

TRINIDAD: NATURE & WILDLIFE ART WORKSHOP

FEBRUARY 23–MARCH 1, 2017

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This workshop and tour is geared toward beginner and advanced nature enthusiasts interested in ample opportunities to capture wildlife through art or journaling while being immersed in a tropical setting – the world famous Asa Wright Nature Centre. Whether you are a birdwatcher who has always wanted to draw birds in the field but has not found the right setting, or an avid journal keeper, a blossoming watercolorist or an experienced landscape painter, this workshop will offer a balanced combination of structure and freedom to create art at your own pace. Most important, the abundant tropical birds, stunning rainforests of Trinidad and rustic setting of the estate house will grant you long-lasting inspiration.

This workshop will be centered on a six-night stay at Asa Wright’s great estate, lodge and preserve. The historic plantation house has been visited by a number of renowned ornithologists and artists including William Beebe, David Snow, and renowned American painter Don Eckelberry, who depicted a number of Trinidad’s birds and their habitats. As with many other researchers and artists, they were attracted to the wide array of tropical species representative of New World bird families found at the preserve, including trogons, manakins, motmots, parrots and antbirds, and the lush habitats teeming with epiphytes, lianas and blooms.

Asa Wright Nature Centre is the ideal location for a nature art workshop because the ample veranda at the estate is a “living” studio that offers close views of feeders that attract many birds and other wildlife, with vistas of the expansive Arima Valley, and access to trails into tropical forests. Without leaving the veranda, participants will observe hummingbirds of several species including Tufted Coquette, tanagers and honeycreepers such as Blue Dacnis, Bananaquits and many other colorful feathered gems. Ample subject matter is readily available to the nature artist, and the facilities at the preserve offer a variety of settings for those interested in working in close proximity to the outdoors.

Participants are invited to immerse their senses into the bountiful nature of Trinidad to find new inspiration for their artwork, and to work in a supportive setting, surrounded by like-minded individuals. The goal is to create work influenced by the field experience with a focus on personal growth. This workshop is ideal for those that have already developed a personal craft, and for those who would like to play with line and color, learn new techniques, and participate in constructive group sessions. Participants are encouraged to work with the materials of their choice and on the subject matter that most interests them. Emphasis will be placed on the depiction of fauna, flora and habitat from direct observation. Sketching or painting while viewing wildlife through a spotting scope or binoculars can be quite effective. Those who wish to work from their own photographs may do so. Each participant is responsible for bringing his/her own optic and photographic equipment and art materials.

Throughout this workshop, you will be guided by experienced naturalists and artists. The leaders have extensive experience in the visual arts when it relates to nature, particularly the depiction of birds in their habitats, and have acquired significant experience by working in the field. The workshops, hikes and presentations offered during this tour are designed to give nature artists enough structure and support when needed, and the freedom and flexibility for those seeking independence. During our morning hikes, we will have an opportunity to study the birds, butterflies and plants of the preserve, and become acquainted with the trails that lead to the leks of manakins and the haunts of bellbirds. Your guides will be field sketching, painting or journaling right alongside participants, demonstrating techniques, leading group exercises, and working with those needing individual help. You will have the option of taking part in structured exploratory workshops for the strengthening of drawing and composition skills, or follow your own pace. More importance will be placed on process rather than product. Participants have the liberty to focus on simple projects like creating a series of loose sketches throughout the tour, or dedicating their entire time to a sketchbook, or developing as ambitious a series of works as desired. There will be plenty of free time to explore the grounds on your own and find subject matter of your liking, to study the birds and plants at your own leisure, or to spend most of the time participating in structured workshops.

Field trips away from the lodge should produce encounters with a number of particularly spectacular tropical birds and landscapes. Throughout the tour we will be keeping a detailed list of all our observations, as is done in traditional birding tours. Each evening we will have recap sessions during which we will share our progress, give feedback to those who desire it, and learn about other artists. Trinidad is a wonderful entrée to the natural history of the American tropics and its marvelous biodiversity. Birders, naturalists, sketchers and painters alike will find the Asa Wright Nature Centre inspiring, and this workshop will offer a broad range of options for both beginners and advanced artists.

