private Collection



43. John Wood – *Lila* (c1941), whereabouts unknown



44. Koren der Harootian – *Seated Woman Holding Sugar Cane* (1930), Collection: NGJ
(photograph Maria LaYacona)



45. Isaac Mendes Belisario – *Sketches of Character: Koo-Koo or Actor Boy* (1837-38), Collection: Maurice and Valerie Facey, on extended loan to the NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



46. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (detail, 1985), Collection: NGJ, detail of installation (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



47. James Valentine – *A Negro Boy* (1891), photograph, Aaron and Marjorie Matalon Collection, NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



48. Isaac Mendes Belisario – *Cocoa Walks* (c1840), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



49. A. Duperly & Sons – *Village View* (n.d.), Aaron and Marjorie Matalon Collection, NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)

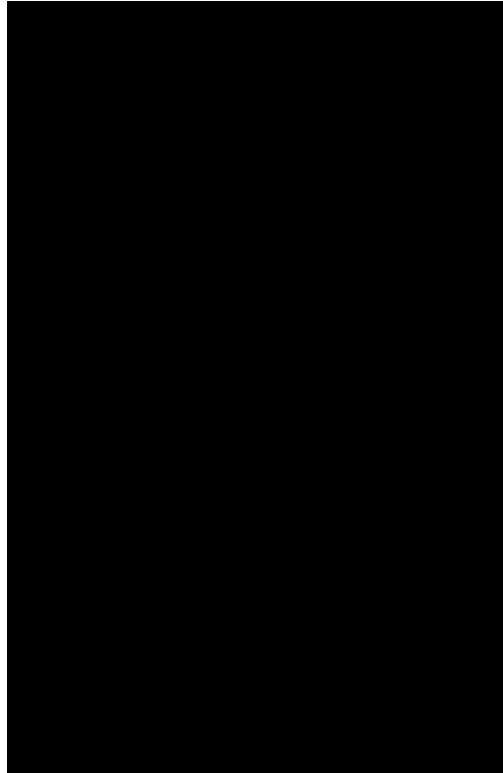


50. Barrington Watson – *The Garden Party* (1976, detail), Collection: Bank of Jamaica

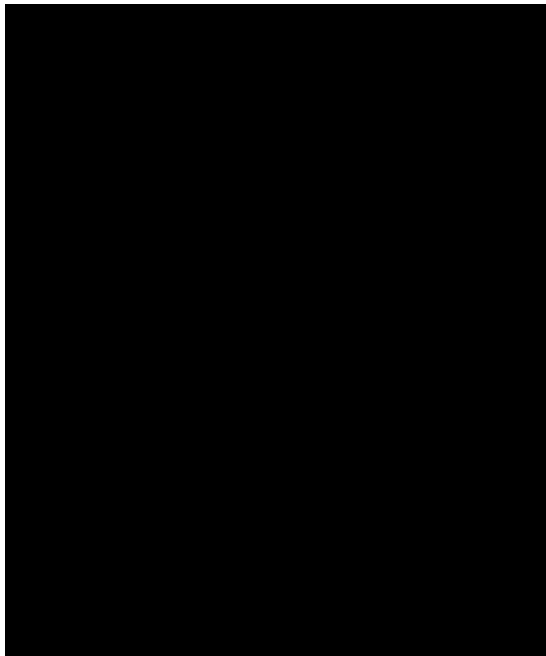


Chapter 2

51. Violet Taylor – *Woman with Basket* (c1915), Aaron and Marjorie Matalon Collection, NGJ
(*permission not available*)



52. Violet Taylor – *Children's Welfare Stamps* (1924) (*permission not available*)



53. Edna Manley – *Listener* (c1923), now lost (photograph courtesy of David Boxer)



54. Edna Manley – *Eve* (1929), Collection: Sheffield Art Gallery (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)

55. Edna Manley – *Pocomania* (1936), Collection: Wallace Campbell (photograph Maria LaYacona)



56. Edna Manley – *Man with Wounded Bird* (1934), Collection: NGJ



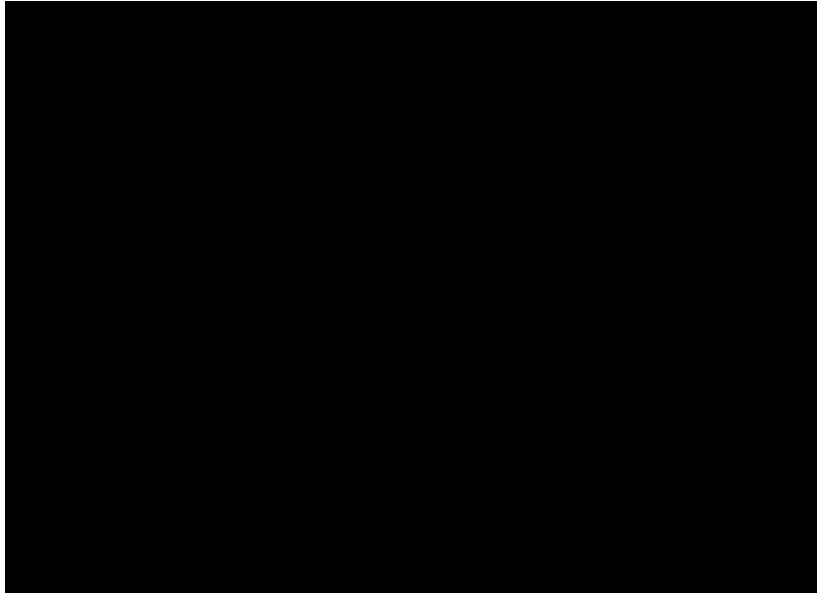


57. Edna Manley – *Horse of the Morning* (1943), Collection: NGJ (Gift of Michael Manley)

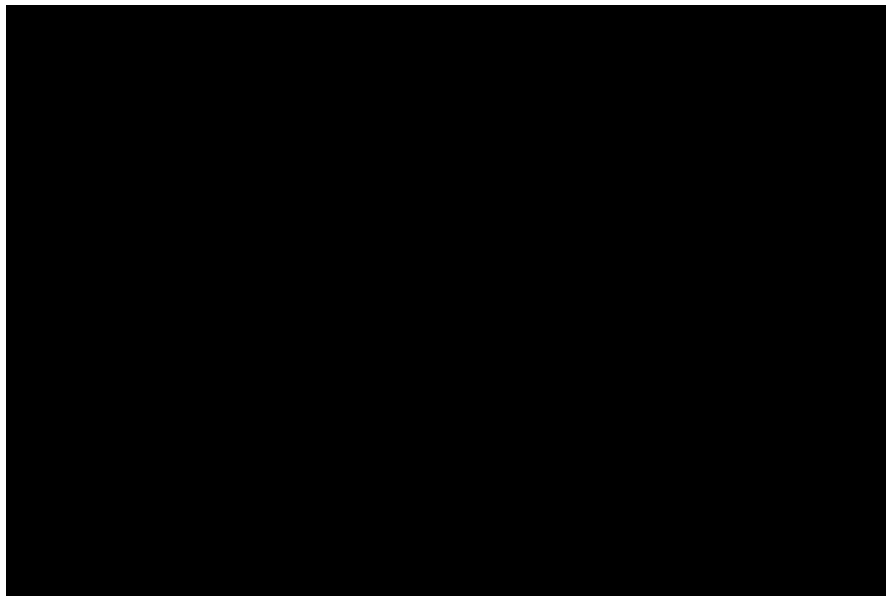
58. Albert Huie – *The Counting Lesson* (1938), Collection: Wallace Campbell (photograph Maria LaYacona)



