

immediate release



Rockstone and Bootheel: Contemporary West Indian Art Saturday, November 14 - Sunday, March 14, 2010

opening reception: Sat., Nov. 14, 3 - 6 PM
members' reception from 1:30 - 3 PM

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Real Art Ways

([get directions](#))

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Gallery Hours:

Tuesday through Thursday
and Sunday, 2-10 pm;

Friday and Saturday 2pm-
midnight. Closed Mondays.

Cinema open daily.



Image: Marlon Griffith: From *The Powder Box Schoolgirl Series*,
Digital Print On Gator Board, 48x32", 2009

Hartford, Connecticut – Real Art Ways presents some of the most challenging, recent work by artists from the Anglophone Caribbean and the diaspora in **Rockstone and Bootheel: Contemporary West Indian Art**, curated by **Kristina Newman-Scott** and **Yona Backer**. The exhibition, featuring the works of 39 artists, evokes the feeling of a high-energy "mash up." The works are juxtaposed in conversation with each other to reveal complex, fragmented stories about contemporary Anglophone Caribbean culture, challenging common assumptions about West Indian artistic expression.

Rockstone and Bootheel opens on Saturday, November 14 and runs

ABOUT REAL ART WAYS

Real Art Ways is one of the leading contemporary arts organizations in the United States, with a record of linking artists, innovation and community. Programs include visual arts, with exhibitions, public art projects, and artist presentations; cinema, with independent and international films 7 nights a week; music; performance; literary events; community and educational programming.

through Sunday, March 14, 2010. Real Art Ways is located at 56 Arbor Street in Hartford's Parkville neighborhood. For more information, contact Real Art Ways: www.realartways.org or 860.232.1006.

The **opening reception** is on Saturday, November 14, 3-6 PM. Performances at the reception include **Christopher Cozier's** temporary sound installation, *Sound System*, and a performance by **Zachary Fabri**.

Public programs slated to take place during the run of the show include film screenings, readings, performances, live music, artist talks, lectures, and community based activities. An event schedule will be available online closer to the exhibition's opening date.

About *Rockstone and Bootheel*: Contemporary West Indian Art

The exhibition's name comes from a Jamaican dub-metal song, "Rockstone and Bootheel," by Gibby. It's a colloquial phrase that means "taking a journey." *Rockstone and Bootheel* is, in fact, an exhibition composed of many journeys, sometimes conflicting, all influenced by the social, political, and economic conditions of life in the West Indies and the diaspora. "West Indies" refers to a group of islands in the Caribbean formerly under British control.

The exhibition focuses on artists from the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago, all former British colonies, each with a distinct artistic presence.

Rockstone and Bootheel offers a snapshot of recent works that draw from the region's popular culture and history. Rather than make the case for a particular West Indian aesthetic, the exhibition offers a lively glimpse into contemporary Anglophone Caribbean visual practice - an energetic "mash up" of art that lies at the intersection of popular and urban culture.

Music and dance are pervasive in West Indian culture. Many of the works in *Rockstone and Bootheel* incorporate sound and performative elements, drawing from Carnival, Jamaican Dancehall, and other dominant subcultures.

The works also tell stories of the region's complicated history, a history filled with conflict, transformation, and cross-cultural exchange. Through their work, the artists address issues including gender, race, sexuality and homophobia, and the rampant crime and violence plaguing many of the islands' inner cities.

The exhibition features large-scale installations, new media and multi-disciplinary works, digital projections, music videos and large-format photographs. Also featured are assemblage sculptures, paintings, and live performances.

An offsite public art project by Karyn Olivier will be installed at a West Indian grocery store in Hartford. Hartford, Connecticut has the third largest West Indian population in the United States, after New York and Miami.

The exhibition's 39 participating artists are Akuzuru, Ewan Atkinson, Lawrence Graham-Brown, Renee Cox, Christopher Cozier, Blue Curry, Sonya Clark, Makandal Dada, Annalee Davis, Khalil Deane, Zachary Fabri, Joscelyn Gardner, Marlon Griffith, Satch Hoyt, Christopher Irons, Leasho Johnson, Ras Kassa, Jayson Keeling, O'Neil Lawrence, Christina Leslie, Simone Leigh, Jaime Lee Loy, Dave McKenzie, Wendell McShine, Petrona Morrison, Karyn Olivier, Zak Ové, Ebony G. Patterson, Omari Ra, Peter Dean Rickards, Nadine Robinson, Sheena Rose, Oneika Russell, Heino Schmid, Phillip Thomas, Adele Todd, Nari Ward, Jay Will and Dave Williams.

Catalog by leading Caribbean designer

Richard Rawlins will create an interactive website and catalog for the exhibition's international audience. Rawlins is artistic director for CMB Creative and the founder of the online magazine *Draconian Switch*.

Like *Draconian Switch*, the catalog will also feature creative work by designers working in advertising. Contributing writers to the catalog include Garnette Cadogan; Nicholas Laughlin (editor of the *Caribbean Review of Books*); writers and critics Annie Paul and Melanie Archer; Donna P. Hope, a professor of Dancehall Culture and Reggae Studies; and poet/activist Muhammad Muwakil.

The Curators

Born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, Real Art Ways' Director of Visual Arts **Kristina Newman-Scott** is a practicing artist. Newman-Scott has organized and curated exhibitions with a particular focus on presenting emerging artists in innovative ways. Her previous curatorial projects include *Shadow Show*, *Archaeology of Wonder* and *Real Public*.

Yona Backer is a co-founder of Third Streaming, a project where popular culture, contemporary art, film, fashion and design intersect. Previously, she served as the Director of Visual Arts at the Americas Society in New York and most recently as the Senior Program Officer at the Andy Warhol Foundation. Yona Backer was born in Kingston, Jamaica and raised in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Support

Rockstone and Bootheel is made possible by generous support from: The National Endowment for the Arts, The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, The Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation, Real Art Ways members, The J. Walton Bissell Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Greater Hartford Arts Council's United Arts Campaign, Travelers, The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Sandy and Howard Fromson, Robinson and Nancy Grover, The Wallace Foundation , Lincoln Financial Group , and Gary E. West.

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