

# Into the mainstream:

## Shifting authenticities in art

### ABSTRACT

When artists who were once dubbed “primitive” find themselves operating in a freshly expanded environment, with an international clientele, new materials to work with, access to urban exhibition spaces, the counsel of culture brokers, and options for travel abroad, their response can include highly creative innovations in both the forms they produce and the interpretations they offer of their work. The new environment can sometimes even lead to adjustments in their vision of the origins and meanings of their artistic heritage. In this article, I trace the recent history of art made by Maroon men in the Guianas, following its mutation from a form of expression for internal consumption, largely as gifts for wives and lovers, to a commodity sold in an external market. [*art, authenticity, culture brokers, symbolism, primitivism, Maroons*]

If it hangs on the wall long enough, it becomes real.

—Elmyr de Hory, art forger (in the Orson Welles film *F for Fake*)

**A**rts adjust. When artists who were once dubbed “primitive” find themselves operating in a freshly expanded environment, with an international clientele, new materials to work with, access to urban exhibition spaces, the counsel of culture brokers, and options for travel abroad, their response can include highly creative innovations in both the forms they produce and the interpretations they offer of their work. The new environment can sometimes even lead to adjustments in their vision of the origins and meanings of their artistic heritage. . . .

May 6, 2005. It's the gala opening for an exhibit of paintings in a chic, urban bar. A large space under a cathedral ceiling, tables and chairs in wrought iron, rattan, and elegantly carved hardwoods, subdued lighting, large potted plants, tastefully framed paintings (see Figure 1). Behind the bar is a brightly colored textile designed by the artist and produced by batik makers in faraway Indonesia (see Figure 2). By nine-thirty the tables are all taken, largely by thirtysomething members of the local jet set dressed in designer casual, and the space is buzzing with animated conversation. Men are drinking “Johnny” on the rocks, while many of the women have opted for frothy-topped cocktails in pastel tones of cassis, grenadine, and lime.

We're in Cayenne, capital of France's small piece of the South American continent, whose notoriety was assured by Devil's Island and the rest of its penal colony until the 1940s. In 1946, French Guiana (Guyane) shed its colonial status and became a full-fledged *département* of the Republic, an overseas state whose relationship to the Hexagon parallels that of Hawai'i to the continental United States. Since the 1960s, when it was chosen as the site for launching Europe's Ariane rockets, it has undergone rapid development and cultural integration into Europe.



Figure 1. Ti Bar Kweyol, L'Ouest, Cayenne. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

The young woman who has been serving drinks taps a glass for attention and introduces Franky Amete, “a gifted artist whose works follow in the tradition of his people, incorporating a high degree of symbolic content.” When the applause dies down, Franky (see Figure 3), more comfortable with a paintbrush than a microphone, expresses his thanks to the owners of the bar for organizing the event and to the assembled crowd for coming and says just a few words about the artistic traditions of his people, the Aluku Maroons. For some time, he has been collecting woodcarvings made by men in his father’s and grandfathers’ generations, and he has included a number of them in the exhibit. Some of his own paintings are in the brightly colored style currently in fashion among fellow Aluku artists (see Figure 4), but the great majority are the fruit of his own creative innovation—designs in traditional geometric patterns of interlaced ribbons but executed in a more subtle palette, using the warm-hued sands and soils of Guyane (see Figure 5). The paintings are technically refined, quietly sophisticated, and elegantly presented.

A brochure next to the cash register provides brief background information on Franky’s people. The Aluku Maroons, it explains, are the descendants of African slaves who rebelled and fled into the Amazonian forest. Their art, popularly known as *tembé* and based on patterns of interlacing bands, is “rich in numerous graphic symbols whose juxtaposition creates a message, usually romantic but sometimes moral.” The state-sponsored cooperative that puts out the brochure describes its mission as one of making traditional skills available to young Maroons, offering both technical education and a reading knowledge of the symbols that make up the ornamental “writing” on Maroon art. Members of the cooperative are present at the opening, including the urbane Afro-Guyanese woman who designed a particularly striking element of the bar’s decor—folding chairs in a combination of tropical hardwoods, refined in their structure and incorporating Maroon woodcarvings on the back panel (see Figure 6).



Figure 2. The batik cloth designed by Franky Amete. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

### From rain-forest “primitives” to European citizens

If the term *arts premiers* had existed in the mid-20th century, it would easily have embraced the art of Franky’s father, uncles, and grandfathers.<sup>1</sup> At that time, Aluku women were still often bare breasted and older men still wore loin-cloths. You could still see faces decorated with scarifications. Many houses were roofed in palm leaves, and water was drawn in buckets from the river. The diet centered on manioc grown in swidden gardens supplemented by local game such as parrots, monkeys, and tapirs. Decisions were made by consulting head-carried oracle bundles, and messages were beaten out on the *apinti* talking drum. There was spirit possession, ancestor worship, and dances for gods embodied in vultures, anacondas, and other forest animals. Virtually no writing, no reading, no schools. Even the term that Alukus and other Maroons in the Guianas often use for themselves—*buschinengué* or *businengé*, rendered in much

of the literature as *Bush Negro* (in English) or *Boschneger* or *Bosneger* (in Dutch)—conveys an impression of perfect exoticism. Thousands of miles and three centuries away from Africa, Maroons have nevertheless been dubbed by outsiders “Africans of Guyane” (Hurault 1970). Melville Herskovits, visiting the Saramaka Maroons in the 1920s, wrote in his diary, “It is African. The houses and the fetishes, the naked children and the cicatrized grown-ups, all fit in” (Price and Price 2003b:18). Or, as two travelers from Harvard marveled in the 1970s, Maroons seemed to be “more African than much of Africa” (Counter and Evans 1981:32–33, n.d.:2).

During the 1970s, however, the Aluku Maroons (like Guyane’s Amerindians) were targeted by an aggressive assimilationist program, authored in Paris, known as *francisation* (frenchification), which transformed their way of life at its very foundations and resulted in a massive migration out of the villages of the interior and into towns along the coast. There they joined the Creoles, Europeans, Chinese, Brazilians, Antilleans, and Haitians who make up the population of



Figure 3. Franky Amete. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

Guyane's coastal towns, together with substantial numbers of Maroons from other groups, mainly Saramakas from central Suriname. Since the mid-19th century, Saramaka men have left their villages for years at a time to become part of the ethnic kaleidoscope in Guyane—first in logging and river transportation and later in a variety of niches, from construction to gold mining. In the late 1980s, a civil war in Suriname drove an increasing flood of Maroons (incl., for the first time, large numbers of women and children) into Guyane. By the early 21st century, fully 20 percent of Guyane's population was from one of four Maroon groups—some 6,000 Alukus, who enjoyed the benefits of French citizenship, plus about 13,000 Saramakas, 13,000 Ndyukas, and 3,000 Paramakas, who were either regularized temporary residents or illegal immigrants in constant danger of expulsion. The coast of Guyane became peppered with ex-primitive Maroons in varying civil statuses—all of them from cultural backgrounds with rich artistic traditions (see Price and Price 2003a).

