

# Perhaps it is a byway but not a highway

The Festival exhibition of paintings mounted by the Bermuda Society of Arts bears the somewhat arbitrary title of "Bermuda's Highways and By-ways".

These theme names for shows always carry the risk of being too confining and limiting the scope of entries. It is unlikely, however, that many artists paint specifically to such an order. Most members sometimes paint a highway or a byway anyway, and in this show one detects a few paintings from the past dredged up to fit the current theme.

It is not the most exciting of the Society's shows, and could be labelled an artistic byway rather than a highway. None the less it contains enough pleasing local pictures to give Festival-goers from overseas a romantic impression of Bermuda's beauties.

The novel drawing-cards in the show come from two non-resident members: Bernard Pulin of Canada, exhibiting here for the first time, and Carmen Z. Simpkins, formerly of Bermuda and now of Florida.

Mrs. Simpkins is represented by only three of her typical large canvases swatched in melting colours. The most interesting is one in pale gold with a dark horizontal motif suggesting a reed-grown island. Another in wide sweeps of graduated blues makes one think of an empty sea and sky. The third introduces on its ecru ground three of the enigmatic turbaned figures which appear in the miniature paintings she is now producing. Single miniatures and clusters of them are mounted in pale grey to match their

understated hues. By far the most successful are those depicting small-scale mountain ranges.

Mr. Poulin's hard-edged representational works an utter contrast to the Simpkins style of abstract impressionism.

Two faithful still lifes lend visual excitement to the objects chosen: a row of glass and metal shapes in "Mother's Bell Collection" and a dramatically simplified copper atomizer with water-drops on a bare ledge.

His water colour "Yacht Club Boat Yard" is a striking close-up cross-section of boats, planks and tools. His oil "Bermuda Sandcastles" (an obvious but hitherto neglected subject) gains interest by posing the dark reclining figure with back to the viewer.

Among the local exhibitors, Otto Trott continues to make strides with his wide-ranging water colour scenes. Though one recognises the technical influence of the water colour instructor brought here by the Society last summer, the artist supplies a Bermudian's grasp of the warm and cool degrees of island colours.

Dark tones predominate in scenes at the foot, or feet, of Knapton Hill and Wilkinson Avenue, and one of a hilltop near St. David's Lighthouse is strong and simple with a layered look to the turf.

Coolidge Adams has responded well to the challenge to paint highways and byways. Extraneous elements are eliminated in two warm oils, a South Shore view in Devonshire and a landscape in Smith's with a pond amid folded hills and a distant church steeple. His grey-green "Banana Patch in Paget," done in gouache and ink, features an interesting broken pattern of foliage and shadow.

Ida Gibbons paints a melting water colour with the odd title "Valley Grn. Cott", and a bare tree for a foreground focus.

Helen Wayland's oil "Road Up from Grape Bay" puts a brown path in soft focus beneath arched boughs and greenery.

Norman Willson in his ingenious oil of Vesey Street with parallel road and stream has the initiative to introduce two cows, usually undeservedly missing from Bermuda pastorals.

Carole Holding Tee does two warm water colours of St. George's and one of Springfield which gains interest from opposing angles and an arch-framed buttery.

Valerie Weddup adapts her broad impasto style to the theme of an "Early Morning Haze" with accents of bare blue trees and an up-turned boat.

Helen Bertles combines water colour and ink for crisp effects in an aerial view

of Front Street complete with buildings, figures and vehicles, and in sharp sketches of a cycle path and Corkscrew Hill. William Beal employs the same two media for two scrawly scenes.

Chris Lane does skilful water colours of Camden House and Chancery Lane in miniature.

Brooding clouds hover in Mary Powell's water colour "Evening Light on Paimetto Road".

J. R. Herr offers an offbeat glimpse of a dim ship's prow and yellow tanks at Ireland Island.

The show ends on February 9.

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