



Cultural Heritage & the Arts

National Gallery of the Cayman Islands

Our Mission...

The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands serves to promote the appreciation and practice of the visual arts, of and in the Cayman Islands and to encourage dialogue relating to cultural heritage, national identity, Caymanian history and the history of art.

This mandate is achieved through a variety of activities that aim to reach all members of the Cayman Islands community and the visiting public: outreach programmes, educational programmes, exhibitions, youth programmes, events, workshops, teacher training, school collaborations, art collections and educational lectures.

Through these programmes and collections the NGCI encourages a rich exploration of culture and self, while building self esteem and fostering creativity amongst all participants.



Programmes and Events

Since our inauguration in 1996, the National Gallery exhibition and programme schedule has grown exponentially. We offer:

- Ⓢ 8 local and international exhibitions each year
- Ⓢ 2500 + visitors per exhibition
- Ⓢ 12 weekly education programmes
- Ⓢ Weekly guided school tours with cross curricular follow-up activities
- Ⓢ 8 weekly outreach community programmes
- Ⓢ Monthly workshops, lectures & film club
- Ⓢ 6 major annual community festivals
- Ⓢ Annual and shorter internships
- Ⓢ A full schedule in the Sister Islands
- Ⓢ The largest specialised arts and cultural library in Cayman

and much more!



Bridging the Past and the Present....



The primary teaching focus of the National Gallery lies in the interpretation of our contemporary cultural experience, specifically relating to the visual arts. Recently however we have been exploring ways to 'bridge the gap' between our traditional craft heritage and our contemporary cultural production.



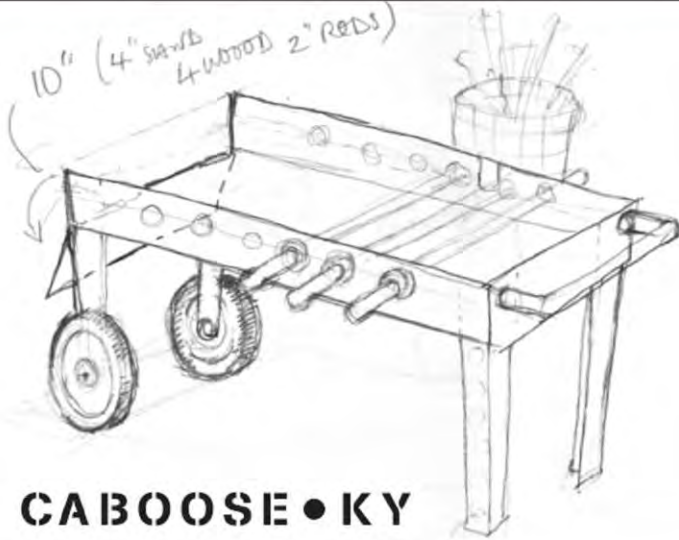
**NATIONAL
GALLERY**
CAYMAN ISLANDS

21st Century

Cayman Exhibition



NATIONAL GALLERY
CAYMAN ISLANDS



OVERVIEW:

The National Gallery has teamed up with the Cayman Islands Traditional Arts Council and sponsor Butterfield to invite our contemporary artists and traditional artisans to collaborate in 21st Century Cayman. Working in pairs, they will share skills and explore contemporary and recycled materials to re-imagine some of the time-honoured techniques that make our heritage unique.

Exhibited artworks will include Catboat sails designed with vibrant colours, hand carved and painted gigs and Waurie boards, thatch baskets plaited and embellished with bold recycled materials, and larger installation pieces using traditional weaving patterns, and many others.

Ultimately, the National Gallery hopes to inspire the continuation of our traditional heritage in a way that is accessible and relevant to our youth, providing opportunities to further the skills and teachings of the traditional artists and to help support a sustainable craft industry for future generations.

Accompanying the exhibition will be a curator's lecture on the history of Caymanian heritage craft and contemporary art, our monthly artist-led Lunchtime Lecture Series (x3), a 'Late Night at the Gallery' Waurie tournament, weaving and gig making workshops, and a series of panel discussion and debates.

21st Century | Cayman Exhibition

Members Preview: February 25th, 2010, 5:30pm

General Opening: February 26th, 2010



National Gallery
Harbour Place

Sponsor: Butterfield



Exhibition concept and background

Renowned cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues that the development of a national culture is *both* an ongoing process *and* one rooted in tradition, a matter of becoming as well as being, a retelling of the past within the contemporary context as it were.

Each of the works in our 21st Century Cayman exhibition attempted to address this concept by revisiting our heritage within a contemporary context. Sharing skills, and ideas, while experimenting with newer, readily available materials we hoped to inspire the continuation of our traditional heritage in a way that was accessible and relevant to our younger generation.



