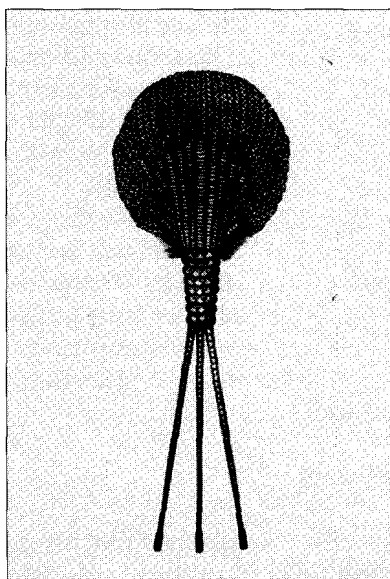
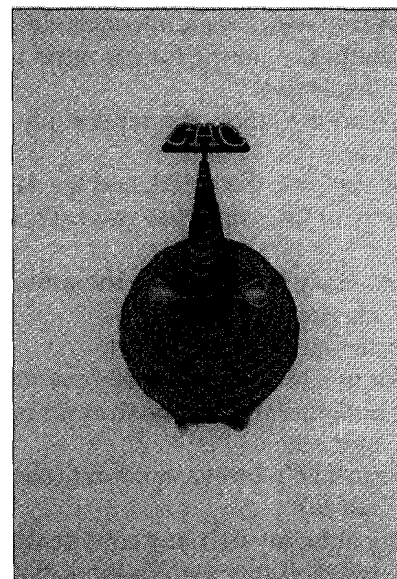


