

Chris Christian



Image: Chris Christian, *Bath Pan #2*, from a private collection

“I’m influenced by water, the movement of water, the flow of it. Sometimes my art has a lot to do with the flow and movement of the ocean.”

This information pack has been kindly sponsored by:

DART
CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Artist

Chris Christian was born and raised in the Cayman Islands.

He is a self-taught artist, advocate for local traditional and contemporary art and curator.

Christian attended university in Canada and studied graphic design. He soon became disenchanted with the industry which was becoming more reliant on computer use. He became a draftsman for a while and helped his father in construction before discovering his love for painting. Christian eventually joined the Native Sons and exhibited with them at numerous exhibitions locally.

Christian started Cayman Traditional Arts (CTA), a heritage programme where instructors visit primary schools often to promote awareness and appreciation of traditional Caymanian craft and fine art. CTA also offers adult workshops. In 2003, he received a Lifetime Achievement award recognizing his contributions to the art scene in Cayman.

Another opportunity for involvement in the arts in Cayman presented itself in 2006 when the Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman asked him to curate their gallery. Over the last decade he has arranged several exhibitions per year and new local artists often debut their work at this venue.

Christian's artwork can be found in the collections of the Cayman National Museum, the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, and numerous private collections.

The Artwork

Reminiscent of his upbringing, *Bath Pan #2*, is of Christian's earliest works. In the painting he captures the nostalgia of being bathed outdoors in a galvanized bathtub. This was common practise up until the Cayman Islands' newfound prosperity in the 1970's. His portfolio of semi-abstract aims to visually archive aspects of Caymanian heritage.

Like other early works he was not content just depicting the scene but wanted to capture how it would feel. Thus he incorporated fragmented, undulating brushstrokes throughout the artwork to mimic the flow of water. The painting shies away from the use of warm colours and vivid, saturated hues of blue and green are used instead.

Discussion

- Consider what emotions are evoked by *Bath Pan #2*. How does the painting feel?
- Discuss the artist's choice to include the ocean in the background of this painting.
- Undeniably the painting espouses movement. Discuss with a classmate where your eyes are directed to when viewing this artwork.



Photograph courtesy of:
Cayman Reporter

Making Comparisons

- Visit <http://www.wikiart.org/en/edvard-munch> to view the artwork of Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch, particularly his later works.
- Consider the similarities between his style and Christian's, especially the brushstrokes and colours. How does Munch's artwork make you feel? How does that contrast to your emotive response to Christian's?

Follow Up Activities



Image: Chris Christian (2007), *Reflecting*, from the collection of the artist

- Create a drawing of a catboat on watercolour paper. Paint it using warm colours in watercolour. Once dry, dip your painting into a bath of water and tilt it at 45 degrees to let the colours drip and run together much like how Christian has done in his painting, *Reflecting*.
- Document this process, your thoughts and feeling and your results in detail.