

**Curriculum and Faculty Development Grants
Associated Colleges of the South Environmental Initiative**

Environmental Design and Construction

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1. Introduction

I founded The Spelman College Summer Art Colony in 1997 at Taller Portobelo, on the Caribbean coast of the Republic of Panama to provide my students with an opportunity to live and work in an idyllic setting in the middle of a rain forest steeped in the history and culture of the African Diaspora in Latin America. Residents of the Art Colony experience the immense difference in the intensities of light and color beside the Bay of Portobelo and the Caribbean Sea. The emerald green waters and cerulean blue skies call upon them to reinvent their palette. The rich history and traditions of the place and the people of Portobelo, the architecture and flora and fauna of this rainforest region offer a new vision and voice of America beyond the United States. The goals of the Art Colony are in accordance with the stated mission of Spelman College – to internationalize the curriculum with a focus on the African Diaspora.

2. Project Description

In recent years the Art Colony has expanded its offerings to include instruction in biodegradable earthworks and installations and now seeks to introduce “Environmental Design and Construction” as a module into the Art 160, Special Problems-Art Colony course that I am redesigning. Presently I am involved in an on-going conversation with my colleague in the Fine Arts, set designer R. Paul Thomason, as well as faculty in the Sciences about the possibility of creating a multi-disciplinary course on environmental design and construction. I am viewing this project as a pilot that could lead to a major future undertaking.

a. Activities

I am seeking funding to travel to Portobelo, Panama this summer in order to develop the skills necessary to build an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly architectural structure at Las Orquideas Sculpture Park. I plan to work with skilled craftsmen and artisans of the village that are familiar with construction of the vernacular architecture of the region that relies on environmentally friendly materials.

Next year this architectural structure will serve as a shelter from the elements for students of the Art Colony working on biodegradable earthworks and installations. Additionally, I will teach Art Colony students how to design and construct smaller structures throughout the sculpture park that will serve the same purpose for one or two artists working in private. I plan to use the construction skills I develop this summer to explore furniture making in the future.

b. Timetable

- Mid-April – Cut palm fronds and store to dry.¹
- Mid-May – Cut bamboo poles and store.
- Late May – Order wooden planks for floors.
- 11 June – Arrive in Portobelo (mid-night).
- 12 June – Accept delivery of cement and wooden planks and hire workers.
- 13 June – • Construction meeting.
 - Cut back the jungle and identify site for structure.
 - Excavate land to pour cement for slabs.
- 14 June – • Dig holes for bamboo columns.
 - Insert bamboo columns and pour concrete for slabs.
- 14 June – Install wooden floors.
- 15 June – Begin working on the roof.
- 16 June – Saturday – day off.
- 17 June – Sunday – day off.
- 18 June – Continue working on roof.
- 19 June – Finish roof.
- 20 June – Paint the structure.
- 21 June – Touch ups²
- 22 June – Touch ups
- 23 June – Saturday – day off
- 24 June – Sunday – day off
- 25 June – Return flight to US

c. Budget and Justification

Labor

• 5 workers @ \$20/day x 10 days	= 1000.00
Construction Materials	
• cement, lumber, bamboo, wood, palm prods, etc.	= 1500.00
Power tools ³	
• saw, drill, sander, etc	= 300.00
Power Generator ⁴	= 600.00

¹ According to Yaneca Esquina, a skilled artisan in the construction of *ranchos* – traditional thatch roofed houses – palm fronds must be cut at a special time of the month and allowed to dry before using in construction. Yaneca is a close friend and fellow artist at Taller Portobelo. I plan to hire him as the principal worker on this project. He will supervise all of the preparatory work before our arrival on June 11th.

² Because we will be working in a rainforest I expect that we will lose several days due to rain. If rain does not hold up production, these last two days will be used to fine tune the project.

³ These power tools will remain at Taller Portobelo for use by future students of the Art Colony.

⁴ The generator will also remain at the taller for future use. There is no electrical power at the sculpture park.

Miscellaneous = 300.00
Total 3700.00

NOTE: The cost of the project is greater than the amount of the grant. I plan to cover the extra expense with my own funds. I will use private funds for travel and living expenses.

Budget Justification

Labor – I plan to hire five workers from the village to help in the construction of the shelter.