59. John Wood – *School Children* (c1941), whereabouts unknown (*permission not available*)



60. John Wood – *Conversation Piece* (c1941), whereabouts unknown (*permission not available*)



61. John Wood – *The Garden Boy* (c1941), whereabouts unknown (*permission not available*)



62. Albert Huie – *Sorrel Harvest* (n.d.), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



63. Albert Huie – *Pocomania* (c1945), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



64. Albert Huie – *Noon* (1943), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



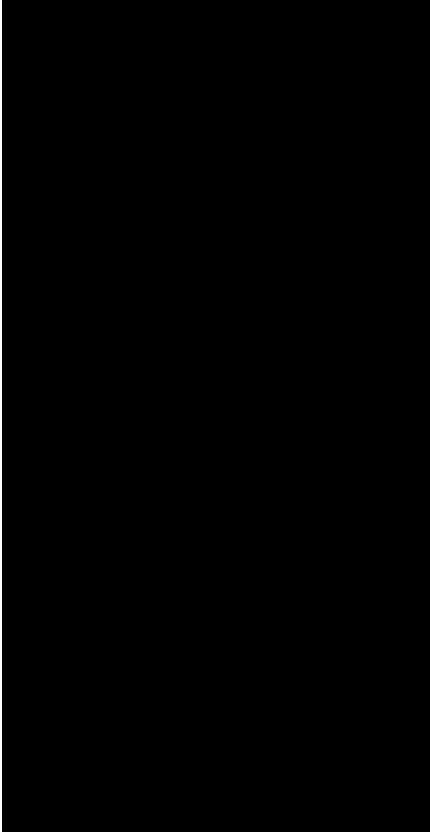


65. Edna Manley – *Diggers* (1936), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)

66. David Pottinger – *Trench Town* (1959), Private Collection (permission not available)



67. Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds – *Angel (Winged Moon Man, 1963)*, Larry Wirth Collection, NGJ
(permission not available)



68. Karl Parboosingh – *Jamaican Interlude (1958)*, Collection: NGJ



69. Karl Parboosingh – *Jamaican Gothic* (1968), A.D. Scott Collection, NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



70. Karl Parboosingh – *Flight Into Egypt* (1974, Collection: NGJ)



71. Eugene Hyde – *Bunch Fruit*
(1959), Collection: NGJ
(photograph courtesy of the
NGJ)



72. Eugene Hyde – *Sun Flowers*
(1967), Collection: NGJ
(photograph Maria LaYacona)



73. Eugene Hyde – *Mask A Come* (1976) , Collection: Bank of Jamaica



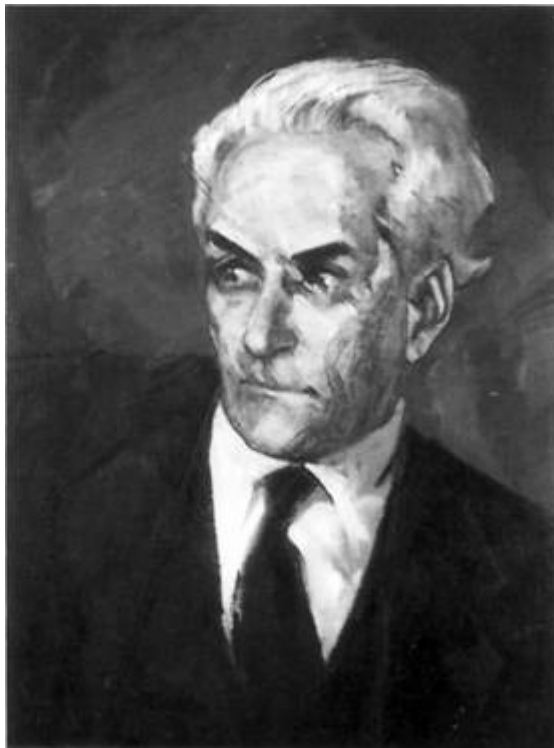
74. Eugene Hyde – *The Landing of the Advisors (Colour is a Personal Thing, 1978)*,
Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



75. Eugene Hyde – *Good Friday (Casualties, 1978)*, Collection: NGJ



76. Barrington Watson – *Norman Manley (1969)*, Aaron and Marjorie Matalon Collection, NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



77. Barrington Watson –
Conversation (1981), Collection:
NGJ (photograph Maria
LaYacona)



78. Osmond Watson –
Masquerade No. 6
(1971), Collection:
Wallace Campbell
(photograph Maria
LaYacona)



79. Osmond Watson – *Peace and Love* (1969), Collection: NGJ



Chapter 3

80. John Bacon – *Rodney Memorial* (1782), Spanish Town Square (photographed in 2006)



81. E.F. Geffowski – *Queen Victoria* (1887), St. William Grant Park, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



82. Dino Feigenspan - Statue of Josephine de Beauharnais, beheaded, Fort de France, Martinique (photographed in 2007, © Dino Feigenspan)



83. Alvin Marriott – *The Jamaican Athlete* (1962), National Stadium, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



84. *Garvey Shrine* (1964), National Heroes Park, Kingston, with bust by Alvin Marriott (photographed in 2011)



85. Jamaican \$ 2 banknote with National Hero Paul Bogle (courtesy of the Bank of Jamaica)



86. National Heroes Mural, John Mills High School, Kingston (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



87. Edna Manley – *Bogle* (1965) at the NGJ in 2010, after restoration (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)





88. Edna Manley – *Growth* (1958), Collection: NGJ

89. Photographer unknown – *Paul Bogle (?)* (c1865) (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



90. Alvin Marriott – *Alexander Bustamante* (1970), St. William Grant Park, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



91. Alvin Marriott – *Norman Manley* (1971), St. William Grant Park, Kingston (photographed in 2011)

92. Alvin Marriott – *Marcus Garvey* (1976), St Ann's Bay Library (photographed in 2011)



93. Alvin Marriott – *Bob Marley* (1985), Celebrity Park, Kingston (photographed in 2004)



94. Clovis – Redemption Song cartoon, *Observer*, August 10, 2003 (courtesy of the *Observer*)



95. Fern Gully stalls with “Big Bamboo” carving by Ronnie Traill (photographed in 2003)



96. Basil Watson – *Emerging Nation* (2000), Holborn Road Park, Kingston
(photographed in 2004)



97. Edna Manley – *He Cometh Forth* (1962), Collection: NGJ



98. Compass Workshop Ltd -
*Monument to the Rt.
Excellent Nanny of the
Windward Maroons* (1999),
National Heroes Park,
Kingston (photographed in
2011)



99. Basil Watson – *Merlene Ottey*
(2005), National Stadium,
Kingston (photographed in
2011)



Chapter 4

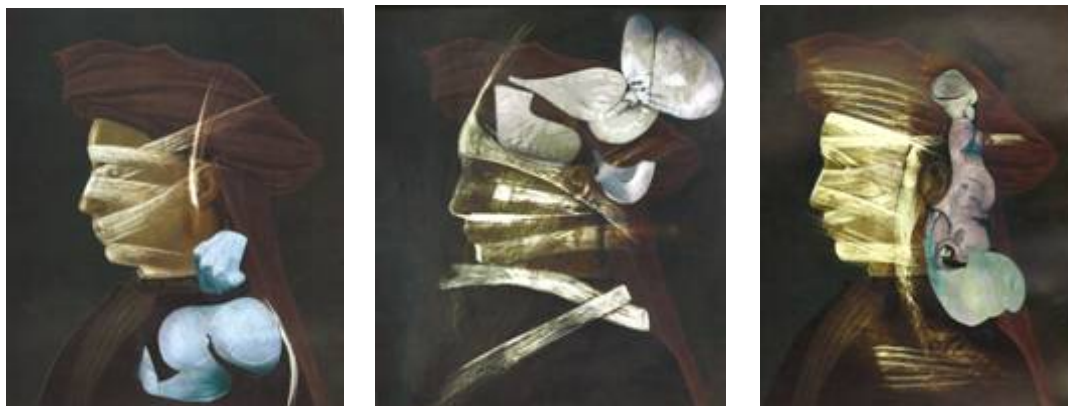
100. David Boxer – *Viet Madonna* (1967), Collection: the Artist (photograph Maria LaYacona)



101. David Boxer – *Rack with Seven Heads* (1972), Collection: the Artist



102. David Boxer – *Three Variations on a Renaissance Head* (1978) – Private Collection (on loan to NGJ) (photograph courtesy of the Artist)



