

# IDEA LAB

## Learn & Create

The Idea Lab is a space for children and adults to connect with the exhibition through activities and educational videos.

Draw your own self portrait, or create a self portrait photograph in the Selfie Station.

Visit the Lower Exhibition Hall and find your space to learn and create.



### CONTACT US

For more information on upcoming events please get in touch by emailing [info@nationalgallery.org.ky](mailto:info@nationalgallery.org.ky) or by calling (345) 945 8111.

#MediatingSelf | @NatGalCayman | [www.nationalgallery.org.ky](http://www.nationalgallery.org.ky)

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30 Jun - 21 Sept 2017

# MEDIATING SELF

Identity and the Body

Passiva, Patssy Higuchi, lithograph, 2001



NATIONAL GALLERY  
CAYMAN ISLANDS



# INTRODUCTION

This exhibition investigates the realm of identities and concepts of self, an important topic as we navigate our increasingly globalized world. Historically, artworks of the human body have, and continue to fulfill specific functions. Portraits and figures were important in documenting historical events and societal structures. Additionally, by including symbols and metaphors, they were also used to provide a biography of the individuals portrayed, and examine the identities of individuals or groups of people.



**Washing Line, Charles Long**

Known for documenting daily life, Long captured scenes in the Cayman Islands that are no longer commonplace. This is particularly evident in this painting, as he depicts a daily chore that has been significantly altered by the technology of modern dryers and washing machines.



**Unidentified Caymanian Women, Simon Tatum**

The images in this series were found in the Cayman Islands National Archives (CINA), where the women were listed as unidentified. Traditionally, women's identities were defined and linked by others -first by their family, and later indefinitely to their husband. However, in our contemporary society women have gained the rights to work, vote and independently hold their names and identities.



**Carnival Duppy, Nasaria Suckoo Chollette**

This series by Suckoo Chollette examines the exclusion of individuals in our society due to mental health struggles. She focuses on the physical appearances of these individuals that serve as both personal protection through further exclusion, and signal for attention and assistance. The title takes its name from the colourful appearance, and the duppy or ghost-like existence of the individual.



**Jonah and The Fish, Gladwyn "Miss Lassie" Bush**

"Miss Lassie" used Biblical stories to illustrate events in her life and local community. In this painting she uses the story of Jonah to portray a tragic event in which some family members and friends drowned at sea.

Artists have portrayed themselves directly and indirectly to critically examine and further understand these influences. Struggles with mental health, acceptance and rejection within social circles, body image, and rites of passage are some of the topics raised. We are made aware of the conscious and unconscious behaviours that construct our multiple identities, and the ways in which these identities play a role in our communities and the world at large.

**Into Being, Randy Chollette**

With this work Chollette examines the process of formation. Seeking to highlight the laws behind the physical world that affect atoms turning them into what we see, he questions what changes we would make in our decisions if we could see the effect before the cause.



**Harold's Picky Head Boy, Gordon Solomon**

This painting illustrates Solomon's struggles with his hair as a young man. Dealing with the insecurities and negative connotations in having a picky head, he aims to negate the delusive concept of having "good hair" as a defining trait of which makes all things possible for the possessor.



**Looking Glass, Simon Tatum**

Recreating an image from the CINA, Tatum uses pastels to capture the islands' heritage and cultural identity by highlighting the traditional looking glass used when fishing. In appropriating the image, he seeks to "legitimise" Caymanian history by transforming it into a classical European painting.



**Joy Unspeakable, Avril Ward**

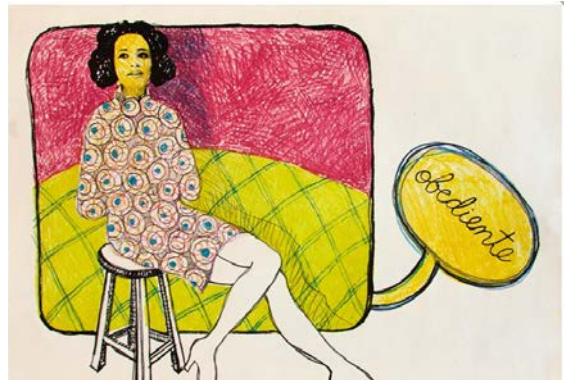
This sculpture by Ward illustrates the artist's connection and training as a professional jazz and contemporary dancer. It examines the extent in which we utilise the body to express emotion through movement.





# SELF REFLECTION

When do we become aware of our sense of self? How is it formed? Once formed, does it remain static, or is it fluid? The ways we view and depict ourselves and those around us change as a result of external and internal influences. External influences significantly impact the physical ways we develop and interact with our identities, and have a domino effect on our internal sense of self.



