



**JESSE WRIGHT**





**JESSE WRIGHT: *Reverie***  
**February 11 - March 19, 2022**

**Essay Jewels Dodson**

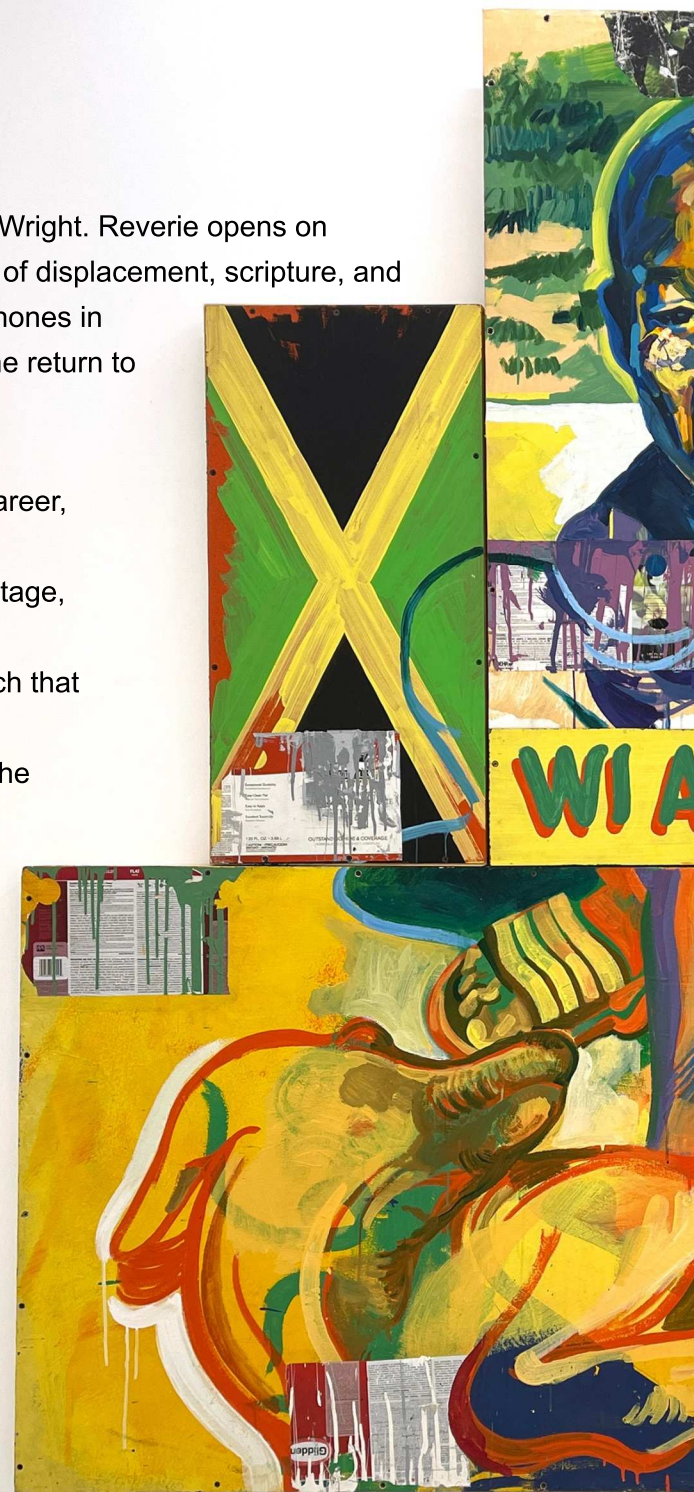
## Jesse Wright *Reveries*

By Jewels Dodson

Latch Key Gallery presents *Reverie* by Newark-based interdisciplinary artist Jesse Wright. *Reverie* opens on February 11, 2022 and is on view until March 19th. The exhibition explores themes of displacement, scripture, and migration in relationship to his Jamaican family and heritage. In this series, Wright hones in on celebrating the Jamaican people and their culture. *Reverie* is a celebration of the return to and emergence of home.

Wright, a practicing artist since 2005 has an overarching story arc throughout his career, the notion of moving from a state of descent to a place of Ascension all the while in pursuit of home. Through the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and African heritage, religious rites, faith, and scripture are integral functions of Jamaican culture and life. Wright who grew up in a Baptist family, his maternal grandfather built the church that serves as his spiritual foundation. Wright has also worked with faith-based mission organizations, building a medical center in Uganda, building a school in Haiti after the devastating 2010 earthquake, and building a school in Mexico as well. Working on humanitarian projects globally and locally has become an integral aspect of Wright's journey and has bound him to his faith.

