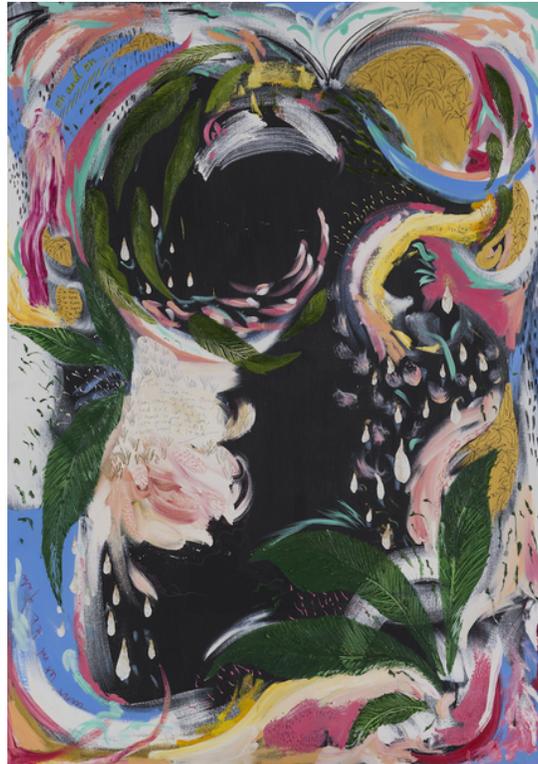


ARTFORUM



Michaela Yearwood-Dan, *Join me until the Bitter Finale*, 2019, acrylic, charcoal and oil on canvas, 47 1/4 x 66 7/8".

CRITIC'S PICKS LONDON Michaela Yearwood-Dan

By: Rianna Jade Parker
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On a typically gray and wet evening in London, I recently found myself letting a breeze of spring colors and textured tropics wash over me. The occasion was "After Euphoria," Michaela Yearwood-Dan's first solo presentation with this gallery, showcasing the young London-based painter's use of palette knives to make sweeping, embracing strokes, and her finesse with contouring gradients across surfaces at once roiling and surprisingly delicate.

Millennial love and heartbreak, more frequently chronicled in Moleskine journals or Tumblrs, are here mulled over in lush swirls of paint. Pop-culture references offer a point of entry for viewers and snap the abstractions briefly into focus. Notes to self appear penciled into many works, as in *Join me until the Bitter Finale* (all works cited, 2019), for which Yearwood-Dan borrowed a lyric from the Jamaican dancehall artist Spice to help fathom the space between dejection and lust: "Bring yo body, come, yah mek mi ride it!" *Breathe* is one of the largest canvases, its thick cursive slashes delineating a misty, emotive garden in tones rarely revealed outside of post-rainfall skies. Across these eleven works, Yearwood-Dan signals her West Indian heritage by emphasizing oceanic blues, emerald-green fern leaves, the gold of carnivals, and the pinkness of guava flesh. Hard to miss are the stippling white dots in varying sizes; they evoke a dewy feeling, tear-like. If the title "After Euphoria" describes this exhibition's particular mood of lovesick abandon, *Breathe* is its deceptively easy instruction for how to endure it—one we would all do better to heed.