103. David Boxer – *Queen Victoria Set We Free* (1988), Private Collection



104. David Boxer – *Passage: A Chorus of Souls* (detail, 2004)



105. David Boxer – *Passage: A Chorus of Souls* (detail, 2004)



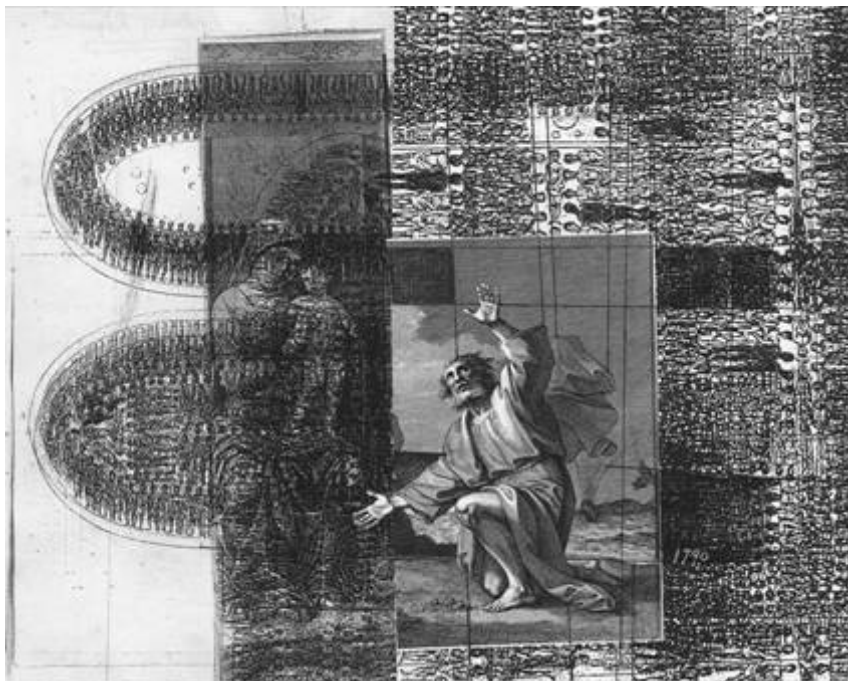
106. David Boxer –
Passage: A Chorus of Souls
(detail, 2004)



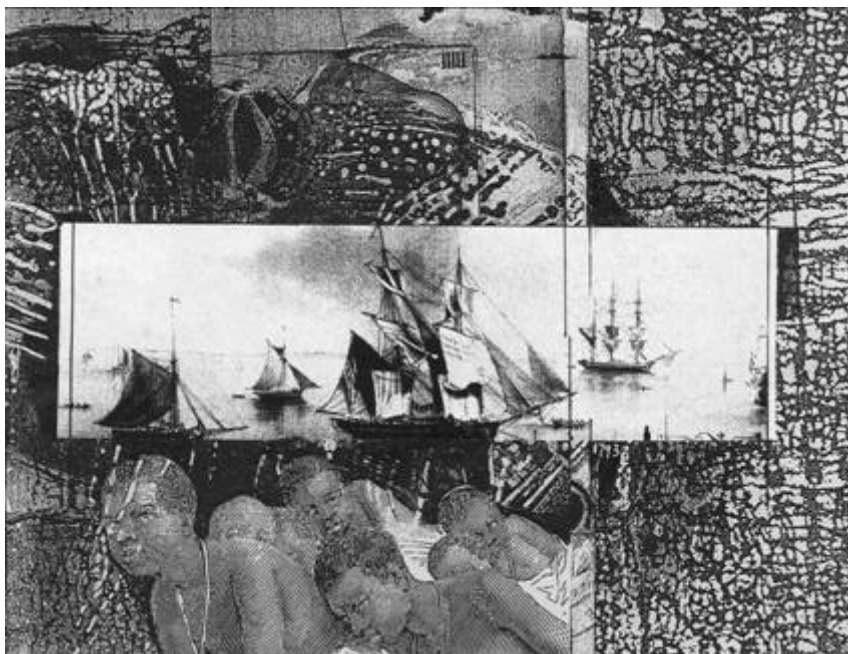
107. David Boxer – *Passage: A Chorus of Souls* (detail, 2004)



108. David Boxer – *Passage: A Chorus of Souls* (detail of *Black Books*, 2004)
(photograph courtesy of the Artist)



109. David Boxer – *Passage: A Chorus of Souls* (detail of *Black Books*, 2004)
(photograph courtesy of the Artist)

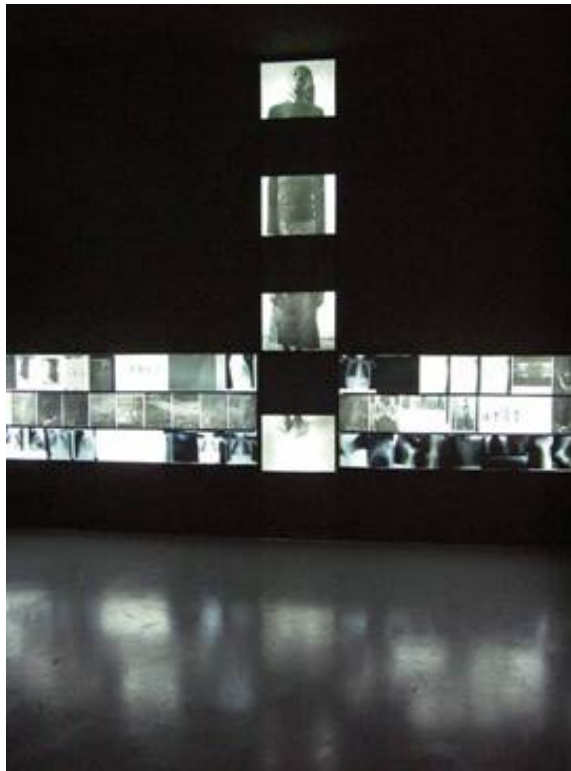


110. Petrona Morrison – *Sentinel* (1992),
Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy
of the Artist)



111. Petrona Morrison – *Remembrance*
(124th Street) (1995), Private Collection
(photograph courtesy of the Artist)

112. Petrona Morrison –
Reality/Representation (2004),
 detail of installation, *Curator's
 Eye I*



113. Petrona Morrison – *South African Diaries* (2005), site-specific installation
 (photograph courtesy of the Artist)



114. Omari Ra – *Blue Fetish*
(1987), Private Collection
(photograph Maria LaYacona)



115. Omari Ra - *Reconstruction:
Legbara in Space* (2004-05),
Collection: the Artist (photograph
courtesy of the NGJ)



116. Roberta Stoddart - *Endangered Species* (1993), Private Collection (photograph courtesy of the Artist)



117. Johnny Newcome cartoon *West India Luxury!!* (1808), Aaron and Marjorie Matalon Collection, NGJ



118. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (detail, 1985), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



119. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (detail, 1985), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



120. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (detail, 1985),
Collection: NGJ (photograph
courtesy of the NGJ)



121. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (detail, 1985), Collection: NGJ (photograph
courtesy of the NGJ)



122. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (detail, 1985), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



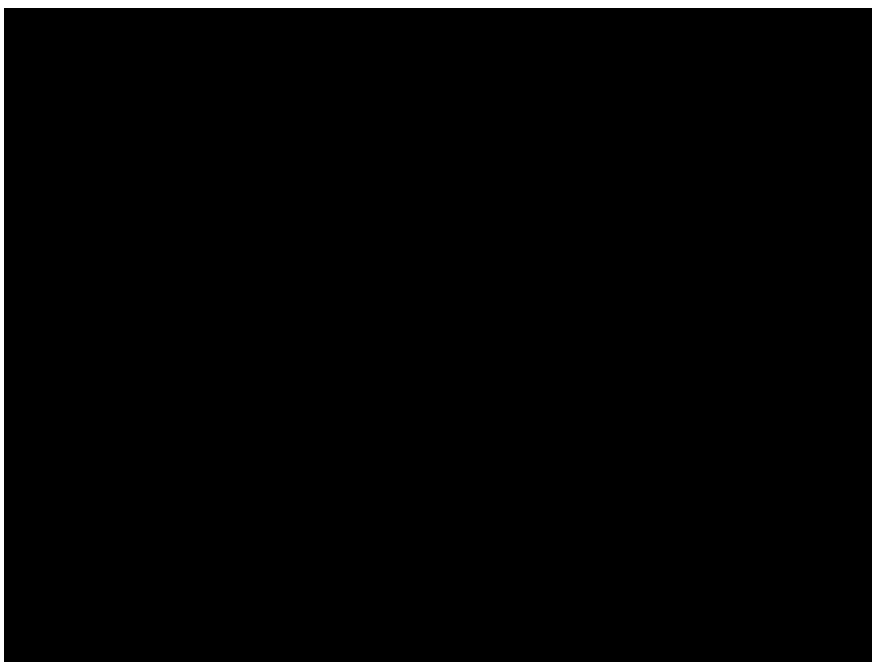
123. Natalie Butler – *Import* (2004) – detail of installation, *Curator's Eye I*



