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# thecornerstone

## Introduction

**WE'RE AT THE HALFWAY MARK OF ANOTHER YEAR – AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO FOCUS ON WHAT MAKES RGM'S CORPORATE PROPERTIES SPECIAL.**

One of the design elements that make all our buildings as elegant as they are is the artwork, which is why this edition of The Cornerstone features a story on key pieces of outstanding local art in each of our locations.

No matter how aesthetically pleasing our buildings are, however, they must also work well for the people who use it, so in anticipation of our first green certified building at Savannah East, we take a look at LED lighting options for the office and why they make good business sense.

Of course, we couldn't publish this issue of our newsletter without acknowledging the 2014 World Cup, scheduled to kick off in Brazil on June 12 – but instead of predicting winners, we

look at the ways in which the host country has tackled the event's developmental needs, constructing stadia and other supporting structures to cater to the massive influx of football fans that will descend on the country over the next month.

Speaking of support structures, RGM has revamped its website ([rgm.co.tt](http://rgm.co.tt)) to be a lot more user – and search engine optimization – friendly! Its style is much more reflective of our design sensibility and the site will be updated with regular blog posts and PDF versions of the newsletter – another step in the right direction when it comes to environmental consciousness.

**Log on and check it out – we'd love to hear your feedback.**

## Art in Architecture

**RGM MAY BE KNOWN FOR ITS BUILDINGS, BUT IF YOU ENTER ANY ONE OF ITS CORPORATE LEASE SPACES, ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS YOU WILL NOTICE IS THE LOCAL ART HANGING THE IN THE LOBBIES, ATRIUMS AND COMMON AREAS.**

"What RGM is doing is important," says gallery owner Mark Perreira. "The company is putting local art in public places – in the lobby of Queen's Park Plaza where there is high foot traffic with people eating at the restaurant or going to the gym; outside Princes Court near the old Princes Building grounds – they're investing in indigenous art and they've made a commitment to do it properly."



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Of course, RGM is not the first local corporate entity to do this – many banks and a few insurance companies have quite an extensive art collection – but Pereira says their purchases tend to happen in fits and starts. “With RGM,” he continues, “it’s almost like a policy. There’s a great sense of continuity in what they do. While they’re not filling buildings with art – after all, they construct buildings for lease, so they can only outfit the public areas – their investment is still significant. They put their money where their mouth is, and I admire that.”

The art itself is certainly something to admire; each building has its own specially commissioned piece, designed to suit the dimensions of the space and its architectural feel...

### Queen’s Park Plaza



A site with so much history (the grand art deco building was formerly the esteemed Queen’s Park Hotel) had to have a statement piece that spoke to the building’s old world style and timeless elegance, while also giving a nod to the progressive future of both the building and the country.

RGM decided to have a competition to determine what piece would eventually adorn the

towering back wall of the atrium. Six Trinidadian artists were invited on the basis of their experience and capacity to work with scale; three submitted and were called upon to defend their models and explain how their art would be mounted in the space. The jury eventually agreed that Jackie Hinkson’s proposal would best suit the location. Hinkson is one of the artists that immediately comes to mind when you think about Caribbean landscapes. He has painted everything from rural scenes and seascapes to the architecture and people of the region, using various materials – gentle watercolours, vivid oils and acrylics, even ink, pencil and crayon.

The Queen’s Park Plaza commission, called “Where We Going From?” is acrylic on canvas. The concept was intended to address where our society had come from and where it was headed. “It’s all a contradiction,” says Hinkson. “I was asking a question about change without taking a moral position.” The mural is done in

seven panels to make the massive scope of the work more manageable. In each section, traditional and contemporary images are juxtaposed, so you will notice both the original Queen’s Park Hotel and its modernised version. You may be drawn to a scene of fishermen pulling seine (a quaint, almost artisan-like skill) and in the background, observe the presence of an oil-drilling platform (one reality of industrialisation). Look at the mural today and it is almost prophetic – the carefree joy of flying kites is counterbalanced with an image of the blimp that was the government of the day’s answer to crime back in 2005.

Hinkson completed the piece in about a year, working out of a warehouse at Fernandes Industrial Centre, but still wishes he had more time to explore the concept – perhaps push it to semi- abstraction or a more contemporary feel – but he is pleased with what he accomplished in the time frame. He had been working with the canvases laid flat on the ground for so long, attaching broomsticks to paintbrushes and using the maquette of the mural to “square things off” and get the proportions right, that when the mural was eventually mounted in the atrium of Queen’s Park Plaza, he felt almost as if he were seeing it for the first time. It remains his largest work of art to date.

