

# FRESH! show at gallery

## ART IN REVIEW

by Natalie Coleman



After a successful start to the year with their hugely popular exhibition 'Time People Forgot', the National Gallery opens its doors once again with 'Fresh!', a contemporary exhibit featuring a diverse collection of paintings, sculpture, mixed media and installation art from local and regional artists.

The list of countries represented in Fresh! is about as varied as the art work itself and there is an interesting mixture of veteran artists and newcomers. Established video artist Martin Kersels from America for instance is interested in creating new forms that he calls 'performative' objects, combining sounds, inanimate objects and performances. Kersels, who began as a performance artist, applies the imperatives of that discipline to sculpture, whether it be a baby grand piano that winches itself across the gallery floor, a desk wired to trigger recorded musical scores as business is transacted, or a rubber band-powered prosthetic leg that frantically kicks the gallery wall.

Fresh! was assembled by National Gallery director Leslie Bigelman from various collections and shows around the world. "This exhibition is a result of the many exhibitions I have been viewing over the past four years," explains Mrs Bigelman. "Each of the participating artists uses their minds and tools to make bold statements, creating contemporary art that goes beyond the 'normal' display one expects to see in an art gallery. Although I question many things that are passed off as 'art' these days, I believe a lot of the work being done, that is

in the cutting edge category to be brave and out there. They are more concerned with expression than the dollar. People today need ways to express what they feel, be it anger, delight, fear or silliness."

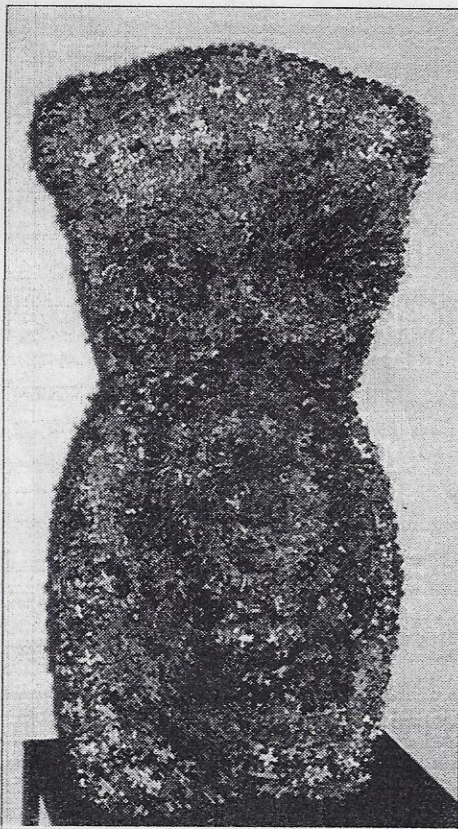
American video artist and photographer Sterz is among the exhibitors. People may remember his installation piece entitled 'Waves' which featured in the foyer of the Royal Bank of Canada here in Cayman in November 2001. Sterz is well known for working with familiar subjects such as water, clouds, and light in his contemporary approach to installation art and photography.

Another striking installation will feature a series of cocooned babies crying onto the floor by Luis Vidal, a work that received critical acclaim at last year's Art Miami. Colombian artist Federico Uribe, who recently exhibited at Art Basel Miami, brings another element to the show creating sculptures from everyday objects in an attempt to

expand the simple perceptions of the viewer. "I have discovered the power of everyday objects, such as plastic forks, baby bottle nipples, coins, metal screws, mannequins, rubber gloves, and various kinds of cleaning supplies, all of which are usually seen for their practical purpose, but are rarely perceived as symbol, colour, texture, or form," explains the artist. "By incorporating these mundane objects into my sculptures, I strive to create works that are sensually, as well as visually stimulating; objects that exhibit fresh, whimsical, humorous, and essentially radical associations of materials and ideas."

Other artists that will be exhibiting in Fresh! include the established video artist Luis Gispert, a Whitney nominee, as well as newcomers Adriana Carvahlo from Brazil, Diego Linares from Ecuador, Luciana Abait from Argentina, Tom Green and Kaethe Kauffman from America, Alfredo Eguiguren from Argentina, Yvonne Bobrowicz, Annalee Davis from Barbados and Karoll Zambrano from Cuba, as well as Cayman's own Tom Rittenhouse and Siobhan Brebner.

Sponsor Coutts (Cayman) Ltd., an avid supporter of the National Gallery, is excited about this vibrant, consciously upbeat exhibition. "Fresh! is not only different for the island, it will be very different for a majority of the viewers coming through the gallery," says Mrs Bigelman. "Some of the pieces may have people scratching their heads and asking..."Is this art?" and I will be very encouraged if it promotes discussion and debate. The National Gallery's growing audience tends to be a young one, and I know that these particular visitors will not only smile at some of these works, but possibly will be inspired to try some of these types of expressions themselves."



A Federico Uribe sculpture created from pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.