February 23, Day 1: Flight to Trinidad; Transfer to Asa Wright. Participants should plan to arrive on the island of Trinidad today. Upon arrival in Port of Spain's *Piarco International Airport* (airport code POS), you will be met by a representative of our local operator, and then make the 50-minute transfer to the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

NIGHT: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Trinidad

February 24-28, Days 2-6: Asa Wright Nature Centre and Outgoing Trips. During this tour, we will spend most of our time based out of the Asa Wright Nature Centre, exploring the preserve and creating art work on the veranda and in the field. The trails at Asa Wright offer more possibilities for inspirational natural encounters than five days allow. The veranda alone is an observation point and work site that grants endless opportunities for closely studying birds, plants and landscapes. We will have the opportunity to engage in expert-led hikes to breeding sites and roosts of some of the most spectacular tropical bird species within the preserve, as well as have time for free explorations of our own. There will be daily structured workshops to learn new techniques for working in the field, and plenty of time to work on our own. Participants will develop art work using the materials and techniques of their own choosing, and will have an opportunity to discuss their ideas and progress with the group during nightly sharing sessions.

We will have three full days to explore Asa Wright and to settle into work inspired by the many natural riches of the preserve. The other two days will be divided by time at the preserve and field trips to outlying locations. The general schedule most days will include morning sketching and warm up sessions, a post-breakfast guided hike to a lek or roost in the preserve, mid-day structured workshops, afternoon working period / free exploration or field trip to outlying area, and evening discussion, review and sharing session.

Each morning we will gather early on the famous veranda in the old estate house, where the fruit trays attract plenty of wildlife including many colorful birds such as Purple Honeycreepers, velvety-red Silver-beaked Tanagers and gold and blue Violaceous Euphonias. Below the trays, Red-rumped Agoutis and Golden Tegus take advantage of

the fruit dropped by birds. The many nectar feeders hanging from the veranda grant close views of brightly plumaged gems including phthalo blue and green White-necked Jacobins, violet-tailed Black-throated Mangos and countless cadmium-bellied Bananaquits. The veranda will be the primary base for our activities, and most participants will find that they will need to go no further in terms of finding suitable subject matter to work from, and comfortable work space. In addition to close views of wildlife, the veranda offers beautiful vistas of the Arima Valley and its lush vegetation. This will prove to be an inspiring perspective for landscape painters because the views of the valley can vary substantially throughout the day, as fog may cover the valley in the mornings and the changing light may reveal a variety of palettes throughout the day. Often, raptors such as a Bat Falcon or an Ornate Hawk-Eagle can be seen perched on a tree down the valley, making it a rewarding experience to get closer views of the birds through a spotting scope, while allowing for sketches or detailed studies from direct observation.

We will spend the mornings on the veranda doing warm-up sketches, journaling or taking reference photos. You are welcome to join our group sketching exercises or do your own thing. After breakfast each day, we will venture into the preserve to explore a number of wonderful wildlife opportunities while continuing warm-up exercises of our choice, or engaging in field sketches from countless subjects. Some mornings we will take slow-paced hikes to visit the leks of Golden-headed and White-bearded manakins. Both species engage in energetic displays that can be quite captivating. Golden-headed males are renowned for their electric “tap-dancing” sideways on branches, followed by vowing, and flights up and down perches. White-bearded males bounce around the understory like popping corn, puffing out their shaggy throats in defiance. Both of these species have been known to display in close proximity to observers and can be great for quick studies or prolonged works at the site. On another morning we will take a more involved hike to Dunston Cave, one of the most accessible roosts for the enigmatic Oilbird, the only nocturnal frugivorous bird in the world. Along the way we will see magnificent tropical vegetation, including many flowering heliconias, bromeliads, and the lichen-covered trunks of twisted fig trees tangled in lianas. Participants may choose to focus on landscape painting or the depiction of flowers during this tour.

Prior to lunch at Asa Wright, we will have the option of participating in group exercises back at the veranda, including workshops in gesturing, drawing and hand-eye coordination. All participants are encouraged to take part. These workshops will be particularly useful for those new to working directly from observation, and are meant as exercises for direct mark-making when working in the field, to loosen up and quickly gain confidence in your skill set. During other instances we will take part in workshops exploring composition and the relationship between subject matter and background; narrative elements in nature art; or how species interact with their habitats.