Curatorial Mission

“In *21st Century Cayman* we challenged our traditional crafters and contemporary artists to re-imagine our heritage craft within a contemporary context. Working in pairs, they exchanged ideas, shared time honoured skills and explored new materials to create a fresh new vision that is both past and present Cayman.”

Natalie Urquhart - Curator





Project Objects

This project focused on the process as much as the final works for the exhibition. Our aim was:

- Skill transferral – traditional weaving and carving techniques passed on to contemporary artists through a three month apprentice programme
- A mutual ‘re-imagining’ of these skills to create new forms of artistic expression
- The sharing of skills with school children in exciting and accessible ways and using new contemporary materials
- Increasing the scope and commercial viability of the craft industry
- (start video...)



NATIONAL
GALLERY
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Traditional techniques, new subjects





Catboat sails as canvas





NATIONAL
GALLERY
CAYMAN ISLANDS

New materials





INSPIRATION...

THATCHING (continued)

Despite a strength which is somewhat inferior to that of sisal rope, thatch rope is more resistant to damage by salt water than either sisal or hemp. It was this rope that was used on all the old boats as well as for roping beds, and suspending hammocks. Years ago baskets and hats were exported from the Cayman Islands as well as to Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, but rope - made in West Bay, North Bay, and East End - not used on the island was shipped to Jamaica. In 1907, 515,000 fathoms were exported at five pounds a hundred fathoms; in 1909, 173,000 fathoms were shipped at 15 pounds a hundred fathoms. It was sold to local traders who in turn sold it to the government. It was then shipped in bulk to Jamaica where it was distributed by the Jamaica Co-operative Union. The sale of rope provided the only cash income for many families for many years. Some 300 to 400 persons were involved in rope making during the first half of the twentieth century. Export of rope declined from 1.3 million fathoms in 1964 to 127,450 fathoms in 1969 to none at all in 1970. Along with thatch sisal was woven and many persons made tiny boxes, fans and slippers. On the Brac, people make hats as well as table mats from the thatch palm. (Our Island Treasure, pg 14)



The palm used for plaiting is the thatch palm, a tall slender tree with silvery-green fan shaped leaves once used for making rope. The plaited baskets and hats were a secondary source for the strips. Baskets were used to carry produce and jars of water to thirsty workers. Baskets were sturdy and large and were carried on the back with the aid of a long strap which was placed across the forehead. The palms' buds dry a lovely sand color and each bud can be cut into three strands. Depending on the thickness of the woven strips needed, the weaver uses between fifteen and twenty-three strands in about nine varying patterns. The strips are then made into a basket or a hat. (Newswater, May 1982, page 1)

Thatch palms which formed the roofs of houses, also formed the base for most everyday chores, carrying sand, wood and provisions. They were also used for the Islands' vessels as well as for making baskets and hats for making. In addition plaiting thatch and making provided a livelihood for many people and was a significant export item. Women were predominant in the craft of plaiting. First they collected the unopened tops or unexpanded buds of the thatch palms, and ideally these tops were collected the day before the moon was full. The buds were then tied into bundles and left to dry the amount of sun or shade determined the color of the thatch. Several weeks later individual palm buds were cut from the leaves and then torn into decorative strips by the fingernail. Tops intended for hats were cut into strips and then separated into palm fingers. Unusually, hats were made of bands of palm fronds, cut into strips and then woven into fish hooks. Hats are made of bands of palm fronds, cut into strips and then woven into fish hooks.

Determination

There are literally hundreds of styles of plaiting, and color and style is passed on from one generation to another. These bands are sewn together with thatch into the desired product. They were taught this craft as children remember, 'about a dozen of us would take a job of about twenty five feet long -- and go 'round by Colliers an cut a whole pile of thatch into about three or four thousand leaves' and return to East End.

To make thatch rope, the palm shoots were split into strips about half an inch wide and six to eight inches long. Several of these strips are twisted together, looped around the other end, and the process started. As the twisting proceeds additional strips are tucked in with the other end of the strand diameter remains constant and enough friction present to prevent pulling apart. The strand is about one-quarter of an inch in diameter and roughly 30 feet long. The strips are laid back and forth between the knees and the foot as the length increased. The laying together of the ropes was started, usually in a long close-spined basket. The strands are attacked at one end to three spindles which were rotated side by side and at the other end to a single spindle. As two persons, one on each end, rotated the spindles in opposite directions, the rope is laid in the right hand direction from the strands. The strands are prevented knotting and to assure tightly laid rope a device is moved along just behind the strands as they are being twisted together. Containing three notches, this device, as the progressing lay, can spread the strands and make the lay tighter; if more than three strands are used, it can spread the strands and make the lay tighter; if more than three strands are used, it can spread the strands and make the lay tighter; if more than three strands are used, it can spread the strands and make the lay tighter.

