



DAVID ANTONIO CRUZ

i know you've wondered
where i've been;
adrift, astare, *atilt*, exhale
asigh,



WaveHill

4900 Independence Avenue
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Boys Room



DAVID ANTONIO CRUZ

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MAY 1–AUGUST 9, 2026

GLYNDOR GALLERY



Wave Hill

Installation view of David Antonio Cruz, *iknowyou'vewonderedwherei'vebeen; adrift, astare, atilt, asigh, exhale*, 2026. Entrance to the "Boys Room," with *comebackandseemeonceagain; givemesome timetoremindyouwhatit'slike, rightbytheplaceweusedtogo*, 2024, seen through doorway. Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

cruzing, resting, posing, loving

The work of David Antonio Cruz evokes a sense of home while defying conventional interpretations. The artist's multidisciplinary practice encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, and performance, often centering Black, brown, and queer communities. For Cruz, home is conjured through the bonds of these communities, sustained by a sense of possibility and belonging that comes from being among loved ones. He explores themes of desire and play, as he combines personal history with references from art history, literature, fashion, and popular culture.

Displayed in Wave Hill's Glyndor Gallery, a former private estate, Cruz's solo exhibition *iknowyou'vewonderedwherei'vebeen; adrift, astare, atilt, asigh, exhale* brings the theme of home to life through an immersive, site-specific installation that responds to the domestic interior space of the building's architecture. The three rooms of the gallery operate in different ways while exploring themes of the body, kinship, and landscape. With a nod toward clandestine, queer sites of desire and the yearning for connection and belonging, each room is named by the artist using double entendres: Cruzing Room (south gallery), Rest Room (center gallery), Boys Room (north gallery), and The Closet (the gallery's coat closet).

In the south gallery, Cruz's drawings and artist-designed wallpaper create a conflation of space, layering images of family homeland and cruising grounds, along with trees and forests from Puerto Rico and Wave Hill. The intricate woodlands in the work merge background and foreground, camouflage figures, and represent the artist's expanded exploration of home and its intersections with geography, diaspora, queer culture, and autobiography.

Cruz draws links between the landscapes of Puerto Rico and New York, bridging his ancestral homeland and his current home of New York City. In the exhibition's title, "adrift" refers to movement, leaving, searching, and surviving. Cruz ponders where safety can be found in this moment—one marked by the targeting of marginalized people in this country for their perceived otherness, and by ongoing international wars the U.S. has initiated or become deeply entangled in. Embedded in the wallpaper's imagery are figures from Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War* print series (1810–20), depicting the gruesome consequences of conflict on both soldiers and civilians.

Also appearing in the south gallery are references to tragedies at sea, such as John Singleton Copley's iconic history painting, *Watson and the Shark* (1778), in which a young man has fallen overboard while his boatmates attempt to save



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icouldn'tcallitbynamebefore, butmaybeit'sbeentheresincefirstknewyou, 2024.

Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.



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iknowyoucanhearmenowprettymemories, 2025 (left) and *andifeelyourbodyclose,ifeelikeined somemore*, 2025 (right) in the "Cruzing Room." Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

him from an impending shark attack. In Cruz's wallpaper, we see only the youth's outstretched arm, but here it is inverted; the figure reaches his hand down from above toward the figures and visitors below. The shark, which represents the threat of evil, is not depicted; it is implied.

Boats and rafts in Cruz's works provide transportation or escape from harm. A new diptych drawing, *nine, eight, seven, six five, four, three, two, one; i go, the raft* (2026), references Théodore Géricault's monumental painting *The Raft of the*

Medusa (1818-19). Elements of the painting's harrowing scene of shipwreck survivors adrift on a makeshift raft are depicted in Cruz's drawing. Hidden within the tangle of tree limbs and foliage are desperate faces and outstretched arms reaching for a rescue ship to bring them to safety. Géricault painted his work in response to a political scandal in 1816 in which a French vessel ran aground on a reef because of the incompetence of the captain, a government appointee. When the captain and officers took the limited lifeboats, hundreds were left to fend for themselves. Only 15 survivors remained, floating on a raft for 12 days without food or water before they were rescued. Cruz references this iconic work to reflect on the current political climate, the sense of being left adrift, and the need for a raft to provide movement and refuge, particularly for BIPOC and queer people.