Most afternoons will be dedicated to working periods during which participants will be free to continue developing work started during exploratory sessions, to revisit locations in the preserve for additional work in the field, or when new works can be started. The guides will be available during this period to assist participants in achieving desired effects through their work, and will spend time one on one with those interested. Optional sessions on technique may be offered some afternoons, exploring concepts such as color, light and form. While many participants may want to focus on work from start to finish, there will be no pressure towards the creation of finished products. Artists should feel free to use the time to experiment and explore new possibilities for personal growth.

During two afternoons, we will travel to two other top destinations for alternate views of Trinidad’s inspiring wilderness and wildlife.* Participants will be free to bring their materials along, to engage in notetaking or journaling, or to use these trips as reference-gathering opportunities for future works. One day we may visit a location known as Yerretê. The chief attraction here is a private home where a gallery of hummingbird feeders hosts up to 13 of the island’s 17 species. Among the selection of avian jewels that attend the feeders are Ruby Topaz, Brown Violet-ear, White-chested Emerald, Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Blue-chinned Sapphire, Green Hermit, and others. Although Yerretê does not offer ample room for prolonged work on site, the multiple feeders allow for very close views of hummingbirds, and offer great opportunities to create reference sketches or to take photographs. While painting from an easel at this location may not be recommended, it is a great place for a sketch pad, a journal or compact watercolor renderings.

On another afternoon, we will visit the Caroni Swamp for a leisurely boat trip through a mangrove forest. As the sun sets, flocks of brightly colored Scarlet Ibises will fly past us to perch on nearby islands. Artists inspired to paint these flocks over time have found it an irresistible challenge to attempt matching the intensity of the color

of this tropical ibis species. Caroni is also a fantastic place to see many other wading bird species including Snowy Egrets and Tricolored Herons. While we will be limited to our seats during this experience, the ride is gentle enough and the boat considerably spacious to allow for field sketching and brief watercolor studies as we cruise through the mangroves. Many interesting species that are bound to inspire an artist may be possible during a trip to Caroni, including Red-capped Cardinals, Common Potoo and Green-throated Mango, not to mention the seven mangrove species with their buttressing roots and twisted trunks. As the ibis spectacle unfolds, we will raise our rum punches to another inspiring outing in Trinidad.

During most evenings, we will gather for discussions and review sessions. These will be great opportunities for participants to share their progress in a supportive atmosphere and get some feedback from others. Some evenings, your guides may give brief presentations on the history of nature art and share contemporary works by artists advancing related art fields. Please read the list of suggested art supplies below. If you have any questions about the suitability of your art materials, or are new to art and unsure about what to bring, please contact your leader, Rafael Galvez, at galvezbirds@gmail.com.

*Please note that the places we visit may vary in order of sequence from what appears in this itinerary.

NIGHTS: Asa Wright Nature Centre

March 1, Day 7: Departure for Home. The tour ends this morning with a transfer from Asa Wright to Port of Spain for flights departing at anytime today.

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 14 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Rafael Galvez and Louise Zemaitis

Rafael Galvez has been birding and illustrating birds since childhood, a dual passion that developed when his family moved from Peru to South Florida. Always with a sketchpad in hand, he has traveled throughout the U.S., Latin America, and Eurasia in pursuit of birds. He served several years as a board member of the BirdLife International affiliate in the Republic of Georgia, developing educational and conservation programs. He gained knowledge of the Caucasus region while directing a series of records and documentary shorts on the ancient chants of the Georgian nation. During that period he also produced retrospective books and catalogs on the works of Russian realist painters. He has combined his love of art, education, and birds while collaborating in several publications, including a field guide to *Raptors and Owls of Georgia (Caucasus)*, which he illustrated and coauthored. After working with raptor research along the Black Sea, he returned to South Florida to spearhead a new phase for the Florida Keys Hawkwatch migration monitoring project, where he has participated as director. As chair of citizen science and IBA monitoring at Tropical Audubon Society in Miami, he has reached out to underserved communities by providing opportunities for the greater appreciation of birds and Florida habitats. Currently, he lives in Homestead, spends much time in the Everglades, serves on the Florida Ornithological Society's Records Committee, and is on the Leica Sport Optics Pro Staff. He loves sharing his passion for birds with audiences of all ages, and has been a guide and teacher for over 15 years. You can find some of his latest sketches and articles about painting in the field at his blog, GalvezBirds.com.

Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count, and owner of Swallowtail Studio at West End Garage in Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a philosopher and musician.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for this tour is **\$3,095** per person in double occupancy from Port of Spain. This includes accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders and local guides. It does not include international airfare to Port of Spain, airport departure taxes (if applicable), travel insurance, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature (postage, telephone calls, emails), or passport fees. Rates are based upon group tariffs. If the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement is **\$400**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Single accommodations are often limited at Asa Wright and singles may be asked to share. If so, you will be credited accordingly.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard, Visa, or American Express at the time of registration. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: Initial tour deposits may be made by MasterCard, Visa, American Express, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc., must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$250*
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person.

Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRIP INSURANCE: We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends *Travel Insured International* as our preferred insurance provider. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related

cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact *Travel Insured International* (800-243-3174 or www.travelinsured.com) prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than *Travel Insured International*, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. ***Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.***

CONDITIONS: Several of the outings at Asa Wright Nature Centre are moderately strenuous, as they follow paths up and down hillside slopes. **Also, most of the accommodations at Asa Wright require walking up and down one or more flights of stairs.** Travel will be aboard a variety of vehicles depending on group size. At the Caroni Swamp we will ride aboard small boats to tour the preserve.

The lodge at Asa Wright Nature Center offers comfortable accommodations, in cottages located near the Main House. Most cottages have twin beds, private bathrooms, screened verandas and are cooled by ceiling fans. The Eckleberry cottage is the exception with four rooms all in the same building - each having its own dedicated bathroom, though not located within the bedroom itself. There are two rooms located in the Main House and are mobility impaired accessible, with king-sized beds and cooled by ceiling fans. As previously noted, the facility is built into a hillside and therefore walking up and down stairs is required to reach virtually any of the rooms outside of the main house. The lodge has a small bar on site with somewhat limited alcoholic choices. Complimentary Wi-Fi is available in the Main House and on the veranda.

BAGGAGE: As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag.

CLOTHING: As this trip is entirely birding oriented, your daily attire should consist primarily of “field” clothing. Generally the weather will be warm and sunny, but it can be cool in the morning hours. Dress will be casual at all times.

- **Pants and Shorts:** A couple pairs of pants and shorts each are recommended. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable. Shorts will be desirable for warmer times of day.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela’s and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular and more reasonably priced than in the past. Please select clothing in muted colors.
- **Sweaters and Coats:** Warm weather will be the rule on this trip, but a sweater or light coat or jacket may come in handy some mornings and evenings.
- **Shirts:** Several t-shirts, (long and short-sleeved), in addition to other comfortable styles suitable for warm weather.

- **Hat:** A hat, particularly a broad-brimmed one, is essential for protection from the sun.
- **Rain Poncho or Parka:** A rain poncho or parka will be very useful if we are caught in a sudden shower or rain-laden cold front.

FOOTWEAR: We strongly recommend comfortable, water resistant hiking boots or trail shoes throughout the trip. Please make sure that your footwear is equipped with good traction as the trails at Asa Wright Nature Centre can be a bit slippery and/or muddy. Rubber boots are also useful because of potentially wet grass and muddy trails, and as protection against chiggers, but are not essential.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available at Asa Wright Nature Centre for a fee.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your tour:

- **Backpack or belt pack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Travel umbrella**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Water bottle**
- **Umbrella** – A small collapsible umbrella is good to have if we are caught in a sudden shower
- **Flashlight or headlamp**
- **Cameras, lenses, film, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick or walking pole** – Highly recommended for those who have trouble walking, in addition to the fact that there is a fair amount of up-and-down at Asa Wright.
- **Tissue packs**
- **Binoculars** – We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of at least 8x32, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 8x32 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.
- **Spotting Scopes** – Your tour leader will have a scope available for general use and to be shared with the group during certain situations. However, if you plan on painting or sketching while viewing wildlife through a scope, you must bring your own equipment.