Outside observers have been struck, unanimously, by the pervasiveness of art in Maroon villages, particularly the

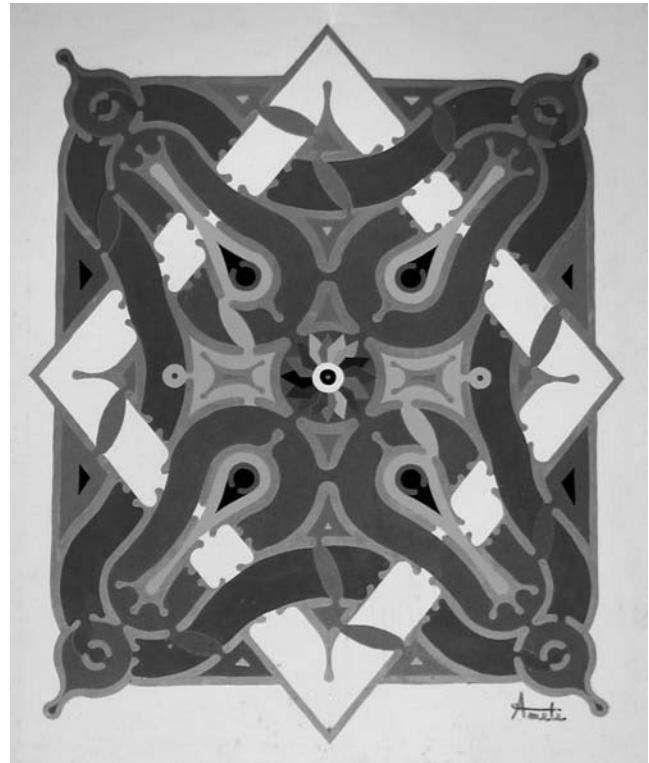


Figure 4. An acrylic painting by Franky Amete. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

art of woodcarving practiced by the men. Simple one-room houses bear architectural embellishments varying from intricately carved door lintels and decorative inlays of tropical woods to lavishly painted façades. Household utensils—winnowing trays, peanut-grinding boards, ladles, and laundry beaters—are elaborately carved. So, too, are combs, stools, canoe prows, paddles, and more. Men also embellish the outsides of calabash containers with complex geometric patterns, and women carve sinuous motifs on the inner surfaces of calabash bowls. Less remarked on, but still common, are the textile arts of embroidery, patchwork, appliqué, and yarn crochet, which embellish everything from clothing and hammock sheets to hunting sack covers and coffin decorations. As Melville Herskovits remarked, “Bush Negro art in all its ramifications is, in the final analysis, Bush Negro life” (1969:167).

As Maroons in French Guiana face new social, economic, political, and cultural realities, they are making adjustments in everything from the art forms they produce and the channels of distribution they tap to the discourses with which they talk about their art. Gender roles, too, have evolved, and women are now engaging in artistic media long defined as belonging exclusively to men, partly because of the introduction of *art tembé* lessons in local schools.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, adaptations to outside influences have always been part of the art history of Maroons. In the 1960s, for example, missionaries in Christian Maroon villages taught schoolgirls



**Figure 5.** A sand painting by Franky Amete. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

the art of cross-stitch and gave them European magazines with diagrams showing them how to realize Santa Clauses and other imagery from far away. In the hands of creative women throughout Maroon territory, those lessons were transmuted into a vibrant new art that has become an emphatically “authentic” genre of Maroon creative expression.

### Shifting approaches to “non-Western” art

Such processes of adaptation have characterized the art history of ex-primitives throughout the world, from Australian Aborigine dot painters and Pueblo potters to Haida mask



**Figure 6.** A chair produced in the Libi Na Wan workshop. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

makers, Ghanaian sculptors, Nigerian weavers, Zairian muralists, New Guinean *mbis* carvers, and countless others. In growing recognition of this aspect of non-Western art history, recent reflections have been eschewing outdated visions of cultural authenticity (and the “one culture—one style” paradigm that they produced for art) and turning attention, instead, toward the permeability and malleability of artistic expression. Anthropologists and art historians such as Sidney Kasfir, Jean-Loup Amselle, and Christopher Steiner in Africa, Janet Berlo, Ruth Phillips, and Molly Mullin in North America, and Howard Morphy and Fred Myers in Australia (to cite but a few of the many scholars writing in this vein over the past couple of decades) have been plumbing the processes by which members of small-scale societies, working in collaboration with interested outsiders, have been reconfiguring their art worlds in response to the exigencies of an increasingly globalized audience.<sup>3</sup>

A fundamental reorientation over the past couple of decades in understandings about art has set the scene for such studies. As I have written elsewhere, the complex workings—social, cultural, economic, and political—that give structure, texture, and (contested or uncontested) meaning to the more traditional matter of art objects and their collective history have been moving into greater

prominence. Artworks once viewed as visual entities set into more or less elaborate wooden borders are now being framed in a completely different sense, as contextualized productions undergoing contextualized readings. Setting art objects, artists' biographies, and the evolution of stylistic sequences more forcefully in the context of perceptions conditioned by social and cultural factors acts to erode the lingering temptation (stronger in some commentators than others) to view art history as the pristine, apolitical study of aesthetic forms. And sacred territories of art historical scholarship, in which original works authenticated by erudite connoisseurship once held pride of place, are being quietly invaded by a growing interest in copies, fakes, appropriations, and derivative forms. There has been a diminished focus on cultural isolates, a by-product of the tendency for today's anthropologists to set the societies and cultures they study in broader fields of vision than their mid-20th-century predecessors did.

While scholars once strained to discern the stylistic essences of particular arts in particular cultures, they are now directing their gaze more frequently toward the doorways where artistic and aesthetic ideas jostle each other in their passage from one cultural setting to the next. While the site of artistic production was once located in lineages of convention within bounded communities, it now spreads into the global arena, pulling in players from every corner of the world, from every kind of society, and from every chamber of the art world's vast honeycomb. And while the emphasis was once on abstracting back from an overlay of modernity to discover uncorrupted artistic traditions, modernization is now seen as lying at the heart of the enterprise, providing a springboard for explorations of cultural creativity and self-affirmation.<sup>4</sup> A few examples of the kind of cultural brokerage that has been turning Maroon art in new directions, taken from recent work on art on the African continent, will illustrate.

Sidney Kasfir (1999) portrays the negotiated adaptation of "traditional" arts to an international market in contemporary African societies, often drawing in specific regional or national politics as they touch on cultural production. Describing case after case of workshops, art schools, cooperatives, and galleries, she shows how the promoters external to particular societies—the folks who teach, exhibit, and advise "their" artists—become key partners in the ongoing creation of cultural realities.

