

A COLLECTION OF JAMAICAN ART:

BY ROBERT BORLENGHI



Photo: Robert Borlenghi, Eric Cadien and his girlfriend, ca. 1991.



Photo: Carl Abrahams and Robert Borlenghi, ca. 1991.



Photo: Gene Pearson and Robert Borlenghi, ca. 2000.



Photo: Colin Garland and Robert Borlenghi, ca. 1992.

Having learned from a good friend of mine of my extensive interest in Haitian Art, in 1990 Mr. Glen Holden, US ambassador to Jamaica, graciously invited us both to visit him at his official Kingston residence. He introduced me to the people in charge at the National Gallery of Jamaica, who in turn gave me the contacts for all the artists I liked from the permanent collection and from the year-end exhibit on view at that time at the museum.

A lot of work, and many trips later over a period of years, in the words of the museum's director David Boxer, I had "accumulated" one of the premier collections of Jamaican art. The pieces in this viewing room are a few of the very fine works still available at my gallery.

My first sale was of an Eric Cadien work, which was on exhibition at the National Gallery when I purchased it. The buyer was Michael Manley, the Prime Minister, and the price was the same that I had paid, at the strong suggestion of David Boxer.... Nevertheless, I took it as a good omen.

It gives me great pleasure that our second Jamaican Art Auction will go on once again to benefit the American Friends of Jamaica, an organization dear to Ambassador and Mrs. Holden so that the beginning meets the end and this beautiful slice of our lives comes full circle.

- Robert Borlenghi

INTUITIVES

During the 1960s, the unity of message in the fledgling art movement began to fray. One could see a split between artists choosing to remain with more traditional modes of expression and those who moved towards the abstract and conceptual in their work. Yet, even these latter artists were cautious and selective in their interest in modern approaches.

This involvement with western modes of art was, of course, only a middle-class preoccupation. The self-taught artists had no such interaction. Because they were poor and perhaps less fortunate, it was not even an option. As such, their work might be regarded as distinctly Jamaican and even African in source, while mainstream Jamaican art, stimulated as it has been by Western artistic trends, can find its integrity questioned.

Intuitive Art is characterized by a preoccupation with Jamaican iconography, an emphasis on no more formal artistic training, and a spontaneous reference to the Jamaican context. Like Garveyism, this strain maintains stronger links with African forms. Milton George could be defined both as an intuitive and a contemporary artist.



KAPO [MALLICA REYNOLDS]

UNTITLED, N.D.

Wood sculpture
20.5 x 6 x 5 in

0-5k



KAPO [MALLICA REYNOLDS]

REVIVAL HEALING, N.D.

