



MIRIAM A. HINDS SMITH  
ARTIST | EDUCATOR

JAMAICA

I was, I am, I will be.  
Resin and fabric and fibre  
Irregular  
2015

## Biography

Miriam A. (Robinson) Hinds Smith (b1969) is a Jamaican mother, wife, artist, and educator; a multi-faceted individual whose sees life through the lens of her passion for textiles and its historical and contemporary significance in our lives. As the Dean of the School of Visual Arts of the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, Hinds Smith is a driven collaborator who seeks and embraces opportunities for artists and students to engage with communities across all sectors.

Hinds Smith is a 1992 honours graduate of the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts and completed her training as an educator in 2008 at the University of Technology, Jamaica. She is a 1998 Chevening scholarship alumni, with a Master's Degree in Fashion and Design from the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, UK, where she was an honours graduate. She has also studied at the L'Ecole des Beaux Arts, in Mulhouse, Alsace, France, from 1992 to 1993.

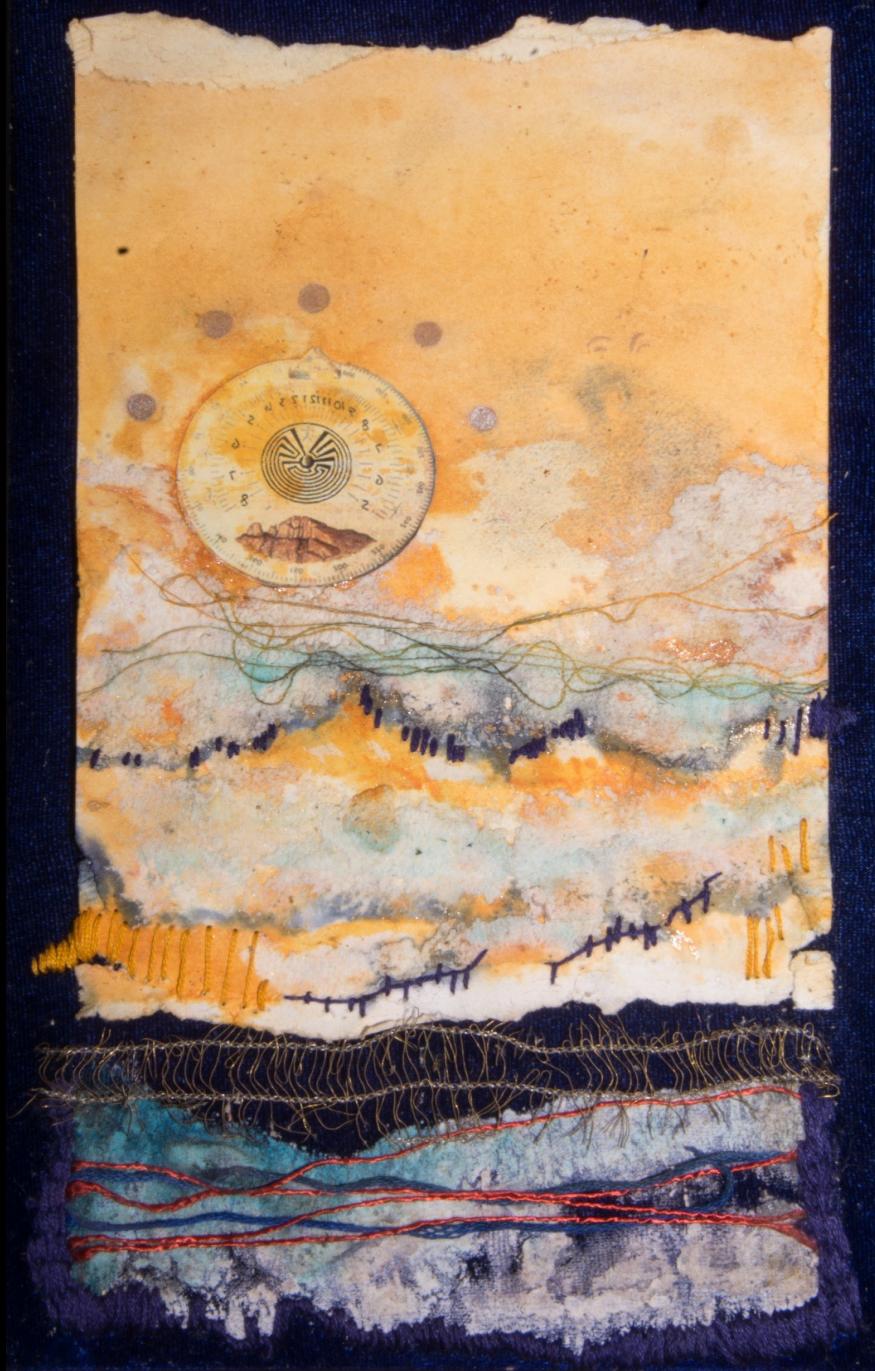
Miriam Hinds Smith has exhibited at the National Gallery of Jamaica and was one of the artists featured in *Seven Women Artists* in 2017 Five. She has also participated in the National Gallery of Jamaica's Biennial in 2008, 2012 and 2016. In the UK, she has exhibited at the Winchester Gallery and at New Designers, Islington, in 1999 and she has also exhibited at the Gallery Mulhouse, in Alsace, France. Hinds Smith was featured in the ImagoMundi publication, *Islands: Contemporary Artists from Haiti and Jamaica* (2017).