Kasfir's depiction of the situation in South Africa during apartheid, for example, explores the highly organized art world of Johannesburg, in which members of a resident white intelligentsia who constituted the core of critics, gallery owners, curators, and collectors acted as brokers for, and sometimes collaborators with, their black counterparts. When some of the artists being trained in the community centers of different townships expressed interest in abstract expressionism, then at its height in the larger art

world, they were firmly discouraged from experimenting with it on the grounds that it was "an unauthentic direction for black artists, who ought to be depicting the life that surrounded them instead of aspiring to membership in an artworld whose centres were far away and putatively 'white'" (Kasfir 1999:96–97).<sup>5</sup> Kasfir points out how this advice, which might have seemed benign in other contexts, acted to set limits for black artists in the racially charged environment of apartheid, directing them toward development of a "township art" based on social realism. Ironically, this style was endorsed at the other end of the political spectrum, for entirely different reasons, by the African National Congress, as consistent with the idea that "the human subject was the only subject worthy of exploitation" (Kasfir 1999:97).

Kasfir also shows how the organizers of workshops in Namibia, acting in a "protective" role toward Bushman artists lest they be exploited by unscrupulous outsiders, ended up "constructing and authenticating a Bushman culture for the benefit of rest of the world, [linking] the workshop artists with a Bushman hunting and gathering past, even though none of the artists or their families have ever lived that way, because this gives their art a pedigree which spectators will recognize as authentic" (1999:63).

Other cases of the invention of new styles, and their promotion as the products of an authentic culture, owe much to the misplaced application of various European-derived frameworks, from mysticism and Jungian concepts of a collective unconscious to models based on the art of European artists such as Pablo Picasso and Henry Moore. Taken together, the hundreds of examples reviewed by Kasfir add up to a portrayal of "the emergence of new African art onto the world stage, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, [as] a major act of cultural brokerage by a small number of mainly European supporters" (1999:65).<sup>6</sup>

A recent book by Africanist anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle on current directions in the world of African art explores similar developments. *L'art de la friche* (2005), a word-play on *l'art de l'Afrique*, also plays with the metaphor of "la friche," a concept currently in vogue in France that takes off from the renovation of industrial ruins into trendy sites for an upscale clientele. Rather than attending to the aesthetic features of the arts in question, Amselle's focus is on the place that Africa holds in the Western imagination and the (social, cultural, and political) space that African artists occupy today. He cautions that to see contemporary African art solely as the product of Westerners' exoticizing fantasies would be to overestimate the power of colonial and postcolonial agents. And it would fail to take into account the interactions, both integrative and oppositional, with alternatives both near and far, that have always influenced the life histories of African artistic traditions. At the same time, his analysis of the interventions of outside promoters—"catalyzers" or "mid-wives" (Amselle 2005:131)—occupies much of the book.

For example, Amselle cites the experience of a prophet and “syllabist” from the Ivory Coast who was “transsubstantiated” into one of the most famous contemporary artists in Africa. Brought to Paris for the monumental “Magicians of the Earth” exhibit of 1989, Frédéric Bruly-Bouabré was surprised to find himself classified as an artist, because his own identity was that of “a poet in search of difficult rhymes.” But his *alphabet bété* excited Paris audiences, who were “fascinated by the idea of hidden significations, viewing it as an [exotic] variant of tags and graffiti,” and his international career was launched (Amselle 2005:65, pl. 5; see also Kasfir 1999:153).

Studies such as these, which, along with countless others from every part of the world, reflect a growing awareness of the pervasive, and potentially powerful, role played by external culture brokers, provide context for developments in the Guianas, where similarly collaborative reformulations are in progress. Before considering the contemporary scene, it will be useful to review the nature of interactions between Maroon artists and outside observers over time.<sup>7</sup>

### Symbolism in Maroon art?

Outsiders’ interest in Maroon art has, since the beginning, focused almost uniquely on woodcarving. Visitors to the rain forest have picked up the word *tembé*, translated it as *art*, and equated it exclusively with the men’s art of woodcarving.<sup>8</sup> Engraved calabashes and embroidery, produced by women, have received occasional mention, but most commentators have given them no more than passing attention. Second, noticing that most woodcarvings were offered as gifts to the carvers’ wives and lovers, outsiders have generally concluded that they transmit explicit romantic messages. This assumption has been fueled in part by conventional images of “primitive art,” in which visions of esoteric (esp. sexual) symbolism have always exerted a compelling attraction (Price 2001). From a Maroon perspective, however, the objective in art making is primarily aesthetic rather than symbolic. Artists have sometimes tried to explain this to the people asking for symbolic explanations of carvings, but their listeners, bent on penetrating “deep” meanings, have tended to dismiss the carvers’ protestations as an attempt to shield tribal secrets from outside scrutiny.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, published reports have produced an image of Maroon art that centers on the existence of symbol-laden motifs. In its full-blown formulation, these motifs are seen as elements that combine to form messages, much as words combine to produce sentences. One of the most widely read books on Maroon art, written by a forestry worker in Suriname, puts it this way:

The motifs can be considered like words. . . . By assigning the right meanings to these motifs and reading them correctly, just like letters and words, it is possible to

bring out the maker’s intent. Exactly the way a comma can change the sense of a sentence, the presence of a particular motif next to another one alters its meaning. [Muntslag 1979:31]

A Frenchman who frequented Aluku and Ndyuka Maroon communities in the course of his mid-20th-century geographical expeditions in French Guiana, came to similar conclusions:

Sexual symbolism occupies a fundamental place in the art of the Maroons; we may consider that it constitutes the veritable purpose of the art, and that without it the art would not have existed. . . . The engraved motif is not just an ornament, it is a rebus, the graphic equivalent of riddles. . . . They are abstract and indirect, and one needs to know how to read them in order to appreciate their ingeniousness and flavor. . . . The whole point, above all else, is a message addressed by a man to a woman. [Hurault 1970:84–85]

Because the idea of symbolic motifs transmitting messages from men to women has always been a presence in the literature on Maroons, it is something that Richard Price and I have kept our eyes and ears open to throughout our field trips over the past 40 years. It has also been a frequent topic of conversation with colleagues who have lived in the villages of the other Maroon groups to the east of the Saramakas (Alukus, Ndyukas, and Paramakas). Discussions of art crop up on a regular basis in the course of daily life in Maroon villages, so we have overheard countless discussions of woodcarving and other arts. People talk frequently about artistically designed objects in terms of many dimensions—formal qualities such as symmetry and balance, technical mastery, the distinctive styles of named individuals, regional associations of particular designs, generational differences in the execution of motifs, and the relationships, often romantic, between maker and owner. Women reminisce about the men who’ve given them particular carvings, and there were countless discussions that touched on the names of motifs.

But there was no mention of symbolic messages.

Given the prevalence, on the one hand, of the notion of symbolism in what we had read, and, on the other hand, its absence in what Maroons seemed to care about, we periodically brought up the subject ourselves, quoting passages from writing on the subject and suggesting a link between graphic motifs and abstract ideas such as fertility or love. The reaction of Asipei, a man in his sixties whose two wives owned ample examples of his carving skills, was typical. In the course of an interview two years into our original stay in a Maroon village, Richard Price cited Herskovits’s assertion that the “crescent moon” motif in Saramaka woodcarvings was the representation of “the male member.” Asipei seemed interested in the idea but admitted that he had never heard it,

and the interview turned to other subjects. The next morning, however, he showed up in front of our house, looking distinctly embarrassed. He came in, sat down, cleared his throat, and said that something had been bothering him since the day before. With apologies for his ignorance on the matter, he wanted to know whether perhaps white men's penises assumed that pointed shape, like the crescent moon, when erect.