All the works of *Reverie*, feature his family as the foundation onto which he builds tableau of biblical allegory. Each work is paired with and inspired by a particular scripture. In one work *Michelle Made it to the Elders Table*, 5 women are seated at a table sitting side by side, communing and breaking bread, this work is inspired by the Last Supper. The women are all members of Wright's family. His subject composition and centering of women speaks to Jamaica's matriarchal adjacent family structure and Jamaica's deep familial roots (Google: Thank You Mamma by Sizzla).







Wright cites great works that inform how he creates his own masterpieces. Diego Rivera's *Retrato de Ignacio Sanchez*, which hangs in his parents' home as another work he looked to, to inform the creation of his own masterpieces. Wright points out the image of a little boy wearing a hat is deceptively simple, because in Wright's purview Ignacio's sombrero could really be a halo, the figure registers to Wright and religious iconography. Wright had a realization, "Someone brought it to my attention that I was finding the spirit in family and that hit me as a truth. I started looking at artists who were doing this and, *Retrato de*

*Ignacio Sanchez*, it's a person but he's telling another story as well."

Wright came across an Egon Schiele work, *The Family* and it struck him because it shows the vulnerability of family, Wright pondered how he was going to capture his own family. Wright looked at Bisa Butler's *Kindred*, 2019 and Jordan Casteel's *Serwaa and Amoakohene*, 2019. "There's a time where the way our communities are portraying our communities," he said. Wright used the sentiments of both Butler and Casteel's familial works to *Four Star Apples in JA (Cain and Able)*, where he captures his brothers across the street from his grandfather's church. Wright documents the boys picking fruit as themselves but he also sees the 2 boys, his brothers, as Cain and Abel. "I'm looking at the spirit of the people but I'm also doing meditations on scripture scriptural themes," Wright says.

Wright sought to challenge himself to tell the complexity of the narratives by layering, balancing formal technique with abstract gestures, and using the figure in a multidimensional way to drive narrative and story. In *Eileen Covers the Blessings*, Wright is a baby in his mother's arms, it has a very Madonna and child subtext. In Wright's version, his mother is comprised of a number of layered materials and symbols indicating of her personal history. Part of her is the ocean symbolizing her journey figuratively, as a spirit on the course of life and physically in her migration overseas. While Wright's diminutive form is silhouetted and filled in with the constellations, Wright means the world to his mother. At the base of the work the Jamaican flag, serves as a foundation for both of them. Wright cites Romare Bearden's *Come Sunday* as the guiding imagery for his creation.





Another theme woven throughout *Reverie* is migration. Migration is embedded into the cultural collective history and familial histories of colonized islands and people throughout the Caribbean. Wright creates connective tissue between his family's physical migrations to England and Canada and makes a comparison to a larger cosmic notion of spirits journeying and searching. He compounds his ongoing narrative in the search for home. For his relatives, many returned to Jamaican after a lifetime of being away and in a larger context, some relatives journeyed home to a time and space beyond the terrestrial here and now. He was compelled to capture this vantage point.

Wright captures the trans-formative story of his Uncle Edgar, *The Saint (Edgar and Apostle Paul)*, who journeyed to England, like most immigrants in search of a better life, but to the contrary, the essence of the subject's spirit became displaced for several decades. Upon Uncle Edgar's return home to Jamaica did find himself again and ascend.

*Reverie* is about the story of Jesse Wright's personal familial narrative, but both family and story are universal. In this body of work Wright brings forward ideas and imagery that are not only real but are also relatable.





*The Saint (Edgar as Apostle Paul)*, 2021  
Acrylic, posters, paper, paint label on canvas  
72 x 72 in



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*Regal Soon Come, 2020*  
Acrylic, posters on paper and wood  
42 x 42 in

*Yard II* 2020

Acrylic, posters, paper, paint label and wood

8.5 x 13 in





PURE WHITE  
(BASE 1)

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Este tipo de pintura es perfecta para interiores, fachadas y exteriores, especialmente por su alta resistencia y su gran durabilidad. Se recomienda para la decoración de interiores y exteriores, especialmente para la decoración de fachadas y exteriores. Se recomienda para la decoración de interiores y exteriores, especialmente para la decoración de fachadas y exteriores.

