

Alvaro Barrington  
featuring Tiffany Calver, Naima Nefertari  
and Friendly Pressure

*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 Bringing together an array of art historical references, including J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), Mark Rothko (1903-1970), Etel Adnan (1925-2021), Claude Monet (1840-1926), among others, these works come together in a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, wood and fabrics surrounded by a group of paintings. The shack is home to new soundscapes composed by the DJ and radio presenter Tiffany Calver, musical artist Naima Nefertari, and includes renditions of the song *I am... I said*, originally composed by Neil Diamond in 1971. The shack features custom-made speakers designed by Friendly Pressure and sculptural seating made by the artist with stone, rope, fabrics and plastic, 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 the 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.

With special thanks to Alex Putman / untitled (recs).

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