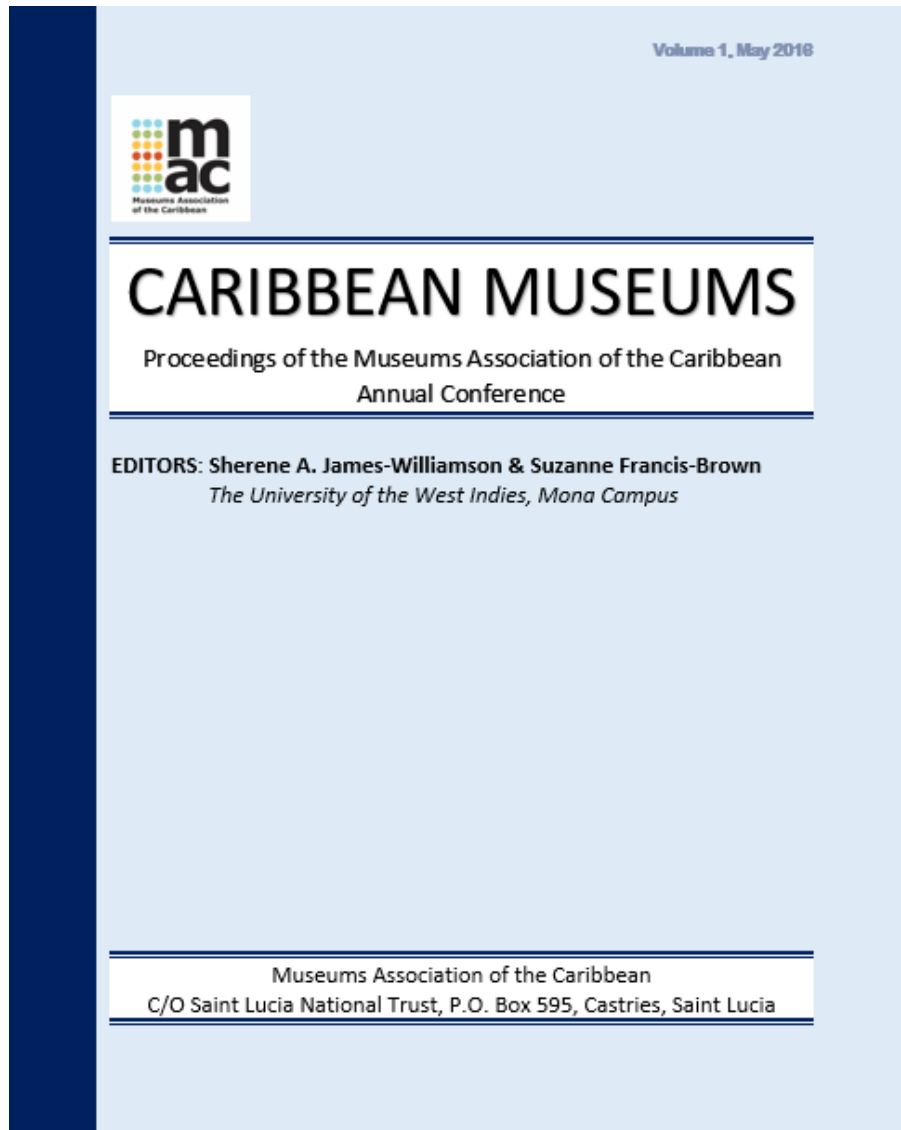


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Introduction

CATHERINE C. COLE

Secretary-General, Commonwealth Association of Museums

The Museums Association of the Caribbean held its 25th anniversary conference in Jamaica in November 2014 on the theme of *Innovation, Research and Education*. On behalf of the Commonwealth Association of Museums, I congratulate MAC on reaching this important milestone. In his keynote address, Jamaica National Heritage Trust Chairman Ainsley Henriques pointed out the importance of collaboration and consultation, and the dangers of living in silos, protecting our turf – the topic of my 2013 presentation to MAC in Belize. CAM and MAC have demonstrated the truth of his statement, building a strong, mutually beneficial relationship in recent years.

CAM has supported museums and museum workers in the Caribbean through internships, the distance learning program and regional workshops; MAC has provided expertise and input to joint initiatives and promoted them through your network. I look forward to continued collaboration in the years to come. Conference presenters focused on innovative approaches to supporting school curricula, and teachers themselves, through museum resources, expertise, exhibitions and programs, a theme picked up by the 2015 workshop on *Museum Education in the Caribbean* organized by CAM, MAC and ICOM Barbados in Barbados.

CAM members share a colonial history, common language and governance, legal and educational

systems. MAC and CAM share issues in redressing our colonial histories and moving forward with optimism. Many of us have colonial museums and historic sites that offer new meanings in the postcolonial world. We are sometimes of two minds about our history. Henriques spoke about our desire to “rid ourselves of the colonial and enslavement stigma” and the value in highlighting our ancestors’ “skills and their contributions during these very difficult times.” We have the opportunity to reinterpret sites and artifacts collected during colonial times and to integrate intangible cultural heritage to make this patrimony relevant to current and future generations.

While we all have concerns about the sustainability of our museums and how address challenges in keeping up with the rapid changes in society and technology with modest budgets, we have also witnessed a significant improvement in the state of museums, the ability to speak for ourselves, to present our own histories, cultures and values, and not to be presented by colonial powers.

Best wishes to MAC for the next 25 years!