Another telling encounter occurred during a 2005 stroll we took through the market of Cayenne, a bustling scene with vendors selling everything from root crops, medicinal herbs, and women's underpants to steaming bowls of Vietnamese soup. At one of the stalls, a Saramaka man was offering a small miscellany of Maroon objects, including carved calabashes bearing scraps of paper on which his son, who'd been to school, had written identifying labels for him. Some offered messages (Saramaka words for "kisses," "sweet dreams," "long life," etc.) and others referred to forms (e.g., "spoon" and "bowl"). These labels were dropped into the calabashes at random (some spoons saying "bowl," some motifs identified in inconsistent ways on different calabashes, etc.), but as a marketing strategy it apparently had little importance. It doesn't matter, he assured us. However the labels are distributed, it's enough to satisfy customers who want an explanation of what they're buying.

Over the course of our several-decade involvement with Saramaka artists, we've been told time and again that claims for symbolic meaning are the mark of a Maroon artist's willingness to mouth any discourse that will increase his success in the market. Many men have expressed pride in never having abandoned their integrity through any nonsense about symbols, and some betray bitterness over the success that the discourse brings. In the early 1990s, we had an opportunity to expand our field experience to the eastern Maroons, thanks to a two-summer collecting expedition (conducted jointly with Aluku ethnographer Kenneth Bilby one year and Ndyuka ethnographer Diane Vernon the next), and there, talking with middle-aged and older men in the villages of the interior, we heard much the same discourse. Later we spoke with a talented Ndyuka carver who had developed a comical parody of the symbol-centered speeches that some of his peers engage in. And our recent trips to Guyane have included conversations with men of the generation of Franky Amete's father, some of whom have given us the names of motifs and claimed the designs make a generalized reference to *lobi* (love) but all of whom have vigorously denied that their carvings can be read as messages. Finally, we have discussed these issues with anthropological colleagues whose work is with eastern Maroons—Bonno Thoden van Velzen and Ineke van Wetering who have been studying Ndyuka culture nonstop since the early 1960s; Bilby, whose experience with Alukus dates back to the mid-1980s; Vernon, who began fieldwork with Ndyukas in the early 1980s and has for many years been living permanently in the heavily Ndyuka

town of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni—all of whom report the same conclusions that have emerged from our work with Saramakas.

In 2005, I interviewed a prolific Ndyuka artist in his forties who had recently left the cooperative that had been promoting his work. He was bitter, feeling that he'd been used by the organization's European leaders. As we looked together at a glossy catalog published by the cooperative, he pointed to a photo of himself, smiling broadly, next to quotes about symbolism that were attributed to him. "You need to tear out those pages and throw them in the garbage can," he said. "Me, I had to leave. I couldn't stay in an organization that got things so wrong. People who buy that book, they're getting 75 percent lies."

The vision of Maroon art as a symbolic language, nurtured in an environment strongly skewed by gender, contains an interesting glitch. The claim is that most carvings are intended as gifts of love from men to women and that they communicate messages through strings of meaningful motifs—much like letters, as the literature often puts it. Yet this claim has, virtually without exception, been advanced by men, Maroon woodcarvers talking in most cases to male observers. Who, one might ask, has thought to tap the opinions of the women to whom the messages are allegedly addressed? In a recent field trip to Guyane, I attempted to raise the subject with women by asking them to explain the meaning of the carvings they had in their homes. Not a single woman could offer any kind of "reading." Each one with whom I spoke apologized that she couldn't help me because, unfortunately, she had never learned to read the symbols. The "language" said to communicate messages of love from male sculptor to female recipient is something to which women appear not to have been given access.

Even among the men who argue for the symbolic content of their art, there is a disconnect between claims that it constitutes a "language" (with individual motifs combining to form "sentences") and the identification of motifs on specific carvings. In other words, in abstract descriptions of the art, these men assert the presence of a virtual grammar, but no carving exegesis that I have ever encountered follows through with a "reading" that links one motif syntactically to another. At most, each motif simply carries a name and is interpreted as a separate unit.

Although the popularity of the myth that Maroon art constitutes a full-fledged language of symbolism owes much to outsiders' stereotypes of "primitive art," several aspects of Maroon culture have also encouraged its propagation. First, a small number of iconic elements do, in fact, carry meanings in Maroon culture. Interlocking Vs, for example, can be read as an allusion to sexual intercourse, and adding an X to an empty area of a design can serve to curse anyone who denigrates the carving. These graphic elements (of which there are only three or four) do not, however, combine like words in a sentence to form more complex messages.



Second, Maroons have always enjoyed assigning names to things they find aesthetically interesting, whether particular kinds of tin lanterns, new models of enamelware from coastal stores, patterns of trade cotton, scarification designs, or woodcarving motifs. These names, which are nothing more than descriptive labels to Maroons, become, in the eyes of outsiders, the lexical building blocks of a communicative language. A circle, for example, is called “navel” on the basis of its form, but it does not (as some outsiders have asserted) carry a message of fertility.

Third, although living in a culture without writing, Maroons have nevertheless always shown a fascination for the idea of writing. This is exemplified in a variety of contexts, from the invention by a Ndyuka Maroon of a script consisting of several dozen symbols (see, e.g., Dubelaar and Pakosie 1999)<sup>10</sup> to a Saramaka folktale in which the action turns on the power of a magical book (Price and Price 1991). Eastern Maroons sometimes assert, in speaking with outsiders, that all art is “talk,” that it’s all communicative, although the demonstration of this invariably consists of pointing to the Vs, Xs, and named motifs of the kind mentioned above without reference to any of the connective tissue of whole sentences.

Fourth, artistic production in Maroon societies is intended for use in romantic relations. Men make woodcarvings as gifts for wives and lovers. Women reciprocate these gifts with handsomely sewn textiles. Artistic offerings express love, although not in sentences or proverbial pronouncements.

In short, embryonic bits and pieces of the discourse that presents Maroon art as a language containing both lexicon and syntax are not entirely absent in Maroon culture. The popularity of its elaboration, in which symbolic messaging attains new heights of explicitness, is the product of a rapidly changing social environment that has created new opportunities for (a relatively small number of) Maroon artists. The ever-increasing intervention of culture brokers from the outside—whether Europeans, Afro-Guyanais, or others, and whether artists’ spouses or advisors to the cooperatives—facilitates Maroons’ adaptation to the new environment, providing the tools to succeed in a world of art that their fathers and grandfathers never knew.

### **The emergence of cooperatives**

French support of local cooperatives in Guyane, which expanded dramatically in the assimilationist environment beginning in the 1970s, offers a ready-made vehicle for the molding of new authenticities through the combined talents and ambitions of young artists and their promoters. Esoteric symbolism is a strong selling point, whose power to spark the fascination of potential clients from dominant nations is well documented throughout the world.

