



*Table, Manors*  
Kareem-Anthony Ferreira

This catalogue is published on the occasion of Kareem-Anthony Ferreira's solo exhibition, *Table, Manors*, on view from March 26-May 14, 2022 in Hamilton Artists Inc.'s Cannon Gallery.

*Kareem-Anthony Ferreira* (b. 1989 Hamilton, Ontario; lives and works in Hamilton, Ontario) completed his BFA at McMaster University in 2012 and his MFA at the University of Arizona in 2020. Ferreira recently had a solo exhibition at Nino Mier Gallery, Glassell Park and has exhibited works at Johannes Vogt Gallery, New York; Alice Yard Gallery, Trinidad and Tobago; the Tucson Museum of Art, Arizona; DeFacto Gallery, Ontario; and the Workers Art & Heritage Centre, Ontario.

*Racquel Rowe* is an interdisciplinary artist from the island of Barbados currently residing in Canada. She has exhibited widely across Ontario and holds an MFA from the University of Waterloo and a BA in History and Studio Art from the University of Guelph. Her practice is continuously influenced by many aspects of history, matrilineal family structures, diasporic communities, and her upbringing in Barbados. Her work takes the form of performance, video, site specific work, and installation.

## *Family Relations; Sites of Resistance*

Racquel Rowe

When you enter *Table, Manors* you may feel a great sense of familiarity. For me, at least, the exhibition instantly transports me back to the Caribbean, to childhood, and, ultimately, a sense of belonging. The Caribbean has been a place of constant change and development, from the time of the first inhabitants to periods of enslavement and post emancipation. For countries like Barbados and Trinidad, precolonial values were mostly lost to modern industrial practices and then to globalization.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, there is still a continual development of distinct identities independent from monarchies and tourism.

Through various migrations, Caribbean people exist in most places one could think of, but this doesn't always equate to visibility or representation within the broader community. There's a distinct sense of joy to experience an exhibition of people who look like you, share similar experiences, and have similar cultural backgrounds.

On viewing Kareem-Anthony Ferreira's exhibition, you are met with Black faces in all their glory. Black life consumes you as you wander around the space. It is easy to become immersed in the paintings, and they may confront you about your own family dynamics. Each of the images depicts a different domestic scene,

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<sup>1</sup> Hanna Garth, *Food and Identity in the Caribbean*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), 108.



ranging from a birthday party, to a meal with gran, to children being fed. Through multiple viewpoints as mother, father, daughter, party goer etc., the viewer can engage with the intimate moments and dialogues that emerge.

As you study the paintings, patterns of tropical landscapes and foliage attract your eye. In *Stopped by for Lunch* (2022), Ferreira's depiction of a lunch with gran sends me into a trance—I'm contemplating the joy of stopping by my own granny for a planned or impromptu lunch, always being welcomed with a hearty and full plate of food and a series of concerned questions about whether I've been getting enough to eat. We see the Tupperware ready to go, a cold glass of drink, the bread knife on the table and a full plate of food. In the painting, granny is in mid-speech with an eyebrow raised. She looks like she is about to scold someone, and I can't help but brace myself for what she's about to say.

While *Table, Manors* reflects the bright and bold colours of the Caribbean, past and present, it also takes a good look at some of the harsh realities that lie beneath the surface of *broughtupsy*—a respectability politics that is still deeply entrenched in our colonial past and present. Broughtupsy, in simple terms, can be thought of as the way in which your parents have raised you to be respectful, polite, well



mannered, well dressed, and in some cases to never talk back and always listen to authoritative figures. When a person is thought to have no broughtuspy it often insinuates that they were not raised “right” or are crass, brawling or lack manners in the traditional colonial British sense; table manners, so to speak.

During the post emancipation period in the Caribbean, the Black middle class struggled to find a national identity that would be respected by white populations. The adoption of Eurocentric values often put them in opposition to working class Black people. Middle class Black women, in particular, earned respect through hiding their asses with “appropriate” clothing, straightening their hair, softening their tone, and bleaching their skin. Any woman who did not want to conform to this was seen as deviant.<sup>2</sup>

Ferreira’s images are jam packed with many opportunities for the viewer to imagine themselves taking part in the scenes. For example, in *Moments around the Pot* (2022), you are met with the expressive gestures of the subjects. Everyone is dressed in shades of white and cream, and the people are depicted in a variety of active and passive roles: cooking dumplings, talking on a bright red corded phone, relaxing, drinking, etc.

*Excited Anticipation* (2022), pictured on the opposite page, presents us with a white sheet cake decorated with Ronald McDonald and eight candles. Excited children of various ages are front and center, eagerly awaiting a slice. Behind them, and cut off by the frame, are various adults dressed in a range of tropical attire; from a classic ‘bikini body’ shirt, featuring a tanned, thin, white body, to tropical prints that feature birds of paradise and other foliage present in the region. Something else is also afoot in the scene: the advent of Ronald McDonald and the rise in the new standard for consumption—Americanisation. In places like Trinidad, the value of imported goods like McDonalds or a bikini body shirt, and the ‘modern’ experience of shopping and dining in American-style establishments, have consistently outweighed efforts to localize.<sup>3</sup>

*Caribbean Breastfeeding* (2022) and *How to Eat* (2022) present parent-child dynamics as the former depicts a family all dressed in colourful patterned attire, consisting of bright yellow bananas, palm tree leaves, lime wedges and other

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2 Janelle Hobson, *Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), 107.

3 Janelle Hobson, *Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), 107.



foliage. The kids are taking turns eating, while one seems much more interested than the other in the food on the plate. In the Caribbean, puréed ground provisions have always been popular baby foods. Ferreira's reference here indicates the importance of keeping culturally specific foods and traditions alive. As gendered roles continue to shift and fewer households cook "from scratch," these cultural markers might only be remembered through paint.<sup>4</sup>

Ferreira's *Table, Manors* gives us a timely and on point commentary on identity politics within the Caribbean Diaspora, ongoing forms of colonial resistance and the joy in moments of liberation that can take place when people gather for food, and we are reminded of home. Through a poignant use of both humour and sincerity, Ferreira comments on the evolving legacy of (British) colonialism in the Caribbean. This exhibition, full of the vivid and sensational colours of the Caribbean, is a warm and welcome addition to ongoing dialogues facilitated by and about people in the Caribbean Diaspora, both near and far.

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4 Sarah Lawson Welsh, *Food, Text and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd, 2019), 139.

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Cover: Kareem-Anthony Ferreira, *Caribbean Breastfeeding*, 2022. Acrylic and mixed media on canvas.

Page 3: Kareem-Anthony Ferreira, *Table, Manors*, 2022. Installation view at Hamilton Artists Inc. From left to right: *Stopped by for Lunch*, *Excited Anticipation*, *Caught in the Act*.

Page 5: Kareem-Anthony Ferreira, *Table, Manors*, 2022. Installation view at Hamilton Artists Inc. From left to right: *Caribbean Breastfeeding*, *Moments Around the Pot*, *How to Eat*.



