



CREATIVITY : HERITAGE : EDUCATION

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Winners Announced for the 28th Annual National Arts & Culture Awards

Twelve of Cayman's cultural practitioners and preservationists will be honoured for their contribution to the country's arts and cultural legacy at the Cayman National Cultural Foundation's 28th annual National Arts and Culture Awards which takes place on Thursday, 17 February at the Harquail Theatre.

Charles Long, Donna Bryan, Margaret Barwick, Natalie Urquhart, Jawara, Ky-Mani Rudolph Davis III (posthumous), Yonier Powery Serrano, Simon Tatum, the Cayman Art Week Committee, Staff of the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands and Stoak'd (Marc & Pam Laurenson) will be recognised for their talent and expertise in the areas of fine arts, fashion design, entertainment, digital art marketing, thatch making and cultural and historic preservation. Prolific visual artist Bendel Hydes will be given the Visionary Award.

National Arts and Culture Awards are given to those who have made a significant contribution to arts and culture or achieved a high-quality body of creative work. The honourees will be presented with their awards at a formal ceremony surrounded by family and friends. In addition, presentations will be made to the sponsor of the year and the recipient of the Chairman's Award for long-term support of CNCF's work. Due to COVID gathering restrictions, the event is invitation-only

Cultural and heritage organisations, as well as the general public, were asked to submit nominations for the CNCF Heritage Cross and Star for Creativity in the Arts. A CNCF-appointed committee ultimately chose the recipients. Nominations are open between January and September each year.

CNCF Heritage Cross

The CNCF Heritage Cross award is reserved for individuals and groups who have a consistent and active, quality engagement in the preservation and/or celebration of Caymanian cultural heritage. The award has three levels: GOLD for a lifetime of high-quality engagement; SILVER (minimum of 10 years) and BRONZE (minimum of 5 years).

CNCF Star for Creativity in the Arts

The CNCF Star for Creativity in the Arts is awarded for artistic endeavour, achievement and excellence in the arts. Like the Heritage Cross, the Star for Creativity also has three levels reflecting the span of the artist's work and/or its overall impact.

“We recognise now, as we do annually through our National Arts and Culture Awards, the many heroic Caymanians – old and young, sung and unsung, past and present – who built the traditions of community, patriotism, love, loyalty, industry, sharing and caring. We are as certain as anyone can be that if Cayman is to retain any semblance of the country that gives substance and meaning to these values of humanity, we must retain and hold them steadfastly as the pillars upon which our future is built.” said Marcia Muttoo, CNCF Managing Director.

GOLD HERITAGE CROSS AWARDEES

Charles Long moved to the Cayman Islands with his family in the late 1960s and began an art career spanning over half a century. A founding member of the Visual Arts Society, Long crafted his own visual aesthetic that is quintessentially Caymanian. His paintings employ a stylistic language that represents the emergence of a distinct voice in Caymanian art, one that is vernacular and rooted in the sensory experience, landscapes and seascapes of our islands. His work has achieved iconic status and is easily recognisable for its brightly coloured palette and flattened, mural-style of depiction.

Long's work is held in the collections of the Cayman Islands National Museum and the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, as well as numerous private collections, and has been featured in countless National Gallery exhibitions, including a career retrospective in 2002. In 2017, he received the CNCF's Star for Creativity, GOLD.

Donna Bryan grew up in Cayman Brac and from the age of 10 was taught by her mother how to plait silver thatch palm. When she came over to Grand Cayman to live, she continued with her thatching skills.

Ms. Bryan has taught thatching in all but one public school, including her visits to the John Gray High School (JGHS) during lunch times. Government funds were allocated to assist with the JGHS initiative and during one of the school's Professional Development days, Ms. Bryan came in and shared her knowledge with the teachers in the Art Department who embraced the class and decided to offer it to Key Stage 3 students as part of the curriculum during the term. Ms. Bryan has also taught thatching at a few private schools. Her thatch pieces have been showcased by Girls Brigade International,

at Heritage Week (formerly known as Pirates Week) and the Kimpton Seafire Resort & Spa.

GOLD STAR FOR CREATIVITY AWARDEES

In 1977 **Margaret Barwick** arrived in the Cayman Islands from her homeland of New Zealand via the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Malawi. She quickly became involved in the establishment of the Visual Arts Society (VAS), the islands' first formal art collective. Subsequently, she headed the first Cayman Islands contingent to CARIFESTA IV in Barbados in 1981.

Barwick has also designed national stamps, created the Tortola, BVI's J. R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens, played a leading role in the design of the Cayman Islands Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park and wrote the authoritative *Tropical and Subtropical Trees: A Worldwide Encyclopaedic Guide* (2004).

Barwick's work has been exhibited in London, New Zealand, Malawi, Barbados, France and the Cayman Islands and can be found in the collections of the Cayman Islands National Museum and the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands.

