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## PAINTER ALEXANDRE LENOIR'S "TROIS RIVIÈRES" SOLO EXHIBITION AT ALMINE RECH

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David Graver



A study of characters that have been crystallized in moments from someone else's memories, Alexandre Lenoir's *Trois Rivières* solo exhibition, on now through 23 October at Almine Rech in NYC, finds the almost impressionistic painter transforming old black-and-white and sepia-toned photographs that belong to his grandmother into large-scale acrylic and oil paintings. Lenoir, who graduated from Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 2016, maintains a studio in Paris, though he's lived in Morocco and spent formative years in Guadeloupe, where his grandmother resides.

Lenoir has never met most of the dreamlike figures that he portrays in this series—though, the images from which they were drawn are emblazoned into his memory, having decorated his grandmother's house in Guadeloupe for as long as he can remember. Lenoir makes them his own with an overwhelming spectral beauty.

This is Lenoir's first solo show in the US and the renowned gallery owner Almine Rech Ruiz-Picasso had a direct hand in its inception. "A close and longtime friend of Alexandre's put a bit of pressure on me to visit the studio in 2019," Ruiz-Picasso tells us. "When I arrived, Lenoir showed me works from two years prior, and others from just a year ago that he had kept in the studio. I was interested, but I was really impressed when he pulled out very recent paintings he had just finished. I could see that his work was evolving and maturing quickly. I knew that he would open door after door. He works from memories, from his Caribbean youth, and you can tell so clearly his paintings reflect such strong, personal emotions. Both the artist and the work are very charismatic and authentic. It's quite rare. I left the studio thinking we had to do a show together!"

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The unearthly, expressive body of work—with ghostly figures with faces like film negatives, and verdant, otherworldly backgrounds—leads to questions of technique. In fact, Lenoir’s physical method is akin to printmaking in some ways and involves applying tape to the canvas before painting. Lenoir then paints a layer, re-tapes and layers again. Some paintings contain as many as 100 coats of paint. This is all in addition to the fact that Lenoir modifies the canvas with solvents.

Lenoir adds, “My process is completed in a meditative mindset, and through meditative painting gestures, in order to represent something that goes beyond the image. This work is inspired by my family’s old photographs and memories. I paint in many layers using very small stencils. My unconscious energy overflows out of my body and onto the canvas, and fixes ancient memories.” A ruminative concept, Lenoir sees it through with dreamlike wonder.