

# “Artists Enriching Our Community: Enriching our World”

Montserrat, like other Caribbean islands emerging from plantation economies with an emphasis on monoculture, continues its efforts to identify other paths to economic diversification, sustainable development and wealth creation.

In recent times, the focus has shifted to the creative and cultural industries which provide a competitive advantage for the region. Montserrat, however, has already had many stories of success in the creative and cultural arts. There are stories of skilled needleworkers, joiners and others who created beauty with very basic tools and materials. Indeed, the island has been home to many creative entrepreneurs who have contributed their talents and hard work towards producing high quality cultural assets.

This exhibition remembers two women who fit that description. They were not born on the island but chose to live here for many years till Mother Nature nudged a return to their countries of birth. They were friends to each other going for a daily swim together and friends to a host of local residents and visitors alike. They shared a love of travel and were both excellent letter writers. They have also left a legacy of inspiring others that goes beyond the products of their talents.

**Demetre (Dem) Pollock née Smook** (1915-2011) signed her paintings using her pet name “Metya”. She came to live in Montserrat from Canada in 1974, unwell and looking for a change of lifestyle on doctor’s orders. She had a house built in Wall Street just outside

Plymouth and within a year the fresh air, fine water, and the warmth of the community that welcomed her provided the most effective tonic she could have desired and she quickly regained her health. She was a talented painter, favouring Caribbean flowers as subject matter and working in both watercolour and oil. She also had a fine singing voice and was a member of the Emerald Community Singers. She finally left the island in 1989 but lived a further 22 years in the US and Canada.

**Maggie E. Peters née Walcott** (1916-2006) came to the island from Barbados in 1956 as the bride of Montserratian Wilfrid Peters, part owner of Peters & Peters Drugstore and brother to Fred E. Peters, well known Montserratian educator and author. She became part of the exodus after the volcanic crisis of 1995. She was involved in a host of volunteer activities within her church and organizations such as the Red Cross, the Girl Guides, the Young Women’s Christian Association and the Montserrat National Trust. She managed (with her husband) the Emerald Isle Hotel in Richmond Hill which later became the Montserrat Springs Hotel. She also worked in the family pharmacy and dry goods store. When that store was destroyed by fire, Maggie concentrated on creating the many dolls that became treasures to those lucky enough to have bought or been given them. She was known to share recipes from her wonderful cooking repertoire which made heavy use of local produce. She was a regular participant in the annual Christmas Festival costumed troupes.



Dem, Maggie and Friends



Dem with the Emerald Community Singers



Dem and Maggie in Boxing Day Troupe