Oil on canvas board
32 x 50 in
5-10k

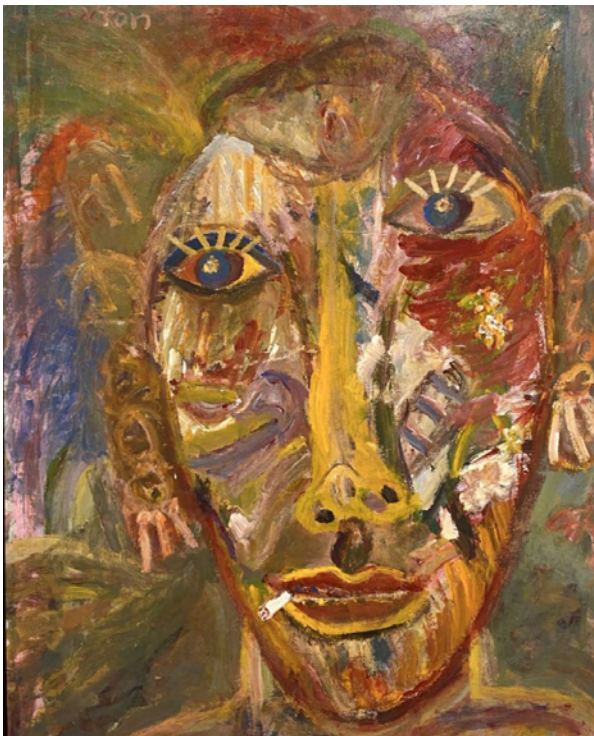


MILTON GEORGE

BE CAREFUL, EARLY 90'S

Pastel on paper
25 x 19 in

0-5k



MILTON GEORGE

BIG HEAD, CA. 1993

Acrylic on canvas
64 x 50 in

5-10k



ALAN JOHNSON ZION

THREE FACES, 1992

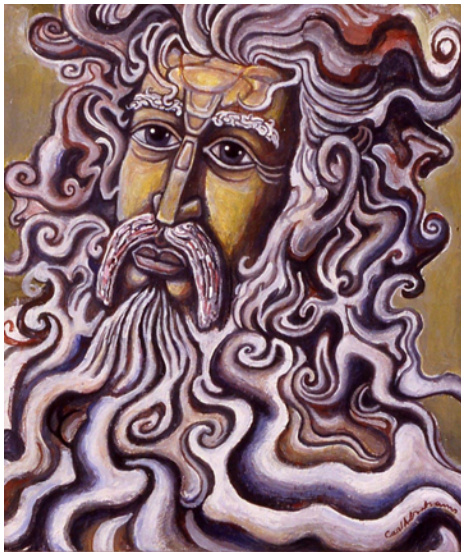
Oil on wood
7.5 x 8 in

0-5k

TRADITIONALISTS

When Edna Manley, (frequently referred to as the "mother of Jamaican art"), first arrived in Jamaica in 1922, she challenged the local art community when she publically criticized their work as "anemic" and "imitative". She may have been right, of course, since much of what was exhibited showed a preoccupation with European styled landscape paintings and portraiture using traditional techniques that didn't reflect Jamaica's culture or its people. Black people were rarely depicted other than in a documentary, ethnographic sense. Artists in Jamaica then seemed little concerned with the modern movements in Europe that were already exploiting so-called "primitive" cultures for inspiration.

The significant cultural change that sculptures like Negro Aroused evoked, however, cannot be credited to the actions of any single individual. Edna Manley's efforts would have been in vain were it not for a prevailing atmosphere of change in the local peoples' perception of themselves. Subsequently, Jamaica's modern art movement has been a collective one, motivated by the creativity of many Jamaican artists and thinkers reclaiming their history and mixed identities.



CARL ABRAHAMS

LARGE MOSES, 1980'S

Acrylic on canvas
23 x 18 in

10-20k



CARL ABRAHAMS

UNTITLED, 1987

Oil on canvas
15 x 11 in

0-5k



CECIL BAUGH

UNTITLED, 1992

Ceramic Sculpture
13 x 5 in

0-5k



COLIN GARLAND

UNTITLED, 2004

Oil on board
60 x 48 in

20-30k



BARRINGTON WATSON

CHURCH AT WALKER'S WOOD, N.D.

Oil on canvas
20 x 26 in

0-5k



BARRINGTON WATSON

LARGE JAMAICAN LANDSCAPE, CA.

1991
Oil on canvas
48 x 72 in

10-20k

CONTEMPORARY

As a continuation of issues raised decades earlier artists committed to a philosophy of pan-Africanism used their imagery to re-position the African identity within a Jamaican cosmology. Their imagery reflected an eclectic mix of stylistic and conceptual sources that used theoretical strategies such as deconstruction to critique old-world myths related to Columbus, the Haitian Revolution, and European literary classics such as Moby Dick.

While not ignorant of these issues, our artists have shown interest in other concerns more directly related to Jamaica's culture. The widening gap between rich and poor in Jamaica has created tensions and led to the violence of which artists are all too aware. The artist's message is one of uplift, valorizing and glamorizing the black condition, and referencing past and present achievements of the race.