ART SUPPLIES: Participants must bring their own art supplies, and are encouraged to work with the materials of their own choice. Beginners to sketching in the field can contact tour leader Rafael Galvez if they have questions about their choice of materials. The veranda at the estate house offers a banister and stools for portable work, a few low coffee tables, plenty of seats and enough floor space for your lightweight portable easels. The living room adjacent to the veranda and other interior spaces offer additional coffee tables and seating that may be used as work space. Within short distance of the estate house, there are benches, picnic tables and a gazebo that offer space for work directly outdoors. Please note that there will not be an opportunity to visit any kind of art or supply shop during our time in Trinidad. The Asa Wright Nature Centre is in a remote region of the island with no commercial facilities within close proximity, so not even a pencil will be available for purchase during our time there. You must bring all your supplies. Below is a list of suggested supplies to bring. Other than in your own room, participants will not be able to leave workspaces permanently set up, so think about portability when it comes to your supplies:

- **Small portable sketchbook or journal** – highly recommended. We will be taking brief exploratory hikes in the preserve during which we will be encouraged to sketch or journal directly in the field, so bring a sketchbook or journal small enough to carry while hiking, either inside a pack or a pocket.

- **Large sketch pad** – highly recommended. A large pad 14”x17” or larger will be very useful when taking part in group warm-up exercises at the estate house. Consider bringing a pad for loose gesture drawings or experimentation. Multimedia, drawing and/or newsprint paper are recommended.
- **Drawing supplies** – required. Whether you will be focusing on sketching throughout the trip or painting, at least the minimal drawing tools will be needed. Please bring all your necessary tools, whether these include pencils, pens, markers, charcoal, conté, ink, etc. Participants are not required to draw during this workshop, but they will be encouraged to participate in group warm-up exercises for which some kind of basic drawing tool of your choice will be required. Please consider bringing at least #2 pencils for the simplest exercises. Whatever else you bring for drawing is up to you.
- **Painting tools** – optional. Participants are encouraged to experiment and push their growth during this workshop. However, everyone will work in the media of their choice, so if painting is not something you are interested in or comfortable with, you do not need to bring paints or brushes. For those that will be painting, water-based media are highly recommended because they are easier to use in a field setting.
 - Watercolors are excellent for use in the field. In general, all you need as a solvent is water. A quality portable 8-color kit can provide all the necessary paint for a workshop of this length.
 - You may wish to compliment your watercolor cake kit with individual tubes of a few selected pigments.
 - If you will be bringing tubes, don’t forget a small palette.
 - Bring a container for painting water; a portable one with a tight lid will prove to be useful when carrying around in the field.
 - Acrylics and other water-soluble paints may prove to be easier for travel and portability than oil-based paints, particularly if you have not done much painting in the field. Acrylics have the advantage of drying quite fast without the need of added drying agents, and for most situations only require water as a solvent and for clean-up.
 - There is a broad choice in the market, including water-soluble “oils” and others. If you are not that familiar with the medium prior to the tour, it may not be a good idea to bring it along for this workshop.
 - Oil paints are best recommended for those with extensive experience with the medium, and experience traveling with the media required for oil painting. Oil paints require some kind of solvent, at least for cleaning up. Most solvents are flammable; therefore you cannot fly with them on a plane. As stated above, participants will not have the opportunity to go shopping for supplies during this tour. Experienced traveling oil painters have learned ways to compensate for this problem, but research will be required from interested participants, and will depend on the desired outcome and personal needs. Make sure you prepare ahead of time. You do not want your painting supplies confiscated by TSA during your flight.
 - Brushes are as personal a choice as is our art work. Try not to overburden yourself with too many brushes, but think about bringing an essential selection to cover a broad set of needs – i.e. a fine round detail brush for detail, a large flat brush for expansive washes, and anything else in between. Don’t forget to bring a water container for your brushes.
 - If you do not have experience traveling with brushes, make sure to protect them in some kind of brush case or wrap. A number of these are available on the market.
 - **Packing painting supplies** should be done with care and planning. It is recommended that you consult your airline before taking any art materials with you on a flight. Flying with a watercolor cake kit will be convenient; the dry pigment blocks will not raise any concerns with the Transportation Security Administration, and endure most forms of damage possible during the rigors of flight. Flying with paint tubes, however, may prove to be more challenging. If you pack your liquid tubes as carry-on, they will be subject to TSA’s “liquid and gel restrictions,” meaning that each paint tube should be less than 3.4 ounces, and each tube should be packed in a single clear plastic zip-lock bag. So long as they fall within the restriction, watercolor paints are considered safe for transport by air. Many oil paints, some linseed and poppy oils, and a few brush cleaners may be safe for air transport, so long as the product’s flash point does not fall below 140° F / 61° C. The flash point is the temperature at which a product will flame, and these are typically listed on the product’s material safety data sheet and should be available