## Artist's Statement

My artistic practice is based on my research on local indigenous textiles, underpinned by the carriage of history, and the implications this holds for issues of personal and national identity. I am also curious of the possible innovative outcomes that the integration of technology might afford such explorations.

As a Christian, I also seek to create necessary dialogue between my spiritual life and the social realities around me. I see my work as “agency through praxis,” to emote in nuanced language on critical issues on violence against women and children, through the lens of cultural identity, and colonialism and its prevailing impacts.

Propelled by this desire to experience and understand this medium of textiles, my work in research and practice involves meandering pathways, including the art of bookbinding, which I actively use as a medium. I look for ways to blur the boundaries of art and applied art applications, through explorations of the subtle language of fibre.



New Moon Rising  
Mixed Media  
8" x12"  
2005



Of Treasures and Torment  
Cover and inside page



Miriam Hinds Smith  
Of Treasures and Torment, Pg.1 & 2.  
Mixed Media  
Page sizes .5" x 15.5"  
2008



Of Treasures and Torment,  
Pg.3 & 4.  
Mixed Media  
Page sizes 10.5" x 15.5"  
2008



Of Treasures and Torment,  
Pg.3 & 4.  
Mixed Media  
Page sizes 10.5" x 15.5"  
2008



Atonement I, II, III,  
Mixed Media  
5' x 1.4'  
2013



Justice Denied... 1600 and Still Counting  
Mixed Media  
Polyptych,  
Individual dimension 8"x10  
2014



Thought we Mattered  
Mixed Media  
Irregular  
Installation,  
2015



Still I Rise I & II; Centre, Blood Crossings; Fibre-based Mixed Media Installation, 2017



Amen  
Fabric Fiber-based Mixed Media  
Installation,  
2019

# Proposed Project

My project will explore gender-based intersections between Haiti and Jamaica, historically and in the present.

Several French planters and merchants fled from Haiti to Jamaica during 1791 – 1804 Haitian revolution, along with scores of enslaved men, women and children. Within these turbulent times and leading up to the abolition of slavery in Jamaica in 1838, innate resourcefulness would have been an important strategy for the forced Haitian migrants to Jamaica, to not only survive but to remain resolute and to assimilate to the new circumstances. In as much as Haitians were far removed from their space of belonging, the immediate interplay between cultures was in evidence. This can be seen in the Belisario illustration of the French Set Girls (1795-1849), which represented the participation of Haitian women and men in the traditional Jamaican Christmastime festivals, where we are allowed a glimpse into the life and practices of cultural reaffirmation and subversive play. The bonds of sister/womanhood that would have been formed in these desperate times resonates across the centuries, conjuring images of survival, family and a will to fight, resisting the colonials of the times.

There is copious documentation of the plight faced by children in Haiti under the unstructured system of “Restavek,” which involves the placing of children coming from families of lesser means, at times into households of similar state from which they came, simply for the hope of having somewhere to sleep and possible meals. It is a form of modern-day slavery, which often involves significant exploitation and abuse. While it does not have a name, this form of human trafficking by placing children also occurs in Jamaica, along with other related practices. As reported by the Ministry of Health, Jamaica, in 2006, there were over 6,500 children being sent to earn a living on the streets across the city of Kingston alone. In the now, the fight for the protection of the rights of the child continues, and the call for equality remains as relevant as it was at the time of the Haitian Revolution.



Isaac Mendes  
Belisario – Sketches  
of Character: French  
Set Girls (1837-380

Against this background, the proposed project will involve research to examine and create narratives that link the experience of both spaces, Jamaica and Haiti. It will particularly focus on the shared experiences of women and children through the lens of history and the now, dissecting and interweaving the parallels and intersectionalities that are at play within both island spaces. Special attention will be paid to historical images of women who took control of their destinies, in Haiti and Jamaica, against structures of oppression, to demonstrate the distance yet immediateness of these realities.

The project will take the form of an installation and will involve the creation of hand-bound books and banner-like structures, as heraldic imagery which will be constructed through methods of printing, stitching, and fabric and fibre manipulation, highlighting the bonds and sister/womanhood that would have been formed. In our desperate times, there is a need a call to action that resonates across the centuries, conjuring images of survival, of self-determination, and a will to fight and resist the systems, imposed or self-imposed, of the then and the now.

It is envisioned that the project will generate conversations among our women and children as agencies in elevating their own understanding of self and ways forward for change.