



BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY

## **Education Resources**

*Adapted from the Carib Art Exhibition, May 9 - June 16, 1995*

### **Art: A Glossary for Visitors**

The following glossary is designed to help the teacher, student or visitor to the exhibition by providing definitions of specialist words and terms that are used in the field of art but may not be familiar to everyone.

#### Materials and Techniques

**Media** (plural) **Medium** (singular): The specific tools and materials used by the artist, e.g., brush and oil paint, chisel and stone, OR the mode of expression, e.g. painting, sculpture, etc.

**Acrylic:** A paint that dries to a tough, plastic like surface that is waterproof. It is very versatile and can be used thick like oil paint or thinned to resemble watercolour.

**Airbrush:** A tool resembling a fountain pen that acts as a miniature spray gun. Mostly used by commercial artists.

**Bas-relief:** A form of shallow sculpture or modeling in which the figures only project slightly from the back ground, as in a coin or medal.

**Batik:** A method of printing textiles by coating parts of the fabric with wax to resist dye.

**Charcoal:** A black crayon made of burnt twigs or wood, usually willow or vine.

**Collage:** A technique of creating a picture in two-dimensions or very low relief by gluing paper, fabrics, or any material to the surface.

**Glaze:** A liquid applied to ceramic work which, when heated in a kiln, fuses to the surface, it may be decorative and/or functional.

**Gouache:** A watercolour paint to which the manufacturer has added chalk or white to make the paint opaque.

**Masonite:** The US name for a pressed wood fibre board popular as a surface for oil painting.

**Mono-print (mono-type):** A one-of-a-kind print usually made by painting on glass and transferring the image while wet to paper.

**Mixed media:** The use of two or more media in a single work, e.g., oil and acrylic.

**Oil:** Oil paints, paint pigment that has been mixed with linseed oil or other oil to a smooth paste, usually available in tubes.

**Pastel:** A chalk like coloured crayon made of pigment mixed with a binder of gum.

**Serigraph:** A US term for creative silkscreen printmaking, in which the artists designs, makes and prints their own stencils.

**Stoneware:** A term generally used to describe ceramic work that has been high-fired as opposed to low-fired Earthenware.

**Terracotta:** A brownish-red clay widely used by sculptors and potters.

**Triptych:** A set of three paintings or Bas-reliefs related in subject matter and connected side by side.

**Watercolour:** A water-based paint usually applied in thin transparent washes.

### Modes and Styles.

**Abstract-expressionism:** A style of non-representational painting that combines abstract form and expressionist emotional value. Developed in New York during the 1940s.

Paintings are typically bold, forceful, and large, colours strident and accidental effects such as drips of paint are often present. Examples, Jackson Pollock, William de Kooning.

**Avant-garde:** 1) That which departs from the existing norm in an original or experimental way. The term is used of an artist's technique, style or choice of subject matter. 2) A group of artists that practice or advocate a new art form. Also extended to mean "outlandish" or "extremist."

**Contemporary:** Generally refers to art produced in the last 50 years, but mostly more recently.

**Cubism:** An art movement that was the product of collaboration between Picasso and Braque, who were its leading figures. Its early phase was encouraged by the Parisian interest in Cezanne, Suerat, and African sculpture. Cubist painting frequently presents several views of the same object.

**Expressionism:** A concept of painting in which traditional rules of realism and proportion are overridden by the intensity of the artists emotions resulting in distortions of line, shape and colour. The forerunners were The Fauves and Van Gogh.

**Fauvism:** A style of painting which uses colour expressively. The terms *Les Fauves*, meaning wild beasts, was used by a critic to describe a group of artists who took violent liberties particularly with colour, often painting objects in the colour they thought best expressed its inner qualities. They were not a closely linked group. Examples, Matisse and Roualt.

**Figurative:** Representing the human form by means of a figure, symbol or likeness in painting, drawing or sculpture.

**Genre:** 1) The work of, or style of, work of an artist or group of artists. 2) A representation of everyday life and surroundings.

**Iconography:** A set of images, symbols or pictures used by an artist to represent as subject. Example, a cross represents Christianity.

**Impressionism:** The first great modern art movement. Characterised by short brush strokes and broken outlines. The Impressionists sought to break up light into its component parts and show its constantly changing effect on surfaces and objects. They intended to observe nature as it really is and put it down on canvas. Examples, Monet, Pissarro.

**Intuitive:** see Naïve, Primitive.

**Modernism:** Art work whose style and content is modern or recent and is derived from recent fashions or tendencies.

**Naïve Art:** A style of painting characterised by a lack of sophisticated artistic technique. The use of colour often does not conform to reality, perspective is often unconventional,

and subject matter usually childlike. Generally, it is used to refer to the work of self-taught or untrained artists. Examples, Henri Rousseau, Grandma Moses.

**Neo-Impressionism:** Name given to a late 19<sup>th</sup> century art movement in French art. It was a synthesis of impressionism and pointillism (the methodical application of dabs of paint to create colour effects). Examples, Suerat, Pissarro.

**Plastic Art:** The creative visual arts, including painting, drawing, and sculpture, as separate from poetry, music, dance and literature.

**Popart:** A style of art derived mainly from commercial art forms often featuring outsize replicas of items of mass culture such as comic strips and packaging, developed in New York in the 1950s. Examples, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein.

**Primitive Art:** The work of naïve or self-taught artists, not subject to the influence of previous or contemporary work.

**Realism:** In general, the depiction of human figures, real objects or scenes as they appear in nature, without distortion or stylization. Also used to describe representational painting to distinguish it from abstract painting. It was an art movement in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that included Courbet, whose work was a reaction against the idealised subjects of Romantic and New-Classical painting.

**Realist:** The style of or the artist working in this style.

**Surrealism:** An art movement starting in the 1920s that attempted to give free rein to the subconscious as a source of creativity. Characterised by everyday objects signed by the artist (found objects), or unusual combinations or distortions of objects in a fantasy or dreamlike setting. Examples, Miro, Dali, de Chirico.

**Ukiyo-e:** Literally, *images from the floating world*, the Japanese woodblock prints were created during the Edo period of Japanese history, approx. 1600 -1868. These prints tended to depict everyday scenes from pleasure houses from beautiful women (geishas) to kabuki actors as well as nature, and are significant for their highly sophisticated process and its impact on the West. Examples, Hokusai, Hiroshige.