

ABOUT CHANGE  
WRESTLING  
WITH  
THE  
IMAGE  
CARIBBEAN INTERVENTIONS



This exhibition and symposium is part of the World Bank's project About Change: Wrestling with the Image exhibition

Marlon James (Jamaica)  
"Mark and Gisele," 2007  
digital print, 40 x 30"



# PROGRAM

Introduction

2:00 - 2:20

1. Ingrid Elliot Ingrid Elliott, Ph.D., Art History,  
University of Chicago, December 2010

2:40 - 3:00

2. Carmen Milagros Torres-Rivera MA Literature,  
University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus

**Ten minutes break**

3:10 - 3:30

3. Pascale De Souza, Ph.D Term Assistant Professor of  
French  
Department of Modern and Classical Languages George  
Mason University

3:30 - 3:50

4. Mariel Barrow PhD Candidate- Cultural Studies-  
George Mason University, Fulbright Scholar

3:50 - 4:10

5. Patricia Fay, Associate Professor of Art Florida Gulf  
Coast University

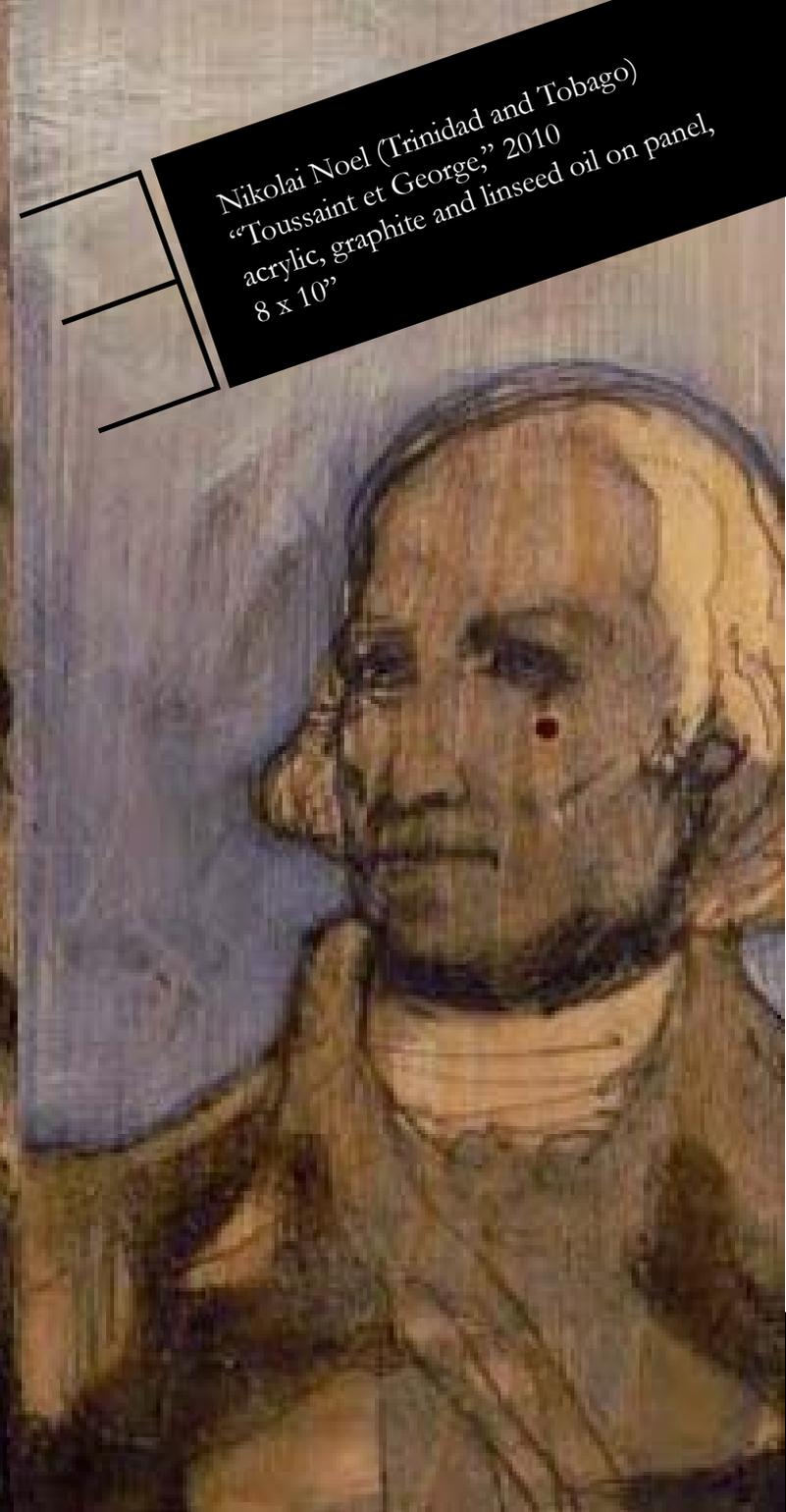
4:10 - 4:30

Comments and questions

4:30 - 5:00

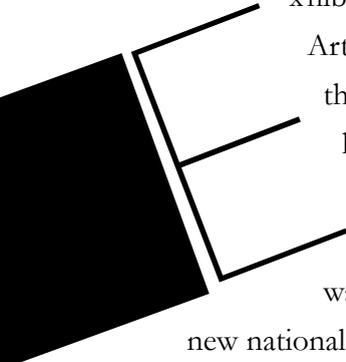
Refreshments

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Nikolai Noel (Trinidad and Tobago)  
