

# arts<sup>and</sup> culture

## *Day in the life at the* **National Gallery**

*Offering a first-hand look at the actual makings of art in three very different genres, the National Gallery's recent 'A Day in the Life' exhibition brought three artists together housed for the first time in the Gallery itself. Business Editor Lindsey Turnbull visited the artists at work.*

According to National Gallery Deputy Director and coordinator of this recent exhibition Natalie Coleman, a residency programme has been a concept dear to her heart for some time, as she explains, "I've enjoyed visiting similar programmes in galleries in various parts of the world and we've wanted to recreate the concept here for several years now. Due to our limited space we had been unable to offer artists a residency space; however by merging studio space within our central exhibition space we've been able to overcome this difficulty. Coordinating this latest exhibition at the National Gallery, sponsored by Butterfield Bank (Cayman) Limited, is therefore a great thrill for us. Not only does having these talented artists onsite bring the place alive but it makes the work, and in particular the process, accessible to the public."

### **The concept**

The idea is simple: three artists, - Randy Chollette, working in paint, Aston Ebanks working in mixed media and ceramicist Cecilia Urdaneta took up "residence" at the Gallery for ten days, creating their artwork in their own separate "rooms" within the Gallery.

After the ten days the artists were then asked to self curate their own

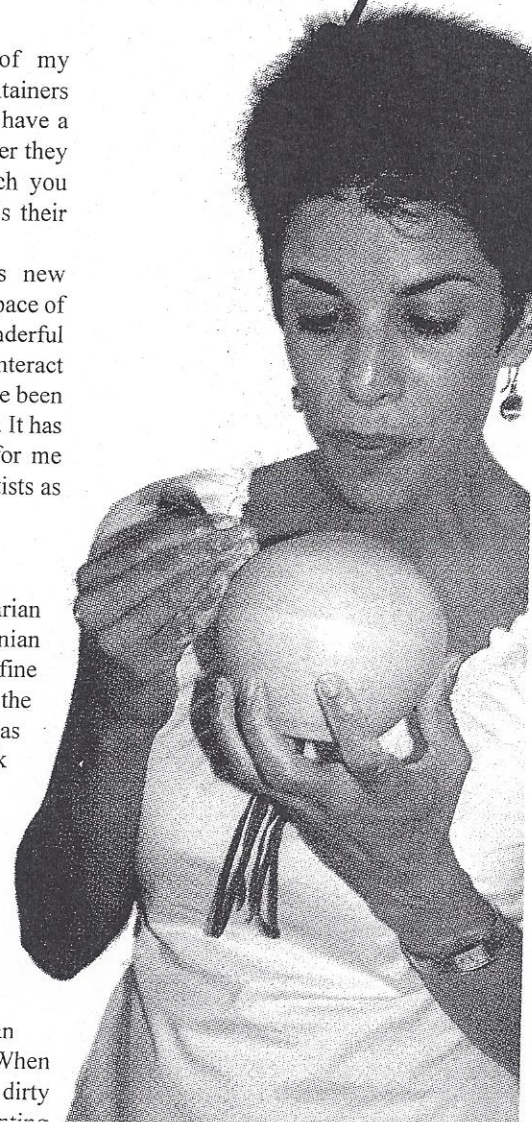
She explains, "A friend of my daughter asked what the containers could be used for as they only have a tiny opening at the top. I told her they were secret containers in which you blow all your secrets, so that is their purpose!"

Cecilia enthuses about this new concept of working within the space of the Gallery, "I think it is a wonderful idea. It is great to be able to interact directly with the public who have been curious to know what I'm doing. It has also been a great opportunity for me to work so closely with other artists as we feed off of each other."

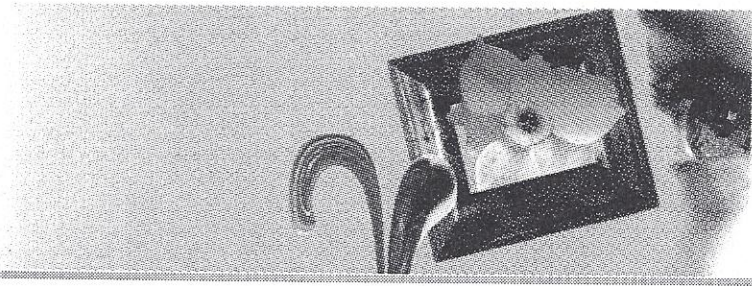
### **Paint and be free**

Artist and musician, Rastafarian Randy Chollette is a Caymanian artist who has won a string of fine art awards since emerging on the scene in 2000. He says he has also enjoyed being able to work directly with the public, and, at the time of this interview, was actually in the process of helping Madhavi Mathura, a newcomer to the world of painting, to put her first stroke on a canvas.

