

PRESS RELEASE

WINSTON BRANCH: *JASMINES BLOWING IN THE WIND*
Simon Lee Gallery, London

22 NOVEMBER 2022 – 14 JANUARY 2023
PRIVATE VIEW: WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER, 6 – 8 PM

Simon Lee Gallery and Varvara Roza Galleries are pleased to announce *Jasmines blowing in the wind*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Winston Branch. For his inaugural exhibition with the gallery and his first in the UK in 25 years, Branch will present a selection of historic works that delve into the possibilities of painting through abstraction.

Ambitious and experimental, the works in this exhibition are the fruit of a 25-year long inquiry into the potentiality of light, colour, space and depth. Born in St. Lucia in 1947, Winston Branch came to London as a teenager to study at The Slade School of Fine Art. Branch would go on to teach at The Slade School of Fine Art, Chelsea College of Arts and University of California (Berkeley, CA) amongst others, whilst maintaining a robust painting practice initially focused on figuration but, from the 1980s onwards, focused on pure abstraction.

Dating back to 1982, the earliest works in *Jasmines blowing in the wind* exemplify the artist's first forays into abstraction. Formed of short, rhythmic brushstrokes, the paintings are energetic and exploratory in their approach to mark-making. In dialogue with French Impressionism, these works were created through instinct and observation, and belong to same suite as *Zachary II*, acquired by Tate in 2018. Later works in the exhibition see Branch demonstrate an increasingly dexterous handling of space and colour. In paintings such as *Blue for Miles* (1999), for example, the artist uses great swathes of rich pigment and thicker, more fluid brushstrokes to open up the picture plane.

Winston Branch's journey with abstraction begun in 1982, the same year in which the British Black Arts Movement was founded to examine issues of racism, sexism and the legacies of colonialism. But, primarily concerned with formalism, Branch was excluded from many seminal exhibitions of the time which were focused on identity politics. 40 years on, this exhibition brings together the results of the painter's investigation into the possibilities of abstraction and hopes to introduce a wider audience to the work of Winston Branch.

NOTES TO EDITORS**ABOUT WINSTON BRANCH**

Winston Branch (b.1947, Castries, St. Lucia) lives and works between London, UK and California, US. Branch studied art at The Slade School of Fine Art, UK and at The British School at Rome, Italy. He has held positions as professor of art at the University of California (Berkeley, CA) and Kansas State University (Manhattan, KS) and taught at The Slade School of Fine Art, Chelsea College of Arts, Kingston School of Art and Goldsmiths, University of London.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Winston Branch: A Gift of Life*, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, Berkeley, CA (2011) and Townsend Center for the Humanities, University of California at Berkeley (2001). Selected group exhibitions include *4th Bienal de Pintura del Caribe y Centroamerica*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (2003); *Being There: 45 Oakland Artists*, Museum of California, Oakland (2002); *1st Bienal Argentina de Grafica Latino americana*, Museo Nacional del Grabado, Argentina (2000); and *Transforming the Crown: African, Asian and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966-1996* Studio Museum of Harlem, New York (1997). Branch's work can be found in the collections of the Tate Britain, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; The British Museum, London; and The Brooklyn Museum, New York amongst others.

ABOUT VARVARA ROZA GALLERIES

Varvara Roza Galleries is an Executive Arts Gallery and Advisory Firm promoting overseas artists & Greece's brightest artists worldwide and is committed to cultural leadership. The CEO of Varvara Roza Galleries is Varvara Roza. Varvara Roza is an Art manager and advisor with a passion for bringing leading contemporary artists and Greece's brightest artists into the global art market. Varvara specializes in the promotion of contemporary art by established and emerging international artists, and she is determined to feature a multitude of artistic disciplines with an intent focus on giving a platform to exceptional talent, diversity and cultural relevance. She is dedicated to ensure the highest level of excellence and integrity within her projects across Europe.

ABOUT SIMON LEE GALLERY

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery
www.simonleegallery.com

Simon Lee Gallery
12 Berkeley Street
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Image: Winston Branch, *Dancing in the silent Blue*, 1982. Acrylic on canvas. 200 x 245 cm (78 3/4 x 96 1/2 in.)
Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact: Jennifer@simonleegallery.com