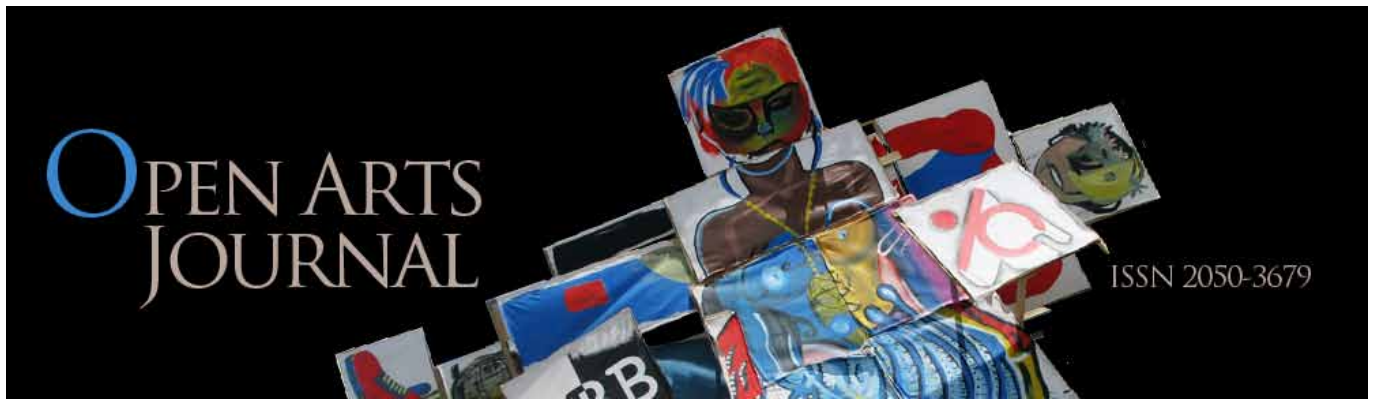




POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EXPANDING MULTIMODALITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CARIBBEAN INTRANSIT

Marielle Barrow

Abstract

This essay explores the concept of multimodality as a creative, structured way of experimenting with how cultural institutions are configured, and with a view to promoting sustainability and social development using the arts. Caribbean InTransit is an experimental platform that explores how diverse modalities of knowledge production may inflect the construction of human subjectivity differently. How do choices about modes of knowledge come to position and interpolate firstly, arts and cultural expression, and secondly, peoples of the Caribbean? And how is the potential for engagement with communities a matter of modality? Caribbean InTransit is a non-profit platform that encourages policy entrepreneurship between locations by ensuring that policy objectives are always under review or 'in transit'. It aims to be a bridge that connects spaces and institutions within certain local or national settings, while creating networked communities that connect across geographical space. It emphasises the need for the 'consociating' of people of various professions to create, what Caribbean InTransit has termed, communities of value (a grouping together of stakeholders) rather than simply communities of interest (groups of individuals with a similar vocational background). The sharing of values is made possible by multimodality: encapsulated in the role that Caribbean InTransit has played in education and social outreach, engaging simultaneously with the modes of collaborative research, cultural creativity through the visual arts and tourism. The four key aspects of multimodality – materiality, framing, design and production – which have emerged in theoretical work on the term (Kress & Jewitt, 2003), are emphasised in the discussion of art communities of the Caribbean.

Keywords: multimodality, policy entrepreneurship, design, arts institutions, community development, arts policy, cultural policy

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Biographical note

Trinidad-born Marielle Barrow is a Fulbright scholar, visual artist and social entrepreneur. After completing a degree in Hospitality Management in 2002, Barrow became a full-time artist and researcher, earning a postgraduate Diploma in Arts and Cultural Enterprise Management and an MPhil in Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies, before completing her doctorate at George Mason University in 2016. Her research focuses on the policy implications of counter-memory and cultural capital within Caribbean arts practice, especially in Haiti, The Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago. Barrow is the founder of *Caribbean InTransit*, a project involving thirty-three scholars and artists across the Caribbean, US and Europe, which produces a biannually published journal, symposia and festivals, as well as workshops for at-risk groups.

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To view the film footage on the Open Arts Archive, www.openartsarchive.org, follow this link:

<http://www.openartsarchive.org/archive/1st-conference-sustainable-art-communities-creativity-and-policy-transnational-caribbean-12>

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Marielle Barrow, Caribbean InTransit

Multimodality

Multimodality has come to be understood as an important aspect of cultural literacy in the twenty-first century. It is a hot topic in the field of research on learning and communication where it is making a particular contribution to understanding the construction of identity, and serves not simply as a way of describing a technological approach within the arts but as the basis for a more general ethos of existing and interacting with the world (Albers & Sanders, 2010, p.7). Moreover, it is part and parcel of artistic practice in a contemporary moment when collaboration and collectives are coming to present new ways of working creatively. Practising multimodality, at its simplest level, can carry arts practitioners and organisers beyond the existing singular or linear approaches, into a broader de-compartmentalising of knowledge within and across categories of cultural practice: linking subject areas within the curriculum of schools and universities, linking departments or ministries within governments and so on. A step and a leap further can lead to imagining new linkages across continents and seas, spanning various types of institutions that may hinge together public, private and artistic interests. Multimodality describes how to cross-pollinate otherwise distinct domains of intellectual work: geographical studies and art; art and medicine; environmental studies and art; art and engineering.

