

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

May 19, 2004

Mrs. Valerie Facey
The Mill Press
184a Constant Spring Road
Box 167, Kingston 8
Jamaica
West Indies

Dear Valerie,

Proposed exhibition on Isaac Mendes Belisario

The Yale Center for British Art is organizing an exhibition on the celebrated Jamaican artist Isaac Mendes Belisario (1795-1849), to take place at the Center in the autumn of 2007. The exhibition will examine the life and work of this remarkable artist, investigate the historical and artistic context in which Belisario worked, and explore cross-Atlantic cultural exchange in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In addition to locating Belisario's artistic style in its historical context, and exploring his topographical landscape paintings of Caribbean subjects, the exhibition will examine the complex iconography of Sketches of Character, identifying the specific African roots of the figures and costumes represented. The exhibition will be accompanied by a scholarly publication, which will illustrate all works in the exhibition, a symposium, and other academic programs. It is also envisaged that the exhibition will travel to other venues.

The core research team at Yale will consist of Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz, formerly a graduate student in the History of Art Department, and now Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Stanford University, who originally proposed the project to Yale; Tim Barringer, Associate Professor in the Yale University History of Art department, and Gillian Forrester, Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Center for British Art. During preparations for the exhibition and its associated projects, the Center will collaborate with a wide range of scholars working in a variety of disciplines, both at Yale and elsewhere. The exhibition will draw extensively on the Yale's museum and library collections, which are particularly rich in this area, but it is hoped that it will be possible to borrow a number of key works from collections elsewhere, notably the six paintings of properties belonging to Howe Peter Browne, the 2nd Marquess of Sligo, which are now in the collection of the National Gallery of Jamaica. Such loans of material from outside the USA are crucial to the success of the exhibition and to the full representation of this great Jamaican artist's work.

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The three members of the research team propose to visit Jamaica between June 17 and 26, 2004 to conduct preliminary research for the project. The objective of the visit is several-fold: to meet with scholars and curators to discuss the project and explore the possibilities for collaboration; to investigate the resources relating to Belisario held in the National Gallery of Jamaica, the National Library of Jamaica, and the Institute of Jamaica and the University of West Indies; and to explore the possibility of loans to the exhibition. I understand that you, as the acknowledged authority on Belisario's work, have generously offered to help facilitate this visit.

The Yale Center for British Art, which has a long tradition of producing scholarly exhibitions and programs, is deeply committed to this important project, and I very much hope that institutions and independent scholars in Jamaica will be able to lend us their support and full collaboration. I very much regret that my commitments make it impossible for me to participate in the upcoming research visit, but I plan to visit Jamaica in the near future, and trust in the meantime that you will have a productive exchange with my colleagues which will lay the foundations for an enduring and meaningful collaboration.

Yours ever,



Amy Meyers
Director

Tim Barringer is Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the History of Art Department at Yale University, following earlier appointments at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the University of London and the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham. He holds degrees from the University of Cambridge, New York University (Institute of Fine Arts) and the University of Sussex. His publications include Reading the Pre-Raphaelites (1999), Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain (forthcoming 2004) and Colonialism and the Object (edited, with Tom Flynn, 1998). He was curator (with Andrew Wilton) of the major loan exhibition American Sublime (Tate Britain, 2002) and co-author of the catalogue. He has written extensively on art and British imperialism and organized a major international conference on the subject at Tate Britain in 2001. He has edited (with Douglas Fordham and Geoff Quilley) a 160,000-word collection of essays, Art and the British Empire, which will be published by Manchester University Press in 2005.

Gillian Forrester is Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Yale Center for British Art, following earlier appointments at the Tate Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery, London. She holds a degree from the University of Nottingham. She has extensive experience of organizing exhibitions, including The Romantic Print in Britain (Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, 2004); Richard Hamilton: Prints and Multiples 1939-2002 (Yale Center for British Art, 2004); The Romantic Print in the Age of Revolutions (Yale Center for British Art, 2003); The Romantic Landscape Print (Yale Center for British Art, 2002), The Line of Beauty: British Drawings and Watercolors of the Eighteenth Century (Yale Center for British Art, 2001), Ruskin: Past: Present: Future (Yale Center for British Art, 2000) and Turner's Drawing Book: The Liber Studiorum (Tate Gallery, London, 1996). Her publications include Turner's Drawing Book: The Liber Studiorum (1996), The Line of Beauty: British Drawings and Watercolors of the Eighteenth Century (2001, with Scott Wilcox), and she has contributed to the Companion to J.M.W. Turner (2001, Oxford University Press), the Dictionary of National Biography (forthcoming, Oxford University Press), and to the catalogue of Sir Brinsley Ford's collection (Walpole Society, London, 1998), which she co-edited with Luke Herrmann.

Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Stanford University. He was awarded his PhD at Yale University in 2004 for his dissertation on "Kongo Machinery: Graphic Writing and other Narratives of the Sign", and also holds degrees from the University of Havana, and the San Alejandro Academy of Art, Cuba. He is co-director of the Paigeart Cultural Association (Amsterdam and Lisbon). He has lectured and published extensively on African, Latin-American, and Caribbean art, and his publications include Del lobo un Pelo: Estudios sobre Arte Contemporáneo Cubano (forthcoming, Editorial Letras Cubanas, Havana); "Speaking in Action" in Odantalan (2002); Marks of the Soul: Poetics, Philosophies, Religions – Eight Caribbean Artists (2001); and "Mambo Comes from the Soul," in Call and Response: Journeys in African Art (2000). He curated Marks of the Soul: Poetics, Philosophies, and Religions – Eight Caribbean Artists (University Galleries, Florida Atlantic University, 2001), and was co-curator for Latino American Art (Yale University Art Gallery, 2000) and Call and Response: Journeys in African Art (Yale University Art Gallery, 2000). A practicing artist, his solo exhibitions include Angola Syndrome (Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama, 1998), Energía Museable No.1 (Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro, Havana, 1997) and De cómo una cabeza pudo crearse cuerpo, alma, fortaleza (Galería Luis de Soto, University of Havana, Cuba, 1993).