

Kenwyn Crichlow: Incandescence

November 4 – December 9, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 4 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Diane Rosenstein is pleased to present *Incandescence* – a solo exhibition by Kenwyn Crichlow (Trinidad and Tobago, b. 1951). For his inaugural exhibition with our gallery, Crichlow will present a suite of recent abstract oil paintings produced in his studio in Curepe, near Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Kenwyn Crichlow has developed and maintained an expansive studio practice for the past forty-five years. His paintings revel in multiple layers and episodes, clearly influenced by Trinidad's topographic and cultural landscape, but deliberately resisting representation. Instead, his work has evolved to evoke feeling through the material vocabulary of a painter: marks modernist in their self-awareness, but poetic in the experience they convey.

In each of his paintings, Crichlow “sets a trap for the muse” – an initial gesture or challenge to which he responds over the course of the work. In some, the picture plane is fractured, and the marks multiplicitous. He provides several entry points for viewers: passages of unique activity crucial to the experience of the whole. Where the center is a magnet for some and others run episodically, many run against the vertical grain. Since 2010, with the completion of the triptych *Kissing the Horizon* (2006-2010), Crichlow's paintings are frequently comprised of multiple panels and immersive in scale.

For *Incandescence*, recent paintings (2010-2023) are shown in conversation with a few early works from the 1970s and 1980s. The fifty-year trajectory will undoubtedly question the diverse manners through which identity and political perspective are conveyed. Crichlow was nineteen during Trinidad's Black Power Revolution of 1970, and his paintings from this era reflect a socio-political awakening. Eight years after Independence, not enough had changed, and the country's youth revolted. In these early figurative works, the artist began to use language and color to flatten space and foreground his political outlook. The few that survived reference an urban postcolonial reality and the kindling of the artist's interest in the picture plane as a subject.

In the mid-1970s, Crichlow left the Caribbean to study art in London at Goldsmiths College, and there found community with the West Indian Student Association. In his London studio, he developed a visual language independent of pictorialism or exoticization, liberating painterly marks from its subject matter. Crichlow sought to understand what representation means, revealing not only paint's capacities, but its cultural scaffolding as well. By 1978, he began exhibiting abstract paintings in curated group presentations in London, such as *Young Contemporaries* (1978) and *Caribbean Art Now* (1986).

DIANE ROSENSTEIN GALLERY

The art critic Waldemar Januszczak wrote about Crichlow's painting *Whispers In The Rainforest* (1985) in his review of *Caribbean Art Now* for The Guardian. He describes the "glorious abstractions with their insistent sense of landscape, their hummingbird blues and hibiscus pinks, their rain-forest greens and those flecks of gold glistening in the distance, like nuggets at the bottom of a river."

After receiving his degree at Goldsmiths, Crichlow returned home and set up his studio in the southern port city of San Fernando. Once there, he began to study his country in earnest and contribute to the development of its arts community. An influential arts leader in the West Indies, Crichlow has framed TT's art history as a wide arc of native practice. In his writing, leadership, and studio practice he insists on multiple ways of perceiving the landscape in which he and generations of his family were raised.

The artist's work was previously exhibited in California in 1998 at the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) in Long Beach, in *Caribbean Visions: Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, curated by Samella Lewis. *Incandescence* is Crichlow's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles and is a major presentation of his recent abstract painting.

A catalogue with an essay by Farrah Karapetian accompanies this exhibition.

Kenwyn Crichlow (TT, b. 1951) is a painter, arts leader, and educator with a studio practice in Curepe, Trinidad. His paintings are in the permanent collection of the Barbados National Art Gallery, Barbados; Mervyn Awon Collection, Barbados; and the Central Bank Museum, National Art Museum, and Republic Bank Art Collection, all in Trinidad. The artist received a MPhil from the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica (2019); BA from Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK (1978), and a Teacher's Certificate from Mausica Teachers College, Trinidad and Tobago (1972).

His paintings were exhibited in a solo presentation with Diane Rosenstein Gallery at *Independent 20th Century*, New York City, NY (2023), and in solo shows at Y Gallery, Port of Spain, TT (2013-2022). Select group exhibitions include *First Caribbean Biennial*, Museum of Modern Art, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (1992); *Caribbean Art Now*, Commonwealth Institute, London, UK (1986); *Caribbean Artists Today*, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA (1990), *Caribbean Visions: Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, curated by Samella Lewis, Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, FL (1995-97), *Season of Renewal, 50th Anniversary Exhibition*, The Museum of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica (2012), among others.

He is the Board Chair of the National Museum and Art Gallery, TT (2019-2025) and the founding coordinator of the Visual Arts Program in the Department of Creative and Festival Arts at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, TT (1968 – 2016). Crichlow's writing, lectures, and contributions as juror both of fine art and carnival have had significant impact on the arts in the Caribbean.