

Andrew Kreps  
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,  
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm  
andrewkreps.com

Tel. (212)741-8849  
Fax. (212)741-8163

# Denzil Forrester

## Two Islands, One World

Andrew Kreps Gallery, 22 Cortlandt Alley & 394 Broadway  
Stephen Friedman Gallery, 54 Franklin Street  
October 25 - December 18, 2024  
Curated by Sheina Wagstaff

Andrew Kreps Gallery and Stephen Friedman Gallery present *Two Islands, One World*, a two-venue exhibition by Grenada-born, British artist Denzil Forrester. Curated by Sheena Wagstaff, Chair Emerita at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and former Chief Curator of Tate Modern, the show will bring together new and historical works spanning five decades of his career. This presentation follows institutional exhibitions in 2023 at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City and ICA Miami.

The dual exhibition showcases Forrester's depictions of London's 1980s reggae and dub nightclub scene across both galleries. Each includes focused rooms dedicated to other significant bodies of work: Andrew Kreps Gallery highlights memories from the artist's childhood and adolescence, while Stephen Friedman Gallery presents three significant historical paintings depicting police brutality and the untimely death of his friend Winston Rose.

Forrester was born in Grenada in 1956 and moved to London in 1967. At this time, immigrants from the West Indies had arrived in the UK seeking opportunities and the promise of a new life. Against a backdrop of racial oppression and resistance, his formative years as an artist unfolded. Forrester's recent work reflects his memories of leaving Grenada and, on arriving in London, sewing shopping bags in their basement with his mother, to sell to support the family.

By the 1980s, Forrester, now a young adult, was frequenting London's dub and reggae clubs. Immersed in the clubs' vibrant energy, he would sketch the ecstatic dancers from behind the bar. In his North London studio the next morning, Forrester would transform these intimate drawings into paintings, using vibrant colors to mimic the pulsing lights that flooded the clubs. In early works like *The Cave* (1978), he constructs a dynamic, Cubist-like composition where geometric forms convey rhythmic movement. As Wagstaff describes, "To experience the vibrant sights and sounds lived by Forrester in his time is to celebrate his remarkable artistic skill, acute powers of observation, rich compositional rhythm – and courage."

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Forrester’s practice also extends beyond the dancefloor to confront the racial and social injustices of the time. The artist exposes police brutality in several early works investigating the tragic death of Winston Rose, a close friend and neighbor. These are presented in one room of the show, enabling for a place of reflection. Describing the documentary power of Forrester’s work, Wagstaff writes: “Each of Forrester’s paintings has a profound sense of precision with which they speak to this historical moment. Their poignancy is enhanced through an exhilarating irradiation, fracturing, or evacuation of light, from the revelation of bodies massed and united in rhythm and movement, flashing glimpses of DJ’s and dancers in darkened basements, to the somber scenes of the death of his friend Winston Rose in police custody.”

Throughout the exhibition, images can be seen to repeat over the decades, much like the dub technique in music. Works such as *Jungleheart* (1995) and *DJ Mix* (1998) feature the same, distinctive character. Forrester continues to use drawings from the 1980s to inform his practice today, combining figures like London Dub DJ, Jah Shaka, with scenes of Cornish nightlife. Since moving to the coast in 2016, his palette has transformed – saturated with pink and purple hues, inspired by the brilliant light characteristic of Cornwall. *Tutti-Frutti* (2024) and *Jah Guide Shaka* (2023), some of the most recent paintings exhibited, are meditations on memories, reinterpreting decades’ old iconography.

Speaking of Forrester’s new work, artist Peter Doig reflects, “Denzil is one of the most important painters to come out of London in the early 1980s, and his early works remain as relevant and vital today as when they were first made. [...] However, a revelation for me has been seeing the recent work coming out of Denzil’s studio. It has a subtlety and form that perhaps comes about because he is reflecting upon his past. These new paintings are dreamlike and emerge as much from his imagination as from his studies of real life.”

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Forrester was born in Grenada in 1956, and he currently lives and works in Cornwall, United Kingdom. He moved to London in 1967 and attended the Central School of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art. His work has been exhibited in numerous institutions, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Kemper Museum, Kansas City; Hayward Gallery, London; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Barbican Art Gallery, London; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and Tate St Ives, Cornwall. He participated in the 58th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh.

