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CELEBRATE

2009 Carnival Exhibition

More often than not in an environment such as ours, it is the wider context of an exhibition and its implications that is of equal interest to the work displayed. In these days of global economic meltdowns, ridiculous, insane, stupid blue and white collar crime, terrorisms of all kinds, even towards cricketers on buses, the occasion of a small exhibition in St. Ann's would indeed fight for a piece of media space, usually dedicated to mayhem, chaos, business, and bacchanalia.

But I believe it's a little miracle of sorts, gallery owner Christine Cambridge, having the faithful initiative and optimism to quietly orchestrate a series of well thought out exhibitions in recent times; the imagery seems to belong to the middle of the road kind of sensibility, but on closer inspection the curatorship of the little space, has incorporated and dared to display works that really belong more to a contemporary vein of younger artists emerging from a mixture of local, traditional and simultaneously avant-garde sensibilities. This is not an easy equation to pull off, but this exhibition draws from the wider berth and breadth of what is truly available and current as a collection of private conversations, and in some cases direct influences between generations of artists still at work. Assisted by artist Nadya Shah at the gallery, this collection of work bridges gaps on a local recent scene of new art and design graduates, all of whom have extended their ranges of influences, becoming aware of the wider range of creative work, opportunity, and possibility here and away, integrating as our generation before them, in teaching, design, research, fine art and now in these times a web based community, more liquid and fluid than ever before. For me it felt great to walk in to the opening space, knowing and feeling many connections which have contributed to that little piece of art magic that evening, the vibe was cool, a full crowd of some beautiful Trinidadians young and old, many artists, looking, laughing, seeing and congratulating the effort and the work

The wider economic context now searches for new items and products in the marketplaces which will hold value, and as I looked at the collection and connections of these works, I wondered that artists were seemingly always facing this kind of meltdown, and now more than ever, it seemed as if the world was joining us in some wider understanding of a necessary creativity applied to the business of life and in particular, the business of dealing with sensibilities that are triggered by a response to the environment and its often critical failure. The true creative challenge is how to channel and transform that energy as opposed to simply predictable, knee jerk reactions to elemental and physical crises of all kinds. I am glad that quite a few pieces have sold from the show, it is an expression of faith in the value not only of the expression and work of our younger and older artists, but also, in the value of art itself, a "product" about time and space which has stood the test of time and space!

A creative doorway remains open in these critical times of financial and political contradictions, the crowd has changed since the days of Art Creators, the times have changed and so have the products, and it is to the credit of in2artltd, that the sense and sensibility is to admit that what was once an "educated" fringe and avant-garde, risqué, is now mainstream and very much a critical part of our contemporary visual, and creative landscape. The notion that this kind of work is out of the ordinary is no longer an issue as the lines of value now extend way beyond the few who were involved and have seen this apparently little show. The list of participating artists is long, the exhibit perhaps a bit crowded, but for the reason, season and time, appropriate. The collection is eclectic but includes some well known established hands, so there is a lively variety that hints at much larger bodies of work in progress. The workings here of artists continues against a backdrop of localized and global economic uncertainty, perhaps there is more to say about how we are living and where we are living that is relevant and meaningful, perhaps art really does represent value added to our communities and our senses, as well as our private spaces, perhaps art and creativity is really just good business altogether.

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