

tween the subjects which becomes the "real" subject of the image. For example we see Christ but not the cross, and Christ’s body is felt more present in the surrounding nails. The keyhole shape of the halo is particularly efficient at conveying the time-space, or 5th dimension, of a miracle happening. Equally important is the fact that the image can be viewed from the back, where the image disintegrates into light and becomes semi-abstract – the artist’s intention to convey Heaven, unseen with the eyes, but sensed and recognized in the prayer.

17. Mind Giants
Randy Chollette



In style this painting is inspired by Cubism, the 20th century art movement in which a single viewpoint was abandoned in favour of geometric shapes and interlocking planes. Here we can still recognise images: the mythological hybrid of a half-human and half-bird, standing on the head of a person putting a finger or an instrument to his/her mouth. However the breakdown of mass is much more radical in the middle right part of the composition and indicates the artists' intention to make one or more images less comprehensible, presumably to stress ideological questions over iconographic representation. The English art critic Berger identifies the diagram as a model of Cubism, "the diagram being a visible symbolic representation of invisible processes, forces and structures." (see #2)

18. Coming into Stillness
Avril Ward



The next logical step to the compression process of an image is abstraction, which is essentially the synthesis of images into an idea. Thinking in abstractions is believed to have developed in close connection with the development of human language. Abstractions are in essence conceptual works and a space for contemplation.

19. Paladin’s Quest
Aston Ebanks



This floor installation is interactive: the viewer is invited to walk on it and re-arrange the squares to find the image made by the large black brushstrokes, like in a sliding puzzle. This assemblage has important implications on the spectator: the minute we start moving in and out the tiles, we become stimulated as creators and re-creators of art. (compare with #23)

20. Crucero Transparente
21. La Puerta Marcha



Anyelmaidelyn Calzadilla Fernandez

For this series the Cuban artist appropriated mechanical drawings from old Soviet books, which not only show how we depend on images for instruction and recreation but also reflect the artist’s own dependency on images when she was confronted with an obsolete literature in a foreign language. Calzadilla transformed these mechanical drawings to combine her personal story with Cuban socio-historical histories. ‘I feel part of a social group at the expense of superior mechanisms

that conditioned my destination, and that I am in a constant fight to survive’. By integrating speech bubbles into her own ‘primitive and organic’ interpretations, the artist created scenes that are simultaneously dark (impossibility) and becoming (hope).

22. Silenciosa
23. Obediente
Patssy Higuchi



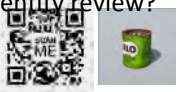
The first question these work ask is ‘what is a woman?’. The titles imply an implicit submissiveness of women despite the source of the speech bubbles being unclear. The oppressed state is reinforced by the outfits that, like straight-jackets, prevent the women from becoming full-scale human beings (note the absence of arms and the unfinished legs). "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", wrote Simone de Beauvoir - however these women’s attempt to deploy their butterfly wings or peacock feathers feel vain in every sense of the word.

24. A Lil’ Bit Nah Gah Kill Ya’
Wray Banker



This witty artwork on the theme of identity purposely looks like a logo. This is because a logo is designed for a purpose: to give an identity. All designers learn that a logo requires clear definition, a definite vision and a contemporary face – it cannot look tatty, and yet must have a consistency that helps with recognition. Locking up the word ‘Caymanian’ like a brand is inviting us to contemplate the concept like a brand. What does ‘Caymanian’ mean, look like? Does it show younger audiences, for example, an exciting, dynamic way of ‘being’? Is the brand suffering and needs a new look? What would studios do if we were to tender for an identity review?