He says, "People are used to seeing my work and now they can see how it is actually produced. When we paint we generally get pretty dirty so here I am in my normal painting



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# Life at the Gallery

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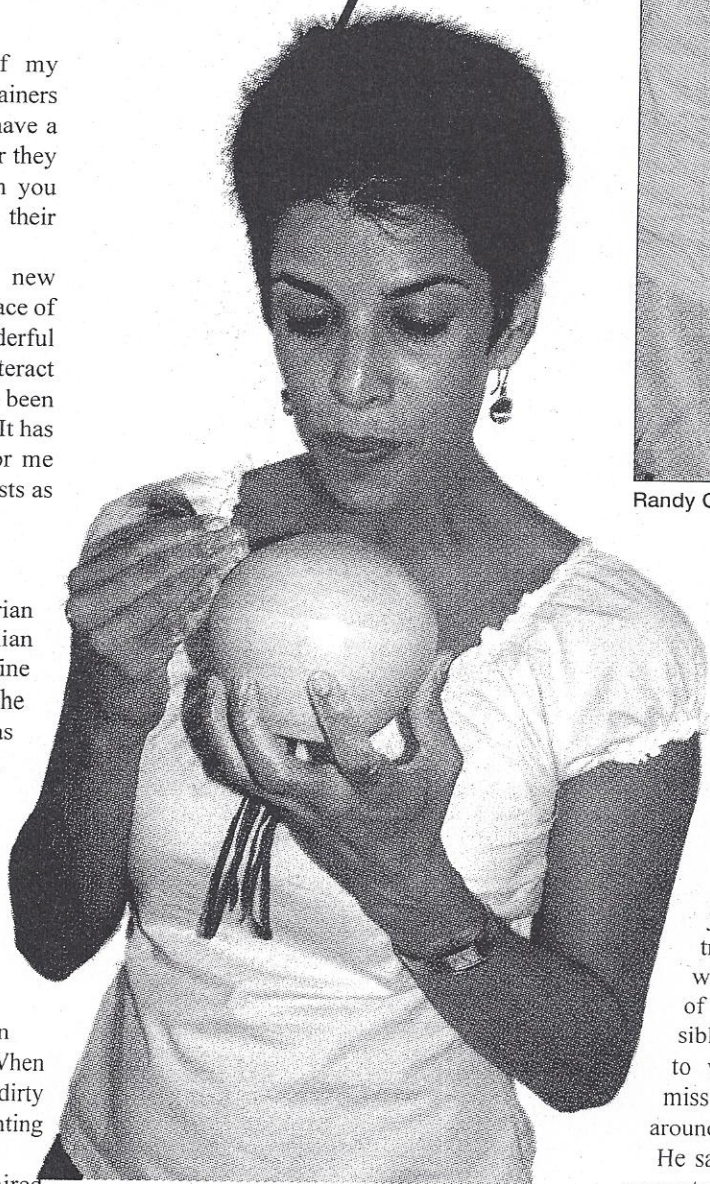
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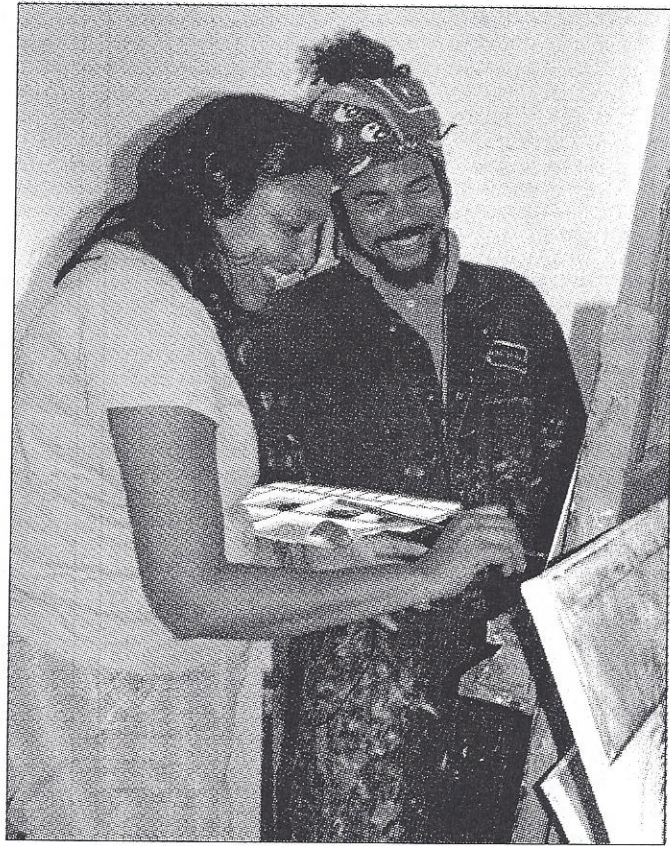
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He says, "People are used to seeing my work and now they can see how it is actually produced. When we paint we generally get pretty dirty here I am in my normal painting clothes!"

