

# Portrait of an Artist exhibition opens at National Gallery

By Christopher Tobutt

A NEW exhibition called 'Portrait of an Artist' opened last Thursday at the National Gallery.

Each of the 22 artists displaying works at the exhibition were asked to produce a self-portrait, and the result was a bold and exciting display of local artistic talent, representing a privileged glimpse into the artistic soul.

The exhibition showed a wide range of styles and techniques: "We have everything; two-dimensional fine art, sculpture, installation art, photography and video," said the curator of the exhibition, Natalie Coleman.

"The work is as diverse as the artists involved," Ms Coleman explained. "I was attracted to the idea of self-portraiture, because I think it gives you a very intimate insight into the artist themselves."

"The artists I invited for

this particular show were people that we haven't necessarily seen for a while; people who were very involved with the gallery and had already exhibited with us on several different occasions. There are also a couple of newer, young artists that are in the show."

Ms Coleman continued: "A lot of people on the Island will be familiar with works by these artists, but they may not know too much about them personally, and I thought that this would be a really good way of introducing these artists to the public."

A written statement by the artist, displayed alongside their work, introduced each of the self-portraits.

Artist Avril Ward's self-portrait, called 'The Softening', is a subtle and sensitive oil painting. It is introduced with a statement of self-disclosure: "Time in my life for softening, body mind and spir-

it; it is not without reservation that I reveal this."

David Bridgeman's 'Can't Talk' is a disturbing image that explores the nightmarish feeling of being unable to talk, or express one's feelings. "I position myself in a long empty corridor with closed doors... this symbolism reflects aspects of my life from childhood to the present time," Mr Bridgeman's statement said.

Other artists who chose to represent themselves in a symbolic way included photographer Lucy Best, whose work consisted of a series of photographs of her shoes. Her statement read: "I have many aspects to my personality and wanted to find a way to portray some of these. The wide array of shoe styles in my wardrobe seem to give an insight into some of my moods and interests."

Gordon Solomon's 'I Am' was actually a vol-



(l-r) Rebeca Gonzales, Holt Hunter and Sherry Soong enjoy the opening of the National Gallery's exhibition 'Portrait of an Artist'

cano painted pointillist style. "This portrait depicts my personality; zealous, empowered, continually evolving... the volcano characterizes my sometimes explosive character."

Artist Zoe Blount was there in person to explain her work, 'By the Sea'. This was a bold abstract

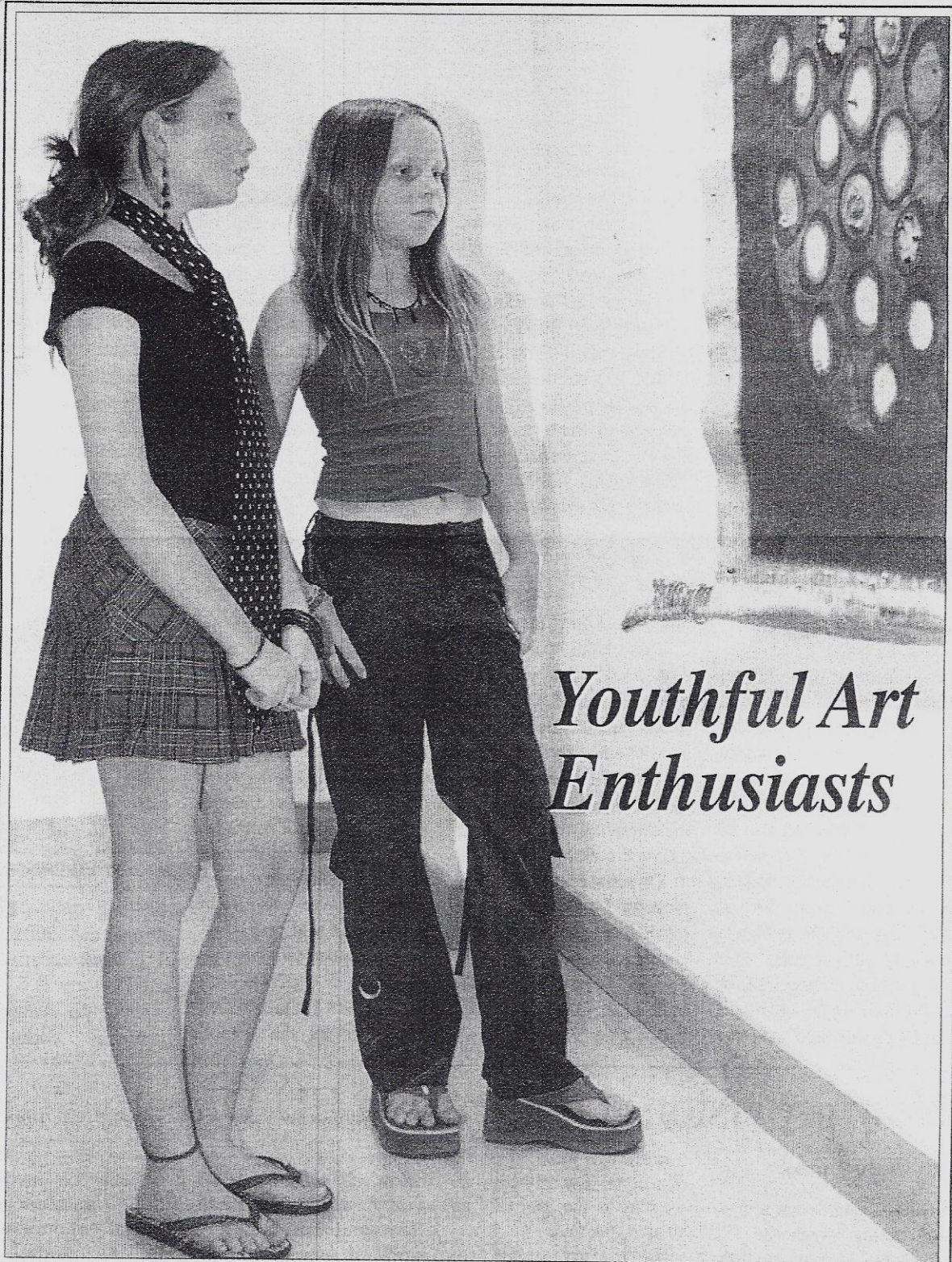
acrylic painting on a canvas hanging between two pieces of driftwood. Each of the pieces of driftwood is bound by wire.

The main body of the painting consists of a series of blue oval forms enclosed within a larger blue oval form, and evokes feelings of protec-

tion. "I was by the sea when I painted it, and I really went with my feelings," she said. "I didn't really decide too much what I was going to do beforehand... I was being really spontaneous."

'Portrait of an Artist' runs at the National Gallery until 17 September.





## *Youthful Art Enthusiasts*

Annie Lauer (left) and Elena McDonough examine artist Zoe Blount's work 'By the Sea' at the opening of the National Gallery's exhibition 'Portrait of an Artist' – Page 2.

*Photo Alan Markoff*