



Anchored in Landscapes

David Bridgeman Artist's Statement

The title Anchored in Landscapes encompasses so many things for me. There is of course the very obvious glancing reference to Cayman's seafaring past but the paintings in this exhibition are largely about fitting in. After seventeen years of island life, how much am I actually part of the Caymanian landscape?

My paintings nearly always revolve around landscapes. The sea is inextricably linked to the land in Cayman and so it is hard to paint one without the other. Figures also feature heavily in much the same way that Edvard Munch's figures featured in his. In analysing *The Scream*, it has been said that every element in the composition contributes to the purpose of the relationship between the figure and the landscape (Symbolist Art, Edward Lucie-Smith). I view my own landscapes in much the same way. Figures, in whom I portray both myself and others, are pivotal to my interpretation of the landscapes: I see the surroundings through my own eyes or through the eyes of others. I agree with Poupeye, who notes that landscapes usually stem from a deep personal identification with nature and the land (Caribbean Art, Veerle Poupeye). I also like to use figures and symbols in my work in much the same way that the Scottish painter, John Bellamy, uses them in his. In one such painting he used situations and imagery of dead and rotting animals from a fishing community to depict the crucifixion.

Inspiration can also come from other sources. Something as simple as sushi in a lacquered box can become a micro landscape in its own right. Small features such as chunks of ginger, a daub of wasabi or rolls of Futo Maki can take on the shapes of buildings, towers or fields.

I often begin painting with a brief drawing, or I might make a monotype where I can produce several different images relatively quickly. I like to work into these prints with oil bars or I create a collage by using materials, often in the form of old paintings or drawings. I then choose one or more of these prints to create a larger painting, my medium of preference with these is usually oils. I like to explore the possibilities of producing a variety of surfaces to paint on - such as wax, text or natural fibres. I prefer to paint in a large format which generally includes the construction of my own stretchers and the use of hammock canvas.

Whatever my primary motivation for the painting, I am content if I am able to create something that is both enjoyable and interesting to look at and that invokes some form of emotional response.

David Bridgeman January 2005