

Portrait of an Artist

By Searlina Bodden

The National Gallery takes a turn inwardly for its next exhibition, "Portrait of an Artist". Scheduled to open tomorrow, the exhibition features self-portraits by 23 local artists in mixed media.

This is the second solo exhibition for deputy gallery director Natalie Coleman. The former education director feels the works will give viewers a unique insight into the artists of Cayman. There is an "unusual freedom," she stated, in being both subject and creator of a piece.

This "allows the viewer a unique opportunity to see the artists represented in their own terms," stated Coleman.

The pool of work represents both established and emerging artists working in a wide range of media, includ-

ing oil painting, photography, prints, installation and sculpture.

As usual, the roster for this National Gallery exhibit reads like a definitive catalogue of the islands' most evocative artists. From established names like John Broad, Chris Mann and Paul Jordison to newcomers like Terry Ann Arch, each submitted artists' statements rings with a tone of self-analysis and honesty.

Particularly exciting, Coleman mentioned, is work submitted by younger artists who chose more cutting-edge media, such as Aston Ebanks' *Introspective* DVD installation.

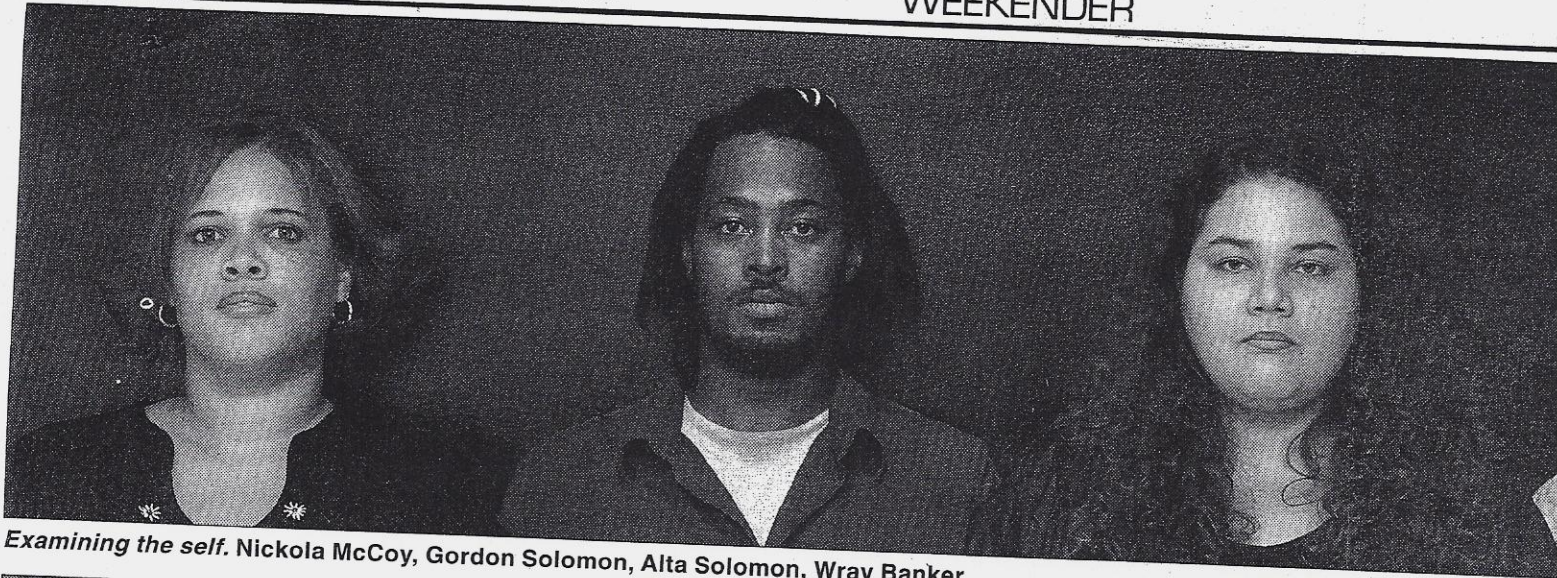
each of the artists involved, I was interested to see how they perceived themselves and perhaps to find out more about 'who they are'. I also felt that anyone interested in the arts in the Cayman Islands would also find the theme intriguing," she said.

