



### ***Art Space***

27 June – 11 Aug 2008

Contemporary art museums have evolved as public institutions. No longer are they dusty repositories reserved solely for two-dimensional art works, but vibrant interactive spaces that capture the twenty-first-century imagination. In addition to housing top-of-the-line exhibition and educational facilities, they have become social gathering spaces with visitor services, such as restaurants and retail stores, which cater to modern requirements. The challenge now facing architects is to construct a building that will itself be a functional work of art whilst not upstaging the art it is designed to house.

In 2008, as the National Gallery planned the building of its own permanent home for the visual arts in the Cayman Islands on Esterley Tibbetts Highway, the public was invited to follow the development through an exhibition of drawings, photographs, and original models by Caymanian architect Danny Owens. A selection of the National Art Collection accompanied this display alongside information, art, and images from the Gallery's vibrant, and expanding, education and outreach departments.

During this time, NGCI's National Collection comprised of approximately 90 works in various media, which made up part of the larger National Collection preserved by the Cayman Islands National Museum, Cayman National Cultural Foundation, and the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands. The focus of this collection was based upon the National Gallery's mandate to preserve and protect artworks of historical and cultural significance. This collection continues to grow to this day, and is comprised of core quality Caymanian artworks, including works by Bendel Hydes, Gladwyn K. "Miss Lassie" Bush, and members of the Native Sons. *Art Space* gave the public greater insight into the development of a cultural icon – the National Gallery and its many programmes – and provided the opportunity to consider how vital the arts are to a healthy community.

Natalie Urquhart (nee Coleman), Curator

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