



Decolonizing **REFINEMENT**

*contemporary pursuits in the art of
Edouard Duval-Carrié*

SYMPOSIUM

February 17, 2018 // William Johnston Building

Saturday, February 17, 2018

10:00am / WJB 2004

Welcome and Acknowledgments

Paul Niell

Associate Professor

Florida State University

Department of Art History

10:15am – 12:30pm / WJB 2004

Session I

Session Chairs – Rachel Fesperman and Alexis Assam

Jerry Philogene – Dickinson College

Nashid Madyun – Florida A&M University

Erica James – University of Miami

Vincent Joos – Florida State University

12:30pm – 2:15pm

Lunch Break

2:15pm - 4:00pm / WJB 2004

Session II

Session Chair and Roundtable Moderator – Lesley Wolff

Edward Sullivan – New York University

Martin Munro – Florida State University

Edouard Duval-Carrié

4:30pm / Museum of Fine Arts, FSU

Reception



Schedule of Events



Jerry Philogene

Dickinson College

Encased in Resin: Memories Hidden in the Shadows of Skin

In “The Fact of Blackness” Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon writes,

The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty. I know that if I want to smoke, I shall have to reach out my right arm and take the pack of cigarettes laying at the other end of the table. The matches, however, are in the drawer on the left, and I shall have to lean back slightly. And all these movements are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge. A slow composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world--definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world” (BSWM, 110-111).

In my presentation, my goal is to draw from both Fanon’s words and the images and textured surfaces of the work of Edouard Duval-Carrié and explore how they function as, according to Anne Anlin Cheng, “discursive constructs and corporeal agents.” Using this idea of the discursive and the corporeal, I want to draw out two things: first the enigmatic nature

of resin. I want to explore how resin, consisting of a viscous substance, hardens with treatment, cements and emphasizes memories and histories as if they are creative acts in both their remembering and their writing. Second, with Fanon’s idea of the body being “surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty” in mind, I would like to explore the impermeable and uncertain nature of the epidermal, which like resin, hardens with treatment. If we were to take skin not only as an object but also as part of a different way of being, it would then allow for a different way of living and moving about the world, as we see in Fanon’s systematic search for his matches and cigarettes understanding the inseparability, indissolubility of his skin to his action and being. My presentation will theorize resin as skin, asking how memories and histories are encased onto skin, tightly sealed and like resin harden with treatment and through time. In particular, I focus my presentation and comments specifically with Duval-Carrié’s series *Memory Window* in mind.

Biography

Jerry Philogene is an Associate Professor in American Studies at Dickinson College. In addition to exploring the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and gender as articulated in contemporary visual arts, her research and teaching interests include interdisciplinary American cultural and art history, Caribbean art history and visual arts, (with an emphasis on the Francophone Caribbean), black cultural politics, and theories of the African diaspora. Her essays have appeared in *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, *Radical History Review*, *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, and the *Journal of Haitian Studies*. She has published numerous art exhibition catalogue essays. Currently, she is a Humanities Writ Large Visiting Faculty Fellow at Duke University where she is working on a book manuscript titled “The Socially Dead and the ‘Improbable Citizen’: Cultural Transformations of Haitian Citizenship,” which provides a rich textured analysis of the power of the visual field and its complex relationship between violence, domination, and liberation through an exploration of painting, photography, film, and comics.





Nashid Madyun

Florida A&M University

**The African American Caste Quandary:
Realism and Consciousness amidst
19th-Century Separatism**

This is an examination of a greater quandary. The economic caste and class of this America was amidst a search for footing between the full partisan power of an enfranchised class and increasing wealth during Reconstruction and the looming peculiarity of Jim Crow. The late 19th-Century Negro was paradoxically engulfed in the fleeting consciousness of the

historically African, the enslaved, the enfranchised, and the caste and class residue of separate but equal. W.E.B DuBois reflected on this quagmire of identity and reduced it to Double Consciousness, the life of an American that happened to be Negro, while other ideologies emerged that demonstrated a greater quandary of obstacles for national and global respect and identity.

Biography

Dr. Nashid Madyun is the Director of the Carrie Meek and James Eaton Sr., Southeastern Regional Black Archives Research Center and Museum at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. He teaches courses in Humanities, African American Art, and U.S. History, and graduate courses in Business. Dr. Madyun has previously served as the Director of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, the Texas State History Museum, President and General Manager of Gibson Retail Group (a division of Gibson Music Instruments), and the Art Museum and Archives of Hampton University.