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22 CORTLANDT ALLEY



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Jungle Run*, 1996-2017

Oil on canvas  
72 x 54 1/8 inches (182.9 x 137.5  
cm.)  
(DZF24-037)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Spice*, c. 1997

Oil on board  
36 3/4 x 48 5/8 inches (93.3 x  
123.6 cm.)  
(DZF24-007)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Reminiscing*, 2015

Compressed charcoal on paper  
33 1/8 x 23 3/8 inches (84.1 x  
59.4 cm.); 40 1/2 x 31 inches  
(102.9 x 78.7 cm.) framed  
(DZF24-038)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*The Stitch*, 2015

Pencil and charcoal on paper  
32 1/4 x 23 1/8 inches (81.9 x  
58.7 cm.); 40 3/8 x 30 7/8 inches  
(102.6 x 78.4 cm.) framed  
(DZF24-048)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Untitled*, 2019

Charcoal and pastel on paper  
23 1/4 x 33 1/8 inches (59.1 x  
84.1 cm.); 30 5/8 x 40 1/2 inches  
(77.8 x 102.9 cm.) framed  
(DZF24-054)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Tribute to Shaka*, 2024

Oil on canvas  
79 7/8 x 107 7/8 inches (203 x  
274 cm.)  
(DZF24-021)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Night Shift*, 2017

Oil on canvas  
65 3/4 x 38 inches (167 x 96.5  
cm.)  
(DZF24-013)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Mad Professor*, 2024

Oil on canvas  
78 3/4 x 64 1/8 inches (200 x  
163 cm.)  
(DZF24-023)

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DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Eula & Sons*, 2024

Oil on canvas  
79 7/8 x 107 7/8 inches (203 x  
274 cm.)  
(DZF24-020)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Jah Guide Shaka*, 2023

Oil on canvas  
72 x 60 1/4 inches (183 x 153  
cm.)  
(DZF24-001)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*DJ Mix*, c. 1998

Oil on board  
48 1/8 x 36 1/4 inches (122.2 x  
92 cm.)  
(DZF24-011)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Sewing Machine*, 2000

Oil on canvas  
47 5/8 x 72 inches (121 x 183  
cm.)  
(DZF24-014)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Moving Heads*, 1986

Pastel and charcoal on paper  
19 3/4 x 27 1/2 inches (50.2 x  
69.8 cm.); 27 3/8 x 34 3/4 inches  
(69.5 x 88.3 cm.) framed  
(DZF24-049)



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Song Clash*, 1981

Compressed charcoal and oil  
pastel on paper  
18 1/2 x 25 3/8 inches (47 x  
64.5 cm.); 25 1/4 x 32 3/4 inches  
(64.1 x 83.2 cm.) framed  
(DZF24-040)

OFFICE



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*In the Fire of Dub*, 1985

Oil on board  
48 7/8 x 72 1/2 inches (124 x  
184 cm.)  
(DZF24-057)

394 BROADWAY



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*The Cave*, 1978

Oil on canvas  
57 1/2 x 67 inches (146.1 x 170.2  
cm.)  
(DZF24-002)

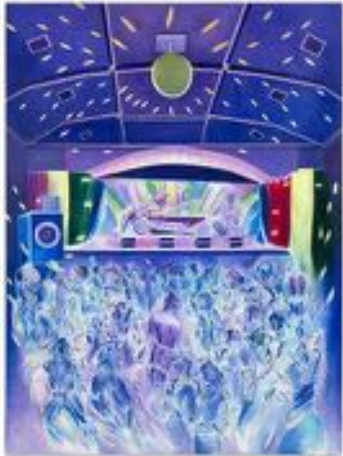
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DOUBLE-HEIGHT SPACE



DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Tutti-Frutti Tu, 2024*

Oil on canvas  
107 7/8 x 79 7/8 inches (274 x  
203 cm.)  
(DZF24-022)

DENZIL FORRESTER  
*Nest, 2023*

Pastel on paper  
32 1/4 x 25 1/4 inches (82 x 64  
cm.); 39 3/4 x 32 1/2 inches (101  
x 82.4 cm.) framed  
(DZF24-032)