DAVID ANTONIO CRUZ

nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, i go; thereafter, 2026, in the "Cruzing Room."
 Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

Incorporated in the wallpaper lining the south gallery walls are photos of the forest surrounding Cruz's ancestral home in Puerto Rico, where his paternal grandparents lived and where Cruz spent summers during his childhood. The property was eventually sold, and the house no longer exists. The artist attempts to recount this feeling of loss by recalling the landscape from his memories and merging it with images of trees from Wave Hill, including the linden tree next to Glyndor House. In the depicted scenery, Cruz brings the outside in, superimposing multiple layers of imagery then setting framed landscape drawings on top of it to create interventions that shift our perception and collapse space and time.

The playfully named "Cruzing Room," is a riff on the artist's last name and the act of cruising often associated with queer men meeting covertly in wooded areas for intimate encounters. In the exhibition title, "astare" refers to longing glances and locking eyes with someone to initiate an encounter. For queer people, showing



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Detail of wallpaper in the "Cruzing Room." Courtesy of the artist.

affection in public can be dangerous, and hiding and disguising are developed survival tactics. Among the figures in the woods are sailors from Paul Cadmus's *The Fleets In!* (1934), a painting that depicts the bawdy antics of sailors on shore leave. Although the carousing men in the Cadmus painting are coming onto women in the scene, their skintight uniforms highlighting their buttocks, bulges, and muscles reveal homoerotic allusions. In Cruz's wallpaper, the figures are headless to give the men anonymity, as visibility comes with risk for those whose lifestyles have been deemed socially unacceptable. Out of caution, these men stay hidden while they seek connection and intimacy.

In Cruz's work, the woods have various symbolic meanings, including a place for love and desire, a refuge for hiding, a space for celebrating, seeking new possibilities and contending with what's been lost. As in Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's musical *Into the Woods* (1986), the forest is a metaphor for the



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adrift,astare,atilt,asigh,exhale, 2026, in the "Rest Room." Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen

human experience: desire and its consequences, moral ambiguity, and navigation of difficult situations. It can be a place to find protection for those who are afraid to be out in the open, and in Cruz's woodland scenes, the artist provides portals for escape, as safety is never guaranteed.

In the center gallery, called the "Rest Room," Cruz invites visitors to "take time to rest, find yourself and one another." In our uncertain and threatening world, a place for respite can feel like the greatest gift. The installation suggests the embodiment of space; chandeliers hang low above a cushioned bench, encouraging visitors to entwine their own bodies and find a comfortable resting position. The word "atilt" in the exhibition title suggests the action one must take, how our bodies must navigate the space, and "asigh" suggests an utterance one makes after allowing the body to rest.

The abundant chandeliers fill the room and transform it with refracted light. These luminous fixtures have become symbols of elegance, prestige, and

opulence since the medieval period in Europe. Cruz puts a mischievous and queer twist on the chandelier by affixing hummingbirds in mid-flight, along with fluttering butterflies. The artist often uses the motifs of birds, butterflies, and flowers to subvert derogatory terms applied to queer people, and instead gives them new, empowered meaning. Cruz sees these birds as free-spirited conduits, misbehaving as they dive and crash into the chandeliers. They are uncaged, carefree, and exuberant. The chandeliers are also embellished with other signposts of queerness, such as beads, pearls, and jeweled adornments. If, in the south gallery, people must remain anonymous and hidden for fear of persecution, here, the artist shows what escape can look and feel like when we are given agency and allow ourselves to shine brightly.

In dialogue with Cruz's chandelier installation is a single vintage chandelier displayed in the south gallery, retained from one of the homes on the Wave Hill property during its period as a private estate. This crystal light fixture represents the affluence of the families who once lived here in the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries, as well as a status symbol, conforming to standards of propriety and societal expectations. Encrusted with dust, Wave Hill's chandelier is a relic that harkens back to a bygone era. In contrast to this antique, Cruz's chandeliers, with their whimsical elements and hummingbirds spiraling around them, generate an aura of hope and renewal.



