

Biography  
of  
Anguillian Artist  
Octavia Melsadis Fleming

O. Melsadis Fleming has undoubtedly earned the rightful position of being one of Anguilla's leading natives in the discipline of the Visual Arts.

As a young girl growing up, Melsadis always gravitated towards the creation of things of beauty. Hence with the guidance of her Primary School Handicraft Teacher her handicraft skills developed admirably. Her introduction to formal art occurred during her two (2) year Teacher Training Programme at the Antigua State College between the years 1981 - 1983.

In 1985 she accepted a Government sponsored scholarship to pursue a course of study in Art and Crafts at the MICO Teachers College in Jamaica. After graduating in the Honours Division she returned to Anguilla in 1987, and whilst teaching Art and Crafts at the Albena Lake Hodge Comprehensive School headed the Visual Arts Department there. For the next nineteen (19) years she passionately prepared many students for successful examination at the CXC level.

In 2006, by assuming the post of Deputy Principal - Campus B, she became in charge of the delivery of all curricula at that campus, which included Art and Crafts. Her natural instinct always caused her to gravitate to the art rooms and where ever possible she continues to guide and assist students as they develop their craftsmanship and artistic skills.

For the past years, Melsadis has been voluntarily organizing and conducting a Summer Art and Craft Programme for Boys at Risk. She also teaches Visual Arts at the Community College Teacher Training Programme.

Melsadis artwork covers a wide range of artistic areas. However, she spends much of her time working on paintings and pottery making. Her artwork, which is primarily done with acrylic paint, is rendered on a variety of mediums such as wood, paper, pottery, cloth, glass, calabash and tin. Despite that wide range the major part of her work is painted on canvas.

She enjoys portraying features found in her native land such as the flora and fauna, land and seascapes, and one of her all time favourites - traditional Anguillian architecture. Many of her paintings adorn the offices and walls of Anguillian places of business, offices, homes and schools. Tourists and locals alike sought after her colourful impressionistic style and view her work as collectors items.

This Anguillian artist has taken her artistic skills to another level i.e in the area of decorating. She takes pleasure and pride in using her skills to transform a space for any occasion - be it a wedding, graduation, party, church related programme or friends and family residences etc.

Melsadis artwork has been showcased in many group exhibitions both locally and internationally. Such include The International Biennial Festival, Caribbean Contemporary Art (Book), Carifesta, what we do in Anguilla (Tourist Guide Magazine) Devonish Art Gallery, Savannah Art Gallery, Island Art Gallery, Anguilla Art and Craft Gallery, Cap Juluca Gift Shop, Za-Zaa Boutique, Viceroy Gift Shop among others.

In 2007 she was honoured by the Sunshine Theatre group as Artist of the year and was the recipient of that award.

As of January 2016, her artwork will be housed in her very own place of business namely Island Art, Gifts and Souvenirs. Her continued desire is to be a positive influence and vehicle for the continued development of Art and Crafts here in our island Anguilla.