"Toussaint et George," 2010  
acrylic, graphite and linseed oil on panel,  
8 x 10"

# Guy Pérez Cisneros' Tropical Baroque, 1940-1943



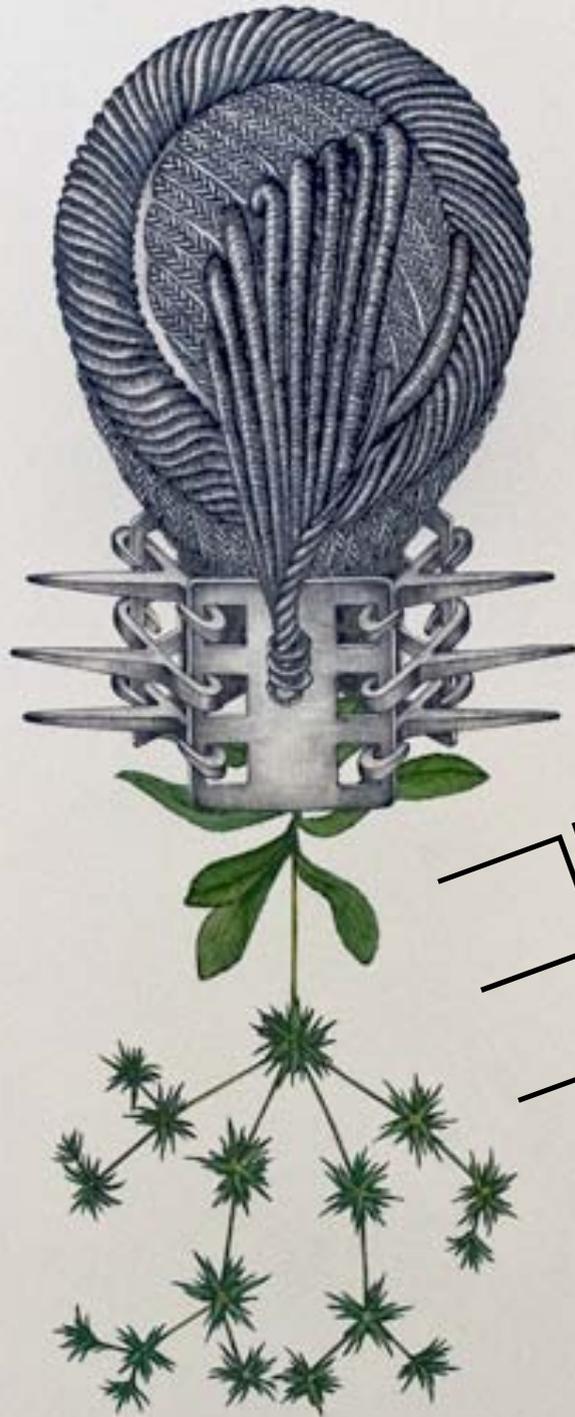
xhibitions like “Ultrabaroque: Aspects of Post-Latin American Art” (Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, 2000) and books such as “Cuban-American Art in Miami: Exile, Identity and the Neo-Baroque” (Lynette M. F. Bosch, 2004) demonstrate that the Baroque is a term that has resonated with contemporary artistic production of the Cuban diaspora, as well as of Latin America. Indeed the Baroque has been a key term in Cuban art and literature at least since the 1940s. Perhaps the earliest articulation of this term in the visual arts was by Guy Pérez Cisneros, who first utilized this term in art criticism advocating for a new national style in 1941. While much attention has been given to the literary and post-modern use of the Baroque, Pérez Cisneros’ early definition has received relatively little study. Moreover the fact that he repeatedly referred to his vision of the future of national art as not just Baroque but “tropical Baroque” has been largely overlooked.