Erica James

University of Miami

Edouard Duval-Carrié, Caribbean Art and the Muse of History

The exploration of recorded histories as a conceptual beginning is a salient feature of Caribbean Art. This paper explores the ways in which Edouard Duval-Carrié, in concert with Caribbean artists from throughout the diaspora, has deployed this mode of investigation through material and form. Through close reading, I aim to demonstrate how this body of work disaggregates seeming fixities

of the Caribbean past, the visual iconographies, economies and cultures of violence and refinement that have both framed and erased the region, from the period of transatlantic slavery to the present.

Biography

Erica Moiah James is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Miami. Before arriving in Miami, she taught at Yale University and was the founding Director and Chief Curator of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas. Her forthcoming book is entitled *After Caliban: Caribbean Art in the Global Imaginary*.



Vincent Joos

Florida State University

Cash Crop Matters: Spatial Structures of Plantation Economies in Haiti and Northern Florida

After thirteen years of Revolution, the formerly enslaved declared Haiti independent in January 1804, and massacred the remaining French planters and their families in April of the same year. It clearly appeared that cash crop systems could not be administered through violence and military presence only. New forms of spatial segregation and of cultural differentiation would arise in regions of the Americas dominated by lucrative cash crop economies in order to prevent the spread of freedom ideals through social and racial mixing. Arguing that a deep fear of interracial contact and exchange spread during and after the Haitian Revolution, this paper tracks the new forms of exclusion, ostracization, and physical separation that appeared during the cotton boom in northern Florida after 1804.

While mirroring the brutal productivism of the 18th-century sugar economy, the 19th-century cotton boom regions present very different social settings. Planters in the U.S. lived in elaborate (and often monumental) buildings on their plantations or in city centers. Strictly enforced segregation was a new and crucial element that allowed elites to create distinction (in architecture, art,

language, etc.) and that enabled Blacks who lived away from their oppressors to fashion cultural, social, and economic spheres of autonomy that would prove crucial during the Reconstruction period. Spatial compartmentalization, differential architecture, and slave patrols' supervision of all aspects of life in plantation made these social disconnections possible. This paper precisely tracks the techniques of disconnection and the processes of distinction that emerged in the U.S. South after the 1804 Revolution. Using Tallahassee as a core example, this paper contrasts spatial dynamics and architecture in the U.S. and St. Domingue as they shape social and cultural life in plantation (and post-plantation) societies. As a key economic center of the cotton boom, Tallahassee offers, in a nutshell, both the architecture of distinction used by planters to perform their "refined" culture and the architecture of confinement that Black enslaved, and later, indentured workers would ply to constitute autonomous worlds.

Biography

Dr. Vincent Joos is a cultural anthropologist who works on Haiti and Haitian communities living in the southeastern United States. His research explores post-disaster reconstruction and the relations between states, citizens, and international institutions and NGOs in the Caribbean. He is now working on a manuscript entitled “Urban Dwellings, Haitian Citizenships: Housing, Daily Life and Memory in Port-au-Prince, Haiti” in which he analyzes infrastructure building in post-earthquake Haiti and the vernacular transformation of urban space by people excluded from the aid economy. Dr. Joos also studies and teaches about Caribbean music and its links to politics and economy on a global scale. He is particularly interested in Caribbean expressive culture in diasporic strongholds throughout the southeastern United States. He earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2015, and a M.A. in Folklore from the same university in 2011. Dr. Joos has taught courses on post-disaster reconstruction, Caribbean music and culture, and on issues of race, class, and gender in the Caribbean and the United States.





Edward Sullivan

New York University

**Edouard Duval-Carrié: Artist,
Activist, Curator, Art Historian**

This talk will focus on the work of Edouard Duval-Carrié throughout his career as an artist who has created vivid visual testimonies of the Haitian diaspora and the African presence in the Western Hemisphere. While he is an artist who is politically engaged with the past of his native country he is equally concerned with depicting (in both metaphorical and concrete images) the conundrums and traumas that face modern Haiti and the wider Caribbean. We will examine here how Duval-Carrié has worked within the Haitian and Latino community in his adopted city of Miami and, in addition, the role social activism and art curating have played within the broad panorama of his prolific production in painting, sculpture and multi-media (often performance-based) projects.

In addition, this paper will chart the role of Edouard Duval-Carrié in the on-going fascination in the case of many museums in the United States for collecting the arts of Haiti. This phenomenon began as early as the 1940s with gatherings of the work of the first generation of the so-called Haitian Renaissance. In the mid-2000s with the phenomenon of numerous

large-scale exhibitions of Edouard's work in museums in many parts of the U.S. and beyond, interest in Haitian art has been revived. Links with some of the artists of the first era of Haitian modern art and the complex picture of Haitian art today will be commented on in the second part of this paper.

