

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Press Release

Venus Over Manhattan Announces Representation of Visionary Artist Claude Lawrence



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** today announced its representation of visionary artist **Claude Lawrence** (b. 1944). Born in Chicago and based in New York, Lawrence is recognized as an accomplished abstract painter, whose visual practice is deeply influenced by his life-long engagement with music. Earlier this year, Venus Over Manhattan presented a major solo exhibition of the artist’s work—***Reflections on Porgy & Bess***—featuring a new body of monumental paintings inspired by composer George Gershwin’s 1935 masterwork *Porgy & Bess*. The critically acclaimed exhibition captured Lawrence’s distinct and exuberant style, characterized by bold saturated colors and expressive gestural marks.

“Claude’s work breathes with a sense of freedom, reflecting the improvisational flow of jazz and the confidence of an artist unafraid to follow his artistic instincts,” said Adam Lindemann, founder of Venus Over Manhattan. “It was our great pleasure to present *Reflections on Porgy & Bess* this spring and to introduce new audiences to his singular and continuously evolving creative practice. We are now delighted to bring Claude formally into our program and to continue to engage collectors, curators, and the public with his unique vision and exceptional work.”

39 GREAT JONES ST
NEW YORK, NY 10012

55 GREAT JONES ST
NEW YORK, NY 10012

T +1 (212) 980-0700
F +1 (212) 980-8861

WWW.VENUSOVERMANHATTAN.COM
INFO@VENUSOVERMANHATTAN.COM

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Raised on the South Side of Chicago, Lawrence was immersed in art and music from childhood and began playing the saxophone at age 14. Following high school, he joined a jazz trio, successfully touring for many years and actively spending time between Chicago and New York City. Through his flourishing music career, he became part of an influential circle of Black musicians and artists that included Jack Whitten and Peter Bradley. The significance of visual art continued to pull him, and in 1986, he began pursuing painting with greater ambition, developing a visual vocabulary deeply influenced by the intuitive quality of his jazz practice.

In the 1990s, he began to spend time in Sag Harbor, a place with a long history of welcoming and serving as a hub for Black artists and writers, including such luminaries Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, and Al Loving. Lawrence's time in Sag Harbor allowed him the space and calm to further his commitment to abstract painting. Today, his work is characterized by sweeping marks, vibrant colors, and compositions developing directly on the canvas. The resulting paintings vibrate with action, a testament to his uniquely unconstrained approach. An intimate expression of himself, Lawrence has said, "What [music and art] have in common is me. I let it flow through me, the music and the painting, and out into the world."

Now in his 80s, Lawrence is producing some of his most ambitious work yet. The suite of 22 paintings that he created for his solo show at Venus Over Manhattan this year convey a deep engagement with the themes, characters, and music of *Porgy & Bess* and offer a powerful and emotive visual interpretation of the narrative. Monumental in scale, the paintings capture Lawrence's distinct layering of colors and juxtaposition of interlocking geometric forms and sharp black strokes. Together, the paintings highlight his innate ability to use paint and canvas to compel and connect with viewers and to expand the boundaries of abstraction through his experience with music. His rich and varied oeuvre continues to influence a new generation of artists and positions Lawrence among the most important abstract painters of our time.

About Claude Lawrence

Claude Lawrence has a long and illustrious career as a musician and visual artist. His work is held in some of the most prestigious public collections across the United States, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Detroit Institute of Art, National Gallery of Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among numerous others. His recent solo exhibitions include *Claude Lawrence: Reflections on Porgy & Bess* (2024) at Venus Over Manhattan and *Claude Lawrence* (2022) at Anthony Meier in San Francisco. His work has also been recently featured in group exhibitions at the American Folk Art Museum, Colby College Museum of Art, and Parrish Art Museum. He lives and works in Sag Harbor, New York.

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

About Venus Over Manhattan

Venus Over Manhattan is dedicated to illuminating the work of a diverse range of historical and contemporary artists through dynamic rotating exhibitions and scholarly publications. Since it was founded by Adam Lindemann in 2012, the gallery has been responsible for revitalizing and establishing commercial, scholarly, and public interest for artists such as Peter Saul, Richard Mayhew, and Joan Brown. Venus Over Manhattan operates from two locations on Great Jones Street and its distinct exhibitions program, which has recently featured works by Claude Lawrence, Peter Saul, Richard Mayhew, Chéri Samba, Keiichi Tanaami, and Joan Brown, attracts a broad spectrum of collectors, curators, writers, and arts enthusiasts. As art world trends continue to shift, Venus Over Manhattan remains steadfast in its focus on the discovery of artists across generations, geographies, and cultures and to expanding the depth of artists celebrated across global institutions, by audiences, and within the art market.

Venus Over Manhattan

39 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012
55 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012

Image credits

Portrait of Claude Lawrence with *Sundown Town* (2022), in his exhibition *Reflections on Porgy & Bess* at Venus Over Manhattan, 2024. Courtesy the artist and Venus Over Manhattan, New York.

Gallery Hours

Monday – Friday
11:00 am – 6:00 pm

Press Contact

Alina Sumajin
PAVE Communications & Consulting
alina@paveconsult.com
+1 (646) 369-2050