124. Natalie Butler – *Import*
(2004) – detail of
installation, *Curator's Eye I*



125. Ken Spencer – *Market Scene* (1985), Aaron and Marjorie Matalon Collection,
NGJ (permission not available)



Chapter 5

126. D.A. McLean – National Heroes Stamps mural (c1970), Tinson Pen train stop, now destroyed (photographed in 1987)



127. Pre-Emancipation African-Jamaican Grave Marker (?),
Collection: Museums of History
and Ethnography, IoJ (courtesy
of the IoJ)



128. Group of William “Woody” Joseph carvings, Private Collection



129. Jamaican Obeah figure (c1887), as featured in *Folklore*, 1893



130. David Miller Jr – group of head carvings, Private Collection



131. David Miller Jr – *Horned Heads*, from the *Intuitive Eye* (1983) catalogue, location unknown (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



132. David Miller Sr – *Obi* (c1940), Collection:
NGJ



133. Deryck Roberts – Mallica
“Kapo” Reynolds at the St
Michael Tabernacle, Kingston
(c1982) (photograph © the
Deryck Roberts Estate)

134. Clinton Hutton – *The Four-Pole Table after the Lighting, Holt Road, Balmagie, St. Andrew* (2006), (photograph © Clinton Hutton)



135. Isaac Mendes Belisario – *Sketches of Character: Water Jar Vendors* (1837-1838), Collection: Maurice and Valerie Facey, on extended loan to the NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



136. Illustration by Howard Pyle, "Jamaica, New and Old," *Harper's Monthly* (1890)



137. Louisa Jones "Ma Lou" – *Cooking Pot* (c1985), Collection: the Author



138. Sylvester Stephens – *Snake Doctor* (c2000), Collection: Wayne and Myrene Cox



139. Detail of murals by Jah Wise Campbell, Church Street, Kingston, c1980 (from Wolfgang Bender et al., *Rastafarian Art* (2006), courtesy of Wolfgang Bender)



140. Members of the Brown family with Trinity hand gesture (c1970), from the Everald Brown photograph album (courtesy of the Everald Brown Estate)



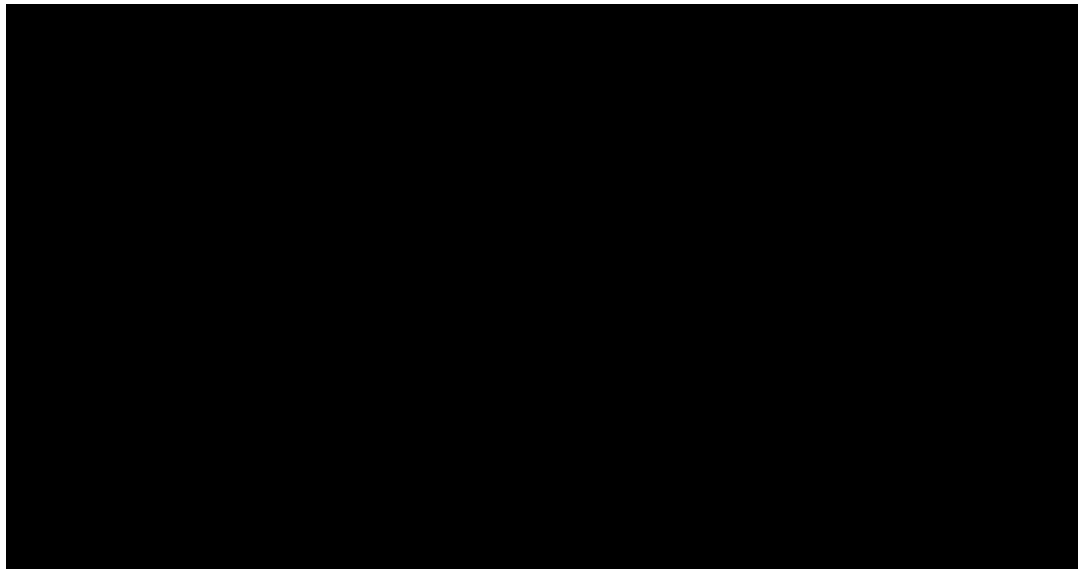
141. Detail of murals by Jah Wise Campbell, Church Street, Kingston, c1980 (from Wolfgang Bender et al., *Rastafarian Art* (2006), courtesy of Wolfgang Bender)



142. Detail of murals by Jah Wise Campbell, Church Street, Kingston, c1980 (from Wolfgang Bender et al., *Rastafarian Art* (2006), courtesy of Wolfgang Bender)



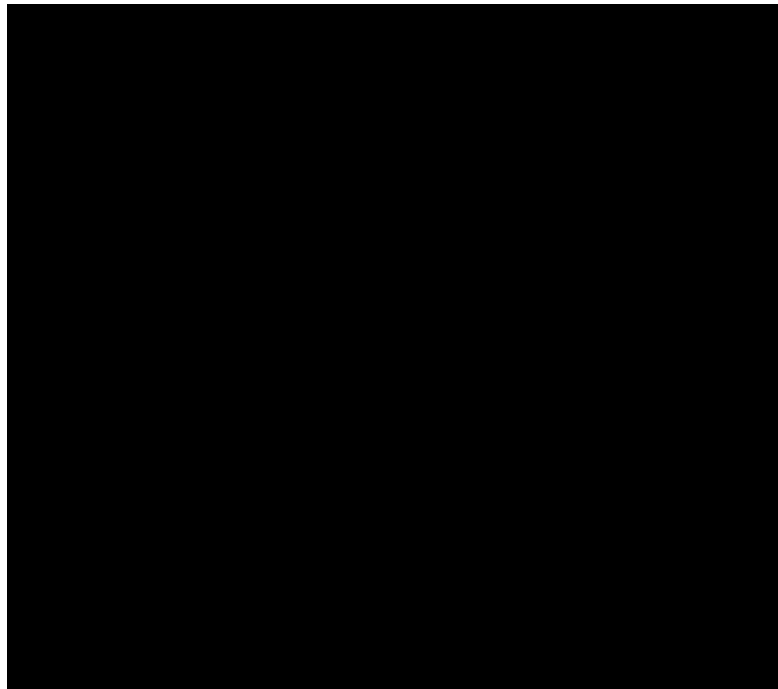
143. Albert Artwell – *Judgement Day* (1979), Private Collection (*permission not available*)



144. Edna Manley – *Brother Man* (1961), Private Collection (photograph Maria LaYacona)



145. Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds – *The Beards at Large* (1964), Larry Wirth Collection, NGJ (*permission not available*)





146. David Miller Sr – *Rasta II: Do Not Touch I* (c1964), Private Collection

147. Ras Akyem Ramsay – *Black King Ascending* (1994), Collection: Mervyn Awon, Barbados (photograph courtesy of the Artist)



148. Albert Chong – *The Two Generations* (1991) (photo courtesy of the Artist)



149. Poster for “Stulla” (“Cheater”) dance on utility pole, Red Hills, Kingston (photographed in 2010)



150. Wall with Dancehall posters, Cross Roads, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



151. Dawn Scott – A Cultural Object (1985), Collection: NGJ, detail of early screen-printed Dancehall poster (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



