

OCTOBER 19th-27th

THE MEETING PLACE

BODY | INSTITUTION | MEMORY



Laura Anderson Barbata



CARIBBEAN INTRANSIT
ARTS JOURNAL

www.caribbeanintransit.com



coco
CONTEMPORARY
CHOREOGRAPHERS
COLLECTIVE



KEYLMAN JAHARA



Body/ Institution/ Memory: A Symposium
Friday 25 October 2013
Centre for Language Learning Auditorium,
The University of the West Indies
St. Augustine
Trinidad & Tobago
Caribbean InTransit: The Meeting Place

9:00 am Welcome

Louis Regis: Bio

Dr. Louis Regis is Head of the Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies and Lecturer in Literatures in English at The University of the West Indies.

Gabrielle Hezekiah: Bio

Dr. Gabrielle Hezekiah is Lecturer in the Postgraduate Programme in Cultural Studies at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Marielle Barrow: Bio

Marielle Barrow is a Fulbright Scholar and PhD candidate of Cultural Studies at George Mason University and Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. She is the founder of *Caribbean InTransit*.

Keynote Address

Erica Moiah James

Abstract

Embodiment, Migration and Re-Memory: Historicizing the Global in Caribbean Art

The Caribbean is both a challenge to and a model for the concept of globalism as it relates to art history. As the field attempts to make the global turn and consider in a more substantive way the impact of global relations on cultural production, the realities of Caribbean contemporary art practice, exhibition, criticism and its place within the market, indicates that globalism remains both de-historicized and under-theorized with respect to the region.

This paper begins to address this lacuna by historicizing the concept of the global in Caribbean art by carefully engaging the migratory and discursive life stories of a series of objects created on the island of Hispaniola during a four hundred year span. It examines the discursive potential of these objects in the context of their

production, materiality and form, migration or removal from the region (and at times the archive), and subsequent shifts in signification and value, through various disciplinary modes of inquiry.

It concludes with a consideration of what historicizing the global Caribbean might mean for the field of art history and our current understanding of modes of contact, aesthetic exchange and cultural production within the trans-Atlantic universe.

Erica Moiah James

Erica Moiah James is Assistant Professor jointly appointed in the Departments of The History of Art and African American Studies at Yale University. She also serves as Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) in the Department of African American Studies. Before arriving at Yale she was the founding Director and Chief Curator of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas.

Dr. James earned the master of fine arts from The University of Chicago and a doctorate in art history from Duke University. While at Duke she earned several awards including the International Association of University Women Graduate Fellowship and The John Hope Franklin Research Fellowship. Since that time she has served as a Clark Fellow at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA and as a post-doctoral teaching fellow at Washington University, St. Louis, MO.

Dr. James has curated more than a dozen exhibitions and published more than thirty essays and exhibition catalogues. She recently published a book project focused on one of the largest private collections in the Caribbean entitled **Love and Responsibility: The Collection of Dawn Davies** (2012) and her current manuscript **Caribbean Art in The Global Imaginary** is under review. She serves on the editorial board of **Small Axe: A Caribbean Platform for Criticism**.

10:30 am Panel 1: Visual Arts and the Body

Andil Gosine

Abstract

WARDROBES: Desire as Memory

Andil Gosine

Drawing on his experience of creating the series of art objects and performances about indentureship **WARDROBES**, Dr. Gosine will explore connections between migration, desire and trauma. He will address three questions posed by the Symposium organizers: *How does the body interrogate and signify in the context of memory and institution? How is art being used to facilitate interrogation and signification through the body, in the context of memory and institution? And how is memory institutionalized within the body?*

Andil Gosine

Andil Gosine is an Associate Professor of Sociology at York University. His writing, research and art practice explore imbrications of ecology, desire and power, particularly in the context of the places in which he has lived and worked (Canada, USA, France, UK and Trinidad and Tobago). Dr. Gosine's publications appear in the books and journals *Art In America*, *Queerly Canadian*, *Queer Online*, *Queer Youth Cultures*, *Queer Ecology*, *Alternatives*, *Canadian Woman Studies*, *ARC* and *Topia Journal of Cultural Studies*, among other, and he is co-author of the book *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada: An Introduction*. His exhibitions and art performances include *Khush: A Show Of Love*, every day I remember something new- (featured in 2013 at the Supernova Performance festival, DC) and *Wardrobes* (featured in the Richard Fung documentary, *Dal Puri Diaspora*).

Discussant: Christopher Cozier

Christopher Cozier is an artist and writer living and working in Trinidad. He has participated in a number of exhibitions focused upon contemporary art in the Caribbean and internationally. Since 1989 he has published a range of essays on related issues in a number of catalogues and journals. Cozier is a recipient of the Prince Claus Fund

Charmaine Lurch

Abstract

Embodied Memory: The Sir George Williams Affair

In 1968, charges of racism were leveled against a professor at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in Montreal, Canada. He was accused of unfairly failing all the black students in his class. The charges were dropped. In response, in 1969, students staged a sit-in and peaceful protest that was met with police aggression, which resulted in arrests and distorted media accounts of the events.

My first encounter with this history occurred when film maker Imara Ajani Rolston invited visual responses to The Sir George Williams Affair: to express the 'inside' perspectives of the Black Caribbean community and the 'outside' perspectives of mainstream Canadian media. Rolston's film focuses on the experiences of Black Caribbean people who participated in the events and their reaction to the 'Affair.

