

(Excerpted from my *Exploration, Diplomacy and Subterfuge* proposal)

Findings

- 1 Bienville was a talented administrator, who managed a wide range of conflicting cultures in horrendous conditions and with varying degrees of official support.
- 2 There is a palpable connection between the culture of contemporary Louisiana and colonial Louisiana.
- 3 There are very few images of Bienville, and the few that do exist are in conflict with each other.
- 4 "The Turn" is an intriguing story of audacity.
- 5 Much of colonial Louisiana history revolves around unsavory practices and values of the early eighteenth century.

The Images

With these issues in mind, I decided to create three separate, but related images that expressed in general terms, Exploration, Diplomacy and Subterfuge. Each painting has multiple types of people, who were important in the history of Louisiana. Each painting also has Bienville as a central figure. It is my intention to create three compelling images of Bienville that refer to elements of past portraits. There is also a reference in each painting to modern times as an acknowledgment of how colonial people contributed to contemporary life.

Exploration shows Bienville and a group representing various colonial people, looking from a rise at the Mississippi. The scene is nonspecific to represent many explorations and settlements from Biloxi to Baton Rouge to New Orleans. The group looks down on a native village, which will soon be displaced by the Europeans. Represented are a Jesuit priest, a French woman and her baby, a trapper, a soldier controlling a horse, Bienville, his lieutenant, and a slave carrying provisions. In the left corner foreground is a contemporary man descendant from African slaves looking at the scene. He carries a business jacket over his shoulder as a comparison to the slave carrying his burden. Several native birds are in the background, with a pelican being the most prominent on the right side.

Subterfuge is a simple interpretation of "The Turn." Bienville is shown in mid-deception, while British Captain, Lewis Banks considers the veracity of Bienville's story. The British ship is anchored on the left and Bienville's canoe and a soldier in his party are below it on shore. To the right of Bienville are a native guide and two soldiers. In the left background is a contemporary French/American mother and her son, who is playing with a jet fighter plane in contrast to the British warship.

Diplomacy shows Bienville dealing with the conflicting values and cultures of colonial Louisiana. To his left are the disenfranchised, while to his right is the establishment. Bienville stands between them. A farmer pleads his case, while an important official reacts angrily. The official is being restrained by a hand on his shoulder. This is in comparison to the slave woman, who has a hand on the farmer's shoulder for protection, while her son uses her skirt for his protection. One of the men in the painting

will be of Spanish decent. An early plan for New Orleans is on the wall behind Bienville. A contemporary Louisiana State seal is in the center foreground.

The paintings are meant to stand on their own, but also work as a whole when viewed together. The center painting is predominately symmetrical and sums up the genius of Bienville's ability to work with diverse people over a long period of time. The State seal is placed at the center of the painting and will be directly above the reception desk in the lobby. The paintings on either side are cropped, so that the figures flow from one painting to the next and end before they reach either end of the lobby. The three studies in this presentation are meant to represent the essence of the three compositions. The final compositions will vary in some detail and elements will shift slightly to strengthen visual relationships as actual costumes are acquired and models pose for the final painting. There will be no more than a 15% visual shift in the overall composition.