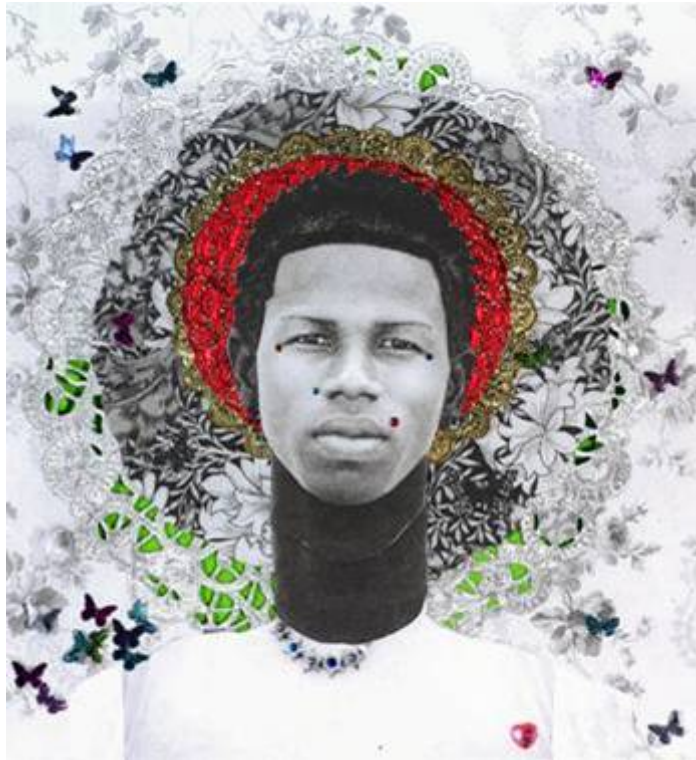
152. Car window advertisement for “Pum Pum Christmas” dance, Mount Rosser main road, St Catherine (photographed in 2007)



153. Painted advertisement for “Force It Up Hard in Her” dance, Red Hills, Kingston (photographed in 2007)



154. Ebony G. Patterson – *Untitled I (Khani + di Krew)*, *From the Disciplez/Gangstas for Life* series (2008), Collection: the Artist (photograph courtesy of the Artist)



155. Ebony G. Patterson – *Cultural Soliloquy (A Cultural Object Revisited)* (2010), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



156. Painted advertisement on car supplies store, Mannings Hill Road, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



157. Bar on Manning's Hill Road, Kingston, with remnants of the Red Stripe Live Red campaign (photographed in 2011)



158. Dawn Scott – *A Cultural Object* (1985),
Collection: NGJ; detail with “Big Bamboo”
façade detail (photograph courtesy of the
NGJ)



159. Decorated vendor's cart, painted
and owned by Eletia Brown,
Kingston Waterfront (photographed
in 2011)

160. Façade of abandoned shop, Grants Pen Road, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



161. Decorated vendor's stall on Shortwood Road, Kingston, now destroyed (photographed in 2006)



162. Donnette Zacca – Commemorative mural for Kirk Diamond, painted by Bones, Southside, Kingston (photograph © Donnette Zacca)



163. Inspirational murals, Grants Pen Road, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



164. Red Rubber Band Mural (c2009), Cross Roads, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



165. Dawn Scott – detail from *A Cultural Object* (1985), featuring “JLP Zone - enter at your own risk” and “Poor Natasha Pa” graffiti (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



166. “Esmie AIDS” graffiti, East Street, Kingston (photographed in 2010)



167. L.A. Lewis graffiti, Red Hills Road (photographed in 2009)



168. O'Neil Lawrence – *Recriminations* (2007), featuring L.A. Lewis graffiti on stranded ship, Palissadoes, Kingston (photograph courtesy of the Artist)



169. “Gaza we seh” (“We support Gaza”) graffiti, Murray Mount, St Ann (photographed in 2011)



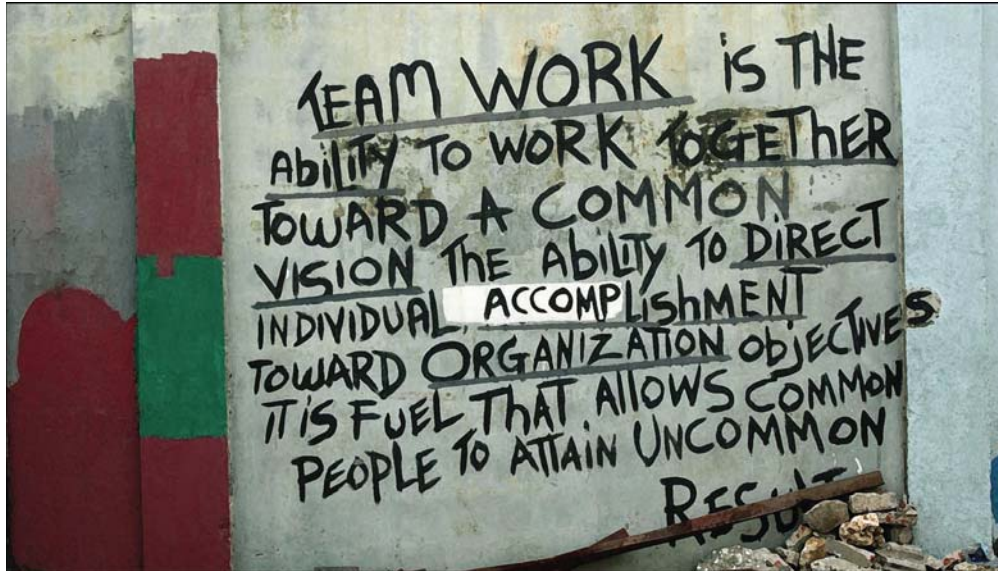
170. Mark Steven Weinberger -
“Scroll tree,” National Heroes
Circle, Kingston (1980s)
(photograph © Mark Steven
Weinberger)



171. Artist Unknown - Graffiti, Barbican Square, Kingston (photographed in 2010)



172. Donnette Zacca – photograph of *Team Work* mural (c2009), Southside, Kingston
(photograph © Donnette Zacca)



Chapter 6

173. Ralph Cameron's craft stall at Fern Gully, Ocho Rios (photographed in 2003)



174. Craft Market, Ocho Rios (photographed in 2003)



175. The Titchfield Hotel dining room (c1903)
(photograph courtesy of
Krista Thompson)



176. Photographer unknown - female fruit vendors (c1905), Private Collection



177. Examples of tourist curios from *Through Jamaica with a Kodak* (1907); includes several "Obeah Heads."



178. Advertisement offering "Obeah Heads," *Gleaner* (1904)

THE GLEANER, SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1904.

