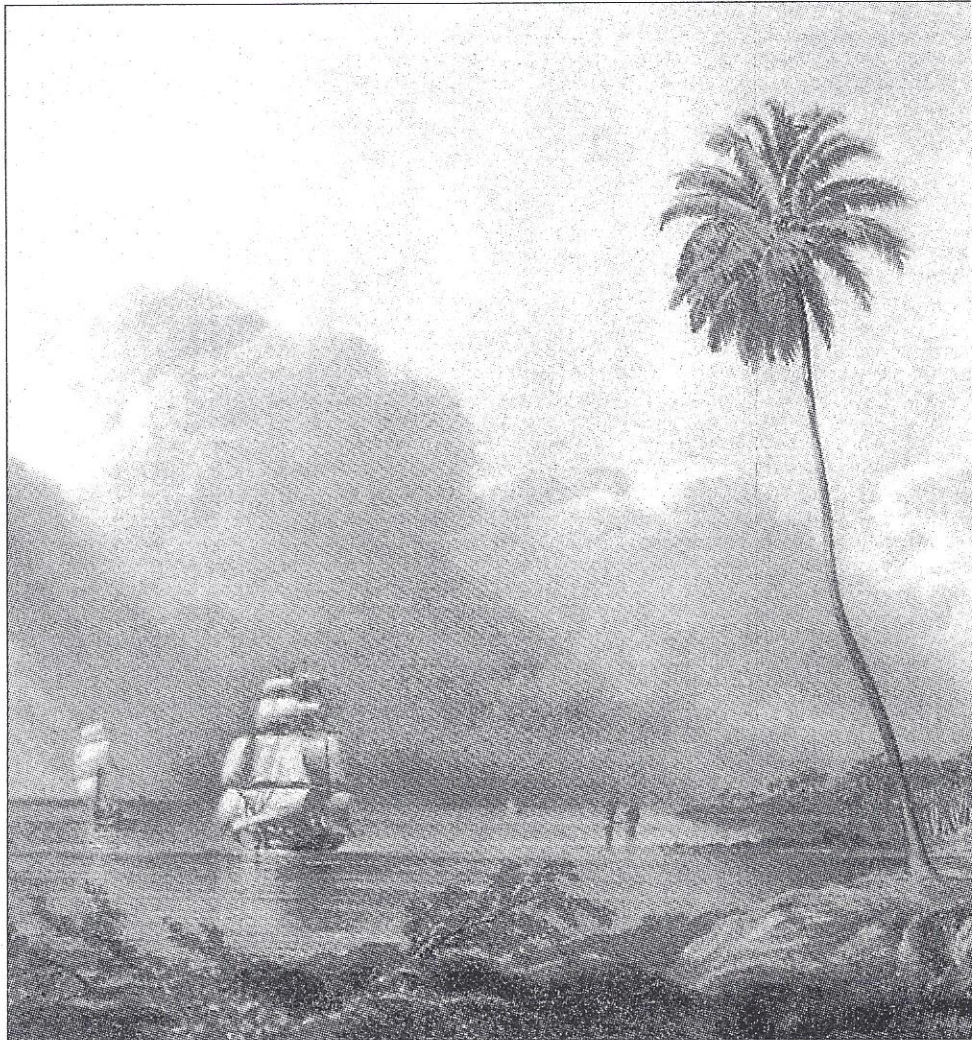


Cocoa Hut Walk on
the Coast_JB Kidd

At the



NG
CAYMAN ISLANDS
NATIONAL
GALLERY



A picturesque view of Jamaica

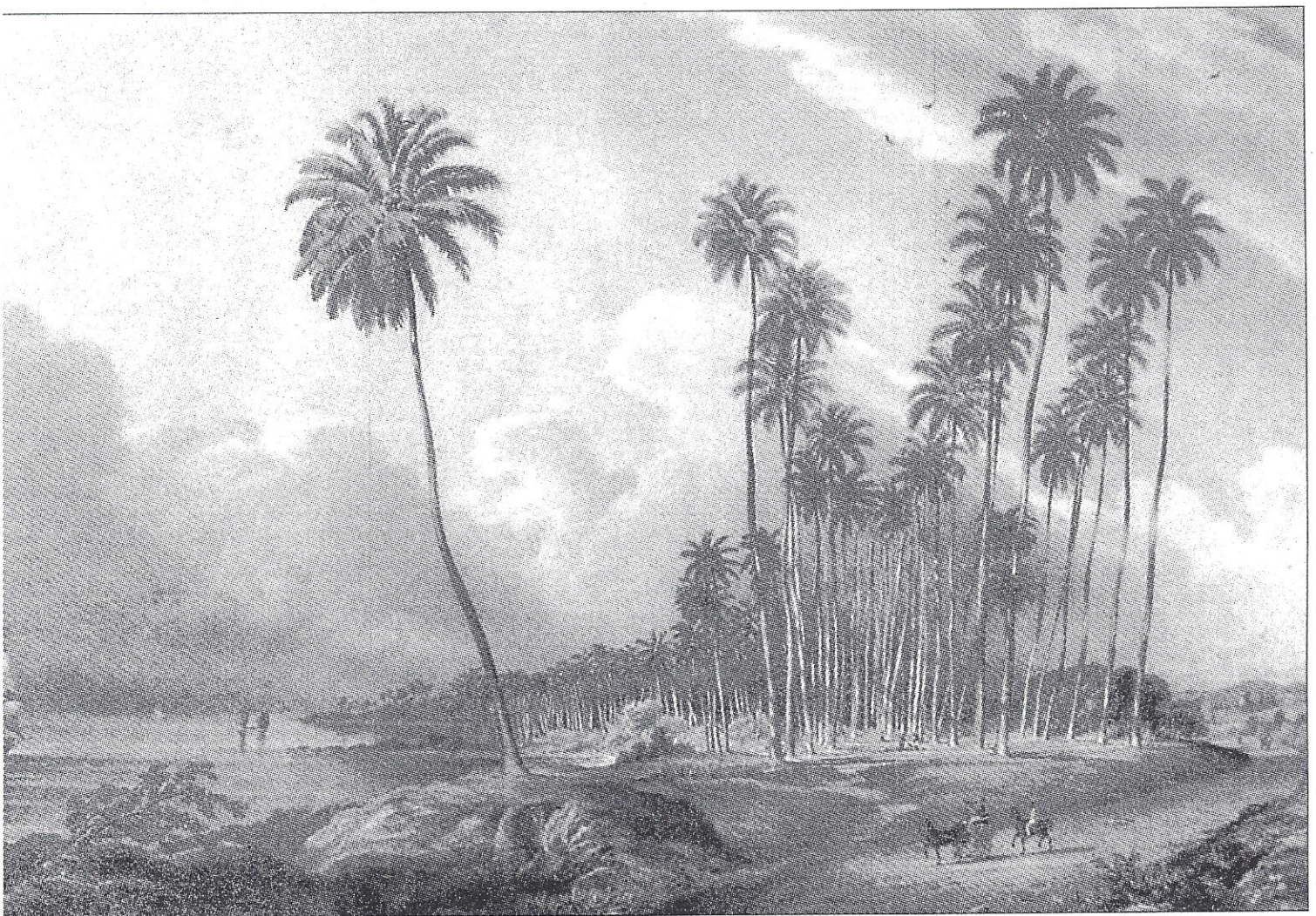
A stunning collection of lithographic prints depicting the artists' view of late 18th and 19th Century Jamaica is on display at the National Gallery, titled

Crucial historical milestones took place during the early part of the 19th Century in the island of Jamaica, Cayman's close neighbour, most significant of which was the abolition of slavery in 1808, along with the implementation of the apprenticeship system of slaves that followed. Thus the West Indies were

National Gallery Director and Curator of the exhibition, Natalie Coleman explains: "These predominantly itinerant artists travelled to Jamaica on what was often referred to as a 'Picturesque Tour' and painted their vision of the Jamaican landscape and culture of the time. It was a highly idealised vision of 'paradise' that made

at the request of British plantation owner William Beckford, these paintings, of landscape and Beckford's plantation, were produced. Beckford's plan was to become part of the history of Jamaica. He received high praise in England.