25. 3 A Lick, No Taws
Wray Banker



In theme and technique the painting is characteristic of Pop Art, one of the major movement of the 20th century. The can of chocolate drink mix evokes the notorious 32 cans of Campbell’s soup painted by the eccentric American artist Andy Warhol, but here Banker is illustrating mass *customization* rather than mass *consummation*. The painting is compartmentalised and ordered like a comic strip. However, if you look closely, you’ll notice that each illustration is in fact on its own panel. You get a sense that one picture can be taken out and another inserted in its place, re-arranged to suit another occasion and that the painting has become a product which can be tailored also to the viewer’s tastes. (compare with #19)

26. Cayman Series (9 pieces)
Allison Lasley



Over the course of several years, the American artist painstakingly created her own artistic archive of her personal experiences, in the form of thousands watercolours in standard size, almost like cards in a rolodex. One assumes that her process is an attempt to make sense of the world, but the works clearly reveal a disruption of conventional order,

whether verbal or physical - words are split into sounds and semantically reordered; objects are embedded to represent something else. Once fragmented, a new transient order emerges from the chance juxtaposition of these individual works, from their inherent correspondences and relationships. Perhaps Lasley shows that any order, however beautiful, is only ever arbitrary and only ever temporary.

27. One for All
NGCI Installation



Which one is the chair? If both the photograph and the words merely describe a chair, how is their functioning different from that of the real chair? What is this artwork doing by adding these functions together? And how does the inclusion of an object in an artwork somehow change it? When we are prodded to ask such questions, we embark on the basic processes demanded by Conceptual art. Chasing a chair through three different registers, Kosuth asks us to try to decipher the subliminal sentences in which we phrase our experience of art.

28. The Outsider Series No. 4,5,6
Pippa Ridley



This series is a short artistic attempt at condensing the key themes in *L'Étranger (The Stranger)* by Albert Camus, particularly the theme of alienation. Like the title character of the novel, regarded as a stranger in society because of his indifference towards other people and therefore towards humankind, the artwork prompts us to ask whether we are isolated from each other by the modern world and technology (compare with #27).

29. Synesthesia
William Verhoeven



This ‘reality creative’ art invites you to type your words and see them become colours and sound. The coding for this work was based on the colour theory of the Russian Abstract painter Kandinsky and on the music theory of Classical Modes. You can access the web page from any device to contribute in situ or remotely, on your own or with others. The work is a reflection on how we are now so inextricably interconnected that artists communicating purely at a cultural level may become unthinkable, even if it were desirable. While we do not know how the internet will affect art in the future, the artwork points to this evolution.



Speak to Me

Understanding the Language of Art

An art Exhibition of works by Cayman and International artists
24 September 2016—12 January 2017

How do artists communicate? Is Art a language?
Speak To Me explores answers to these questions. All the artworks exhibited have been chosen because they seek to establish an emotional, sensual or intellectual connection with the viewers. From the traditional use of signs and symbols to the conceptual language of installations, the artists have handled visual terms to share an idea, whether openly or in subtle - even unintentional - ways. The title of the exhibition is a call to face these artworks with confidence and to engage more deeply by going beyond appearances and aesthetic appeal. In some cases, artworks even refuse to be aesthetically pleasing; in others, some artworks refuse to contain anything at all, and seem to challenge the very concept of Art as a language, or that Art should mean anything. But even then, the nothingness or the rejection of interpretation becomes the very subject.

Some academics, mostly linguists, object that art cannot be technically a language because it is not a complex constructed system. However Art theorists argue that art is also built of interdependent structural units, such as shape, line, colour, form, motion, texture, pattern, scale, angle, space and proportion. The only difference is that the elements of art represent con-



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cepts in a spatial context, rather than the linear form used by words.

Of course, words are more comprehensible and easier to use to deliver a message – this very essay would not be necessary otherwise if the exhibition could speak as easily for itself. However, it is becoming apparent that words are no longer the main vehicles for communication: Emojis are taking over and have become a defined auxiliary language, evolving and adapting as all genuine languages do. Every stage of the digital revolution in language – email, text, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat – has been greeted with the prediction that language will be destroyed. Why? What is the power of images?

