

Jordon Ritchie

In my latest series, inspired by Frantz Fanon's seminal work *Wretched of the Earth*, I present two paintings that critique the discrimination faced by queer individuals in the Bahamas. These pieces confront the colonial and societal norms that marginalize and dehumanize members of the LGBTQIA community, asserting a powerful narrative of visibility and resilience.

Both paintings combine abstraction, the human figure, and text to create a raw and confrontational composition. In painting 1, the phrase "Don't be afraid of me" is boldly inscribed across the canvas, challenging the viewer to reconsider their preconceptions and biases. The figures, depicted in naked, vulnerable poses, symbolize the exposure and risk that queer individuals face daily. Through these elements, I demand recognition and respect, emphasizing that fear and prejudice have no place in our society. This work is a plea for empathy and a declaration of my right to exist unapologetically.

In painting 2, I continue to explore the themes of identity and existence through the powerful statement "I think therefore I am." This phrase, integrated into the painting alongside abstraction and the human figure, reclaims the philosophical assertion of self-awareness and consciousness as a basis for identity. The naked figures, again in vulnerable poses, highlight the inherent dignity and humanity of queer individuals. This painting challenges the colonial mindset that seeks to erase or invalidate queer identities, asserting instead that our thoughts, feelings, and existence are undeniable and worthy of respect.

Both paintings serve as a critique of the colonial and societal views that perpetuate discrimination against queer individuals in the Bahamas. By portraying figures in states of vulnerability and coupling them with assertive text, I aim to create a dialogue that not only confronts prejudice but also celebrates the strength and resilience of the LGBTQIA community.

These works are a call to action, urging society to acknowledge and embrace our shared humanity.