Installation view in the "Cruzing Room," with vintage chandelier from former estate of Wave Hill, c. 1950. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen



IMAGE ABOVE:

DAVID ANTONIO CRUZ

icouldn'tcallitbynamebefore,butmaybeit'sbeentheresincefirstknewyou, 2024 (left) and *comeclose, likebefore,sowecansitinsilenceandcloseoureyestothosewants, andmaybe,maybe,wecangetlost inthepacewherethebirdssleep,lostinthesummerheat*, 2024, in the "Boys Room". Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

IMAGE ON THE RIGHT: Detail of wall drawing in the "Boys Room." PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

The north gallery, which the artist has called the "Boys Room," features dreamlike and stylized portraits of friends and chosen family that celebrate unabashed queer love and desire. From the metaphorical free birds in the Rest Room, the queer couples and individuals featured in the Boys Room are presenting their authentic selves. In these paintings, posing becomes an act of resistance, frolic, and connection. The intertwined figures can be seen as embodied landscapes, forming environments that create spaces of intimacy. The last word in the exhibition title, "exhale," expresses a sense of relief after finding kinship and belonging among loved ones.



Drawn directly onto the gallery walls, graphite renderings depict branches and vines, such as the wisteria growing on the corner of the terrace behind Glyndor Gallery, as well as images of Ceiba trees that are indigenous to the Caribbean, Mexico, and West Africa. To Cruz, the Ceiba tree represents a grounding motif to signify the roots of chosen family. In this installation, Cruz depicts flora found in the landscapes of both his ancestral and adopted homelands, merging these places, bringing the outside into the domestic interior, while making a mark and carving a space for the narratives of Black, brown, and queer people to be told among the society at large.

Cruz has adopted poses and iconography from art history, as well as sources from pop culture, presenting desire and sexuality while celebrating the allure of highly expressive and confident individuals. For example, Cruz's *comebackandsee meonceagain; givemesometimetoremindyouwhatit'slike, rightbythelaceweused togo* (2024) references supermodel Kate Moss's memorable pose in a 1990s

Calvin Klein advertisement. Likewise, the figure's posture in *comeclose,likebefore, sowecansitinsilenceandcloseoureyestothosewants, andmaybe,maybe,wecangetlostinthelacewhere thebirds sleep, lostinthesummerheat* (2024) is reminiscent of the 1972 photograph of Burt Reynolds, the iconic male sex symbol, lying nude across a bearskin rug in the centerfold of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. In his work, Cruz gives a queer reinterpretation of the image of the macho actor by portraying his close friend dressed in fishnet stockings and a white jacket covered with brooches, while stretching across the foreground on a lilac-colored fur rug. Paintings such as these show Cruz's irreverence toward our expectations of a traditional portrait, and of

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comebackandsee meonceagain; givemesometimetoremindyouwhatit'slike, rightbythelaceweused togo, 2024 (left) and *don'twhispergentlythatyoucan'tforgetme*, 2025, in the "Boys Room." Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.



the societal norms that they possess. In his painting practice, Cruz's depiction of the body shares aspects of his performance practice—the staged gestures, inhabiting space, and released expression.

The newest painting in the exhibition *inthefogofSeptember,itrains,andthemist makestheinteriorfeelmore,andthesoftnoisesofthequietmoveinside* (2026), depicts visual artist Nick Cave and his partner, artist-designer Bob Faust, seen from above, their bodies intertwined in an embrace. In this work, the concept of embodied landscapes is especially evident. The composition can be viewed as divided into three levels, representing sky, sea, and land. The record in the upper left corner gives the top portion of the piece the appearance of a moonlit sky, while the blue, graphic pattern on Faust's shirt resembles the ripples of an ocean current. In addition, Cruz portrays the strands of beads that crisscross Cave's torso and flow past his waist to his crotch as if they are a system of roots. Cave's green hand and arm match the color of many of the beads, suggesting that his body is becoming a part of this landscape and forming a kindred lineage with Faust and with the land.

Through the artist's interventions in the space, *iknowyou'vewonderedwhere i'vebeen*, blurs the boundaries between public and private, exterior and interior, visible and hidden, interrupting and reframing the gallery's architectural details to shift our ways of seeing. The amalgam of imagery across the exhibition recalls the environments of Cruz's ancestral and adopted homes, as well as the natural world just outside the gallery. Here, bodies merge with landscapes, enveloping the viewer; these depictions also resemble maps, evoking an underlying search for kinship, routes of escape, and an elusive sense of security.

