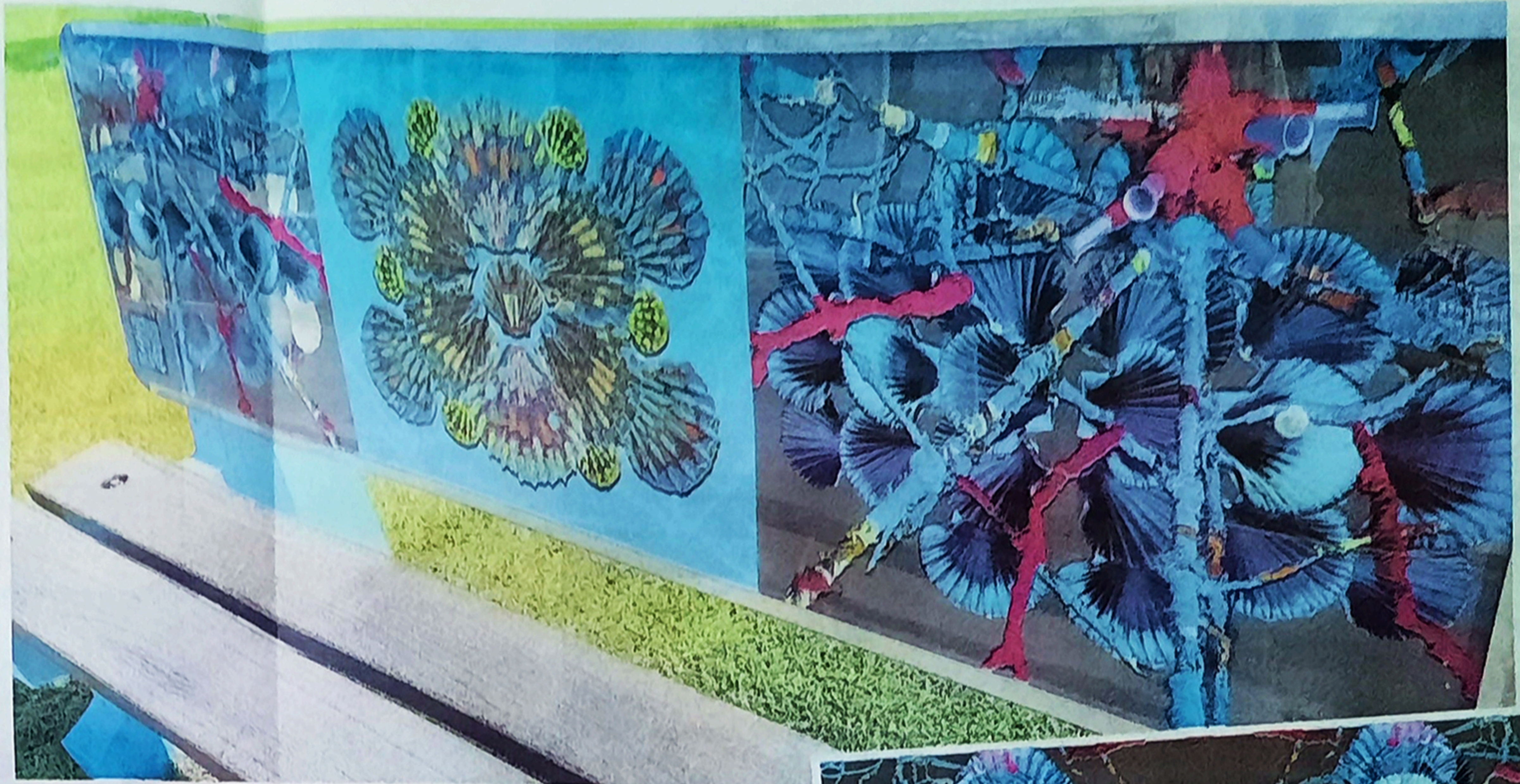


"Plexus is in the vein of biological processes, referring to the internal networks within the body and how they act as restrictions but also as a support system that keeps us alive," said the artist.



This bench in Golden Square Freedom Park in The City, was done by Katherine Kennedy. (CP)



Katherine said it is a difficult thing for artists to keep going in the Caribbean. (CP)

Katherine working hard to push art

By Donna Sealy

If you've been to Golden Square Freedom Park, in The City, and sat on one of the benches highlighting artists' designs, there's a possibility it could have been visual artist Katherine Kennedy's.

