

Tanya Leighton

Press Release

Simone Kennedy Doig
'THE VISITOR'

8 September – 21 October 2023

Preview: Thursday 7 September, 6–8pm

Tanya Leighton is pleased to present 'The Visitor' by Simone Kennedy Doig. The exhibition marks the artist's solo debut in Europe and consists of paintings as well as drawings on paper and on found objects, bringing together works made over the last five years.

Born in London and raised in Port of Spain, Trinidad, Kennedy Doig continually travels back and forth between the two cities. In this permanent state of transience, she processes her life through diaristic collage, collapsing experiences both immediate and remembered. Using a personal archive of cellphone snapshots as loose references, she captures impressions of carnival fêtes and sunrise strolls, dawn in Port of Spain and midnight in London. Kennedy Doig not only collects memories of her comings and goings; she also works with mementoes she picks up along the way. Objects charged with the histories of her travels – invitation cards, a takeaway container, plastic bags, a shoebox – can all become vessels for her drawings.

With the exhibition title, 'The Visitor', Kennedy Doig references a lost baby Jay bird that she discovered in her studio in London a few years back. Still a chick, it hadn't yet fully developed its wings, so its mother visited the artist's studio every day over the course of a few weeks to feed it until it was strong enough to fly away. The Jays are the protagonists of the exhibition's titular painting, but they are not the only visiting birds. In the work *Kiskadee Visit*, a Kiskadee bird appears in the upper centre of the canvas, whilst the human figure veers sideways. Drawing connections to the people closest to us, birds become a motif symbolic of life's vagaries and fragility in this particular body of Kennedy Doig's work.

The works in 'The Visitor' remind us how we are all merely passing through. They can be read as meditations on the fleeting nature of life. There is a complex subliminal beauty, perhaps even an eerie sense of wonder underlying these reflections. Paintings such as *Savannah Grass* or *Mango Bar* depict figures in moments of togetherness, joy and celebration. It is in that vulnerable in-betweenness that Kennedy Doig's artistic practice exists. Framing each scene with the atmosphere of the environments captured, her focus is more on feeling and on the hazy and mysterious ways we reminisce, rather than in exacting detail.

A poignant interest in personhood and the uncertain dynamics of human relationships defines Kennedy Doig's work. She paints what she knows – her worlds, her places, her people, how she gazes at them and how she sees them gaze at one another. As though reconciling with life's ephemeral reality, the works bear witness to brief, shared moments of observation – heartbeats, breaths, and a seemingly interconnected web of piercing looks. In the space in-between, an overarching presence looms – the fragile truth of just how short our time together is and the earnest attempts we make to hold onto such moments.

Kurfürstenstraße 156, 10785 Berlin

+49 (0)30 21 972 220, info@tanyaleighton.com, www.tanyaleighton.com

Tanya Leighton

Simone Kennedy Doig (born in 1994 in London) lives and works between London and Port of Spain, Trinidad. She received her BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2017. She had her first solo exhibition, titled 'Waist Deep' at Baert Gallery, Los Angeles in 2022. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Michael Werner Gallery, East Hampton, New York; Galeria Madragoa, Lisbon; The Frame Shop, Port of Spain; French Riviera, London; Spirit Shop, Lisbon; Tramps Gallery, New York; Cob Gallery, London; Asylum Studios Suffolk; Churchgate Galleries, Somerset, and Cubitt Studios, London, among others.

For more information please contact info@tanyaleighton.com or telephone +49(0)30221607770.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am–6 pm and by appointment.