"Intriguing" is a understatement. "Portrait of an Artist", even in its developmental stages, is something to behold. Paintings leaned against walls, painters transforming the gallery and artists popping in to rap with Coleman about hanging and placement are evidence that the exhibit is

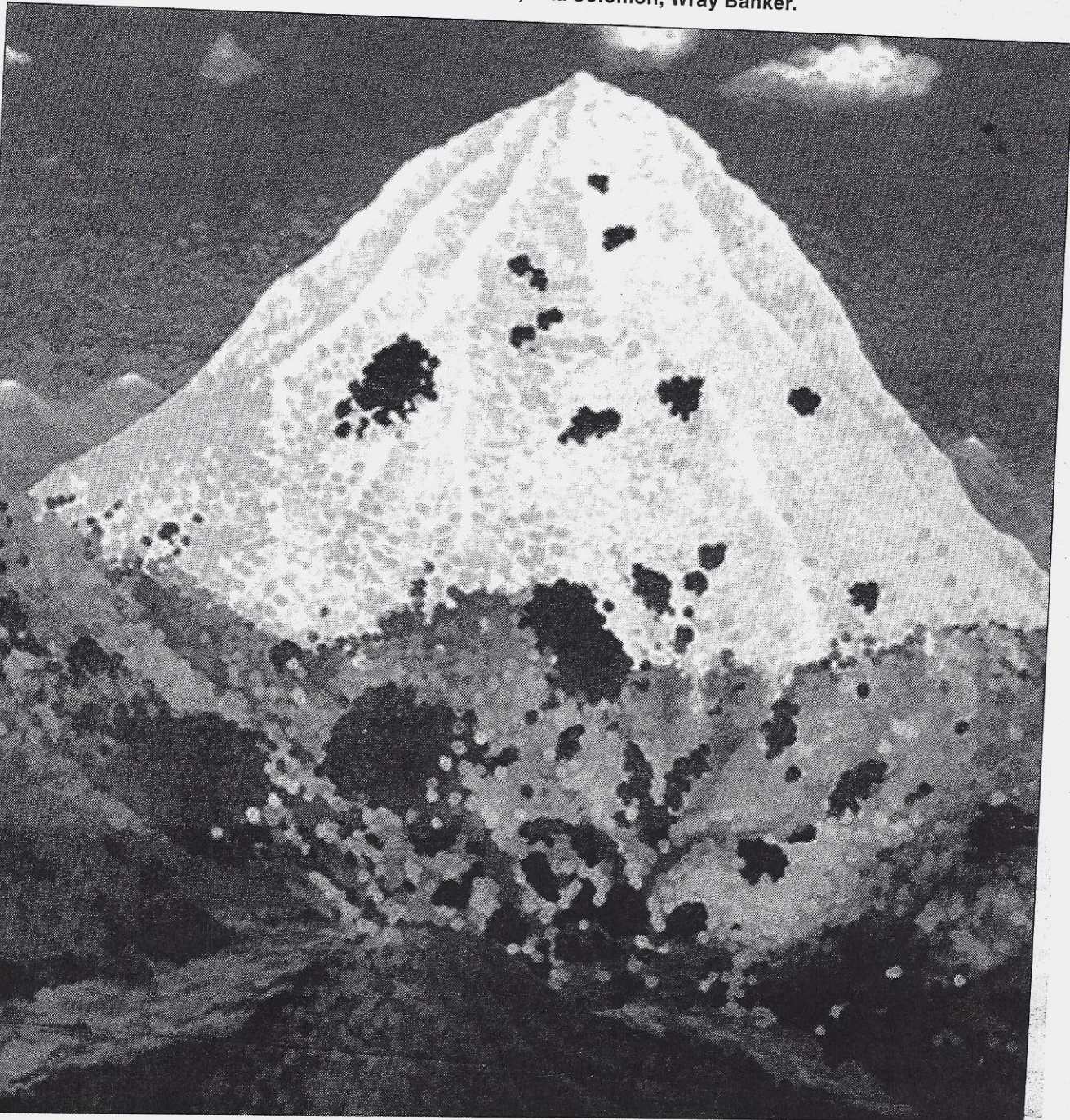
"Portrait of an Artist" opens this Saturday and will run until 17 September. The National Gallery is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am-5pm and on Saturdays from 11am until 4pm.



