

Press Release

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*Empire Is Not Forever*

Opening reception: Saturday, May 9, 2026

6:00-8:00pm



Kemar Keanu Wynter, *Seven hundred and sixty two point five millimeters of mercury (Pineapple Chiffon)*, 2024-2025

Welancora Gallery and Ivy's Projects are pleased to present *Empire is Not Forever*, a group exhibition guest curated by Alyssa Alexander and Cyle Warner. The exhibition will be on view at Ivy's Projects (410 Jefferson Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11221), and includes work by Jill Cohen-Nuñez, Renluka Maharaj, Pedro Troncoso, Cyle Warner, and Kemar Keanu Wynter. The opening reception will take place on May 9, 2026, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

*Empire is not forever* is a group exhibition that gathers works engaged with the slow unraveling and persistence of empire. Through painting, sculpture, installation, video, and textile-based practices, the exhibition considers how the legacies of colonial structures in the Caribbean and its diaspora, deteriorate unevenly, leaving behind residues in land, language, and the body. Resistant to negotiating these truths by way of narrative strategies, artists here look to various modes of storytelling. The difference, as Byung-Chul Han suggests in *The Crisis of Narration*, is that narration is an enclosure rather than an invitation to explore. In an age of relentless access to information, narration upholds familiar knowledge and notions, it doesn't challenge or question. Where narration provides a neatly packaged identity, storytelling initiates possibilities of realms unknown. Though varied in their approaches, the artists within *Empire is not forever* withhold as much as they share, leaving room for generative speculation on how to leverage what has been left behind toward a useful futurity.

**Jill Cohen-Nuñez** (they/them) creates tumored ancestral and futurist spiritual sites that address themes of memory, syncretism, and disease. Working across sculpture, their practice engages in slow, laborious processes to bridge material and immaterial landscapes—disrupted by colonization and systemic erasure. Using the language of objects, altars, and poetry, their work explores the intersections of myth-making, devotion, and continuity.

Cohen-Nuñez (b. 1992) is a Dominican-American artist from The Bronx, NY. They hold a BA in Studio Art from CUNY City College. They are a recipient of The Bronx Museum's 2025 AIM Fellowship. In 2024, they were named the Devra Freeland Artist Fellow at Socrates Sculpture Park and were awarded a New York Community Trust Van Lier fellowship at Wave Hill in 2023. They have received grants and scholarships from Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, the Connor Merit Awards, Urban Glass, the Oki Doki Studio, and an NYFA City Artist Corps Grant. Cohen-Nuñez has participated in residencies at Haverford College, The Newark Print Shop, Manhattan Graphics Center, MASS MoCA, Chashama, and Modern Art Foundry.

They have exhibited at the National Sculpture Society, BronxArtSpace, Center for Performance Research, Fordham University, BAAD! Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, The New York Botanical Garden, the Jane Hartsook Gallery at Greenwich House, and EFA Project Space.

**Renluka Maharaj** utilizes sourced photographs, textiles, sculpture, research, and travel to create mixed media compositions that investigate how history, migration, memory, religion, and gender inform identity in general and that of her family in particular. The artist's family lineage can be traced back to India during the 19th century, when forced indentured servitude replaced African slave labor on sugarcane plantations in the Caribbean.

She was born in Trinidad & Tobago; she lives and works between Colorado, New York City and Trinidad. Maharaj completed her BFA at the University of Colorado Boulder and her MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she received the Barbara De Genevieve Scholarship. Her work has been recognized with awards including Fellowships from: Vermont Studio Center, Fountainhead Residency and Virginia Center For Creative Arts.

Maharaj has exhibited at the Mattatuck Museum, McColl Center, South Asia Institute, Avery Research Center, Whitebox Gallery, Rule Gallery, Colorado Fine Arts Center, Project for Empty Space, and Akron Art Museum.

**Pedro Troncoso** (b. 1996) is a New York-based artist whose work explores colonial erasures of identity, diaspora, and cultural memory. Rooted in his Dominican heritage, Troncoso's paintings and drawings layer erased narratives into dreamlike spaces where blurred identities confront colonial erasure. His ongoing exploration of figure, iconography and form transcends the boundaries of drawing and painting, implementing architectural and sculptural motifs to further trouble concepts of Caribbean identity.

Troncoso was born in the Dominican Republic. He earned his BFA in Illustration at Parsons School of Design after formative studies at Altos de Chavón, La Escuela de Diseño (DR), and

holds an MFA in Fine Arts from the New York Academy of Art. In 2026, he was listed on Forbes' "30 Under 30" list for Art & Style. In 2025, he was awarded the Equal Prize at the 31st National Biennial of Visual Arts at the Museum of Modern Art Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic.

His work has been shown at the 29th and 31st Dominican Biennials, NADA, Art Central Hong Kong, ComplexCon, and the AXA Art Prize, with additional exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and Beijing. His practice has been profiled in Blanc Magazine, Whitewall, Artlyst, New American Paintings, among others.

**Cyle Warner** (b. 2001) is a Caribbean-American multidisciplinary artist whose practice investigates space, place, and the material histories embedded within the Caribbean landscape. Working across fiber, photography, and sculpture, Warner's work engages with architectural forms, particularly Caribbean breeze blocks, and vernacular structures, to reimagine the relationship between body, home, and collective memory. Drawing from familial archives, found objects, and regional materials, Warner creates textile-based installations and wall works that function as physical and poetic structures—spaces to hold memory, myth, and the residue of place.

Warner was born in New York, where he still lives and works. He earned a BFA in Photography and Video from the School of Visual Arts in 2023 and attended the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art in 2022. He has participated in the Vermont Studio Center with a fellowship in 2024 and is currently a 2024-2026 Van Lier Fellow at Abrons Arts Center. He was a 2025 Bronx AIM Fellow.

Warner's work has been exhibited at Regular Normal, New York (2020, 2021); Oolite Arts, Miami (2022); Bradley Ertaskiran, Montréal (2022); and the Brooklyn Museum (2024).

Drawing upon his years of Friday nights cooking in familial kitchens and a nourished upbringing along the bakery and jerk shop-lined cross-streets of Crown Heights, **Kemar Keanu Wynter's** abstract works are a generous stew of language and pigment. Layers of luscious, gestural strokes draw the viewer into fields of color which frequently operate with coded references to his histories; one, storied and generations-long in the Antilles and another budding and burgeoning in the Five Boroughs. Through this interplay of motif and materiality, the viewer's own tethers to comfort, history and home are brought into focus.

Wynter (b. 1995) was born in Crown Heights, Brooklyn; he lives and works in Little Caribbean, Brooklyn. He earned his BFA, cum laude, in Painting and Drawing from SUNY Purchase. He is represented by Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York. He has completed residencies at Anderson Ranch Arts Center, The Macedonia Institute, the AAI-LES Studio Program, Ox-Bow, and 100 West Artist and Writer Residency.

His work has exhibited at Bode Projects, Berlin (2021); Anat Ebgi, New York (2024); Cuchifritos Gallery, New York (2024); and McKay Gallery (East Hampton, NY) among others. Wynter's works have been featured in The Brooklyn Rail, Hyperallergic, and Cultured Mag.

His work is in the collections of Art Galleries at Black Studies, University of Texas, Austin, TX; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ; and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA.