“Explorations II: Religion and Spirituality” Exhibition to open at National Gallery

The National Gallery of Jamaica (NGJ) is pleased to present the Explorations II: Religion and Spirituality exhibition, which is scheduled to open on Sunday, December 22.

The exhibition is the second in the NGJ’s new Explorations series, which was launched earlier this year with the Natural Histories exhibition. The series explores major themes in Jamaican art, and in the National Art Collection, and aims to allow visitors the opportunity to engage in new, more exploratory ways with the artistic and cultural history of Jamaica. Explorations II: Religion and Spirituality examines the themes of religion and spirituality in Jamaican art and comprises sixty-seven works from the National Collection. “The fact that we can mount such an exhibition without resorting to loans is in itself testimony to the central and pervasive role of religion and spirituality in almost all aspects of Jamaican history and life and, consequently, in Jamaican art,” emphasised Dr. Veerle Poupeye, Executive Director, NGJ. As was done in the Natural Histories exhibition, Religion and Spirituality is organized around several broad, overlapping themes. The exhibition first looks at the theme, “A Chapter a Day,” which explores the central role of the Bible in Jamaican life and includes various works that illustrate biblical scenes and personalities. The second theme, “Ancestral Memories,” looks at the ways in which ancestral religious and mystical practices have been imagined in Jamaican art. The third theme, “In Our Own Image”, explores how “white” colonial religious representations have been implicitly and expressly challenged in local religious and artistic practice and pays special attention to the representation of the Black Christ. The fourth theme, “Spiritual Warriors”, examines the use of religion and spirituality in resistance and liberation movements, especially during the colonial period. The fifth theme, “Prayer and Ritual,” documents the artistic representation of prayer and ritual practice and also considers the boundaries between ritual object and work of art. The sixth and final theme is titled, “Death and Life Beyond,” and looks at the representation of death, resurrection and the afterlife in Jamaican art. The artists represented in Religion and Spirituality include: Carl Abrahams, Mallica “Kapo” Reynolds, Osmond Watson, Renee Cox, Edna Manley, Ebony G. Patterson, Gloria Escoffery, Eugene Hyde, Ralph Campbell, Karl Parboosingh, Omari Ra, Petrona Morrison, and Everald and Clinton Brown. For the opening function of the Explorations II: Religion and Spirituality exhibition on Sunday, December 22, the NGJ’s doors will be open from 11 am to 4 pm, with free admission and free tours and children’s activities. The formalities will start at 1:30 pm and the guest speaker is Rev. Dr. Marjorie A. Lewis, President of the United Theological College of the West Indies. This will be followed by a performance by The Mico University College Choir and Band. Explorations II: Religion and Spirituality will run for four months, until April 27, 2014.