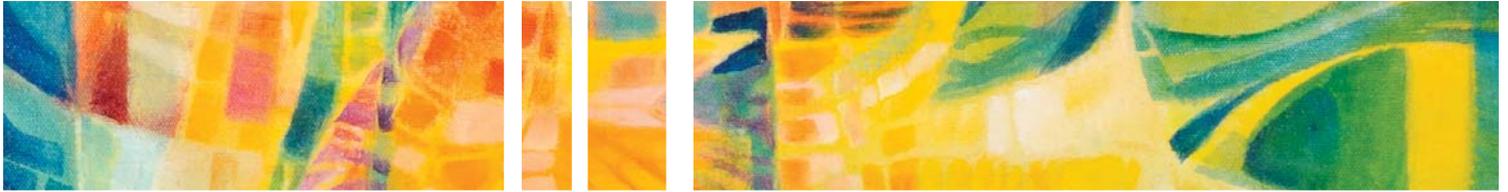
### Albion Plaza



For this space, RGM chose an acrylic on canvas painting by Makemba Kunle, titled “Great Gods Come Calling”. When you walk into the lobby area, the piece hangs to the right, occupying the main wall of the vestibule. The detail on the piece is awe-inspiring – swirls, curves and precise lines all converge on a horizontal flat surface, making it appear three dimensional, with relief and texture.

Step back from the painting and it becomes an entirely divergent piece of art than it appears up close. There are suddenly three perfectly positioned crosses, with heads emerging from them, seemingly coming to life. Kunle’s use of light and shadow is commanding, allowing distinct details to be noticed with each viewing.

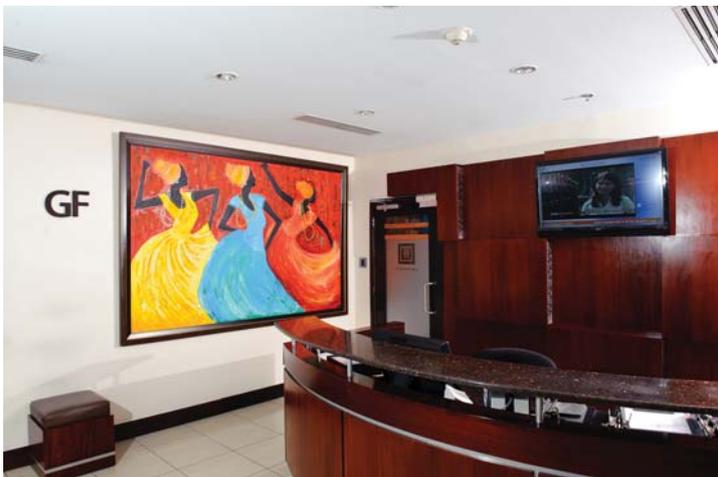
“When you think of Gods coming to earth, you think the apocalypse,” explains Kunle. The piece does have a sense of impending



destruction with its dark background and chaotic structure of human and abstract shapes almost superimposed upon one another, but it also feels hopeful, thanks to the use of bright colours and fluidity of movement. "It speaks to Man's aspirations, while acknowledging that there is something greater than himself. It's a recognition of the mysteries of the universe."

In that word – mystery – lies the magic of Kunle's painting. The technique he used for this particular piece is not even recognised in traditional art styles; he jokes that he'll have to coin his own term for the approach. It is one of the pieces that he feels proudest of, unlike any other painting you are likely to see anywhere in the world.

### Newtown Centre



Located in a historically significant suburb, this building sits in an area that has made great contributions to the arts and culture of Trinidad and Tobago. Newtown is home to various steel pan sides, and gave birth to some of the most pioneering Carnival costume designers, from Raoul Garib to Wayne Berkeley.

No surprise, then, that the piece that was chosen to adorn the foyer area is a bright and beautiful painting called "Three Ladies Dancing", by Jackie Guzman – the lone female artist in the group.

The work, another example of acrylic on canvas, pops out at you immediately upon entry. Against an exuberant red background appear the whirling, twirling figures of three dancers. Their bodies and faces are in rich, dark silhouette – no features are seen, only profiles. In stark contrast, their flowing dresses pop with colour – sunny yellow, bright blue and a sweepingly complex pink/orange/red combination that at the same time wants to meld with the background and move away from it.

The arms of the dancers are all in different positions; two are sweeping their full skirts about them, one hand in the air, while the

central figure holds them confidently on her waist and hips, head held high. They all wear headscarves and long strands of pearls; there is a sense of unity among them that exudes the indescribable allure of Caribbean women. The scene is a nod to the traditional bélé folk dance of the region, a lively and fitting tribute to the cultural energy of the area.