—Gabriel de Guzman

David Antonio Cruz: iknowyou'vewonderedwherei'vebeen; adrift,astare,atilt,asigh,exhale is organized by Gabriel de Guzman, Director of Arts and Chief Curator, with support from Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, Curator of Visual Arts, and Afriti Bankwalla, Curatorial Administrative Assistant.

We wish to extend our deep gratitude to those who have made this exhibition possible, starting with artist David Antonio Cruz, for sharing his creative vision and stunning work with our audience. Enormous thanks to Cameron Barker and Laurena Fineus; to Monique Meloche, Evan Boris, Alyssa Brubaker, and Cara Feeney from Monique Meloche Gallery; to Samuel Swanton; and to the installation team: Jake Alfieri, Habib Fall, Chi Fung Wong, Ming-Jer Kuo, Rain Sanfiorenzo, and Nikki Van Zanten.



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inthefogofSeptember,itrains,andthemistmakestheinteriorfeelmore,andthesoftnoiseofthequiet moveinside, 2026. Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.



PHOTO: Courtesy of DAC Studio

about the artist

David Antonio Cruz is an interdisciplinary artist working in painting, drawing, performance, and site-specific installations. Drawing on a mix of queer discourse, fashion, history, and pop culture, his work interrogates Western traditions of representation and invites subjects to pose as a form of resistance and play, queering the act of posing. Cruz's recent solo exhibitions include *black/backroom* at PES Futures, New York, NY (2026), *stay, take your time, my love* at ICA San Francisco (2025); *hauntme* at Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art (2025); and *When The Children Come Home* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA (2023). His work has been included in notable group exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Newark Museum of Art, NJ; The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, Everson, IL; the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY; the Ford Foundation, New York, NY; the Brooklyn Museum, NY; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; and the Kemper Art Museum, Kansas City, MO. Residencies and fellowships include Joan Mitchell Center Artist-in-Residence, New Orleans, LA; Latinx Artist Fellowship; Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass Village, CO; the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Award; Neubauer Faculty Fellowship, Tufts University, Boston, MA; BRIC Workspace Residency, Brooklyn, NY; Gateway Project Spaces, Newark, NJ; and the LMCC Workspace Residency, New York, NY. Cruz is a 2025 Outwin Boochever National Portrait Competition prizewinner. Cruz lives and works in New York City, where he is the Assistant Professor of Visual Arts at Columbia University. He earned a BFA from Pratt Institute and an MFA from Yale University.

www.cruzantoniodavid.com

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adrift, astare, atilt, asigh, exhale, 2026 (detail). Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

exhibition checklist

All works are by **David Antonio Cruz**
and courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

adrift, astare, atilt, asigh, exhale, 2026

15 chandeliers: glass, acrylic, resin, metal chains, and beads
Dimensions variable

and ifeelyourbodyclose, ifeelikeineedsomemore, 2025

Ink, flashe, wax pencil on double layered watercolor paper
72 x 52 inches

*comebackandseemeonceagain; givemesometimetoremindyouwhatit'slike, rightby
thelaceweusedtogo*, 2024

Oil and acrylic on wood panel
48 x 72 x 2 inches

*comeclose, likebefore, sowecansitinsilenceandcloseoureyestothosewants, and
maybe, maybe, wecangetlostintheplacewhere thebirdssleep, lostinthesummerheat*,
2024

Oil and acrylic on wood panel
48 x 60 x 2 in.

don'twhispergentlythatyoucan'tforgetme, 2025

Oil and flashe on wood panel
36 x 36 x 2 inches

icouldn'tcallitbynamebefore, butmaybeit'sbeentheresinceIfirstknewyou, 2024

Oil and flashe on wood panel
36 x 36 x 2 inches

iknowyoucanhearmenowprettymemories, 2025

Ink, flashe, wax pencil on double layered watercolor paper
72 x 52 inches

*inthefogofSeptember, it rains, andthemistmakestheinteriorfeelmore, andthesoft
noiseofthequietmoveinside*, 2026

Oil and acrylic on wood panel
72 x 60 inches

nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, i go; thereafter, 2026

Ink, flashe, wax pencil on double layered watercolor paper
Diptych, each work 72 x 52 inches

*thefogwillrise, theclaydry, andallcoveredindew. butI'llsee youwhenthesunsetscause
wehavelivingghosts*, 2024