Natalie Urquhart is the Director and Chief Curator of the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI). She has worked within the regional cultural sector for over 20 years and is a leading authority on Caymanian art and culture, and author of the islands' first formal art history.

In 2019 she established the *Cayman Islands Biennial* – the country's first multi-venue tri-island contemporary art project – and more recently launched the inaugural Cayman Art Week in response to the impact of the pandemic on the creative sector. Her own curatorial practice explores the influence of traditional cultural heritage and memory on contemporary art in the Cayman Islands, which has led to over 30 exhibition projects including *21st Century Cayman*, *The Persistence of Memory*, *Tidal Shift*, *REVIVE – Contemporary Caymanian Craft*, *Upon the Seas*, and *The Art of Fashion*.

Urquhart is a former President of the Museums Association of the Caribbean (2017-2020) and has served on the Boards of the Tilting Axis - Caribbean Art Alliance, the Visual Arts Society, the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce, and the Cayman Islands Constitution Commission, among others. She is the recipient of the Young Caymanian Leadership Award, 2011, a CNCF Star for Creativity in the Arts, Silver 2009 and Heritage Cross, Silver 2015, and a Cayman Islands Literary Award, 2017. In 2022 she was recognised with a British Empire Medal in the Queens Honours List for her services to arts and culture in the Cayman Islands and the wider region.

SILVER STAR FOR CREATIVITY AWARDEES

Jawara Alleyne is a Caymanian artist and fashion designer whose work deals with questions of cultural identity from a Caribbean perspective. In 2013 he received a

scholarship from the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI) and Deutsche Bank, which he used to pursue a bachelor's degree in Fashion Design and Marketing at The London College of Fashion. Following his graduation in 2016 Alleyne co-founded the diversity conscious Nii model agency in London with photographer and collaborator Campbell Addy. He also completed a master's degree in Fashion Design at Central Saint Martin's, London in 2020.

Alleyne's work was featured in the NGCI exhibition *Art of Fashion* (2018) and *Cross Currents - 1st Cayman Islands Biennial* in 2019. He is an avid representative of the Cayman Islands internationally, representing Cayman at the 2017 CARIFESTA festival and in London at the United Kingdom Overseas Territory Association (UKOTA). In 2018, he received a CNCF Star for Creativity, BRONZE.

Ky-Mani Davis – affectionately known as Rudolph, DJ TNT, and Rudy – was born in Grand Cayman on 20th January 1975 to the late Rudolph Davis II, and Sonia Davis, who emigrated from Belize. Around 1986, he learned to mix music under the tutelage of Neil Sambula a.k.a. "DJ Neil Sam", and deejayed alongside his lifelong friend, Arek Gardner a.k.a. "DJ Atom Skillz".

An in-demand DJ, Rudolph travelled and entertained around the globe for more than 30 years. He also mentored and/or partnered with fellow Cayman-based DJs such as New Generation, Super C, Selecta Renegade, Coalition and La Familia, and internationally acclaimed DJ crews such as Poison Dart.

Sadly, Ky-Mani passed away on 14 December 2020 at the age of 45, leaving behind a legacy of memorable accomplishments and devoted fans. He will always be remembered as a musical legend.

BRONZE STAR FOR CREATIVITY AWARDEES

Yonier Powery Serrano was born on Isle of Youth, Cuba. Beginning his artistic studies in 1999, his prolific output, which ranges from painting and drawing to intricate ceramic pieces, reflects the artist's personal biography and his twin influence of his Cuban-Caymanian roots. Acknowledging the deep ancestral associations that link the artist's family, and those of many Caymanians to the Isle of Pines, his fantastical ceramic art is very much the product of Cuba and Cayman's close cultural and economic ties to the sea.

Since 2010 when he started living in Cayman full time, Powery Serrano has made every effort to share art with all areas of the community and has also donated his work to charities such as the Cayman Islands Cancer Society. He keeps his Caribbean heritage the forefront of his art, which has been featured in multiple shows, including a recent solo exhibition at the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands in 2021.

Simon Tatum received his Bachelor of Art degree from the University of Missouri (USA) in 2017, and a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Sculpture and Expanded Media from Kent

State University (USA) in 2021. Tatum's thesis showcase, titled *The Romantic Caribbean*, featured at the Kent State University's CVA gallery in March 2021, and he has shown a solo exhibition within the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI) titled *Looking Back and Thinking Ahead*. He has also participated in many group exhibitions including *Arrivants: Art and Migration in Anglophone Caribbean World* at the Barbados Museum and Historical Society and the *Sense of Place* exhibition at Spinnerei Halle 18 in Leipzig, Germany.

Tatum was honoured in 2016 with an international travel grant from the NGCI to attend the Caribbean Linked IV residency programme in Oranjestad, Aruba. Moreover, he is also the first graduate scholar sponsored by the Peter N Thomson Family Foundation in Grand Cayman to pursue a graduate programme.