IMPORTS

Value of the imports during the 30th month preceding the 30th month of 1904-05	£23,820 0 0
Value of the imports during the 30th month of 1904-05	20,840 0 0

EXPORTS

Total amount of the exports during the 30th month of 1904-05	£16,204 0 0
Total amount of the exports during the 30th month of 1904-05	11,920 14 0

The large excess of imports over the exports is accounted for as follows:

There are about 1,500 Cayman islanders employed in the West Indies, Central America, Mexico, Spanish Honduras, &c., and their families and relatives here, and they remit a considerable amount of money to these Islands.

Whalers trading between the Cayman Islands and elsewhere.

Chief Exports.

	1904-05.	1905-06.
Turtle	£ 4,158 0 0	5,627 12 0
Hawks-bill turtle-shell	1,080 18 0	1,548 0 0
Bape	425 8 0	680 10 0
Cattle and horses	1,337 10 0	577 0 0
Dried skins	869 18 0	805 0 0
Lignum	158 0 0	0 0 0
Coco-nuts	4,080 0 0	0 0 0
Pink pearls	216 0 0	0 0 0
Cowry shells	118 0 0	0 0 0

Staw rope industry pledge:



I do solemnly pledge my mind and hands for the production of standard quality of staw rope for the promotion of trade and commerce.

WORLD OF



Adult Education Programme


- *Screenings:*
 - Film maker Aston Ebanks airs *21st Century Cayman* and discusses the making of his documentary.
- *Lectures:*
 - Curator Natalie Urquhart will lead an informal tour of the new exhibition and discuss the history of traditional craft and contemporary art in Cayman
 - ‘The History of Catboats’, a lecture by the Cayman Catboat Club.
 - Lunchtime lecture: National Gallery curators will lead a, discussing various aspects of the artists’ work.
 - Art Forum: Panel Discussion surrounding the exhibitions concept – heritage and cultural development in 21st Century Cayman.
- *Events:*
 - Waurie Tournament: mediated by Wray Banker and Deals Ebanks of the Cayman Islands Traditional Arts Council.
- *Workshops:*
 - Gig Carving Workshop with Deal Ebanks.
 - Family Mornings at the National Gallery. Bring your family and enjoy of art activities related to the current exhibition.
 - Traditional crafters Miss Lizzie Powell, Miss Rosemay Ebanks and Miss Marlina Anglin will demonstrate the art of thatch craft.

21st Century Exhibition

"The History of Catboats"


A lecture by the
Cayman Catboat Club



Join members of the Catboat Club, Jerris Miller, Loxley Banks and Kem Jackson as they discuss the influence this vessel has had on our society throughout history.

**Saturday, 20th March
6:00pm**

National Gallery, Harbour Place
For info call 945-8111







21st Century Exhibition

The National Gallery Presents A Gig Carving Workshop with Deal Ebanks

Join us and learn how to create your very own traditional Gig, the game piece for one of Cayman's most popular pastimes.

\$25 for registration and materials.

Contact Kerri at 945-8111 for more details and to register.

Supported by Cayman Islands Traditional Arts Council (CITAC)

**Saturday, 24 April
11:00am to 4:00pm**

Will be held at the Gallery's Education Centre
(located at Miss Lassie's Duplex South Sound Road)

103 HARBOUR PLACE, GEORGE TOWN • 945.945.8111 • WWW.NATIONALGALLERY.ORG.KY




21st Century Exhibition



Waurie Tournament



Join us for a night of fun and friendly rivalry as you compete for the title of *Waurie Champion*

**Wednesday, 7th April
6:00pm to 9:00pm**

National Gallery, Harbour Place

Tournament mediated by Wray Banker and Deal Ebanks; both artists and members of the Cayman Islands Traditional Arts Council (CITAC).

Sponsored by Butterfield 

21st Century Exhibition



21st Century Cayman; A documentary by Aston Ebanks



View Mr. Ebanks' perspective of the artists behind the 21st Century Cayman exhibition. Take a look at how they have helped to keep Caymanian traditions alive.



\$5.00 admission or FREE for members.
For more information call 945-8111

**Tuesday 11th May
6:00pm**

Harbour Place

Sponsored by Butterfield  Supported by CITAC 


21st Century Exhibition


Thursday 4th March 6:00pm

This lecture accompanies the *21st Century Cayman* exhibition.