Currently, on small scales and through isolated programming or in one-off events, multimodality is already being practised. Pushing this to operate at a higher level, the discussion here will frame and define such practices of multimodality within arts institutions and among artists, while emphasising their future potential. As I will show, this requires special consideration of economies of scale given the current conjuncture of circumstances presented by the Caribbean.

Multi suggests multiplicity – multiple ways of being and doing – while modality refers to modes

of representation, whether visual, aural, gestural or three-dimensional. The selection and orchestration of these modes is culturally contingent, following established conventions for ‘making meaning’ according to a given community and its shared sense of values. Multimodality describes the multiple means of social interaction or interface using signs and resources that interact to produce meaning. It also exists as a methodology, a framework for the collection and analysis of data of various kinds, from embodied, spatial experiences of interaction in social environments, to visual and aural data, as well as the interrelationships between each of these (Jewitt, 2009; Kress, 2009).

I have lifted multimodality from its familiar usage in the domains of literacy and communication research in order to apply it as a framework for the development of sustainable art communities. In doing so, I choose to explore multimodality as a structured process of experimenting with the configuration of institutions – essentially shaping new institutional relations – in order to promote socio-economic development through the arts. As the founder and president of the non-profit organisation *Caribbean InTransit*, I continually test the possibilities for alternative institutional arrangements at the ground level. With thirty-three volunteers across thirteen countries, our platform is one in which to experiment with different means of self-organisation in order to identify new modalities of knowledge and subject formation. We have asked: how do considerations about modality help to clarify an understanding of arts and cultural representation, and communities of the Caribbean? In particular, how does a concern with such modality affect the potential for *engagement* with such communities?

In beginning this investigation it has been useful to explore some of the various conceptualisations of the cultural industries, as well as points of disagreement in a moral economy of interest in contemporary arts practice, in which there is often considerable opposition to the very concept of culture as a site of industry. On that basis, *Caribbean InTransit* has developed itself as a contribution to ‘policy entrepreneurship’. Illuminating the diversity among modes of activity within the visual arts in the following discussion, I set out the historical background to policy entrepreneurship as a critical practice, followed by an account of multimodality as it is emerging both within the Caribbean and further afield.

Cultural industries and development goals

Caribbean InTransit’s central long-term goal of shifting the economies of the Caribbean may only be achievable through collaborative arrangements within the arts.

The strength of such a micro-enterprise is its mobility and responsiveness to changing circumstances, while its partners lend specialised institutional expertise, on-the-ground access and contextual know-how ('situated knowledge'), as well as providing direct finance and in-kind sponsorship. Through collaborative projects largely initiated by *Caribbean InTransit*, we are able to reach a community of scholars, cultural producers, students, activists and policy makers, and bring them together with businesses to enable an articulation of entrepreneurship and artistic creativity. This extended community is both an internal and external clientele, and is envisioned as a mechanism for change in the arts.

Caribbean InTransit curates cultural events and creates opportunities for its members, developing individuals who are seeking to bring about change. Our various strands of doing so are complementary: regular workshops; interventions in the field of cultural heritage and its conservation; networking among Caribbean artists and policy makers on the shared issue of how to engineer sustainable communities in and through the arts, arts education and cultural tourism. We have encountered significant gaps not simply between stakeholders in the cultural field, but also a longstanding disconnect between the arts and the benefits and interests of a wider industrial base in the Caribbean, including tourism. Broaching them has involved direct recognition of the following six concerns and sets of constraints, while many more lie beyond these, in what is by all accounts a challenging social and economic context for the development of the cultural industries.

Firstly, it is widely acknowledged in the art, policy and academic communities that the Caribbean infrastructure for the arts, including its human resources (its practitioners and industry specialists), is inadequate and needs urgent development. There is limited available training in the arts, and less than ample conditions for incubating the arts through financing (loans), support services and legal frameworks including tax incentives. Grant-writing or entrepreneurship workshops for the creative industries appear only sporadically, and with poor and uneven access across the region.

Secondly, marketplace opportunities for the showcasing and sale of arts goods and services (such as art festivals and public events) are generally unsatisfactory across the Caribbean region, and unknown altogether in some Caribbean countries. Consequently, it is a great challenge for artists and arts organisations to sustain themselves and the livelihoods of dedicated individuals. Even when such opportunities do arise, their scale is limited, events are too brief, and

there is little support in the way of promotion to the public or facilitation of commercial exchanges such as with potential art buyers. The lack of such a hub of services, and the commonly short lead times toward the staging of art events, has meant that artists are frequently not made aware of the extent of the state-sponsored provision. They are barely consulted at the planning stages and find themselves consequently unable to fully benefit.

Thirdly, although change is afoot when the Caribbean is taken as a whole, in many Caribbean countries, there is a lack of critical interrogation of artistic practices and products, such as in the adjacent field of scholarly or journalistic debate. While critique does arise, participation in the critical reception and interpretation of art practices is limited if not closed off altogether from the general public in particular settings of the Caribbean. Thus a wider audience for art and a strong public stake in the arts has not emerged. By implication, there are also significant weaknesses in arts policy. The research undertaken in the preparation of policy has tended to be conducted on a shallow pool of cases and their results integrated haphazardly. It remains unclear what conceptualisations of the arts are held among policy makers, and how these have been arrived at, as well as whether qualitative in addition to quantitative methods are being employed in the analysis of data.