from the manufacturer online. Painting materials with a flash point below 140° F / 61° C are classified as dangerous and cannot be included in checked or carry-on baggage during flights. Please check your product specifications and your airlines for details and regulation updates. Additionally, most acrylics, gouache, drawing and calligraphy inks and masking fluids are considered safe for flight, but please do the research on your specific product. Turpentine and paint thinners are flammable and not considered safe for flight. If you pack your paint tubes or any other liquid painting materials in your checked luggage, make sure to protect them. Consider placing your tubes in an air-tight, water-tight plastic container, so that the pressures of bag handling don't result in smashed tubes. Consider placing each tube in an individual zip bag in case of spills. Make sure there is some padding in the container to avoid having the corners of tubes puncturing each other.

- Please remember that regardless of the painting materials you choose to bring, each participant will be responsible for cleaning up, and keeping all the public areas at Asa Wright clean, so pack accordingly. Make sure to bring your own paint rags and cleaning towels if needed, and keep in mind that there will be no place to dispose of toxic products such as solvents or unused paints. We will have a general cleaning area for rinsing water-soluble paints from brushes and palettes at the center.
- **Drawing and painting surfaces:** All participants need to bring their own sketchbooks, sketchpads, loose sheets of paper (watercolor, drawing, multimedia), stretched frames, canvas panels, and/or any other suitable art-making surface. What you bring is up to you, but place an emphasis on portability. Please consider bringing stretched panels or boards no larger than 20" x 30".
- **Other supplies / mixed media:** Feel free to bring a mixed assortment of materials. Other possibilities include oil and/or chalk pastels, oil bars, charcoal pencils, erasers, color pencils, watercolor pencils, crayons, inks, gouache, tempera, and many others.
- **Portable stool and / or easel** – optional. Consider bringing a foldable outdoor stool and/or a compact portable easel. Participants may find that the space and basic facilities provided at Asa Wright are appropriate enough to suffice all needs. However, if you plan on taking lengthier hikes to spots off the beaten path, you may find that at least a portable stool will allow you to paint at more locations. If you plan on painting on larger pads or stretched frames, an easel may be what you need.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Asa Wright is an excellent place for bird photography, owing to the feeding stations on the veranda that attract many birds. Participants may choose to bring their cameras to capture imagery they wish to paint or draw from during this tour.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: The temperature on Trinidad averages about 72-95° F. The mornings at Asa Wright can be wet and cool. In the lowlands, the weather is usually warm and depending on the location, varies from dry to very humid. Do expect some short showers every day, but usually in the afternoons. Such rainfall is usually refreshing and birds become very active afterward.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Trinidad is required, with at least one blank page for entry stamp. A visa is not required for entry by United States citizens for stays under 90 days. Non U. S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: Your trip to Trinidad includes most necessary expenses. You will want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the workshop, such as taxi rides, gifts, laundry, gratuities, meals on your own, and personal items. It is best to carry small denominations of cash as many places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. While U.S. dollars may be accepted in more populous areas, it is always convenient to have a supply of local currency for such items. It is best to acquire local currency before leaving home. The Asa Wright Nature Centre may also convert small amounts and will accept U.S. dollars or credit cards for purchases of items in their store.

The official currency of Trinidad and Tobago is the Trinidadian Dollar (TTD). You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE-The World's Favorite Currency Site" at: <http://www.xe.com/>.

DEPARTURE TAX: At present, the international departure tax, known in Trinidad as a “Passenger Service Tax,” is about \$32 USD (\$200 Trinidad Dollars). For travelers who purchase their air tickets from major U.S. carriers, the tax should be included in the cost of the ticket. We recommend that you keep some extra cash handy when checking in for your flight just in case the tax was not included.

