

CARIBBEAN EXPORT DESIGN INITIATIVE
11-14 February 2009, Jamaica

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The Mission to Jamaica was to attend a Planning Meeting of the Caribbean Export Design Initiative. The overall objective was to enhance the capacity of design in the Caribbean by increasing the output of high-end products.

The Caribbean Design for Export Initiative was conceived at a meeting during the 15th Caribbean Gift and Craft Show in Barbados, during October 2008. A small group, including Patty Johnson (Consultant, TFO Canada), Michael Piggott (Head of Barbados Design Centre), Andy Manley (Design Consultant, Dominica) and Mr. Philip Williams (Executive Director, Caribbean Export) met to discuss how Caribbean Export might work to improve Caribbean design.

Invitations to this meeting were issued to a select group of persons involved in the development of Caribbean design, drawn from:

- ① Design Agencies/Centres
- ② Design Schools
- ③ Designer/Producers
- ④ Design Consultants

There were 18 participants in the Mission. (Please see Appendix 1).

Invited participants were expected to prepare an update on the status of design in their country and/or the region. This includes profiles, projects, case studies, and current issues. The aim was that participants should come prepared to discuss the key design issues facing the region and to develop some ideas for a work programme to improve regional design.

REPORT

The Mission to Jamaica was divided into two segments: Site visits and the Planning meeting (See AGENDA at Appendix 2). The mission members made site visits to:

The Jamaica Business and Design Centre, Kingston

The JBDC which provides assistance and incubator facilities to start-up and established SMEs in a variety of craft areas: – jewellery, handicraft, fashion, ceramics, etcetera.

Edna Manley School of Visual Arts, Kingston

This well established school, provides training in a wide range of disciplines and is a source of staff with technical skills for the JBDC. It also runs the Cage Gallery, which puts on quality exhibitions, displaying the works of faculty, pupils and former pupils.

National Gallery of Jamaican Art, Kingston

This well laid out national gallery is one of the finest in the region and has an interesting collection of Jamaican art of the colonial and modern periods, including fine examples of Jamaican Intuitive Art.

Harmony Hall, Ocho Rios

Harmony Hall which has been run for over 25 years by Peter and Annabella Proudlock, is regarded as the finest art gallery on the North cost of Jamaica.

The actual meeting was held at Te Moana, the home of the Proudlocks, who facilitated arrangements for the meeting in Jamaica.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by participants of the planning meeting:

1. Establishment of a Caribbean Design Network (council)
 - Next Meeting – TBD/last week of April
2. Establishment of national design networks – 15MAR
 - Establish national recognition
 - OECS member states represented by EDU
 - Engage the Dominican Republic (Altos de Chavon)
BAH, BEL, SUR (TBD)
3. Research
 - Create a database of design practitioners/ and related service providers that each country (community of interests) offers to the design initiative – 31MAR
 - Create a web page (internal forum) for the design sector
 - Identify funding sources for education in design
 - Identify national authorising agencies for the design initiative
 - Identify relevant existing research efforts
 - Caribarts.org
 - OCES/CE reports
4. Create an awareness campaign that promotes the importance and use of design
E.g. video technology (ICT)
5. Lobby government for changes in educational curricula
6. Refine products in original Onsite Caribbean line and build on existing collection with current companies.
7. Create new collections with additional companies in a coordinated product development project and launch at Maison et Objet, Paris in January 2010. There are national projects proposed and scheduled in Guyana, Barbados and Jamaica currently. Other countries in the region to be included in Onsite Caribbean 2 are: OECS, Belize, Haiti and Suriname.
 - Using the existing design centres in Jamaica, Barbados, DR and Trinidad & Tobago to create and pilot a new design network with regional designers. Identify potential design nodes and partners – firms, schools, etc – in areas

without a design centre. Build visual libraries through the design network as a resource for future investigations of motifs.

- Product development targeted at both local and international markets in a coordinated engagement with the design network and companies and communities that is collection based and design led.
 - Study tour to Maison et Objet September 2009 for designers and selected companies.
7. Create new linkages through this product development project with agriculture, Caribbean Hotel Tourism Association, Rural Women's Network/IICA, indigenous populations and investigate technical assistance where and when appropriate.
 8. Establish institutional relationship between the re-branded CGCS and Onsite Caribbean with cross promotion and benchmarking for development of companies for Onsite Caribbean launches.