Nickola McCoy with her contribution "Who I Am"



Examining the self. Nickola McCoy, Gordon Solomon, Alta Solomon, Wray Banker.



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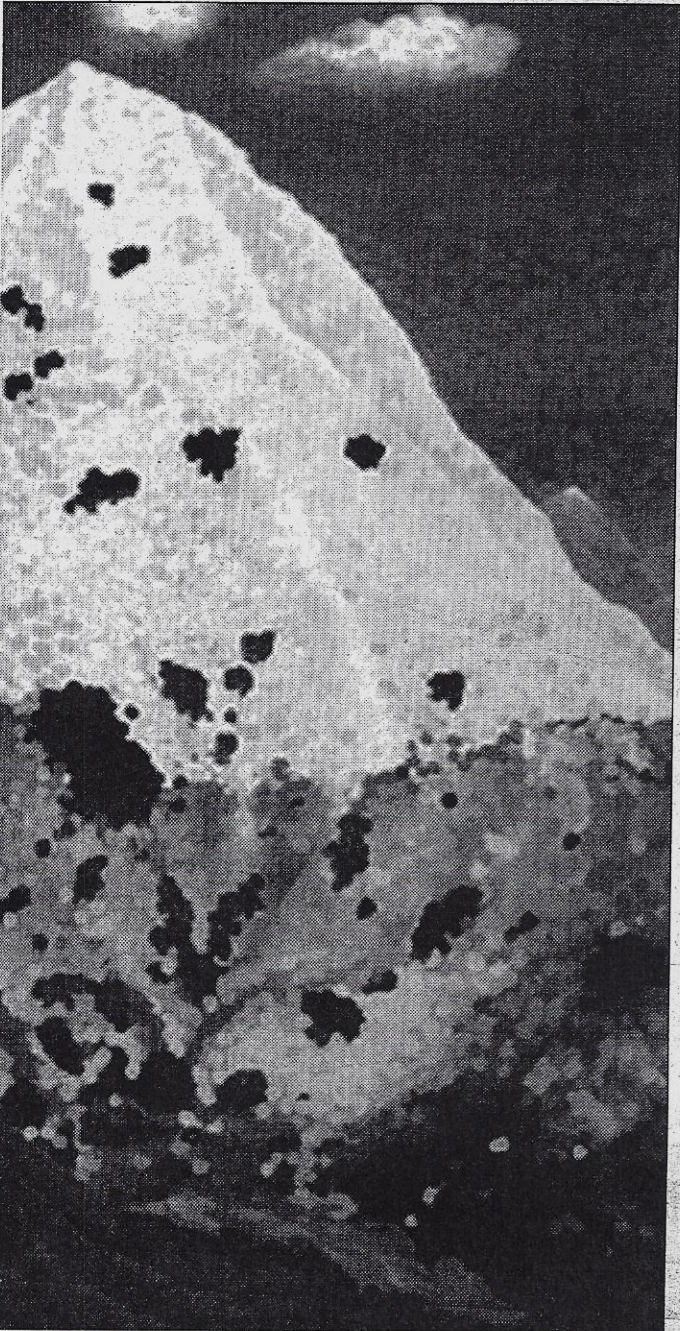
the gallery.
While this emotional interaction will involve viewers sentimentally involved with the work, Coleman also hopes to take people on a cultural journey through the sheer variety in

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work, which she attributes to differing experiences and cultural experiences. “I have found a diversity amongst self-portraits,” she states. Touring “Portrait of an Artist” may lead to even more questions than it answers. “After the wall through this exhibition we are left to explore



Alta Solomon, Wray Banker.



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While this emotional interaction will keep viewers sentimentally involved with the works, Coleman also hopes to take people on a cultural journey through the sheer variety in the

the motivations behind the self-portrait, studying its effects, and discussing the very different understandings of the self which these artists project," Coleman concluded. "As you would expect they have tackled the concept of 'self' in a unique way

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work, which she attributes to differing social and cultural experiences.

"I have found a great diversity amongst the self portraits," she stated.

Touring "Portrait of an Artist" may leave even more questions than it answers.

"After walking through this exhibition we are left to explore

and there are few characteristics to bind them, which is always a challenge to a curator.

"Several artists have been entirely introspective; others were prompted to use their self-portrait to explore wider issues about the society in which we live, a society which is clearly as diverse as the artwork."