The idea that Maroon art constitutes a symbolic language has been embraced with enthusiasm by cooperatives such as the one that sponsored Franky Amete’s exhibit in Cayenne. Created in the context of France’s assimilationist program, these nonprofit *associations* have exerted multiple influences on the art of Maroon men (and, to a lesser extent, women), making new tools and materials available, adapting the forms produced to the demands of a commercial market, and opening up new outlets through travel opportunities, exhibits, and publications. Artistic traditions once focused on providing an aesthetic dimension for domestic life in the forest (on paddles, house façades, winnowing trays, etc.) have been redirected toward an external market for which the central forms are paintings and other wall hangings, Western-style furniture, touristic bibelots, and the commissioned decoration of public buildings (see Figure 7). The designs are also sometimes executed on T-shirts and postcards. Specialization has increased dramatically, as the understanding that every man would produce objects for his wives’ use has lost out to a consumer mentality in which a small minority of men carve for sale and women work with Western-manufactured utensils. At the same time, woodcarving, until recently the staple of the men’s art, has been losing ground to painting (once a secondary embellishment) as the medium of choice for professional artists.

Terminology has been adjusted in response to these changes. Rather than referring to Maroon men’s art as “tembé,” people in Guyane now talk of “art tembé,” using it to mean Maroon painting. When the previously dominant art of carving is discussed, people use the term *piki-faka tembé* (pocketknife art) to distinguish it from the now more widespread *feifi tembé* (paint art).

The shift from carving to painting is related to issues of social hierarchy and civil status. Saramaka carvers have never included painted designs in their work, in contrast to Alukus, Ndyukas, and Paramakas, for whom painting has long been a contributing element. Saramaka men have been the dominant producers of Maroon art in Guyane for the past century, but because they come from villages in central Suriname and often have no residence papers, their financial well-being tends to depend entirely on the sale of carvings from crudely built stands strung out along country roads, where they do their best to avoid being hassled by gendarmes (see Figure 8; for photos of six such outlets, see Price and Price 2003a:86). In contrast, Aluku Maroons, whose villages have been located on the French side of the border river for over a hundred years, are citizens of France, which gives them a voice in local government and makes them eligible for the whole range of support programs.

In addition to facilitating distribution (incl. getting their artists’ work into stores; see Figure 9), the cooperatives have been instrumental in disseminating ideas about the meaning of Maroon art, promoting a discourse that plays well in the context of the new market. Like the workshop organizers



**Figure 7.** A mural designed by Dimpai-awini, a member of the Mama Bobi cooperative. In 2000, students participated in its realization on the wall of a *collège* (junior high school) in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, on French Guiana's border with Suriname. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

described by Kasfir for Bushmen in Namibia, the leaders of Guyane cooperatives are engaged in “constructing and authenticating a [Maroon] culture.” A brief look at two cooperatives that have been particularly active in promoting Maroon art will illustrate the mechanisms at work.

The Mama Bobi cultural center, based in the westernmost town of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, with a second office upriver in the Aluku village of Apatou, was founded in 1990 (see Figure 10). Its vocal spokesman is Gérard Guillemot, a Frenchman who arrived in Guyane in the 1970s and has amassed a personal collection of Maroon artworks that is said to be several times larger than that of any museum. Guillemot (universally known only as “Gé”) exerts tight control over the association's activities, claiming political motivations related to an interest in decolonization and Guyane's independence movement. It's clear to anyone who's dealt with him that he's also driven by intimate personal ties with the association's members, most of them relatively young men of the eastern groups—Alukus, Ndyukas, and Paramakas. Mama Bobi supports programs involving environmental concerns and alternative medicine, for example, through ties to a drug rehabilitation center and projects cen-

tered on the diffusion of knowledge about medicinal plants. In addition to organizing art exhibits and demonstrations of herbal remedies, the cooperative sells postcards, posters, and T-shirts.

The Libi Na Wan association also promotes Maroon artists, especially in connection with its goals of development and job training. Based in the coastal town of Kourou (home to the space center that launches Europe's Ariane rockets), it has close ties (in both personnel and financial terms) with the Société Immobilière de Kourou (SIMKO), the company responsible for providing housing in this fast-expanding town where class and ethnicity correlate purposefully with the construction style of each separately designed neighborhood.<sup>11</sup> Among its other projects, SIMKO has the concession for constructing standard housing to replace the insalubrious shacks of the Maroon section, built by Maroon men using detritus culled from the construction sites where they worked as laborers. Libi Na Wan also works in collaboration with the Architecture School of Grenoble in France, including with two professors and a designer who have authored a series of glossy books—catalogs on Maroon culture and art produced through the school's publishing



**Figure 8.** A Saramaka carver's sign on a road in western French Guiana. Photo by S. Price, 2002.

outlet, CRATerre. Libi Na Wan has received generous financial support from governmental agencies in Guyane, the European Community, the Architecture School of Grenoble, and other sources.

When I visited Libi Na Wan in 2005, most of the Maroons who had been running its art-producing workshops had left the association for independent careers, and all but one of the workshops (organized by medium and ethnicity—Ndyuka painting, Saramaka sculpture, etc.) had been discontinued. The only one that remained active was the cabinetry workshop, in which upscale furniture with Maroon embellishments was being produced for sale. The chairs in the bar mentioned above, for example, were designed in this workshop. Libi Na Wan creative design projects have also produced gift boxes, knife handles, beach chairs, and other furniture—the combined product of European-inspired designs and decorative arts executed by Maroon men and women. Finally, members of the association have exhibited their art in a number of locations, including galleries in Paris.

### **Marketing symbolism**

On purely aesthetic grounds, the sinuous lines, bright colors, and clean-cut compositions of art by the eastern Maroons lend an undeniably attractive decorative dimension to Western-style living rooms and public buildings. But, of course, the art world has never been driven by purely aesthetic considerations. The value of works of art is also affected by their connections with particular historical periods, religious beliefs, political movements, cultural backgrounds, individual biographies, exhibition history, previous ownership, and more. The reputation of Maroon art is tightly linked to the idea that it constitutes an esoteric language of symbols, learned through initiation from father to son, and designed to transmit explicit (sexual) messages to the women for whom most of the art has traditionally been made.

Cooperatives in Guyane have picked up on this vision of Maroon exoticism and used it creatively to promote



Figure 9. The window of a souvenir store in Cayenne. Photo by S. Price, 2005.

their members' art. One of the publications authored by the Grenoble architecture team of Libi Na Wan puts it this way:

The symbolic figures . . . constitute a kind of lexicon that is transmitted from generation to generation. . . Each sign is there both for the way its form contributes to the overall composition and for its meaning. The message can be romantic, moral, humorous, or even insolent. Examples include:

- full moon—a blossoming, fertility
- mouth—expression of a wish
- turtle's back—ardent passion
- sideways "S"—long lasting love

. . . what we're dealing with here are actual messages, with the carved object generally serving as a "gift" designed to illustrate the feelings of a man for a woman, and that not in any casual or devil-may-care fashion, but in such a way that the happy recipient can decipher,

below the surface lines, a veritable discourse. Whether it's classic or provocative, humorous or austere, it always communicates something to someone. [Doat et al. 1999:122, 49]

Aluku artist Antoine Lamoraille, a founding member of the Mama Bobi cooperative, has advanced essentially the same discourse, publishing elaborate readings of his painted panels. One, for example, is said to include motifs symbolizing vigilance, the dangers of navigating river rapids, self-control, prudence, friendship, solidarity, peace in one's heart and soul, and hospitality. Taken together, he writes, these symbols say, "You have been able to avoid the trap that took your brothers, but watch out in the future for the tree that bends over (Tu as su éviter le piège qui a pris tes frères; désormais méfie-toi de l'arbre qui penche)" (Lamoraille 1998:5).