Construction materials – Portobelo is in a remote area and construction materials tend to be more expensive because of transportation costs. Cement, wood and other hardware materials will be purchased in Sabanita or Colon – 45 – 60 minutes away. The prods for this construction must be acquired from a special palm trees found deep in the rainforest.

Power tools – To be purchased in Colon or Panama City.

Power Generator – Onan Portable Generator – Model #3500.

Miscellaneous – In event there are unexpected costs.

d. Syllabus – Please see attached, but do note that the attached syllabus is proposed for next year and may be adjusted after my experience in Portobelo this summer.

3. Evaluation and Dissemination

a. Project evaluation – The best evaluation of the project is whether or not the structure remains standing and useful next year. I also plan to invite Jorge Ventocilla, a former member of the Education Department of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute whose area of expertise is ecology to evaluate the project.

b. Publicity – The project will be documented by videographer Oronike Odeleye and used to promote the Art Colony on Spelman College's website. It will also be made available within ACS and on the CFD website. I will forward a press release my contacts in the local media in Panama of the project in order to get coverage there.

4. Institutional Approval – to be sent via email to ballen@rollins.edu

5. Disclosure Statement – There are no current or pending funding support.

6. Curriculum vitae – see attached.

SYLLABUS

COURSE	: Art 160 Special Problems-Environmental Design & Construction
LOCATION	: Taller Portobelo, Portobelo, Panama 011.507.448.2124
PROFESSOR	: Dr. Arturo Lindsay
DATES	: To be announced
PREREQUISITE	: Permission of the instructor

RATIONALE

The cosmopolitan character of urban cities and college campuses promotes the creation of sophisticated works of art and fosters enlightened discussions about aesthetics, while the slow pace and provincial nature of rural life in impoverished communities in Latin America nurtures the more innocent and uncontrived tendencies in art. Seldom do artists and art students from these two distinct communities have an opportunity to interact with each other while making art. The Spelman College Summer Art Colony was created in order to provide such an opportunity. The main purpose of the Art Colony is to provide a forum for college students from the United States, and self-taught artists from the village of Portobelo to exchange ideas and share artistic visions. By learning about each other, their respective cultures and art making techniques while living and working together in Portobelo, both students and self-taught artists benefit.

LOCATION

The Spelman College Summer Art Colony is located at Taller Portobelo in the village of Portobelo. Portobelo is a 16th century Spanish colonial town on the Caribbean coast of the Republic of Panama that is steeped in the history of the African Diaspora. Taller Portobelo is a cooperative that was founded in the early 1970s by photographer Sandra Eleta and a group of artists and intellectuals. For more information please visit the Spelman College Summer Art Colony's website at www.spelman.edu/artcolony

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with a unique cultural experience and an experiential understanding of the basic principles and techniques of making environmentally friendly works of art at an introductory level. Emphasis will be on balancing the ecology of the area with the formal elements of art and the basic principles of design.

Each year the instructor will propose a new project for the class. However, students wishing to work on independent projects must provide a proposal to be approved by the instructor. The course consists of lectures, demonstrations, research, slide presentations, and visits to villages on the Costa Arriba of Panama. Although class presentations, assignments and projects will be done in a group, instruction will be tailored to each student's needs on an individualized basis.

Students will receive 75 contact hours of instruction and 30 hours of independent work over a three-week period. Additionally, students will receive daily instruction in understanding and appreciating sustainable architecture, cultural diversity, and the role of environmentally friendly design and construction in non-western cultures. They will also participate in daily group critiques and have their work reviewed once a week.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Portobelo's location in the middle of a rain forest offers art students a unique opportunity to live and work with artisans familiar with building the vernacular architectural structures of the region that rely primarily on ecologically friendly materials. The history, myths, legends, people, and culture of Portobelo will also challenge students to critically think and create new works of art inspired by this historic village.

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the role of the arts in preserving the environment.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic visual elements, principles of pictorial design, and
aesthetic criteria from a multicultural perspective.
3. Execute works of art outdoors.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of color theory.
5. Demonstrate the ability to work in a foreign environment.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter by participating in critical analysis of art
through group critiques.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION & GRADES

The criteria for evaluating students' work will be based on:

1. Class Attendance and Participation.

Class attendance and participation are critical to learning how to make works of art. **Students should not register for this course if they are expecting to go on vacation.** Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time, be prepared to work, and participate in group discussions and critiques. This course must be taken seriously.