# Creole Portraits (2002-2003)

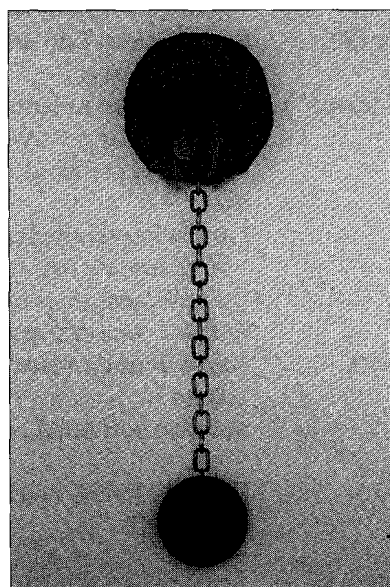
JOSCELYN GARDNER



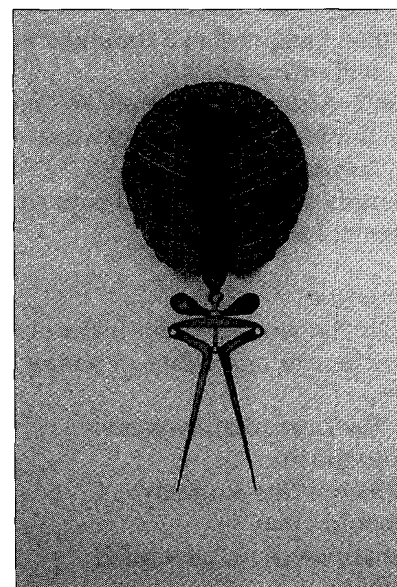
*Membah... also answers to the name of*



*Old Betty*

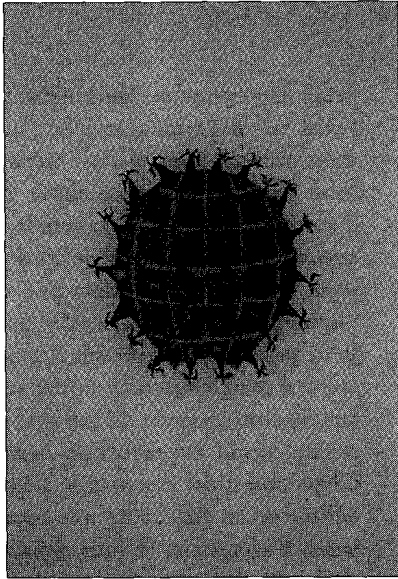


*Zebby*

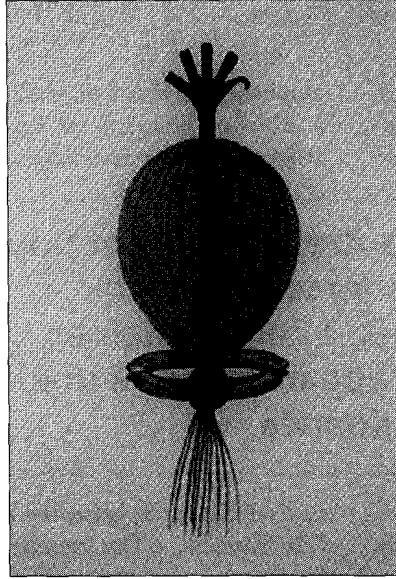


*Princess*

*In my work I use a (white) postcolonial Creole feminist methodology to probe historical representations of Creole identity in order to negotiate a legitimate space for my contemporary Creole voice. This series of black and white lithographic "portraits" recalls nineteenth-century abolitionist illustrations and plays on the view that slavery's memory can be objectified by emphasis on the tools of torture rather than the slave body. By illustrating these horrific whips, collars, chains, and branding irons entwined within exquisitely braided hair, I construct simultaneously attractive and repugnant hybrid images that resonate as metaphors for the weightiness of history in contemporary postcolonial life. Recalling the site of hair as the second most important corporeal sign of race, these ambiguous inverted portraits seek to "name" and empower the women lost to anonymity on the plantations and open up a space for contemplating the shared experience of slavery and its after-effects. Though grounded in the Caribbean's historical / cultural specificity, they point to the wider issue of white western postcolonial guilt and aim to subvert the notion that colonialism's effects are solely an issue of the Other.*



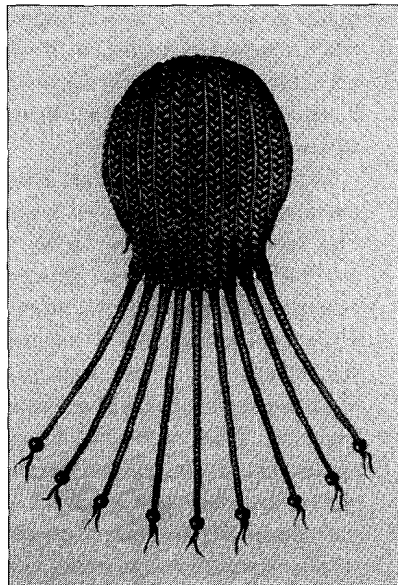
*Esther*



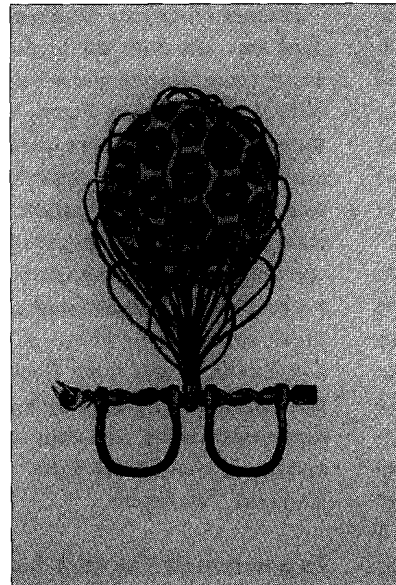
*Dolly ... Daughter of Old Doll*



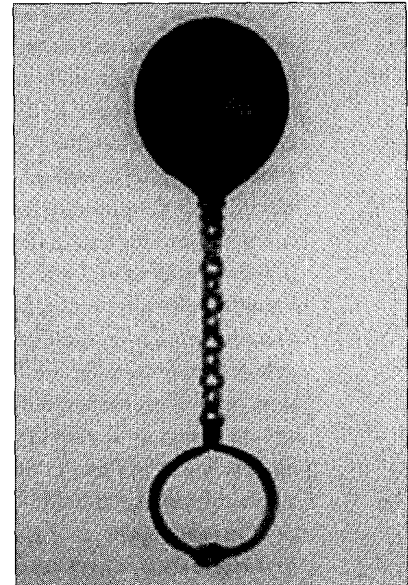
*Phibba*



*Mary Ann*



*Elizabeth ... calls herself Phibbah*



*Black Bess*

*10 lithographs on frosted mylar, each 24" x 36"  
Photos: John Tamblyn*

*Joscelyn Gardner is a visual artist whose practice focuses on her Creole identity from a postcolonial feminist perspective. She was born in Barbados in 1961 to a family that has been resident on the island from the seventeenth century. She received an M.F.A. from the University of Western Ontario in 2003 and currently teaches art part-time at Fanshawe College, London, Ontario. She has represented Barbados in many international exhibitions including the Sao Paulo Biennials (1994, 1996), has held solo exhibitions in Barbados and Canada, and has exhibited in several group shows in Europe, USA, Canada, the Caribbean, and South and Central America.*