Similarly, a lavishly illustrated coffee-table book on Maroon stools, written by a local politician who thanks the Saramaka president of a cooperative called "Langa Lobi"



Figure 10. The Mama Bobi cultural center, Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni. Photo by Sally Price, 2005.

(“Lasting Love”) for “verification” of the symbolic readings, asserts that the designs constitute a

language for use in relations between the sexes, a symbolic language that is intended to amuse and seduce the woman, . . . it’s a rebus that the man gives her to decipher. . . . In one motif, symmetrical scrolls are the abstract representation of a pregnant woman’s body, and thus fertility. . . . The motifs in another design transmit a desire to preserve harmony of feelings within the couple, and there are also motifs in which the tongue conveys the idea of communication. . . . Or again, an intertwined motif, “the ants’ path,” . . . incorporates the idea of agility and pugnacity in work, almost like the ant in the [European] fable. [Bruné 1995:ix, 42–43, 32–33, 27]

And Franky Amete, whose exhibit opening we visited above, has carried the idea of explicit symbolism even further, assigning meaning to each of the colors in his paintings. An accomplished artist (and ex-member of Libi Na Wan),

whose French wife helps out with the management of promotional strategies, he supplied the line drawings and explanatory readings for a popular children’s coloring book (Amete 2004).<sup>12</sup> The closing page, entitled “A Secret Code,” explains that art tembé can be studied like a language and that colors are chosen in terms of the themes to be expressed. Red, it asserts, represents man and blood, white is woman and beauty, black is earth (soil), blue is the earth (planet), and so on. The designs are accompanied by small diagrams indicating which colors to use to say, for example, “Take care of yourself,” “You and me for eternity,” or “Marry me.”

I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of many of the artists who are producing (and explaining) art tembé, and it would be a mistake to dismiss the symbolic discourse on Maroon art as the simple distortion of an “authentic” cultural tradition by ill-informed or overimaginative outsiders. As in other parts of the world, the shift is collaboratively authored by inside artists and outside culture brokers. Some of the more successful Maroon artists, who were born around

the time that France's assimilationist program was getting off the ground, have sworn to me that the symbolic code in their art was taught to them by their fathers and uncles. For them, the symbols represent an age-old tradition of their people, part of the backbone of Maroon culture. Franky Amete, writing in his coloring book with the help of his French wife, dates the rebus back to the 17th century, when "the art of *tembé* was used as a means of communication among plantation slaves, comparable to secret messages in code. After the slaves escaped their servitude and established themselves on the banks of the river, . . . it became the written language of a community that had until then been based on an oral tradition" (2004:1).

The art of the Maroons is far from unique in being targeted by those who thirst for symbolic meaning in art. On the contrary, the phenomenon has frequently been noted by observers in various parts of the world, writing about a variety of artistic media. To cite but two examples, African textile scholar Venice Lamb has traced R. S. Rattray's "quest for clan symbolism in Asante cloth" to the power of the "desire to attach names and meanings to art forms," which, she asserts, could have led him "to read more into these patterns than was originally intended. The weavers, particularly when being subjected to questioning by an outsider, may well feel under some obligation to construct meaningful stories and legends to explain abstract patterns which in themselves are really just beautiful examples of textile design" (1975:136). And scholars of Native North American art have pointed to the inappropriateness of outsiders' search for sacred meanings in Navajo textiles, stressing that "there is no sacred meaning to the finished product or its geometric designs" (Berlo and Phillips 1998:67).

Very recently, the myth of artistic symbolism hit the front page of the *New York Times* in connection with a commemorative statue in Central Park (Cohen 2007). The installation of an eight-foot statue of Frederick Douglass was well under way, at a cost of \$15.5 million, when historians pointed out a problem with the granite representation of a quilt that constituted part of the statue. The squares of the quilt contained symbols that, according to an adjoining plaque, signaled "the location of safe houses and escape routes" along the Underground Railroad, as well as other "information vital to a slave's escape and survival." As historians were quick to point out, however, the idea that quilts carried secret messages was nothing more than "spurious history," popularized by a 1999 book entitled *Hidden in Plain View* (Tobin and Dobard 1999), which was based on the "recollections" of a single woman. The book was immediately given wide exposure on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and in *USA Today* and was eagerly picked up by elementary school teachers who saw it as an inspirational pedagogic tool for the classroom. There are currently 207,000 copies in print. The appeal that launched the "secret code" claim isn't hard to discern. As one op-ed columnist noted,

Few aspects of the American past have inspired more colorful mythology than the Underground Railroad. It's probably fair to say that most Americans view it as a thrilling tapestry of midnight flights, hairsbreadth escapes, mysterious codes and strange hiding places. So it's not surprising that the intriguing (if only recently invented) tale of escape maps encoded in antebellum quilts . . . should also seize the popular imagination. . . . Eye-catching quilts and mysterious tunnels satisfy the human penchant for easily digestible history. Myths deliver us the heroes we crave, and submerge the horrific reality of slavery in a gilded haze of uplift. [Bordewich 2007: A19]

### "Outsider artists"

One could argue that the litmus test for a Fourth World art's entry into the global market is its ability to inspire outsiders to pass from consumers to producers. Saramaka woodcarving made the grade in the early 1990s, when an enterprising French schoolteacher successfully sold a state museum his collection of "ancient" musical instruments, all elaborately carved with Saramaka-style motifs and studded with cowry shells and bone inlays in combinations that reflected his own rather idiosyncratic construction of Maroon art (see Price and Price 1995 for the story of these forgeries). Fifteen years later, another adaptation came to my attention, suggesting that the painted designs of eastern Maroons were also well on their way to attaining a place in the mainstream. The strikingly colorful beach towel shown in Figure 11, on sale for €45 (roughly \$58), is an example if ever there was one of art *tembé*. In fact, it packs in so many interlaced bands, so much color contrast, and so many little symbol-like motifs that one might almost be tempted to consider it a caricature. In this, it echoes the Saramaka forgeries of the early 1990s, which took off from their European author's vision of Maroon art, carrying a well-documented early-20th-century style to the brink of credibility. The talented textile artist who designed the towel—an Englishwoman, Hatt Eaton, who had lived for three years (2002–05) in a village of the interior as the wife of the (French) doctor—had not only captured the essence of the interwoven ribbons and the characteristic colors of art *tembé* but also researched its symbolism. Each of her towels comes with a card explaining the meanings of its motifs (see Figure 12).<sup>13</sup> In an e-mail exchange with me, she kindly described her apprenticeship:

Being a textile designer and having worked in textiles for fifteen years, I was naturally interested in the designs that I repeatedly saw in all the places I visited (houses, furniture, boats etc) and looked up a lot of the historical information myself. When I wanted to draw my own *Tembé*, to understand and respect the meanings of colour and form, I got in contact with some associations (Libi Na Wan in particular) and I was given the name of artists that gave classes . . . in Cayenne.