2. Progress

The student's artistic growth and maturity is an important criteria for evaluation. Progress is evaluated based on improvement in the execution of works of art, demonstration of a mature attitude towards work and responsibility, and the student's demonstrated commitment to experiment.

3. Projects and Assignments

Projects will vary each summer however, emphasis will be placed on new genre art forms such as installations and earthworks, and maximum use of the environment in Portobelo. Assignments will include, but will not be limited to line, shape, form, texture, negative and positive space, composition, surface preparation, paint application, brush techniques, tonality, color theory, and composition.

4. Art Experiences

Because this course receives four credit hours, students are expected to write a paper that is a critical analysis of their art and cultural experiences in Panama. This paper is due two weeks after students return to the United States.

5. Grades

After completion of the course a letter grade will be assigned to each student. Grades will be assessed based on the student's mastery of various techniques, uniqueness, intellectual content, and presentation.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Weekends will be reserved for cultural enrichment with visits to culturally and historically important sites including Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, the Museum of the Canal, the Afro-Antillano Museum, Mi Pueblito, the Museum of Religious Art, and architectural preservation projects in Casco Viejo. Additional visits include the locks of the Panama Canal at Miraflores, Isla Grande and La Huerta, as well as an optional visit to the Kuna Indians in Kuna Yala (the San Blas Islands). Other activities include a Congada, a nature walk in the rain forest at Las Orquideas, and cayuco (canoe) trips in the Bay of Portobelo and in the small surrounding rivers

ELIGIBILITY

This course is open to college students from the United States and Latin America regardless of their major, as well as emerging self-taught artists of Portobelo.

MATERIALS

Materials will depend on the proposed project. Please see the instructor.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Any form of academic dishonesty will result in failure of the course, and the student being reported to the dean for further disciplinary action.

TERMINATION

The instructor reserves the right to terminate the participation of any student not adhering to the rules and policies of Spelman College, the Spelman College Summer Art Colony, Taller Portobelo, or the customs and laws of the Republic of Panama.

Arturo Lindsay

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 • The Sumter County Gallery of Art, *Arturo Lindsay: Healing*, Sumter, SC
• Clifford Gallery, Colgate University, *Transition: Changes at the
Crossroad in the Life & Art of Arturo Lindsay*, Hamilton,
NY
- 2004 • City Gallery at Waterfront, *Mapping Ports: Sullivan's Island, Goreé
Island,
Portobelo, Havana and Seville, a retrospective exhibition* Charleston,
SC
- 2000 • Loneyear Museum, Colgate University - *Santuario/Sanctuary* Hamilton,
NY
- 1999 • Segunda Biental Iberoamericana de Lima - Salones de Artistas Invitados
Pancho Fierro, *Retorno de las ánimas Africanas* Lima, Peru
- 1998 • *Animas, arcángeles y antepasados: Recent Work by Arturo Lindsay*
Diggs Gallery, Winston-Salem State University (1998) Winston-
SalemNC
- Intermedia Art Center (1997)
Minneapolis, MN
- Nexus Contemporary Art Center (1996) Atlanta,
GA
- 1994 • Museo de Arte Contemporaneo
Canto a la Libertad de Africa a America Panama,
Panama
- Chassie Post Gallery *Congo Spirits* Atlanta,
GA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 • Georgia College and State University, *Kindred Spirits*, a two-man
show with Fahamu Pecou
Milledgeville, GA
- 2006 • The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, *Recognize:
The Spelman College Department of Fine Art Faculty Exhibition* Atlanta,
GA

