

ABSTRACT

Matters in Trinidad & Tobago Maketh Man:
The Visual Art of Leroy Clarke

David Alan Cave

This thesis seeks to offer an independent insight into the development of the visual art of the Trinidadian artist Leroy Clarke over the time period of its formal inception, circa 1963 to the year 2010. The study proceeds in chronological order, starting from the genesis of the artist, which discusses the creative, socio-economic and spiritual influences of Clarke's early life as well as the reception of his first solo exhibition *Labour of Love* of 1966. Progression is subsequently made through the analysis of the subsequent exhibitions, *Fragments of a Spiritual*, *Douens*, *El Tucuche*, *Pantheon* and *Revelations*, where changes in thematic philosophy and artistic technique are noted for each phase of his visual art.

However, it must also be noted that this study goes beyond mere chronology, as the analysis of Clarke's visual art also extends to the roles played by his literary and artistic influences in addition to the key individuals of his personal life. These sources of inspiration lead to the pursuance of analysing how Clarke has utilised the concepts brought forth by the above sources of inspiration to create and develop his art, specifically along an Afrocentric vein.

The study concludes by offering many possibilities for synthesis of the existing paradigms set forth by the artist, while also addressing the significant degree of uncertainty that still remains over the continuing reception and/or possible lack of acceptance by the Trinidad and Tobago public at large, which has always been the primary audience of Leroy Clarke.

Key Words: Leroy Clarke, Trinidad, Visual, Art, Orisha, El Tucuche, Douen