### Princes Court



RGM's Princes Court building boasts the only piece of sculpture in the set – and even better, it sits outdoors. Fashioned entirely out of bronze by lauded sculptor Luise Kimme who passed away last year, the piece is simply titled "Orpheus".

In Greek mythology, Orpheus was a legendary poet and musician who had the power to charm all things with his melody.

Unfortunately, in an attempt

to rescue his wife, Eurydice, from the underworld, he died at the hands of those unenlightened souls who were deaf to the beauty of his mystical music. The plaque on Kimme's sculpture takes a few lines from poet Rainer Maria Rilke's metaphorical "Sonnets to Orpheus":

Set up no stone to his memory.

Just let the rose bloom each year for his sake.

For it is Orpheus.

Kimme's work reveals a lean, lanky figure – a Caribbean representation of the Greek – looking almost wistfully behind him. Offset against the ever-changing sky that is reflected in the glass façade of the building, the sculpture seems otherworldly.

Kimme often said that Carnival visionary Peter Minshall and his innovative costume designs were the most inspiring influence for her work in Trinidad, and this outstanding piece that stands in front of Princes Court honours that. Kimme manages to capture a softness and vulnerability to the character even while working with a hard metal such as bronze. In the vein of Minshall's Tan Tan and Saga Boy, Orpheus is at once both flowing and strong; tangible and ethereal.



### Savannah East

For RGM'S newest building – the country's first green one at that – Carlisle Harris was selected to create a mural for the atrium space. Harris works mostly with acrylic on canvas, but likes to add varying textures to the mix using materials like sand, oil-based sprays and even modeling paste.

For this commission, he needed to create a piece of art twenty feet high. "I didn't have complete creative license," he says, "but I wasn't given any restrictions either." What he was given was a brief that spoke to RGM's strong concern for green buildings. Naturally, the artist began thinking about conservation. "I also thought about beginnings...where you've come from and where you're going," he explains. The concept got progressively deeper: he was soon considering the entire growth process.

In the mural, which he calls "We Take, We Give, We Survive", you will see bits of molecules, atoms and DNA; images Harris describes as "trellises of growth", coming to fruition in symbolic, tree-like forms at the top of the mural, attributes of evolution and production.

He finds mural painting a social endeavour: "You have to communicate with the viewer; he has to be able to relate." In the past, Harris' social discourse has been more narrative, but he realises that most audiences don't like to be outwitted – they prefer to connect with art; to understand it. With this installation, he has taken an idiosyncratic approach, using form, lines, colour and shapes, in harmony (and sometimes in contrast) to bring the viewer into the conversation. He hopes that people who will be working at Savannah East will see new things in the mural over time; that they will ponder the work, start tying things together and come to have a relationship with the art – and that visitors to the building, who see the mural only fleetingly, will latch on to some element of the message and take something valuable away when it comes to environmental responsibility and the cycle of life.

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## Building The World Cup



### "FIFA GO HOME!" PLACARDS DECRYING THE WORLD FOOTBALL GOVERNING BODY HAVE BECOME A COMMON SIGHT IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE 2014 WORLD CUP IN BRAZIL.

Dissatisfaction with the millions that are being spent on stadia construction, while many across the country are still lacking basic services like schools and housing, the deaths of many construction workers who had been recruited to help build the new facilities, and a general dissatisfaction about Brazil's wide economic gap are just some of the injustices that people are protesting against.

Even more glaringly, the extravagant spend may be for naught, as the stadium scheduled to host the opening game may not be finished in time, and the completion of several other venues is delayed. Authorities are reacting to public demonstrations with a

heavy hand, using tear gas and rubber bullets on protestors. Naturally, with time running against the construction crews, questions about health and safety are also being raised. Recently, a construction worker was electrocuted on site amidst the rush to finish venues before the tournament. He was the eighth stadium construction fatality for the games.

Even Brazilian football legend Pele, who holds the position of special advisor to the World Cup organising committee, was critical of the process, citing corruption as a key cause of many of the problems.