Fourthly, the challenges of maintaining continuity in the growth and development of the arts are pressing. There is a pervasive culture of short-termism, with sporadic interventions designed to improve the arts. There is a tendency to channel benefits to the same key individuals (the readily identified 'stars' who comprise an unchanging, narrow grouping). This reflects favouritism, if not bald clientelism, in the public support for arts channelled to private individuals. Within a small but relatively diverse cultural environment, such practices have resulted in token gestures toward the arts rather than its articulation with the larger goals of Caribbean economic and socio-cultural development. Even so, it is clear that marketing and publicity for the arts is insufficient for maximising upon the model of 'individual achievement', which in turn suggests that the existing policy objectives, however misdirected, are not effectively applied. What lies at the heart of this attention to the promotion of a star system, moreover, is a bracketing of cultural practices – images, objects, performances etc. – and their separation from the cultural field at large.

As a fifth concern, while the state and state-sponsored organisations have often convened to stage, in somewhat episodic fashion, the region's various art events, experts in the cultural industries are largely left

out of the picture. This has hampered their ability to understand the extent to which event operators draw benefits from the privilege of enjoying exclusive access (Tull, 2009).

A final concern is a corollary to this sense of a division between those who distribute resources for the state in the field of the arts and the ostensible primary beneficiaries: the arts practitioners. The latter are forced to negotiate the deficiencies in policy frameworks and their implementation, especially in the area of sustainability for art communities. Indeed, the common delay between the drafting of policy, business planning and other developmental tools presents an implementation gap or time lag. We have found that arts organisations are often placed in the position of making use of such plans as much as a decade after they were devised. Falling within this domain of outdated policy formulations is the generally inchoate criteria for financing projects, as well as retrograde ethical codes that have tended not to be implemented. Transparency in the making of policy and the actual uses of funds is also a key issue, not to mention the disconnection between them. The fundamental starting point for the improvement of any such policy seems to be missing, namely a conceptualisation of what should comprise and characterise the cultural field, while avoiding narrowness. Much attention in Caribbean cultural policy has gravitated toward carnival as the dominant cultural industry and growth site for heritage tourism and sponsorship, and this has disadvantaged the visual arts in the main, which are left to fend for themselves on a landscape of scale. In certain cases, visual artists have felt that their only path to sustainability is to participate in carnival, constructing new categories that parse the relation between it and the otherwise discrete environment of 'contemporary art'. The unequal attention here to policy making for carnival as compared to visual arts is patent (see also: Tull, 2009).

Caribbean InTransit as policy entrepreneurship

Reviewing some of the background to the concept of policy entrepreneurship may be helpful here. A policy entrepreneur is 'an individual, group, or organisation which leverages resources to generate a favoured policy outcome' (Arnold, 2015, p.308; see also: Oliver & Paul-Shaheen, 1997, p.744; Etzioni 1987; Kingdon, 1984; Mintrom, 1997; Schumpeter, 1942). Arnold (2015) has carried forward this field of study by focusing on key considerations surrounding the processes of re-formulating intellectual, organisational and political resources that disrupt traditional structures. The

work of policy entrepreneurs should be of special interest to academic scholars because it seems to demand attention from the academy in order to be successful. Julius Court and Simon Maxwell (2007) for instance highlight key points that affect the policy entrepreneurship environment that integrate the role of scholarship. They cite the need for a presence of 'research donors', individuals who are willing to invest intellectually in this field and to address its politics directly. Indeed, there is a need for detailed, quality research that crosses geographical boundaries, as well as institutional ones, in order to enter the domain of policy debates with a view to influencing them while resisting over-simplification of the process of doing so. This also leads to considerations about the power of partnerships between researchers and civil groups or even investors. To some extent such partnerships are already in play in the Caribbean, where artists are increasingly involved with the scholarly community. However, they have yet to be joined by those with a shared interest in shaping cultural policy.

Policy entrepreneurs tend to be driven by a desire for social change – effectively they are social entrepreneurs invested in seeing their work written into policy. They value social development over personal economic profit (Reinstaller, 2005, p.1368). Andreas Reinstaller argues that policy entrepreneurs articulate their social solutions with a 'policy vision' and their 'importance lies in their capability to induce a revaluation of existing shared mental models and beliefs on specific issues and related routines by concerned actors and groups' (p.1368). While it is beyond the scope of this article to set out the Caribbean's historical background of resisting the operations of policy entrepreneurialism, it suffices to note that there are considerable present-day factors that inhibit them. What deserves highlighting are some preliminary ways toward the integration of the arts within society, and in particular how the arts may perform more constructively in meeting the social, cultural, economic and even environmental needs of Caribbean societies. I hope that this will serve as a starting point toward re-configuring policy agendas and that multimodality can be an enterprising step into this setting.

