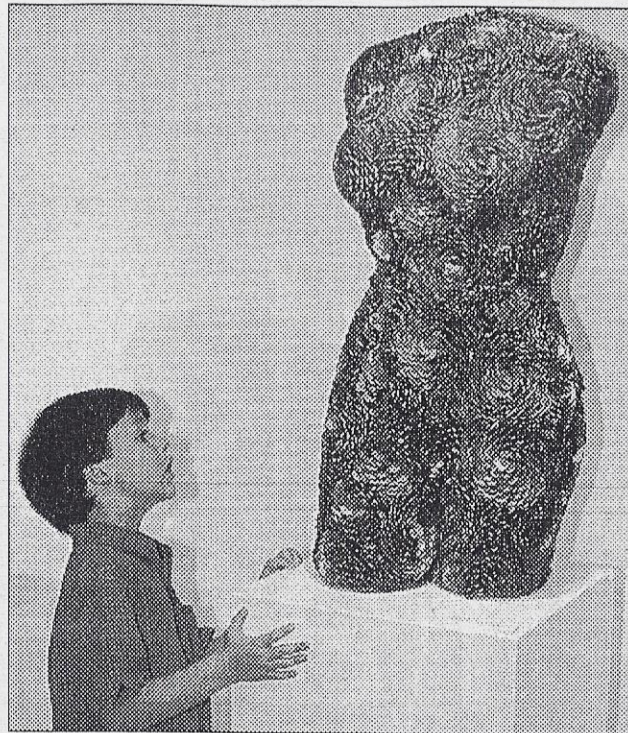
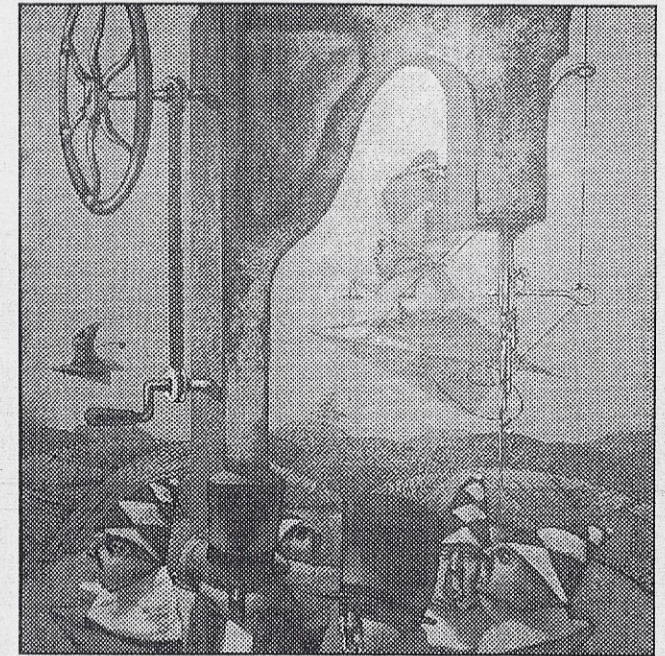


Crying Babies by Luis Vidal (Spain). The installation makes a powerful statement about the desperate plight many of the world's children are born into. The babies are rigged up to cry water, which is caught in the bowls below.



One young visitor pays close attention to the detail in the *Pennies Torso* by Colombian artist Frederico Uribe. Photo: Denise Boddin



Emigrants by Karoll Zambrano (Cuba). The highly stylised piece deals with a common subject matter of Cubanos in their homeland, leaving Cuba for a better life. Here Emigrants leave using any materials that they can put together. Those who are better off leave in paper planes and carry grass a reminder of Cuba, which they all hope someday to return to.

Fresh: a director's cut at the NG

Fresh, the newest and probably hippest art show in Cayman, is currently enjoying rave reviews from visitors to the National Gallery in Harbour Place.

The 16-contributor show, which runs until 26 April, has a decidedly international flavour. It is the director's cut of what Gallery Director, Leslie Bigelman, found to be among the best and the brightest work of the shows she has visited over the past few years.

Fresh is the realisation of Ms Bigelman's quest to bring a radical and upbeat show of global appeal to Cayman. **Elphina Magona** caught up with the director and asked the show's originator and

curator about the impetus behind the exhibit.

1. What is the idea behind Fresh? [Leslie] It was time in the growth of the National Gallery for it to get a little bit cutting-edge with an exhibition. Also after September 11th, I wanted to do a show that was pretty much upbeat and would make people smile. That is why I opened with Uribe's piece, as I knew one couldn't help but smile at cacti made from plastic forks!

2. As the show's originator and curator what statement is fresh trying to make? [Leslie] Quite

simply that art can be anything these days and there are so many people out there that have a desire to express themselves in a creative way. The "old" forms of art sometimes do not appeal to the younger generation, especially one that has not had the privilege of having been exposed to a range of art from an early age like here in Cayman.

3. What particular challenges did putting the show together present for you? [Leslie] Many, finding a mix of artists/artwork that would "work" together. Actually hunting down the artists or their

representatives, choosing works, as some that I had seen over the past several years had been sold. Another challenge was finding sufficient funding, which is always a big hassle, but thanks to Friends of the Gallery, we could do this. Transportation of artwork from Spain, Costa Rica, etc., was costly, and I also thought it important to have some of the artists here for the opening, which was costly as well. We had to pay for air tickets, but Hyatt, Holiday Inn, Sunset House, Seaview Hotel and Treasure Island Resort all came through with room donations. Also, there were a few families that housed artists as well. Coutts (Cayman) Ltd. gave us a donation for doing a private viewing for their clients,

NG's cutting edge exhibit

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so we ended up with enough funding to pull this off. Co-ordinating airline schedules, pick-ups, etc., was a bit of a challenge, but it all worked in the end. Having six of the artists here was a bonus for not just the community, but for me as well. The artists were mostly young and very vibrant personalities, and I loved getting to know them. The energy from them is obvious in their work. Many people think (and thought) that a show like this just travels as such. This is not the case. This show could have been called "Director's choice", as I chose every single piece of work from artists I had seen or met over the past three years. One on the Internet, one on display at an airport, some in New York galleries, some in a Miami Art Expo, etc.

