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Forging the Path: Establishing Contemporary Art in Trinidad and Tobago

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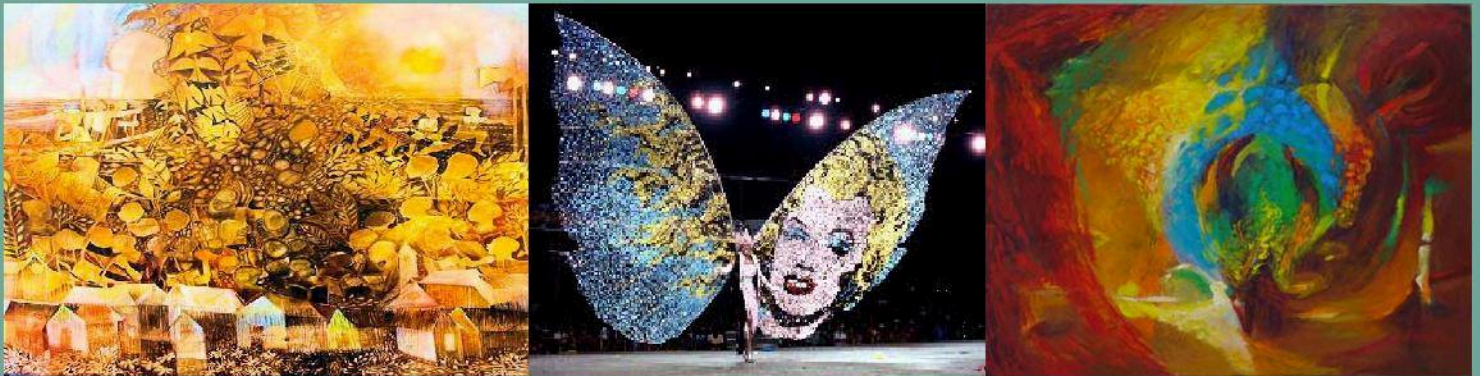
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Dr. Rebecca L. Skinner Green
Thursday February 11, 12-1:30
BTSU 208



Forging the Path: Establishing Contemporary Art in Trinidad and Tobago

While Many Americans only see the Caribbean as an exotic tourist haven, the remarkable fecundity of Caribbean intellectual contribution to economics, science, literature, politics, and art are silently interwoven into the fabric of our intellectual lives. These small islands boast 4 Nobel Prize winners, iconic personalities such as Alexander Hamilton, Colin Powell, Stuart Hall, Sir Arthur Lewis, Anthony Chen, Eric Holder, and Shirley Chisholm, as well as luminaries in the arts, including Harry Belafonte, Bob Marley, Sidney Poitier, Derek Walcott, and Vidia Naipaul. In this talk Dr. Skinner Green explores the wealth of Caribbean creativity through the lens of contemporary visual art/ists, an emergent Caribbean aesthetic, and the nascency of Caribbean creative energy within the multiplexity of ethnicities, social-cultural-political aspirations, and anxieties embodied in Caribbean life space. Skinner Green situates contemporary Caribbean visual arts by exploring how these aesthetics emerge in Trinidad & Tobago, as expressed through its artists' voices: from world-renowned Peter Minshall, to LeRoy Clarke, Makemba Kunle, Kenwyn Crichlow, Carlisle Harris, Glenn Roophchand, Shastri Maharji, Wendy Nanan, and others--catalysts of contemporary art, who emerged from distinct educational, social, and racial backgrounds. By incorporating artists' discussions and critiques of their art and their art-making experiences, this project moves beyond extant literature that emphasizes foreign observations on selected contemporary Caribbean works and exhibitions. Internationally recognized transcultural artists who move deftly between and among worlds--partaking in visual conversations on post-colonial global issues and concerns while maintaining a local awareness and flavor--continue to emerge from and thrive within this Caribbean space. By documenting the artists, their works, and their motivations, this project posits contemporary art in Trinidad & Tobago within a large corpus of scholarship on Caribbean aesthetics.

Rebecca L. Skinner Green is Associate Professor of Art History in the School of Art, having earned her PhD Indiana University. While Skinner Green's long-time specialty in African art and culture focuses particularly on the visual and performatory arts of Madagascar, her work since 2011 has expanded into the Caribbean, where she is engaged in collaborative research giving voice to Contemporary artists in Trinidad & Tobago. Currently an ICS fellow, past sponsors include the Social Science Research Council, Fulbright, Fulbright-Hays, the American Association of University Women, the Dawn Glanz Family Research Fund, and ICS.