Materiality, framing, design and production

Four additional keywords that help to make clear the benefits of the term multimodality (Kress & Jewitt, 2003) and that may be applied to the Caribbean context, are as follows: materiality, framing, design and production. As I am about to show, these terms are to be understood within an overall framework that integrates art and everyday life in crucially productive ways.

Materiality includes resources for art making, whether these be still images, fabric, conceptual vocabularies, or the properties of a raw material whose manipulation comes to be central in the communication of messages and the conveyance of a sensorial experience. At the simplest level, it can be interpreted as physical material alone, yet shifts in thinking around the term have seen it broaden out to encompass the changing social roles of artists, such as interventions in urban planning, waste management, public sector reform and poverty alleviation, to mention but a few. Within contemporary art, time or teaching can be also understood as forms of materiality, as can bodies themselves.

Institutional settings in which such roles materialise have come to be central for the work of artists from outside the Caribbean such as Mierle Ukeles. While not working in or from the Caribbean, the Caribbean may draw example from Ukeles, a feminist with a rooted social practice for her art. Ukeles draws on bodies in the workplace, engaging issues of labour, such as *Touch Sanitation*, a work about garbage collectors in New York City. The labouring body is both private and public, accessing the political in myriad ways. She activates the political potential of labour, by challenging the social constructions that separate aesthetic and cultural values as they shape and indeed conventionally separate the domains of work and art (Krug, 2006). Her practice highlights an aesthetic of work within the labouring body as well as the narratives that workers share. Materiality becomes a preoccupation addressed through various tasks that the worker must perform. Mierles employs a video camera in order to share the aesthetic dimension of such work, connecting to bodies within a more public domain. Art becomes social practice and work becomes art. This exchange of art and work, especially art and the everyday, scrutinises the mundane and shifts perceptions and challenges stereotypes by way of the materiality of bodies.

Ukeles' projects seem to encourage that we ask some farther-reaching questions about the mapping of verbal conversations as a means to innovate aesthetically, and how the appropriation of artistic practice, such as by large institutions, can be understood as a form of materiality that may in turn be critiqued or manipulated by an artist. Indeed, how could such practices be taken up in the Caribbean, to change cultural norms, alter relationships between institutions and their internal or external clientele, and perspectives on art shared by the wider public?

Framing references the way in which various materials exist together, and whether they create dissonance or else continuity, and how shifts in

the organisation of such materials can elicit the interpretations of the viewer. Ukeles, in her role as artist-in-residence to the city, signifies how to frame differently organised social and institutional bodies. Collaboration between art and corporations, or government departments/ministries, as a re-framing or shift in the organisation and determination of relationships, may also come to inform viewers' perceptions.

With reference to framing, *The Hemispheric Institute*, housed at the Office of the Provost, New York University, is notable for figuring a transition outwards from the art gallery and museum into the academy. It exists between each site, in an in-between space, attached yet distinct in form and practice from the tertiary education super-structure. Articulating an alternative value system, the *Institute* initiated its project as a consortium where scholars could work 'at the intersections of scholarship, artistic practice and political life in the Americas' (Hemispheric Institute, n.d.). It functions by attaching itself to NYU while existing as a network of more than 45 universities across the US and Latin America. Artists are given temporary fellowships and hosted through residencies and scholars, all within a slew of partner institutions overseen by a board of faculty members and activists who pursue a shared interest. Staging performances and encounters with one another and the public, offering courses and publishing, the *Institute* has begun to develop a truly networked community that spans a considerable international geography. The key to its success is a concern with framing: re-conceptualising the possible interrelationships between educational and artistic organisations, while essentially trying to re-integrate art into social life by attending to a critical purpose.

iLAND – Interdisciplinary Laboratory of Art Nature and Dance is similar to the other initiatives I have mentioned, but for its somewhat unusual structure. This laboratory of sorts characterises itself as 'a dance research organisation that investigates the power of dance, in collaboration with other fields, to illuminate our kinetic understanding of the world' (iLAND, n.d.). In de-compartmentalising disciplines to favour a more fluid staging of the private and public experience of dance, iLAND hosts workshops, symposia and residencies. With titles such as *Watershed*, *IMAP/ Ridgewood Reservoir*, *Urban Migration* and *Bird Brain: A Navigational Dance Project*, these events create a dissonance from the usual frame of reference for dance, while pressing for greater continuity, dare I say harmony, with the spatial environment. *Urban Migrations* activates the urban landscape through movement, while

Ridge Wood Reservoir uses research and collaboration with natural scientists to find new ways of dissolving nature-culture binaries to the benefit of communities. In sum, the value of framing and re-framing is tri-fold, involving: i) attention to the conceptualisation of cultural forms, de-compartmentalising practices through collaboration; ii) a new focus on the human body, for instance, the dancing body as compared to the labouring body; and iii) resulting shifts in cultural practice itself, revealing original patterns in the collisions and collaborations between social life and the spatial environment. Such a raft of approaches, I would contend, can have considerable yield for the Caribbean. It can show how to bridge our uneven institutional terrain by bringing social relations and bringing them into the purview of theories of community that promote cultural praxis – essentially bridging art activities with academic disciplines and community practices.