My creative response to this historical event can be seen in my painting *1960's Affair'*. It incorporates galvanized steel wire faces imbedded into layered canvases. These faces, supported by an extended arm (which references the raised fist of the Black Power movement), symbolize an embodied struggle. Images of buildings and computer cards are purposefully placed on the canvas to represent 'the institution' as a collection of repressive systems, which acted upon the students involved, the Black community in Montreal and the broader transnational Black population.

Through these images, I represent the idea of the bodies present at the affair—the individual, the crowd, the participant, the observer—and the artist/viewer's perspective, an embodiment of personal stories and historical research captured in object form.

Charmaine Lurch

Charmaine Lurch's fine arts combine wire relief and painted canvases as well as free standing wire structures. Her creative process is both solitary and social. At the heart of her work is a gathering of stories through visual forms and means. Lurch's work is a balance of practice and theory, enhanced by the consideration of the role of the artist in bringing awareness to social and environment issues. The outcome can be seen in her most recent work which is an installation of giant wire sculpture bees. Lurch's work has been exhibited in both Canada and the Caribbean, including a recent exhibition in 2012 Biennial in National Gallery of Jamaica. She is presently pursuing her Masters in Environmental Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada.

Discussant: Marsha Pearce:

Marsha Pearce has completed her doctorate in Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies (UWI) St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad. She lectures in the Department of Creative and Festival Arts at UWI and is an arts writer for the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian newspaper. Pearce is the 2006 Rhodes Trust Rex Nettleford Cultural Studies Fellow.

2:30 pm Panel 2: Literature and the Body

Brian McLoughlin

Abstract

I Am Japanese Writing: Transnational Body Creation Through *Relation* in Dany Laferrière's *I Am a Japanese Writer*

"I take on my reader's nationality. Which means that when a Japanese person reads me, I immediately become a Japanese writer," offers Dany Laferrière's narrator to the question of how he dares to write a novel entitled *I Am a Japanese Writer*. The question of identity is one that the Haitian born and Montréal living writer explores and challenges in his 2008 novel of the same name. Dany Laferrière confronts the issue by placing the question in a transnational context. In this opening quote, the political intricacies of nationality are slighted, but the process and question of identity is nonetheless complicated by the act of reading, but also by the act of writing and by different contextual situations.

The novel itself is a "body," a "corpstexte" (["bodytext"]) to appropriate a term from the Québécois author Nicole Brossard) that challenges national and post-national contexts. This "body" is a border-crossing agent, traversing reader-writer, as well as national, geographical, temporal, and political distinctions, through the Édouard Glissant process of *relation*, creating its own complicated and unstable identity. Like the narrator who reads Matsuo Basho on the train in Montréal and finds himself lost mentally, physically, and textually, the reader also becomes unsure of

the geopolitical position of the novel as neither the reader nor the narrator ever has to displace oneself transnationally, and yet context in every sense is challenged. This study will explore how a (transnational) body can be created through *relation*, and what the implications are in Caribbean, and transnational contexts.

Brian McLoughlin

Brian McLoughlin is pursuing a doctorate degree in French and Francophone Studies at Northwestern University. His research interests are Francophone Caribbean literature, as well as the role of language in identity-building. He has published articles on language in Simone Schwarz-Bart and Dany Laferrière in *MaComère*, and on Jean-Michel Basquiat in *Caribbean InTransit*

Discussant: Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw

Dr. Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw is Senior Lecturer & Coordinator (Postgraduate), French Literature and Deputy Dean for Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Humanities & Education at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Ronald Mendoza-de Jesús

Abstract

“Assuming a Body? Embodiment, Opacity, and Resistance in Giannina Braschi’s ‘Close Up’”

In this essay, I do a close reading of “Close-Up,” the first part of Giannina Braschi’s 1998 novel *Yo-Yo Boing!*. Departing from the identity-based approaches to her work, I contend that “Close-Up” can be productively read as an ambiguous allegory of embodiment. On the one hand, the text of Braschi stages the violent, normative, everyday processes through which the body is invested with the ontological value of an unstable, rebellious, and opaque materiality. This process results in the overcoming of the body’s opacity through its determination as the source of resistance necessary for the self’s attainment of higher immaterial functions—including the domestication of the body as such. On the other hand, “Close-Up” can also be read as an attempt to recover the body before being its domestication through a series of impossible corporeal rituals and performances. I contend that the ambiguity of this text’s way of configuring embodiment can help us to think through some of the most enduring problems concerning the status of the body in Caribbean art and culture. For Braschi, the body is the site of a radical dispossession, since even the opacity that supposedly belongs to the body by virtue of its materiality is ultimately reducible to the subject’s own strategies of self-appropriation. And yet, through this dispossession, Braschi indexes the body—not unlike other Caribbean writers, such as Glissant or Walcott—as the site for a constitutive loss that continues to haunt and shake the very institutions of the subject.

Ronald Mendoza-de Jesús

Ronald Mendoza-de Jesús is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature at Emory University. He is currently writing a dissertation that provides a non-historicist alternative to the historicism prevalent in Latin American literary history through readings of Benjamin, Paz, Martí, Borges and Ferré. He teaches and writes mostly on Caribbean art and literature, French contemporary thought and German early 20th century thought. His work has been supported by the NEH and the DAAD. He was recently a resident scholar in Beta-Local, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Discussant: Nicole Roberts

Dr. Nicole Roberts is Senior Lecturer & Coordinator (Postgraduate), Spanish and Head of the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

4:00 pm Roundtable Discussion and Closing Remarks