Madhavi says she had admired



Cecilia Urdaneta with her secret containers in



Randy Chollette teaches Madhavi to just let go

tranquility in each shot.

Aston says the video is a statement about life in general as well as more specifically about Cayman and the direction the island is taking. He hopes that the journey taken by the traveler in the video will open up the eyes of commuters who possibly take the same route to work but who may miss the beauty that is all around them.

He says, "We can at least guaranty that the sun will rise each morning but can you

see it? We have to look at how we are treating our natural environment and assess the damage man has done."

Aston says the public was not initially too sure about what he was creating at the Gallery so he was at pains to create a comfortable and inviting environment for visitors to sit and chat with the artist.

It has also been a great opportunity for artists to share ideas among themselves, as Aston says, "It's really important for us as artists to communicate with each other as we all share a common thread. We need to create more open forums and critique each other's work. It's not done enough in Cayman." Randy Chollette, Cecilia Urdaneta and

is still time to view the final works of each artist.

### Female form in clay

Cecilia Urdaneta is a native of Venezuela and has been creating wonderful ceramics for the past 14 years.

She explains her current work, "I've always been interested in the female form; I really believe in the alliance among women! My clay forms are generally simple, linear and elongated. I like to create tall figures as I feel that they are somehow reaching up to God."

Furthering the female theme, Cecilia displays some clever clay moldings of her body created during pregnancy.

Some diverse and eclectic containers are also on display which are again simple in form but finished off with a clever twist at the top – literally

a twist of clay or perhaps a feather.

She states, "I wondered how someone could create such wonderful paintings from a blank canvas so I just had to come and see the process for myself. I have canvases, brushes and paints at home but just haven't quite built up the nerve to put brush to canvas."

Madhavi said she had lots of good intentions to start but just needed the motivation.

Randy explained that to simply get going was important and that artists get better with practice, just as with most things in life.

He said, "You shouldn't be worried about the outcome, don't try to be perfect. Just let go."

Randy's exhibition is currently featuring a new style for him, involving a new technique which involves a freer movement.

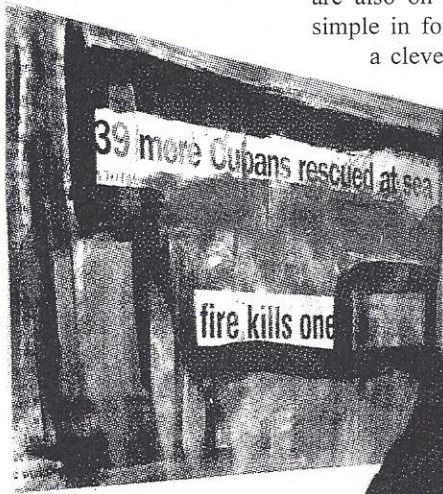
He says, "I'm working on paintings that don't have any boundaries. I like to layer my paintings and create mystery. The forms in the pieces come from the layering process – I don't always see them at first. Sometimes I like to leave a painting for a few days and come back to it. Sometimes it ends up completely different to how it first began."