Design involves the conceptual aspect of visual creativity and covers the range of ways in which people use the materials available to them to shape the field of representation. There are at least three very fertile examples in the Caribbean. The first two: *Fresh Milk*, centred in Barbados, and *Alice Yard*, Trinidad, are designed spaces intended to straddle both private and public interests in art and cultural production. They are artist-led initiatives, benefitting from named artistic personalities who imbue the two organisations with an atmosphere of informality: whether that be the back yard (rear garden) of a family property, transformed into a centre that the public may visit and attend publicised events, or the outbuildings on a family-run dairy farm. *Projects and Space*, the third example, by contrast presents art as a social practice by virtue of being grounded in the accessibility of an online platform.

In a fourth example, *ARC: Art, Recognition, Culture*, an online and print publication with an accompanying team of events organisers and publicists, the emphasis is more on trying to overcome the challenges of the scattered geography of the Caribbean and its diaspora. The chosen response is to focus on the accessibility of art of the Caribbean and its frequent production through collaboration. *ARC* is less an institution than a space of interaction, typified by online collaborations perhaps, yet channelled to address the need to develop social relationships. A comparison may be drawn with another initiative, *AICA Caraïbe du Sud* – the southern Caribbean chapter of the UNESCO-funded, global, non-governmental organisation the Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art (the International Association of Art Critics), founded in 1950 and

headquartered in Paris – which is most active here through its online presence. One of its lead organisers, Dominique Brebion, has described the co-existence of these and many more Caribbean-focused initiatives in the arts, highlighting their general purpose of publishing material with the potential to have an impact upon policy making, as well as to reach widely across this multilingual region. As she writes:

Repeating Islands, *Arte Sur*, *Gens de la Caraïbe*, *AICA Caraïbe du Sud*, and *Uprising Art*, ... publish regularly and exclusively online, sometimes posting material daily... Four among these, *Caribbean InTransit*, *Small Axe*, *Arte por Excelencias* and *Repeating Islands* are initiated from the Diaspora, whereas the others are created within the Caribbean. There are seven reviews from the English-speaking area, three from the Spanish-speaking area, and four from the French-speaking area. However, two of these are trilingual, three bilingual, seven others are written exclusively in English, another in Spanish and the last one in French. (2011, p.7)

This network of online publications might be described as 'ephemera cartographies' (see Rita Valente's work on ephemeral cartographies) for the Caribbean's art communities – through the network evolving relationships and cultural practices that are connected in virtual space can be mapped. Design has a particular importance for such networks, helping to re-spatialise them by breaching borders and cutting short temporal distances (cf. Wilbur, 2000), while holding open the possibility for alternatives to corporate capitalism through a more co-operative or collaborative approach to linking art and profit. At root, the design of Caribbean art communities in the area of their communications requires a suitable response in the field of cultural policy. The appearance of multiple platforms and organisations is evidently filling a policy vacuum. And yet these entities are struggling to sustain themselves as anything more than informal, ephemeral solutions to a much deeper problem of a lack of infrastructure – or of 'design' in the multimodal sense. How may national and regional bodies further their progress? To what extent would the arrival of formal cultural policy not attuned to multimodality come to disrupt or stymie the path and style of these initiatives?

Lastly, **production** describes the act of assembling or creating cultural representations, covering the technical skill needed for their execution. There are several cultural formations throughout modern history that became notable for their alternative techniques of production: from the *Bauhaus* to *Van Guardia*, the

Guerrilla Girls, *General Idea*, the *Laundromat Project* and *Ant Farm*, as well as more contemporary groups such as *Yes Men* and *Floating Lab Collective*. These groups – whether engaging comedy, dissonance or social critique – hold in common the result of opening up the arts to wider users and audiences. In the Caribbean, the ambition to produce outcomes on a comparable scale is certainly there: *Alice Yard*, *Fresh Milk* and *Projects and Space*, are to be counted along with *Popop Studios* in The Bahamas and the *Instituto Buena Vista* in Curaçao. These initiatives can be mapped for their innovative work in production, and it remains for me to draw comparisons between their development and the practice of *Caribbean InTransit*.

The uses of multimodality in *Caribbean InTransit*

Caribbean InTransit attempts to build on some historical lessons about enterprise in the domain of culture through its multimodal, multicity, networked community of participants. As a site primarily of learning, our

programming includes a bi-annually published, open-access, peer-reviewed journal, as well as our newsletter, a Google talk series, a roving arts festival and an arts workshop series that targets at-risk youth, and people with HIV/AIDS. The organisation works with scholars, cultural practitioners, students, activists, policy makers and businesses to cultivate a union between entrepreneurship and artistic practice, conducting conversations that propel forward the development of a Caribbean community, taking in its wide diaspora. Its strategic partnerships to date have been mostly institutions of higher education, museums and galleries (the University of the West Indies at its campus in Trinidad; George Mason University, Virginia; Rutgers University, New Jersey; the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington DC; Jamaica's National Art Gallery; and the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas). It has also worked with government – the Ministry of Planning and Sustainability in Trinidad and Tobago – and with charitable funders such as the Inter-American Development Bank.