James Hakewill visited

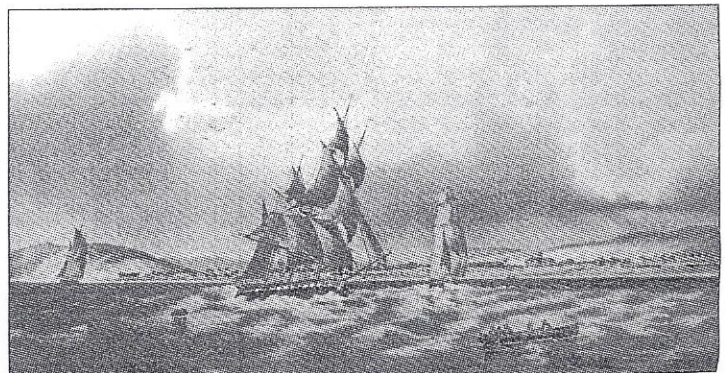


icturesque view of Jamaica

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at the request of British plantation owner William Beckford. His paintings, of landscapes, portraits and Beckford's plantation, were due to become part of a book that Beckford was writing on the history of Jamaica. His paintings received high praise once back in England.

James Hakewill visited Jamaica from 1820-1 and went on to publish 'A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica' in 1825. At the same time as his book was published, Hakewill also published



Kidd_Leaving Port Royal

'Paradise (re)Visited', a first of its kind for the islands and quite possibly the oldest art collection ever shown here. Business Editor Lindsey Turnbull went along to the Gallery to find out more and reports.

lowed. Thus the west Indies were much in discussion in Britain at that time. Attracting artists from mainly Britain, but also other parts of Europe as well, Jamaica was seen as a new and exotic location which beckoned to the imagination and often entranced many artists to remain settled there for a good number of years, if not for life.

The exhibition

Paradise (re)Visited features 38 lithographs by renowned water colourist Joseph Bartholomew Kidd, with supporting works by artists Adolphe Duperly, Louis Belanger, James Robertson, Captain Whitty, P. Cartwright and James Hakewill; all well know landscape painters based in Jamaica during the 1800s.

used vision of paradise that made no attempt to discuss the moral or political climate of the period. Their work was printed and reproduced throughout Europe thus contributing to the earliest popular understanding of the Caribbean region in the West and prefiguring the later trend for romantic landscapes in the 19th century."

Indeed, A Picturesque Tour was the name given to any work depicting views of a country at that time, a deliberate attempt to romanticise the landscape without making political or moral comment in the work.

The artists

The earliest works in the exhibition are by George Robertson, who arrived in Jamaica in 1773

James Hakewill visit from 1820-1 and went to publish 'A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica' in 1824. At the same time as his book was published, Hakewill also wrote an essay which accompanied the work, offering "a few observations on the moral condition of the island and its inhabitants", providing insight into the plight of the people during the apprenticeship period post the abolition of slavery.

