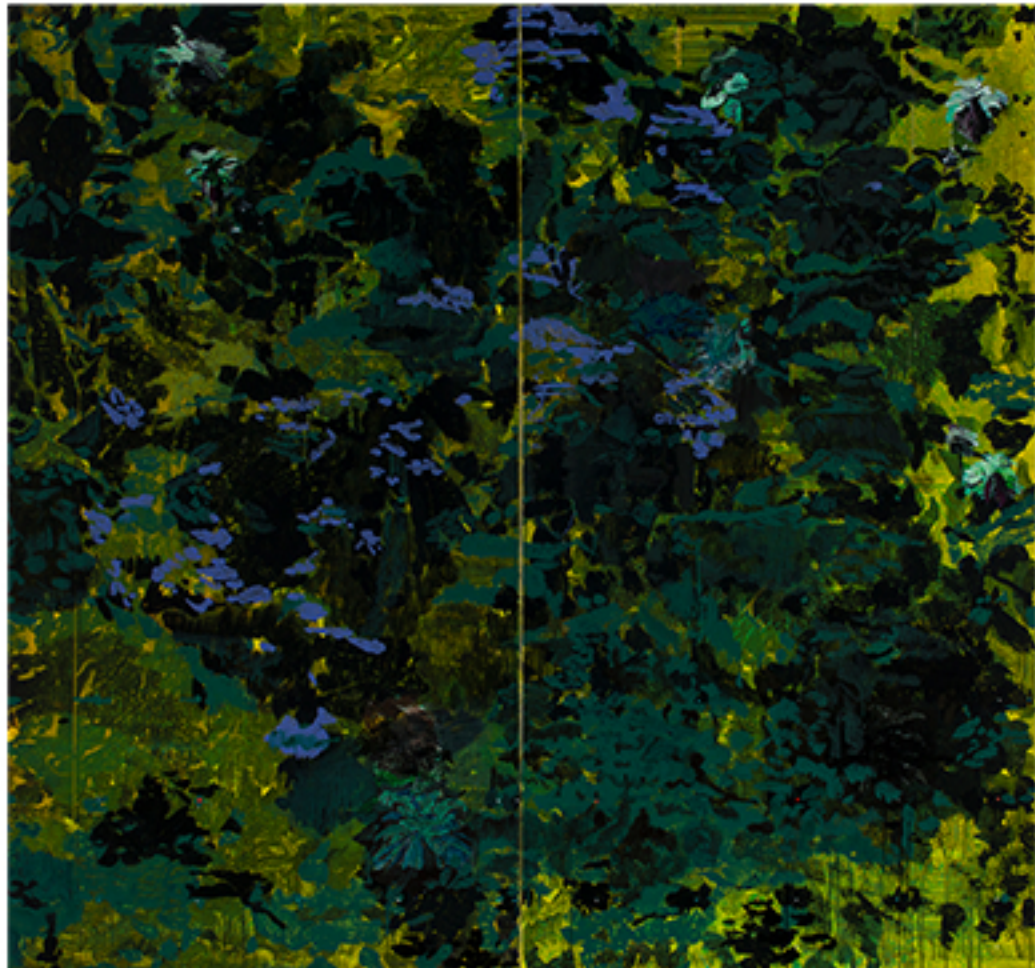




Hurvin Anderson, *Palm House*, 2009.

Photo: Craig Smith



Hurvin Anderson, *Twins*, 2015.

Photo: Craig Smith

The verdant landscapes and intimate interior spaces depicted in Hurvin Anderson's paintings often appear *just* out of reach, as if visually obscured by painterly finesse, geometric overlay, or the subtle intangibility of memory. Born in Birmingham, England of Jamaican parentage, Anderson has frequently turned to the Caribbean as both subject and muse. For the artist, the islands are marked by experiences of familiarity, identity, and belonging, but also the unbridgeable distance felt by many second-generation immigrants towards a familial or cultural homeland. Anderson's chromatically lush renderings of picturesque tropical environments—Black British barbershops, tennis courts, living rooms, and art galleries are characterized by a unique sense of vital fluidity—are constantly shifting between representation and abstraction, clarity and opacity, or surface and depth.

Palm House and *Twins* are each exemplary of what the artist calls 'anti-landscape,' a reversal of the genre's historic affiliation with the visual regimes of imperialism and surveillance. The Caribbean has long been codified as a kind of tropical Eden in Western painting, either through romanticized vistas of idyllic beaches and overgrown jungles teeming with untamed wildlife or plantation pictures that celebrate the landscape's productive fecundity once 'tamed.' In *Palm House*, Anderson troubles mankind's desire to exert control over nature, as well as the colonial impulse to collect, or pillage, cultural and natural artifacts from the colonized world. Around this time, for instance, Anderson produced several paintings inspired by greenhouse enclosures such as the Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, London, where transplanted tropical flora is glimpsed through a decorative geometric screen—an analogy to the migratory journeys of diasporan communities settled across Britain. (These patterned overlays are further reminiscent of ornamented security grilles seen throughout many creolized locales across the Atlantic world). Anderson thus reminds us that landscapes are always 'framed'—perpetually mediated by our cultural, generational, or historical positionalities.

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