EXHIBITION CONTINTUES AT STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

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# Denzil Forrester

BORN 1956, GRENADA, WEST INDIES  
LIVES AND WORKS IN CORNWALL, UK

## EDUCATION

1983 MA Fine Art, Royal College of Art, London, UK  
1979 BA (Hons) Fine Art, Central School of Art, London, UK  
1976 Foundation, Central School of Art, London, UK

## AWARDS

2024 The Robson Orr TenTen Award, UK  
2021 South Bank Sky Arts Award, UK  
Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE)  
2019 Morley Fellowship, Morley College, London, UK  
2000 The Scottish Gallery Diana King Prize, Royal Academy Summer  
Exhibition, London, UK  
1987 Koren-Ferry International Award, Royal Academy Summer  
Exhibition, London, UK  
1986 Harkness Fellowship  
1983 Scholarship, British School at Rome, Rome, Italy

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024 *Two Islands One World*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and  
Stephen Friedman Gallery, New York  
2023 *We Culture*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, Florida, USA  
*With Q*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK  
*Duppy Conqueror*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas  
City, Missouri, USA (catalogue)  
2021 *Itchin & Scratchin*, Spike Island, Bristol, UK (touring)  
2020 *Itchin & Scratchin*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK  
(touring)  
*Denzil Forrester in Rome*, 30 Old Burlington Street, Stephen  
Friedman Gallery, London, UK



- 2019 *Brixton Blue*, TFL Commission, Brixton Underground Station, London, UK  
*A Survey*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK
- 2018 *From Trench Town to Porthtown*, Jackson Foundation, St Just, UK
- 2016 *White Columns*, New York, USA Tramps, London, England
- 2002 *Two Decades of Painting*, The Edward Wilmot Blyden Project, 4 Victoria Street, Bristol, UK
- 1996 *Memory and Images*, Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery, Peterborough, UK
- 1995 *Farewell to Shadowland*, 198 Gallery, London, UK
- 1991 *Dub Transition*, Laing art Gallery, Newcastle; Usher Gallery, Lincolnshire; Smith Art Gallery, Stirling; Boundary Gallery, London; The Angel Row, Nottingham; and Lancaster Gallery, Coventry, UK(touring)
- 1990 *Dub Transition*, Harris Museum & Gallery, Preston (touring)
- 1987 *Limelight Club*, New York, USA
- 1986 *Drawing Exhibition*, Commonwealth Institute, London,UK
- 1983 *Pagan Echoes*, Riverside Studios, London, UK

#### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA (touring)
- 2024 *Drawing the Unspeakable*, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne, UK  
*The Time is Always Now*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, USA  
*Beyond the Bassline: 500 Years of Black British Music*, British Library, London, UK  
*The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; The Box, Plymouth, UK (touring)
- 2023 *The Place I Am*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK  
*The Rejectionists: Collective Benefit Exhibition between Drawing Center and Pace*, New York, USA  
*Thin Skin*, Monash University Museum of Art, Cauldfield East, Australia (catalogue)  
*The Rejectionists: The Drawing Center Collective Benefit Exhibition with Pace*, Pace Gallery, New York, USA  
*10 Years Anniversary Show – PART 2*, Long Museum, Shanghai, China  
*Papertrail*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles, California, USA  
*A voice answering a voice*, Tanya Leighton, Berlin, Germany
- 2022 *Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s-today*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA (catalogue)  
*Grayson's Art Club*, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, England  
*Dark Light, Realism in the Age of Post truth: Selections from the Aishti Foundation Collection*, Aishti Foundation, Antelias, Lebanon