This chain of events holds a valuable lesson about construction and development. When there is an overriding sense of inequity, the dispossessed feel that they have no choice but to piggyback on global events such as the World Cup in order to attract mainstream media attention and have their voices heard. When construction schedules are not properly planned and implemented, it is easier for fatal mistakes to happen, and the sad reality is that Brazil's HSSE failings may pale in comparison to

Qatar's (picked to host the 2022 World Cup), where cheap migrant labour is easy to come by, work conditions and lodging are not up to standard and safety laws are lax at best. As a major player in the corporate property development industry, RGM is all too aware that while profit is the bottom-line concern of businesses, major development must be done with the bigger picture in mind – and the safety and well being of both people and the environment should always be at the top of that list.

## What a **bright idea!**

**WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF RGM'S NEWEST PREMIER PROPERTY, SAVANNAH EAST, TRINIDAD WILL HAVE ITS FIRST-EVER GREEN CERTIFIED BUILDING.**

We chose to go green because we understand that clever use of key resources can translate into big cost savings, particularly when it comes to energy consumption.

To prove it, we have introduced simple, but effective measures to minimize the effect our buildings have on the environment, including the after-hours shutting down of non-essential building networks like elevators and air-conditioning units and the implementation of recycling policies. Savannah East will be fully outfitted with Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting. Recent technological advancements make it a perfect choice for both environmental and task lighting. LEDs are much better than their incandescent equivalents on many fronts: they use less energy to function and therefore have a longer life, they are smaller yet sturdier, and they have faster switching capability, which means a quicker response time.

Of course, LEDs are more expensive than traditional bulbs at the front end, but in the long term, they will drastically reduce operation and maintenance costs. The concept is such a sound one that we are suggesting that our tenants consider retrofitting all traditional 4ft fluorescent light tubes with 4ft LED T8 tubes. Here's why:

1. **Traditional fluorescents require heavy maintenance.** This includes replacing electronic ballasts, which is quite labour intensive, as well as frequent changing and proper disposal of blown tubes, both rather costly.

2. **Fluorescent fixtures are dangerous.** They are filled with a highly toxic mercury vapour which, if leaked, can be hazardous to health. Fluorescents cannot be dumped in a landfill like regular waste. Correct disposal of these lights means capturing and containing the vapour – an expensive process that adds to the inconvenience of using this type of lighting system.

3. **LEDs are safe and sensible.** With LEDs, there are no hidden maintenance or disposal costs. Coupled with the longer lifespan of the tube, the higher purchase cost begins to make sense when translated into energy savings. Depending on the type and brand of LED and how it is used, electricity and maintenance savings can be more than 50% of that for traditional fluorescent tubes.

In Trinidad and Tobago, electricity costs are low compared to many other parts of the world, but with inflation, as well as technological and operational costs to consider, rates are bound to increase in the future. RGM therefore feels that a switch to LED lighting systems would be a wise investment for both the company and our tenants, positioning us ahead of the game and making our buildings – and our businesses – more sustainable.

## WELCOME

RGM LIMITED (RGM) IS A COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY OPERATING PRIMARILY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BUT WITH A REACH THAT EXPANDS THROUGHOUT THE CARIBBEAN. WE CURRENTLY MAINTAIN OVER FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND SQUARE FEET OF A-CLASS OFFICE SPACE UNDER MANAGEMENT WITH ANOTHER 70,000 SQUARE FEET UNDER DEVELOPMENT.

### NEWSLETTER

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### SAVANNAH EAST



# RGM Online

PART OF ANY COMPANY’S BRAND IDENTITY IN THE INFORMATION AGE IS ITS WEBSITE – AND RGM HAS JUST UPDATED OURS SO THAT OUR DIGITAL PERSONA WILL MORE ACCURATELY MIRROR OUR CORPORATE PERSONALITY.

## Log on to [rgm.co.tt](http://rgm.co.tt) and see for yourself!

It looks a lot more like us – all content is cleverly superimposed over a changing photostream of our building exteriors, which add colour and depth to the home page. The look is stream-lined, clean and modern: the horizontal menu bar is simple, yet contains all key categories with pertinent information, from who we are to available space options. There are handy links to all of our clients’ websites and an entire section dedicated to our newest world-class address, Savannah East.

You can also read past issues of The Cornerstone, and there will soon be a blog feature on the site as well, which will allow our client partners and customers – both internal and external – to keep abreast of developments that affect them and the building industry in general. We are very pleased with the new site: it is user friendly and now that it has moved away from flash, it will work well for search engine optimization so that RGM will be easy to find on the World Wide Web. We hope you’ll enjoy using it...happy surfing!

## Get Inspired!

Does art imitate life or the other way around? These brilliant insights may help you decide...

“

The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.”

– Friedrich Nietzsche

“

The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.”

– Aristotle

“

The world is but a canvas to our imagination.”

– Henry David Thoreau