My paper examines Pérez Cisneros’ conceptualization of the tropical Baroque in a series of articles published from 1940 to 1943. These essays address landscapes by the contemporary painter Mariano Rodríguez, as well as the nineteenth-century Cuban printmaker Leonardo Barañano. I argue Pérez Cisneros wanted to disassociate the term “Baroque” from Spanish colonialism and rearticulate it as something essentially “Cuban,” derived from the tropical landscape. Furthermore he viewed the tropics as a local source of resistance to aesthetic dogma imposed from abroad, and he closely associated the tropics with “desire,” particularly the desire to achieve something as of yet unattained--national style.

Ingrid Elliott

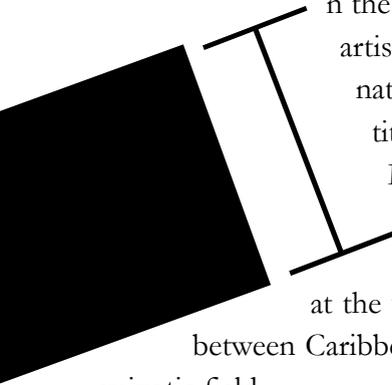
Ph.D., Art History, University of Chicago, December 2010

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Joscelyn Gardner (Barbados)  
"Eryngium foetidum (Prue)," 2009  
hand painted stone lithograph on  
frosted mylar, 36 x 24"

# Art, Identity, and the Post-Colonial Present: Two Caribbean Exhibitions



In the 20th century, a visual canon was established for Caribbean art that focused on male artists making iconic paintings defining and illustrating sweeping issues of newly emergent national identities. In 2005 I curated an exhibition for Florida Gulf Coast University titled *Two Views: Trinidad* showcasing the work of painters Ken Crichlow and Shastri Maharaj. This project explored the apparently divergent influences of African and Indian heritage in Trinidadian culture, and juxtaposed sleek abstract modernism with folk-inspired narrative imagery. Crichlow and Maharaj spent a week in residence at the university, and shared lively dialogues with faculty and students on the intersections between Caribbean art, history, culture, and experience that makes this genre such a fascinating and quixotic field.

In the 21st century, women artists from the region are producing intensely personal translations of their Caribbean heritage in a range of media including photography, video, performance, mixed media, sculpture and installation art. In the spring of 2010 my second curatorial effort, titled *Close Encounters: Contemporary Art by Caribbean Women*, focused on new paradigms evidenced by women artists born in Cuba, Barbados, Jamaica, Haiti, and St. Lucia. Their works highlight an acute awareness of the social and psychological complexities of this post-colonial landscape, whether as perspectives on island life or reports from the diaspora. The educational program supporting the frankly gorgeous artwork in the exhibition includes artist interviews, lectures, and residencies to further extend the dialogue on Caribbean culture.

This presentation will focus on the images and ideas explored in these two exhibitions, pairing ways of making with considerations of identity in the contemporary world of the post-colonial Caribbean.

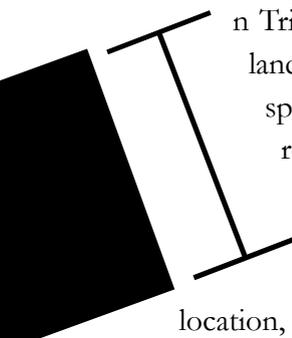
Patricia Fay  
Associate Professor of Art  
Florida Gulf Coast University

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Ebony Patterson (Jamaica)  
 "Entourage," 2010  
 digital print, 108 x 60 in.