Her work is among those created by Barbadian artists displayed in the recently developed Cityscape that not only highlights art, but brings it sharply into focus, giving it prominence so everyone in the space can see and appreciate it.

Katherine, whose "visual practice is heavily tied to a sense of place, using interplay between organic and inorganic materials and imagery to interrogate the spectrum of belonging and displacement in different environments or cultural contexts", is slated to participate in an exhibition in Ontario, Canada this year.

Last year, her work was at The #social2021 in CICA Museum, Gimpo, South Korea, in **Transformation: Objects And Images In Relation**, presented by Tide Rising Art Projects and held at the Clemente Gallery, New York City, US, and the Atlantic World Art Fair, Booth curated by Sour Grass Curatorial Agency, Artsy.

Two of her pieces (both videos) – **Enmeshment** and **Plexus** – were part of **The Longest Night** exhibition in The Montpelier Arts Centre, Maryland, US, which opened in November last year and ended on January 2. She spoke to **Weekend Buzz** about participating

in that Maryland exhibition after she responded to an open call.

Katherine, who is also a writer, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Arts (first class honours) from Lancaster University in the UK, and has exhibited in Barbados, Aruba and Jamaica, London, Glasgow, the US, Nigeria, New Zealand, and South Korea.

Seeing art as valuable

She thinks projects like Golden Square are important because they allow people "to see culture and the arts being built into our public space and seeing it as valuable".

"That is something we're really working on in the Caribbean and really valuing arts and culture and the role they play in our lives," she said.

Katherine, who debuted as a solo-curator with the exhibition **Social Geometry: Expanded Drawing Practices By Barbadian Artists** held at the **Queen's Park Gallery**, in May 2019, said as an artist, coping with the COVID-19 pandemic is "a struggle".

For example, she noted that the **Transformation: Objects And Images In Relation** exhibition in June was originally scheduled for 2020 but was pushed back till last year. She had originally planned to attend the opening to support her friend who curated it but could

not because of the restrictions.

"It's also been difficult given that I work in sculpture and installation, and I prefer to work on a larger scale, but I didn't have the space to go out and do anything or experiment with anything, which is why I turned towards more of the video work. This is a way to continue my processes and my thoughts about where I would like to take my sculpture and a chance to experiment with a new medium as well."

The artist said she spent a lot of time applying for things and looking for opportunities online to get her work out in spaces.

Enmeshment was part of the exhibition in South Korea and in **De-Colonisation**, presented by Artists Alliance Barbados and held at the Embassy of Argentina. **Plexus** was in **Innerscapes**, an exhibition curated by Kraig Yearwood and held at The Frame & Art Co.

Opportunities available

Katherine said it is a "difficult thing for artists to keep going particularly in the Caribbean" and while "the number of opportunities available to artists is improving, if you are passionate about your art, you have to keep pushing".