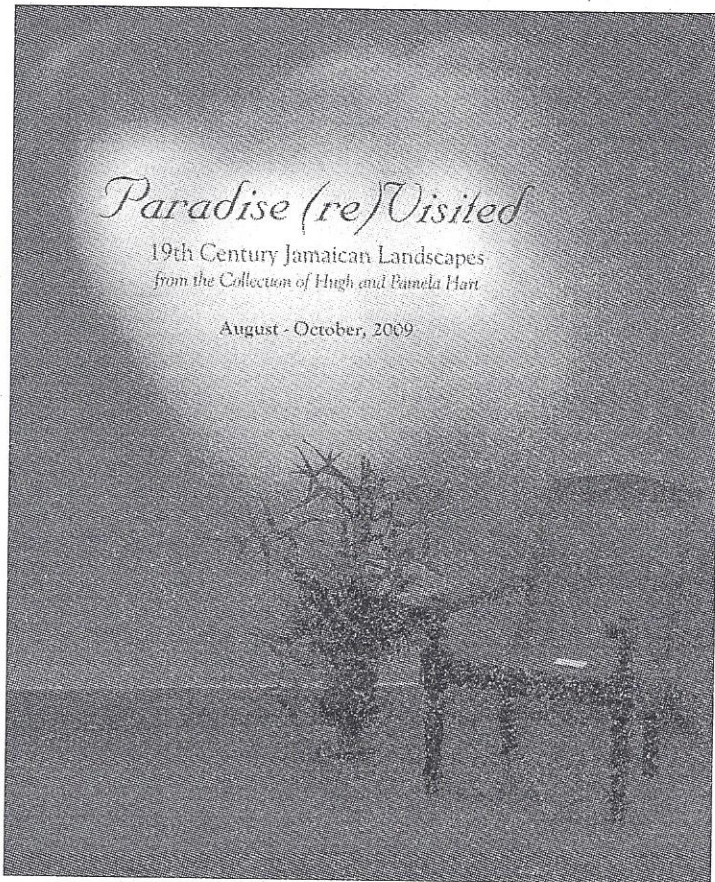
French artist Adolphe Duperly established himself as a landscape painter in Kingston Jamaica in the early 1820s, selling his work to many of the prominent colonists, and historical events were commemorated with another artist, Mendes Belisario to produce one of the most celebrated lithographs of the period: 'Sketches of the Views of the Negro Population of the Island of Jamaica'.

P. Cartwright was a London-based lithographer and landscape painter who collected views from the Baptist Chapel and the St. Andrew's Chapel, commemorating the pre-1838 chapels that were closed down with the abolition of slavery.

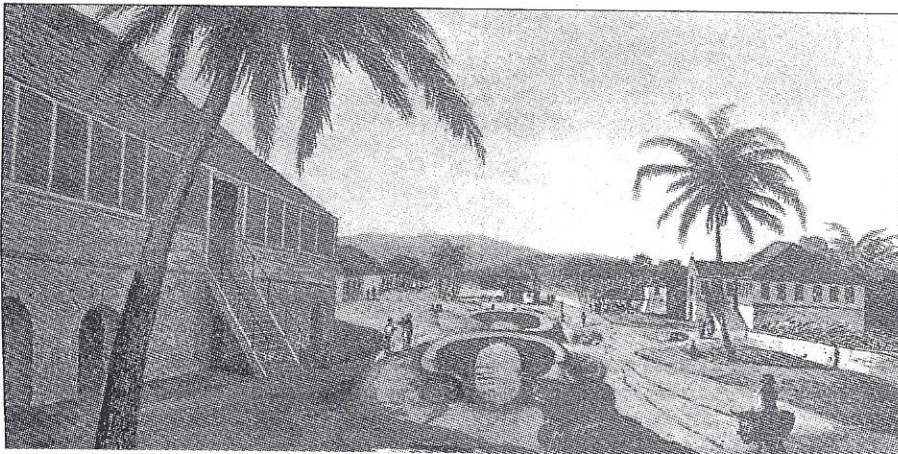
Joseph Bartholomew Kidd was the most prolific of the painters in the exhibition, first arrived in Jamaica in 1835, at a time when the island was already a commercial success. Views from exotic locations were already commercial and Kidd was a prominent member of the Scottish Academy who went on to produce many lithographs and paintings through his lithographs by Kidd had a four year period. As an artist before him, Kidd romanticised and idealised the landscape in Jamaica, with slaves and their surrounding landscape painting slavery into a neutral part of the Jamaican landscape.