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*Stays Life Time, 2022*

Acrylic, paper, paint label on wood

10 x 8 in









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*Lwasa Had An Idea*, 2017 -2021  
Acrylic, tempera, paper, sticker,  
paint label on wood  
80 x 22 in







*Michelle Made it to the Elders Table,*  
2017 -2021  
Acrylic, tempera, paper, sticker,  
paint label on wood  
48 x 96 in

*Yuh Dun Know Christine's Seti (Salomé), 2019*

Acrylic, poster on paper on wood

42 x 40 in













*You Now You (Emerge)*, 2021  
Acrylic, tempera, paper, paint labels on wood  
36 x 36 in

*Isaiah 58 (Emerge)*, 2021-2022  
Acrylic, poster, paper , fabric on wood  
42 x 40 in





*Isaiah 58*, 2020

Acrylic, posters, paper, on wood

30 x 24 in





*For Star Apples in JA (Cain & Able), 2020*  
Acrylic, posters, paper, paint label on canvas  
72 x 60 in







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*Hattie & Edgar in Mandeville  
(Abraham & Sarah), 2020*  
Acrylic, posters, paper, paint labels on canvas  
72 x 60 in

*Wei A Tek It (Pieta)*, 2018

Acrylic, paper on paper mounted on wood

40 x 31 in





GIER VAN DER WEYDEN  
PIETA

*Bethsheba*, 2021

Acrylic, posters, paper, wood on wood

96 x 48 in





*Elisha's Chariot, Grand Garage, 2021-2022*  
Acrylic, posters, paper, paint labels on wood  
44.5 x 52 in







IF YOU NAH

WORSHIP SERVICE 10 am *All Welcome*





HEAR YOU GUH FEEL



*In Reverie (Vance & Richard as  
Zaccheaus Looking for Christ), 2021-2022*  
Acrylic, poster paper, paint labels, tempera, found  
church sign, on canvas & wood  
72 x 132 in





*Boy with Dog at Night in Jamaica, 2019*  
Acrylic, posters, paper, paint labels on wood  
84 x 84 in



LatchKey Gallery is pleased to present, Jesse Wright, *Reverie*. Opening February 11 – March 19, 2022. Wright's visual approach references his blended Jamaican-American heritage creating a language that addresses his ongoing allegory on displacement, migration, and scripture.

On view are a series of works created from 2019 – 2022 which forge visual circuits between historical narratives and present-day experiences. Images created from Wright's time in Jamaica are bridged with his American life resulting in works rich in texture – layered in symbolism and meaning. Shifting from collage to geometrical patterns, to painterly gestures, Wright uses his maternal relatives as archetypes of migration. Hope, aspiration, strength, and longing are all depicted giving attention to the complexity of humanity.

Anchoring the exhibition is *Dog with Boy at Night in Jamaica*. Assembled by multiple panels, into a harmonious triangle, the young figure gleefully plays with his dog highlighting the divinity of everyday life. Stylistically, Wright purposely outlines his figures to reveal what lies within. Here, the boy is between two worlds, the Jamaican flag firmly over his right shoulder, and on the left and within, the symbolic guidance of the night sky. *Dog with Boy at Night in Jamaica* serves as a metaphor for sacrifice, the boy's unknowing future and his ultimate loss of country, identity, and sense of home.

Throughout the exhibition, scale and style evoke the artist's urban culture. Encoded samplings are pulled from his blended heritage, resulting in surfaces that invite a constant change in focus, and a meditation on detail. The work of Wright is an ecumenical assemblage of art history, collecting inspiration from the fervent period of the Renaissance through to the commercial symbolism of Pop Art. His visual language speaks to the tenor of our times, offering complex and diverse reverence to home.

Jesse Wright is an interdisciplinary artist based in Newark, New Jersey. He received his BA from The School of Visual Arts in New York City. His work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions Passaic County Art Center, Hawthorne, NJ; Newark Historical Society, Newark, NJ; Jersey City Museum, Jersey City, NJ; Kean University, Union, NJ, and Shore Institute of Contemporary Arts, Long Branch, NJ. This is his first solo exhibition with Latch Key Gallery.