**Figure 11.** A beach towel designed and produced by Hatt Eaton. The towel measures 103 × 176 centimeters. See the full-color photo on the cover of this issue. Photo by S. Price, 2006.

Franky Amete is the person that taught me a little on art Temb . I would go and sit in his workshop and ask him questions, using his paintings as ways of understanding the meanings etc. When I felt I had grasped a little bit the ‘flow’ of the artwork, Franky just said I was to get down and do a drawing, which is what I did. We then went over it together and he corrected mistakes . . . , and I collected meanings that I wanted to integrate into the drawing, shapes and forms that I had seen on the river and that I liked (usually the centre motif in the circles etc). As to the postcard that accompanys the towel, I have often found it extremely frustrating in a Temb  art exhibition where you have the Temb  paintings and just their title. You don’t actually know which part means

what in the painting, where is love, where is friendship etc. So I thought it would be nice to actually share the meanings with the people buying my Temb  and show them exactly the part that gave that certain meaning. At the time, I talked to Franky about my frustration of the language and he said that he was preparing a book, a sort of dictionary if possible, of the meanings of Temb  language. . . . I really hope that he does this, as it would give exhibitions another dimension. I like being able to try and understand with the limited snippets I have acquired, but the idea of a dictionary would be exciting.

I do not consider myself in the least bit a temb  artist, I just wanted to promote this wonderful art . . . as I appreciate it very much and wanted to use my ‘occidental’ textile knowledge and mix both together. The day I was told my temb  towel was used in the f te du village at Maripasoula as a backdrop on one of the local stands for decoration, I felt happy that my work had been acknowledged and approved by the people of the river as this was important for me to respect them first and foremost. [personal communications, November 15 and 18, 2006]

\* \* \*

Franky Amete tells a story that traces a language of symbolism in Maroon art to slavery-era origins, when it allegedly functioned as a means of communication from one plantation to another. I’ve told a story in this article that depicts it as the product of a late 20th-century entry into a market economy and the primitivizing dreams of non-Maroon culture brokers. We seem to be floating in that foggy realm where discourse and event vie for authority. But whichever way one reads the signposts, it seems clear that a language of symbolism has earned its place as a meaningful dimension of Maroon art, at least for some of its most successful producers. Seen through the eyes of Elmyr de Hory, it has hung on the wall long enough to have achieved its authenticity.

## Notes

*Acknowledgments.* I am grateful to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, which supported my research in French Guiana through Grant #7237, and to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which provided a fellowship (FB-52197) during my time on leave from the College of William and Mary. As per the requirements of my NEH fellowship, I hereby affirm that ‘any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.’

1. The expression *arts premiers*, popularized in France as part of Jacques Chirac’s campaign to upgrade recognition of African, Oceanic, and pre-Columbian art in Paris, was an attempt to avoid the negative connotations of *primitive art*. The president’s campaign has been realized in two prominent sites. A new gallery showpiecing these arts opened in the Louvre in April 2000, and a major museum, built next to the Eiffel Tower, opened in June 2006 (see Price 2007).

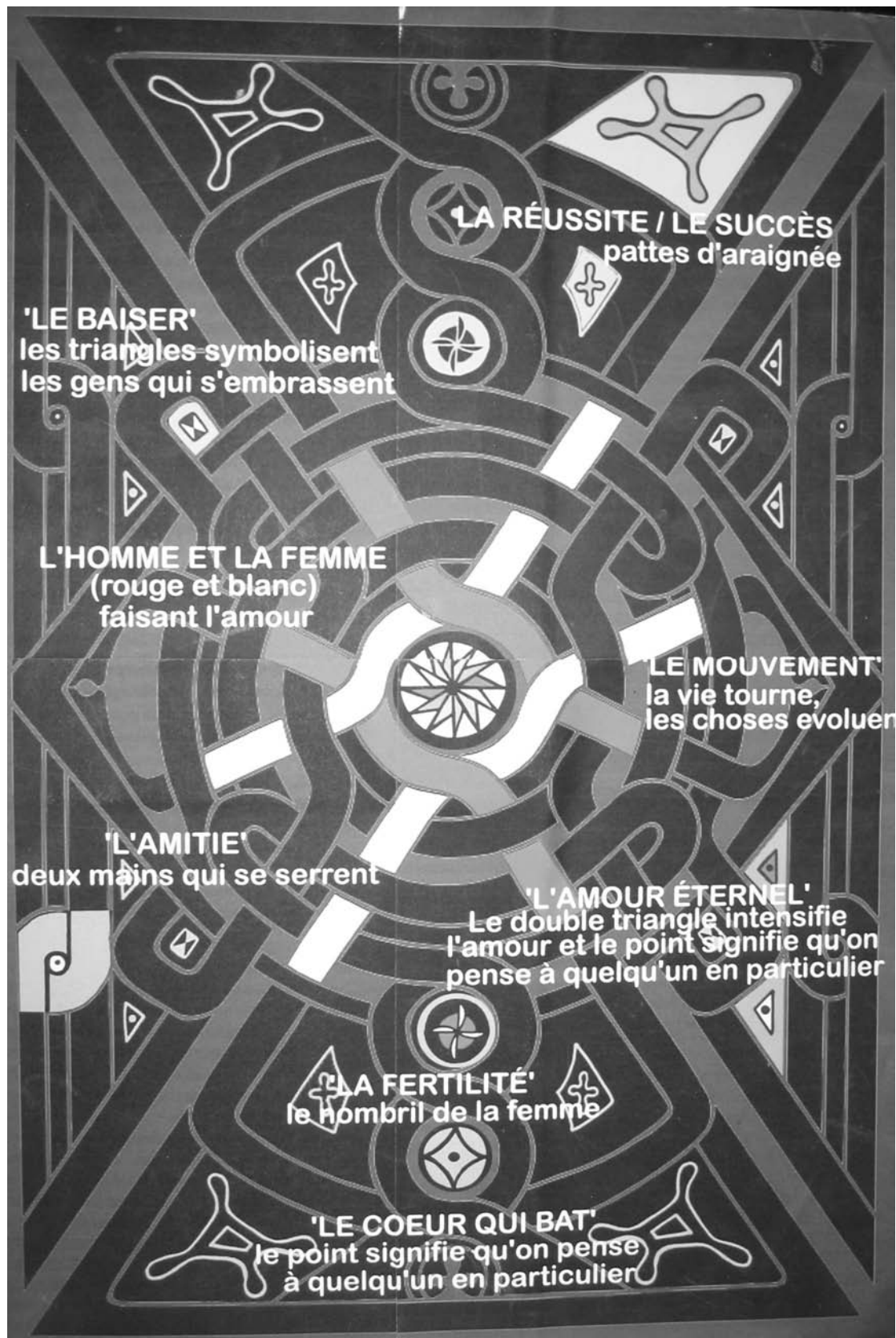


Figure 12. Poster explaining how to read the motifs on Hatt Eaton's beach towel. Photo by S. Price, 2006.



