

Serious 'Bout Mekin' Fun art

By Elphina Magona

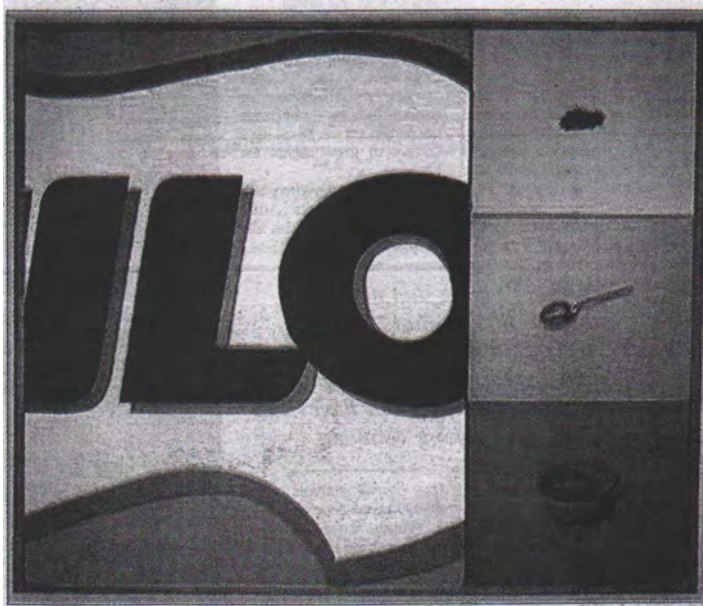
Caymanian artist, Wray Banker's first-ever one-man show opened last Friday to much acclaim, according to organisers at the National Gallery.

Not only did the gallery have over 300 visitors on the first night but many stayed behind, following their viewing of *Serious 'Bout Mekin' Fun* to chat to the artist.

"There's no difference between Banker's art and who he is as a person. I think that's great," comments the gallery's director, Leslie Bigelman.

Beyond the usual crowd to be found at such occasions were many youngsters whose appreciation of several pieces was fairly vocal, adding vibrancy to the show.

Funny ironic rather than funny amusing, Banker's solo exhibition



I Likes it Jus So.

Simple Curve to Foot. Photos: NGCI



Exhibition is no joke

mixes painting, poetry, installation art, sculpture and photography to produce a winsome and yet commanding show which promises perhaps more in the future.

Titles like *Mad Cowboy* and *I Likes it Jus So* give only a hint of the impressions which wash through Banker's brain ending up in his art.

The thirty-three year-old, a member of local art

group *Native Sons*, brings a fresh and playful perspective to local art scene. Apart from the standard influences of Van Gogh et al, Banker cites his "mother, growing up in West Bay... and the little things in life," as influencing his work.

His *Milo* series, which currently comprises four 4'x4' acrylic and latex paintings paintings and may yet include two more

pieces, received perhaps the most interest on the night.

These pop art pieces, strongly evocative of Warhol's Campbell's Soup series, drew reactions, which belie the throwaway subject matter. Ironic and playful, the paintings tap directly into a specific icon of throwaway consumerism, which yet holds a permanent cultural

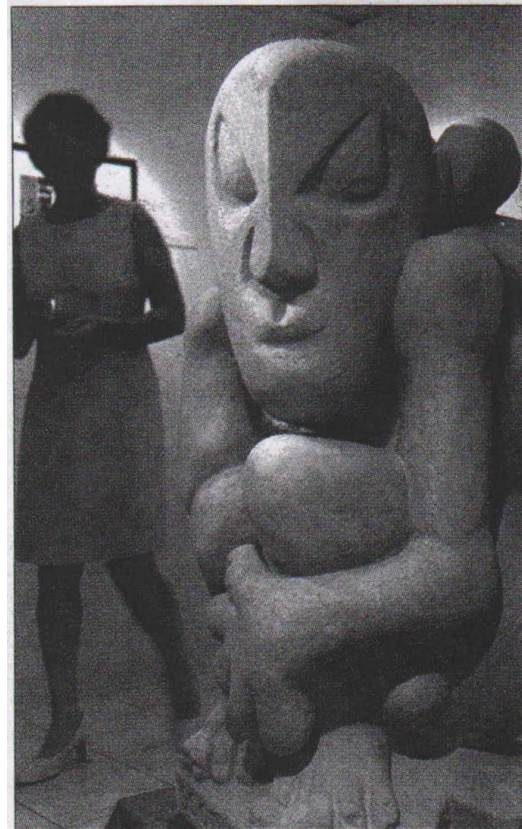
significance. Stylistically flat and lurid, these pieces were among the most appealing of Banker's work yet seen.

The artist says the series is, "a nod to Warhol and having understood the concept of seeing something telling in the mundane.

"The series reflects on the many levels of Cayman culture, not seemingly apparent, it is everywhere in the most ordinary things so easy to discount and discard."

His mixed media sculpture, '*Good Boy, Bad Boy!*' thought to be a fairly personal piece speaks much about the human condition, the conscious and the subconscious. As Banker himself says, "If you're wondering about the title, let's just say I was wrestling with my Ying and Yang."

Another piece that is particularly striking was *Big Bunkey Runs Away*. This acrylic and latex on canvas picture was taken from a doodle, which was later developed and reminds him of



Good Boy, Bad Boy. Photo: Justin Uzzell

his girlfriend. It is another 'personal' piece, which links humour with an element of mystery evident in the obscure symbolism in the piece.

Look out also for the artist's digitally enhanced photographs such as *All is Not Well* and *Simple Curve to Foot*.

Banker's recent three week 'Artists Away' trip to Havana's Taller Experimental de

Grafica, a renowned print shop school, produced lithographs, several of which appear in his show.

Serious 'Bout Mekin' Fun runs until 24 November, 2001 and is open to the public Mondays through Fridays 9am-7pm and from 11am to 4pm on Saturdays.

For further information contact the National Gallervon 945-8111



Art is good for you, according to this group of health service professionals. Photo: Elphina Magona