**Obediente, Patssy Higuchi**

This series of lithographs directly address societal expectations of women existing within the artist's home of Latin America and the Caribbean. The adjectives within the speech bubbles annotate the desired characteristics of the figures, who appear to be bound within their dresses and physical appearances.



**Collapse, Cassandra Shea**

Abandoning the circuit between travel and time, Shea uses film to explore the mental health of herself after a journey and her mania has come to an end. The angle places the viewer in a godlike position, exaggerating the insignificance of the artist, who is being consumed by her setting and mental state.



**If Anyone Knows Why, David Bridgeman**

Imitating criminal mugshots, Bridgeman uses photography to reference the standard application requirement in obtaining Caymanian status that ended in the early 2000s. The applicant's photograph was placed in the newspaper, opening opportunities for local residents to submit evidence against the applicant as deemed necessary.

# WORK LIFE

Men and women in the Cayman Islands have looked to the sea and land in varying degrees for sustenance and career opportunities. The traditional and idyllic images of Barwick's *Picking Breadfruit* and Sibley's *Fishermen* are shown alongside contrasting present-day career illustrations; *Portrait of William 'Bill' Walker*, founder of Walkers law firm, and the landscaper at war with his environment in *The Leaf Blower II* by Broad.

**Portrait of William S. Walker, Joanne Sibley**

In keeping with classical portraiture, Sibley expertly conveys the importance of the individual portrayed. Here we see William Walker, founder of the internationally renowned law firm of the same name, captured in what is presumed to be his office of practice.



**The Leaf Blower II, John Broad**

This watercolour illustrates a contemporary landscaping profession, the leaf blower. Here Broad highlights the juxtaposition of the landscaper dressed in what resembles a Stormtrooper's outfit -used to protect himself from the sun- going to war with his environment. He works to present manicured surroundings, and every leaf out of place is removed as he takes rule over nature.



**Picking Breadfruit, Jan Barwick**

Barwick presents a stylised illustration of individuals picking breadfruit -a starchy food staple in traditional Cayman cuisine. Here we see individuals in a setting that translates necessity as both a domestic chore and career.





# RELATIONSHIPS

Familial and social responsibilities form a significant part of our day-to-day lives. Our social identities are shaped by the affiliations we form, and activities we take part in – such as schools attended or storytelling over a game of dominoes. Contentment or errors in these networks critically shape aspects of our sense of self.



## ***Madonna, Gladwyn "Miss Lassie" Bush***

Facilitated by the use of Biblical characters, "Miss Lassie" illustrates the connection she shared with her mother, and later the love and devotion she felt for her son. The size of the painting invites the viewer closer, further highlighting the intimacy of parent-child relations.



## ***Untitled III & IV, Nelson Dominguez***

This series of lithographs depicts the dynamics of traditional family units. Here we see a female figure portrayed as mother and caregiver, and the male as provider and protector of the unit. From the illustrations we are made to assume that the figures are connected in a traditional domestic union.



## ***Miracle, Judy Singh***

Created to celebrate the birth of Singh's firstborn, this video examines family relationships from the perspective of a new mother. Singh questions the experiences and histories her son will have as a Third Culture child -having parents with different national and cultural backgrounds, and where these experiences will take him.

# SOCIAL LIFE

## ***Among Friends, Al Ebanks***

Ebanks created this painting in response to his participation in the carnival group, the Mudders -who were eventually banned from carnival festivities. The use of dark colours highlight the mixed feelings of the artist in regards to expression and censorship.



## ***Carnival Dancers, Chris Mann***

In this painting, Mann celebrates the spirit of carnival in the Caribbean, specifically in the Cayman Islands. Through the use of bright colours and movement of brush strokes, Mann captures the expressive and lighthearted nature of carnival.



## ***Untitled - Cleaning Fish, Cayman Brac, Greg Lipton***

With this figurative work Lipton captures the social experience of fishing in the Cayman Islands. Used as both livelihood and leisure activity, it is commonplace to see fishermen gathered on shore to clean their catch and share their adventures after a night or full day at sea.



## ***Radley Gourzong Playing Fiddle, Chris Mann***

Honoured as a cultural treasure, Radley Gourzong is acknowledged and appreciated for his great fiddle playing skills. Playing both solo and with the group, "Radley Gourzong and the Happy Boys" he has helped to create many fond memories in the Cayman Islands for locals and visitors alike, including the royal family.

