

Alvaro Barrington *Back Home / I Am... I Said*

05 March — 26 April 2025
62 Kingly Street London W1

Opening Wednesday 05 March, 6-8pm



Following his recent exhibition at Tate Britain, *Grace*, Alvaro Barrington presents an exhibition in two chapters of new bodies of work at Sadie Coles HQ. This show marks the artist's return to the exploration of traditional modernist painting – his primary medium of work. *Back Home* is composed of a series of paintings and works on paper, in which the artist depicts his impression of sunsets setting over the Caribbean Sea. Bringing together an array of art historical references, including J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), Mark Rothko (1903-1970), Etel Adnan (1925-2021), Claude Monet (1840-1926), among others, these works come together in a simple installation along the perimeter of the gallery, which encourages slow looking and contemplation. The repetition of the sun setting over the sea creates a rhythm, which rhymes with the routine of everyday and finds beauty in the mundane experiences and the surrounding environment. As such, these paintings reward the act of slow and focused looking, revealing new layers, details and moments with time.

Earlier this year Barrington returned to Grenada – the place where he spent his childhood – for the first time since 1995. Reminded of the different modes of artistic and creative expressions, the architectural typology in the region as well as a continuous importance of music in his practice, the artist created an intimate sonic installation in a shack constructed from corrugated metal and wood surrounded by a group of paintings. The shack is home to a soundscape composed by the DJ and radio presenter Tiffany Calver and includes furniture made by the artist, which offer a place to sit and thus encourage visitors to slow down, listen to the music and then experience the paintings in a changed emotional state. Surrounding the shack is a suite of works, which expand on the artist's *Banana Fall on You* series (2021–onwards), in which the artist depicts plants and the natural environment of the Caribbean. Each work is composed of multiple burlap panels and includes lyrics from John Jones' version of Neil Diamond's 1971 song *I Am... I Said*. In this body of work Barrington focuses on a particular verse form the song, which for him speaks about movement, migration and belonging:

*I'm Jamaican born and raised
But nowadays
I'm lost between two shores
L.A.'s fine, but it ain't home
J's home
But it ain't mine no more
"I am," I said*

Two additional works, made of burlap sacks – frequently used for trade of cocoa and coffee, among other goods – are included in the show. Inspired by the works of the American painter Lee Krasner (1908-1984), the burlap sacks were disassembled, cut into pieces and stitched together, before being painted. The hybridity of their form and the material that they are made of point towards the tension between finding one's identity and being a product.

Excerpt from the artist's statement:

History doesn't repeat but it often rhythms
Experience is what you get when you dont get what you want
Faith is for cowards and fools destiny is for what you make of it
We pick desire over nessecity all day long
Its a visually major moment
Remember when is the lowest form of conversation
Front row at the funeral
You gonna die being you
I feel so safe ive found security
Fear campaign
A country called earth
Legalized criminal enterprise
Some of the things im willing to struggle for is the things im going through
Trauma in a people decontextualized over time looks like culture
And in some ways, crypto is a radical experiment in stakeholder capitalism
When the tide goes down you see who have bathing suits on