

Stephen Friedman Gallery

FLOORR
Denzil Forrester
Brooke Hailey Hoffert
July 2018

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WINDRUSH SCANDAL: "THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED THE HARDEST FOR THIS COUNTRY WERE GIVEN NO OFFICIAL PAPERS ON THEIR ARRIVAL. THEY ARE NOW FACED WITH A NEW SET OF RULES INVENTED BY YOUNG ADMINISTRATORS WHO HAVE NO UNDERSTANDING OF THAT TIME..."

Could you tell us a bit about yourself and your background? Where did you study?

I arrived in London from Grenada in 1967. I began by helping my mum make bags in a basement in Stoke Newington. After school and FE college I joined an art studio in Dalston - Colvestone Youth Centre, which led to a BA at Central School of Art & Design and an MA at the Royal College of art. I received the Rome Fellowship in 1983-85 and the Harkness Fellowship New York 1986- 88.

In 2015 I was contacted by Peter Doig who gave me an exhibition at his Gallery Tramps London, 2016. This led to an exhibition at White Columns, directed by Mathew Higgs, New York. In 2016 I moved to Cornwall with my partner, artist Phillippa Clayden. Since then I have had an exhibition curated by Peter and Mathew at the Jackson Foundation Gallery St Just Cornwall (arguably the best exhibition space in Cornwall).



"From Trench Town to Porthtown" at Jackson Foundation Gallery 2018

How did Peter Doig and Matthew Higgs become fans of your work?

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Peter saw my Royal College MA show in 1983 and was impressed with it. In 2015 he found my contact details from Anne Walmsley, Britain's foremost authority on Caribbean artists. He set up a meeting with me in Dalston and soon after introduced me to Mathew Higgs and the White Columns Gallery. They visited my Studio in Cornwall and have been guiding and supporting me since then.

What do you think about the current Windrush scandal?

Appalling. The people who have worked the hardest for this country were given no official papers on their arrival. They are now faced with a new set of rules invented by young administrators who have no understanding of that time and that expect them to produce paperwork 50 years later after the fact.

Has moving to Cornwall influenced your art in any way?

Cornwall and Ireland are considered the most spiritual places in the UK. Cornwall has given me the mental and physical space to focus on my childhood in Grenada and London.



“From Trench Town to Porthtowan” at Jackson Foundation Gallery 2018

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"Stitch Up" 2017



"Blues" 1978

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Denzil Forrester

How do you go about naming your work?

Titles always come when the painting is finished. Some are taken from dub reggae record titles, some are made up by me and have a close connection to music and dance.

Tell us a bit about how you spend your day / studio routine? What is your studio like?

I paint 5 days a week, 8am - 7pm. My studio is based in my back garden. It has a cliff face at the back. It is light and airy. In the summer months I have the constant sound of seagulls, as well as my vinyl dub music.

What artwork have you seen recently that has resonated with you?

A sculpture by Wayne Snagg a Grenadian sculptor.

Apart from your solo exhibition "From Trench Town to Porthtowan", Is there anything new and exciting in the pipeline you would like to tell us about?

An exhibition in Berlin at the Tanya Leighton Gallery.