### Installation inspires deep thinking

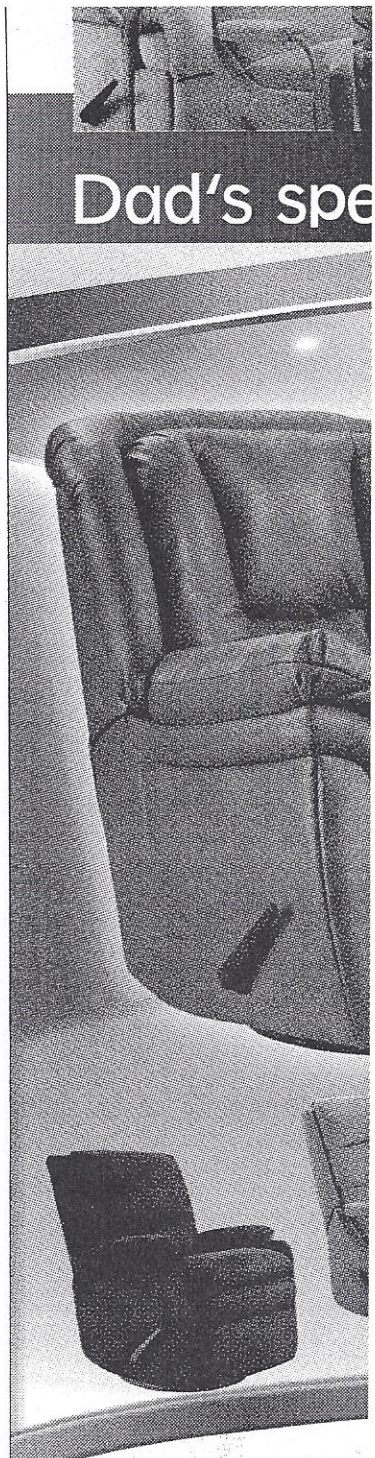
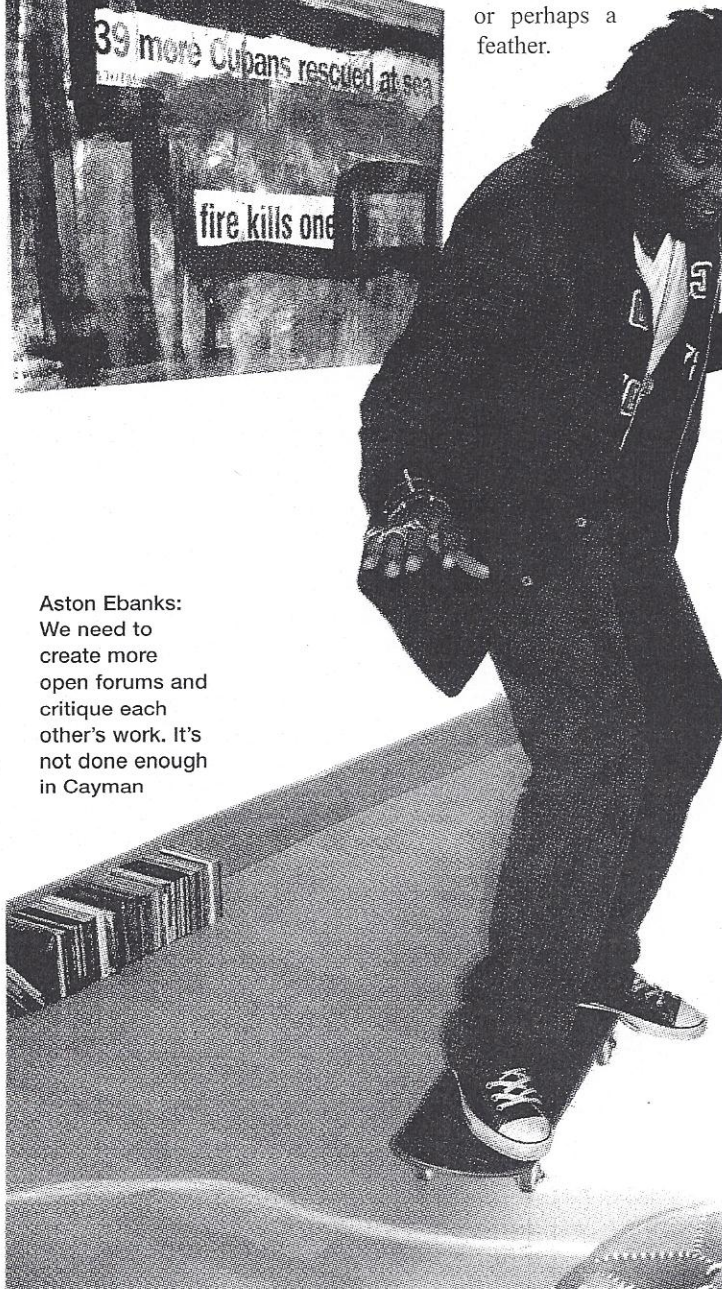
Aston Ebanks is an artist comfortable working within a wide range of media. He is currently one of the only installation artists in Cayman and this current exhibition employs a mixture of video installation, architectural drawings, paintings and music.

He explains the concept of his exhibition, "I worked on a video installation with three separate but distinctive sound tracks to accompany the video. The video is footage that I compiled traveling around Cayman, inspired by the images of nature. The separate music and poetry (written by Satina DaCosta-Cottam and Ras Jamal) sound tracks are there to see how they manipulate emotion while the imagery stays the same."

The theme of the video is decay and abandonment and indeed abandoned cars and homes litter the imagery, yet Aston's sensitive videography, which includes the choice of early morning light for filming, manages to display a beauty and



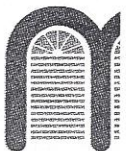
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