

Jamaica Gleaner Online

Artist to artist

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Photos by Hugh Stone

LEFT: Mutual Gallery curator Gilou Bauer gives Norman Rae, former writer, critic and playwright his Alexander Cooper Master of Craft award last Sunday. Between 1956 and 1970, Norman Rae was the [purse](#)

string reviewer and special writer for fine arts, theatre, film and dance. Between 1978 and 1983, he wrote the weekly column, 'A line from the Tower of Babel'.

RIGHT: Cartoonist Las May (right) receives the Master of Craft award and a trophy from [painting](#) master Alexander Cooper last Sunday.

Anthea McGibbon, Gleaner Writer

LAST SUNDAY, as thickening mist crept over Coopers Hill, artists and supporters gathered to honour five of their own at the home of renowned master [painter](#) Alexander Cooper. The occasion was the opening of a [mini](#) museum, complementing Alexander Cooper's existing art gallery. The idea, according to Cooper, is to preserve the legacy of Jamaica's history.

Racing against quickening rain drops, guest speaker Professor Rex Nettleford, representing the cultural community, identified the arts as a relevant element that has kept us (Jamaica) together. He described Alexander Cooper as "a son of Jamaican soil, belonging to the generation that tries to make art mean something to the country".

The painter for more than five decades was applauded for leading other artists into appreciating other artists and, fittingly, a brief history of his life and works was given.

In 1965, during a controversial time in American history for persons of Negro descent, Alexander Cooper was the first painter invited to represent Jamaica in an exhibition held at the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C.

Capturing the richness and vibrancy

In 1983, then Prime of Jamaica Edward Seaga honoured him for his outstanding art contributions which even today captures the richness and vibrancy of Jamaican life. The former [graduate](#) and educator at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, Cooper is still sought out for classes.

Annette Cooper, affectionately called 'Ms. Ann' who has understudied her husband, has in her four years of paintings also secured national honour, earning for herself one silver and two bronze in the JCDC's 2006 National Visual Arts Competition.

The couple has a passion for fine art and believes in the progress of artists and the advancement of art in Jamaica.

The museum and gallery is just one avenue through which they hone the survival skills of Jamaican artists and their art.

Masters of craft

In this spirit, five artists were awarded Masters of their craft. **The Gleaner's** Las May was awarded for his contributions of humour and down-to-earth satirical caricatures. Clovis Brown, former **Gleaner** cartoonist also received a similar honour.

Norman Rae, former **Gleaner** writer, critic and playwright, who Alexander Cooper remembered as "keeping them on their toes with witty and biting critiques", was also honoured as an accomplished theatre director.

Artist/sculptor Laura Facey was awarded for her graceful, powerful, and large-scale sculptures (such as the emancipation statues) which "represent an outstanding contribution to the culture of the Jamaican people".

Dorothy Henriques-Wells was honoured as a watercolourist extraordinaire who executed her work "with a sensitive touch".

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