Established in 2011, *Caribbean InTransit* has sought to create networks beyond these partners, and our modus operandi is in large part shaped by the digital technologies available to us. Our Google talk series *Talking Arts* serves as a body of knowledge: a space to meet online with a diverse range of participants. We use the Google Hangout platform in addition to live webcasting to field questions from a global audience which are then captured for posterity on the *Caribbean InTransit* website. This a means to stay up-to-date with the community that has built up through the initiative, and our progress is reported in the newsletter – *Arts Menu* – which, in addition, shares the details of relevant opportunities, events and book releases, while keeping our readers current on *Caribbean InTransit* and its partners.

These channels are designed to elicit dialogue and to share information, producing teaching

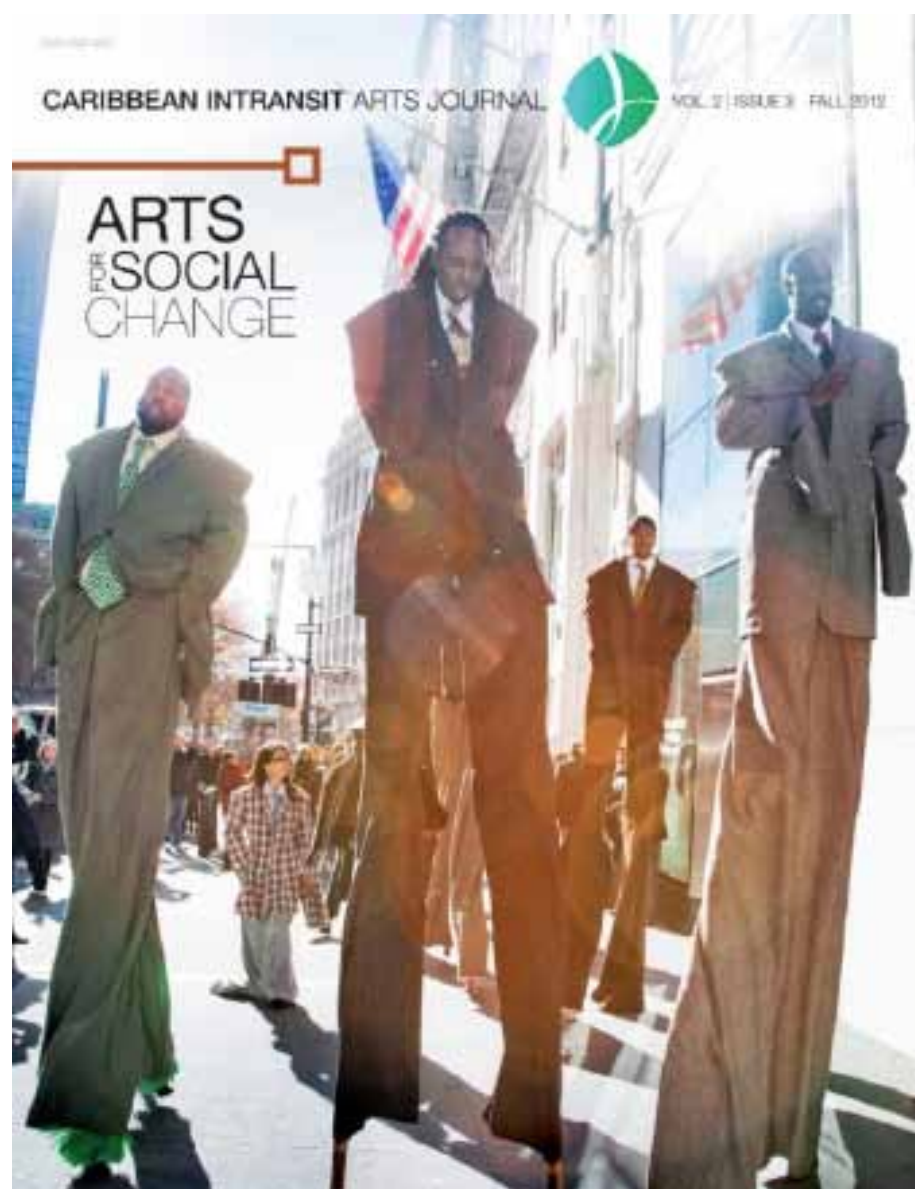


Figure 8.1: Cover image of *Caribbean InTransit Arts Journal* (Fall 2012, vol.2, no.3) by Laura Anderson Barbata. (Photo: *Caribbean InTransit*)

and learning materials, as well as material that policy makers, scholars, artists and art audiences can explore and exploit in their own ways. As a shared space of knowledge, these are platforms for *Caribbean InTransit* to operate in its role as an 'interlocutor', facilitating relationships in the arts within a de-hierarchised space that strives for a common language. A challenge that faces us at present is how then to move into a deeper material relationship with our participants, one that would ensure that their communications are more direct and continuous, affecting a perpetual exchange between the cultural field and the life of our Caribbean communities more broadly. One solution may be found in, indeed I would recommend, the application of a framework of multimodality, and it is plain to see that here lies a field of opportunity for us as we come to address each of its various tenets.

In the context of *Caribbean InTransit*, the multimodal emphasis on framing may come to be applied to the materials that we circulate through our publicity channels and through our public events. These extend, of course, beyond the materiality of information, to include the movement of our participants, their bodies and narratives, as they undergo transition

and transformation through involvement with one another. If the newsletter and our Google talk series have served in enabling this activity, then the logical next step is perhaps to turn the organisation of such materials back over to participants themselves, in other words to transcend the role of *Caribbean InTransit* as a medium for their exchange. On that basis, more direct partnerships could emerge between policy makers, students, artists and audiences.

