

Timothy Taylor



Paul Anthony Smith, *Dreams Deferred #78* (detail), 2024. Oil stick on inkjet print mounted on Dibond, 40 × 50 in. (101.6 × 127 cm) © Paul Anthony Smith

Frieze London 2024 Paul Anthony Smith

Booth B12

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The Regent's Park, London

Timothy Taylor is pleased to return to Frieze London with a solo presentation of new works by Paul Anthony Smith (b. 1988, St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica), marking the artist's first presentation with the gallery since joining in 2023. Centring on two ongoing series, *Dreams Deferred* and *Eye Fi di Tropics*, Smith will feature large-scale oil paintings and *picotage* works that reflect on diasporic identity, cultural memory, and the landscape.

The paintings in *Dreams Deferred* offer scenes of abundant gardens with hydrangeas, marigolds, anemones, and tiger lilies rendered in verdant and sun-kissed hues. Across the impasto works, Smith variously places the viewer inside and outside of these lush spaces, some of which are obscured and abstracted by a foregrounded chain link fence. These works summon notions of calm, respite, and prosperity, as well as the foreclosure of these experiences.

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Titled after a line from Langston Hughes's iconic 1951 poem "Harlem," the series draws a comparison between gardens and dreams, which, if not tended to, Smith suggests both dry up and wither or become unruly and unrecognisable. The works were inspired in part by the artist's reflection on the fraught pathways to success for many Black men in America and the idea that to create and preserve a legacy, it's important to avoid destructive cultural narratives—to stay in and nurture the garden. Smith paints with oil stick over photographs he has taken in significant gardens including Queen Mary's Gardens, Central Park, as well as wild, surprising plots along highways and in dense neighbourhoods. Eternalizing vibrant, ephemeral scenes in paint, he asks what the natural spaces that surround us tell us about ourselves.

Initiated in 2018, *Eye Fi di Tropics* considers the relationship between cultural perceptions of the Caribbean and the region's landscape, tourism industry, and colonial history. Smith's grandfather emigrated from Cuba to Jamaica, and his parents both worked on cruise ships in the 1980s, sailing between Miami and the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica. The artist considers all of these crossings and various imaginaries of the tropics in his own representations. The series features a technique Smith adopted in 2012 called *picotage*, wherein the artist uses a retrofitted wooden needle to puncture the surface of inkjet pigment prints, introducing a sculptural lenticular effect. The resulting multifaceted image embodies the idea that photographic documentation is always incomplete, contingent, and contextual, bearing a complicated relationship to the notion of truth.

In this series, stippled marks are used to frame images Smith has taken of the water at sunrise from the vantage of various islands. In each landscape, the crisp horizon is set aglow. The *picotage* frame designs draw on elements of Saint Lucia's architecture, which itself incorporates architectural traditions from Asia and Africa. Like the fencing that veils the landscape in Smith's paintings, these frames introduce a sense of removal from the depicted natural environment. With these works, Smith approaches themes of migration, travel, and influence by seeking to appreciate familiar landscapes from a distant perspective. He asks: how are we to reckon with the enduring narratives about the islands that emerged from European exploration and were enshrined by the ensuing colonisation? What do we do with the beauty—the intercultural architecture, art, and design—that was borne from occupation and violence?

Together, *Dreams Deferred* and *Eye Fi di Tropics* offer a meditation on Smith's relationship to his experiences of home in Jamaica and the United States, one that confronts the duality of being an outsider looking in and an insider looking out.

About the Artist

Paul Anthony Smith (b. 1988, St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica) is a New York-based artist whose work explores themes of post-diasporic identity, community, and cultural memory. Smith studied ceramics at the Kansas City Art Institute before turning largely to painting and photography. His recent solo exhibitions include those mounted at the Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, NY (2024); Jack Shainman Gallery, New York (2024, 2021, 2019); Blaffer Art Museum, Houston (2023); Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO (2022); Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha (2019); Luis de Jesus, Los Angeles (2018); and the Green Gallery, Milwaukee (2018). Smith's work resides in numerous public collections, including the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; Art Gallery of Ontario; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Colby Museum of Art, Waterville, ME; and the Blanton Museum at the University of Texas, Austin. Currently, Smith's work features in *Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage*, which debuted at the Frist Museum, Nashville (2023), traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2024), and is now on view at the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. through September 22, 2024.

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