National Gallery Curator, Natalie Urquhart will lead an informal tour of the new exhibition discussing the history of traditional crafts and contemporary art in Cayman.

For more information
E-mail nat.gal@candw.ky
or call 945-8111.

Sponsored by Butterfield 





21st Century Exhibition

Traditional Craft Demonstration and School Tour

The NGCI will feature a selection of Cayman's well known artisans; Lizzie Powell, Mariena Anglin, Rose May Ebanks and Deal Ebanks.

Learn all about thatch plaiting, gig making, sewing and more.

**Wednesday 12th May
10:00am to 3:00pm**

National Gallery, Harbour Place

These skills will help to keep Caymanian traditions alive.



Call 945-8111 for more information or to book your school's tour!

Sponsored by Butterfield  Supported by CITAC 





School Programme

The aim of the extensive school programme was to provide students with:

- A clear understanding of the historical use of each craft form
- Hands on instruction of weaving and carving techniques
- An appreciation of new, sustainable materials
- Fun, educational activities that would instill a life long passion for Caymanian heritage craft





NATIONAL
GALLERY
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Guided School Tours





Follow-up Classroom activities

The comprehensive teachers guide included a series of cross-curricular lessons and activities designed to be incorporated into the existing curriculum. These included:

- Glossary of exhibition terms (def of globalization, heritage etc) and related questions
- Word searches
- History and uses of artifacts with trivia questions
- 'Compare and contrast' activities encouraging students to consider differences between the past and present
- Art activities
- Thatching activities

and more!





EXAMPLE ONE: WAURIE WARRIORS ACTIVITY

First the game was explained and the templates for creating a board and instructions for playing were provided:

(Def) Waurie is a game played in the Cayman Islands. Legend has it that the game was introduced to Grand Cayman by the pirate Black Beard after one of his voyages to Africa. The game uses a board of 12 holes called “bowls” and two stores at both ends called “mancalas”. At the start there are four seeds or nuts in each hole and each player claims one of the mancalas and the 6 bowls to the right of her mancala. On each turn, a player distributes the contents of one of her holes, one by seed is dropped into the player’s own mancala, she gets to move again. The turn is over if the last seed falls into a bowl or the opponent’s mancala. The game ends when all bowls of a player are empty. The player who has no seeds left in her bowls is the winner.



Nicker Seeds are the [seeds](#) of the gray “nickernut” shrub (*Caesalpinia bonduc*) and are maybe the most popular gaming counters used to play Waurie. The seeds are found usually in pairs, on pods protected by thorns.





EXAMPLE TWO: CATBOAT CREATIONS ACTIVITY

Information was provided on the history of catboats along with archival images and then.....



*Courtesy of the Cayman Islands
National Archive*



Create Your Own Catboat Sail!

To create your own catboat sail painting in the same style as Randy Cholette's "The Kings of Satura," in pencil, sketch out a rough drawing of the image you would like to depict on a bright piece of construction paper. Overtop of your drawing divide up your image into sections by drawing curving lines that go from one edge of your paper, right through your drawing to another edge. Go over each of your pencil lines with white glue then let the glue dry.....



EXAMPLE THREE: WEAVING ACTIVITY

Weaving a Thatch Wristband

Full instructions with diagrams were provided along with a variety of new styles and shapes to try out.





NATIONAL
GALLERY
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Craft demonstrations





Students had the chance to learn from traditional artists first hand



Teacher Feedback

“During the Spring and Summer term, year two students from Cayman Prep and High School have been looking at what influences artists and their personal representation of ideas through a piece of work; we discussed uses of technique, colour and content.

To assist our children in this we visited the National Gallery in March 2010 to specifically see some local Caymanian artist's work which was being displayed in the '21st Century' exhibition.

We were treated to an invaluable curator's explanation of the art works and understood that the artists had been briefed to make artwork that tied Past and Present Cayman which helped the student's understand the particular influence of these works. The children were delighted to hear about the history behind the works and to see such a variety of techniques used to create pieces.”

Lorien Neale, Cayman Prep School

Back in the classroom students created their catboat 'art'



trip to the
onal Art
inspired us
ate work
on what we
saw.

2N's Art Gallery



Exhibition Outcomes

- Development of the Teachers Guide and activity pack into school book on arts and crafts in Cayman
- Take a Look programme (art history for students) using exhibition images
- Creation of a permanent ‘on demand’ craft workshop series at the National Gallery
- Continuation of apprenticeship opportunities for artist and younger students
- Increased access to, and awareness of, heritage craft industries within school system
- Revitalization of craft industry – new styles and materials with traditional techniques
- New partnership opportunities for artists and traditional artisans
- Platform for continuing dialogue within the arts community