To some extent that step has already been taken: *Caribbean InTransit* worked together with *Floating Lab Collective* as a contribution to the third manifestation of the *Haiti Ghetto Biennale* (2013). This brought together scholars and artists who created paper and ink works comprising *The Book of Latent Promises*, which used materials sourced in Haiti. On this contextualising material, they made imprints of debris from the earthquake onto the paper, and printed narratives of promises that have remained unfulfilled for the Haitian peoples. This was a process of encouraging people to join in, and it opened up a space of mutual empathy and a practice of communication and aesthetic production that was indelibly marked by the new relationships and exchanged that formed. Moreover, here were the



Figure 8.2: Papermaking and printing in Haiti at *Caribbean InTransit*, 2013. (Photo: *Caribbean InTransit*)

seeds for a continuing sort of engagement between stakeholders, who explored the metaphor of how to make an impact – or imprint – upon the paradigms of social, cultural and economic development that characterises ordinary life in Haiti. Collectively penned, the description of the project in my journal entry reflected our thoughts at the time:

The Book of Latent Promises ... is a contextual proposal for a shared practice. We are working with the creative strengths that already exist in Haiti. The work lives on a one-to-one human scale. Relationships are being created through trust and presence. Recognising the artists as members of the universal artistic community, the Haitian artists with whom we are collaborating are introducing the space to us. We have created a mobile printing lab that is an extension of research by collaborating parties. In addition, the objective is to produce this document as simultaneously an art object and a journal.

Collaboration between art and corporations or government ministries has also served to re-frame the importance of the Caribbean as a site of policy entrepreneurship. *Caribbean InTransit*'s position as an

academic journal with a university affiliation, while simultaneously interconnected to other partners, draws a lesson from similar models such as *The Hemispheric Institute*. What remains is for these sort of arrangements to inform state policy in the Caribbean, and in a similar pattern to parse relations between the visual arts, dance, music, and so on in order to improve our social, political and economic relations.

Conceptualising an arts festival for the Caribbean and a programme of social development

One such example of this type of innovation could focus interest on the role of arts festivals. There are several similar festivals and biennials in the region – notably *Carifesta*, established in the 1970s, with a periodic and roving programme between members of the Caribbean economic community, CARICOM – but nothing that has drawn quite so heavily on digital technologies (in order to establish and maintain its community of participants), as we have done through *The Meeting Place*, *Arts InTransit*, and *Creatives of the Caribbean*, our first three festivals, held in Trinidad and Tobago (2013, 2014), and in Washington DC (June 2014). Our festival model has also explored

Inaugural festival

• Trinidad October 2013

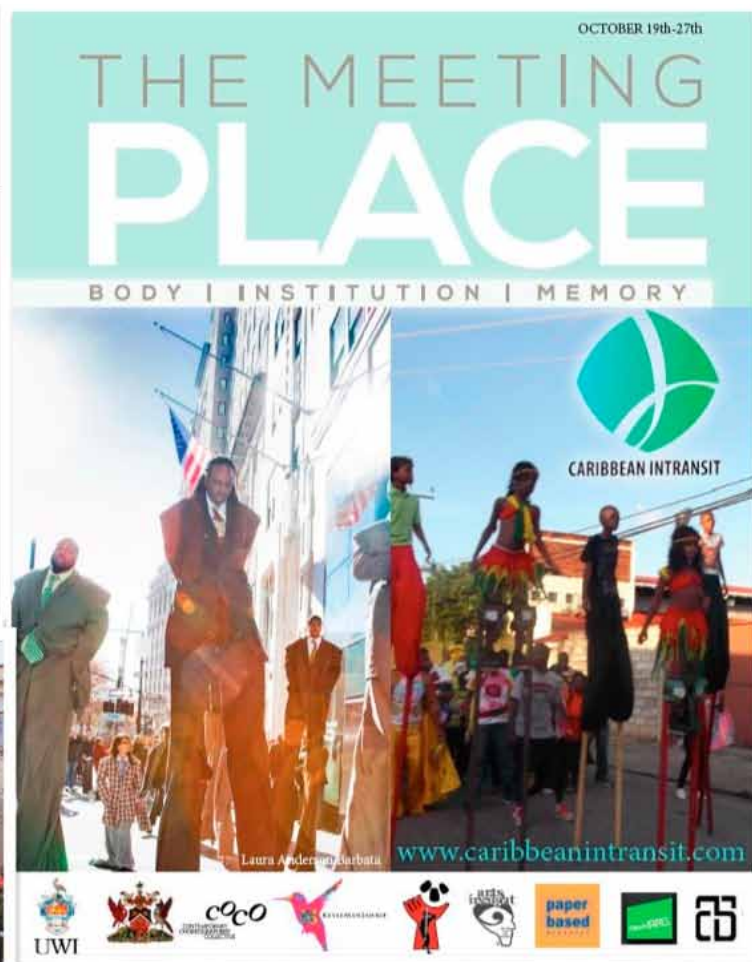


Figure 8.3: Inaugural *Caribbean InTransit* Festival *The Meeting Place*, 2013. (Photo: *Caribbean InTransit*)

the benefits of self-evaluation of its very model by contributing to conferences that took place in the weeks around the festivals in Trinidad and Washington. We also worked to link the festivals with one another, using a multicity presence that could de-stabilise a sense of the borders not only between Caribbean nations, but between the geographic Caribbean and the diaspora.