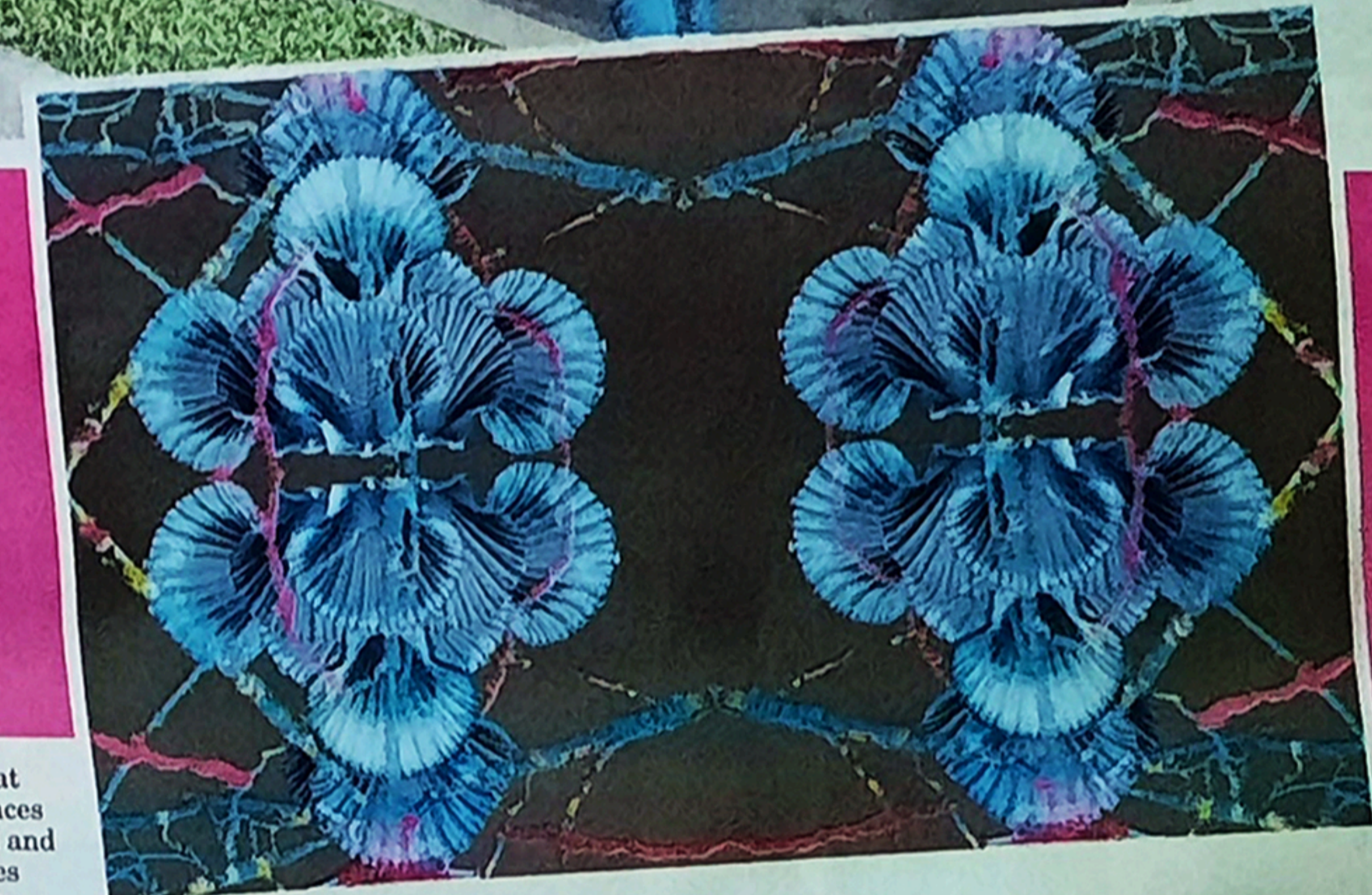
About **The Longest Night** exhibition, she said she responded to an open call. The brief stated it was

looking at experiences of ritual and life cycles which is something her work has been focused on especially in the last two years with the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and natural disasters Barbados has been experiencing.

"I've been thinking a lot about these ideas of life cycles and how we adapt to the ever-changing circumstances. The theme of the exhibition spoke to me in that way, so I submitted two of my videos to the open calls and they were selected which was amazing. I've been in touch with the curator ever since and I've been able to follow a lot of the other artists in the show whose work I wasn't familiar with before. It was great to make those connections," said the communications and operations manager of the Fresh Milk Art Platform in Barbados.

Enmeshment was created in 2020 and the word itself "is a psychological concept" that relates to an "unhealthy erosion of social boundaries between individuals". She hand-beaded shells which are moving in a "cyclical mesmerising kind of way and then become entrapped in a mesh of another one of my art projects".

"I'm mostly a sculptor and installation, but



Enmeshment was created in 2020 and the word itself "is a psychological concept" that relates to an "unhealthy erosion of social boundaries between individuals". (CP)

what I've started doing is taking images of my work and then creating videos out of the three-dimensional pieces as well. It was supposed to be a navigation of a murky environment that we're going through and a reflection on Barbados' and the Caribbean's complicated reliance on tourism and our natural beauty and how that can sometimes be a contemptuous relationship when things get more geared towards an external lens rather than an internal one.

"It was a mixture of environmental issues and psychological issues especially when everybody was inside during lockdown and having the time to ruminate on these things.

"**Plexus** follows a similar vein, but it was thinking a bit more about the biological processes as opposed to environmental and thinking about the effect on a human body when you are forced to be inside and sitting with your thoughts for a very long time. **Plexus** was referring to the internal networks within the body and how they act as restrictions but also as a support system that keeps us alive," said the artist. (GBM)