

-figur

Kemar Keanu Wynter

Nov 15, 2024 through Feb 1, 2025

Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space is pleased to present **-figur**, a solo exhibition of recent works by Lower East Side Studio Program alum **Kemar Keanu Wynter**, on view at 88 Essex St. from November 15, 2024 through February 1, 2025.

-figur follows on the heels of Kemar's previous solo exhibition, *Rücken-*, at Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, serving as its complement and functioning to complete the term Rückenfigur, a visual motif used extensively within the lineages of both German Romanticism and Hudson River School painting, each of which has been integral to Wynter's practice over the last year.

"In many ways, *Rücken-* was a reflection on the relationships I hold dear in my life—those external connections that form the periphery of who I am as an individual. **-figur** is about my relationship with myself, the core of my being—the last year has been one of immense flux and within that crucible, there has been a sort of recrystallization of the self that I'm excited to reflect on through the work."

The exhibition features the newest work from Wynter's ongoing suite of acrylic-washed paintings on Evolon titled, *Surrogate II (Blackberry Preserves, Natural Skippy Extra Crunchy, Toasted Honey Wheat)*. As someone with an affinity for cuisine and cookery, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich reflects an ease and utilitarian comfort that the artist often relies on to get through the week. Eschewing the figure, each abstraction serves as a surrogate for the fixtures in his life, each Surrogate-titled painting being a direct self-portrait of Wynter in his present moment.

Flanking *Surrogate II* is *Amlodipine*, Wynter's first standalone text-based work. The title, taken directly from the name of the medication the artist uses to keep his heart in check, Wynter relates the erratic shift of one's heartbeat to notions of desire, anxiety, and affection. This work also serves as a reemergence of coding within the artist's practice, where he has keyed individual letters of the alphabet to the ivory pieces of a double-six domino set. With 6-6 serving as the letter A, the first piece put down at the start of his family's games, the writing is relayed through a series of risographs hung from restaurant ticket rails. At first glance, one's eyes flit rapidly between the various arrays of dots on each page, but with time, visitors can peel through the patterns for an intimate look into the artist's journaling and prose-poetic text.

A native New Yorker distanced from the patois of his Jamaican heritage, Wynter uses memory and cuisine to inform his artistic vision. Growing up in Crown Heights Brooklyn, the kitchen of his childhood home became a place of inspiration. Through the use of abstractions, coded references, and rich colors, Wynter has developed and explored a new visual patois, one that bridges him between the five boroughs, the Caribbean, and a plethora of cultures and cuisines he has yet to encounter. In this sensory crossover articulated by color and mark, viewers are invited to connect with themes of identity, heritage, and memory.

Kemar Keanu Wynter (he/him) (b. Brooklyn, NY) holds a BFA from the SUNY Purchase School of Art and Design. His work was the focus of solo exhibitions at Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York (2024), Encounter, Lisbon, Portugal (2023), and Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Queens (2021). He has exhibited in several group shows including Mama's in the Kitchen, Anat Ebgi, New York; Visible World,

Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton; Death of Beauty, Sargent's Daughters, Los Angeles; and Notes on Ecstatic Unity, OTP Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark. Wynter was a member of the 2023-24 Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, and has also been in residence at the AAI-LES Studio Program, The Macedonia Institute, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, as well as ARoS Kunstmuseum in Aarhus, Denmark and Art Quarter Budapest in Budapest, Hungary. His work is held in the collection of the Art Galleries at Black Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. Wynter's practice has been written about in Hyperallergic, bon appétit, and the Brooklyn Rail, and discussed on Correspondence Archive and Montez Press Radio.

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CHECKLIST

MAIN GALLERY

Kemar Keanu Wynter
Amlodipine, 2024
graphite, risograph on 67lb Neenah Vellum
Bristol, restaurant ticket rail

Kemar Keanu Wynter
*Surrogate II (Blackberry Preserves,
Natural Skippy Extra Crunchy, Toasted
Honey Wheat)*, 2024
acrylic on Evolon

STREET-FACING WINDOW

Kemar Keanu Wynter
Surrogate I (Cow Foot Soup), 2024
acrylic on Evolon

BACKROOM

Kemar Keanu Wynter
HRS24-1, 2024
three-color risograph on 60lb French cover
paper, restaurant ticket rail

Kemar Keanu Wynter
HRS24-2, 2024
three-color risograph on 60lb French cover
paper, restaurant ticket rail

Accessibility

During your visit, if desired, a folding chair can be provided should standing for short or long periods of time interfere with your viewing experience. Additionally, sound dampening headphones and tinted glasses are available and will be provided upon request for visitors for whom the sound or lighting of the gallery space is disruptive. A quiet, off-site/off-view space can be arranged during viewing for those with the need. Baby strollers are welcome in Essex Market and Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space. Both facilities are wheelchair accessible, and service animals on a leash are permitted.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about accessing Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space or attending programs, please email gallery@artistsallianceinc.org.

Artists Alliance Inc. (AAI) is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization located on the Lower East Side of New York City. Programming support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with support from the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Further exhibition programming is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts. We thank the New York City Economic Development Corporation, The Clemente Soto Vélaz Cultural & Educational Center, and individual supporters of Artists Alliance Inc for their continued support. Special thanks go to our team of dedicated volunteers and interns, without whom this program would not be possible.