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'THIS YEAR HAS DERANGED MY SENSES': 12 ARTISTS ON HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED THE WAY THEY APPROACH THEIR WORK



Alvaro Barrington, *They have They Cant*, (2021). © Alvaro Barrington. Photo: Charles Duprat, courtesy of Thaddaeus Ropac, London, Paris, Salzburg.

Alvaro Barrington

Sometime in early fall, when we were facing a new potential lockdown, my homegirl told me she was gonna delete her dating apps, get some sexy underwear, a bottle of wine, light some candles, and take a bath. It wasn't for anyone else, it was for her. Normally, during pre-holiday "cuffing season," a lot of folks I know would be looking for a relationship. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, they are all around the corner. Folks suffer tremendously from the impact of Covid—I think particularly of young children and parents who have lost their jobs, and the stress that causes in any household. So many of us define our worth by our labor under capitalism. Parents define themselves by their ability to provide and, for many, that was taken away without any safety net, through no fault of their own. They are powerless, stuck at home watching their children struggle with bad internet and a shitting computer. There are generational scars being overextended to many folks and in particular to women and people of color and the youth's new scars are being formed right now. I can't imagine that journey to healing... Anyway, a lot of folks I know have used the last year to work on themselves, work on their demons, become better at something they were interested in, like art, yoga, music or DJing, and learn to take better care of their bodies. I have found inspiration in my friends and family and I've decided that I need to creatively translate this era of isolation, but also celebrate those who have worked on themselves.

The pandemic has made me address something that I think I had ignorantly tried to pretend I was too old to think about as I'm nearly 40 and remember landlines. I'm speaking about the digital revolution. If the industrial revolution made the camera an accessible object that impacted painting. The digital revolution will affect painting in ways hard to imagine now. I deeply believe painting with its long history can add much to the digital the way it added to film (think about 1920s collage art to the Adobe cut-and-paste feature). I formed a collective with some friends like Hazel Brill and Dorus Tossijn and we have been brainstorming how to engage more radically with the digital. There is a very important David Bowie clip where he is talking about the potential of the internet that I find gives me so much life.