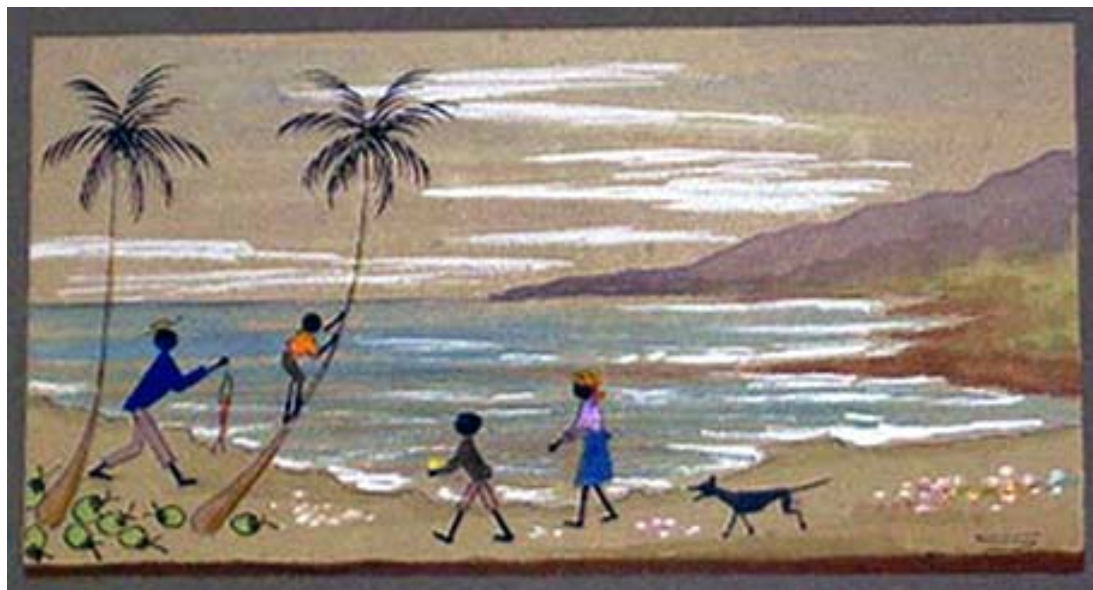
<p>rice House cery.</p> <p>Imported for Easter.</p> <p>per lb of 5lbs for 1s Salmon Herrings Jowls adlock se on cut at 1s 1/2 lb r Cheese us on Cut at 1s 1/2 lb re Bacon 1 Feet r's Prime York Hams tly pieces Salt Pork me Dutch Cheese Gruyere Cheese me slices Bacon 1s at 1s and 1s 6d per lb cars & Cherries in syrup fruit Chocolate mepathle Cocoa ques</p> <p>ER & CO.</p> <p>y Stables.</p> <p>y! Livery!</p> <p>Sampson, sville P.O., Ja. se for Island travelling.</p>	<p>WELDON'S LADIES' JOURNAL</p> <p>Four Paper Patterns. Price 4½d; post free 7d.</p> <p>Harrison's Dressmaker</p> <p>Five Patterns. Price 4½d; post free 6d.</p> <p>Jamaica Curios:</p> <p><i>Cocoanut Obeah Heads</i> 1s 6d EACH.</p> <p>packed and sent by post to any address in Great Britain for 1s extra.</p> <p>The Educational Supply Co., 16 King St., Kingston. W. R. GILLIES, Manager.</p>	<p>Daily</p> <p>KINGSTON ESTAB. 1850 Has the Largest Paper published</p> <p>SATURDAY</p> <p>MORE ABOUT ATI</p> <p>We recently received a nucleus of a Bureau was Institute of J argued, by the Institute with purpose of science and that tourists information. But is this a be, of course conservative to adapt he sometimes. tion has a circumstance doing the t established f sible is to u poses. It is sides that t ooking for it has no r collection of ties are of li then, contin section attac all? To os to do would a part of ti culture—wh being,—the devoting hi study. growths, a scientific kn upon agricu lieve the In pens now e and the mo devoted to a</p>
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179. 1906 carved coconut shell,
Jamaica, Private Collection



180. Assorted coconut carvings, Jamaica
(1920s & 30s), Private Collection (*permission
not available*)

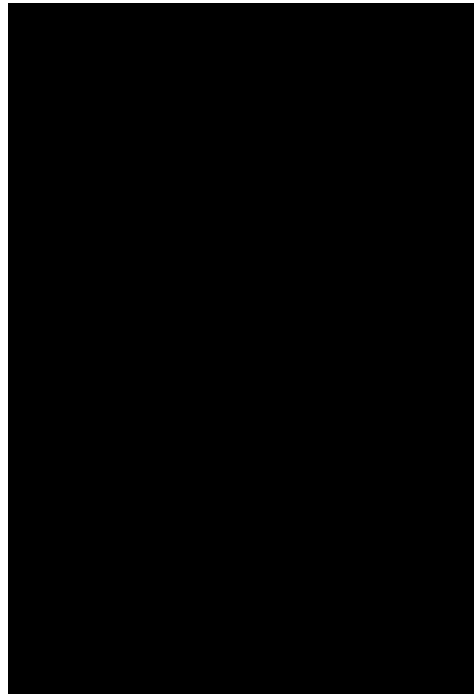
181. Stella Shaw - hand-painted postcard (c1905), Private Collection



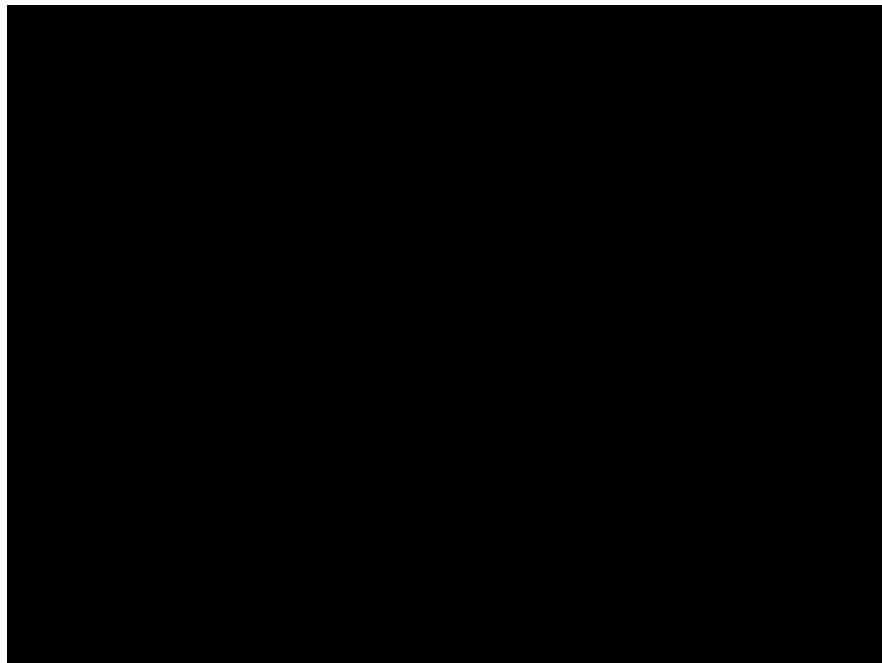
182. David Miller Sr or Jr - assorted curios with Hitler/Vulture figurine, Private Collection



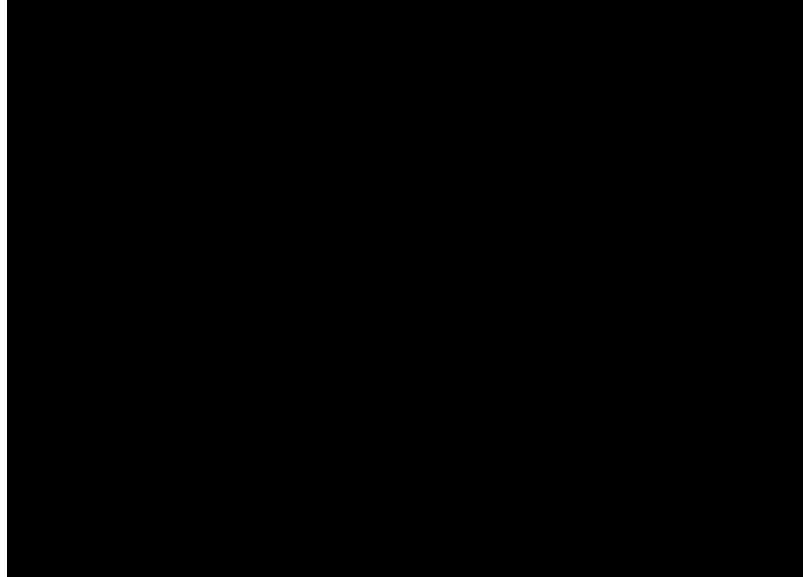
183. Rhoda Jackson – Cover of *Pleasure Island* (1955), Private Collection
(no permission available)



