

Alvaro Barrington
Grandma's Land

62 Kingly Street W1
02 September – 21 October 2023
Private view: Saturday 02 September, 6-8pm

I left Grenada when i was 7 maybe 8 so much of my memories of my time spent there are stories told to me by family members of how they remembered me and in a way it's also how they remember themselves and their role in my life. In turn their stories became my memories of myself and those narratives a north star for my work. The play and mobility of these narratives has meant they have also grown with me over the years constantly shifting as I have needed, yet its function has always remained the same. To hold me to time i had felt the most safe free protected and loved which i say not for the drama of such a statement but something i realized so many folks have said about their youth about the loss of their village even if that village is corner of Notting Hill or west village. It is at time memories I wonder how much is a fetishizing romanticized version of a place and people.



Grandma's land is three shacks (my grandmother, aunt and uncle) in the countryside of the small village i grew up in. It is not really about who they were then but who they would need to be today to make me feel as safe and free as i was then when i was with them. It is who my grandmother would have to be for me today in this even stranger world i exist in that she could have never imagined. My uncle who smoked weed and disappeared and appeared at will is today the rebel rasta and a man of the earth and the road. To be with him meant you did things that society didn't approve of, he was if anything he a punk a philosopher of sorts or just crazy. The last i heard of him he was in jail for weed distribution. He is today the most celebrated image of the Caribbean man a bob marley of sorts whose dreadlocks have given space to be free. My aunt not much older than me, beyond childhood yet not quite a woman was forced to be my older sister and had to take me to her beach parties and jab jab carnival with her friends. Here we featured a series works by Paul Anthony Smith of masqueraders during carnival. And my grandmother whose bed i was fortunate to share till my last night in Grenada – the woman who peed on the side of the road and said to me “never be ashamed of what the lord makes your body do.” – I've asked the brilliant Sonia Gomes whose early works exploring how cloths shaped the body has a donated a new work bringing home the point of how much her and women have of their bodies.

– Alvaro Barrington, 2023

This September, Alvaro Barrington will present *Grandma's Land*, a major new body of work in which the artist returns to his early experience of life growing up in the Caribbean. For his third solo exhibition at the gallery, Barrington will take over the entirety of the Kingly Street space in Soho, creating a total environment described by the artist as a 'universe'. Centred on three monumental, hand built architectural structures each installation draws on aspects of family life lived in the region; celebrating its diverse culture and landscape. Both in scale and subject, the project represents an ambitious expansion of themes that have endured since the beginning of Barrington's career, of interwoven personal and cultural narratives and at their intersection: family, community, love, music and its vibrant materiality, as well as wider inspirations drawn from art history.

Opening immediately following Notting Hill Carnival (27-28 August 2023) – during which Barrington will present a number of collaborative projects – *Grandma's Land* will bring together new works conceived for the project that expand on the region's traditions, alongside several made for this year's Carnival. These encompass a range of media, including painting, drawing, wallpaper, installation and for the first time video. Throughout, Barrington uses traditional and non-traditional materials, such as timber and burlap, that speak to the ubiquitous materials used for housing structures in the Caribbean region; mirroring his enduring concern for how different medias can function as a visual tool and exist as a richly layered signifier of cultural and political histories.

As part of the exhibition, Barrington has invited his peer artists whose own diverse practices likewise pay homage to the Caribbean, its diaspora and Carnival culture to participate in the show. Two of the three structures will host works by artists Sonia Gomes and Paul Anthony Smith, creating a richly textured environment; reflecting the essence of collaboration at the centre of his practice. In addition, a new work by filmmaker Akinola Davies Jr. centred on the Notting Hill Carnival will be featured as part of the exhibition.

Special thanks to Bottega Veneta and Matthieu Blazy for the leather used in selected works.

Alvaro Barrington (b. 1983, Caracas, Venezuela) studied at Hunter College in New York (2010-2013) and graduated with an MFA in painting from the Slade School of Art in 2017. Following his graduation, Barrington presented his first solo exhibition at MoMA PS1, curated by Klaus Biesenbach, for which his London studio was re-installed in its entirety at the institution (2017). Recent solo exhibitions include *Spider the Pig, Pig the Spider*, South London Gallery, London (2021); *Wave Your Flags II*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2021); *Wave Your Flags*, The Tabernacle, London (2021); *GARVEY: SEX LOVE NURTURING FAMALAY*, Sadie Coles HQ, London and *Tt X AB*, Emalin, London (both 2019). He has been included in group exhibitions including *Drawing Biennial 2021*, Drawing Room and Cromwell Place, London (2021); *100 Drawings From Now*, The Drawing Center, New York (2020); *No horizon, no edge to liquid*, Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2020); *Artists I steal from* at Thaddeus Ropac, London, which he curated alongside Julia Peyton Jones, (2019); *Der Lauf der Dinge (The Way Things Run Part), 1: Loose Ends Don't Tie*, PS120, Berlin (2018); *Widening the Gaze*, Slade Research Centre, London (2018) and *The Sleeping Procession*, Cass Sculpture Foundation, West Sussex, England (2017). In Spring 2024, Barrington will create the Tate Britain Commission, a prestigious annual exhibition inviting artists to make a new work in response to Tate's Collection.

For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com.

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