- Is it morning for you yet?*, 58th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA  
*because the night belongs to us*, The Box, Plymouth, UK  
Captured Beauty, Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, Cornwall, UK  
*Legacies: London Transport's Caribbean Workforce*, London Transport Museum, London, UK  
2021 *Coventry Biennial: Hyper-Possible*, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK  
*Life Between Islands: Caribbean–British Art 50s – Now*, Tate Britain, London, UK  
*Mixing It Up: Painting Today*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK  
*Modern Conversations*, Tate St Ives, Cornwall, UK  
2020 *25 Years*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK  
*Everything is Personal*, Tramps, New York, USA  
*Frieze LIVE*, curated by Victor Wang, 9 Cork Street, London, UK  
*England Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
2019 *Get Up, Stand Up Now: Generations of Black Creative Pioneers*, Somerset House, London, UK  
*Artists | Steal From*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London, England  
2017 *Sputterances*, Metro Pictures, New York, USA  
*Sixty Years, Collection Display: Walkthrough British Art*, Tate Britain, London, UK  
2008 *Quad*, The Gallery in Cork Street, London, UK  
2007 *Artists Doing It for Themselves*, Burlington Arcade, London, UK  
2006 *Artists Doing It for Themselves*, Thurloe Road, London, UK  
2005 *Artists Doing It for Themselves*, Farringdon, London, UK  
2001 *Fresh Art*, Business Design Centre, London, England  
2000 *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
*The Painting & Drawing Department*, Morley Gallery, London, UK  
*The Selectors*, Madeleine Pearson Gallery, London, UK  
1997 *Transforming the Crown: African, Asian and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966-1996*, Caribbean Cultural Center, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York Foundations of Fame, The London Institute, London, UK  
1996 *Imagined Communities*, Oldham Gallery, Oldham, UK, and Art Gallery, Walsall, England; Royal Festival Hall, London  
1995 Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
*The London Art Group*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK  
1990 *Rome Scholars 1980-90*, Royal College of Art, London, UK  
1989 *Caribbean Expressions in Britain*, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, UK, Glasgow, Scotland (touring); Firstsite, Colchester, UK; Walsall Museum  
1988 *New Figurative Painters*, The Orangery, London, UK  
*Figuring Out the 80s*, Laing Gallery, Newcastle, UK  
*Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
*Painters at the Royal College of Art, 150th Anniversary Show*, Royal College of Art, London, UK



- 1987 *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
1986 *From Two Worlds*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK  
*Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
*Open Exhibition*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK  
1985 *Six Artists in Action*, Madeleine Pearson Gallery, London, UK  
*Rome Scholars Final Show*, Academia Britannica, Rome, Italy  
Bisonte Gallery, Florence, Italy  
*Wolfson College Gallery*, Oxford, UK  
1984 *Open Show*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK  
*Five Artists in Action*, Madeleine Pearson Gallery, London, UK  
*Ten Artists*, Accademia Britannica, Rome, Italy  
1983 *Black on Black, Creation for Liberation*, London, UK  
*Six Artists in Action*, Madeleine Pearson Gallery, London, UK  
*Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
*Post Graduate Exhibition*, Royal College of Art, London, UK  
*Germinations*, Trilateral Art Exhibition, London, UK  
Edinburgh, Scotland; Kassel, Germany and Lille, France (touring)  
1982 *Drawings and Prints*, Madeleine Pearson Gallery, London, UK  
*Four Man Show*, Sadler's Wells Gallery, London, UK  
*Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
1981 *Six Man Show*, Madeleine Pearson Gallery, London, UK  
1979 *Basement Art Group*, CYC Gallery, London, UK  
*Graduate Exhibition*, Central School of Art, London, UK  
1977 *Basement Art Group*, CYC Gallery, London, UK

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2024 *Denzil Forrester: Duppy Conqueror*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri, USA  
*The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK  
2023 *Thin Skin*, Monash University Museum of Art, Cauldfield East, Australia  
2022 *Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s-today*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA  
*Modern British Art: New Reflections, The Ingram Collection*, Lund Humphries, London, UK  
2021 *Mixing It Up: Painting Today*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK  
Coventry Biennial: Hyper-Possible, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK  
*The Anomie Review of Contemporary British Painting 2'*, Matt Price, Anomie Publishing, London, UK  
*Life Between Islands: Caribbean–British Art 50s – Now*, Tate Britain, London, UK  
2020 *25 Years*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK

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- 2019 *Get Up, Stand Up Now: Generations of Black Creative Pioneers*,  
Somerset House, London, UK  
*Denzil Forrester*, foreword by Peter Doig, essays by Sam Thorne  
and Eddie Chambers, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK
- 2018 *Denzil Forrester: From Trench Town to Porthtowan*, Kurt Jackson  
Editions, UK

#### PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Aïshti Foundation, Antelias, Lebanon  
Arts Council Collection, UK  
Government Art Collection, UK  
Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston, England  
Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, Florida, USA  
Long Museum, Shanghai, China  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
Morley College, London, UK  
Tate, UK