



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

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August 17, 2023

MEDIA RELEASE

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts Awards Cultural Mentors

The Ministry of Tourism Culture and the Arts recognized service excellence and dedication to cultural preservation last evening (Wednesday 16th August, 2023) during an award ceremony at Queen’s Hall, Port of Spain.

Cultural stalwarts Helen Camps, Maria Lee and Shastri Maharaj were recognized for their contributions to the growth and transformation of this country’s Theatre Arts, Chinese Folk Art and Visual Arts sectors respectively.

Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Mrs. Jasmine Pascal, speaking on behalf of Senator the Honourable Randall Mitchell, congratulated the awardees for being “a luminary in their respective fields and bringing to the table a wealth of experience that is invaluable”.

Deputy Permanent Secretary Pascal said that “Mentorship is the flame that ignites the torch of succession planning, ensuring that the torchbearers of our cultural legacy are well-equipped and inspired to carry it forward. Through mentorship, we foster not only artistic excellence but also a profound sense of belonging and pride in our national identity.

She added that the event symbolises the ethos of the National Cultural Policy of Trinidad and Tobago that seeks to place artists at the centre of cultural development through recognizing and rewarding excellence.

The awardees thanked the Ministry for recognizing their contributions to Trinidad and Tobago’s cultural landscape.

In accepting his award Mr. Maharaj said “This is rare. I never anticipated or expected growing up here in Trinidad that one day I’ll be a recipient or a beneficiary of such a title. I

always deal with icons in my visual expressions but I never thought it was also going to be referred to me. I thank the Ministry for recognizing this small contribution I have made to my country in particular because documentation of Trinidad and Tobago visually is of paramount importance if we are to progress and go further through further generations.”

The Ministry’s 2023 Mentoring by the Masters (MBTM) programme was also launched at last evening’s event.

The Mentoring by the Masters Programme began in 2012 and is the flagship professional development project of the National Registry of Artists and Cultural Workers. The programme is a mentorship workshop series focused on heritage preservation and succession planning, honouring local cultural icons, collaborating with creative and cultural institutions, and engendering a sense of national pride while strengthening cultural values and traditions.

Approximately forty-two (42) participants have enrolled in this year’s edition and will be mentored by MBTM awardees Helen Camps, Maria Lee and Shastri Maharaj.

Over the years more than seven hundred participants have been mentored in the areas of dance, theatre, jewellery design, literary arts, film, visual arts, fashion, business for the arts, traditional carnival arts, if/orisa traditions, broadcasting, music, copper arts, festival development, heritage preservation, storytelling, professional development and more by this country’s creative and cultural icons.

Repeat mentee and performer, Ms. Keomi Serette said “I will encourage others to sign up for the programme because, after all the segments I have done, it has now become like a business for me. Especially at Carnival I work for a lot of corporate events and I manage to gain an income from that. I look forward to many more years of mentorship.”

The 2023 Mentoring by the Masters Programme will run from August to October, 2023.

For further information please contact the Secretariat of the National Registry of Artists and Cultural Workers at (868) 624-1403 extensions 254; 305 or 309.



Cultural Mentors Recognized by Ministry of Tourism: (from l-r) Helen Camps, Maria Lee, Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Jasmine Pascal, and Shastri Maharaj.

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