Ink, flashe, wax pencil on double layered watercolor paper
72 x 52 inches

tomorrowiseveryday, 2026

Collage
5 x 6 1/2 inches



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*thefogwillrise, theclaydry, andallcoveredindew. butI'llsee youwhenthesun setscausewehaveliving
ghosts*, 2024, in the "Cruzing Room." Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

public programs

SPRING ARTS MEMBERS/VIP RECEPTION

Sunday, April 30, 5–8PM, Glyndor Gallery

On view in Glyndor Gallery is *David Antonio Cruz: iknowyou'vewonderedwhere i'vebeen; adrift,astare,atilt,asigh,exhale*; in the Sunroom Project Space is *Sujin Lim: Memories in Red*; and in Wave Hill House is *Atom Moore: Second Nature*.

MEET THE ARTIST

Saturday, May 16, 2–3PM, Glyndor Gallery

Exhibition walkthrough of *iknowyou'vewonderedwherei'vebeen; adrift,astare, atilt,asigh,exhale* with artist David Antonio Cruz.

SUNSET WEDNESDAYS: JENNIFER JADE LEDESNA

Wednesday, July 8, 7–8PM, Great Lawn, rain site: Armor Hall

Bronxite and multilingual jazz vocalist Jennifer Jade Ledesna kicks off Sunset Wednesdays, Wave Hill's outdoor summer concert series. Ledesna has performed with David Antonio Cruz in his experimental, interactive, bilingual performance *green,howiwantyougreen* (2015–17), with music composed by Daniel de Jesus, and she has been portrayed in one of Cruz's paintings from his *chosenfamily* series.

DJ DANCE PARTY AT THE BRONX MUSEUM

Friday, August 7, 6–9PM

Celebrate the free spirit and expression of David Antonio Cruz's work with a dance party organized in collaboration with The Bronx Museum, as part of the museum's monthly First Fridays series. Admission to this event is free.

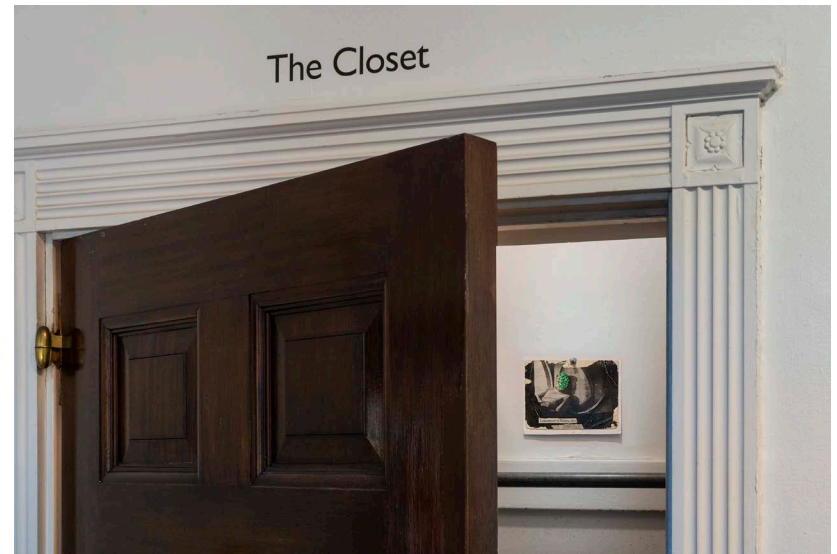
LOCATION: The Bronx Museum, 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10456.

This event does not take place at Wave Hill.

PUBLIC GALLERY TOURS

Thursdays & Saturdays at 2PM, Glyndor Gallery

Learn about the artworks on view in this free, 45-minute exhibition tour led by a Wave Hill Gallery Greeter.



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tomorrowseveryday, 2026, as seen through the doorway of "The Closet." Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.



Wave Hill

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Wave Hill is a public garden and cultural center in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. Its mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education, and the arts.

Director of Arts and Chief Curator: Gabriel de Guzman
Curator of Visual Arts: Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger
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COVER:
David Antonio Cruz, *inthefogofSeptember, itrains,andthemismakesetheinteriorfeelmore, andthesoftnoiseofthequietmoveinside*, 2026.
Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. PHOTO: Stefan Hagen.

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