4. What kind of feedback have you had?

[Leslie] Amazingly positive, more than I expected. I thought there might be some people who would come through and look at the video or a dress made from steel wool and comment about it not really being art... but so far, everyone just loves not only the work shown, but also the whole feeling of the show. Watch out for Federico Uribe, the Colombian artist, who did the torsos and cactus garden with carnivorous flowers and mosquitoes. He will be coming back to Cayman at the

end of April to do a public project with school children. Reaction to his work, in particular, has been so strong, that we want to follow up while it is hot!

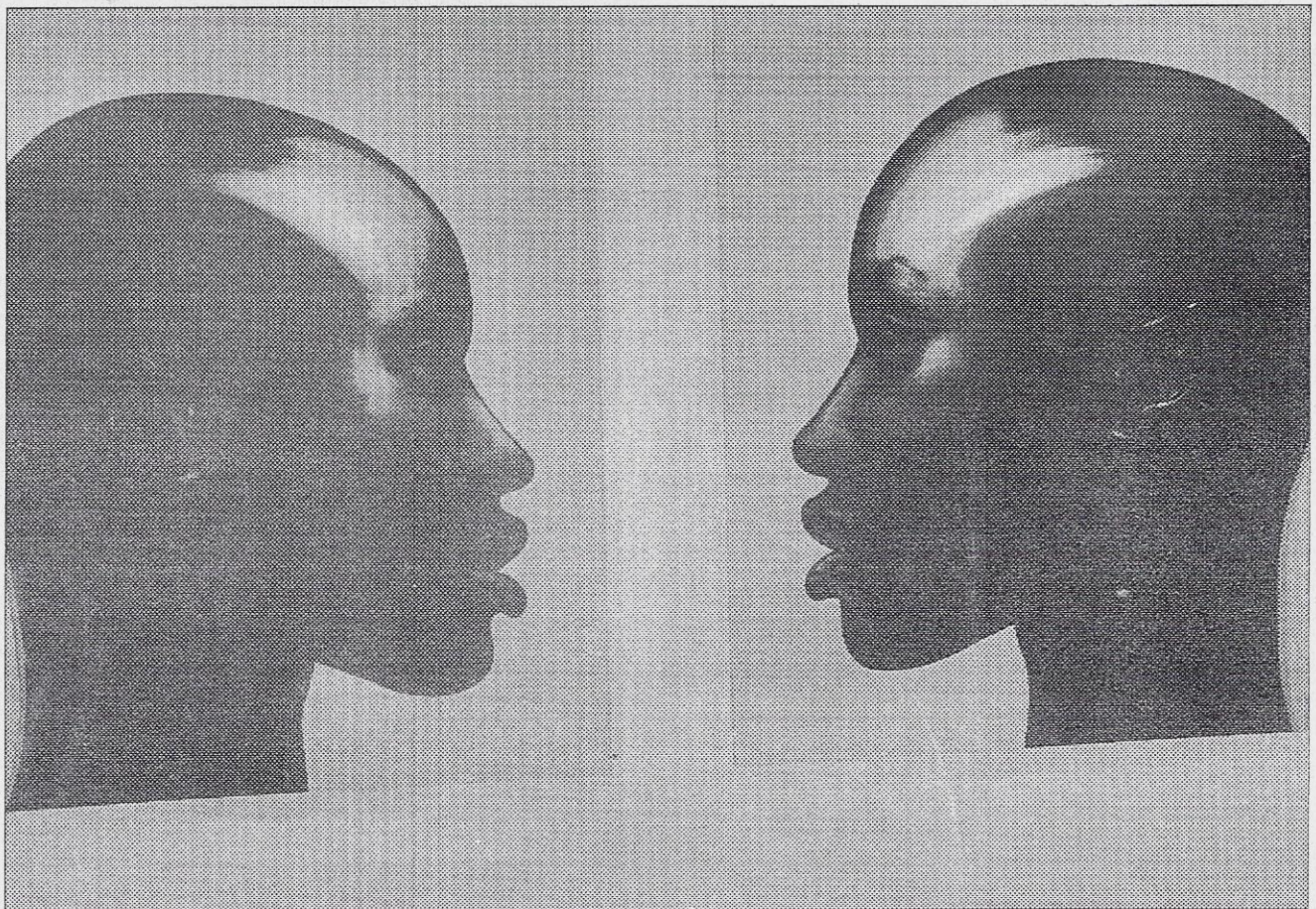
5. What affect, if any, did the presence of several of the exhibiting artists on opening night have?

[Leslie] It created immediacy, a bond between the public and the creators and made viewers connection to the artworks stronger. It was unique opportunity that many got a lot out of. Its not everyday one can meet and question artists whose work intrigues you. We had over 315 visitors at the opening a solid indication there is a market for more contemporary art here.

6. Is the show a departure from the gallery's usual exhibits?

[Leslie] We always try to do departures from shows we have done in the past. We want to show the community that we are catering to all interests. Art is very far-reaching open ended. We had many families with kids at this opening. It is exactly how it should be. The National Gallery is an educational institution, and I feel that is exactly what we are doing not only with this show but also with all that we do.

The National Gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm and on Saturday from 11am to 4pm. Admission is free.



Though eerily like photographs Perfil 1 and 2 are in fact paintings by Costa Rican artist, Diego Linaras.