Alongside his studio art practice, Tatum is developing skills in art administration and writing. He has previously worked with the NGCI and the Kent State School of Art Galleries and Collection. He currently works within Studio Campos-Pons in Nashville, TN, USA.

STAR FOR CREATIVITY CERTIFICATE

Cayman Art Week (CAW) is a week-long curated programme of exhibitions, art galleries, open studios, art tours and late-night art events across the three Cayman Islands that was launched in July 2021. Created to help offset the impact of the pandemic on the creative sector, CAW was designed to stimulate the Caymanian creative economy and to celebrate Caymanian creativity by drawing to together an unparalleled collection of 27 commercial galleries, pop up exhibitions, and studio spaces.

CAW's annual event is supported by a web platform and social media calendar that profiles all commercial art spaces in the Cayman Islands in one comprehensive space enabling a singular point of access to, and information about, these venues throughout the year. Cayman Art Week was launched by Natalie Urquhart (founder), and executed by a volunteer team comprised of Urquhart, Caroline Schroder, Pam Brown and Meegan Ebanks, with support from Susan A. Olde, OBE (CAW Patron), Colin Lumsden, Isy Walton, Katie O'Neil and Melanie Cumber. The entirely free event was supported by core partners Provenance Properties Cayman Islands, George Town Revitalisation (and NYSA), the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, and MC2 Design Group, along with support-in-kind from local businesses. The long-term aim for Cayman Art Week is to develop as an annual event that supports the growth of a viable art market in the Cayman Islands by cultivating local and international collectors, as well as supporting the arts community through online programming.

Staff of the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands for their Digital Programming Initiative

Following the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI) had to shut its doors to the public. In order to continue providing the

community with access to locally produced art, culture, and educational activities throughout, NGCI's staff rapidly adapted by making almost all of its services available online, as part of a new Digital Engagement Programme.

This included, but was not limited to: four virtual online exhibition experiences, several of which were included in a line-up of top global virtual exhibitions alongside the Louvre Museum (Paris) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC); the new NGCI Collection Online Project, which saw 200 artworks from the National Gallery Collection uploaded to a digital archive with related interpretation materials and artist biographies (making this the most comprehensive archive on Caymanian art anywhere); the new National Gallery Online Exhibition Archive; several 'digital-only' exhibitions that shared the community's response to lockdown including Art Under Lockdown; and a programme of tri-weekly downloadable art activities relating to STEAM topics to ensure students from all corners of Cayman could still celebrate art and culture in a very difficult time.

With the new digital programme being supported by an active social media campaign uptake was extensive and, despite opening doors in July 2021, NGCI remains committed to responding to the needs of its in-person and online audiences by working in a hybrid capacity permanently.

Marc and Pam Laurenson are the co-founders of **Stoak'd**, an illustration, art, and design collective. Working principally in pop art-inspired style, the Laurensens' practice embraces a wide range of artistic styles and media, from painting and sculpture to graphic design and working with found and recycled materials.

Stoak'd has won numerous awards since its inception and the Laurensens' work has been widely shown in galleries and featured in editorials and magazines, including the cover of the Cayman Airways Skies in-flight magazine (2019), 1340 Art International Magazine and most recently in Forbes (2020) for their artwork created from recycled materials – *COVID-Self Portrait* – which has been added to the Permanent Collection of the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI)

Stoak'd has won two Poinciana Festival awards (2013 and 2014), exhibited in the KAABOO Cayman Music, Arts and Food Festival (2019), featured in the National Gallery's exhibitions *Cross Currents: First Cayman Islands Biennial* (2019), *Art Under Lockdown* (2020, virtual) and *Island of Women* (2020). The most recent art exhibition was *Consumed* (2020), presented as a solo exhibition by Marc Laurenson at the NGCI.

VISIONARY AWARD

As the Cayman Islands foremost visual artist, **Bendel Hydes** is rightly recognised as the founding father of contemporary art in the Cayman Islands. During his 50-year career as a professional artist, he has carried the torch for Caymanian culture both locally and overseas, exhibiting his work in prestigious art institutions, including the Commonwealth Institute in London and the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., while also featuring in several of the most prominent international exhibitions of Caribbean art.

Hydes was instrumental in co-founding the National Theatre, the precursor to the Cayman National Cultural Foundation (CNCF), and the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands (NGCI). He has also taught numerous artist's workshops at both CNCF and NGCI, helping to teach the next generation of Caymanian artists. In 2004 Hydes was made cultural attaché to the United States, serving as a cultural ambassador for our islands and helping to further support the promotion of Caymanian culture overseas.

Within art historical circles, the importance of Hydes' work is reflected by his inclusion in seminal publications on Caribbean art and artists. He also has the distinction of being the only Caymanian artist to receive a FULL career retrospective at the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands in 2019, which was accompanied by a 200-page scholarly publication.

For more information about the National Arts & Culture Awards email info@artscayman.org or call 949-5477.

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