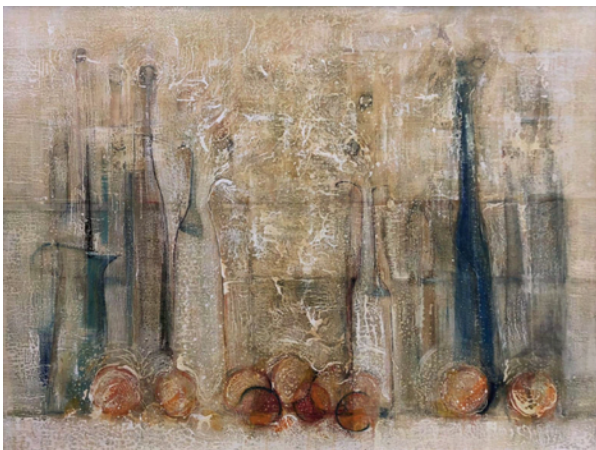


DAVID BOXER

STILL LIFE WITH
CHRYSANTHEMUMS, 2003-2006

Mixed media on paper
20 x 28 in

0-5k



DAVID BOXER

STILL-LIFE - FUGUE, 2003-2004

Mixed media on canvas
36 x 48 in

5-10k



ERIC CADIEN

FAMILY WITH BICYCLE, CA. 1990

Acrylic on canvas
34 x 24 in

0-5k



ERIC CADIEN

SHAPES IN SPACE #1, N.D.

Acrylic on Paper
42 x 28 in

0-5k



GENE PEARSON

PERSEUS, 2002

Ceramic Sculpture
24 x 9 x 7 in

0-5k



GENE PEARSON

RAMSES, 1980

Bronze Sculpture
15.5 x 14 x 11 in

5-10k



GEORGE RODNEY

PORT MARIA BUILDINGS, 1992

Acrylic on canvas
36 x 30 in

0-5k



GEORGE RODNEY

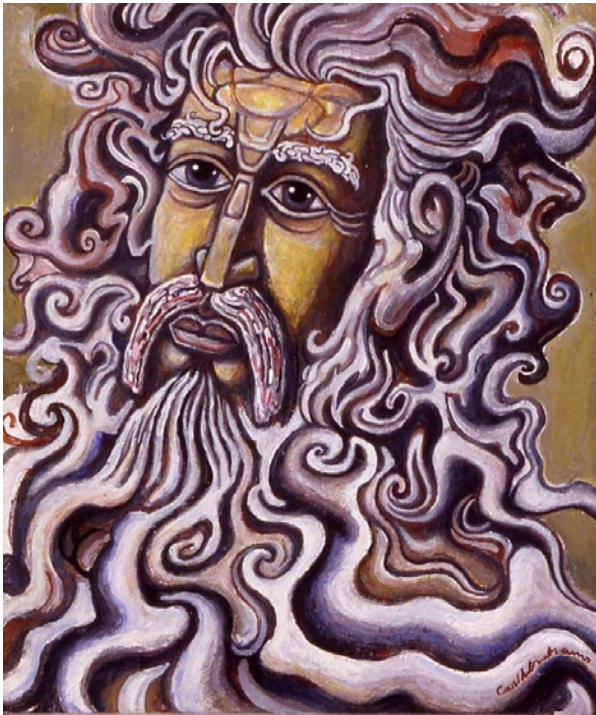
TE DEUS/PARISH CHURCH, 1992

Acrylic on canvas
36 x 30 in

0-5k

THE AUCTION IS OPEN UNTIL
THE LIVE ONLINE AUCTION
ON JUNE 14 AT 11:00 AM [EST]

VIEW THE CATALOGUE AND REGISTER FOR BIDDING BELOW



AUCTION TO BENEFIT THE AMERICAN
FRIENDS OF JAMAICA
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APRIL 12, 2019
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