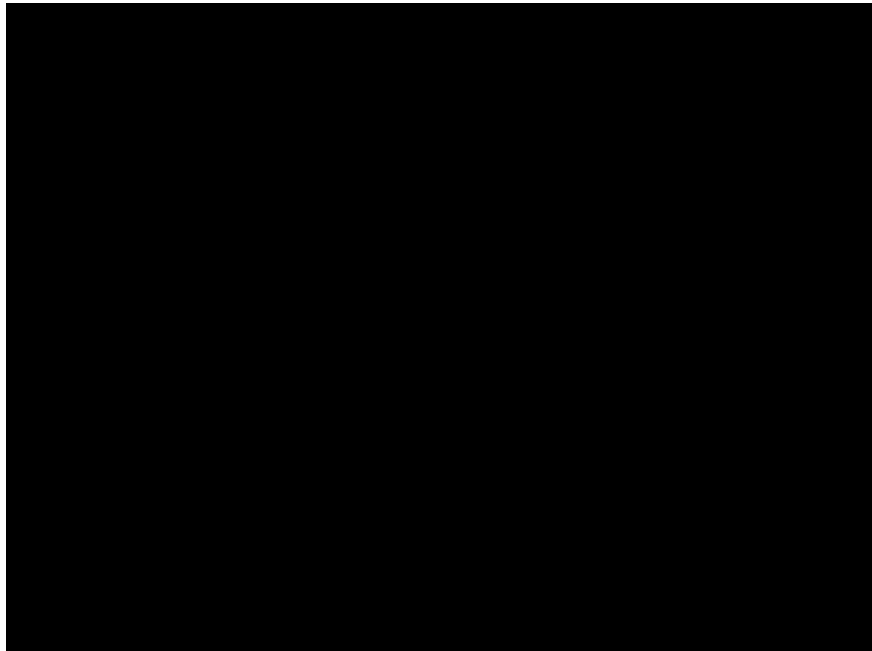
184. Rhoda Jackson – undated mural painting at the *People's Museum*, Spanish Town,
Jamaica (no permission available)



185. Rhoda Jackson – detail of cover of *Pleasure Island* (1955) (*no permission available*)



186. Rhoda Jackson – *Wash Day* (1945), Collection: NGJ (*no permission available*)



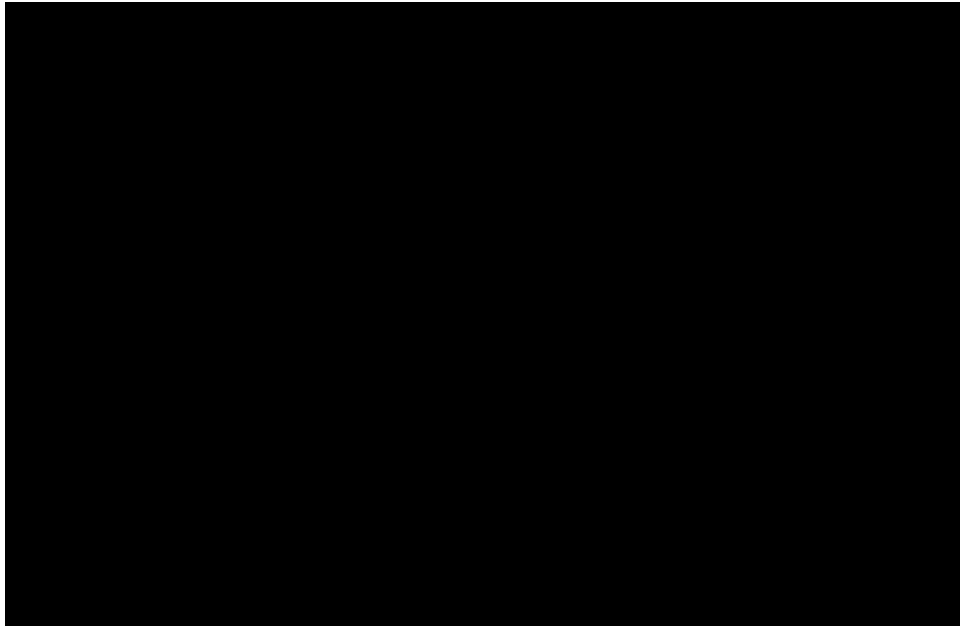
187. Seymour Leichman – *The Good Shepherd* mural (1968), King Street, Kingston (photographed in 2011)



188. Salt and pepper set (1950s?), Jamaica (*no permission available*)



189. Tea towel with Jamaican map (n.d.), Private Collection (*no permission available*)



190. Jamaica Tourist Board Poster (1972, featuring Sintra Arunte) (courtesy of the Jamaica Tourist Board)



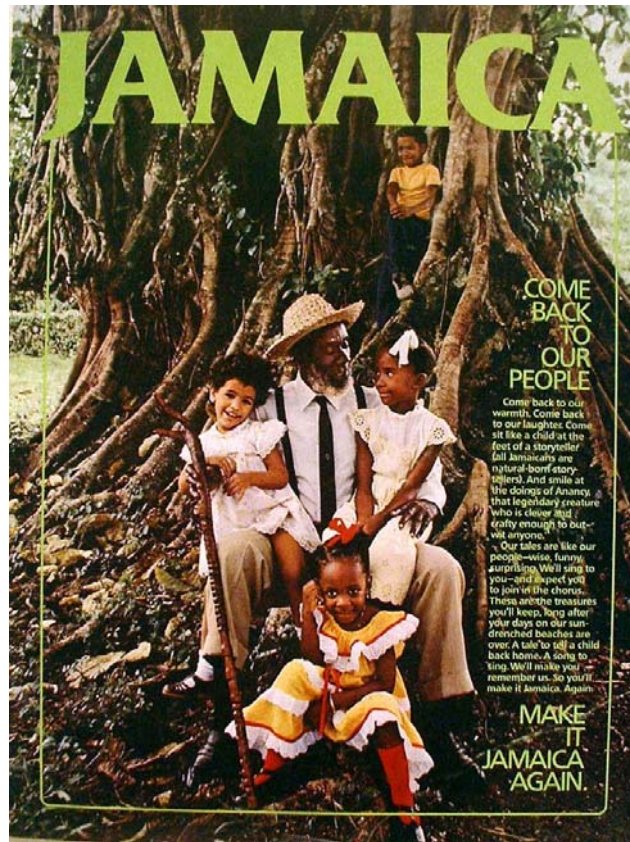
191. Bongo Silly – *Lion's Den*, Ocho Rios (c1980), now destroyed (from Wolfgang Bender et al., *Rastafarian Art* (2006), courtesy of Wolfgang Bender)



192. Zaccheus Powell – *Erotic Staff* (1974) and *Marriage Staff* (1982), Collection: NGJ



193. “Make It Jamaica Again” advertisement, Jamaica Tourist Board (c1981) (courtesy of the Jamaica Tourist Board)



194. The Author at Jakes, Treasure Beach, Jamaica in 2006



195. Harmony Hall, Tower Hill, St Mary (photographed in 2006)



Chapter 7

196. Leonard Daley – *The Pickpocket* (1984), Private Collection (photograph Maria LaYacona)



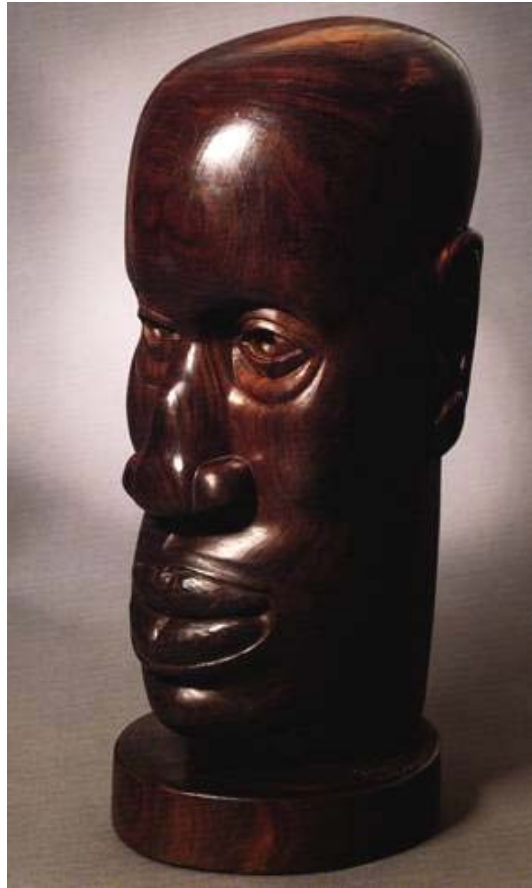
197. Roy Reid – *A Pig Is a Pig* (1986), Private Collection (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)





