



BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY

The Bermuda National Gallery at a glance

Updated: December 2003

About the Gallery

The Bermuda National Gallery (BNG) is Bermuda's art museum and is located on the second floor of the City Hall & Arts Centre on Church Street in the heart of Hamilton, the Island's capital. The Gallery comprises four main exhibition spaces: the Main Gallery, the Mezzanine, the Watlington Room and the Ondaatje Wing, named for founding trustee Hereward T. Watlington and benefactor Christopher Ondaatje. The Gallery opened in 1992 and is a registered charity (#288)

Contact details

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Key personnel/staff

Chairman: David L. White, OBE

Director: Laura T. Gorham

Curator: David Mitchell

Education Director: Judy Wong

Development Director: Gita Blakeney-Saltus

Opening hours

The Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Saturday. The Gallery is closed on Bermuda Public Holidays. Admission is free.

Tours

A team of volunteer docents is professionally-trained for each exhibition and free general tours take place on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Special group tours can be arranged with the Gallery office. The City Hall building and the main level of the gallery are wheelchair accessible. (Take the elevators on the ground level to the second floor.)

Mission

The Bermuda National Gallery was created with a mission to promote, benefit and advance the visual arts in Bermuda through creating a collection of significant artworks both from Bermuda and worldwide, and to create a facility in which to care for, research and interpret these works for the public. The BNG's goals are: excellence, education and bringing the community together to share in the finest accomplishments.

Background

Our governing body, The Bermuda Fine Art Trust was created by an Act of Parliament in 1982. In 1988 the Corporation of Hamilton leased the East Exhibition Room space at City Hall to the BNG for \$25 per year. The lease is for 25 years, starting in 1988, with a renewable option.

The Gallery opened its doors in 1992 with a core collection of historic European paintings, now known as The Watlington Collection, bequeathed to Bermuda by founding trustee and artist Hereward T. Watlington (1902-1989). The Collection was bequeathed in 1989 with the proviso that the paintings be housed in a climate-controlled facility to the standard of the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Since a proper climate control facility did not exist in Bermuda at that time, this was the catalyst for the development of the BNG. The Collection is owned by the Government of Bermuda and is on permanent loan to the Gallery.

Since 1992 the BNG has matured into the Island's major art museum, a repository for national art treasures, a leading education resource and a popular entertainment venue. The Gallery stages three major temporary exhibitions each year plus occasional smaller installations and special events, including the Bacardi Limited Biennial (first held in 1994), a internationally-juried showcase of the best in local contemporary art. Shows are created through loans from local collectors of historic and/or contemporary international art, through collaborations with other local art organisations or museums, through jointly curated shows with international museums or by bringing international travelling exhibitions to the island.

The Gallery's Education Department helps local students, families and the public to interact with exhibitions through the ArtReach Museum Education Programme for schools, the Island's Adult Education Programme and Summer Art Camps. A lively social programme includes lectures, seminars, film shows, and cocktail parties.

More than 25,000 people visited the Gallery during 2002.

Funding

The BNG is a Bermuda charitable organisation and is funded independently by membership fees, donations, sponsorship and its own fund-raising activities. American friends can support the museum through tax-deductible gifts to The Bermuda Fine Arts Foundation, a non-profit American Foundation formed to further the goals of the Gallery. Sponsors of Gallery exhibitions

and events include many of the Island's leading corporations, including the Bank of Bermuda, ACE Limited, Partner Re, and Bacardi Limited.

Collections

The BNG's Permanent Collection numbers more than 350 works by local and international artists organised into six distinct collections:

- **The African Collection** is a selection of 22 figures, masks and royal regalia that celebrates people, relationships, and values central to the African culture. The Collection was purchased in 1996 by a cross-section of the Bermudian community, including 15 schools.
- **The Bermuda Collection** includes paintings, furniture, photographs and sculpture made in, or inspired by, Bermuda and date back to the 17th century.
- **The Contemporary Collection** is a selection of paintings, graphics and sculptures that were completed during the 20th century.
- **The European (Watlington) Collection** includes an historic collection of paintings that span four centuries and represent Dutch, English, Flemish, German, Italian and Spanish artists such as George Romney, Rembrandt, and Thomas Gainsborough.
- **The Photography Collection** is a selection of 30 black and white photographs by Bermudian international photojournalist Richard Saunders (1922-1987).
- **The Print Collection** includes a selection of Hale Woodruff linocuts that depict powerful images of African American life from the artist's Atlanta period (1930–1940).

Recent exhibitions

The Gallery's most successful recent exhibitions have included:

- *Inside & Out: House & Home* — an international exhibit exploring artistic interpretations of the concepts “house” and “home”
- *Lee Miller* — images by the pioneering American woman photographer
- *Once Upon A Time* — the art of illustrated children's storybooks
- *Window On The Azores* — contemporary art from the Azores
- *Made In Bermuda* — an historical exhibition of Bermudian decorative arts
- *Mickey & The Grinch* — the art of animated film
- *The Art of Japanese Woodblock Prints* — an insight into the ancient art form

For more details about the Gallery and its collections, please visit our website at www.bng.bm or contact Director Laura T. Gorham at 441-295-9428 or director@bng.bm

