

Press Release

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Welancora Gallery presents *Weh Dem? De Sparrow Catcher?*

Opening reception: Thursday, July 27 from 6-8pm.



Welancora Gallery is proud to present *Weh Dem? De Sparrow Catcher?*, a solo exhibition of new work by Cyle Warner (b. 2001), on view from July 27 to October 10, 2023. Warner's first exhibition at the gallery brings together a reimagined archive of photographs and textiles to reveal a very personal exploration of his family's life in the Caribbean.

Sourced from the Warner family archive, the photographs are layered, recomposed and enlarged to conjure feelings of curiosity about Warner's elders and their life in the Caribbean. The works on view raise a number of questions; namely, what would life be like if there had been no migration to the United States? The photos, ranging from the mid 1940s to the early to mid 1970s, depict family members when they were permanently residing in the Caribbean. The hazy quality and sepia tones, as well as what's visible, what's further highlighted, and what's left

to be desired all lend themselves to the artist's fractured understanding of a time in the Caribbean that he never experienced first hand.

The textile works are created with materials that the artist sourced from various family members; burlap from his father's workplace and clothing gifted to him by the influential Caribbean women in his life. This physical proximity to his heritage and family, as well as the tactility of his process – cutting and tearing, connecting and sewing by hand and machine, and sometimes dying fabrics – further connects the artist to his familial archive, which is embedded with memory, experience, and touch.

The bifurcated title of the show is drawn from West Indian patois and stories that Warner's grandmother shared with him as he was growing up. *Weh dem* or "where are they", is a nod to the artist's familial lineage, Caribbean vernacular and dialect. The second half of the exhibition title - *De Sparrow Catcher* - stems from a story handed down by Warner's grandmother about his great-grandfather, which led the artist to create the metaphorical tale of "De Sparrow Catcher". While the tale is inspired by the true story of his great-grandfather bringing sparrows back to the United States from Trinidad, "De Sparrow Catcher" is a character who holds more power in its disidentification -- this character could be a representation of any blood relative or extended family member. This blending of myth, history, and personal narrative is an attempt at the bridging and uncovering of family memories across generations and across borders.

Warner's (re)compositions honor the legacies and experiences of generations whose stories and memories are imbued within cloth and photographs, serving as a place of rest and an embrace for the entanglements of these histories. These works tell the stories of growing up in a West-Indian family, outside of the Caribbean, with all the labor, humor, and wisdom while making space for what was less known but was longed for.

About the Artist

Warner's artistic practice is centered around his conceptual framework, rooted in West Indian culture, which he refers to as *Dis (This)*; it is an infinite, rhizomatic approach to history that acts as a method for understanding the present through fragmented memories, stories, and myths.

Cyle Warner was born in New York, NY. He earned his BFA in Photography and Video from the School of Visual Arts in 2023. Warner completed a residency at the Yale Norfolk School of Art in 2022. He has participated in numerous exhibitions, including: *Miami is Not the Caribbean, Yet It Feels Like It*, Oolite Arts, Miami, FL (2022); *MIGRATING SUN PART 1*, Welancora Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2022); *Last Call*, Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal, CA (2022); *Like Wildflowers*, NYC Culture Club, New York, New York (2022); *If fluid was a song...*, online curation by Adama Delphine Fawundu at Project Gallery V (2021); *Becoming*, School of Visual Arts Galleries, New York, NY (2021); *The Meeting Point*, Regular Normal x Art Noir, New York, NY (2021), *We Still Around: Here*, Black Gotham Experience, New York, NY; and *The Privilege of Getting Together*, Regular Normal, New York, NY. Warner has had two solo exhibitions: *you take a longish road*

going so..., BFA Photo and Video Gallery at SVA, New York, NY (2022); and *Alternative Reflections*, Backyard Ghost, Brooklyn, NY (2021). He lives and works in New York, NY.

Image: *I Don't Want To Go*, Archival pigment print with collage on Hanhemühle Photo Rag, 5 x 7 inches.

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