A second strand of the overall *Caribbean InTransit* initiative is the programme *This is ME*, which is currently in its fifth phase. It offers leadership and entrepreneurship training to at-risk communities

as well as women in the Caribbean, targeting the young and those living with HIV/AIDS. Phases one and three took place in Trinidad (2012, 2013), the second in Jamaica (2012) and the fourth in Haiti (July 2014). The series explores *Caribbean InTransit*'s emphasis on art as a path for social change, involving the local school system, regional and international social work collectives, and tertiary institutions. It develops sustainable programming that increases employability chances and is a firm example of how art may become part of a wider concern for social outreach and development. Additionally, we believe



CARIBBEAN INTRANSIT LAUNCHES ITS
1st Annual Symposium
Theme: Body | Institution | Memory
October 25, 2013

CARIBBEAN INTRANSIT HOSTS THE SYMPOSIUM AS A PART OF ITS FIRST ANNUAL FESTIVAL "THE MEETING PLACE", IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN CULTURAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (UWI), ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Dr. Erica M. James
Assistant Professor, History of Art
and African American Studies,
Yale University

Erica M. James, PhD, is Asst. Professor jointly appointed in the Dept. of History of Art and African American Studies at Yale University. Before arriving at Yale, she served as the founding Director and Chief Curator of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas. Dr. James earned an MFA from The University of Chicago and a PhD in Art History from Duke University. While at Duke, she was awarded several fellowships including the International Association of University Women and The John Hope Franklin Fellowships. Since that time she has served as a Clark Fellow at the Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute and as a post-doctoral teaching fellow at Washington University, St. Louis.

CALL FOR PAPERS for "Body | Institution | Memory"

We invite proposals for papers from established scholars as well as artists and postgraduate students to be presented at the symposium. Papers presented will be under consideration for inclusion in Issue 6 of *Caribbean InTransit* anticipated for a Spring 2014 publication.

In "*Body|Institution|Memory*," we are interested in works which reflect on the body in relation to institutions and memory in contemporary art. We would like to initiate a discussion of the ways in which contemporary artists of the Caribbean and its diasporas have addressed these concerns – and the ways in which these might be linked to similar concerns internationally. While earlier work has situated the body politically within a nexus of colonial and postcolonial relations, gendered relations and raced relations, we would like to extend the conversation to think also of the body as a set of practices that might address the idea of embodiment itself.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 15TH, 2013

FOR FULL SYNOPSIS & TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK, visit:
<http://caribbeanintransit.com/submissions/submit-work/>

Figure 8.4: Flyer for Inaugural Festival *The Meeting Place*, 2013. (Photo: *Caribbean InTransit*)



This is Me, Trinidad. 2013

Belmont Boys High School

Figure 8.5: *This is ME I, Trinidad*, 2012. (Photo: *Caribbean InTransit*)

that the results show how to catalyse the creation of communities within the Caribbean by enabling students to understand the need for economic cooperatives and to participate in their development. Within the next five years, our aim is to open a satellite operation in the shape of a school of the arts, entrepreneurship and the environment, and to take advantage of a concept of the 'orange economy', promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank among other international funders, thereby consolidating our work on growing the creative industries in the Caribbean in a particular area of social need.

Conclusion

Caribbean InTransit has reached a stage of review in its development, which I have chosen to outline in this article from my standpoint as its founder. As a collaborative, networked platform, *Caribbean InTransit* works to build ideas and strategies through partnerships that take advantage of decentralisation of the globe via the Internet, and the implications for the arts through policy entrepreneurship. Moving the Caribbean onto a stronger policy footing in the arts, as we have begun to demonstrate, means using a multimodal approach that draws support from

government and state organisations where relevant, but equally places its balancing point closer to more innovative domains that are already represented by the arts, albeit as they struggle to sustain themselves.

The background of thinking on multimodality becomes productive when pressed into the service of the arts: the concepts of materiality, framing, design and production offer a way forward, as I have suggested. What has distinguished *Caribbean InTransit* is its additional emphasis on access, creative practice, critique and sustainability, and ideally these ought to be considered together with the framework on multimodality that I have been discussing. *Caribbean InTransit* essentially responds to three major questions: What does it take to create a viable creative industry for the Caribbean? What innovative development models already exist? How may these models be sustained in relation to the region's economic constraints? Such questions serve to harness creative imaginations producing innovative solutions through entrepreneurial activities. By de-compartmentalising disciplines and making value-based connections across a variety of sites and institutions, policy innovators can begin to dismantle structures that are leaving the Caribbean behind the curve, while making use of the

institutional strengths that have carried us to this point. When Caribbean communities choose to put to use their artists as thinkers in a new age of digital flows, human experience itself may be transformed into a shared resource. By effectively raising the use value of the arts, the top-down anxiety of how to 'carry' the arts will be alleviated, while increasing the contribution of the arts to Caribbean society.

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