Capt Whitty



Picturesque Exhibition



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The artists

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same time as his book was published, Hakewill also published an essay which accompanied the work, offering “a few remarks on the moral condition of some parts of its inhabitants”, providing great insight into the plight of slaves during the apprenticeship period post the abolition of slavery.

French artist Adolphe Duperly established himself as a lithographer in Kingston Jamaica in the early 1820s, selling lithographs of prominent colonists, plantations and historical events. He partnered with another artist, Isaac Mendes Belisario to produce one of the most celebrated series of the period: ‘Sketches of Character... of the Negro Population in the Island of Jamaica’.

P. Cartwright was a well-known London-based lithographer and Thomas Picken, a lesser known landscape painter collaborated on *The Baptist Chapel Series* commemorating the preachers and chapels that were closely associated with the abolition movement.

Joseph Bartholomew Kidd, the most prolific of the painters in this exhibition, first arrived in Jamaica in 1835, at a time when Picturesque Views from exotic locations were already commercial ventures. Kidd was a prominent member of the Scottish Academy of Art and went on to produce fifty drawings and paintings translated into lithographs by Kidd himself over a four year period. As with the artists before him, Kidd painted a romantic and idealised view of life in Jamaica, with slaves in harmony with their surroundings, thereby painting slavery into a picture that was simply a neutral and natural part of the Jamaican landscape.

The significance

Natalie explains how the Gallery came about this rare and treasured collection: “This beautiful, and historically significant, collection is owned locally by Hugh and Pam Hart, themselves originally from Jamaica. The Gallery owes them a huge debt of gratitude for permitting us to show just a part of their extensive collection, collected over the years to form this complete series.”

Each print is a detailed account of some form of life on the island, including essays on architecture, landscapes, commerce and social scenes, all seen through the eyes of the artist. Details are included on a whole myriad of the minutiae of life during the period, from costume to pastimes, commerce to the flora of the region. None-the-less, the view is very much an idealised version and Natalie believes the collection therefore raises moral and social questions with regard to what the paintings leave out.

“I think this exhibition offers students a great chance to gain a real insight into the era from so many angles – historically, politically, socially and morally,” she says. “This was an incredibly charged period in all of our histories and the images provide an excellent basis for discussion.” There is comprehensive student and teacher pack that accompanies the exhibition has lesson plans relating the history, architecture, geography and social studies that will compliment those areas of the curriculum.

Pamela Hart describes how the collection came together: “We started working on the collection over 30 years ago and we were for-

tunate enough to get most of them in complete sets. We had decided to make a concerted effort to collect these prints of Jamaica which were not only historic, but show so much of its natural beauty, with many of the locations remaining almost the same.”

The Hart’s collection extends further than this show: “We also have in the collection a number of oils of the same period, as well as prints by Jean Michael Cazabon; who painted in Trinidad and views of the interior of Guyana painted by Charles Bentley. I have always had a passion for regional art and we also have a nice collection of most of the well known Jamaican artists, including Albert Huie, Kapo, Pottinger, Barrington Watson, in addition to Brazilian artists and local artists,” she says.

Pamela says she is thrilled to see everything so beautifully displayed in one location. “I have been told that the exhibition has been well received and, gathering from the programme that Natalie has put together, it should reach a wide cross-section of people of all nationalities who live here.”

Natalie explains the cultural significance for Cayman: “This collection provides the viewer with a comprehensive view of the Jamaican environment in the last days of the pre-emancipation era but connections may also be drawn with the Caymanian history given our close connection to our neighbours during this period. Aside from the sheer beauty of this visual essay the work provides a poignant insight into life at this time. It will be of interest for visitors of all ages.”