# Inverting the Gaze: Subjectivity and Spatial mapping in IN Trinidad



n Trinidad, a book of photography, presents the multiple loci of 'home' within the Trinidadian landscape. Location in this context is not simply a physical descriptive referencing an emotional space but location is expressed as performative acts such as festival and cultural fusions. As a site, rooted in the human body, location is imagined by Caribbean scholar Marsha Pearce as gender, race, sexuality, religion and class, ethnicity and so on. Within this text, location is complicated with the notion of the gaze, the gaze being the act of seeing and being seen as a recurring material manifestation within photographs. Discerning how the gaze is at work within location, as a form of labor, as a space for inhabitation and in the creation of a trans-identity, entangles us in narrative elements and structures of Trinidad society as portrayed in In Trinidad. What are the formal and informal narrative elements that perform a mapping of our psycho-social and physio-somatic existence within In Trinidad? As a result of such factors (the gaze, labor, the portrayal of spaces of inhabitation) and the physical manifestation of the book as object, how is this work positioned in the socio-political landscape of Trinidad and how does it begin to position Trinidad in the vast network of looking that impacts a global Caribbean existence? How does the spatio-temporal mapping of the gaze through location, labor and spaces of inhabitation within this text lead us to a 'trans-identity'? How do these aspects propel us into a transitional space of becoming and expectation?

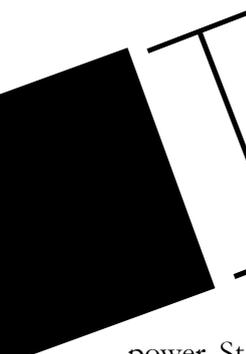
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John Cox (Bahamas)  
"Coming to Terms with the  
Inside World II," 2008  
acrylic on canvas, 60 x 78"

# Visual representations of a maroon named Solitude as tales of gendered resistance



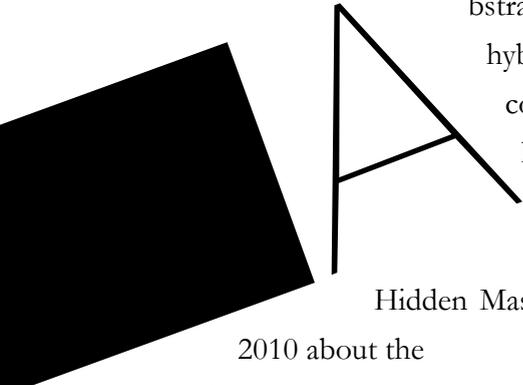
In *Silencing the Past*, the Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot contrasts the positivist view of history wherein “the role of the historian is to reveal the past, to discover or, at least, approximate the truth” with a constructivist view of history as “another form of fiction” (5).

Trouillot contends that positivism characterizes European and North-American approaches to colonial history as it provides “a story about power, a story about those who won” (ibid), thereby silencing the voice of the other. Maroons present an interesting challenge to such a reading as through leaving the plantation, they escaped the positivist construction of history and simultaneously established an alternative narrative predicated on a new form of power. St. Lucian poet Derek Walcott’s famous claim that ‘the sea is History’ acknowledges both positivist and constructionist views of Caribbean history by suggesting both the silencing and voicing resistance. When translated into French, “La mer est l’Histoire” introduces a gendered perspective on history, suggesting that below Walcott’s sea lies a feminine tale waiting to be told. Attuned to such feminine interpretations, this paper will examine how historians and sculptors have blurred the limits between fact and fiction to create the figure of a female maroon named Solitude. It will focus in particular on the statue of Solitude erected in Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe) and the one in Bagneux (France) as reflecting a visual narrative of feminine struggle against colonialism.

Pascale De Souza

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# Hidden Masks upon the Canvas



Abstract: Carnival has been a form of expression in the Caribbean islands. The hybridization of African and European as well as indigenous elements form contemporary carnival festivities. Ponce a southern town in Puerto Rico has the oldest carnival celebrated in the island. The vejigante, a demon-like, clown figure stands out as symbolic of carnival in the island.

Hidden Masks upon the Canvas is a field research conducted from January- March 2010 about the image of the vejigante. It was part of the work done in a graduate course of UPR Rio Piedras offered by Dr. Lowell Fiet. The research focuses on how this character has transformed from a folkloric representation to reflecting Puerto Rican identity and resistance through the work of plastic artists from this area.

The research begins studying the traditional representation of the vejigante with the works of artisans Juan Alindato sr. and son, Miguel Caraballo, and Edwin Muniz. It goes on to study how dressmakers represent this figure. The study moves on to contemporary interpretation from plastic artists Antonio Martorell, Miguel Conesa, Jose Balay, Jesus Ortiz and Erick Ortiz Gelpi.

The questions that are sought to be answered are: How has the vejigante evolved from its beginning? Does the vejigante represent Puerto Rican resistance in terms of identity and culture?

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