Biography

Edward J. Sullivan is the Helen Gould Sheppard Professor of the History of Art at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts where he also serves as Deputy Director. Sullivan's lengthy career in teaching, writing and curating has focused on Caribbean art of the nineteenth century to the present and Latin American art of the modern era. He is the author of some thirty books and exhibition catalogues. He edited and wrote the principal essay for the major monograph on Duval-Carrié, *Continental Shifts: The Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié* (2007), and has authored numerous other essays on his work. Sullivan's latest book, *Making the Americas Modern: Hemispheric Art 1910-1960* (2018) is published by Laurance King Ltd., London.





Martin Munro

Florida State University

Edgy Edouard

The first time I met Edouard Duval Carrié, he said something that has stayed with me since. It was in 2007, in Trinidad, where he was participating in a conference I co-organized on contemporary Haitian art and literature. We were having lunch, and we were talking about his relationship with the other, mostly slightly younger, artists who were participating in the event. He hesitated a moment, gave a smile, and with a little wave of his hand, indicated that they did not think much of his work. I expressed my surprise, and asked why that was,

to which he replied “Oh, they don’t think I’m edgy enough.” The phrase struck me, and is in the back of my mind each time I see some of his work: what did they mean? What did it mean to him? What did they mean by “edgy”? In what ways might his work be considered “edgy”? I argue that the sharp edges of personal and collective experience remain present in the work, that they inform it in different ways, and that they manifest themselves in ways different to those found in more deliberately confrontational or jarring forms.

Biography

Martin Munro is Eminent Scholar and Winthrop-King Professor of French and Francophone Studies in the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics at Florida State University. A specialist in Francophone Caribbean literature and culture, he is the author of many publications including the books *Different Drummers: Rhythm and Race in the Americas* (University of California Press, 2010) and *Writing on the Fault Line: Haitian Literature and the Earthquake of 2010* (Liverpool University Press, 2014).



Edouard Duval-Carrié

Born and raised in Haiti, Edouard Duval-Carrié fled the regime of “Papa Doc” Duvalier as a teenager and subsequently resided in locales as diverse as Puerto Rico, Montreal, Paris, and Miami. Parallels thus emerge between the artist’s cosmopolitan lifestyle and his artistic sensitivity toward the multifaceted identities that form his native Haiti. Whether in sculpture, painting, or multimedia installation, Duval-Carrié’s work navigates the historically rich and culturally complex traditions that comprise a uniquely Caribbean perspective. At heart, Duval-Carrié is an educator: he challenges the viewer to make meaning of dense iconography derived from Caribbean history, politics, and religion.

Duval-Carrié also re-appropriates history, inscribing photographs, documents, paintings, and ephemera onto his own work and thus problematizes official Francophonic narratives against lived realities. Although he claims his art to be a secular and intellectual pursuit, Duval-Carrié’s work often convenes with the spiritual via installations reminiscent of Vodou and Catholic altarpieces and reliquaries. In so doing, the artist explores the complex intermingling of ethnicities and socio-economic circumstances that staged Haiti’s contemporary, hybridic culture, and through which the Vodou pantheon continues to pulse. Recently, the conceptual layering of Duval-Carrié’s works has been further emphasized in his materials and through consistent attention to translucent and reflective mediums, such as glitter, glass, and resin. The introspective effects of these mediums transform his works into spatial interventions that implicate the viewer in their historicity. At their most fundamental, Duval-Carrié’s works ask the viewer to complicate the Western canon, to consider how Africa has shaped the Americas, and how the Caribbean has shaped the modern world.



Acknowledgments

Thank You

We would like to thank Dr. Kenneth Reckford and Charlotte Orth Reckford along with the Winthrop-King Institute for Contemporary French and Francophone Studies at Florida State University for the funding that made this symposium possible. Of the Winthrop-King Institute, we especially thank its Director, our colleague Martin Munro. We thank our speakers, Erica James, Jerry Philogene, Nashid Madyun, Vincent Joos, Edward Sullivan, Martin Munro, and Edouard Duval-Carrié, for their contributions.

In the College of Fine Arts (CFA), we would like to acknowledge the support of Interim Dean Scott Shamp and in the Department of Art History, Adam Jolles, Department Chair. We also thank Sheri Patton, Business Administrator and Jean Hudson, Media Center Curator. For graphic assistance, we thank Gabrielle Taylor, Graphic Arts Specialist of the CFA.

Kristin Dowell, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at FSU, and Caitlyn Lightle provided vital assistance in video recording the event. Graduate students in the Department of Art History, Rachel Fesperman and Alexis Assam, generously lent their time to the planning, promotion, and execution of this symposium; and we thank Morgan Gunther and Ashley Lindeman for their design of the symposium website.

— Paul B. Niell, Michael D. Carrasco, and Lesley A. Wolff





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