198. John Dunkley – *Jerboa* (1939), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)

199. David Miller Jr – *Large Head* (1949), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



200. John Dunkley – *Back to Nature* (1939), Collection: NGJ



201. John Dunkley – *Feeding the Fishes* (c1940), Private Collection (Photograph Maria LaYacona)



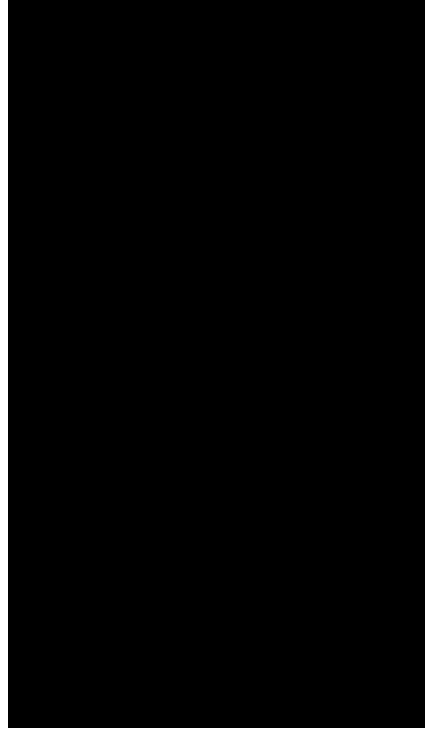
202. John Dunkley – *Diamond Wedding* (1940), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



203. John Dunkley – *Cuban Scenery* (1939), Collection: NGJ



204. Henry Daley – *River Scene* (1943),
Collection: Wallace Campbell (*permission
not available*)



205. John Dunkley – *Deliverance* (1946), Private Collection (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



206. Roy Reid – *The Mystical Order Undercover* (1984-86), Private Collection (photograph Maria LaYacona)



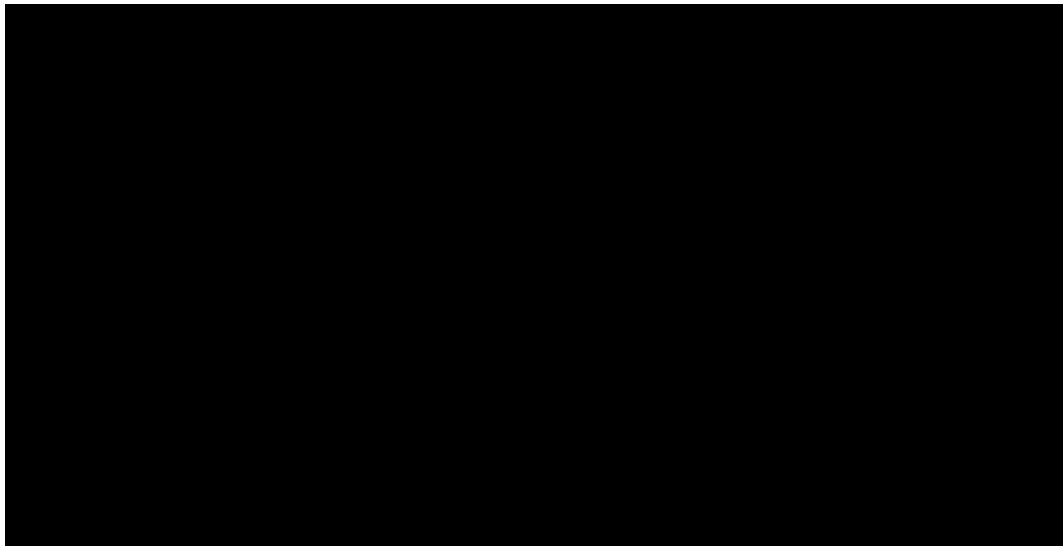
207. Everal Brown – *The Earth Is the Lord* (1969), Collection: NGJ (photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



208. Clinton Brown – *Victory March* (1976), Collection: NGJ (photograph Maria LaYacona)



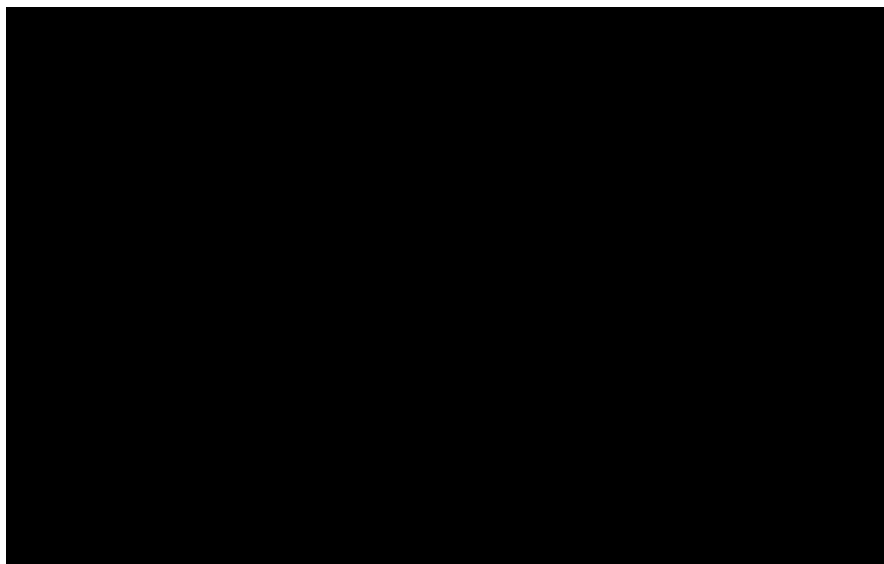
209. Albert Artwell – *Untitled* (1975), Private Collection (*permission not available*)



210. Ras Dizzy (Birth Livingstone) – *Rasta Says* (1987), Private Collection (*permission not available*)



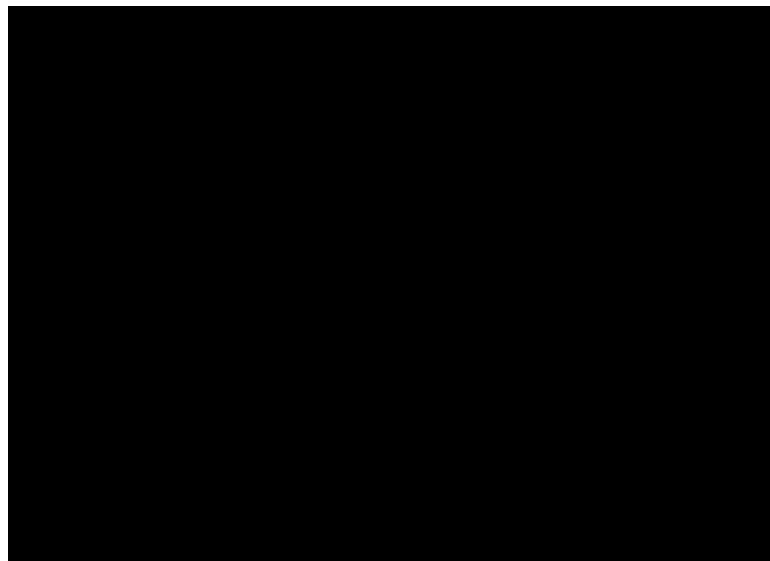
211. Eli Jah – *Jesus was Born in a Manger* (1995), Collection: NGJ (*permission not available*)



212. Michael Parchment – *No Woman, Nuh Cry* (2005), Private Collection
(photograph courtesy of the NGJ)



213. Deloris Anglin – *Negril Green Hut* (1994), Collection: Wayne and Myrene Cox
(permission not available)



214. Everal Brown – *Instrument for Four People* (1986), Collection: NGJ



215. Everal Brown – *Instrument for Four People* (1991), Collection: Wayne and Myrene Cox



SOURCES

Abbreviations for Jamaican newspapers:

Jamaica Daily News = *Daily News*
Jamaica Gleaner (weekday edition) = *Gleaner*
Sunday Gleaner = *Gleaner*
Sunday Herald = *Herald*
Jamaica Observer (weekday edition) = *Observer*
Sunday Observer = *Observer*
Jamaica Record = *Record*
Jamaica Star = *Star*

Abbreviations of institutional names:

Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts = *EMC*
Institute of Jamaica = *IoJ*
Jamaica Information Service = *JIS*
Jamaica School of Art = *JSA*
Jamaica School of Art and Craft = *JSAC*
National Gallery of Jamaica = *NGJ*
School of Visual Arts = *SVA*
University of the West Indies = *UWI*

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