2. Even the distribution of tools has shifted. I recently saw women's calabash carvings that, instead of being engraved with the traditional shard of glass, showed the marks of a compass like those men use for their woodcarvings. In the 1960s, some men owned foot-pedaled sewing machines and used them to whip up an occasional breechcloth, but women produced most of the clothing with hand-sewn stitching. Now women have developed embroidery and appliqué styles that utilize a variety of decorative stitches they produce on their own state-of-the-art sewing machines.

3. See, for example, Kasfir 1999, Amselle 2005, Phillips and Steiner 1999, Steiner 1994, Berlo and Phillips 1998, Mullin 2001, Morphy 1998, and Myers 2002.

4. See the afterword in Price 2001, which lists major contributions to these trends.

5. For commentary by artist Romare Bearden on the pressure, even for 20th-century African American artists in the United States, to conform to stereotypes of "primitive" art, see Price and Price 2006:42.

6. Kasfir's short list of the best-known cases of cultural brokers include Ulli and Georgina Beier and Susanne Wenger in Nigeria, Frank McEwen and Tom Blomefield in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, Pierre Romain-Defossés and Pierre Lods in the Belgian and French Congo, and Pancho Guedes in Mozambique, but her book includes countless others, including missionaries, art teachers, philanthropists, and even corporations such as Esso and BMW.

7. For a less thumbnail-sized review of interactions between Maroon artists and outside observers, see Price and Price 1999.

8. The word *tembé*, which exists in both of the Maroon languages (Saramaccan and Ndyuka), can refer to objects made with artistic intent or to people with artistic talent.

9. Herskovits, whose first field experience outside of the United States was with Saramakas, reports,

Analysis of [Bush-Negro art] is impossible without the assistance of the natives, and the natives have an engaging way of evading the questions of the investigator when appealed to for the meanings of the carvings. . . . Whatever the psychological motives, the Bush-Negro is ingenious in eluding his questioner. He will say that the carving is of wood; he will name the wood it is made of; he will say it is beautiful; that it is an "in and out" design; he will say it is carpentry, or that it is done with a knife, or that it is decoration, to name a few of the recurrent answers. [1969:159-160]

Similarly, a Dutch visitor to a Christian Maroon village in the 1950s reports,

On inquiry concerning the meaning of [an embroidered cloth hanging in a doorway], no one gave a direct answer. The women of the village answered "a flower." As this response was not very enlightening, a very old man was asked. His unsatisfactory answer was the same, "a flower." Obviously, people considered it inappropriate to clarify the meaning of this private decoration to foreign visitors, especially when it referred to religious beliefs that were no longer (openly) professed. [de Vries-Hamburger 1959:109]

10. Ken Bilby, who read a draft of this article, points out that the units of this "Afaka script" represent specific sounds, which makes them "very different from the more complex (perhaps multivocal) symbols embodying more abstract ideas that outsiders like to imagine when thinking about Maroon art" (personal communication, December 9, 2006).

11. The CEO of SIMKO, Jacques Maurice, is also the president of Libi Na Wan.

12. The coloring book was published with the support of the Conseil Régional (one of the two main governing bodies) of Guyane.

13. The card indicates that red and white represent a man and a woman making love; a circular motif depicts the navel and, therefore, fertility; another circular motif is glossed as "the beating heart," with a central dot indicating that the design was made with a particular person in mind; a similar dot is part of the double-triangle motif that communicates eternal love. And so forth.

## References cited

- Amete, Franky  
2004 *Colorie tes tableaux tembé!* Cayenne: Editions Plume Verte.
- Amselle, Jean-Loup  
2005 *L'art de la friche: Essai sur l'art africain contemporain.* Paris: Flammarion.
- Berlo, Janet C., and Ruth B. Phillips  
1998 *Native North American Art.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bordewich, Fergus M.  
2007 *History's Tangled Threads.* New York Times, February 2: A19.
- Bruné, Paulin  
1995 *Sièges et sculptures chez les Noirs-Marrons des Guyanes.* Cayenne: Éditions Equinoxe Communication.
- Cohen, Noam  
2007 In Frederick Douglass Tribute, *Slave Folklore and Fact Collide.* New York Times, January 23: A1, C12.
- Counter, S. Allen, Jr., and David Evans  
1981 *I Sought My Brother: An Afro-American Reunion.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- N.d. *The Bush Afro-Americans of Surinam and French Guiana: The Connecting Link.* Pamphlet.
- de Vries-Hamburger, L.  
1959 *Over volkskunst in het algemeen en die van Suriname in het bijzonder.* *Kultuurpatronen* 1:106-110.
- Doat, Patrice, Daniel Schneegans, and Guy Schneegans  
1999 *Guyane: L'art businengé.* Grenoble: CRATERre Editions.
- Dubelaar, Cornelis N., and André R. M. Pakosie  
1999 *Het Afakaschrift van de Tapanahoni Rivier in Suriname.* Utrecht, the Netherlands: Bronnen voor de Studie van Suriname Deel 21.
- Herskovits, Melville J.  
1969[1930] *Bush Negro Art.* In *The New World Negro.* Frances S. Herskovits, ed. Pp. 157-167. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [original: *Arts* 17(51):25-37]
- Hurault, Jean  
1970 *Africains de Guyane: La vie matérielle et l'art des Noirs Réfugiés de Guyane.* The Hague: Mouton.
- Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield  
1999 *Contemporary African Art.* London: Thames and Hudson.
- Lamb, Venice  
1975 *West African Weaving.* London: Duckworth.
- Lamoraille, Antoine  
1998 *Cent cinquantaire: Abolition de l'esclavage.* Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, French Guiana: Centre Culturel Mama Bobi.
- Morphy, Howard  
1998 *Aboriginal Art.* London: Phaidon Press.
- Mullin, Molly H.  
2001 *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Muntslag, F. H. J.  
1979 *Paw a paw dindoe: Surinaamse houtsnijkunst.* Amsterdam: Prins Bernard Fonds.

Myers, Fred R.

2002 *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Phillips, Ruth B., and Christopher B. Steiner, eds.

1999 *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Price, Richard, and Sally Price

1991 *Two Evenings in Saramaka*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1995 *Enigma Variations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

2003a *Les Marrons*. Châteauneuf-le-Rouge: Vents d'ailleurs.

2003b *The Root of Roots: Or, How Afro-American Anthropology Got Its Start*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Price, Sally

2001 *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2007 *Paris Primitive: Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Price, Sally, and Richard Price

1999 *Maroon Arts: Cultural Vitality in the African Diaspora*. Boston: Beacon Press.

2006 *Romare Bearden: The Caribbean Dimension*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Steiner, Christopher B.

1994 *African Art in Transit*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tobin, Jacqueline L., and Raymond G. Dobard

1999 *Hidden in Plain View: The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. New York: Doubleday.

*accepted February 7, 2007*

*final version submitted March 8, 2007*

Sally Price

Department of Anthropology

College of William and Mary

Williamsburg, VA 23187

sally.price@earthlink.net