

CHRIS MANN **Biography**

Chris was born in England in 1955 but spent most his childhood living abroad, his fathers work as an air force pilot moving the family every few years to Yemen, Germany and Sardinia, interspersed with living in various parts of England until settling at the age fifteen with his family in Cornwall. This enforced nomadic lifestyle gifted visits to many parts of Europe as well as Africa, bringing him into contact with their art and artifacts. The opportunity to experience the variety of mans artistic expression, the ways by which art objects represent, using divergent vocabularies of imagery and symbols was the beginning of a lifelong passion for travel and culture that has remained constant. His parents interest in history meant few museums or sites of antiquities in these places were allowed to go unvisited by the family. Influential experiences were visiting Venice, seeing paintings by Van Gogh in the Rijksmuseum, and Cycladic art of the Mediterranean in Sardinia.

Chris went to Goldsmiths College in London studying drawing, painting and printmaking, before specializing in ceramics and sculpture. Here he became interested in the work of Matisse, Picasso and David Hockney. Following college he taught in several schools in London before moving to live in Cayman in 1987, appointed as Head of Art at George Hicks High School. Initially he worked in watercolour and made small ceramic sculptures, but returned to painting, often large scale works in oil and acrylic, following workshops with Caymanian- New York based artist Bendel Hydes and later with Trinidadian artist James Isaiah Boodhoo, both of whom were influential in his further development.

His work has been described diversely as challenging prejudice and being a celebration of beauty . In his work, figurative and symbolic elements both appear, the subject being described using simplified forms or by the creation of symbols and motifs to represent ideas or emotion. Landscape and the figure feature strongly, and references to culture and environment. Working in oil, acrylic, mixed media and collage, his work is characterized by its bold, sculptural description of form and broad use of rich colour.

Chris has exhibited in England, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, and New Zealand. Works are in the collections of the National Gallery, National Museum, National Archive, Cultural Foundation, and Visual Arts Society, and numerous private collections in Cayman and abroad. He has produced illustrations for two books on the history of Cayman, and a number of National Trust publications. In working with his students, he has taken every opportunity to have them produce art for the community. Encouraging them to create numerous works including; mosaics for the harbour wall in George Town, murals for the Quincentennial Offices, Owen Roberts airport, the hospital children s ward and for the Red Cross. He has enjoyed teaching at workshops for adults on behalf of the National Gallery and VAS.

Following Ivan he is once again living a nomadic existence with his family, his wife Cora-Anne, and children Rory and Tom, moving every few weeks between the homes of generous friends, who as well as the circle as a metaphor for life may feature in future work!