

Watermarks: a fresh look at our landscape



Joanne Sibley stands between two of her beautifully detailed watercolours, 'Fishermen' and 'Miss Dorath Bush's Home-South Sound'

Art instructor Pauline Ronald besides her painting, 'Gender Gap.'

By Christopher Tobutt

A NEW exhibition of watercolour paintings, called Watermarks, has opened at the National Gallery at Harbour Place in George Town.

The medium of watercolour is ideal for the depiction of Cayman's landscapes; the nuances of light and tone, the brightness of the sun on the water, or shining through foliage, the subtlety of the changing sky at sunrise or at sunset, is suited to the translucence of watercolours.

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'Fishermen,' she wrote: "This is a scene I have interpreted many times from on-site paintings, sketches and photographs. It is such a well-known seaside location in George Town."

Another painting, 'Miss Dorath Bush's Home-South Sound' is a gentle painting, depicting a friends' garden in South Sound. Ms Sibley said that the painting reminded her "of all the happy times we had there."

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At this exhibition with

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The light transmitted through the washes of colour makes them vivid, giving them a depth and richness, and bringing them alive, in contrast to the reflection from opaque paints such as oil or acrylic, that so often seems flat and lifeless.

Pauline Ronald, an art instructor with Cayman Gallery's continuing education programme has one of her own paintings on display.

Striking and original, it is a painting of a group of standing nudes, using stencil and airbrush techniques. The figures are painted with limbs and features suggested rather than explicitly depicted, and however hard one stares, one cannot quite see which of the figures are men and which are women. The painting is called 'Gender Gap.'

Joanne Sibley has been painting in oil and watercolour for many years. She paints with an eye for detail, but her paintings are never cluttered.

About her painting,

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At this exhibition with two paintings in particular, 'In My Garden,' and 'Peaceful Palms,' she shows that by returning to her original medium, watercolour, she can actually transcend the limitations of paint.

It is as if we are actually transported into the garden with Ms Bending and we are surprised that we cannot feel the warm sun on our faces and our hands.

This exciting exhibition speaks of re-growth and renewal. The new leaves struggling to appear on the trees since the devastation of Hurricane Ivan are echoed in these beautiful and evocative paintings, most of them painted before Ivan.

They help us to remember Cayman's landscape in full glory, while we look forward with hope and anticipation to the time when the renewal will be complete.



A close up of Joanne Sibley's painting "Fishermen"