- 2005 • Sumter County Cultural Commission, *Requiem: Sumter, SC* for the
Accessibility 2005 – Transplanted Latino Artists in the USA.
The Seventh Annual Exhibition of Installation Art Sumter, SC
• *Ferias de Portobelo 2005*, Las Orquídeas Sculpture Park,
Requiem for a Fool, a biodegradable sculptural installation. Portobelo,
Panama
- Sonja Stone Haynes Black Culture Center, University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill, *Como se cuenta le cuento-How the Story is Told*, an
exhibition of Taller Portobelo Chapel
- 2004 • Hammonds House Galleries, *Como se cuenta le cuento-How the Story is
Told*, an exhibition of Taller Porto belo Atlanta,
GA
- 3TEN HAUSTUDIO, “*studio sweepings*” Atlanta,
GA
- The Columbus Museum, *Redefining Georgia: Perspectivas en Arte
Contemporáneo* Columbus,
GA
- 2003 • *Ferias de Portobelo 2003*, Las Orquídeas Sculpture Park,
Retorno de las ánimas, a biodegradable sculptural installation. Portobelo,
Panama
- 2002 • Sun Trust Plaza Gallery, *Culture Shock: Work by Georgia
Foreign-Born Artists* Atlanta,
GA
- Blackridge Hall Gallery, The Georgia College & State University
Reinventing Traditions: Congo Art of Taller Portobelo
Milledgeville, GA
- 2001 • XVI Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro, *Santuario de los reyes,
una obra colectiva del Taller Portobelo* Cadiz,
Spain
- City Gallery East, *Pertenecer Belonging* Atlanta,
GA
- Modern Primitive Gallery, *Congo Art of Taller Portobelo* Atlanta,
GA
- 2000 • Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, *Panameños en la bienal de Lima* Panama,
Panama
- EXMA' Centro Culturale D'Arte e Cultura, *Percorsi dello Spirito
Anno Duemila* Cagliari,
Italy
- Kubatana Gallery, *Transgressions and Transformations*,
a two person exhibition with Michael Harris Atlanta,
GA
- Convento de Santo Domingo, Arco Chato, *Altars* Panama,
Panama
- Ruth Hall Hodges Art Gallery, Morris Brown College
Remembrance of a Legacy Atlanta,
GA
- 1999 • Smithsonian Institution, Anacostia Museum and the Center for African
American History and Culture, *Locating the Spirit: Religion and*

Spirituality in African American Art

- Washington, DC
• Cinque Gallery, *Artists in the City* New York,
NY
1998 • Cittadella dei Musei Piazza Arsenale, Organized by
Centro Culturale Man Ray, *Percorsi dello Spirito* Cagliari,
Italy
• Spelman College Museum of Fine Art,
Divergent Journey/Aesthetic Convergence Atlanta,
GA

ART PROJECTS & PERFORMANCES

- 2004 • *The Erosion Project*, for Plexus International Dakar,
Senegal
2002 • *The Voyage of the Delfina, a performance art ritual*. In collaboration
with poet Opal Moore, musician Joe Jennings, filmmaker Ayoka
Chenzira and a host of artists and students. Spelman College Atlanta,
GA
2000 • *The Return of the Ancestral Messenger Through the Door of No Return*
Plexus Dakar Goree,
Senegal
1994 • *Plexus Interactive Art & Science Project* Cagliari Museum Sardinia,
Italy
1992 • *Transmission of the Fleet of Projects*, (a Plexus Fax performance)
University of Cagliari Sardinia,
Italy
1990 • *Plexus Black Box* Teatro Coliseo Rome, Italy
• *Feeding of St. Andy's Aura* Franklin and Marshall College Lancaster,
PA
• *Feeding of St. Andy's Aura* Gettysburg College Gettysburg,
PA
1989 • *Feeding Mother Earth after Hugo and The Frisco Quake*
Sonora Desert, Tucson, AZ
• *Feeding St. Andy's Aura* Nuyorican Poet's Cafe at CUANDO East
Village, NYC
• *Plexus Art Co-Opera #2: Purgatorio* CUANDO East
Village, NY
• *Performance Drawing* Shuttle Lab East
Village, NY
• *Collaboration with John Betsch and Ghengis Nor* Shuttle Lab East
Village, NY
1984 • *Smoke Voices with Ntzoke Shange* Sutton Gallery Houston,
TX

EDUCATION

- 1990 Doctor of Arts, New York University, Dissertation title: *Performance Art Ritual As
Postmodern Thought: An Aesthetic Investigation*
1975 Master of Fine Arts, University of Massachusetts, Amherst - Painting
1970 Bachelor of Arts, Central Connecticut State University - Spanish/Theater