

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Traditional Cayman Crafts Embraces 21st Century Style

There has been much lamenting in the Cayman Islands over the last few years surrounding the loss of traditional Caymanian Heritage. A fall-out from the rapid development and globalization, there are fewer and fewer artists and craftsperson carrying on traditional art forms while increasingly the younger generation question the need for retaining traditional past times.

In the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands' newest exhibition, *21st Century Cayman*, the contemporary reflections of some of Cayman's mainstream artists, meet the longstanding traditional handiwork of many of Cayman's well known crafters. It is an attempt to 'reimagine' traditional arts for our contemporary experience.

Artworks will include Catboat sail and hulls designed with vibrant colours, hand painted gigs and waurie boards; and thatch baskets using bold recycled materials. The task was to pair artists such as Bendel Hydes, John Broad, Nasaria Suckoo-Chollette, Gordon Solomon, Deal Ebanks and Wray Banker with time-honoured crafters such as Rosemay Ebanks, Lizzie Powell, Dianne Scott and Carmen Connolly, to name a few. From the pairings, a fresh new vision has emerged in hopes to bring the widely utilitarian crafts of yesteryear to the forefront of the community's minds.

21st Century Cayman, an artistic expression of Cayman's heritage in never-before-seen displays, is the brainchild of the National Gallery Director and exhibition curator, Natalie Urquhart. It is sponsored by Butterfield Bank and supported by the Cayman Islands Traditional Arts Council (CITAC).

"At Butterfield, we take great pride in giving back to the community in which we live and work and have been supporting the arts for over 40 years," said Butterfield's Sheree Ebanks, Director and Head of Wealth Management. "We are pleased to partner once again with the National Gallery as a sponsor of this year's 21st Century Cayman art exhibition, which ties in nicely with Butterfield's continuous support of heritage and culture in the Cayman Islands."

"Ultimately we hope to inspire the continuation of our traditional heritage in a way that is accessible and relevant to our younger generation", explains Gallery Director, Natalie Urquhart.

Many educational activities have been developed specifically to accommodate this exhibition; the Gallery's efforts to bring the younger generation a first hand look at our nation's heritage and our ever changing culture.

Families can join us for our Family Fun Days and teachers and students can take advantage of our school tours schedule. Lunchtime Lectures are also being held to explain the differences between contemporary artworks and traditional crafts made for practical purpose and also the natural processes of harvesting and preparing thatch for its plaiting. Lectures will also discuss the progression of the show and the making of such an exhibition balancing a blend of old and new. There will also be a gig carving workshop and a waurie tournament.

The public is invited to view this amazing and thought provoking exhibition beginning on Friday 26th February at Harbour Place. The 21st Century Cayman exhibition runs from 26th February through May is one that is sure not to be missed.



John Broad's "Thatch Lady"
Painted on plaited thatch canvas