

# Caribbean Art Collection e.V.

## Association for cultural exchange



ASSOCIATION

The Association Caribbean Art Collection e. V. (CACV) was formally established in December 2007. This Association aims to be inclusive, featuring the work of individual artists, groups and even entire countries. In the case of countries, the objective is to show-case the creativity of the particular territory, using a selected theme, through events, exhibits, workshops and lectures.

CACV operates as a non-profit association which seeks to promote exchange between the Caribbean and European Cultures. Its inaugural event "*Jamaica – Out of Many, One: A Journey through Art*" will be held on November 20, 2008 at *Nelson Mandela International School*, Berlin. It is being held under the auspices of Her Excellency, Mrs. Joy Wheeler, Ambassador for Jamaica to Federal Republic of Germany - amongst others in cooperation with the Jamaican Tourist Board and "Aktion Mensch".

MEMBERS

Founding members of the association include Lydia Tulloch-Déhee, President and Initiator of project, Jamaican-born. Ulrike Bortfeldt, Vice President, Constantin Bartning, Business Advisor and Ariana Rüssel M.A., art historian, all three are German-born. Dr. Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger, cultural sciences. Marine Legrand, treasurer and Patrice Déhee, technical advisor, both born in France.

This non-profit association runs parallel to the Gallery, Caribbean Art Collection - Berlin, an established entity also involved in the promotion of contemporary art in Europe and creating a cultural bridge between the peoples of the Caribbean and Europe. Made up of a multi-talented team, the association depends on the active participation of its members. Membership is accepted from all who wish to assist and promote the goals of CACV. Donations to and sponsorship of projects and events are also welcome from individuals and organisations wishing to support its work.

GOALS

The aim of the exhibition is to foster awareness among the local and international community on Jamaica's and the wider Caribbean's history, struggles, and accomplishments using mainly the medium of the visual and performing arts. CACV strongly emphasizes common responsibility for the preservation of and respect for natural resources and the intrinsic and cultural value of artefacts and material culture. Starting with the art-loving people of Berlin, the association hopes that its articulated perspective as demonstrated in its activities will lead to a broadening of knowledge and therefore contribute to the eradication of certain apprehensions, stereotypes and possible prejudices, thereby promoting similarities rather than differences among all people.

Further the association will work with schools with the aim of helping the younger generation, who in this highly globalized world, often question their origins, to feel a sense of identity and pride in nationhood and help those of mixed-race or non-European cultures, to be aware, and become proud of their own identity and heritage.

SOURCING

Sourcing is extremely critical. For this reason, the principals of the association have traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean, and have established significant working relationships with artists from the various territories. They have also met with noted scholars from places like the famed *Edna Manley School of Visual and Performing Arts* in Jamaica and the Curator of *Jamaica's National Museum*, Dr. David Boxer who are in support of this venture. Although the beginnings of the associations' activities are strongly marked by the familiarity with Jamaican art and artists, other contacts have been developed with former members of the *Akademia di Arte of Curaçao*, Netherlands Antilles, *the National School of Arts (ENA)* in Havana, Cuba and Puerto Rican art historians. The organization maintains an ongoing contact and exchange with many artists and specialists in the Caribbean - living in and outside the region - for constantly updating information about recent developments.

# HISTORY

The Caribbean comprises 30 islands and archipelagos with dozens of different languages as well as diverse Indigenous, European, African, Chinese, Indian, Jewish, Arabic and American influences. Despite their South American location, the countries of Cayenne (French Guiana), Guyana and Suriname - bordering the Caribbean Sea - are also included in the geographical and ideological Caribbean. Colonized by Europeans since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the original inhabitants became in many places extinct and were replaced by enslaved Africans. Beginning in 1834 after the abolition of slavery, and continuing well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, different European, Asian as well as Middle Eastern nationalities were imported by state and private entrepreneurs to supplement the labour force (as newly freed Africans sought non-plantation occupations) and to diversify the ethnic mix of the region. The result of that history is that the Caribbean has become a racial melting pot. Not surprisingly, research into Caribbean culture, 'creolization' and the presence or absence of 'ethnic pluralism' has become of growing interest to historians and others.



Isaac Mendez Belisario, *Koo, Koo, or Actor-Boy*, Kingston, Jamaica, Lithography, Oct. 1837

# PRESENT

Although the historical development of each of the territories, from Cuba to Guyana is different, the common goal, especially in respect of art and culture, is to remove stereotypes and clichés and define the Caribbean from a Caribbean perspective. In North America, Caribbean art is already recognized and sought out. An example is the travelling exhibition "*Soon Come: the Art of Contemporary Jamaica*", which ran from 2000-02 in the USA and which featured Jamaican artists e.g. Cecil Cooper, David Boxer and Milton George. The biographies and styles of Caribbean artists are as varied as the different Caribbean countries. Some are graduates of the *Edna Manley School for Visual and Performing Arts* in Kingston, Jamaica, of the *L'École de la Beauté* in Haiti or other formal schools of art. Others are self-taught, painting since childhood and selling at market places or galleries. Some work in the so called "naïve" or folkloric style, others realistic, abstract, etc. The object is to value them for art without isolating them because of the origin of the artist or their formal training in art or lack thereof.

Caribbean Art Collection e.V.  
c/o Lydia Tulloch-Déhee  
Salzbrunnerstr. 5  
D-14193 Berlin  
Germany

Mobile: +49 - (0)173 – 824 32 78  
Fax: +49 - (0)30 – 885 09 24

[www.caribbean-art-association.com](http://www.caribbean-art-association.com)  
[post@caribbean-art-association.com](mailto:post@caribbean-art-association.com)

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