

Stephen Friedman Gallery

**Frieze Los Angeles
Booth D2**

Denzil Forrester

Frieze Los Angeles
9900 Wilshire Boulevard,
Beverly Hills, Los Angeles
USA

17–20 February 2022

Preview: Thursday 17 February
(invitation only) 10am–7pm
Friday 18 February, 11am–8pm

Public Days: Saturday 19 February
11am–7pm
Sunday 20 February, 11am–6pm



For Frieze Los Angeles 2022, Stephen Friedman Gallery presents works by Grenadian-British artist **Denzil Forrester**. The solo exhibition comprises new paintings and drawings that take as their reference the artist's childhood in the West Indies and the dynamic energy of the London reggae and dub nightclub scene in the 1980s. The presentation precedes major solo exhibitions at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City and the ICA Miami in 2023.

Originating in Kingston, Jamaica, dub music became vital to Forrester's life and practice around the time he moved from Grenada to East London in the late 1960s. "You probably wouldn't see a lot of your friends or family living in London", so for him it was dub that "rekindled our community spirit." Pulsating with rhythm, the artist's expressive depictions of dance halls and clubs in Dalston show crowds of people moving as one to the beat of the music. Flashes of colour, gestural brushstrokes and frenetic compositions characterise his work.

A typical evening would see the artist draw in his sketchbook at the bar until early in the morning before developing the larger, painterly compositions in the studio the following day. Each sketch was delineated by the duration of a song, roughly four minutes long, with the next drawing beginning in sync with the changing soundtrack. The spontaneity of these drawings is transposed by Forrester into his paintings with swift angular brush strokes that emulate the dynamic atmosphere of the clubs. The artist still uses drawings from the 1980s and 1990s as the basis for his compositions today. Several of the new works on view also reflect Forrester's recent experience of sets by Lee 'Scratch' Perry in Cornwall – before the DJ died – focusing on his flamboyant hats and exuberant energy.

Rendered in vivid purples and oranges, other works reflect Forrester's early memories of life in the West Indies. Some portray Maurice Rupert Bishop, a Grenadian revolutionary and leader of the New Jewel Movement – a Marxist-Leninist party in the late 70s that prioritised socio-economic development, education and black liberation. Collage-like juxtapositions that dislocate time and space heighten the dreamlike quality of these works.

Forrester was born in Grenada in 1956 and moved to London in 1967. He now lives and works in Cornwall. Forrester received a BA in Fine Art from the Central School of Art, London, in 1979 and an MA in Fine Art from the Royal College of Art, London, in 1983.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

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In late 2021, his work features in 'Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 50s – Now' at Tate Britain, London, alongside artists including Lisa Brice, Peter Doig and Chris Ofili. Paintings by Forrester were also included in a major group painting survey show 'Mixing It Up: Painting Today' at Hayward Gallery, London, from September to December 2021. The artist was recently awarded the 2021 South Bank Sky Arts Award for his touring solo exhibition 'Itchin & Scratchin', presented at Nottingham Contemporary and Spike Island, Bristol in 2020–21. A large-scale public artwork by Forrester for Brixton Underground Station, London, was unveiled by TFL in September 2019.

Forrester's works can be found in the collections of Tate, London; Arts Council Collection, UK; and Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston, among others. His work has been exhibited internationally at venues including The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Royal Academy of Arts, London; and Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow. His work was the focus of three solo shows curated by Peter Doig and Matthew Higgs at White Columns, New York (2016); Tramps, London (2016); and Jackson Foundation, St Just, Cornwall (2018).

About Stephen Friedman Gallery

Stephen Friedman Gallery represents exceptional emerging and mid-career artists from around the world. Since its inauguration in 1995, the gallery has been based in Mayfair on Old Burlington Street. The gallery now has three spaces in which it hosts solo and group exhibitions throughout the year. Additional works can be viewed by appointment in private rooms and office spaces. There is also a facility to exhibit outdoor sculpture in a landscaped private garden.