It is now widely accepted that the two hemispheres of the brain deal with different kinds of thought, and that the mind thinks at its deepest level through ‘sensory’ rather than ‘cognitive’ processes. Likewise, artists communicate at a sensory level, often treating subjects which cannot be expressed in words alone. They use symbols which carry emotional and intellectual weight, and which can be universally understood. These images alone do not supplant words, but artists have a very special ability to articulate them to share human experiences that speak directly to our common humanity. As such, art is a fundamental and unique form of communication.

Art, then, is perhaps the language that speaks most completely to us. If so, hopefully this exhibition can help viewers ‘hear’ it with their eyes, interpret it through their usual vocabulary and respond to it with the depth it asks of us all.

Emé Paschalides – Curator
Kerri-Anne Chisholm – Assistant Curator

To learn more about the artists featured in the exhibition, download a free QR reader on your device.

Android users:
Go to the Play Store app on your device. Click the search icon in the top right corner. Search for QR reader. Select QR Code Reader and install.
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Free wifi is available throughout the NGCI Exhibition Hall.

Name: Natl Gallery Guests
Password: none

1. Mr. Paul Clay
Wray Banker



This doodle records ‘accidentally’ on a fax paper what was on the artist’s mind during a telephone conversation – a triple take on communication and the illusion that it has taken place.

2. I Will Listen When Art Tries to Speak to Me
NGCI Installation



This installation shows that language has made-up rules that we all agree to follow and that conventional notions of art may be as ingrained, passed down, and unquestioned as rules of language. Artists like Baldessari aimed to show that these rules are arbitrary and open to interpretation. Baldessari described his conceptual works as “what I thought art should be, not what somebody else would think art would be. You know, received wisdom, what you would get in school. And so a lot of my work was about questioning this received wisdom.”

3. The Gentleman’s Recreation
Richard Blome



One of the great 17th c. titles, consisting of an Encyclopaedia of the Arts and Sciences and a treatise on outdoor pursuits for gentlemen. This first plate covers all the subjects of interest to a gentleman, from logic to painting. The English art critic John Berger wrote that a diagram “differs from that of the mirror in that it suggests a concern with what is not self-evident.” Equally, artists are usually less concerned with mirroring reality than representing invisible thoughts symbolically. (compare with #17)

4. Along the Same Lines
Avril Ward



Encaustic painting is also known as hot wax painting and involves using heated beeswax to which coloured pigments are added. The liquid or paste is then applied to a surface—usually prepared wood, though canvas and other materials are often used.

5. Homage to Cayos Miskitos
Soundings in Fathoms No. 2
Bendel Hydes



This work employs a vocabulary of topography and the symbolism of the hourglass to explore the concept of human existence and place in the physical world as fleeting, since the ‘sands of time’ will run out for every human life. This is an early example of the artist’s attempt to “traverse the boundary between physical abstraction and emotional reality”.

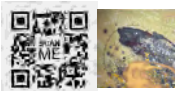
6. Study for The Copse
David Bridgeman



A copse is a thicket of bushes or a small stand of trees, which can provide a good hiding place during a game of hide-and-seek. The word is not found much in everyday use and its closeness in spelling to the word ‘corpse’ is, intentionally or not, suggesting a secondary meaning to the work, particularly

in conjunction to the artist’s second work on exhibit (#13). This sketchbook is a good illustration of how artists can borrow from evocative maps to develop their visual language. Please feel free to look through the book, especially pages 53-61 which relate directly to Study for The Copse (#5).

7. Soundings in Fathoms Series #19
Bendel Hydes



This almost abstract painting is using the vocabulary and the imagery of a nautical chart. The beauty of the graphism and the mystery of the symbols, provided to navigators so that they don’t get lost at sea or encounter possible hazards, is deepened by the artist’s annotations which evoke the unknown fate of mariners’ – and all men.