TIME: At the time of this tour, Trinidad is one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST).

ELECTRICITY: Power in Trinidad is 115V, with use of outlet types “A” and “B.” The “A” type outlet accommodates a flat two-bladed plug while the “B” type outlet, also known as the American 3-pin outlet, accommodates a plug with two flat blades and a round grounding pin. To ensure that use of American standard 110V equipment with the flat-pronged plugs will work in all locations, you should bring an all purpose transformer to convert the current for 110V use, in addition to proper plug adapters.

LANGUAGE: English is the official language of Trinidad; however, of a local dialect known as Trinidad English. Trinidad Creole is also commonly spoken among the locals, which has Indian, African, European (including Spanish), and French influences.

HEALTH: As of this writing (June 2016), no major shots or inoculations are required for entry into Trinidad; however, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination or prophylaxis against a variety of preventable diseases, including:

- 1) **Routine Vaccinations** (if you are not up-to-date), which are **measles/mumps/rubella (MMR)** vaccine; **diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT)** vaccine; and **poliovirus vaccine** (boosters for adult travelers who have received a primary series with either inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV); they should receive another dose of IPV before departure). You should also be up-to-date with your **Hepatitis A**, or Immune Globulin (IG), **Hepatitis B** and **Typhoid** vaccinations. Note that a combined hepatitis A/B vaccination is now available.
- 2) **Yellow Fever** is a viral disease transmitted between humans by a mosquito. It is a very rare cause of illness in travelers, in part because of the precautions taken by affected countries. In Trinidad, the incidence of Yellow Fever is low; however, vaccination is recommended for all travelers visiting areas away from the capital city of Port of Spain, and is required of travelers arriving from any country where Yellow Fever is endemic. The yellow fever vaccine is a live virus vaccine which has been in use for several decades. A single dose confers immunity for ten years or more if you are not continually exposed. Adults and children over nine months can take this vaccine. The vaccine is not recommended for certain types of travelers, including pregnant women, persons hypersensitive to eggs, or persons suffering from a condition related to HIV/AIDS. Your doctor can help you make the best decision about the vaccine.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

Water – Bottled or purified water will be provided at all times throughout the trip. At the Asa Wright Nature Centre, pitchers of purified water are provided and there is a large container of purified water on the veranda at all times if you run out.

Sun Exposure – The sun’s ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes). Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

Biting Insects – Mosquitoes occur on Trinidad. To protect you from being bitten, we recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants when in the field, particularly during the cooler hours of the morning and late afternoon. In certain areas we also recommend the use of insect repellent containing DEET. Repellent can be applied to exposed skin and/or clothing. Clothing sprayed with Permethrin is another option (pre-treated or you can treat yourself). There is no threat of Malaria on this tour route. Another mosquito-borne disease, Dengue, is present throughout the Caribbean. The disease is transmitted by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, which occurs most commonly around populated urban and residential centers. In most cases, signs of Dengue may include severe flu-like symptoms accompanied by rash, headache, muscle pain, and joint pain. We consider the risk of exposure very low on this trip, but do recommend that participants follow the suggestions for prevention of mosquito bites.

A Note About Chiggers: This tour visits areas where chiggers are known to occur. Chiggers are tiny parasitic mites found in most warm weather areas of the southern United States and the world's tropics. They are especially numerous in grassy areas, where, in the immature stage, they attach themselves to other animals or humans who make contact with the grass as they pass by. Chiggers do not suck blood and the majority of the world's species do not carry disease. They do feed on bodily fluids, however, through a process in which a digestive enzyme is produced by the chigger which essentially liquefies the skin around the area where the chigger is attached. The chigger is not usually attached to the skin for more than a few hours before it either falls off or is knocked off. Our bodies respond by producing a hardened area as a defense against the chigger's digestive enzyme. Though the chigger may be long gone, it is the presence of the hardened area, and the body's natural process of reabsorbing it that typically causes intense itching, often lasting for a week or more. Chiggers like to attach themselves to areas of thin skin, like around the ankles, beltline, undergarment lines, knees, and elbows.

