

# Street Art exhibition at Nat'l Gallery tells life stories

An exhibition of contemporary "street art" currently at the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands is designed to be both thought-provoking and evocative, says Jessica Wallace, Education and Outreach Coordinator.

"This exhibition can help us realize that art has the power to move not just our hearts," she says, "but our community consciousness as well."

Created by emerging local artists in the gallery's Outreach Programme, the pieces in the "UP and OUT" exhibit address social injustice and community activism with spray paint. There are 22 large, street-art murals spray painted on wood panels, along with dozens of smaller "tags," stencils and words spray-painted directly onto gallery walls.

The artists range in age

from 13, a girl from the Francis Bodden Home who spray-painted an emotional depiction of her home when it burnt down, to 85, an elderly resident of the Pines Retirement Home.

"The goals of street art often echo the grassroots intention of all National Gallery Outreach Programmes," Ms Wallace says, "to connect awareness, appreciation, and accessibility of the visual arts to all members of our community; to share the healing power of imaginative creation with those who need it most."

The exhibition is comprised of the artwork created through the Gallery's Outreach Programmes, including "Inside Art," offered weekly to the women at Fairbanks Prison; "Art Unbound," provided weekly to men at Northward Prison, including vocational

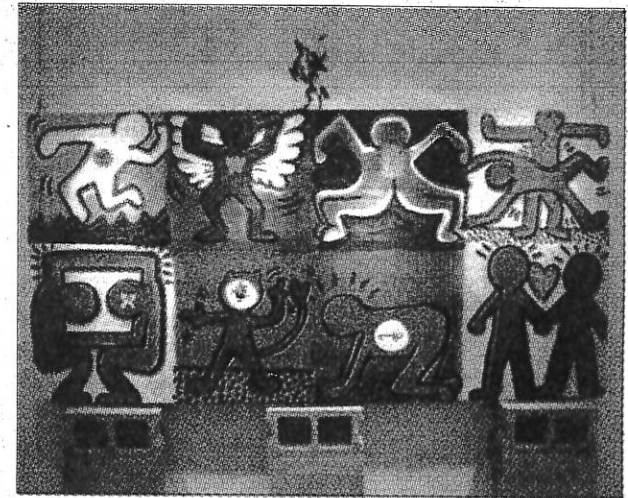
skills such as wood-working, landscape and construction; "Art Magnet," a class presented bi-monthly to Pines Retirement Home residents; "Art Haven," for the men at Caribbean Haven, who are taught new art methods to use toward their independent projects; "Art Unlimited," which was specifically designed to aid the girls from Francis Bodden Home deal with difficult emotions and experiences and develop their self-esteem; and "Art Sisters," for women referred to the programme by the Women's Resource Centre or the Cayman Islands Crisis Centre.

Street art, originally

born of the graffiti-writing found in New York and San Francisco ghettos of the 1960s and 1970s, is fast becoming recognized as the defining art movement of the 21st Century, according to Ms Wallace, but does not project the violence characterized by graffiti.

"Street Art emphasizes the sorrow and beauty within a community," says Ms Wallace, "which is often ignored or forgotten if one gets too caught up in the challenges that a busy life presents."

There is no gallery admission charge, but donations are appreciated.



A mural created by artists from the Francis Bodden Home for girls on exhibit now at the National Gallery.