8. Collecting Turtles
Simon Tatum



The nostalgia for a Caymanian past is strongly evoked by the symbol of the turtle, once a staple diet and industry to the Cayman Islands, but also by the acetate on which the image is painted, which evokes analogue photography. Light interacts with the artwork like the chemicals in the negative film, as if the image was coming to life in a photo lab. The black and white saturation is dramatic, and the grain of the ink adds soul and character to the image, which conjures dream-like memories.

9. Drifting Dreaming
Gordon Solomon



This painting is about the plight of our neighbours in Cuba as well as the thousands of migrants travelling across the Mediterranean Sea in search for a better life. Note the faceless figures – they could be anybody anywhere – and how they help both viewers and the artist unfold a story within the artwork.

10. Baby with the Bathwater
Nasaria Suckoo Chollette



The dichotomy between nature and culture forms part of the thematic structure of this painting and is played out in the relationship between the treatment of the two legs and the two arms: the untainted blue colour representing nature, and the assortment of collage and mixed paint, representing culture. The theme is further developed in the bowl which evokes enclosure and exposure, beginning and end, past and future. The conflict can be interpreted in a number of other ways: in historical terms, as nature contends against industrialization (the fish-shoe); in psychological and spiritual terms (the mono eye); and in philosophical and social terms, in the debate of nature v. nurture (the seeds and the roots).

11. Ouroboros
Saskia Eubanks



The ouroboros is an ancient symbol depicting a serpent eating its own tail and which, in western modern symbolism, represents self-reflexivity, the eternal return or cyclicity, especially in the sense of something constantly re-creating itself such as the infinite cycle of nature's endless creation and de-

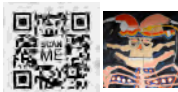
struction, life and death. Carl Jung interpreted the Ouroboros as having an archetypal significance to the human psyche. It is interesting to compare this painting with the previous one (#10) which treats very similar themes.

12. The Women Have Become the Truth
Nasaria Suckoo Cholette



The subject of this painting is the Apartheid and the history of women’s struggle in South Africa. The power of the painting comes from its three-parts composition echoed in the triple corns, and the tension created between images that are both antagonistic and subtly complimentary: the flower, for example, is seemingly blossoming under the free words coming out as well as gagging the mouth to silence.

13. Last Tango In...
David Bridgeman



In 2010, the artist was diagnosed with cancer. The ephemeral and the transience of time were themes always implied in his works, but they became more explicitly about death after his illness. This is a striking self-portrait in which the direct symbol of a skeleton tells of the struggle to remain alive. By crowning the skeleton with a jester’s hat, the artist reminds us – and himself - that ‘Death always has the last laugh’.

14. Aller Simple (One Way)
Executé (Executed)
L’Appât (The Bait)
Gilbert de Vries



The work of this artist draws on influences from classical bas-reliefs to the assemblage art of the 50’s and is distinctive for its recurrent use of an egg, which throughout the ages has symbolized new beginnings, the spark of creation, fertility, purity and rebirth. The artist was living in Holland and aged 10 when the Nazis took his father to a concentration camp, after bombarding and invading the country. These references to imprisonment, summary execution and abuse of human rights are evidence of the artist’s search for a meaning to existence in an absurd world.

15. A Sight in the Night Sky
Gladwyn ‘Miss Lassie’ Bush



The self-taught artist revisited traditional Christian symbols with a personal and perhaps more authentic approach to image-making than non-intuitive artists. Observe for example the treatment of the halo and the ingenuity of the two little feet attached to it, to signify the spiritual body in the most unassuming way. Compare this to Dali’s treatment of the same symbol (#16).

16. Christ of the Communion
Salvador Dali (Spanish, 1904-1989)



From 1949 on, Dali had found a mystical meaning for life and began to explore Christian symbols. The artist explained that he felt things were made up of energy rather than solid mass. In this work we can appreciate his effort to make visible an invisible reality (the classic definition of a sacrament) through the treatment of negative space - the space around and be-