Chiggers can be avoided by following these procedures:

- Avoid walking, or standing in particular, in areas dominated by grass. These areas are where one is most likely to encounter chiggers.
- Tuck your pants into your socks to avoid direct skin-to-grass contact. Chiggers can find their way through clothing, but this is a standard and effective prevention technique commonly employed by many.
- Apply a cream-style insect repellent, such as "Cutter" to your body from the waist down BEFORE putting on your clothing.
- Spray your pants and socks with a spray repellent such as "Cutter" or "Off!" Repellents with high concentrations of DEET (70-100%) are most effective. You do not need to apply these to your skin, only to clothing. (Be careful as DEET will damage plastics and lens coatings). Repel Permanone is an odorless aerosol insecticide that offers perhaps the best defense against chiggers. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online. It should only be applied to clothes and allowed to dry before you dress. Never apply Permanone directly to the skin. Permethrin is known to be a highly toxic chemical to insects. It is the active ingredient in Permanone, but is present in a small amount (0.5%).
- Powdered sulfur applied to waist, bottoms of pants, sock and boots is also effective at repelling chiggers. However, be warned that clothes will retain the sulfur odor for several washings.
- Shower at the end of each day in the field. Use a washcloth to vigorously rub your legs, feet, and ankles.

By following these methods, you should be able to avoid all chigger bites, as well as tick bites. If, however, you are bitten by chiggers anyway, you can reduce or eliminate the symptoms by applying benzocaine or hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, After Bite, or any number of anti-itch products.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING: Our website, www.ventbird.com offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from this store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You may also visit such other online stores such as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print or hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or www.buteobooks.com which specializes in ornithology books.

The most important field guide for this tour is:

Kenefick, M., R. Restall & F. Hayes. *Birds of Trinidad & Tobago*. Second edition. Yale University Press. 2011. 107 improved color plates with species accounts. A must for birders visiting Trinidad.

Other Birding Resources:

Ffrench, Richard, John P. O'Neil, John Anderton, Dale Dyer, Don Schmitt, and Carol J. James. *A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Sacramento, California: Comstock Publishing Associates, 2012 (3rd edition). Excellent field guide/handbook, especially with this brand new revision.

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding, and Diversity*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005. An excellent companion to a field guide. As the subtitle suggests, the book delves into the lives of tropical birds, providing the observer with far more information than is available in field identification guides. A very excellent and highly readable book.

General Ecology:

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Scribners, 1984. A good layman's introduction to tropical biology. Highly recommended.

Kricher, John C. *A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to the Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. Another good introduction to Neotropical biology.

Snow, David W. *The Web of Adaptation: Tropical Bird Studies*. Collins, 1976. Excellent introduction to the ecology of fruit-eating birds. Written in popular, readable style and based mostly on studies conducted in Trinidad. Good list of references. Recommended!

Reptiles:

Murphy, John C. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Trinidad and Tobago*. Malabar, Florida: Kreiger Publishing Company, 1997. Excellent thorough coverage of the islands' herps.

Trees/Plants:

Duncan, E. Julian. *A Guide to the Wild Flowers of Trinidad and Tobago*. Asa Wright Center, 1993.

Hargreaves, Dorothy and Bob. *Tropical Trees Found in the Caribbean, South America, Central America, Mexico*. Kailua, Hawaii: Hargreaves Publishing Company, 1965. Available at Asa Wright Nature Center.

Hargreaves, Dorothy and Bob. *Tropical Blossoms of the Caribbean*. Kailua, Hawaii: Hargreaves Publishing Company, 1960. Available at Asa Wright Nature Center.

Seddon, S.A. and G.W. Lennox. *Trees of the Caribbean*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1980. Available at Asa Wright Nature Center.

Nature Art:

Jonsson, Lars. *Birds and Light*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002. Profound accounts on the process of depicting birds in their habitats by one of the most accomplished artists/ornithologists of our time. A handsome, beautifully illustrated, large format book (232 pages).

Cultural Background:

De-Light, Dominique and Polly Thomas. *The Rough Guide to Trinidad & Tobago*. London: The Rough Guides, 2001. Current, thorough tourist guide with lots of background essays.

Naipaul, V.S. *A House For Mr. Biswas*. New York: Vintage Internationals, 1961, 1989. The Nobel Prize winning author's most acclaimed novel about life in postcolonial Trinidad.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

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