

GALLERIA POGGIALI

Presents

David Antonio Cruz

so you are back again, you are here, and we are here with you

23.03. 2023 – 27.05.2023

Opening

Thursday 23.03. 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Galleria Poggiali – Milano
Foro Bonaparte 52 – 20121 Milano

Galleria Poggiali is pleased to present in its Milan premises, in Foro Bonaparte 52, ***so you are back again, you are here, and we are here with you***, the first solo exhibition in Italy of the American artist **David Antonio Cruz** (b. 1974, USA). David Antonio Cruz explores the nuances of genderqueerness, race, public and private spaces, and the invisibility of the Brown/Black body through the use of portraiture and operatic performance.

so you are back again, you are here, and we are here with you, presents an intimate visual conversation of love, support, and comfort between the artist and his longtime performance collaborator, Daniel de Jesus. Personal, biographical, and political, the works engage with the struggles imposed on queer people and people of color and offer empowered depictions of authenticity as a form of resilience. *so you are back again*, extends the artist's 2021 exhibition *icutfromtehmiddletogetabetterslice*, which explored the notion of 'chosen family': the nonbiological bonds between queer people based on mutual support and love. Each painting depicts the likeness of the artist's community. At the same time, the portraits strive to capture much more than the physical representation of the figures; they venerate the overall structure of queer relationships, captured through intimate moments of touch, strength, support, and celebration.

Set in lush, opulent interiors, the paintings are brightly colored, claiming space for an unapologetic celebration of queer life. Cruz's highly chromatic atmosphere weaves fashion, pop culture, and art historical references, drawing from John Singer Sargent's high society portraits and Francis Bacon's paintings in warped environments. The subjects are reinterpreting and playing with classical poses nestled intimately on a morphed couch. Covered in tapestries and upholstery, the furniture plays with a sense of decadence and luxury, calling on the romanticism seen through Victorian, Rococo, and early American paintings. In contrast to the former, Cruz's subjects are invited to pose in opposition to social norms as a form of resistance and play, queering the act of posing.

In contrast to the artist's bright, celebratory paintings, Cruz's monochromatic drawings establish an intimate and meditative space that, while almost haunting, is beautiful to behold. Silhouettes of organic forms from the subject's specific geographic regions across the US are combined with delicate wax pencil renderings of chosen family subjects and flora from the countryside of Puerto Rico. Cruz incorporates the Ceiba, a tree indigenous to Mexico, the Caribbean, and West Africa, as a grounding motif to signify his chosen family's deep and strong roots and connect to the artist's memories. He views the drawings as a moment of meditation or slower reading of the lush paintings—almost as if they were two sides of an LP or record. The works speak the same language but with a different resonance and tune, compelling the viewer to engage more deeply.

David Antonio Cruz (b. 1974, Philadelphia) received his BFA in Painting from Pratt Institute and his MFA from Yale University. He also attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and completed the AIM Program at the Bronx Museum, New York. Recent residencies and fellowships include the LMCC Workspace Residency, New York (2015); Gateway Project Spaces, Newark, NJ (2016); BRIC Workspace Residency, Brooklyn (2018); Neubauer Faculty Fellowship, Tufts University, Boston (2018); and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Award (2018). Cruz's work has been included in notable exhibitions at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C (2014); El Museo del Barrio, New York (2016); the Ford Foundation, New York (2019); the Brooklyn Museum (2019); the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio (2019); the the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (2020); the Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts (2020/2021); the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (2021/2022); The Block Museum at Northwestern (2022) and ICA Boston (2022), Cruz presented performances at Performa 13, New York (2013); and the High Line, New York (2015). Upcoming solo exhibitions include Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art Charleston, SC (2024); Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Center, Bronx, NY (2024). Cruz lives and works in New York, where he is a Professor of Visual Arts at the School of Visual Arts at Columbia University, NY.

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